The USC FIM Program Class of 2016

In its 58th year, the Food Industry Management (FIM) Program at the USC Marshall School of Business, in association with the Western Association of Food Chains Inc. (WAFC), has brought together faculty, industry participants and teaching materials in a unique educational environment. The program runs 16 weeks—Jan. 8-April 27, 2016.

“The program at USC is designed specifically for the industry’s high-potential executives who have expertise in one or two areas of the business but need a bit more exposure to other disciplines. They are effectively being groomed as future leaders for their respective companies,” according to Cynthia McCloud, director of USC Marshall Food Industry Programs. “Our goal is to expose them to new and innovative ideas so they become stronger, more balanced contributors. Our motto is, ‘You pick them. We polish them.’ These students leave the program as thought-leaders with more confidence, new techniques and the most current tools to address current business needs and identify future opportunities.

They will challenge their organizations to think differently and take risks to compete in an industry that is changing faster than we can imagine.”

The participants in the 2016 FIM Program were handpicked by their employers to attend this career-building, and often life-changing, program. The ideal candidates are senior-level managers from food retailers, wholesalers or manufacturers, or from companies that support the food industry. Tuition is funded by the WAFC, a nonprofit organization composed of the senior executives from food retail and wholesale companies that account for sales exceeding $140 billion annually in 14 western states. Since 1959, the WAFC, with the generous donations of both supplier companies and individuals, has supported the Food Industry Management Program with scholarships in excess of $23 million. More than 1,700 students have qualified, persevered and graduated.

2016 FIM Participants

Heidi Bertagnolli
National Account Manager, King’s Hawaiian Bakery, Torrance, California

Pamela Brandt
Assistant Food Buyer, Costco Wholesale, Garden Grove, California

William Erskine
District Operations Coordinator, Ralphs Grocery Co., Irvine, California

Tamara Ciraulo
Director, Insurance Administration, Stater Bros. Markets, San Bernardino, California

Zachary Carthan
Product Development Manager, Niagara Bottling LLC, Ontario, California

Matthew Dobson
SAP Manager, Publix Supermarkets Invercargill, New Zealand

Michael Doss
Division Recruiting Coordinator, King Soopers, Denver, Colorado

Victor Farr
Project Manager / Business Analyst, Natural Markets Food Group, Irvington, New York

Lizette Gonzalez
Marketing Project Manager, Northgate Gonzalez Markets, Anaheim, California

Heidi Bertagnolli
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Lizette Gonzalez
Marketing Project Manager, Northgate Gonzalez Markets, Anaheim, California

Ernie Rivera
Sales Director—Food Service and On-Premise, Caca-Cola, Downey, California

Curt Selpert
Director of Advertising—Pacific Northwest Region, Unified Grocers, Seattle, Washington

Paul Stoffel
Buyer, Stater Bros. Markets, San Bernardino, California

Cipriano Valencia
Assistant GM, Costco Wholesale, Norwalk, California

Leslie Villanueva
Sales Planner-Midwest Division, Food 4 Less, Compton, California

Kramer Wood
Assistant Manager, Molly Stone’s Markets, San Francisco, California

James Wells
Unit Sales Manager, Pepsi Beverages Co., Aliso Viejo, California

Bridget Wolek
Store Manager, Fry’s Food Stores, Phoenix, Arizona

Shawn Wolek
Store Manager, Fry’s Food Stores, Phoenix, Arizona

Jeanie Goodrich
Pharmacy Coordinator, Smith’s Food & Drug, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Jose Huerta
VP of Operations, Big Save Foods, Vernon, California

Katherine Kallemeyn
Store Director, Cub Foods, Eagan, Minnesota

Aaron Landau
Assistant Store Director, Myers Group LLC, Camano Island, Washington

Ryan LusCano
Sales Development Manager, Niagara Bottling LLC, Ontario, California

Trevor Latham
Key Account Manager, Nestlé USA, Rogers, Arkansas

Monet Levy
Supervisor, Unified Grocers, Commerce, California

Garrett Macek
Key Account Manager, California Specialty Farms, Los Angeles, California

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The Future of the Industry

“USC’s Food Industry Management class represents the future of our industry. These amazing students gather together to tackle the tough issues facing industry leaders today,” McCuddy said. “Each member of the FIM class learns about his or her own personal style and how to build their leadership skills to become more effective. This impactful 16-week curriculum shapes the careers of high-potential students and sends them back to their organizations with skills that they can leverage for many years to come. This year, some of the students will demonstrate their newly developed skills on stage at the WAFC Conference in Chicago, April 11-12.”

“The WAFC is proud to support USC’s FIM class as they advance our industry through leadership and education,” said Bryan Kaltenbach, president of Food 4 Less.

Tutored by world-class faculty from the USC Marshall School of Business, along with well-known executives from the food industry, the students are exposed to texts, lectures and other teaching methods including team projects, role-plays, group presentations and materials developed specifically for the food industry. The curriculum integrates the functional areas of business with cutting-edge theory and practical application to help students understand how all pieces of an organization fit together. Participants leave with strong leadership and management skills, enhanced business acumen and a solid understanding of communication, marketing, finance, strategy and more.

For more information, contact Cynthia McCloud, program director, at cmcloud@marshall.usc.edu or (714) 815-0000; website: marshall.usc.edu/fim.

2016 USC FIM Class Profile:
• 29 companies (with six companies sending two students)
• 10 states: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York and Washington
• One international student, from New Zealand
• Average age: 38
• Age range: 24-54
• 24 men; 11 women
• 26 retailers; nine suppliers
• 15 Millennials
• 15 Gen Xers
• Five Baby Boomers
• Education: a mix of degrees are represented—Ph.D., Master’s, Bachelor’s, Associate’s and transfers.
A FOOD INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

The vision and generosity of these education donors provide the funding that benefits thousands of food industry employees who participate in WAFC-endorsed educational programs:
- USC Food Industry Management Program
- USC Food Industry Executive Program
- The Community College Retail Management Certificate Program
- Grants to Universities funding food industry education initiatives throughout the 14 western states