

# Culinology® Team Reclaims Gold!



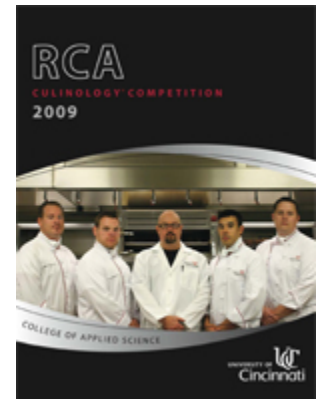
The Gold team - Parsons, Serrato, Coach Keegan, Scholle, and Coltrane

Compiling a near perfect score the Applied Science Culinology® Team led all entrants in the RCA 2009 Student Culinology Competition. Their reward - the gold medal and a check for \$5,000...Then two Applied Science students earned memorial scholarships from the Research Chefs Association, RCA.

"Medaling in all three years of the competition is a tribute to the discipline and rigors of our curriculum and the skills and talents of our instructors," affirmed Rajiv Soman, department head overseeing the Culinary Arts Program at UC's CEAS - Applied Science. "Our student's excellence in national competitions firmly catapults our program into the national limelight."

Only three teams qualified for the final competition at the RCA Annual Conference and Culinology Expo held March 4-8 at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel in Dallas, Texas. To qualify each team completed a proposal detailing their selection of entree and side dishes, how to prepare them (this defined the "gold standard" for the dish), how to manufacture them in volume, package them, store them for prolonged periods, and all at a cost that enabled dinner for two at a retail price of \$9.99.

"Texas Prairie Duo was designed to match the competition requirement for Texas cuisine that is high quality and yet ready-to-eat in minutes," declared John Parsons, the team's main chef for the fresh cooking portion of the competition. "Turns out our team's proposal earned the highest marks possible and a trip to the finals." Before leaving, however, the team prepared and packaged Texas Prairie Duo, froze the products, and shipped the commercial versions to the Sheraton Hotel where they were held for the final round of competition.



**Texas Prairie Duo** teams beef in a special sweet & tangy sauce with fire roasted vegetables and ruby red rice. Quoting from the team's competition proposal, "...A medley of fire roasted vegetables complement the beef strips, recreating the experience of camping around a burning fire under the night sky of Texas. The essence of ruby red grapefruit accents the long grain rice, evoking the intertwined history between the citrus fruit and Texan agriculture."



Which is reheated? Look left...

"As the senior on the team my role was to concentrate on the technical part to get the frozen production meal to match our gold standard freshly cooked dinner in appearance, texture and taste," stated Andrew Scholle. "The sauce was a challenge! The fresh preparation calls for braising the beef in its juices along with our secret Texas ingredient-Dr. Pepper. Most folks don't know that Dr. Pepper was invented in Waco, Texas."

Creating a match for the sauce took dozens of trials and weeks of effort but in the end the team created the match. "I am so proud of these guys and the program that we have built," exclaimed Lisa Sanders, the team's industry advisor

and Manager-Culinary Applications for Flavor Systems International, Inc. "They have worked so hard all year meeting and practicing every Thursday and Sunday since September to reclaim the gold medal for Applied Science."

"Our packaging excelled and raised the bar even higher for the other teams. It was really unique with its dramatic graphics and sleeve that enabled the dinners to be drawn from each side," held team alternate, Robert Coltrane. "Our packaging would sell in any market." The team drew on the expertise of Kacie Snyder, recent DAAP graduate from UC and free lance designer, for the package design and appearance.



Team receives check from RCA spokeswoman.

When the real head-to-head chef work got underway on Thursday, cooking skills to generate the "gold standard" as defined in the proposal and its taste were only half of the score. However, the team's skills were put to the test as first, the ovens had no temperature indicators on the dials and ... "John saved the day!" claimed Christian Serrato, team leader. "He managed to spot that the beef was about to burn and got it out of the oven and transferred to another pot before the liquid boiled off. Fortunately, the cameras and judges were looking the other way at the time. LSU wasn't so lucky. Their kitchen fire was on video and became the replay hit of the conference."

Then, a scheduling problem caused the judges to expect the team's dinners to be ready 30 minutes before they were actually due. The team responded by hurrying the meals to the judges but was penalized for being eight minutes late. One judge later reported that these were the only points deducted and theirs was still a near perfect score.



The other half the competition day points came from the quality of the frozen dinner when compared to the freshly prepared meal. One set of meals rushed to the judges were the frozen dinners shipped earlier and reheated per the package directions. The judges reported a direct match to the freshly prepared "gold Standard" and at the Awards Luncheon on Saturday presented the gold medal and a check to the Applied Science Culinology team.

"With our students spending two years concentrating on chef skills, co-op work experience, and two years of food science, our curriculum defines Culinology. Dan Proctor and Christian Serrato being selected for RCA Memorial Scholarships makes the point even stronger," concluded Chef Christopher Keegan, faculty advisor and adjunct instructor at the Midwest Culinary Institute and adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati. "This team works very well together and from what I could see things went really smooth in the kitchen."

Smooth in the kitchen, solid in preparation, and cool in the face of their competition, the Applied Science Culinology Team and UC CEAS - Applied Science stood tall in Texas.

[Click here for a Pictorial Layout of Culinary Gold in Dallas](#)

[For more on Culinology Opportunities at Applied Science - Click Here](#)

[For More on the Research Chefs Association & the Competition - Click Here](#)

## Texas Prairie Duo

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**Beef strips in a special sweet & tangy sauce**

**Medley of fire roasted vegetables**

**Ruby red grapefruit accents**

**Package design by Kacie Snyder**

## Culinology Team Advisors

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**Lisa Sanders**, Flavor Systems International

**Chef Jim Myatt**, Midwest Culinary Institute

**Chef Christopher Keegan**, Faculty Advisor, Applied Science

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