

CCSF Culinary Arts

Daniella “D.” Sanchez

WHAT BROUGHT D. TO CCSF

Daniella “D.” Sanchez grew up in San Francisco. “My family was heavily into culinary, my father loved to experiment with cooking and we’d often go out to different restaurants in the city. I was introduced to a lot of different flavors and cultures from a young age.” After high school D. attended Oberlin to double major in music and Spanish translation and minor in creative writing. Her culinary curiosity never wavered. “My college boyfriend and I hosted Dungeons and Dragons games, so I’d cook a whimsically themed menu for five angry nerds every Saturday night.” After graduating, D. moved back home. “I realized I didn’t want to teach kids or begin a Master’s degree.” On a whim, she enrolled in a summer class at CCSF, “Miss Zeiger’s Intro to Hospitality class. She encouraged me to apply for the full 2-year culinary program.”

D.’S CCSF EXPERIENCE

CCSF was a big change. “I was used to some practical hands-on classes with music, but having 90% of my classes be like that was really different.” D. thrived in classes with an academic element, “like Chef Rudd’s electives, French, Italian, and American Cooking which emphasized the historic and cultural relevance of the recipes. Take the Native American, pemmican. It’s a power bar made with beef fat and dried fruits. It’s quite atrocious, but Chef Rudd made us try it, and explained the context as a high-energy survival food, essential for long journeys.” In her final semester, D. interned with McCalls, the premiere catering and event management company in San Francisco.

D.’S CAREER

After graduation, D. happily accepted a permanent position at McCalls as the Assistant to the Executive Chef. “People say once you do something 10,000 times you’ll master it. We do that in a week at McCalls, and every week it’s something new.” McCalls caters a huge volume of events, and each menu is unique, often requiring research and client interaction to get it just right. “Someone may request a Hawaiian menu for their event. So, we do some research and talk them through different options; were they thinking something along the lines of Spam musubi or more like lomi lomi salmon, or it may turn out they want something that’s Hawaiian-ish.” Whether it’s cultural accuracy, or something more creative, D. and the rest of the McCalls staff will work with the client to develop the perfect menu.

D.’S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

For now, D is very happy at McCalls. She gets to use and grow a broad range of culinary, administrative, multi-lingual, and research skills. “McCalls is wonderful. Even though I’m no longer in school, I’m constantly learning.” Recently, D. represented McCalls at the CCSF Culinary Department’s annual Walk on the Wild

Side benefit where she served a curated menu of hors d’oeuvres. D.’s latest endeavor is to create a database for all of McCalls recipes. “My hope is that it’ll make it easier for the salespeople to make initial recommendations. It’s also a fun challenge for me and an opportunity to familiarize myself with a lot of different ingredients.”

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