CULINARY ARTS BUILDING

LOS ANGELES TRADE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
For over 80 years, the Culinary Arts Department at Los Angeles Trade Technical College has served not only aspiring chefs but the larger community of Los Angeles. Offering experiential ‘hands-on’ curriculum to prepare students for the highly competitive hospitality industry, the new Art & Culinary Arts Building and ancillary Athletic Field is the heartbeat of the campus. Just as food brings friends and family together, this sustainable LEED Gold facility was designed to support a multi-cultural student population and, provide a central focal point for the student body and community at large. The 61,000 sf 2-story structure required highly technical kitchen and lab facilities and flexible indoor / outdoor multi-purpose spaces to accommodate the ever-changing needs of a vibrant growing campus and the adjacent neighborhoods. This flexible new structure and accompanying curriculum boost the Culinary Arts program to be on par - if not above - that of any private institution. A central hub, the new facility hosts everything from an array of daily classes, to community galas, to campus wide graduation ceremonies. Designed to support evolving technologies and student needs, the new structure is the crown jewel of the Los Angeles Trade Technical College campus.

“We offer the same certificate that private schools offer.”

- Culinary Department Chair, Chef Stacy Damaso
To accommodate a large student body and malleable campus needs, the new Culinary Arts Building included: offices and student lounges; multipurpose/dining room for 600 seats; bakery labs and kitchen labs; general classrooms; and auxiliary spaces for IT, storage, conference rooms and restrooms; and MEP supporting facilities. The building will not only facilitate the Culinary Arts Department but will also provide allowable flexible space for other campus needs, assemblies, and multipurpose activities, as well as providing a student lounge and outdoor informal gathering. In keeping with Los Angeles Community College District goals, the new structure also needed to be environmentally conscious and include the use of a Solar Photovoltaic Panel System for a LEED Gold Certification.

As a central structure on the campus, the building site is located at a fundamental part of the student activities hub, surrounded by the Mariposa Hall (library/learning resource center), athletic field, the Wellness Center, Juniper Hall (student services building), Aspen Hall (tech education building); and bordered by 23rd Street to the South. Together with the Athletic Field, the addition of the Arts & Culinary Arts Building was the most critical development on the campus proper and integral to the growth and curriculum of Los Angeles Trade Technical College in its entirety.

BUDGET: $51,500,000
SIZE: 61,000 SF
campus map

downtown Los Angeles

existing campus

110 freeway
With over 80 years of history, the Culinary Arts program at Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) has been a stronghold in the Los Angeles community. During and after WWII LATTC offered women vocational classes - including the culinary arts - to help rebuild America as soldiers returned from war. This longstanding relationship with the city of Los Angeles was something the college wanted to celebrate and elevate with the construction of a new Arts & Culinary Arts Building. The main dining space was built with community events and fundraisers in mind. It's adaptable nature and indoor/outdoor flow welcomes the city to be a part of the education process.

The location of the campus - mere blocks from Downtown Los Angeles - offers students an education with direct access to one of the largest thriving metropolitans. As an immense tourist attraction but with a large local population, the hospitality industry in Los Angeles is valued at over $18M annually. The Culinary Arts program at LATTC offers students immediate access to this bustling world class scene. The curriculum emphasizes real world application to prepare students for a career after graduation and the new space reflects this ‘hands-on’ approach. The campus works directly with industry leaders to provide the newest techniques and to ensure job placement post graduation.

The challenge became paying homage to a rich established history within the framework of Los Angeles while also providing the newest technology to ensure a competitive edge for the graduating students. By including key stakeholders from the college and community at large - especially culinary students and Department Chair, Chef Stacy Damaso - every detail of the new space was approached with the lens of function. Industrial grade kitchens and laboratories were outfitted with high tech audio / visual equipment to aid students in learning and to allow the space to seamlessly transition into a very sleek event space for the neighborhood.
The LATTC Culinary Arts program strives to provide students with real world knowledge. The main dining space serves as a test kitchen where students create meals and serve them to other students, facility, and members of the community. The ability to experience the pace and structure of a real dining room is a key component to the Culinary Arts program curriculum. Laboratories feature industrial grade ovens, large prep stations and everything an aspiring chef could want to create a high-end coursed meal. A communal herb/vegetable garden gives students access to the freshest of ingredients and allows for them to participate in literal farm to table dining.

In addition to the latest and greatest in culinary technology, the classrooms and kitchens also offer top notch A/V technology. Cameras and screens throughout the facility allow for the school to easily adapt to hybrid learning which ushers the campus into the future. A few days a week students can physically be in the labs immersed in hands-on training. Other days they can be home watching a live-stream lecture. Under the advisement of Chef Damaso, the Culinary Arts program created an app for touch-less dining that directly syncs with the new POS systems in place. The state of the art AV systems also allows the facility to function as a community event space for other departments on campus or outside organizations. Award ceremonies, fundraising galas are easily accommodated through flexible furniture and an abundance of screens, cameras and speakers.

“Everything is hands on here at Trade Tech. It’s not just classrooms where teachers are coming at you with textbooks. You actually get familiar with the food.”

- Ron Johnson II, graduate of LATTC Culinary
As a central piece in the larger LATTC campus puzzle, it was imperative that the new Culinary Arts Building be a structure that could serve the student body for years to come. The structure welcomes the Southern California lifestyle and climate. A high performance steel framed envelope insures structural soundness in an earthquake prone area. Large operable glass panels allow for natural light and ventilation. They also can be completely opened to invite the outdoors into the main dining hall - perfect for sunny Los Angeles weather.

A comprehensive study of the existing school was done to ensure minimal disruption to the student body during construction. This research also aided in the design of the structure to ensure a cohesiveness with the rest of campus. Scale and materiality were important factors in allowing the structure to both fit in to a larger environment and provide a new focal point for LATTC. Exterior materials - white steel panels and intermittent splashes of orange - were chosen to echo a crisp white chefs coat and a garnish of chili oil. Fresh and clean but still a little bit spicy and innovative. In an even larger context the structure’s clean lines and permeable walls invite Los Angeles to be a part of the college, creating a sense of community.

LEED Gold is achieved through LED lighting, the high performance envelope, an array of Photovoltaic Roof Panels, and extensive daylighting. Durable materials were chosen throughout the structure to accommodate daily use and extend the life-cycle of the building.

The goal was to create a space that was light, bright and environmentally friendly to help inspire students to achieve similar creativity in their culinary creations. The outdoor herb garden is an extension of both environmental goals and culinary creativity. Students can experience first hand the power of investing in our environment and reap immediate benefits in the form of fresh veggies and herbs.
The resulting new Culinary Arts Building is a shiny bright spot on the LATTC campus. From the well equipped kitchens, to the high tech classrooms, the space allows students and teachers to dream and create together. Technical skills and creativity are fostered, mastered and then implemented. The main dining room gives students the opportunity to experience a fast-paced restaurant environment and prepares them for employment after graduation.

A creative new work force also has a direct impact on the culinary scene of the greater Los Angeles community. Graduating students bring new perspectives and zeal to the LA Food Scene. Buzz and excitement are bound to be a constant. The physical structure also invites Los Angeles to be a part of the culinary dialogue. From guest lectures by real working chefs to events held in the new space, the college is a perfect pairing for the greater Los Angeles community. A symbiotic relationship between a well-established industry and a community of bright, new, eager-to-learn students.

Through thoughtful, environmentally sensitive, LEED Gold construction practices, the new Culinary facility also manages to maintain the Los Angeles Community College Districts high expectations for new buildings. The Art & Culinary Arts Building is a four star example of how to take curriculum goals and bundle them in a handsome, sustainable package. The new structure elevates the school district’s book of offerings to prospective students and allows LATTC to compete with private culinary institutions.

A hub for students and community, the new Culinary Arts Building is a place of creativity and warmth. A place where teachers can inspire, where community can grow and where students can actualize dreams. The coupling of highly technical kitchen spaces with larger communal indoor / outdoor dining means the new space is a welcoming environment for everyone. The structure serves as both a pillar for the LATTC community and greater Los Angeles.

Bon Appetit!
THANK YOU