



TOP  
blog  
STORIES



By Jessica Fitz

**Coffeehouses**  
Now Open:  
Cafecito  
Orgánico on  
Heliotrope



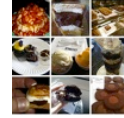
By Noah Galuten

**Best Of LA.**  
Best Banana  
Cream Pie: The  
Apple Pan



By Ali Trachta

**Food News**  
Le Cordon Bleu  
Culinary School  
Faces Class  
Action Lawsuit



By Elina Shatkin

**Food writing**  
Is Food Media  
Booming or Has  
It Jumped The  
Shark?

### Food News

## Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School Faces Class Action Lawsuit

By Ali Trachta, Mon., Oct. 11 2010 @ 12:16PM

Categories: [Food News](#)

Comments (42)

Share 223 Like 223 32 retweet 0

*Updated after the jump with additional information about the change in curriculum.*

A class action lawsuit alleging fraud is currently pending against [Le Cordon Bleu](#) in Pasadena, which is owned by the Culinary School of California, a subsidiary of the Career Education Corporation (CEC). The suit claims the school leads prospective students to believe they'll become chefs, but that the vast majority of them graduate unable to obtain that position.

According to the claim, Le Cordon Bleu's marketing strategy reels in students with "become a chef" advertising and the promise that "a very high percentage, (80% to 90%) of its graduates are placed." However, the claim goes on to say that "those statistics do not relate to 'chef' jobs, but to prep and line cook jobs, and other low wage jobs, available without a culinary degree." It continues that "virtually all" students take on financial aid in order to enroll, then are stuck with student loans they'll never be able to pay off, since Le Cordon Bleu does not adequately train them to obtain high-paying jobs in the culinary field.

When asked about these charges, Jeff Leshay, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications and Public Relations at CEC, said, "We believe this lawsuit has no merit and the claims are ill-founded, and we intend to defend against it."

The case against Le Cordon Bleu in Pasadena was filed in 2008, and is not the first bout of criticism the CEC has faced. Back in 2007, [SF Weekly](#) talked to both CEC students as well as former admissions officers who agreed that students were misled about what kinds of jobs they would be able to get upon graduating. There's also [a similar class action suit](#) against the Western Culinary Institute, another CEC school in Portland, which was filed in 2008 as well.



### Most Popular Stories

Viewed Commented Recent

[Top 10 Men With Meat Names](#)

[Restaurant High Chairs Carry More Bacteria Than Toilet Seats](#)

[Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School Faces Class Action Lawsuit](#)

[Lady Gaga's Raw Meat Dress: Your VMA Meat ID Test](#)

[LudoBites 6.0: Coming to Max Restaurant in Sherman Oaks](#)

[More Most Popular...](#)

The company owns more than 90 campuses worldwide, 18 of which are culinary schools. Leshay told us, "We stand by the reputation of the institution; it has a strong reputation as a global leader in culinary education."

One possible source of unrest among students may have stemmed from the CEC's decision to change Le Cordon Bleu's curriculum in late 2007. Students went from spending 5 hours in the kitchen per day for 6 weeks (and 2 hours per day in a classroom) to spending just three weeks total in the kitchen per term. The school resumed a 6-week term schedule in May of this year. Over the course of several conversations, *Squid Ink* asked Leshay if there was any change in tuition and/or credits received during this time, but was not able to obtain an answer.

**Update:** Per Leshay, the credits required dropped to 90 from 101 during 3-week terms, while tuition remained essentially the same. While students spent 150 hours in the kitchen during 6-week terms, Leshay was not able to confirm how many hours were spent in the kitchen during 3-week sessions.

So is this fraud? Could you sue Harvard if you thought it didn't adequately prepare you to obtain a high-paying job? Is suing a culinary school or a trade school any different? Weigh in below.

**Tags:**

[Ali Trachta](#), [Class Action Lawsuit](#), [Le Cordon Bleu](#)

---

 [Comments \(42\)](#)  [Write Comment](#)  [Email to Friend](#)  [Print Article](#)

---

**Related Content**

[IT'S NOT "CHOC-OHOLICS" — IT'S CHOCOLAT-ICS](#) October 8, 2009

[Elements Restaurant Now Open in Pasadena](#) January 21, 2010

[Ecole De Cuisine Pasadena: Farid Zadi's New Cooking School A Moules à la Moutarde Recipe](#) September 15, 2010

[Back to \(Cooking\) School: Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Los Angeles Gets More Students An Anti-Griddle](#) November 16, 2009

[Intelligentsia Coffeehouse Opens in Pasadena](#) August 4, 2010

**More About:**

[Le Cordon Bleu](#)

[Jeff Leshay](#)

[Pasadena](#)

[Food and Cooking](#)

[Culinary Arts](#)