

Local Schools



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Culinary Arts Curriculum Upgraded with Industry Input

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A Poplar Bluff restaurateur has worked with the culinary arts program of the Technical Career Center to upgrade its curriculum in an effort to better serve the industry.

This school year TCC instructor Brandon Moon began implementing ProStart, a two-year certification program developed by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, to further train students both academically in the classroom and experientially in the field.

“If we have the option between curriculum developed by restaurant leaders or a well-intentioned curriculum company, we’re gonna go with the industry,” stated Charles Kinsey, TCC director. “Students will be better poised to advance through the ranks of assistant chefs and sous chefs, and hopefully be more employable.”

Colton’s Steak House & Grill co-owner Herman Styles has been in discussions about ProStart with Dr. Scott Dill since he took the helm as superintendent in 2016/17. Last school year, R-I officials and Styles visited with Leone Herring of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to secure approval. Over 100 schools in the state have adopted the program, which meets Missouri Learning Standards.

“Working with Mr. Kinsey and Mr. Moon, we agreed to update the curriculum and ensure our students—upon successful completion of the program—are ready to take their place

in the workforce,” Dill explained. Chef Moon is also entering his third year at R-I.

ProStart covers all levels of the restaurant business including safety, knife skills, front of the house service, marketing and food costs. To complete the program, students must gain 400 hours of on-the-job experience, a portion of which can take place in the Mules Café and the remainder at local restaurants, either paid or voluntarily.

“It’s similar information to what we had, but I feel that ProStart is geared toward job opportunity and career placement,” noted Moon, who will be attending a series of trainings himself to obtain his ProStart teaching credentials. “We have a couple students interested in owning their own restaurant. This is a foundation.”

While the TCC invested in the textbooks for the class, the hope is that additional funding lines will be opened up through new grant opportunities to continue to enhance the program, according to Kinsey. There are also student scholarships available through the NRAEF as well as competitions on top of SkillsUSA.

The president of the Missouri Restaurant Association, Styles has been in the restaurant industry for 46 years, currently employing over 500 people at his seven franchise locations. It took him five years in the business to run his first restaurant, he told the class on Thursday, Aug. 23.

“Eighty-five percent of managers start as line cooks and work their way up the ladder,” Styles said. “The industry is always in demand for management people; this program is a kick start.”

Pictured: (Far left) Paraprofessional Monica Lewis, (in back, left to right) Charles Kinsey, Dr. Scott Dill, Herman Styles and (far right) Chef Brandon Moon are pictured with TCC culinary arts students displaying their new textbooks.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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