

**CAMPUS NOTES**



# Practising sustainability

From providing a diverse range of culinary courses with a focus on practising sustainability, to creating a platform for experiencing local and global cultures and cuisines, students at Kendall College School of Culinary Arts are exposed to myriad of opportunities in the campus itself

By Rituparna Chatterjee

**E**STABLISHED in 1985 in Evanston, by Dr Albert Furbay and a cadre of visionary chef educators, Kendall College School of Culinary Arts has grown to become one of the most premier culinary-training institutes in the United States with its campus presently located in Chicago. The Kendall College School of Culinary Arts has come a long way since its establishment, attracting not only domestic students but also international aspirants. "We have 51 nationalities of students within the student body," boasts Christopher Koetke, vice president, Center of Excellence in Culinary Arts, Kendall College.

The college has also been attracting a lot of Indian students who either have no previous culinary education or already have a bachelor's degree. "We have a number of Indian students in our college and by and large they do great. They are serious and focused. We have seen Indians applying for either the four year or two year course, but their choice of course is dependent upon the prior education they had in India. In some instances, the Indian students coming to our college are already equipped with a bachelor's degree from different levels of hotel schools," explains Koetke. The



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college has 13 kitchens and three restaurants wherein one restaurant serves 400 people, the second serves 215 people an hour, and the third one is a

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fine dining restaurant. The college faculty consists of 22 full-time chefs, representing five to six nationalities, and six pastry chefs, one of whom is

an Indian. Kendall College School of Culinary Arts offers a range of culinary courses including - Bachelor of Arts in Culinary

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Arts, a four-year programme; Associate of Applied Science in Culinary Arts for seven quarters when attending full-time or 13 quarters when participating part-time; Associate of Applied Science in Culinary Arts, Accelerated Programme, a five quarter course; Associate of Applied Science Degree in Baking and Pastry, six quarter programme, and The Kendall College Culinary Certificate of Participation which can be obtained in under a year. The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Accrediting Commission (ACFEFAC) has accredited the Culinary Arts Associate Programme since 1988 and the Baking and Pastry Associate Programme since 2008.

### Cooking sustainably

The Kendall College School of Culinary Arts adopted a sustainable approach in their culinary practice in 2005 and has been practising the same since then. The college has developed a sustainable curriculum to address everything from composting, recycling and energy conservation programmes to sourcing locally grown, organic ingredients. "We practice sustainability across the curriculum i.e. the students are taught sustainable subjects throughout their education both theoretically and practically. For instance, we have a class called Advanced Fish and Sauce. Years ago this class simply entailed how you cook fish and make sauces. But now in addition to that, when you cook with the fish, the focus is on where and how was the fish harvested, is the fish an endangered species. There are recipes that we have changed to use more sustainable fishes than others which are endangered," he opines.

The college also operates their own sustainable garden that grows produce for their restaurants and teaches students the basics of sustainable agriculture. "There is a large garden in front of our facility. We harvest somewhere around 3000 kg of vegetables a year. In addition, all of our trash is sorted into recycling compost trash and other trash. We send more compost garbage and



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clothes out of our facility than anything else which gets composted into soil essentially," he mentions.

In 2007, the college received the Green Award from the Food Service Consultants Society International (FCSI) and was also the first institution with an accredited culinary arts programme to operate Green Certified Restaurants. The college was also named the official educational partner of the National Restaurant Association Conserve Environmental Initiative in 2009. "We focus a lot on sustainability for it is all about preparing students for a future world where natural resources like energy and water will be

scarce. We have to create that sense of responsibility, where increasing issues of food directly impacts the practices and operations of hotels and restaurants around the world. We recently built a kitchen and installed sustainable ventilation systems in it. Sustainability is comprised of a journey that never ends. We have to keep trying to become more sustainable," asserts Koetke.

### Wide exposure

Apart from adopting a sustainable approach, the college allows its students to actively engage with the local farmers. "In our fine dining class, students go to the farmer's market,

interact with the farmers and buy products from them. We also have guest speakers, involved in different parts of producing food, coming to the college to give lectures. Hence the student comes to know how the food grows," explains Koetke. Furthermore, giving global exposure to students has also been an intrinsic part of the college's curriculum. "We take students periodically to other countries. For instance, we took them for a two week trip to France, Thailand, Mexico wherein a lot of times we pair up with a hotel or a culinary school so that they have the opportunity to cook with a local chef and can learn about the culture from their sur-

rounding. Food is ultimately an expression of culture so it is critical that students do travel," states Koetke.

The college has a Career Service Department to help students with internships. "We don't tell the students where they have to go. We help and guide students so that they get a good internship. We want them to take ownership of the process. We have 100 per cent placement at graduation level," boasts Koetke. As for his message to aspiring chefs, Koetke states, "Passion, discipline and intensity are the qualities required to be successful. Have a big dream and never let go of it."