

# BIZBASH

FLORIDA

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## F.I.U. Students Take Over Convention Center Kitchen for South Beach Wine & Food Prep

More than 150 *hospitality-not* culinary-students from Florida International University gathered at the [Miami Beach Convention Center](#) as early as 8:00 a.m. yesterday to start food prep for two of the South Beach Wine and Food Festival's biggest culinary events: BubbleQ and the Whole Foods Market Grand Tasting Village. Just a mere 48 hours before 3,000 plus hungry guests flock to the sands behind the [Delano](#) hotel for BubbleQ on Friday, students-under the direction of chef-instructor Michael Moran-took on the responsibility of getting everything ready for the 26 participating chefs.



Yesterday more than 150 hospitality students helped with the food prep for BubbleQ tomorrow night.

Courtesy of the F.I.U. School of Hospitality/Mitchell Zachs

Paired with a student manager and chef mentor (such as Govind Armstrong of [Table 8](#) in Miami Beach and Tom Colicchio of [Craft Restaurant](#) in New York City and host for the Friday affair), teams of four students were responsible for prepping 1,800 pounds of pork; 1,500 pounds of beef filet; 1,000 pounds of chicken; 1,200 pounds of fish; 800 pounds of cabbage, and turning out several hundred pounds of nouveau potato salad, cole slaw, and other side dishes for arguably one of the festival's most coveted soirees.

"Not only is this a great experience for students who are interested in the restaurant and hospitality industry, but also for those like myself who are drawn to the special events business," said Andy Villabona, a senior at F.I.U. and one of chef Moran's two lead interns. "I am given the opportunity to

manage close to 175 students who will later serve close to 3,500 guests coming from all over the country."

Yesterday's prep work will wrap up this morning with the food then being packed into a refrigerated, 65-foot, 18-wheeler truck and delivered to the Delano. Simultaneously prep will begin for Saturday and Sunday's Grand Tasting Village under the direction of Alex Kuk, a graduate student from the university.

Overall more than 700 students from F.I.U. are involved in a variety of different capacities before, during, and after the festival to help make it a success.

"We're part of the community and want to make it more successful," said chef Moran. "One of the things we can bring to the table is the planning and creation of an environment to have a great time."

*—Brittany Peitsmeyer*