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FPFC apprentices hold first class meeting at expo

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The [Fresh Produce & Floral Council](#) 2022 Apprentice Class held its first meeting at the 2022 FPFC Expo last week with the [International Fresh Produce Association](#) Career Pathways students.

On April 5, the Apprentice and Career Pathways students and their mentors, attended a morning introductory breakfast that was led by Barbara Hochman of IFPA. There were apprentices and students from varying segments across the supply chain, including quality control, operations and sales/marketing. After breakfast, the group continued to Frieda's Specialty Produce for a tour of the facility, marketing presentation and a "Fear No Fruit" tasting where the group ate specialty produce such as watermelon radish, Popjoys kumquats and Snow Dragons Fruit.

After their tour concluded, the group traveled back to the Anaheim Convention Center for a supply chain overview from Howard Nager of Pacific Trellis Fruit/Dulcinea. "The Career Pathway's and FPFC's Apprentice Program focuses on key initiatives and current issues in the produce and floral industry, to not only educate the students, but also excite them about the many available career opportunities," said Nager. "It was a pleasure to be able to present to the group at the recent FPFC Expo in Anaheim 'The Produce & Floral Industry Overview' touching on such topics as Supply Chain, Sustainability and Technology."

Following the supply chain overview was a career panel led by Kristen Reid of MIXTEC Group with Ambar Mota of Oppy; Myisha Nathaniel of Raley's, Jonathan Tong of Bonduelle Fresh Americas; and Tara Olson of Progressive Produce/Pathfinder Logistics. After a day of tours, programming, and educational sessions; the group attended the Exclusive Tuesday Night Out at Splitsville where they networked with their mentors and Career Pathways students.

"After two years connecting virtually, IFPA was excited to conduct the first in-person Career Pathways Program in conjunction with the FPFC Expo," said Hochman. "The university students from Cal Poly-Pomona, Fresno State, and Chapman University were joined by this year's FPFC Apprentices as they kicked off their program. IFPA is grateful for the continued partnership with FPFC and our joint mission of attracting and developing talent."

On April 6, the group attended the Keynote Breakfast with WNBA Player and Olympic Gold Medalist Lisa Leslie, who gave the young professionals in the room her insight and viewpoints on leadership. After the Keynote Breakfast, the apprentices and students walked the show floor with their industry mentors while networking and learning about the various sectors of the industry.

"The 2022 FPFC Apprentice Program is off to a great start this year and we were thankful to kick off our programming at Expo in conjunction with the Career Pathways students once again," said Rachelle Schulken, Apprentice taskforce chair. "We are thankful to companies like Frieda's for hosting our group at their headquarters, and to the many industry volunteers for taking time out of their schedules to speak with and mentor this eager group of up-and-coming young professionals."

