

Culinary Management program equips student chefs with the skills to be sustainable in the kitchen and at home

This article is about a four-minute read.

“As a chef, there are competencies you have to meet, just like teaching an electrical or plumbing trade. So, three years ago the Ontario College of Trades decided to add sustainability as one of those competencies,” says Shonah Chalmers, Culinary Professor.

After consulting with the World Association of Chefs Societies (World Chefs), Shonah customized and implemented a curriculum that incorporates sustainability and cooking, “we started small, students first got an understanding [of sustainability], then by second semester [students] start thinking about how they can include sustainability in menu planning.”

In the fourth semester, students have the option to take a full seven-week culinary elective focused on sustainability and the foodservice industry, “It’s an online and in-class, hands-on course. Its’ six weeks of learning and then in [the seventh week] they do a proposal.”

Students work with real case studies and propose solutions to problems in their program, at Humber, or related to the role of a chef. Shonah explains that many of the proposals have been implemented into the culinary program, “which makes students proud.”

One of the proposals implemented into the culinary program addressed the issue of single-use plastic spoons, “it seems like a small win, but [students] were so distraught about how many plastic spoons were in the garbage, as you have to have a sanitary method for tastings.” Shonah explains that one class throws away up to 10,000 spoons in a single semester. Metal spoons have since been provided in the student’s tool kits.



Above: Culinary students in the classroom, North Campus

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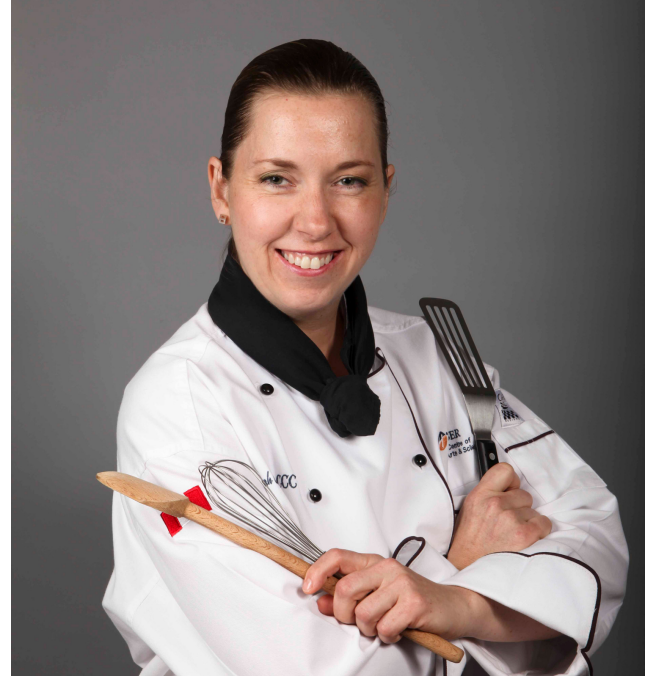
Culinary students are often provided hands-on opportunities at the North Campus beyond the kitchen, such as tapping the syrup at the Humber Arboretum and visiting Humber's Greenhouse to learn about proper planting.

Shonah has also gotten her students excited about garbage audits, “[students] go through the garbage and see what we could’ve used, what could be repurposed, what should be garbage, and they’re appalled.” Shonah is hopeful that her students who have seen the impact they have on waste will go into the world and make changes, now realizing that their choices matter.

Shonah is proud to see her students bringing other sustainable initiatives to the attention of their professors, “they’re educating upwards in some cases.”

For over 10 years, Shonah has positively impacted the Humber community and aligned the Culinary Management program with Humber's value of sustainability. Shonah remains dedicated to Humber students, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and tools needed for success in the industry.

To learn more about the Culinary Management program's commitment to sustainability visit the Culinary Management Program Standard guide.



Above: Shonah Chalmers CCC, BASc, WCCE, Culinary Professor



Above: Students of the Culinary Management program.