



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Jackie Ruegger  
jruegger@monroecollege.edu  
914-740-6455

---

**Monroe College's Culinary Institute of New York Competition Team Wins  
ACF National Student Team Championship for the Second Straight Year**

*Monroe Student Also Takes Home Bronze Medal in the Individual Pastry Chef Competition*

**NEW ROCHELLE, NY, July 26, 2023** – [Monroe College](#), a national leader in educating first generation and international students, is proud to announce that its [Culinary Institute of New York](#) (CINY) student competition team was named the [American Culinary Federation's](#) (ACF) 2023 national champion, taking home the coveted trophy for the second straight year.

The CINY team was one of four top student culinary teams in the country to compete at ACF's national competition in New Orleans. They earned their number one seed and the Northeast Regional championship at a qualifier event held last March in Kansas. Pandemic year aside, 2023 was the fifth straight year that the CINY team was crowned the ACF Northeast Regional Champion.

"Team CINY is incredibly proud to earn the national championship again this year," said Dr. Frank C. Costantino, Dean of Monroe College's School of Hospitality Management and Culinary Institute of New York and the head coach of the competition team. "It was very rewarding to see all of their hard work and countless practice hours in the kitchen come together with such a happy outcome."

He added: "We extend our warmest congratulations to all those who competed. Every team did a phenomenal job this year and I have no doubt that those amazing young chefs will all make their mark as professionals in the culinary world one day."

The five members of Monroe's championship-winning team are: Melina Sosa (Team Captain) and Mikayla Pabroada from Food & Finance High School in New York City; Jaylene Cid from Perry High School in Gilbert, AZ; Vanessa Ruiz from Desert Ridge High School in Mesa, AZ; and Tatiana Torres from Hicksville High School in Hicksville, NY.

Four additional culinary students comprised Team CINY's apprentice team, which plays an important role preparing the ingredients on competition day and supporting the efforts of the core team. They are Humza Hussain from Central Islip High School in Central Islip, NY; Nijae Lawrence from Truman High School in the Bronx, NY; Dakari Rone from Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia; and Isabella Torres from Long Island City High School in Long Island City, NY.

Each team had to prepare a signature menu incorporating specific elements announced in advance so that the teams could adequately plan and practice. The CINY team began putting its menu together last April, practicing again and again until competition day to perfect their dishes.

Team CINY's winning menu featured:

***Fish starter course:*** pan-fried sea bream, beaugard island oyster and vegetable ragout with veal bacon, shellfish velouté, homemade oyster crackers

***Salad course:*** "Variations of Sweetman Farm's Corn" -- mache, frisée, endive, creamy corn vinaigrette, sweet corn panna cotta, cotija cheese, corn fritter, spicy remoulade, popcorn shoots, grattons

***Main course:*** " Trio of Rabbit" -- saddle "mosaic" with tasso ham, etouffée sauce, timbale of red rice, crayfish and spicy rabbit sausage, braised collards and cabbage, herbed pan-roasted merliton, baby carrots vichy

***Dessert course:*** "New Orleans Flavors" -- "Hurricane" entremet, passion mousse, orange insert, lime spongecake, fassionola white chocolate mirror glaze, bedazzled piped chocolate ganache, "bananas foster" with don papa rum caramel butter "flambé", pecan praline ice cream, vanilla bean sablé

In addition to her role on the team competition, student Vanessa Ruiz also competed in the individual Student Pastry Chef of the Year event. She earned a Bronze medal for her New Orleans-themed dessert menu featuring a "Mardi Gras" white chocolate petite four, a classic bananas foster, and a tempting Hurricane cocktail-inspired verrine with orange, passion, lime, and rum served with pecan praline ice cream.

The competition took place at the 2023 ACF National Convention held July 16-19 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The competition results were announced on the final evening at the popular gala dinner attended by all ACF conference participants.

## **ABOUT THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK AT MONROE COLLEGE**

The Culinary Institute of New York at Monroe College is an award-winning, nationally recognized culinary institute that provides students with a combination of theoretical education and hands-on experience in culinary arts, pastry arts, and hospitality management. With facilities designed to simulate the kitchens of restaurants, hotels, and large production operations, students receive personal instruction and mentorship from a faculty of ACF-certified chefs and experienced industry professionals who are committed to their success.

Since 2009, CINY has produced award-winning culinary teams, students, faculty and staff, as well as a critically acclaimed student-run restaurant, The Dining Lab, which was described as a "[training ground for students](#)" by *The Wall Street Journal* and "[the little kitchen that could](#)" by *The New York Times*. Monroe's culinary program has won nearly 1,100 American Culinary Federation medals to date. More information, including admissions criteria, is available [online](#).

## **ABOUT MONROE COLLEGE**

Founded in 1933, Monroe College is a recognized leader in urban and international education. The College is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, especially among first-generation students. The strength of its warm, supportive culture is reflected in the personal connections fostered among students, faculty, and staff.

Monroe educates close to 8,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs from campuses in the Bronx, New Rochelle, and St. Lucia. Students may also take courses online.

Programs are offered through seven academic schools, including the Schools of Allied Health Professions, Business and Accounting, Criminal and Social Justice, Education, Hospitality Management and the Culinary Institute of New York (CINY), Information Technology, and Nursing, as well as through King Graduate School. Liberal arts and continuing education programs are also available. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroecollege.edu>.

# # #