

## **NACUFS (2025)**

### Employee Development Program of the Year

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#### OHIO Chef Team Achieves ACF Certification

Ohio University

#### Introduction:

Senior Executive Chef Matt Paisley developed the American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification program at Ohio University to enhance the professional growth of Culinary Services staff. This program provides chefs with opportunities to earn nationally recognized certifications, validating their skills, knowledge, and commitment to the culinary field. Through structured training, mentorship, and hands-on assessments, participants refine their techniques and elevate food quality across campus dining. The initiative fosters career advancement, industry recognition, and a culture of excellence within OHIO Culinary Services, ensuring staff remain at the forefront of culinary innovation while providing high-quality meals to students, faculty, and guests.

#### Essay:

Senior Executive Chef Matt Paisley developed the American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification program at Ohio University to elevate the professionalism and expertise of Culinary Services staff. This program provides chefs with the opportunity to earn nationally recognized certifications, demonstrating their skills, knowledge, and commitment to culinary excellence. Through structured training, mentorship, and rigorous testing, chefs refine their techniques, enhance food quality, and gain industry recognition.

The certification process includes written exams and hands-on cooking assessments, where chefs are evaluated on their ability to execute high-level techniques, time management, and presentation. To ensure success, the program offers training

sessions, study materials, and mentorship from experienced certified chefs. Upon achieving certification, chefs receive new professional chef coats adorned with the ACF patch, symbolizing their accomplishment and dedication to their craft.

This initiative fosters career advancement, industry credibility, and continuous learning within OHIO Culinary Services. It also strengthens the dining program by ensuring staff remain at the forefront of culinary innovation, providing high-quality, expertly prepared meals to students, faculty, and guests. By investing in staff development, OHIO Culinary Services demonstrates a commitment to culinary excellence, professional growth, and an enhanced dining experience across campus.

#### Introduction:

The American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification program at Ohio University has played a key role in retaining talented culinary staff by providing professional growth opportunities. Over the past year, the program has motivated chefs to advance their skills, boosting job satisfaction and workplace engagement. The recognition that comes with certification, including ACF-patched chef coats and industry credentials, has fostered a sense of pride and achievement. By investing in staff development, Culinary Services has strengthened team morale, reduced turnover, and enhanced food quality. This initiative has helped retain skilled professionals while reinforcing a culture of excellence, innovation, and career progression.

#### Essay:

The American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification program at Ohio University has significantly contributed to employee retention and professional development within Culinary Services. Over the past year, the program has encouraged chefs to pursue higher standards of culinary excellence, reinforcing their commitment to the organization. By providing an opportunity for professional growth and industry-recognized certification, the program has helped boost job satisfaction, morale, and career longevity.

One of the biggest impacts on retention has been the sense of accomplishment chefs feel upon achieving ACF certification. Each certified chef receives a new chef coat adorned with the official ACF patch, symbolizing their hard work and dedication. This recognition fosters loyalty and a stronger connection to the Culinary Services team. Additionally, ongoing training and testing ensure that chefs continue learning and refining their skills, creating a more engaging and fulfilling work environment.

The program has also enhanced team morale and collaboration, as chefs work together to prepare for exams, share knowledge, and support one another's growth. By investing in its culinary professionals, Ohio University has reduced turnover, retained top talent, and strengthened its reputation for high-quality dining, making the ACF program a key pillar in long-term staff development and retention.

#### Introduction:

The American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification program at Ohio University serves as a powerful recruitment tool for future hiring. While the university currently has a full chef team, the program showcases a strong commitment to professional development and career advancement, making it attractive to prospective candidates. Offering ACF certification demonstrates that Ohio University values and invests in its culinary professionals, setting it apart from other employers. When future hiring needs arise, the program will help attract skilled chefs seeking growth opportunities. By promoting this initiative, Culinary Services ensures that it remains a desirable workplace for top culinary talent.

#### Essay:

The American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification program at Ohio University is not only a valuable tool for retaining top culinary talent but also a strategic asset for future recruitment. While the university currently has a full chef team, the program will play a crucial role in attracting skilled professionals when hiring opportunities arise. By offering industry-recognized certification, Ohio University demonstrates its commitment to professional development, making it a highly desirable workplace for chefs who seek career growth and advancement. This initiative sets Culinary Services apart from other employers by showcasing a dedication to elevating culinary standards and investing in staff success.

Beyond recruitment, the ACF program fosters collaborations across Ohio University's academic departments, including the Restaurant, Hotel, and Tourism program and the Dietetics program. By engaging with these fields, Culinary Services can create hands-on learning experiences for students, offering them exposure to professional kitchens and mentorship from certified chefs. This integration strengthens workforce development, helping students transition into the industry while ensuring that the university continues to attract high-caliber culinary professionals. As a result, Ohio University positions itself as a leader in culinary education and professional training, benefiting both its current team and future talent acquisition efforts.

#### Introduction:

The ACF certification program at Ohio University has significantly enhanced employee job satisfaction, providing chefs with professional development opportunities and industry recognition. Executive Chef Anne Liston states, "Earning my ACF certification has reinforced my skills and given me a sense of accomplishment in my career." Sous Chef Chris Fisher adds, "The program pushes us to grow, ensuring we meet high culinary standards." Senior Executive Chef Matt Paisley shares, "Investing in our chefs' education has created a stronger, more motivated team." This commitment to professional growth has led to higher morale, improved skills, and greater pride in the culinary team.

#### Essay:

The ACF certification program at Ohio University has positively impacted employee job satisfaction by providing chefs with industry-recognized credentials, professional development opportunities, and a clear path for career growth. By investing in certification, Culinary Services has fostered a culture of continuous learning and achievement, increasing morale and engagement within the team.

Chef Mike Rodriguez shares, "The ACF program has given me the opportunity to validate my skills and grow as a professional. It's motivating to work in a place that values development." Chef Michael Yontz adds, "This certification has not only enhanced my confidence in the kitchen but also strengthened our entire team by holding us all to a higher standard."

To assess the program's long-term impact, we will begin measuring the average chef tenure, tracking retention trends and career progression. The goal is to see how certification affects employee commitment, performance, and job longevity. By providing professional growth opportunities, the program not only strengthens our culinary team but also enhances guest experiences, food quality, and workplace culture. With a team of motivated, highly skilled chefs, Ohio University continues to set a high standard in campus dining and culinary excellence.

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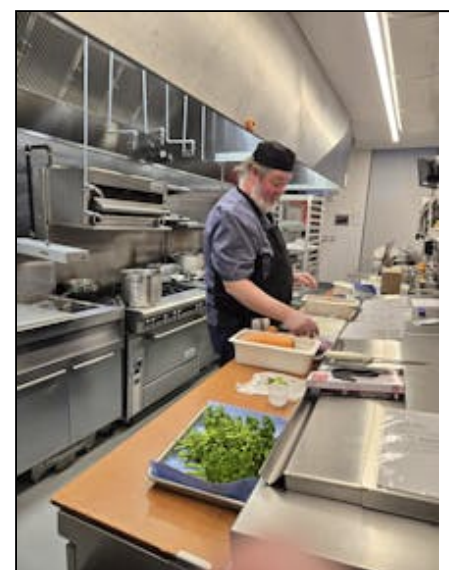
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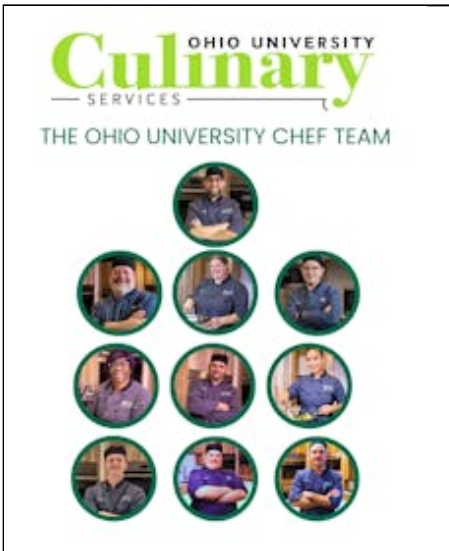
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