Written by MARK JAEGER
Wednesday, 02 January 2013 15:34

Retail management training, financial aid offered through Concordia

Concordia University Wisconsin is partnering with Sendik's Food Market to offer a specialized retail management program through the School of Business Administration.

The Sendik's Food Market Scholars Retail Management Program is a four-year, undergraduate offering that will be available to select students interested in a career in the retail grocery industry.

Selected students will receive annual scholarships of $5,000 and internship placements within the Sendik's organization.

"Executives within this modern age need to be customer-focused, tech-savvy leaders," Dean of Business Administration David Brost said.

"Student in this program will learn strong, critical thinking skills and be able to manage budgets and inventory successfully."

Ted Balistreri, one of the co-owners of the Sendik's chain, said program is intended to develop future leaders for the family business.

The Balistreri family has roots in Milwaukee's food business that go back more than 80 years.

After family members immigrated from Santa Elia, Sicily, they first peddled fruits and vegetables from a horse-drawn wagon. An only slightly more modern image of the original produce truck has been incorporated into the store-chain's logo.

The Balistreri family has been running grocery stores in the Milwaukee area since 1926. They currently operate 10 stores in southeast Wisconsin, including ones in Grafton and Mequon.

According to the store's Web site, the Sendik's name is not derived from a family name, but a customer's misunderstanding of the broken English and heavy Italian accent of one of the original Balistreris.

The story goes that "Great Grandpa Balistreri" placed an order for a stove with a sales clerk, asking him to "send it," which apparently sounded like Sendik to the clerk.

When the stove arrived, the delivery person said he was told to "ask for Mr. Sendik," and the rest is history.

Interviews for the first class of Sendik's Scholars at Concordia will be conducted in spring.

More details are available by calling (262) 243-5700.