



New food and nutrition lab opens on UD campus

2:07 p.m., Sept. 22, 2010----Students in Carolyn Manning's *Food Concepts* class, NTDT 201, are selecting, preparing, and tasting food in a new state-of-the-art laboratory on the University of Delaware campus. A year-long planning and construction project culminated in completion of the classroom, located in the Willard Hall Education Building, just in time for the fall 2010 semester.

The facility features six work stations -- including one that is ADA-accessible -- each with a gas stove, a deep stainless-steel sink, and easy-to-clean cabinets and countertops. A large mirror over an additional countertop with a gas cooktop enables the entire class to view demonstrations, and a transparency projector allows students to record data and share it with the class. Wheeled tables can be easily moved around the room as needed for demonstrations and displays.

A large area adjacent to the kitchen workstations provides desk space for classroom work and lectures, and the adjoining pantry houses baking pans, dishes, measuring cups, skillets, colanders, and other kitchenware on open stainless shelves.

A food science class for nutrition majors, the course focuses on the composition and structure of foods, the functions of ingredients, and the methods used to achieve desirable sensory and nutritional attributes in foods.

During a recent class, students sampled olive oil and evaluated it for look, smell, taste, and feel. Slices of green apple were provided for the tasters to cleanse their palates.

"There are two things you can't say in here," Manning told the class as they swirled the oil around in their mouths.

"I don't want to hear 'I like it' or 'I don't like it.' I want you to be like restaurant reviewers and use descriptors." Acceptable terms for the olive oil ranged from fruity and fragrant to peppery and pungent.

In other taste tests, the students evaluated foods ranging from cheese and jelly beans to Oreos and oatmeal cookies. In future classes, they will use the facility to learn proper measuring techniques and understand the science behind making cheese, creating sauces, cooking fruits and vegetables, and baking muffins and cakes.

Manning, associate professor in the Department of Behavioral Health and Nutrition, envisions potential uses for the facility beyond its function as a lab for her class, including culinary demonstrations by faculty, staff, and students involved in UD's Food and Culinary Club and its HealthyU Employee Wellness Program.

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Carolyn Manning, right, works with students in the new laboratory, which features classroom space and cooking stations.



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