

Professional Baking Capstone



Gage Gwynn was pursuing a general associate degree at Clark College when he mentioned to his math professor that he enjoyed baking and had heard positive reviews of Clark's Professional Baking and Pastry Arts program. His professor talked so effusively about it that Gwynn eventually enrolled in the program.

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Gage Gwynn holding a loaf of sourdough focaccia.

Gwynn was one of eight second-year baking students who presented their capstone project to the college community and their families on May 9 in the McClaskey Culinary Institute Food Court in Gaiser Hall.

An enthusiastic crowd of Clark students, staff, and community members waited in a very long line for an opportunity to sample artful and delicious baked goods prepared by the students.

The much-awaited annual event is the culmination of their capstone project. They spent the first five weeks of spring term creating their final presentations. Each student chose their focus: bread, plated dessert, or viennoiserie (laminated doughs).

Before the ravenous crowd was allowed to storm the bakery tables, all the baked goods were judged by professional bakers who examined the baked goods, asked students questions about their techniques and ingredients—and then tasted everything.

Finally, the judges finished. By this time, the crowd was growing restless. The line snaked through the food court, down the hall, and nearly to the north entrance of Gaiser Hall.



Alison Dolder, *center*, stands with the judges who volunteered to rate the student's work.

Then Alison Dolder, Professional Baking and Pastry Arts instructor stepped to the front of the waiting crowd and introduced the 2024 capstone project. She stepped aside as people made a beeline to tables where baking students stood behind mouth-watering displays of their baked goods.

The bakers patiently offered samples of pain au chocolat, tiramisu, cambozola cheesecake Napoleon, salted caramel cream puff, chocolate babka, and much more to the eager tasters.



Students prepping for their final project in the McClaskey cake room.

Real-world experience

These students have completed their classes at Clark. Next, they will get hands-on real-world work experience immersed in internships in professional bakeries in Vancouver and Portland. During the five-week internships, students must work a minimum of 24 hours per week. Some will work more.

In June these students will earn an associate in applied technology degree in Professional Baking and Pastry Arts Management.



First-year students help the bakers get their pastries plated for presentation.



Meet the Bakers

Miranda Kirby

Capstone focus: Viennoiserie (laminated doughs)

Internship: Bakeshop in Portland

Isabella Alvarez

Capstone focus: Individual desserts

Internship: Di Tazza Gourmet Coffee and Café, Vancouver

Max Harrell

Capstone focus: Viennoiserie (laminated doughs)

Internship: Forevers Bakery, Hazel Dell

Genesis Skjeie

Capstone focus: Viennoiserie (laminated doughs)

Internship: Di Tazza Gourmet Coffee and Café, Vancouver

Annika Davila

Capstone focus: Individual desserts

Internship: Farina Bakery, Portland

Emily Baker

Capstone focus: Individual desserts, particularly petit four

Internship: Chandelier Bakery, Vancouver

Jessica Ray

Capstone focus: Individual desserts

Internship: Dream Cakes, Portland

Gage Gwynn

Capstone focus: Artisan breads, particularly sourdough

Internship: Fleur De Lis Bakery & Cafe, Portland

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