

Professional Baking Capstone



The Penguin Student Lounge looked and smelled like a delectable bakery as second-year students in Clark's Professional Baking and Pastry Arts program displayed their creations as part of their capstone project.

In the first portion of the capstone project, two professional bakers from Portland served as judges in a closed-door session. Greg Mistell, owner, Fleur De Lis Bakery & Café and Josh Svenhard, manager, Eurobake Bakery examined all the baked goods, asked students questions about their techniques and ingredients—and then the judges tasted everything. Fans of "The Great British Baking Show," know the drill.



McKenzie Cullen serves samples.

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Students spent five weeks preparing and baking for their

capstone projects. Sometimes the baked goods didn't come out right, and the student tried again.

Looking around the room, Professor Dolder said, "They did a nice job. It was good for them to hear from industry professionals who aren't their instructors."

Students have spent two years in the program and will earn an Associate in Applied Technology degree in Professional Baking and Pastry Arts Management.

May 3 was the students' last day of class. Next, students get hands-on work experience immersed in internships in professional bakeries in the community. During the five-week internships, students must work a minimum of 24 hours per week. Some will work more. Another student completed his capstone project earlier so that he could travel to Spain for his internship.

Baker Kenzie Wallers will be doing her internship at Papa Haydn. "I'm excited," she said. "I've already been hired to work full time."



Bakers Allyson Hartwig and Carolyn Nance slicing their bread.

Baking changed their lives

Some students pursued baking right out of high school while others followed other careers but chose baking.

McKenzie Cullen was a youth librarian before the pandemic. Although she enjoyed her job, she said, “COVID made me rethink what I’m doing with my life. I love baking!”

Carolyn Nance, 35, said, “I’ve been dreaming about being a baker for a long time. These have literally been the best two years of my life. Clark’s program is even better than I expected.”



Bakers Kenzie Wallers and Anna Kakorian

Meet the Bakers:

McKenzie Cullen

Capstone focus: Viennoiserie (laminated doughs) including

puff pastry apple turnover, chocolate chip Schnecken
croissant, puff pastry palmier, puff pastry vol au vent

Internship: Gluten Free Gem, Portland

Allyson Hartwig

Capstone focus: Artisan bread including Nutella raspberry Babka (sweet braided bread), baguette, Winston knot and butter rolls

Internship: Di Tazza Gourmet Coffee and Café, Vancouver

Anna Kakorin

Capstone focus: Individual desserts including opera cakes, raspberry vanilla cream puffs, Prinsesstårta (Swedish princess cake), orange creamsicle éclair, and Medovik (Russian summer honeycake)

Internship: Chandelier Bakery, Vancouver

Carolyn Nance

Capstone focus: Artisan breads including baguette, pan bread, ciabatta and braided brioche

Internship: Forevers Bakery, Hazel Dell

Kenzie Wallers

Capstone focus: Individual desserts including cream puffs, eclairs, mousse bomb, tiramisu, profiteroles and caramel cascade

Internship: Papa Haydn, Portland

Photos: Clark College/Susan Parrish