

*Another Advancement In*

# STEM Education



*Iowa State University informing decision-makers about research in Science–Technology–Engineering–Mathematics Education*

## ***New major combines science, artistry of food***

Healthy eating and nutrition know-how are needed everywhere today. In response to a growing demand for palate-pleasing and wholesome food products, Iowa State has launched the culinary science major that combines the artistry and science of food development.

With classes that build basic culinary skills and courses focusing on science-related topics — such as food chemistry and food microbiology — students are well-prepared for internships and field experiences that further their knowledge in the field.

“Students will complete two internships over the course of four years,” said Erica Beirman, culinary science program coordinator. “Their first will be in a culinary setting, where they are encouraged to work in establishments that offer fine dining and where they can use their creativity. The second [internship] is in the food science area, where they will get experience with product development and food science-based research.”

With eleven students already enrolled, the program has seen a favorable response from administrators, high school students, parents, and industry. As the only culinary science program in Iowa, and one of three in the Midwest, Beirman said the program’s growth potential is encouraging.

“Because of the way our culture has changed, students often don’t have basic culinary skill sets when they go into the food science industry,” Beirman said. “In response to that, the industry has been hiring chefs as well as food scientist for product development and re-



*Students in the new culinary science major at Iowa State complete two internships throughout their coursework to further develop their skills and knowledge.*

search. We’re preparing students to fill the voids on the team, which is more efficient in the workplace.”

Culinary science students will come to the workplace well-equipped with a foundation in food science and culinary skills. Potential career paths include food product development, corporate restaurant menu development, food marketing and sales, quality assurance research, and culinary technology. Beirman said because of consumers’ ever-changing palates and demands, the field is primed for a new crop of experts.

“These students impact the lives of others on a daily basis as they create new products for consumers,” Beirman said. “We have plans to work with local farmers and area food industries and let our students be part of the development process. Iowa is a big part of the food industry and we want to embrace what we have here and now.”

## **For more information:**

Visit [www.hs.iastate.edu/news/stem](http://www.hs.iastate.edu/news/stem) or contact Erica Beirman, culinary science program coordinator, at 515-294-4361 or [fshnweb@iastate.edu](mailto:fshnweb@iastate.edu).