

February 18, 2021

To our community –

Thank you all for taking the time to join us, ask questions, and provide feedback during our Listening Session: A Conversation on Education & Examination this week. The Board and our Membership strongly believe this series of sessions is a great start to give you, our constituents, an opportunity to play an active role in our evolution as an organization.

In case you were not able to join us, or if you would like to revisit our conversation from the conversation, we've outlined the top four topics covered below. Please note that other topics were discussed, but we wanted to give you a synopsis of those we discussed the most.

Stay tuned for details about the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas' next Listening Session: Diversity in The Industry, taking place virtually on Friday, March 5th at 12 PM Pacific. You can register in advance for the Zoom meeting by using this [LINK](#).

Listening Session: A Conversation on Education & Examination Topics Recap

1. **Transparency in Tasting:** CMS-A has heard very clearly that this is something that candidates are asking for. We know that there is room for improvement and are actively discussing what this can look like in all aspects of the exams and the potential repercussions. There is a deft balance required to ensure the information we do provide is done so constructively and constantly in a manner that aides in the development of candidates on their journey rather than distracting from the pursuit or even worse is used to attempt to game the system. One thing that is certain is that as we venture down this path of transparency in exams the implementation will come in stages rather than sweeping changes.
2. **Transparency in Service** We keep all scores and records, and we are discussing how to better share the service grading process. We have spent a lot of time making sure that this examination is not subjective. We do not currently have an appeals process, but it is something we are discussing.
3. **Examination Security:** We can't give away exact security standards for obvious reasons, but those in place ensure of the following:
 - Limit Master Sommelier exposure to content before, during, and after the examination.
 - Eliminate interaction of Master Sommeliers with candidates before, during, and after the examinations.
 - No electronic devices permitted for Master Sommelier examiners.
 - Create real consequences for examination security breaches.
 - A refresh of content for each examination, further ensuring that sharing information would no longer be helpful.
4. **Staying Refreshed For Exams During COVID:** Since the pandemic started, we have been and remain very committed to virtual seminars to help keep you prepared for both performance in

our programming and return to the restaurant profession. Along with another round of Tasting with Master Sommeliers, we will also be introducing both online Introductory Sommelier Courses and Somm Assembly. Somm Assembly is meant for those preparing for upper-level examinations in 2021 or for those forced to pause on the Advanced Sommelier Course this past year. Please stay tuned for more information.

We also received many questions on the subject of diversity and inclusion in the examination and service space, and we clearly see that this is a major area of interest to you all. We will discuss this subject at the next Listening Session: Diversity in The Industry, taking place virtually on Friday, March 5th at 12 PM Pacific.

We won't stop listening. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us either by emailing listening@mastersommeliers.org or visiting the CMS-A [website](#) for panelist contact information.

Yours In Service,

Emily Wines, MS
Chair, Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas

Kathryn Morgan, MS
Vice Chair, Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas

Christopher Bates, MS	Joshua Nadel, MS
Robert Bigelow, MS	Sabato Sagaria, MS
Brahm Callahan, MS	Mia Van de Water, MS
Keith Goldston, MS	David Yoshida, MS
Michael Meagher, MS	