Second Thoughts about New Culinary School at the LeGrand Center!!! Is this a scam on Students, taxpayers or what??? –Thinking by Robert A. Williams-Words by others

I am starting this article off by stating the fact that I like to grill a steak every now and then. BBQ a Boston Butt every now and then. And cook by eggs over easy in a cast iron frying pan. I have a gas grill, a wood fired Oklahoma Joe smoker and several cast iron pots and pans. And, yesterday, I bought a new, made in the USA, cast iron square griddle pan, the kind with the ridges in the bottom so you can grill inside. I already had a lid that fit it perfectly.

Then, I wondered how to properly season my new griddle pan as I sometimes have problems with sticking when I fry eggs in my cast iron frying pans. So, I go to You-Tube and look up a few things.

I learned from YouTube how to properly season cast iron cookware. Entirely different from what I was doing before. I learned how to slice an onion properly. I learned how to properly fry eggs over easy. I learned everything I wanted to know sitting right there at my computer. For free!!!

So, I wondered why would I want to take a Culinary class at CCC-the LeGrand Center just because they have a nice kitchen. The Old Court House (The Earl Scruggs Center) has a nice kitchen where the old Courtroom used to be. I also remembered

that the new Courthouse has a nice kitchen where they used to cook meals for the jail inmates and the County Commissioners too on their meetings days. About every school in Cleveland County has nice kitchens. But now the jail and the schools buy ready made meals from a food service. The schools are selling off their pots and pans and sinks and just about everything else. All but their big trash cans because that is where the kids throw their food that is not fit to eat. But that is another story.

Now, I began to think other thoughts about this planned new Culinary School at CCC-The LeGrand Center. Where would students with culinary degrees get jobs? Working at minimum wage for these food services people that prepare food for the jail and schools that is not fit to eat? Hardees or McDonalds that pay minimum wage? Or where? So, I looked up some more things on google about a culinary school education.

Here is what I found. Decide for yourself if you want to invest in a culinary education.

Does culinary school pay off?
Unless you're rolling in cash, you will graduate from culinary school in debt. Let's just think about it for a second. You're paying the same amount of money for a culinary education that you would be paying for a liberal arts education, but the job you're graduating with pays minimum wage instead of $40k.

9 Reasons Why You Shouldn't Go To Culinary School
From someone who almost did.

Alex Hawkins
Spoon University
Social norms have it that to get a real job and to be successful in life, one must go to college first. From an educational standpoint that makes sense – the more you know about something the better you'll be as a worker in that field.

But when it comes to culinary school, the investment doesn't really make sense.

There are an insane amount of things people don't get about working in food service. This misunderstanding, combined with the perception that to succeed you have to get some form of professional training, is what culinary schools capitalize on.

So I'm here to tell you that if you're even slightly on the fence about getting a culinary degree, you shouldn't invest in a culinary education.

1. Culinary school is way too expensive.

The goal for me was to graduate from college and go straight to culinary school. It was essentially going to be my equivalent to getting a masters… until I saw the price tag.

Do you see those two lighter-red lines? That's basically saying that culinary school would cost as much as my four-year education (which was roughly $60,000 a year in tuition).

That might seem reasonable if you've ever toured the facilities at some of the top culinary schools in America. But have you considered the length of their programs?

Let me break it down for you:

Culinary Institute of America (Hyde Park, NY) – Bachelor's Program: $16,000 a semester for 4 years. It comes out to being over $128,000 in total, including room and board.

International Culinary Center (NYC): $40,000 for 6 months.

Institute of Culinary Education (NYC): $40,000 for 8 months.

Cordon Bleu: ~$40,000 for an associate's degree, which is around 21 months, depending on the location

Yeah… no.

2. You'll graduate with a lot of debt that won't be easy to pay off.

Unless you're rolling in cash, you will graduate from culinary school in debt.

Let's just think about it for a second. You're paying the same amount of money for a culinary education that you would be paying for a liberal arts education, but the job you're graduating with pays minimum wage instead of $40k.

Unless you happen to snag a job at one of the better

restaurant groups out there, you're probably going to make an hourly wage between $7-11/hr for an entry level job that involves a lot of peeling and cleaning produce.

Don't get me wrong, I know you have to pay your dues in this industry. And a blue collar job that you enjoy isn't a bad thing. But when you also have to pay your bills and steep loans, well… that sucks.

3. Statistics show income doesn't increase with additional culinary education.

You do not need to get a bachelor's degree in culinary education to make more than the next guy in this industry. It literally doesn't matter if you just have a high school degree. A $2,000 difference in salary is basically negligible.

4. It's also not just a job, it's a lifestyle.

Many people are unaware of how hard it is to be a cook. Take me for example (see embarrassing tweets above). I got my ass handed to me when I took my first kitchen job during the summer after my sophomore year in college.

I expected to work with someone incredibly patient, like Ina Garten, to bake wonderful and magical dishes at a snail's pace and really absorb what he/she was teaching me. Man, oh man, was I wrong.

Culinary school offers Externships so people can really understand what they're getting themselves into, but most people who go to culinary school haven't had real kitchen experience until that part of their education.

So unless you want to pay half of your tuition to realize that you hate working weekends, being screamed at, not getting holidays off, working 60 hour weeks, and being smelly and sweaty all the time, then don't do it.

5. A certificate doesn't mean you can call yourself a chef.

One of my biggest pet peeves of working in the food industry is when people call me a pastry chef. I literally just want to scream in their face, "I AM NOT A CHEF."

Why? Because associating my two short experiences working in pastry kitchens with the title "chef" completely undermines the dedication, time and effort it takes to earn that title.

The chefs that I know have worked in the industry for years and have tirelessly climbed the hierarchy to get there.
So if you think that working your butt off in school for 6 months will make you a chef, think again.
6. If you go to culinary school to be on the Food Network, you will not be on the Food Network.
You think Ina Garten chose to give up her high-paying government job to own a small food store in the Hamptons with the intention of becoming a food celeb? Hell no.
She did it because she wanted to, because she loved food, and because she needed somewhere to channel her need to throw dinner parties all the time.
Her fame is a byproduct of her passion. If you don't love cooking, don't do it, and certainly don't pay for it.
7. Depending on the program, you may only learn a technique once, and then have to completely relearn that technique at your new job.
When I was debating on whether or not to go to culinary school, almost all of the cooks I know told me it's not worth the debt. Depending on the program, you may only learn a technique once.
It's up to you to really practice that technique outside of class, like any normal education expects of you. But when it requires materials and a kitchen, it becomes a little bit harder, especially if you add in a part-time job to pay for said education.
Also, many restaurants have their own ways of doing things. So that very classical French training that you got at school may not even apply to the way they do things at each job you take.
8. Chefs like hiring people who haven't been molded by culinary school.
When people get a traditional culinary education, many times they think that it's CIA's way or die. That stubbornness and inflexibility is a huge downfall in an industry that demands you adapt to each new kitchen setting.
People who haven't gone to culinary school, on the other hand, are apparently more open-minded and accepting of the different

styles and techniques of the various chefs they work for.
9. Everything you pay to learn in culinary school can just as easily be learned in the field while getting paid.

Editor’s Note: Of course, all this culinary school stuff at the LeGrand Center could just be how to bake a four-layer German Chocolate Cake or a pecan pie or something that seniors like me might want to do. For a free tuition.

Or, perhaps this culinary school plan is only half baked. Pardon the pun. But starting Culinary School Classes at the LeGrand center just to justify Jason Falls’s too high pay of a job is NOT something I would recommend for CCC to get involved with.