

Course Development Lead



Randy Hofberger
R&D Candy Consultants
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Randy has more than 35 years of experience in the confectionery industry, with many years at Nestlé Confections starting in the QA department and eventually into technical applications. He started R&D Candy Consulting in 2008 to help people with their confectionery challenges. Randy is involved with RCI, AACT and PMCA and has assisted with lectures and technical courses. He is the recipient of the Henry Bornhofft and Stroud Jordan awards and has contributed technical articles to Candy Industry, Manufacturing

Confectioner Magazine, AIB and co-authored chapters to several books. Recently, he has assisted with the book Confectionery Science and Technology. Randy's personal interests include candy making, hiking, cooking, traveling, biking and kayaking.

Instructors



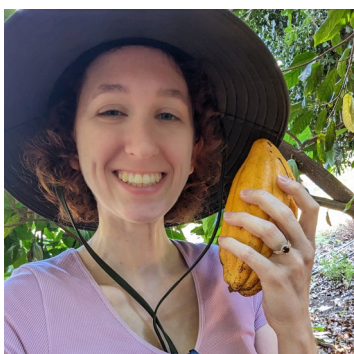
Zachary Freed
Blommer Chocolate Company
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My name is Zachary Freed, and I am a product development manager for Blommer Chocolate. Prior to this role, I was a product development and innovation manager at ofi, senior application specialist for confections with AAK USA, and innovations project manager at Barry Callebaut, totaling just over 15 years in the confections industry. Before starting my professional career, I received my bachelor's degree in food science and management from Delaware Valley College.



Kaitlin Hackett
Cargill
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Kaitlin Hackett is a food scientist at Cargill and has been developing compounds and chocolates for the past five years.



Allyson Martin
Clasen Quality Chocolate
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Allyson has been a part of the candy industry since joining Clasen Quality Chocolate in 2015. She works in the research and development group as a food scientist working on new product development and managing an ever-complex cocoa ingredient portfolio. Allyson currently serves as the First Vice President and Program Chair of the American Association of Candy Technologists (AACT) as well as serving on the board of the regional Milwaukee chapter of AACT. She is a frequent lab instructor at UW Madison's Resident Course in

Confectionery Technology and is excited to be teaching at her first PMCA short course!



Eric Schmoyer
IRCA Group Americas
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Eric Schmoyer joined IRCA Group Americas in 2024 as technical innovation director. Previously, he was technical services manager with Barry Callebaut since 2007, where he worked with internal and external customers solving production issues.

Prior to joining Barry Callebaut, Eric was with the R.M. Palmer Company for almost 20 years. Starting in the moulding department and moving to tech services, he worked with raw materials, formulation and processing, as well as standard QA duties. In 1998, he was

named R&D Lab manager, where his duties included ideation and new item prototype development, plant scale-ups, on-line troubleshooting, production of sales samples and managing the QA libraries.

Eric has instructed and attended several PMCA courses as well as the NCA Confectionery Residency course in Madison, WI. A member of PMCA for a long, long time, Eric is co-chair of the Education & Learning Committee, chair of the Nominations Committee and is active on the Long Range Planning and Student Outreach committees. He also leads the Beyond the Basics Subcommittee, which plans the Monday morning program for PMCA's Annual Production Conference. Eric is past president of the American Association of Candy Technologists as well as Philadelphia Chairperson. He was the 2020 recipient of AACT's Stroud Jordan Award.



Joe Sofia
Cargill
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Joe Sofia graduated from Cornell University with a degree in chemical engineering and spent 10 years working for Nestlé USA in engineering, R&D and manufacturing. In 1995, Joe moved to the Peter's Chocolate division of Nestle as a sales manager, focusing on confectionery customers. The Peter's brand was acquired by Cargill in 2002, where Joe has been working ever since. He is currently senior technical advisor for Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate and works primarily with Cargill's confectionery customers who buy their Peter's,

Wilbur and Merckens brands. Joe is working on his thirty-eighth year in the confectionery industry. He has been an instructor for Cargill's chocolatier's workshops, hosted seminars and demonstrations at the Philadelphia Candy Show and Sweets & Snacks Expo and instructs for the RCI Chocolate Boot Camp and PMCA chocolate and compound courses. Among other hobbies, "Cocoa Joe" enjoys making chocolates in his spare time in his home candy kitchen.



Marlene Stauffer
Blommer Chocolate Company
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Marlene Stauffer graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a food science degree in the College of Agriculture Sciences. She has been with Blommer Chocolate Company since 1982. Her role is a technical fellow focusing on R&D and regulatory. She also offers support for all aspects of food safety and quality from raw materials, manufacturing, quality systems and product development to customer technical assistance.

Marlene was the leader of the NCA Proposition 65 Industry Working Group to recommend best practices. Certifications include FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food PCQI, FSVP, Internal Auditor by SAI Global and Advanced International HACCP Alliance. Marlene has been an instructor at several NCA, PMCA, RCI and university classes and spoken at PMCA, RCI, AACT, BCMA, FCIA, CMAA and CASA events.

Marlene is a member of PMCA's Production Conference Program and Education committees. She is also a member of AACT, NCA's Chocolate & Regulatory and Health & Nutrition Committees, the Cocoa Merchants Regulatory Committee (CMAA), the Pennsylvania Ag Council and a board member of FARRP (Food Allergy Resource and Research Program). She is a past recipient of the Marie Kelso Memorial Award and Stroud Jordan Award as well as a past PMCA president and chair of the board. She is currently president of the Food Industry Group. Marlene was inducted into the Candy Hall of Fame in 2024.



Ed Wilson
Retired, AAK USA
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Ed has 35 years of experience in technical sales and service functions at AAK USA and Barry Callebaut.

Ed has been active for many years on several PMCA committees (Education & Learning, Production Conference Program, Membership, Marketing, Western Region, Nominations, Research, Student Outreach and Long-Range Planning) and continues to serve on most of these groups today. He is also a past officer and currently serves on the PMCA Board of

Directors. Ed has instructed at PMCA's chocolate and compound courses multiple times and has presented at the Annual Production Conference. He has received other industry honors, including being the recipient of the AACT Stroud Jordan Award and being inducted into the Candy Hall of Fame.

Ed majored in industrial management while attending The College of Philadelphia and Glassboro State University. He has participated in short courses sponsored by universities and trade organizations.

Course Assistant



Monica Caparosa
Blommer Chocolate Company
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Monica Caparosa graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a B.S. in food science and a minor in international agriculture from the College of Agriculture Sciences. She continued her studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she earned her M.S. in food science under Rich Hartel for her research studying lecithin interactions in chocolate. Monica joined Blommer in 2024 and manages the Blommer R&D Center, located in Chicago, IL.

During her time at UW-Madison, Monica facilitated Candy School operations for two years and supported many other short courses. She has also had the opportunity to intern at several confectionery companies supporting product development, quality and operations teams. Prior to joining Blommer in 2024, Monica worked for Ferrero on their iconic American chocolate brands and for Ferrara Candy Company on the cookies, cones and crust products.

Monica attended three PMCA conferences with the partnership of the Student Outreach Program and continues to serve on the Student Outreach Committee and as a student mentor when she attends PMCA.