

RHT RDs and Rouxbe: A Statewide Resource for CCC Culinary Instructors

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused critical disruptions to the successful delivery of lab-based instruction in career and technical education, particularly in the Retail, Hospitality and Tourism sectors. Across California, community colleges moved rapidly to suspend in-person, hands-on culinary education in March 2020, with the disruptions persisting through today in many cases.

In this climate, BACCC RHT RD Audrey Le Baudour identified a potential resource in Rouxbe, an industry-approved culinary curriculum that incorporates a wide range of digital lessons, exams and interactive assignments presented in a variety of languages.

Le Baudour worked with the Bay Area Joint Regional Fund and her fellow RHT RDs Vince Roos and Josh Sweigert to fund the adoption of Rouxbe at community colleges in the Bay Area, Central Valley/Mother Lode, Orange County, and North Far North Regional Consortia. The program has been adopted by 67 instructors at 17 community college campuses to date, with a negotiated rate available to any California Community College statewide. The program has also been piloted in three high school campuses.

Feedback has been broadly positive thus far, with students and instructors commending the individual pace of instruction in the program as well as its broad digital accessibility and functionality.

"From a chef instructor's prospective, I love Rouxbe," said Robert Cabrerros, Culinary Arts Chef Instructor at Woodland Community College's Lake County campus. "I found that it followed my existing curriculum and helped me better teach culinary techniques. In addition I think that Rouxbe also helps students that complete the certificate to find a better job with better wages and benefits."

One advantage of the adoption of Rouxbe has been the flexibility that the program allows to instructors. A culinary or hospitality instructor is able to pick and choose which individual lessons and assignments are applicable to each term's classes, or assign broader chunks of the curriculum as they see fit.

Le Baudour has also established a monthly Community of Practice meeting for instructors statewide to collaborate on best practices around teaching with Rouxbe, along with other challenges surrounding this new instructional environment.

The team's goal is to continue support for participating colleges for another year, while pursuing more sustainable funding sources for the future.

"The popularity of the platform has led us to determine that we should once again pursue this online learning activity for the 21-22 academic year," Le Baudour said. "It's our hope to make even more course selections, including Pastry Arts, available to our students to further their educational opportunities."

While there is no digital substitute for high-quality, in-person mentoring from an experienced culinary professional, Rouxbe provides instructors with one more tool with which to address today's instructional challenges.

"I feel that Rouxbe helped me this semester in many ways," Cabrerros said. "It has helped my students grow as cooks, and helped me stay organized in the kitchen lab and with online instruction."

For more information around CA Community College's agreement with Rouxbe, please contact Audrey Le Baudour or Josh Sweigert.