

The Culinary Arts Department at North Shore Community College has offered coursework to prepare students for employment opportunities in the food service industry since 1999. The program requires designated technical space due to the equipment needs of the program, including industry-based hoods needing proper ventilation for cooking, a fully functional restaurant space to serve customers, and a baking and production kitchen with ample food storage for hot and cold items. To date, the program has not been located on either of the College's main campus footprints which has significantly limited growth and the sustainability of the program. Instead, it has historically been housed at external sites beginning first in the Essex Aggie building until 2014; then in the North Shore Development Center in Middleton from 2014- 2020; and now at Essex Technical High School in Middleton under a rental agreement. Currently, the College negotiated a one-year lease at Essex Technical High School once our lease was not renewed with our landlord from the North Shore Development Group.

The Culinary Arts Department offers an array of programming from an Associate in Applied Science in Culinary Arts, a Certificate in Culinary Arts, a Baking Certificate and a Restaurant Management Certificate. The current enrollment trends are:

	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Culinary Arts AAS	59	52	41	29	33
Culinary Arts Certificate	4	3	5	5	3
Restaurant Management Certificate	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Baking Certificate	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	4

Based on the information above, the program is experiencing higher enrollment declines than the aggregate of the academic programs for the college. Over the last five years, the aggregate has declined at a rate of 20 % versus the culinary department offerings of 35%. Since 2011 the decline is even more stark from 123 students annually to 33 or a 73% decline.

The graduation and completion data for the department is as follows:

	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Culinary Arts AAS	8	11	10	12	5
Culinary Arts Certificate	0	1	1	2	1
Restaurant Management Certificate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Baking Certificate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
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As a graduation percentage, the college saw an aggregate growing from 17% to 25% in the same time period; meanwhile, the culinary arts department saw flat graduation rates as many students left the programs prior to graduating due to employment opportunities or moved to part-time enrollment.

When the College moved the program to Essex Technical High School in August of 2020, a decision was made in April of 2020 to not enroll a new cohort of culinary arts and baking students. Instead, based on the COVID pandemic and the need for labs to be socially distanced with personal protective equipment, the focus was to run the courses to finish out the continuing students in the program. By and large, this will be accomplished by the end of the spring 2021 semester.

Simultaneously, the labor market for the food service industry that relies on trained people through our culinary department has eroded and will likely continue to do so at significant rates due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The restaurant industry has experienced steady decline based on people not going out to eat as much and relying more on preparing food at home from the grocery stores. In addition, the Massachusetts Restaurant Association CEO, Bob Lutz, recently estimated 25% of Massachusetts restaurants have permanently closed due to the Pandemic. This mirrors the national stats of over 60,000 restaurant jobs lost in the industry with full service and casual dining being hit the hardest. On average the field pays between 15- 17 dollars an hour, which is low wage, high demand.

Coupled with competition from area sister institutions that also offer Culinary Arts programming ranging from Bunker Hill Community College with an AS in Culinary Arts and one in Baking and Pastry and a Culinary Certificate; Middlesex Community College with a AS in Culinary Arts Business Administration and a Culinary Certificate; and Northern Essex Community College with an array of non-credit culinary certificates and options, the program historically has struggled to maintain enrollment numbers.

It should be noted both Bunker Hill and Middlesex's programs are physically located on their campus footprint, where programming is more readily available for students to showcase their culinary talents and support the college's mission with workforce. Northern Essex's recent expansion into the culinary arts fields based on a strong partnership with industry, hence they also are better equipped to provide students with better exposure to industry standards and training. In addition, with the recent emphasis on technical and vocational high schools, most of whom have up-to-date full culinary facilities on site such as Essex Technical High School, many students have chosen this route versus the community college as the entry point to the field. It is also important to understand that the industry as a whole doesn't require completion of a college credential and will hire unskilled labor and train in-house.

In the 2017 Culinary Program Review, the administration recommended the faculty explore ACF (American Culinary Federation) programmatic accreditation to bring recognition to the program or to look at rethinking the model to a competency-based program through an apprenticeship model with industry. To date, neither option has been fully explored.

Financially, the Culinary program has been operating in the red for the last several years based on the additional cost of the rental of space, the cost of two full-time faculty, and budget for food with a small revenue line based on products sold.

Based on the reasons stated above, the college plans to close the program for 2021- 2022. As a result, the two full-time faculty will be retrenched as of September 2021. In addition, NSCC has had conversations with sister institutions who have culinary programs to see if they may have a need for transferring the curriculum, additional faculty, and/or equipment. This has yielded a transfer opportunity to a full-time teaching position for one of our faculty and adjunct opportunities for another. Discussions have also begun with DHE in this matter to ensure we follow current policy and practice in this matter.