

Sophia Hamann

English 10

Block F

28 February 2015

Personal Narrative

I always thought I was sure of what I wanted to do with my life. I thought I had everything figured out. When I was in first grade I wanted to be a veterinarian. When I was in fifth grade I was sure I was going to be a fashion designer. In eighth grade I planned on being an actress and a writer. Just last year I wanted to be an Imagineer. This year I'm not so sure.

I have always known I have wanted to do something creative with my life, but not what to be creative with. I have so many interests and hobbies, I can't just pick one. If I had it my way, in college I would major in ten different things. However, lately I have been finding myself coming back to the idea of a pastry chef. I am in love of the idea of owning my own business, and I always have, so I want to combine my passions. I have always loved cooking, and I am very ambitious, so what is more ambitious than owning my own business.

Baking has always been my way of putting art into something tangible. I love to see people's faces when I give them cookies I baked the night before, just for their birthday. I contemplated just being a culinary artist, but I wasn't sure I was prepared for the restaurant environment. Cooking has always relaxed me and taken my mind off things and I don't know if it would be tainted working in a fast-paced and demanding environment. Baking however, would show off my love for baking beautiful things.

When I was a kid I was never the type of person you would find watching cartoons, but the kid who always watched Food Network with my Dad.

My Dad has influenced me in my love for cooking. As long as I can remember I always asked my Dad if I could help him with dinner or with the grill. Even though my Dad is a geologist, he still lives out his passion for art, in his artwork as well as his cooking. My sister and my brother took different paths than I am looking at, which definitely make me think of what I wanted to do with my life. My sister is studying currently to be a doctor, and my brother is studying philosophy. I knew for sure that neither of the studies my siblings were interested in was what I wanted to do. It was an inspiration, however, especially by my sister, to be ambitious and find what I really wanted to do. I know that my sister is still not sure if that is what she wants to be, which gives me the chance to see that I don't have to know right now, even though I feel so much pressure to decide. Even though I am still unsure, I know that baking is definitely one of my passions.

I am the kind of person, when I discover something interesting to me, I will research it extensively. That is what I have done since last year about college. Pastry chefs are limited to very few schools. I do know for a fact that I do not want an associate degree or to attend a trade school. I want to attend a four year university and earn my bachelor degree. As a result, I have found only one school in the U.S. that meets this criteria. This school seems like a place where I could pursue my passions and receive amazing opportunities. University aside, I have a potential plan for life, or at least of what I think I want to do. I always have seen myself one day owning my own business, and I would want the business to be something I genuinely enjoy. I can see myself waking up

early every morning to bake something everyone enjoys at the bakery I own. Who wouldn't want that life? I know owning your own business is risky and challenging, but I love a challenge. Another interest in my life is being an entrepreneur. I want to do something difficult and challenging and I feel that if I were just a pastry chef I would be doing something I enjoy, but not being challenged and I think owning my own business would be a true accomplishment. I want to do something with my life and be excited almost every day going into work. What are the skills and experiences I must gain to become successful in my chosen career?

Research Section

Part I

Whenever I'm not doing schoolwork, I seem to always find myself obsessing, researching, and thinking about colleges. I always knew I wanted to go to college, and my chosen field has many options. Unfortunately, for me if I want to study the baking and pastry arts directly, there are not many accredited four-year schools with a bachelor degree available. However, if I wanted to open my own business, I could study a business hospitality or entrepreneurship major (The College Board). That opens up my options to many schools. For the sake of this paper, however, I will focus on one school that seems to fit all my needs: Johnson & Wales University (JWU).

Johnson & Wales is a private, career university in four locations. I would choose the location in Providence, RI. As I said before, I have many interests, so something I am looking for is a major with a well-rounded education. I don't just want to study to become a pastry chef, I want to know the business of it. The major I am interested in at Johnson & Wales is Baking & Pastry Arts and Food Service Management. This is a

combined major, and prepares you for the specific expertise as a chef as well as starting and maintaining a food-service business (“Academics”).

Another aspect and benefit of going to a career-oriented school is that they require you to do multiple internships. Before I own a business, I want to have experience working in one. An internship program that interested me was the Disney College Program. This is an internship where you would work in the Disneyland theme park. As it is a college program, there is housing offered as well as business and other classes taught by Disney working professionals (“Program Components”). Disney is a world class business with specialties in hospitality, and gives you real work experience before you leave college (Disney College Program). Both the Disney College Program and JWU provide you with a large list of options to create and supply your resume for the future.

One other option for my schooling is to study economics, business, or entrepreneurial studies at other schools. This opens up my options to a whole new choice of school. Economics and business are offered at many schools, so I would not just have to leave all of my intention on getting in to one school. If I did not choose JWU, I could go to a liberal arts college so I would at least know how to start a business. If I felt it was necessary to obtain the culinary skills needed to own a bakery, I have a few options in addition with my liberal arts schooling. After or during college, I could obtain a certificate or associate's degree in the pastry arts. This can be accomplished by going to a culinary school, Johnson & Wales (they offer an associate's degree in the baking and pastry arts), or a community college. This way I would still have a bachelor's degree in economics or business as well as the expertise on how to create the product I would be selling.

In addition to Johnson & Wales undergraduate schooling or a liberal arts undergraduate education, the next step in the field of business offers a higher education in the Master of Business Administration. This requires taking the Graduate Management Admissions Test, a standardized test for business school. However, I may choose not to do this because I think when the time comes to decide I might want just to start my career and skip the few extra years of schooling and save myself money. If I did feel it was necessary, JWU offers a one year graduate MBA course, so I may complete it in less time. If I did not want to continue my education at JWU, there are many other options all over the country to complete an MBA (MBA). Being able to achieve JWU, the Disney internship, and possibly an MBA would be my perfect plan towards the future of my career.

Part II

Johnson & Wales is not the most academically rigorous school out there, but that's to be expected from a culinary career school. Although this is true, it does not mean that I will not achieve my academic goals in high school. Also, I will be thinking about other schools so I should be academically prepared. In my opinion, I think the U.S. regards the Advanced Placement program higher than the International Baccalaureate program. While Nido does not offer advanced placement classes, they offer the tests. A.P. is a very good program to be academically challenged as well as obtain college credit. Even though I am being prepared for IB, I will still try to complete and do well on as many A.P. tests as I can. That being said, I will not be going for the full IB diploma. Instead, I will be going for the Nido traditional diploma and an IB certificate.

There are multiple classes that I feel will get me on my path to Johnson & Wales or any other liberal arts school. With my interest in business classes related to business as well as language and the arts will prepare me to be a good candidate person for JWU and other schools. I plan on taking IB Mathematics and IB Economics 1 next year, which is a popular choice for business majors. Also, while I was learning about the IB, Nido seems to offer an online course in IB business and management. Although the online course are not recommended, I feel I could manage the time and ability well to complete them. In addition, language is a very important factor for businessmen and women. Being able to communicate is what business is all about, so I plan on taking B3 Spanish and continuing my education in Spanish. Aside from business, being a pastry chef requires a level of creativity, so I will continue to pursue my passion for the arts and take Visual Arts 3. All of my other classes will be standard IB classes.

As for clubs and organizations, I plan on continuing not to try everything, but to do very well and stay invested in my current clubs. I think this makes you an appealing contender for colleges. I am currently in Knowledge Bowl and After School Art Club. I also plan on joining a service club, such as the Global Issues Network, to be more involved and to appear as a more appealing student for college. If I continue with the course stated above, I will be a great candidate for college.

Part III

There are many different paths to go about in the field of the pastry arts. My main goal is to own and operate my own bakery, but I would like to have as much work experience possible under my belt before owning my own business.

Before entering their full intended career, many chefs intern or apprentice under an established pastry chef to gain the proper experience to further themselves in the culinary world (“My Footpath”). I can achieve this while in college or shortly after I graduate from a university. Once I have the knowledge and skills to pursue my dream, I can start my second step to owning my own bakery. The duties of a pastry chef, unlike other occupations, are very specific. Typical duties include jobs such as: checking the quality of the ingredients, preparing workspace and equipment, measuring and weighing ingredients, cutting, rolling, and shaping dough, and applying decorations, icing, and other toppings onto pastries (“College Grad”). Because of all these hands-on duties, the work of a pastry chef usually requires working in the early morning or late at night to prepare the food for the next day. Pastry chefs can work about 55 hours a week on average (“Global Post”).

As you might of thought, being a pastry chef is not the most lucrative business. On average pastry chefs only earn about \$ 20,000- 45,000 a year (“Chron”). However, I think this varies based on the position you have. If I intend to own my own bakery, I will make more money if I successfully cultivate my career to be productive, and an ambitious one. As I improve more on your skills and become a more established pastry chef, I could qualify for positions such as executive pastry chef. Executive pastry chefs make about \$65,000 a year, which is about double as someone who is just starting out (Salary).

Being a pastry chef could lead to many different job positions, in different areas of work. Having a background for business, nutrition, and sanitation is always helpful to advance and move in the career (“Study”). I will learn that in the college education,

stated in research section one. As a pastry chef, before I own my own business, I have the option of working for corporate companies, working in a magazine which features cooking, a hotel or resort, or under another small company that designs wedding cakes. There are many different options to choose from. I could even work as the executive pastry chef for the President of the United States! Something from that list that interest me, is working for a magazine. I always like the recipes from magazines like *Martha Stewart Living Magazine*, and I wondered who creates those? A position in a magazine as a pastry chef, would mean working in a test kitchen, You create these beautiful pastries to eventually read how you made them in the magazine. Another career, like working in a hotel or resort are very popular amongst pastry chefs. Preparing for everyday pastries, to full, over-the-top wedding cakes for guests at the hotel are just some of the duties working in hospitality. Lastly, working for a small business, like a wedding cake business, would allow me to have a feel for the small business world. I would also be doing what I love, which is art. Making wedding cakes, allows you not only to use your culinary skills, but it also allows you to hone your artistic skills in the beautiful presentations of the cakes.

Although, much of the time spent as a pastry chef is in the kitchen, the culinary arts is still a hospitality business. Hospitality means the interaction with other people and customers and satisfying their pastry art needs. If I worked with brides for weddings, my job would be to intently listen to her vision of the cake, and execute it to fit her needs, while still staying true to my tastes, and my view of the cake overall. Working with people who need to have certain specific needs met and in a certain timeframe can be quite challenging. This, is applicable in most jobs, but especially in the arts. Being chef

also means working well with other employees. Everyone must come to an agreement of the overall piece and everyone has their specific duties and tasks. Artists may clash when they have different options in the execution of a piece as well as if artists have their own, distinct style.

There are many benefits to being a pastry chef. Once I reach my desired field of owning my own business, I will be able to let my creative juices flow. Pastry chefs are always faced with challenges and coming up with new ideas and recipes, which is something I look forward to in the field. I will be able to place my own style and feel of the bakery and get to work in a positive environment, hopefully everyday. Until I own my own bakery, I will still get to enjoy many benefits. I really enjoy talking with and meeting new people and that is something I will be able to accomplish while working in a hotel or resort. In any direction I go there will be drawbacks as well as many benefits.

Although a pastry chef, might not be the most glamorous field of work, with the long work hours and small pay, at the end of the day, you do it for passion. I will be able to see my art displayed and enjoyed by people from all over the world.

Interview

Reading and researching about a career is one thing, but understanding the true reality of a career, is a very different thing. There are many different environments a pastry chef can work in such as: a cruise ship, a hotel, a bakery, or even the White House. While I was conducting my interviews, I tried to reach many small bakeries in the United States, however the only person who was responded was the one who I did not even expect a reply from. William Yosses is a world-renowned pastry chef who, just over six months ago, was the executive pastry chef for the White House. While, this isn't the

exact profession I envisioned for myself, it certainly is an honorable job in the culinary world and the principles of pastry arts are still applied to this amazing job. Yosses worked under George Bush, and President Barack Obama. He made cakes for the Pope, the Presidents, and many other respectable individuals. I was honored to interview a man who has made such a great accomplishment. While this is a unique job, the aspects of a pastry chef were still applicable to the profession.

Yosses obtained an associate degree in hospitality management, and has a masters in French language and literature. I asked Yosses about his most helpful classes in college and he replied, “All my classes were helpful even the ones I did not think were important at the time, such as science classes, and now I rely on that information a lot.” This made me realize the importance of science and staying attentive in all of my classes because it might help me in the future. Although he has no formal education in the pastry arts, Yosses had apprenticeships in France under well known chefs. Yosses stated, “...Volunteer to work in the best place you can find to see if you like the work and the pace of the job.” Yosses has allowed me to see that aside from formal education, I would have to work with pay or not to see if this career is really for me. Culinary careers are very hands-on and demanding jobs, that I might want to consider if I really want to work in such conditions.

A typical day for Yosses was very unique, in that he spoke about, “ we start at 7:30 am with the staff meeting in which we coordinate all the information we have on the events of the day. That usually includes a reception or two and maybe a lunch or dinner for the President and First Lady with guests anywhere from 2 to 200.” He continues speaking about other meetings as well as preparing the ingredients for the upcoming

events and dinners. This work schedule sounds busy and demanding (he said ten to twelve hour workdays), however, he was still using the skills of hospitality management, which is similar to event managing, and his culinary skills in his everyday life. Being able to practice what you love and have studied every day is a necessity for me to have a joyful career.

Another aspect that Yosses stresses was to love your job and don't concern yourself with money. Yosses said, "The money will come, but first you must learn your craft the best you can." This inspired me and reminded me of why I chose this career to write about. I love the arts, and I love being creative. Yosses told me, "What I enjoy most about my profession is creativity. It feels good to have mastered the classic basics and then to invent new ways to cook, bake and to understand how they work." Being in the pastry arts would allow me to be creative and to invent. Learning the basics, as he said, would be helpful through a university, as well as an apprenticeship or internship.

There is a good and a bad aspect to every career. For Yosses, he said, balancing work and life was very difficult for him. Pastry chefs are probably one of the more demanding professions, with long hours, and difficult ingredients to work with, you have to find a balance. However, there is a very rewarding part to being a pastry chef. Yosses stated, "Most surprising to me was the fellowship and camaraderie of people in the same profession. There is a mutual understanding and respect for others who face the same challenges and this is true around the world, everybody knows how hard the other chefs work and they help each other." This is very encouraging to me to know that there will be many other people facing the same hardships as well as success as me in the culinary world.

Yosses said, “You have to allow yourself to be passionate and work hard at it to improve, go to work early and leave late, and stick to it even when you don’t think you are growing.” Yosses helped me realize to be truly successful, you have to gain experience and work as hard as you can everyday. Overall, although the job of Yosses is just a far away dream I have, he encouraged me to work for my passion, and the rest will follow.

(Yosses, William)

Conclusion

While taking into account all the factors it takes to become a pastry chef, such as education and real world experience, I do realize this is a career I am definitely interested in. I still have many other interests and passions, but for the moment a pastry chef seems like a promising career. Being a pastry chef requires you to be creative, problem-solving, and to be able to work under pressure. I believe that I have those qualities, and I can improve them over time. The ways to gain education and experience can vary between college, apprenticeships, as well as other jobs leading to my main goal of owning my own bakery.

During the research, I realized that most pastry chefs do not even hold a bachelor’s degree. I have always been academically striving and I try my best. Those qualities are something I value and I feel that I would not necessary find that in a low academically achieving school. On the other hand, chefs need to have passion and ambition, which those qualities would result in people having a competitive mindset and I would be around people wanting to achieve their goals through their passions.

The interview helped me see that there are many good and bad aspects to being a pastry chef. You get to work everyday doing what you love, but the hours are long and tiring. Yosses mentioned that he did not officially spend time with his family until after he finished his time at the White House. This is a major problem for hands-on careers. A balance between life and work, while still having time to enjoy both. However, Yosses still said he loved what he did and he was able to pursue his passion everyday.

Overall, I think being a pastry chef is a viable option for me. There are many other things I would like to pursue, however I think I would be doing something I enjoy everyday and I would be making many other people happy.

Works Cited

"Bakers." : *Career, Salary and Education Information, CollegeGrad.com*. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2015.

"Career Info for a Baking & Pastry Arts Degree." *Study.com*. Study.com, 2003-2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2015.

"Disney College Program Home." *Disney College Program*. Disney, n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.

- "Executive Pastry Chef Job Description | Salary.com." *Executive Pastry Chef Job Description*. International Business Machines Corporation, 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2015.
- "Johnson & Wales University : Academics & Real World Experience : Home UNIV." *Johnson & Wales University : Academics & Real World Experience : Home UNIV*. N.p., 2008-2015. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.
- "Majors + Degrees." *JWU Academics*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.
- "Majors - Entrepreneurial Studies - Business." *Big Future by The College Board*. The College Board, 2015. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.
- "Pastry Chef Careers." *College Degree Programs Online Schools Career Profiles MyFootpath.com Pastry Chef Careers Comments*. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition, n.d. Web. 17 Mar. 2015.
- "Pay & Work Conditions for Pastry Chefs." *Everyday Life*. Demand Media, 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2015.
- "Pay & Work Conditions for Pastry Chefs." *Work*. Hearst Newspapers, 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2015.
- "Plan For Business School." *The Official Website of the GMAT*. Graduate Management Admissions Council, 2002-2015. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.
- "Program Components." *Disney College Program*. Disney, n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.
- Yosses, William. Personal Interview. March 19, 2015.