

THE BEACON

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Dinner is served

Slob learns dining etiquette at practice dinner

News Editor

The salad fork goes to the right of the dinner fork, but the salad knife goes to the left of the dinner knife. Fold your napkin under the table. Chew with your mouth closed.

The rules of formal dinner etiquette have been largely ignored by most people in this country, perhaps because their complexity often demands the use of diagrams, maps and lengthy charts - I know, because I lazily tend to ignore those rules myself.

In an effort to gain some of those long-forgotten manners, I attended the annual Business Etiquette Dinner sponsored by SGA and Career Services on Oct. 6, a \$20 event which tries to reform working-type slobs like me who can't tell the difference between a white wine or red wine glass.

The event - held in a well decorated Graham Center conference room - consisted of a six course meal served to 88 attending students dressed in their formal best.

From the warm minestrone soup served as appetizer to the main course of chicken and rice (or 'Coq au Vin with Rice Pilaf,' as the menu stated, imitating what might eventually be encountered at a high-class restaurant), the food proved to be superb and of a high quality. The only problem was the timing of the service; being that the dessert éclairs did not find their way to our tables till three hours after the start of the event.



WHICH IS WHICH?: Elena Brouwer assists a student attending the practice dinner with the appropriate way to handle a water glass.

Media Credit: [Harry Coleman / Editor in Chief](#)

Between long waits for the next plate, **Elena Brouwer**, a certified etiquette and protocol expert, kept the audience informed through a training lesson designed to explain the million rules involved with being polite at a business dinner.

"A person with good etiquette is a person who shows he or she is in control, a person who shows responsibility," she said during an introduction regarding the importance of good manners.

Illustrating her lecture with personal anecdotes, the well-groomed **Brouwer** told of the businesswoman who threw her fork across the room in a drunken state, of having to adjust to the extremely late night meals held by other cultures and other such tales that helped to perk up the sometimes dull atmosphere. She responded well to the many questions students asked, personally walking from table to table to demonstrate the proper way to propose a toast or scoop rice onto a fork.

By the end of my meal, I found myself confident in the ability to eat in front of an audience during highly formal events, picking up such random facts as the true purpose of sorbet along the way (that it helps clean the palette between courses).

The dinner, held once a semester at UP, is an event all business-oriented students should make an effort to attend whether or not they know the difference between a red or white wine glass.