

# BREWING UP A NEW MINOR

## Ohio State Tapping Into the Microbrew Trend

STORY AND PHOTO BY **CHANDLER WILSON**

As glasses cling and spirits sing, the stress of the long work week melts away in the beautiful environment created by local breweries. Local sport teams provide a special commode along with a fun competitive atmosphere. As the customers unwind, the bartenders keep tabs on who may need a refill or simply a friendly conversation.

Columbus, Ohio, is becoming a dominant location for the brewing industry. In response, The Ohio State University started offering a brewing science minor in autumn semester 2021. This minor has been in the works for a few years and is available for all students to enroll.

### Meeting a Growing Need

"I think that Ohio is becoming an important hub for beer," said Professor of food science Luis Rodriguez-Saona, PhD, and a key player in developing this minor for the University. "We have recognizable names, and I think that is one of the things we like most about making this brewery science minor available."

A booming and resilient industry

Unlike other businesses, more Columbus breweries have opened rather than closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are over 45 breweries in central Ohio which have generated \$111 million in economic output and created over 1200 jobs. The expansion of breweries after the pandemic is having many positive

impacts on local economies. With this boom in the industry, comes a boom in the need for employees. Ohio State is now in the position to benefit students, breweries, and the university itself by establishing and building a strong program.

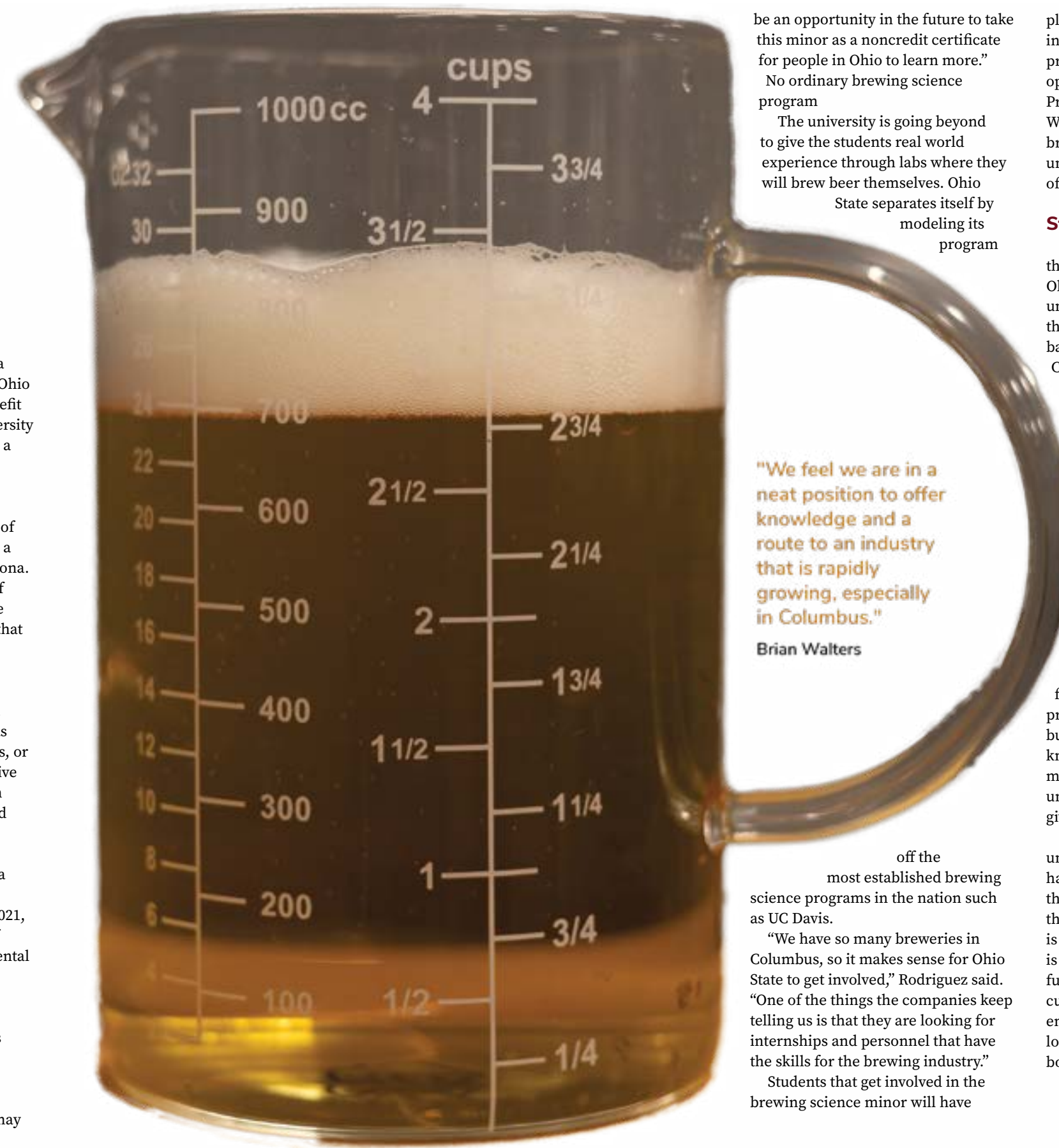
"We want to make sure to give the students a taste of what is a commercial setting, with support of the chair we have been able to get a microbrewery," said Rodriguez-Saona. "It's an intermediate stage piece of equipment that is going to provide understanding of the complexity that goes into making beer."

### Added Value

The brewing science minor is a terrific addition to anyone who has already completed biology courses, or chemistry courses. It is a way to give value to the information you learn from a general education class and utilize it as a career or side gig.

Not only is the brewing science minor great for students, there is a possibility it will be available as a certificate class in the future. In 2021, Jeanne Osborne, assistant dean of Food Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, supports the idea of expanding the program to people beyond college students.

"Because there are a lot of folks in the state of Ohio that would be interested in learning about the brewing industry and the science behind it," said Osborne. "There may



be an opportunity in the future to take this minor as a noncredit certificate for people in Ohio to learn more."

No ordinary brewing science program

The university is going beyond to give the students real world experience through labs where they will brew beer themselves. Ohio

State separates itself by modeling its program

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Brian Walters

off the most established brewing science programs in the nation such as UC Davis.

"We have so many breweries in Columbus, so it makes sense for Ohio State to get involved," Rodriguez said. "One of the things the companies keep telling us is that they are looking for internships and personnel that have the skills for the brewing industry."

Students that get involved in the brewing science minor will have

plenty of opportunities for internships in the Columbus area which will present long-term employment opportunities in the industry. Professor of food science Brian Waters is currently teaching in the brewing science minor and feels the university's program has quite a bit to offer to the students of Ohio State.

### Standing Out

"What we feel we have to offer is that we have the brand recognition of Ohio State, a very big approachable university," Waters said. "Most of the brewing science programs are basically out West in Colorado and California," said Waters. "We feel we are in a neat position to offer knowledge and a route to an industry that is rapidly growing, especially in Columbus."

Ahead of the competition

Since the craft brewing industry in Ohio has exploded, many opportunities have arisen for students. Any student interested in joining a small brewing business is in luck due to the ever-growing popularity of local craft breweries. Many have picked up the brewing industry as they have gone along at no fault of their own, as there was no program available for them to help build a solid foundation of brewing knowledge. The development of this minor will provide a powerful base of understanding for anyone involved, giving them an edge in the job market.

Craft brewed beer has a special and unique taste, and each establishment has their own set of flavors. However, there is more to the brewing industry than making good beer. While that is obviously a principal factor, it is equally as important to create a fun and unique atmosphere to get customers in the door. Creating an environment where people can let loose and enjoy themselves is a win for both customers and brewers. \*