

KEISER COLLEGE

# Keiser's culinary program is really cooking

## Students at the Capital Culinary Institute already are putting their skills into practice.

**SPECIAL TO THE DEMOCRAT**  
The Capital Culinary Institute at Keiser College, which began classes in August, will be starting its second class Jan. 4.

"The demand for the program is growing dramatically," said Arthur Keiser, president of Keiser College. "We already have large hotel chains and catering companies calling and wanting to set up externships and hire our graduates."

Construction on the school was complete in October and, as part of their training, students have been working in two fully equipped kitchens on campus.

"The new facility is great," said culinary student Ernest Butler, who was named student of the month for December. "We have equipment I've never seen before."

Butler, who started with the first culinary class in August, has more than 26 years' experience in the food service industry, from flipping burgers at Busch Gardens at 14 to running his own catering busi-

ness. But he never had a degree in the field.

"When I heard about the Capital Culinary Institute at Keiser College, it was like a dream come true," Butler said. "I had always wanted to go to culinary school but couldn't afford to go to school in New York. Having been in the industry, I know that the degree from Keiser College combined with my experience will make me extremely marketable."

Experience is the key, and students at the Capital Culinary Institute already have begun putting their skills into practice by volunteering at community events according to Chef Kevin Keating, program director for the Associate of Science in Culinary Arts.

Students also recently impressed President Keiser and other college employees with the culinary expertise they have developed in their first semester. "Their first official event was to prepare a holiday banquet, and it was incredible," Keiser said.

"I did a pasta with bechamel sauce and assorted vegetables," Butler said. "I felt like a performer standing there in my tall white hat and nice white coat. It was great." Forty new students are sched-

uled to join the class in January. These students will start with a basic sanitation service course, followed by a management course and principles of food.

"These are intro courses to give them an overview of the industry," Keating said. "The issue of sanitation becomes more and more important every day, and it's critical that we teach students how to properly handle food."

The culinary program at Keiser College also focuses on the chef as a manager. According to Keating, a chef with management skills is in demand more than ever.

"Years ago, the chef could just hide in the kitchen and concentrate on being a really good, creative cook," Keating said. "Now, due to a labor shortage in the industry, the executive chef is not just the creative person in the kitchen but also the business person who must understand who the customer is and what they want."

The elements of the culinary program that teach management skills are complemented by the overall Keiser College philosophy, which emphasizes professionalism. The degree combines solid academics with practical technical skills, which makes graduates mar-

keable in today's work force.

"In order to succeed at Keiser College and as a chef, students need to have a professional attitude, a true desire to become a chef, a commitment to themselves to reach their goals and a positive outlook and attitude," Keating said.

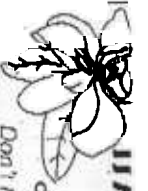
The Florida Department of Labor lists food service managers and cooks among the fastest-growing occupations in Florida in its Industry and Occupational Projections for 1995-2005.

"A career in culinary arts offers you a very good living at a job you can love," Keating said.

Butler's advice for students starting in January is to "ask plenty of questions and get involved."

Keiser College is a two-year, private college accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the associate degree. The college specializes in computers, business and allied health and has campuses in Tallahassee, Fort Lauderdale, Melbourne, Daytona Beach and Sarasota.

For more information on the culinary arts program or other degrees offered at Keiser College, call (850) 906-9494.



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