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**MANCHESTER
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

Culinary Innovator Partners With Connecticut Community College In Creating Sustainable Food-Service Management Program

A nationally recognized pioneer in sustainable food is joining forces with Connecticut's largest community college to offer a cutting-edge degree program in sustainable food-service management.

[John Turenne](#), a Connecticut chef and sustainable food innovator who has worked with culinary celebrities such as Alice Waters and Jamie Oliver, will teach one course in the multi-discipline sustainability program at Manchester Community College. The program is designed to prepare students for work in the field that is transforming the food-service industry.

There is little debate among experts that worldwide demand is growing for healthier, more environmentally friendly food production. Working with MCC's Hospitality Department faculty, Turenne designed the course to prepare food-service professionals to shape the industry's future as it evolves. He will co-teach it with [Molly Devanney](#), vice president of Highland Park Market, a Connecticut grocery store chain that promotes and sells locally produced foods.

Turenne has literally written the book on sustainable food-service management – one chapter of the courses' text book, anyway.

The course is a reflection of his deeply held belief that a sustainable food system enhances individual health, the local economy and the planet as a whole. As president and founder of [Sustainable Food Systems](#), a consulting firm based in Wallingford, CT, Turenne has spent years refining techniques and developing practices that are both environmentally responsible and profitable.

The MCC sustainability program is the college's newest option for a food-service management degree. It combines food-service training with courses in human health and environmental science, giving students what Turenne calls a "big-picture" understanding of the issues, policies and practices surrounding the sustainable food movement.

The course will help students see how their decisions about food purchasing and preparation, waste control, energy and water use and interaction with vendors influence individual health, business success and profitability, the local economy, land use, and the long-term health of the nation's food and agricultural production network.

Turenne is often sought as a public speaker and mentor, and his company has worked with culinary schools such as Johnson & Wales University and the Culinary Institute of America; but he has never before taught in a classroom setting. He said he is eager to share his insights and techniques with MCC's culinary students as an extension of his effort to "make the world a better place."

Turenne said he realized that the sustainability movement was transforming the conventional food service when he was working as the executive chef at Yale University's dining service in 2001. Among the students was the daughter of chef and restaurateur [Alice Waters](#), a pioneer and internationally known advocate of a locally based food economy.

With the blessing of the Yale president, Waters toured Turenne's kitchen and handed him a copy of "[Fast Food Nation](#)." She persuaded the school to look for a fresher, more local and more sustainable model for its campus food service; and in his research, Turenne had "an epiphany," he said.

"I couldn't ignore it," he said. "I realized this is a direction we have to go in."

A chef who once defined success only by how effectively he could reduce costs became a champion of moving toward a healthier and more socially responsible food delivery network.

Of course the difficult part is in applying sustainable practices in ways that not only produce better food, but better food that can be delivered profitably.

That's where Turenne's long career in the conventional food service proved invaluable. It enabled him to become a key participant at the [Yale Sustainable Food Project](#); and, seven years ago, to create Sustainable Food Systems. Since then he has been helping clients profitably "bridge the gap" between conventional and sustainable techniques and practices.

Turenne's company worked behind the scenes in West Virginia with British chef Jamie Oliver in his production of the [Food Revolution](#) television program. He was also one of nine chefs selected to work with the Obama Administration in the development of the USDA's [Chefs Move to Schools](#) initiative to combat childhood obesity.

Turenne also wrote on chapter of the text he and Devanney will be teaching from: "[Greening Food and Beverage Services: A Green Seal Guide To Transforming The Industry](#)." They will be using that text and others, he said.

Jayne Pearson, chair of MCC's Hospitality Department, knew of Turenne through their mutual membership in the Connecticut chapter of the [Northeast Organic Farmer's Association](#). Turenne serves on that organization's board of directors.

The [American Culinary Federation](#), which accredits MCC's program, "is pushing for all their schools" to institute a [similar program](#), she said. So far, however, only a handful of culinary colleges have actually launched them.

Turenne's fall class will be open to both matriculating students and, with Pearson's approval, members of the professional food-service community.

For more information on eligibility and enrollment, contact:

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About MCC:

As the largest of the 12 Connecticut community colleges, MCC is proud of its academic excellence, new facilities, flexible schedules, small classes, low tuition and faculty with both academic and "real world" credentials. The college offers more than 60 programs, transfer options, financial aid and scholarships, as well as access to baccalaureate degrees through guaranteed admissions programs with several universities. MCC is situated on a park-like campus and is easily accessible from I-84.