

## Half-Baked

**George Kelly, Colorado Mesa University**

---

*This critical incident was prepared by the authors and is intended to be used as a basis for class discussion. The views presented here are those of the authors based on their professional judgment and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society for Case Research. The names of individuals, the firm, and its location have been disguised to preserve anonymity. Copyright © 2015 by the Society for Case Research and the authors. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the Society for Case Research.*

---

### Introduction

“This can’t be happening,” Gerry spoke out loud as if someone else were still standing in the kitchen. Gerry couldn’t believe his ears. One of the other chef instructors had just told him the new baking chef, Diane Harvey, had been promoted over Gerry to a full time position. Gerry Kennedy had been an adjunct instructor at the community college for six years. When the full time position was originally posted, Gerry’s supervisor, Dave Klein, had advised Gerry that he might not be qualified for the position because he lacked the Certified Executive Pastry Chef (CEPC) needed for the job. Gerry now wondered whether his current position was secure, or whether it was time to move on to a new opportunity.

Gerry had enrolled in the culinary arts program offered at the college years before. He had performed so well as a student that he was the first graduate of the program to be invited back as an instructor. The community college had offered a conversion program where graduates could take their Associate of Arts degree and transfer to the university in town. With additional course work, students would end up with a Bachelor of Arts degree in business. Gerry had willingly made this conversion, added a second undergraduate degree in Marketing, and eventually went on to get an MBA at the university.

During this period, Gerry had continued to work as an adjunct instructor in the culinary arts program. Gerry remembers being very excited when the full time position was made available. Even if he lacked the CEPC qualification, his six years of experience combined with his three business degrees would make him a candidate. That was before Dave Klein had advised him they would keep looking for even more qualified candidates. Gerry was disappointed, he felt he at least deserved an interview, but realized that he might have to consider an adjunct position in the business department at the university instead of staying with the culinary arts department.

Then Grant heard the news that Dave had given the full time position to Diane Harvey, the new adjunct. Gerry couldn’t understand how this could be possible. Diane did not have the CEPC qualification listed in the job posting. She also did not have any other college degrees or his teaching experience; not even the Associate of Arts degree that the students she was instructing were working on. There was already other women working as instructors, but like all the instructors in that department, they were younger than Gerry.

### **Gerry Kennedy**

Gerry Kennedy was in his fifties when he decided to change careers. Culinary Arts had seemed like a good way to secure an income in food service while working on his real objective: A B.A. in Business Administration. Gerry began working as an instructor right after receiving his A.A.S. in Culinary Arts. Students and faculty both like Gerry's friendly and positive personality. Being an Instructor at the community college was the perfect part-time job for Gerry while he finished his degree.

Gerry worked as an adjunct instructor until his graduation in 2010. Because of his age (now 55 years old) and no better full time job prospects, Gerry immediately enrolled in the MBA program at the University. After graduation in 2012, an MBA allowed Gerry to teach a whole new set of classes for both the Community College and the University. Gerry was sure that being able to teach more courses would make him invaluable to the Culinary Arts Department and insure him a full time job there. When the new job was listed, Gerry was sure that this was the break he had been waiting for.

### **High Desert Community College**

High Desert Community College had been a vocational school until it was acquired by the University and became an extension campus for general education classes, as well. Students enrolled in Culinary Arts Associate of Applied Science programs had an option to convert them to Bachelor of Applied Science degrees by transferring to the main campus of the University.

### **Dave Klein**

Dave Klein had been the Department Head for the Culinary Arts Department at High Desert Community College for 19 years. Dave had owned both full service and limited service restaurants in the past and was well respected at the college. Gerry had never seen a job description from Dave, and while full time employees (FTEs) are hired by committee through the HR Department, it was Dave's decision alone to hire adjuncts for the program. Like other instructors in the Culinary Arts Department, Dave was under pressure from the University to finish his undergraduate degree. Last year, Dave actually had to take Gerry's computer class as part of Dave's B.A. requirements. Dave ended up with a "C" for that course.

### **Diane Harvey**

Diane Harvey was a 42 year old business owner from the local community that had owned and operated a cake and cupcake business for 10 years. She was a self-taught baker that was looking for a change to the demanding rigors of self-employment. The baking instructor opportunity at the community college seems perfect for Diane. Diane started as an adjunct instructor, but after three months, was promoted to a full time position.

Diane enjoyed teaching and got along well with the students. Department Head Dave Klein told Diane that she was the best suited employee to be advanced to the full time position as no other qualified applicants had even applied. Diane was excited about her new opportunity, sold her cake and cupcake business, and began a second career at the community college

### **The Pastry Chef Controversy**

In 2013, a new instructor position was listed for a Certified Executive Pastry Chef. Although Gerry taught baking classes and was the senior adjunct skills instructor, he had never pursued getting the CEPC certification. This was largely due to Gerry being enrolled in the University's MBA program. Gerry had graduated with his MBA in the spring of 2012; the first Culinary Arts Department graduate to earn one. Although Gerry knew that the CEPC certification was important for the position, he was confident that if no one who applied had one, they would pick him because of his seniority and academic accomplishments.

### **Gerry and Dave's Meeting**

Gerry made an appointment to talk with Dave Klein about the new job.

Dave was as cordial as ever and explained that no favoritism had been shown; that the new Instructor simply had more pastry experience.

Job fulfillment was not based on seniority, but on job qualifications. Because this advancement was to a full time employee (FTE) position, the hiring was done by Committee, and it wasn't Dave's decision alone.

Dave explained that although Gerry had two undergraduate degrees and an MBA, the Culinary Arts Department was a vocational curriculum and those qualifications didn't matter as much.

Dave told Gerry he was welcome to stay and continue to teach his three baking classes.

### **Moving Forward**

Gerry wondered what to do next. Had he overstayed or outgrown his welcome at the Community College? Was it possible Dave was upset about the computer class grade? The business department at the university had offered Gerry a chance to teach three business classes for them next semester. Gerry wondered if he should abandon his hope of getting a full time job at the Community College in-lieu of a different opportunity at the University.

The university job was closer to Gerry's current skill set, but he had an emotional attachment and a long history at the Community College. Gerry had to make a big decision, and he had to let the University know his decision in one week.

