2011-2012 SAIF Project

Final Report

Exploring UW-Platteville’s Rich History in Cheese-making

and Developing Our Future

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Introduction

When I applied for the SAIF funding in Spring 2011, I only knew that I wanted to continue the process of investigating how UW-Platteville has been connected to the cheese-making industry through interviewing and meeting with past and present industry professionals, especially those directly associated with UW-Platteville. I had no idea that this investigation would open doors that would move me that much closer to the goal of keeping UW-Platteville firmly involved in the dairy processing industry.

Objectives

My objectives for the 2011-2012 funding period were:

- To record the tradition of involvement of UW-Platteville alumni the cheese-making industry, as well as other connections between local cheese-makers and the University
- To determine UW-Platteville’s niche for education about and processing of quality dairy products

Project Outcomes

I have had many amazing interactions with professionals in the dairy processing industry. Some of the opportunities I have had during the SAIF project period were:

- Meeting with Bob Wills, owner and cheesemaker at Cedar Grove Cheese in Plain, WI and recent builder of Clock Shadow Creamery in Milwaukee, WI
- Meeting with Sid Cook, owner and cheesemaker at Carr Valley Cheese (UW-Platteville alumnus)
- Meeting with Tony Hook of Hook’s Cheese in Mineral Point, WI (UW-Platteville alumnus)
- Meeting with Myron Olson, Master Cheesemaker at Chalet Cheese in Monroe, WI. I co-nominated Myron for Outstanding Alumni in BILSA during Homecoming in 2011 and he was given the award.
- Attending the week-long Cheese Tech Short Course at UW-Madison
- Working with alumnus Bill Broske on yogurt-making skills
- Getting certified as a pasteurizer operator through a short course at UW-Madison
- Making incredibly valuable connections through DBIC, Center for Dairy Research, and other entities throughout Wisconsin and beyond
- Meeting with the Southwest Wisconsin Cheesemakers’ Association. The first business meeting I attended I was given a monetary gift to support my quest for my cheesemaker’s license. I will be attending their annual meeting to give an update on my project and progress on October 4, 2012.
- Showcasing my project at the annual UW-Platteville Research Poster Day in Spring 2012. It was wonderful to engage other faculty, staff, and students in discussions about how involved UW-Platteville has been in the cheese industry and what the future holds as I move toward making my dairy plant “dream” a reality.

Future Outlook

I have started a business plan as part of the planning process for beginning the fundraising for the dairy products pilot plant. I am in regular contact with many of the alumni and other dairy professionals that I met thanks to this project. I will be finishing the final three courses and the apprenticeship needed to obtain my cheesemaker’s license by the end of 2013. Without this funding I would not have been able to take the time needed to make these valuable contacts and continue this valuable project for the benefit of my students, UW-Platteville, the dairy processing industry in SW Wisconsin, and our surrounding communities.