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Collin program accredited by **American Culinary Federation**

THERE ONCE WAS A time when Collin College's Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Education (IHCE) consisted of only seven students in a classroom at Allen High School.

Since 1999, however, the program has expanded to include 125 culinary and pastry students, its own building, featuring the Red Room, at the Preston Ridge Campus in Frisco, state-of-the-art equipment, and multiple degree and certificate options. In January the IHCE added to this list of accomplishments by becoming an American Culinary Federation (ACF) accredited college.

"As I worked with faculty, staff and students preparing for the ACF site visit at the end of October, I sensed a great deal of pride and enthusiasm," Karen Musa, program chair and professor for the IHCE, said about the program's accomplishments over the years. "Achieving the accreditation means we

are on par with many of the well-known and publicized programs throughout the United States."

Founded in 1929, the ACF is the largest professional chefs organization in North America and includes more than 20,000 members who belong to more than 200 chapters.

Enhanced professional growth

According to Musa, ACF accreditation is designed to enhance professional growth for all current and future chefs and pastry chefs. Additionally, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the U.S., she added.

"The [accreditation] process is very rewarding," Musa explained. "It allowed us to focus on areas of the program we needed to enhance, such as the frequency of department meetings, communication with the students and our facilities."

The accreditation process, Musa added, also brought the IHCE department closer.

"My favorite story is when a site visit team member, who was staying at the Embassy Suites in Frisco, walked up to a young man wearing a culinary uniform and asked what he knew about Collin College? Little did the site visit team member know Josh White was in the process of graduating from our culinary program and had nothing but positive things to say about the program."

The same can be said for Emily K. Feikes, who credits the IHCE for discovering her passion for the nutritional side of the food industry.

"I am proud to attend a college with an ACF accreditation. I hold my head high and practically brag when I tell people about Collin College's culinary program," Feikes said. "I have learned so much in the past year and a half from great chefs, professors and students. Having this

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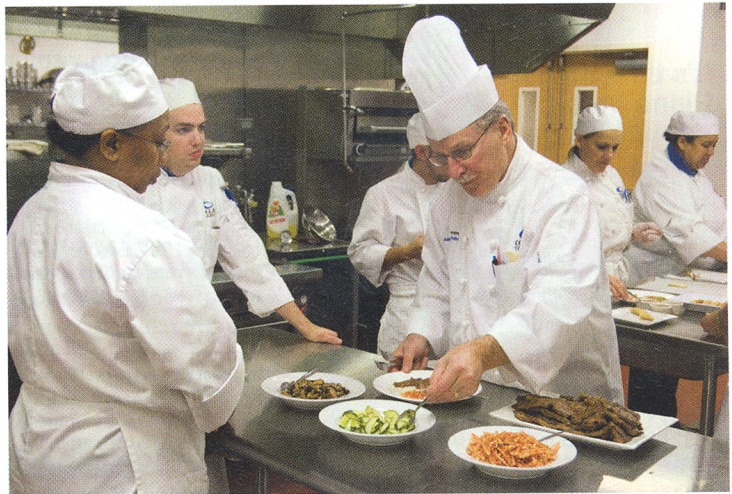
accreditation is a good tool to have under my belt, as it implies I can abide by high standards and produce quality results. I look forward to seeing the future of this path I am on."

ACF accreditation benefits

With plans to graduate in May from Collin College, Fiekies intends to pursue a degree in nutrition this fall at Texas Woman's University, but not before she takes her Certified Dietary Manager and Certified Food Protection Professional exam.

"There are four ways to qualify for this exam and one of them is by having a culinary degree," Fiekies said about the importance of studying a program with such options. "While I'm not sure there is a job title for what I want to do, I aspire to use my culinary knowledge in combination with the nutrition degree to help others eat and cook healthier through a hands-on program."

Fiekies, along with other Collin College ICHE counterparts, will certainly have an advantage thanks to the ACF accreditation, which, according to Musa, provides students an opportunity to graduate



from either the culinary or pastry Associate of Applied Science program with a Certified Culinarian or Certified Pastry Culinarian designation.

"This is the first step in the professional certification process," Musa explained. "Students who are getting ready to graduate this May are eligible for the designation. I hope to see several of our students achieve Certified Executive Chef status in the near future, and—maybe one day—Collin College can boast its own Certified Master Chef." 