NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

HOSPITALITY & TOURISM NEWS
FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

SUMMER 2008

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COLLEGE HOSTS INAUGURAL NIAGARA UNIVERSITY SPORT MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Oct. 18 and 19 saw the Niagara University sport management program take another step in establishing itself as one of the premier programs in the northeast when it successfully hosted the inaugural NU Sport Management Conference. In keeping with the university’s focus on active and integrative learning, this conference was largely the work of a small group of sport management students: Erin Andrejcak, Pat Haggerty, Cali Gilbert, and Julie Moses. These students worked tirelessly for 10 months to ensure the success of this event. Working even harder were the two sport faculty members: Dexter Davis and Michael Gentile.

The idea for this conference was planted nearly two years ago when a group of NU sport management students attended a conference hosted by Georgia Southern University in Savannah, Ga. During that conference, a number of Niagara students asked, “Why can’t we do something like this at NU?” From that conversation, the idea for the NU conference began to grow and came to fruition as a “conference for students, by students” in October.

The conference opened with a large panel discussion, featuring representatives from across the wide spectrum of sport and recreation. The professional sport industry was represented by current and former executives from the Buffalo Bills, Buffalo Bisons, and Buffalo Sabres; the recreational sport industry was represented by department heads from Nemacolin Woodland Spa and Resort; intercollegiate athletics was represented by members of the Niagara University athletic department; and the sport tourism industry was represented by a former New York State Parks and Recreation staffer and current sport tourism entrepreneur. The focus of this discussion was on providing students with practical insights as to how they should best prepare for the ever-evolving sport and recreation industry.

Students received advice on a wide range of topics, from résumé preparation, to the importance of internships and other practical experiences, to being prepared for the fact that you might one day be fired from your position.

Thursday evening conference attendees were treated to the excitement of opening night for
HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY!

The 2008-09 academic year is one of special celebration and thankfulness. It is our 40th anniversary year. The Institute of Transportation, Travel and Tourism was announced to the world on Lowell Thomas’ July 4, 1968, radio broadcast. TTT became the Institute of Travel, Hotel and Restaurant Administration in 1987, and the third and final name change occurred when ITHRA became the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management on Feb. 8, 2001. This change in status made us the fourth college at Niagara University and we became the fourth hospitality and tourism program in the country to achieve college status.

Special dates to note during this academic year are:

- **Oct. 10**: Career Day program sponsored by the college’s alumni association that brings alumni and friends of the college to campus to discuss career opportunities and promote networking. See student-written article about Career Day in this newsletter.
- **Oct. 23**: College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Convocation that honors national and international leaders in the hospitality and tourism industry. Honorees for the 40th anniversary year of this Maid of the Mist sponsored event include: John Doherty, executive chef, The Waldorf-Astoria; John Scott, president and CEO, Rosewood Hotels and Resorts (includes The Carlyle as one of their properties); Tom Shepard, chief executive officer, Festival Network; and Jan Shrem, founder and owner of Clos Pegase Winery, Napa Valley. This is the college’s flagship event.
- **Nov. 9**: The college’s reception at the Waldorf-Astoria during the Hotel Show from 6 – 8 p.m. in the fourth floor Conrad Suite. Business attire is required.
- **Feb. 11**: College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair. This is a great opportunity to secure students for internships, summer jobs, and full-time jobs.

Please RSVP for these events using the form in this newsletter; contact me about participation in the career fair.

The newsletter summarizes many of our activities this past year — and there are many activities and accomplishments, too many to discuss here. Our sport management program has truly come of age in seven short years as demonstrated by the hosting of the college’s first annual sport conference in October 2007. The club management program continues to rapidly develop, with students gaining placements and internships at the top-rated clubs in the country and earning great industry support for our program. Students worked on projects such as the annual auction for the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association, and for the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau. Students worked as consultants on a project provided them by the hotel manager of the Waldorf-Astoria — only one other program in the country ever did this (guess which one and it was not recently). The college launched in June 2008 a work-abroad program in Cusco, Peru, complementing its highly successful and signature Lake Como work-abroad program.

Two great friends of the college helped us again this year. The Statler Foundation provided us with a $225,000 grant to strengthen our practical industry applications focus — the source of the college’s success — and to strengthen the international linkages of the college. The Statler Foundation has been a long-standing supporter of the college, helping us over the years with facilities, computer equipment, student scholarships, and programming to support industry and international linkages. The Carlson Family Foundation awarded us a $250,000 grant to hire a director of experiential opportunities (see article on Katie Finamore on page 8) to strengthen our linkages with industry, providing more co-op, placement, and experiential opportunities for our students. Major Carlson Company presidents regularly speak on our campus as part of our hospitality partnership agreement with Carlson.

A person who worked very hard behind the scenes this year is Zongqing Zhou. He is leading us through a well-defined outcomes assessment process to make us a better college that brings even greater value to our students. It is not glitzy work — it is hard and meticulous work — but it is the kind of work that we need to strengthen the college as it continually needs to improve. Thank you, friends and alumni, for helping us better serve our students as we try our best to make the biggest possible impact on them.

We have received many blessings recently and over 40 years and are thankful for all of them!
COLEGE HONORS FOUR AT ANNUAL CONVOCATION

David Kong, president and chief executive officer of Best Western International, and Charles S. Cutts, president and chief executive officer of The Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto, were among the honorees at the Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management's seventh annual convocation on Oct. 25, 2007, in Alumni Chapel. The event is sponsored by The Maid of the Mist Corp.

Kong, who received the Lifetime Hotelier Leadership Award, joined Best Western, the world's largest hotel chain, in 2001. During his tenure at Best Western, Kong has held several high profile positions, including vice president of strategic service, senior vice president of global strategy and development, and senior vice president of marketing and development. He is a hospitality veteran with more than 35 years of experience and has also held senior management positions at Hyatt, KPMG Consulting, and Omni International. He has also worked for Hilton, Hilton International and Regent International.

Cutts was feted with the Cultural Management Leadership Award. Since 1992, he has led The Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall. The facilities stage 400 concert attractions a year. From 1980 to 1989, he was the general manager of the former O'Keefe Centre for the Performing Arts. Cutts has received the Association of Cultural Executives Award for Cultural Leadership in 2003. He is the chair of Tourism Toronto and is director with the Toronto Board of Trade.

Other honorees included:

Paul Cohen, president of Partner Concepts, who received the Tourism Industry Leadership Award. Cohen founded Partner Concepts, a full-service travel-marketing firm in 2002. The firm has the exclusive rights to market the 2008 Beijing Olympics in the United States. Cohen is also assisting to re-shape the focus of The Travel Channel. He has also headed up the hospitality and tourism division of Enten & Associates, an advertising agency based in Bethesda, Md., and served as director of marketing and strategic alliances for the American Hotel & Motel Association. Cohen is a 1989 graduate of the State University of New York, Brockport.

Peter Coyne, president of Coyne Associates, received the Urban Regeneration Leadership Award. Coyne is a chartered surveyor with considerable experience as a practitioner and as a general manager in property development, urban redevelopment and social and economic regeneration. He has also been the chief executive of the Dublin Docklands Development Authority in Ireland, one of the largest urban regeneration projects in Europe, and saw the project through its first seven and a half years. He undertook strategic and area master planning; land acquisition and decontamination; mixed use property development; area environmental and infrastructural development; and comprehensive social regeneration with specific emphasis on education.

Friday’s activities included a series of roundtable discussions with the panelists and a keynote address by Jim Kahler, executive director of the Ohio University Center for Sport Administration and coordinator of graduate studies in sport administration. The roundtables were designed to allow students to ask more direct questions of the panelists and obtain more personalized answers to their specific questions. Kahler’s keynote address focused on the role and growth of sales within the sport and recreation industry. He also provided information regarding graduate studies at Ohio University and the value of a graduate degree for those interested in a future within the sport industry.

As with any new experience, this conference provided all involved with incredible opportunities for growth. The participants had the opportunity to learn from industry experts exactly what is needed to successfully enter the highly competitive sport and recreation industry. The student leaders had the opportunity to enhance their skills and résumés. The panelists had the opportunity to share the wealth of knowledge they have gained through their experiences in the industry and meet potential new members of their respective organizations. The next group of student leaders is already working with professors Davis and Gentile on the second annual Niagara University Sport Management Conference, to be held in fall 2008.

Contact gdp@niagara.edu for information about exhibiting at the annual Hospitality and Tourism Career Fair on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Niagara University.
HOSPITALITY ITALIAN STYLE
By Susan Mikula Campbell

The language, the food, the weather, and being thousands of miles away from home was a bit difficult at times, but Italian students who spent the fall semester studying at Niagara University agree — it’s sure going to look good on their résumés.

That opinion is shared by their NU counterparts who spent the summer working in Italy. It all started in 2001 when Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, assisted Italy’s University of Insurbia in developing a new hospitality and tourism program and, in the process, began working with the Lake Como Hotel Association and Lake Como Tourism Association. From this grew an exchange program that for the past four years has put 10 Niagara travel-tourism students to work for the summer in Lake Como hotels and brought 10 Insurbia students to study at the NU campus for a semester.

“I think it’s a unique experience. It helps you grow,” said Insurbia student Consuelo Ravelli. “You learn a lot of new things apart from language.”

Insurbia’s program focuses on theory, while at Niagara, there’s a lot of practice. In Italy, they don’t live on campus, but return to home or apartments at the end of the day. Nor do they have career days and the university doesn’t help you find a job, Ravelli noted. “Here, they are very lucky,” she said.

One of the most difficult, and at the same time, valuable, experiences for Anna Mandato was speaking and understanding English. She studied English in Italy, but learned mostly grammar rules.

“The first month for me was very, very difficult. I didn’t understand very well when people speak to me.” By the end of the semester, she said, “I’m not so well able to answer, but I understand for the most part.”

Because there are so many foreign visitors in the tourist areas of Italy, the ability to speak English and other languages is one of the first things employers in the tourism industry there look for on a résumé.

Ravelli’s English was a bit stronger (she also speaks German and a little French), but even she found American classes difficult at first. “They speak so fast,” she said.

The language difference meant the Italian students had to put in some extra studying to keep up with classes and required projects.

“They study more than any student I know at Niagara,” commented Evan Hanrahan, a senior from Ithaca.

Asked what she would miss the most when she returned to Italy, Ravelli said it would be the people she’s met. “They are very friendly and helpful with us. If you go anywhere and ask for help, they just smile and help you.”

During their semester at NU, the two young women traveled to Toronto, Washington, Philadelphia, New York (where they stayed at the Waldorf-Astoria for an industry hotel show) and, when interviewed in December, had just been to Miami and suffered the fate of any snowbird who returns too early. “It was so warm there, and when we came here, it was snowing!” Ravelli said.

As to what they wouldn’t miss on returning home, Mandato apologetically commented, “I’m sorry, but I just don’t like the food.” Not used to that much fat in their diets, she and Ravelli didn’t fall victim to french fries or chicken wings.

By contrast, their NU counterparts loved Italian food.

“It’s so healthy and so fresh. There’s so much more emotion put into their food,” Hanrahan said, describing smoky-flavored, thin-crust pizza with fresh vegetables baked on a stone. Both he and fellow NU senior Nathaniel Adams became addicted to Italian gelato, which is kept at lower temperatures than American ice cream. “It’s like cold frosting,” Adams said.

Hanrahan spent last summer working at the Grand Hotel di Como; Adams at the smaller Villa Flori. They rotated through each of the departments at their hotels, from kitchen to front desk. Hanrahan even took over as head of the housekeeping staff at his hotel for a week when the manager went on vacation. Like the Italian students here, they had to adjust to the language barrier, despite having studied Italian for a year.

Self-confidence and willingness to serve is the first thing you notice about the NU students who have worked in Italy.

“It takes a lot of guts for a 20-year-old to work half way around the world, speak a different language and live with their co-workers at a property with no other Niagara students present,” Praetzel said.

The NU students who work in Italy get free room and board, plus invaluable experience, but no payment at the hotels where they work. They do get 12 credit hours, which allows them to graduate a semester early. Adams, for example, already has a job at the Grand Hyatt in downtown Washington.

It’s different from going to another country to vacation. It’s nerve-wracking at first, but when you work and live in another country, you immerse yourself in the culture and come out the better for it, Hanrahan said.

Both the Italian and the NU students credit Praetzel not only for establishing the program, but for taking the extra step to make sure their experience was a success. As one Italian student wrote Praetzel after returning home in December: “I will never be able to thank you enough; it was such a great experience that it’s difficult to find the right words to describe it. Thank you.”

It doesn’t matter if it’s a small problem or a large one, he’s always available to help, Ravelli said.

In Italy, Hanrahan said, Praetzel comes by the hotels where the students are working, takes them out to dinner and introduces them to people.

“He really takes care of you. He becomes like a surrogate parent. You want to make him proud. It’s the same way you want to make your father proud,” he said.
The college's annual fundraising dinner at Salvatore's Italian Gardens Restaurant came about due to the time and effort of Burt Notarius, president of the Premier Group and community leader. Burt Notarius is not only one of the great entrepreneurial stories in Western New York, he is also one of the most giving people in the community. Notarius is a leader in the cultural community and serves on many boards of directors for key organizations such as the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau. One organization that he has helped greatly is our college. Thanks to his efforts, the college hosted its third fundraising dinner — a food and wine paring dinner featuring Rocca delle Macie wines — on May 1 that attracted about 450 people! The event raises funds to support the practical industry applications focus of the college, which includes excursions to industry conferences, two work-abroad programs, a cruise course, and special events on campus such as the Career Day program and convocation.

Southern Wine and Spirits of Upstate New York supplied all wine on a complimentary basis for the reception and the six-course dinner that was paired with Rocca delle Macie wines. Approximately 450 people attended this event and so this donation by Southern Wine and Spirits was greatly appreciated. Tom Kitson, on behalf of Southern, has generously donated the wine for all three years that this event has been held. John Coco, Jay Bauer, Bob Swiech, and Kevin Cuzylko are all part of the Southern team that has made this event possible. Chris Low of Palm Bay International worked with Southern to make this wine donation possible. Lynn George of Palm Bay served as our evening’s wine expert, explaining to the audience why a particular wine was paired with a specific dish.

Joe Salvatore has selected the menu for all three years, making for a true culinary delight in an elegant setting. The dinner this year was held in the new banquet room at Salvatore’s Italian Gardens Restaurant, the destination restaurant of Western New York. The formal setting, great food, and equally great wine made for an unforgettable evening. This is why the event started at 200 people in 2006, grew to 300 attendees in 2007, and reached 450 guests in 2008. Joe Salvatore and the Southern Wine team know how to throw a great party.

Thank You: Burt Notarius, Southern Wine, and Joe Salvatore

Pictured at the Salvatore’s fundraising dinner on May 1 from left to right are: Lynn George of Palm Bay International, Pat Notarius, Dr. Gary Praetzel, and Burt Notarius.
By Lisa McMahon

When Dr. Dexter Davis discusses the differences between the sports programs of the United States and those of non-U.S. countries in his Organizational Behavior class, he’s speaking from experience. That’s because he has traveled abroad several times during the past few years to teach foreign sport administrators how to run their programs.

Through his association with the United States Sports Academy (he earned his doctorate there and currently serves as an adjunct professor), he has made connections in Thailand, Bahrain and Dubai, and traveled to those countries to offer one-week introductory courses in the basic fundamentals of sports administration.

“We hit everything pretty quick,” Davis says, adding that more focused courses on specific administrative topics are likely to be developed in the future.

Davis’ interest in international sports programs was kindled as an undergraduate at Houghton College during a six-week internship with the National Sports Foundation in the Honduras.

“Since that time, it’s always intrigued me how other countries run their sports programs,” he says. Davis has parlayed that interest into a unique opportunity not only to learn how foreign sports programs are run, but to also play a part.

In the summer of 2004 (just a week or so before he was scheduled to start his new position as assistant professor of sports management at NU), Davis took the 17-hour flight to Thailand to work with that country’s Sports Authority. A snafu with his visa prevented him from leaving on his expected day of departure, and he ended up missing the orientation program NU provides all new faculty before classes start. Davis notes that Dr. Gary Praetzel, the dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Administration, was understanding even then, and has been a strong supporter of his international work ever since.

Davis’ next trip was to Bahrain, where he provided his course through the country’s Office of General Welfare for Youth and Girls, an organization that oversees youth sports programs. He was surprised to discover how Bahraini sports programs are affected by the country’s cultural conventions. For example, only members of the ruling family’s sect can hope to advance in their positions. However, he notes that “they’ve gotten better at understanding it’s about ability and turning to people who can help them grow their programs.”

In addition, while women could attend his class, they were not permitted to ask questions directly of Davis. Instead, they had to have older men in the class ask their questions for them, and Davis would have to reply to the men, who in turn would answer the women.

The fact that Davis’ words were translated into Farsi and Arabic so that participants could understand added another unique twist to the typical Q and A session.

His most recent trip to Dubai this past January was eye-opening in several ways as well, including learning about the measures that country is taking to become a sports tourism destination. Davis says that Dubai is building “incredible” golf courses (Tiger Woods has played on them in the past) and soccer stadiums “on par with anything in Europe.”

Dubai also built an indoor ski slope, an interesting choice for a country with temperatures that range from 75-113 degrees Fahrenheit.

Unfortunately, Davis did not get many opportunities to sightsee in Dubai. His anticipated class of 45 grew to nearly 100, forcing him to offer the course in two separate sessions each day. And President George Bush’s visit to that country just days after Davis arrived prompted a national holiday which “closed the entire place down,” keeping Davis in his hotel and the students at home.

Cultural norms and impromptu national holidays aside, the most significant difference between sports programs in other countries and those in the United States is the way they are run, Davis notes. Unlike U.S. programs, sports programs in these countries are run by governmental agencies, and the people working in the industry are volunteers who have “real” jobs that are unrelated to their sports work. Because schools do not offer athletic programs, it is through these programs that the countries’ athletes are trained, and communities support their local programs the same way Americans support their favorite college or high school teams.

“They take a lot of pride in their clubs and in their clubs doing well,” Davis says. That’s why courses like the one Davis offers are so appealing to these nations, and why their governments encourage and enable individuals to take time off work to attend, he says.

While Davis’ next destination is not yet determined (he’s currently looking into opportunities that may become available in Chile and Cuba), what is certain is that Davis will continue to offer his considerable expertise to students both at home and abroad.

Dr. Dexter Davis, assistant professor of sports management, wears a traditional Saudi head covering he received as a gift from his class in Dubai. The ghutra is folded on a diagonal, and the aghal holds the ghutra in place.
TASTING THE BEST OF ITALY

Academia Barilla representatives Italo Besseghini and Carlo Orlando provided 50 students enrolled in the food and culture course and foodservice purchasing course with a day they would never forget. On March 26, 2007, the students had the opportunity to taste the luxury products in the Academia Barilla product collection. Academia Barilla is the fine products division of Barilla, featuring extra virgin olive oils, fine balsamic vinegars, specialty cheeses, cured meats, and artisan compotes.

The students tasted a range of olive oils, from delicate to medium strong, experiencing the flavors of fresh almonds, pine nuts, green tomatoes, and freshly cut grass within them. They also tasted a range of aged balsamic vinegars, which, as someone noted, was “like tasting port wine.” The tasting event was topped off with some outstanding meats, olives, and cheeses, including the king of cheeses, a fine Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, and Pecorino sheep’s milk cheese from Sardinia.

But these tastings were just the beginning. In true Italian fashion, the meal continued with meat, pasta, and halibut dishes, which utilized Academia Barilla products such as natural rock sea salt. The tasting was a three-hour dining sensation which took Besseghini and Orlando a full day to prepare in the college’s teaching kitchen and dining area. The time, generosity, and hospitality of Besseghini and Orlando taught all of us a lesson.

Italo Besseghini grew up in the Valtellina region of northern Italy and it was there that his dedication to food began. As a child, he worked on his grandfather’s dairy farm, where he learned the art of making cheese, wine, and cured meats. After moving to the United States, he worked as a chef and opened Sassela, an upscale restaurant in Amherst, N.Y., featuring the best and finest ingredients. In 1999, he launched Spriana Imports, which brings quality Italian products to the American market. That same year, he started working for Orlando Foods and representing Academia Barilla.

Carlo Orlando is president and 50 percent owner of Orlando Food Sales, Inc., a New Jersey based company established in 1945. Orlando has worked in the family business since 1990. The company was founded to supply traditional Italian foods to the U.S. market. The company has maintained its mission, but expanded its focus to include top quality products from other countries including Spain, Greece, Morocco, Argentina, Brazil, and Thailand. Orlando Foods supplies Academia Barilla products, as well as Barilla pasta, to the American market. It has been the sole importer of the Academia Barilla product line since its inception some five years ago, and a regional representative of Barilla Pasta since 1988.

Thank you, Besseghini and Orlando, for such a delightful learning experience!

GLOVER RECEIVES AH&L EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Jessica Glover, a student in Niagara’s nationally ranked College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, has been awarded a $5,000 Arthur J. Packard Memorial Scholarship from the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Foundation. Glover, a senior, is a native of Watkins Glen, N.Y.

“Jessica’s award of the Packard Scholarship illustrates her special talents and also shows that Niagara University is a leading national and international program in hospitality and tourism,” said Dr. Gary D. Praetzel, dean of the college.

In 2002, the American Hotel & Lodging Association consolidated its two affiliates, the American Hotel and Lodging Foundation and the Educational Institute of AH&LA, to form the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Foundation, which operates in two divisions: the foundation, which is the charitable-giving, fundraising, and endowed fund management subsidiary of the AH&LA; and the Educational Institute.

YANNAS HONORED FOR EXCELLENCE

Senior Ioannis Yannas is Niagara University’s recipient of the Leading Hotel Schools of the World award, The Leading Award of Excellence. The criteria for the award include excellence in academic achievement and in work experience at a member property of The Leading Hotels of the World. In summer 2007, Yannas participated in the college’s signature Lake Como work-aboard program, working at the world-renowned Villa d’Este hotel, also known as “Hollywood on Lake Como” for the movie stars and distinguished guests it serves.

John Homik, ’47 (left), received the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Outstanding Alumnus Award during a ceremony held during Alumni Weekend. Homik, an accountant by training, has acquired and sold over 40 businesses in his career. He made a special mark in the hospitality industry when he began Inntel Hospitality Management, a company now run by his son, alumnus Dan Homik, ’78 (right). Both John and Dan Homik have been life-long supporters of Niagara University and in particular the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the college, refers to them as “two of the most loyal friends that the college has ever had.”
NU TRAINS YOUTH FOR SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

With the support of two area foundations, Niagara University has launched a program to prepare disadvantaged minority youth for employment by arts and cultural organizations and historical and natural attractions in the Buffalo-Niagara area.

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and the Niagara Area Foundation have provided nearly $15,000 in grant funding to train an estimated 20 high school students from Erie and Niagara counties to work as interns at nonprofit organizations and attractions participating in the program.

Niagara’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s Center for Hospitality Training and Research developed the six-week training program, which began in March with internships running from May 12 to June 20.

The Buffalo Zoo, The Buffalo Museum of Science, Artpark, Old Fort Niagara and the Lockport Locks and Erie Canal Cruises have agreed to provide internship positions and either a paid position or a letter of recommendation upon successful completion of the program, according to Deborah T. Curtis, director of the center, who, with Michael Jeswald, designed the program.

MEET KATIE FINAMORE: DIRECTOR OF EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

NU’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management is built on practical industry applications. It has an extensive network of worldwide contacts with industry, but needs to more fully develop and expand this network to increase internship and placement opportunities for its students. In addition, the college needs to more fully develop its alumni association for the same purpose. Through generous funding from the Carlson Family Foundation, the college hired Katie Finamore to serve as its first director of experiential opportunities.

Finamore is a Buffalo native who has worked in the hospitality industry for several years. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in hospitality administration from Boston University. During her time at BU, she completed internships at both the Buffalo and the Boston convention and visitors bureaus, and gained experience working in hotels and restaurants. She served as president of student government at the school from 2002-2003 and helped to establish and develop several new student programs, including the Dean’s Host program and the Peer Advising program.

Upon graduation, Finamore returned to Buffalo and obtained a position working for Hart Hotels as a sales manager. In 2004, she went to work at the Hyatt Regency Buffalo, first as their group rooms coordinator and later as corporate sales manager. While at the Hyatt, she was named manager of the year in 2005 and was nominated by the hotel for the 2005 Hyatt Hotels and Resorts sales manager of the year. Finamore has been a member of the Western New York Hotel Motel Association and the New York State Business Travel Association. She is currently chairman of the BU School of Hospitality Administration’s New York State Alumni Association.

In July of 2007, Finamore left the Hyatt to participate in the international volunteer program Cross Cultural Solutions. She served in the township of Nyanga outside of Cape Town, South Africa, where she worked for several weeks at a center for women and children with HIV and AIDS. After completing her volunteer work, Katie traveled to several African and European countries before returning home. She is now thrilled to be a part of the NU College of Hospitality and Tourism Management community and looks forward to strengthening the college’s relationship with industry in her role as director of experiential opportunities.

Benedikt Schneider, regional sales director of Lufthansa Airlines, delivered the keynote address at the Eta Sigma Delta induction ceremony. He was inducted as an honorary member of the national honor society for hospitality and tourism students at the event.

Student Margarita Grigoryev was part of the student team preparing the food and decorating the fourth floor of St. Vincent’s Hall for the reception that followed the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s convocation. The reception was sponsored by the Maid of the Mist. Upon graduation, Grigoryev begins work with the Cherokee Club in Atlanta, rated the number one club in the country.
Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management has received two grants totaling nearly $475,000 to strengthen industry programs that provide students with practical experience and other learning opportunities.

A $225,000 grant received from The Statler Foundation was matched by a grant from The Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation that will provide an additional $248,876 over a three-year period. The funds will facilitate international expansion of the college’s student-learning and placement opportunities and industry training programs. A new staff position of director of experiential opportunities was also created.

“The grants will allow the college to strengthen the source of its success; namely, its focus on practical industry applications,” said Dr. Gary D. Praetzel, dean of the college.

The Statler grant will provide the funding to develop, offer and receive distance-learning courses in consort with leading hospitality programs in Europe and South America. At the same time, it will expand the college’s ability to provide its industry training programs to different parts of the world. The Carlson grant will support the staffing needed to develop and monitor the expanded programming.

“These international partnerships will expand Niagara students’ knowledge and cultural understanding and add to the college’s national and international reputation, creating even more industry linkages,” Praetzel said.

The college currently has partnership agreements with the Catholic University of Milan and the University of Insubria in Italy; the International University of Applied Sciences in Bad Honnef, Germany; and the Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola in Lima, Peru. The grants will support existing partnership programs and facilitate additional ones at all institutions.

The college’s relationships with the hospitality and tourism industry provide students with internships, placement and training opportunities with major hoteliers, including The Leading Hotels of the World. Students gain other practical learning experiences by attending major conferences, serving on student consulting teams that analyze and report on individual property or corporate projects, exposure to industry experts and participation in workshops on industry topics, and attendance at career days. These various practical-application programs will also benefit from the grant funds, Praetzel said.

The Statler Foundation, the major benefactor of the college and sponsor of student scholarships, was created from the estate of Buffalo hotelier Ellsworth Statler, who died in 1928. The foundation supports projects and educational programs that benefit the hospitality industry.

The Carlson Family Foundation was created in 1959 to administer the charitable contributions of the family’s global group of integrated companies that provide travel, hotel, restaurant, cruise and marketing services. Among its nearly 30 brands are Radisson Hotels and Resorts, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Country Inns & Suites and T.G.I. Friday’s restaurants.

The college has a hospitality partnership agreement with the Carlson companies, which have operations in 140 countries worldwide.
The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management introduced an innovative addition to the annual convocation by creating a workshop to allow the distinguished honorees to share their experiences with local leaders in the field of economic development, tourism and the arts.

“We felt it was an ideal opportunity to apply the expertise of our outstanding international honorees to address issues such as ‘place competitiveness’ and what that means for Western New York,” said Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the college. Praetzel added that he was delighted to acknowledge the support of the Baird Foundation, whose financial contribution permitted the inclusion of a workshop as part of the convocation for the next three years.

Peter Coyne, who successfully transformed Dublin Docklands from a decaying inner city site to a vibrant multiuse location without any public sector funding, suggested that at times government can be part of the problem rather than the solution. “The public sector is naturally risk averse, which in turn creates a bureaucratic maze that most private sector organizations avoid like the plague.” His remarks struck a chord with the Western New York audience accustomed to a plethora of public sector organizations claiming authority for economic development but lacking single unit accountability for delivery.

Charlie Cutts, president and CEO of the Corporation of Roy Thomson Hall and Massey Hall, Toronto, and current chairman of Tourism Toronto, was passionate in his support of the arts, but cautioned against a dependency toward public subsidy. “The most critical function for an arts administrator/presenter is to expand the audience for the art form.” It is a tough lesson to learn but we must not be seduced into using taxpayers’ money to develop a love affair with an empty seat.

Paul Cohen, president of Partner Concepts, addressed the opportunities presented by events as the means of attracting visitors and singled out Buffalo’s cuisine as an ideal brand capable of further development.

Eddie Friel, Niagara University’s “expert-in-residence,” commented that the tourism industry is not adequately recognized for its role within economic regeneration. “We need to understand that in a service economy, tourism provides the point-of-entry jobs that were previously represented by manual workers in the manufacturing economy. However, where you start has nothing to do with where you finish, as the scale of the opportunity within the sector is enormous. Tourism cannot exist in isolation from the economy of the region it serves, and greater inclusion of the industry’s contribution to economic development planning is critical in the future,” Friel said.

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**Club Management Association Update**

(Pictured at top left) On April 15, 2008, the Niagara University Club Managers Association of America student chapter hosted the New York state CMAA chapter’s educational session and business meeting, and prepared and served the lunch for the group. The New York state chapter has been recognized by CMAA for its outstanding educational programs and this one was no different. It featured guest speaker Philip E. Flynn of Philip E. Flynn Consulting Services (pictured at far right). The day was topped off with a video compiled and presented by students capturing their accomplishments over the year.

(Pictured right) Students of NU’s CMAA student chapter pose for a photo at the Country Club of Buffalo prior to the start of a dinner event on April 20, 2008. The event, “Destination New Orleans,” was held to raise funds for the students’ trip to the World Conference on Club Management in New Orleans in February 2009. The students planned, marketed, prepared and served the dinner for the event, which raised $4,000.

(Pictured bottom left) In conjunction with the New York state CMAA, the Niagara University CMAA student chapter collected Christmas gifts for needy families for the second straight year. Pictured from left to right are: Laura Stevenson, Lauren Kenney, Bethany Wood, Amy Beardsley, James Mason, and Dr. William Frye, the student chapter’s moderator.
SPEND A DAY WITH ALUMNI

The “Spend a Day with an Alumnus” program, now in its third year, has proven to be incredibly successful and beneficial to all participants in their quest to make educated decisions about their future career endeavors. Juniors and seniors interested in the program complete applications that are reviewed by the program committee to find the best alumni fit for each student, based on his or her expressed interests. The following recaps the very successful student/alumni pairings that did engage in this program over the past two years:

Senior Thomas Crowley/ Kevin Fiske, Columbia University Event Management
Senior Nicole Czechowski/ Dan Calabrese, director of sales, Starwood Hotels
Senior Jennifer Filipelli and junior Lillian Long/ Anthony Scioli, owner/manager, My Tomato Pie Restaurant
Senior Matthew Kozel and junior Julie Dorsey/ Tracey Kegebein, director of sales, Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau
Senior Nicole Marinich/ Lori Boccaccio, U.S. sales manager, Vintage Inns
Senior Elena Oxford/ Mary Mattson, training manager, The Carlyle
Senior Jennifer Taylor/ Paul Murphy, facility manager, Buffalo Convention Center
Juniors Catherine Cotton and Rita Grigorveu/ Mark Gatley, general manager, Ft. Lauderdale Convention Center

Students must have the willingness, ability and tenacity to take advantage of this opportunity, because they are responsible for getting themselves to and from the alumni’s places of business, as well as for all associated travel costs. Based on the feedback received from the students (in a written summary about their experience), it was unanimous that such an opportunity allowed them to gain significant hands-on practical experience and personal insight about their areas of interest. Nicole Czechowski explained: “I am truly grateful and feel privileged to have been selected to participate in the ‘Spend a Day with an Alumnus’ program as well as being paired with Mr. Dan Calabrese. Dan shared advice with me that I will use throughout my career. After completing this program, I am even more passionate and enthusiastic about having a career within sales.”

Elena Oxford said: “I absolutely cannot say enough about the ‘Spend a Day with an Alumnus’ program. I would whole-heartedly recommend it to ANY student who was interested. It was a fantastic experience, and there is so much that I was able to take away from the extraordinary staff at the Carlyle.”

Matt Kozel wrote: “This meeting provided the necessary forum for communication among various associates and departments. The overall willingness to share both ideas and opinions was refreshing. I even found myself sharing ideas when my experiences offered insight. This valuable real-world experience combined with critical networking opportunities will undoubtedly positively affect my career.”

Catherine Cotton wrote: “This program, ‘Spend a Day with an Alumnus,’ has helped me narrow down and start to focus my interests and likes to a specific field. The knowledge, information about different careers, and supportive advice I gained was priceless. I was somewhat uncertain about what I may want to do once I graduate from Niagara University; however, after visiting with Mark and his team I definitely feel that this experience was one that was extremely effective in helping me come closer to a more specific clear path.”

The overall willingness to share both ideas and opinions was refreshing. I even found myself sharing ideas when my experiences offered insight. This valuable real-world experience combined with critical networking opportunities will undoubtedly positively affect my career.

PRAETZEL NAMED CHAIR OF TOURISM EDUCATORS COUNCIL

Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, has been elevated to the position of chairman of the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association’s Tourism Educators Council. His two-year term began in January of 2008.

The council is for individuals who are employed at any institution of learning in New York state offering educational courses relating to the hospitality and tourism industry.

“This (post) is a reflection of the college’s practical industry applications focus that has resulted in outstanding placement rates for its students,” said Praetzel. He added that the university is constantly offering programs statewide to meet the educational needs of the hospitality and tourism industry.

MONTI WINS TIA FOUNDATION’S SHOP AMERICA ALLIANCE SCHOLARSHIP

The Travel Industry Association Foundation has named Christina Monti, a senior tourism/sports management major in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, the winner of the 2007 Shop America Alliance Scholarship. Monti, from Syracuse, was awarded $3,000.

The TIA Foundation awards the scholarship to a junior or senior undergraduate student pursuing a degree in travel and tourism. The foundation was created in 1995 to help meet the travel industry’s growing need for trained professionals and academics who can guide the entire industry into the future.

The Travel Industry Association, located in Washington, D.C., is a nonprofit trade association that represents and speaks for the common interests and concerns of the entire U.S. travel industry.
STUDENTS SERVE AS CONSULTANTS AT THE WALDORF=ASTORIA
By Steven Siegel, associate professor

Hospitality faculty members are always looking for any good experiential learning opportunities to supplement in-class learning. When the world-famous Waldorf-Astoria makes a most unusual and intriguing offer, one’s answer will usually be “When do you want us there?”

Background
In June of 2007, while completing a weeklong faculty internship at the Waldorf, and after consulting with three of our alumni currently working at the hotel — Amanda Marsh, Elena Oxford and Kevin Conroy — I floated this question to Mark Lauer, the hotel manager: “Would you be interested in defining a major problem that the hotel is currently facing, one that you have been unable to adequately solve, and have a group of students from the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management come into the hotel and serve as consultants and present their findings to you and your staff?” Lauer was intrigued with the possibility and immediately said that he would be interested.

Over the next six months, the Waldorf canvassed its various operating departments, looking for the right problem that could consume a semester of effort on the part of the students. Meanwhile, with input from Bill Frye, I was able to put together not one, but two consulting teams made up of four members each. Dr. Gary Praetzel, recognizing the challenge ahead, decided that instead of this simply being a noncredit-bearing project, it would be a three-credit course for spring 2008 called “Waldorf Consulting Project.”

In January 2008, with all the pieces in place to make this project with the Waldorf a success, the hotel unveiled the problem to me.

Situation
The “room turn” at the Waldorf=Astoria is a much discussed topic at the hotel. With nearly 1,400 rooms, and occupancy rates always at peak, managing the process is quite a challenge. Of particular concern is Saturday. Due to so many guests arriving on Friday and staying until Sunday, the hotel finds that it have very few check-outs on a typical Saturday, which serves to limit the number of available rooms for sale on Saturday. But the bigger issue is that the vast majority of check-outs on Saturday occur very late in the day, causing many rooms to not be “turned” until perhaps 5 or 6 p.m. Meanwhile, new check-ins are arriving and expecting to check in no later than the published time of 3 p.m. There are many trends which seem to affect, and in turn are affected by, the room turn, including but not limited to: weekend traffic, high room rates, the nature of a guest’s visit to New York City, guest expectations, staffing, and the union environment. Students should not only analyze the cause of the “turn” issue, but also the cost of a slow room turn, and impact on the hotel’s SALT scores, revenues, and overall reputation. The students should focus particularly on Saturdays during each week, when there are an equally small number of arrivals and departures, leaving a limited margin of flexibility.

My goal for the student groups
To identify all causal factors creating the problem. Identify the current qualitative and quantitative costs to the hotel. Provide creative solutions to the issues causing the problem, which are supported by quantitative/financial data. Such solutions should also be shown to more successfully meet the needs of all parties involved — employees, unions, and management, as well as the customers.

Process
In February 2008, the consulting groups flew to New York City, and were given meals and accommodations at the hotel. They then proceeded to spend two days “fact-finding” throughout the property, through holding a series of meetings with various department heads and employees, as well as following them around as they performed their daily duties. At the conclusion, the students were treated to a dinner at the world-famous Bull and Bear Restaurant, located within the hotel. I was personally amazed at the amount of rather sensitive information that the hotel shared with the students during these two days. Obviously, the hotel was very serious about having the students really solve this problem.

Upon returning to NU, the students hunkered down for two months of additional data collection, data analysis and discussions — each group of four working totally independently of the other groups. In early April, each consulting group provided me with a 40-50 page written report. In addition, we were scheduled to return to the hotel in late April to present our findings orally to the management staff. Throughout April, the two groups rehearsed their oral reports before each other, other classes and the College Advisory Council.

On April 27-28 we returned to the hotel and in a pressure-packed scene reminiscent of the television show “The Apprentice,” each consulting group gave their presentation and, at the conclusion, successfully addressed a series of questions posed to them by the staff. The feedback from the hotel was all positive: many solutions proposed were felt to merit implementation. We were also invited back next year by Lauer to tackle the next big problem that the Waldorf will soon define for us.

Members of the consulting groups were: Maryanne Bantelman, Patrick Burns, Alexandra Dokuchitz, Evan Hanrahan, Samantha Marks, Ken Newhart, Lindsay Otto and Laura Stevenson.

Great job guys!

Pictured in the Presidential Suite of the Waldorf=Astoria are alumnus and Waldorf purchasing manager Kevin Conroy with Carol Praetzel, standing behind President Kennedy’s rocking chair.
As count down until graduation narrows down to single digits, we may find ourselves questioning our career decisions. How would students ever know that their selection suited them well? I have had yet another great experience at the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management here at Niagara University. Students of professor Siegel’s strategic management course and Dr. Frye’s advance hotel operations course were presented with an opportunity to shadow managers at the Park Hyatt Toronto for two days to see how course studies are used by industry leaders. As instructed by Park Hyatt managers, students were given the opportunity to ask anything that may be a concern. Some students were even able to sit in the weekly managers meeting. Students discovered quickly that no information was kept confidential. From daily tasks to budget spreadsheets, all information was available to us. We also enjoyed an informative seminar with the Park Hyatt’s colorful director of human resources, Paul Trudel, to address life after college. This was especially helpful given that many of the students are graduating soon.

Prior to this experience, I decided to begin my career track with the Hyatt Dulles located in Virginia. The two-day excursion at the Park Hyatt Toronto personally reassured my decision about joining the Hyatt “family.” Even though we are Niagara University students, managers and employees made us feel part of the Hyatt family. I use “Hyatt family” instead of “Hyatt team” because that was the type of atmosphere created for us. Within the two days, I realized that the Hyatt culture and atmosphere were the best fit for my personality and career goals. I found myself agreeing with many of the beliefs and attitudes that define Hyatt, such as the family atmosphere and giving back to the local community.

On behalf of all the students, I would like to give a special thank you to Paul Verciglio, general manager, and Paul Trudel for organizing this shadowing opportunity with professors Siegel and Frye. I would also like to thank the managers from the Park Hyatt Toronto who donated time from their busy work schedules to assist us in further understanding the hospitality industry.

Thank You Park Hyatt Toronto
By senior Ioannis Yannas

The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management is pleased to announce that Anthony Mauro has joined the faculty, effective August 2008, as a full-time faculty member specializing in the food and beverage area. Dr. Gary D. Praetzel, dean of the college, noted that “Mauro is an icon in the local food and beverage community with a distinguished teaching career of 35 years at Erie Community College, coupled with extensive practical industry experience.” The dean added that “the college has been seeking for many years a person in the food and beverage area with this kind of balance between exceptional teaching and exceptional industry experience.” Mauro is a graduate of Cornell University’s Hotel School and is a certified food executive. His many industry experiences include: director of catering at Martin’s Fantasy Island, a foodservice trainer at SUNY Buffalo, a foodservice evaluator for the U.S. Army, owner and operator of a local restaurant, and the assistant sales manager for the Sheraton Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. Mauro for many years has served as senior partner for Chapman-Forbes, an international management consulting company serving the hospitality industry. Most importantly, it is the students who will gain from his expertise. Welcome Tony Mauro to Niagara University!

The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management is pleased to announce that Anthony Mauro has joined the faculty, effective August 2008, as a full-time faculty member specializing in the food and beverage area. Dr. Gary D. Praetzel, dean of the college, noted that “Mauro is an icon in the local food and beverage community with a distinguished teaching career of 35 years at Erie Community College, coupled with extensive practical industry experience.” The dean added that “the college has been seeking for many years a person in the food and beverage area with this kind of balance between exceptional teaching and exceptional industry experience.” Mauro is a graduate of Cornell University’s Hotel School and is a certified food executive. His many industry experiences include: director of catering at Martin’s Fantasy Island, a foodservice trainer at SUNY Buffalo, a foodservice evaluator for the U.S. Army, owner and operator of a local restaurant, and the assistant sales manager for the Sheraton Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. Mauro for many years has served as senior partner for Chapman-Forbes, an international management consulting company serving the hospitality industry. Most importantly, it is the students who will gain from his expertise. Welcome Tony Mauro to Niagara University!
Americans cherish their traditional Thanksgiving meal as time to count their blessings, surround themselves with friends and loved ones and, of course, pack away vast quantities of turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes.

However, for the past seven years, Journey’s End Refugee Services, Inc., has used the holiday meal as more than just that, viewing it instead as a valuable cultural opportunity for refugees new to America’s shores. The Christian and community-based organization, which places refugees for resettlement in Western New York, celebrated the holidays with its Harvest Festival on Saturday, Nov. 17, at St. John Grace Episcopal Church, 51 Colonial Circle, Buffalo. Made possible this year through a donation by Fidelis Care, the Festival began at 5 p.m., with festivities running through the evening. Set-up and decoration for this function begins early that morning and food preparation begins a few days before this event due to the work of Niagara University students.

For many refugees, this is their first introduction to a traditional Thanksgiving meal, said Robert Roggie, Journey’s End Refugee Services executive director. In fact, Roggie contends the feast, served buffet-style, “may very well be the first meal they’ve had prepared for them by Americans.”

Students from Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management decorate the room and prepare the meal, complete with all the trimmings, for 250 people. Steve Siegel, senior faculty member, learned about the dinner, which Journey’s End previously tried to host itself, through a soccer coach whose players included many of the refugees’ children.

“I figured it was a natural fit for hotel/tourism management kids to get involved with this,” said Siegel, explaining that despite the university’s best efforts, many of his predominantly white, suburban students live culturally sheltered lives. Graduates often find the minority roles reversed upon landing positions in more internationally diverse hotels/restaurants in bigger cities.

With refugees from Burma, Somalia, Sudan, and Iran expected this year, Siegel described the feast as “one-stop shopping for multiculturalism.” Despite exceeding his greatest expectations, in recent years the professor has strongly encouraged his students to get out of the kitchen on their breaks and break bread with the refugees and their families. “We want it to be a festival where everyone is interacting with each other,” he said, noting that the students typically connect first with the children and eventually earn the parents’ trust.

Putting everyone at ease in a relaxed environment while slipping in a teaching moment or two is the event’s purpose, explained Elaine Smyth-Bogumil, Journey’s End volunteer services coordinator. Describing the feast as “a good melding of needs,” Smyth-Bogumil said refugees learn about Thanksgiving’s rich cultural heritage and cuisine. For many, it will be their first taste of roast turkey or pumpkin pie, menu fare completely foreign to them.

By evening’s end, Roggie said the refugees are “enthused and appreciative” in experiencing this uniquely American tradition firsthand. For the more enthusiastic epicureans, Journey’s End even supplies take-home turkey gift baskets with instructions for refugees to prepare their own Thanksgiving meals.

In that sense, Journey’s End Harvest Feast becomes the gift that keeps on giving each year for refugees and their families.
GORMAN BRINGS BUFFALO HOMECOMING 2008 INTO THE CLASSROOM

Marti Gorman, organizer of the popular summer downtown event Buffalo Homecoming 2008, has as her organizing team a group of event management students. Fifteen Niagara University students who registered for “Buffalo Homecoming 2008” in spring 2008 are helping Gorman execute this event.

As Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, noted, the college continuously seeks opportunities to partner with industry and the community.

Buffalo Homecoming 2008 is an immense reunion that celebrates the best of Buffalo for those who are in Buffalo because they want to be, as well as for those who are not in Buffalo but wish they were. It is designed to help keep our best and brightest here, encourage those who have left to come back, and attract professionals, entrepreneurs and businesses to Buffalo. This year, more than 10,000 enthusiastic participants are expected to register to be part of this unique, grassroots event!

The 15 Niagara University students are gaining hands-on experience with every facet of event management. The class helped design the four-day event, had input on the event graphic, worked on the messaging, contributed to the design of the Web site, and identified and prioritized potential attendees. With the help of guest speakers and attendance at off-campus events, they have learned how to write a press release, run a press conference, generate publicity, manage the media, use blogs and viral networking techniques, decide on and contract for venues, and make entertainment and menu decisions. Every student works with a community mentor to reach out to a specific community to generate registrations, and to manage or work on of one of the seven Buffalo Homecoming signature events. Students will be on site on June 26-29 to run the event they have worked so hard to produce. The 17-member steering committee and the 15-member NU team have formed a powerful partnership to create a unique event that is engaging the students in the community to make a real difference in that community.

REASONS TO ATTEND NU’S COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

• Niagara offered the world’s first bachelor’s degree in tourism.
• Our college is a founding member of The Leading Hotel Schools of the World, an association of leading hotel schools worldwide that works with the 430 five-star Leading Hotels of the World.
• The college was the 2002 recipient of the Institutional Achievement Award of the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators.
• We were the seventh program in the country to be accredited.
• Only three other hospitality and tourism programs have achieved college status.
• We are ranked in the top 20 hospitality and tourism programs in the country.
• Students can work abroad in Lake Como, Italy, and cruise abroad in the Caribbean.
• The college’s alumni association operates a mentoring program for our students, provides career panels, and secures employment and internship opportunities for our students.
• More than 20 leading national and international industry leaders speak to our students each year.
• The college honors national and international industry leaders at its annual convocation.
• Students gain valuable hands-on experience through our 800-hour, approved practical industry experience requirement.
• We have a 100 percent placement rate with 90 percent of our students placed in the hospitality/tourism industry.
• Average class size is 17 students.
• We offer a range of programs in lodging, foodservice management, tourism, recreation and sports management, and entrepreneurship.
During the spring 2008 semester, Dr. Jan van Harssel incorporated three classroom projects into his courses.

Van Harssel has had a long association with the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association, so it was natural for that organization to seek his help in raising scholarship funds for hospitality and tourism students in New York state. During the past three years, students in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management have assisted the association in organizing the Fred and Gertrude Scholarship Foundation Silent Auction. The event takes place during NYSH&TA's annual conference. Each fall semester, students prepare for the spring auction by organizing pledge letters. During the weeks leading up to the event they organize the pledged items, design and publish the auction catalog, and plan for the layout of the auction room and tabletop displays. This year’s auction took place in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Albany, N.Y., on March 10. Over the three years NU has been involved, the association has raised over $25,000. The fourth annual NYSH&TA Scholarship Auction will take place in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., in April 2009.

Students in van Harssel’s Tourism Planning and Destination Design class had the opportunity this spring to work directly with staff members from the Buffalo/Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau. Early in the semester, after meeting with Cheryl Zanghi, the bureau’s national sales manager, students developed strategic planning recommendations in two areas: branding the city and introducing green practices to the city’s service industries. Students conducted a review of the literature and, after a careful situation analysis and a look at exemplary practices around the country, shared their conclusions in the classroom. Findings and recommendations were presented in two papers entitled “Buffalo: A Great, Good City to Visit” and “Buffalo: Green with Envy.” As a final exam exercise, students presented their work to Zanghi and her colleague, Mike Evan, director of sales and services, on May 27.

If you would like to donate an item for NYSH&TA’s auction, sponsor part of the event, or learn more about getting students involved in your fundraising efforts, please contact Dr. Jan van Harssel at 716-286-8276.

“Celebrating the Service Culture” was the theme of two successful and informative New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association organized seminars presented in Long Island in early March by Dr. Jan van Harssel, professor at Niagara University's College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Employees at the Gurney’s Inn in Montauk and the Holiday Inn Express Stony Brook participated in the three-hour long interactive workshop aimed at anticipating guests’ need and reducing “customer sacrifice.”

“Professor van Harssel did an outstanding job. His presentation was top-notch and very professional,” said Bill Somerville, director of human resources at Gurney’s Inn. “His casual approach and engaging personality allowed him to quickly put the staff at ease and open up terrific dialogue.”

“(Dr. van Harssel) brought enlightenment to areas where we are doing things right and how we can slightly improve to make a more positive experience for our guests,” said Denean Fontanetta, general manager of the Holiday Inn Express Stony Brook. “The key point that I walked away with and have since focused on is making the guest experience memorable.”

For more information on scheduling a half-day workshop for either frontline or management-level employees, presented by Dr. Jan van Harssel, please contact Debra Trulli-Cassale, NYSH&TA's director of education at (800) 642-5313, ext. 12 or by e-mail at debbie@nyshta.org.

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MENTOR APPLICATION

The mentor and shadow programs, organized by the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Alumni Association, have been highly successful. They have increased the professionalism and marketability of our students. If you want to make a difference in a student’s life, please apply. For more information, visit our Web site at www.niagara.edu/hospitality.

Mail the application to:
Gary D. Praetzel, Dean
College of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Niagara University, N.Y. 14109
gdp@niagara.edu

Please print

Year Graduated Niagara University: _____________ Major: __________________________________________________________

Current Industry Category: (check one)
☐ Hotel
☐ Meeting Planning
☐ Other

☐ Group Tours and Attractions
☐ Convention Centers/Bureaus/Facilities
☐ Restaurants/Catering

☐ Sports, Incentive and Event Planning

Name: __________________________________________________________

Title: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Company: __________________________________________________________

Business Address: __________________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: __________ Zip: __________________________

Office Phone: __________________________ Fax: __________________________

E-mail Address (preferred method of communication): __________________________

For committee use only:

Home Address: __________________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: __________ Zip: __________________________
Dear Alumni:

2008 marks the 40th anniversary of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. We, like you, are proud that the college has grown into a leading national and international program. The strong commitment and devotion demonstrated by the college’s alumni have no doubt contributed to the college’s success. As the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s Career Day approaches, Oct. 9 and 10, we ask that alumni continue to give back. The connections and relationships fostered between students and alumni prepare students for the industry. The one-on-one relationship helps students to develop long-lasting mentors and broadens internship opportunities, while ensuring a successful future for the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. We ask, alumni, that you please make the homecoming trip to Niagara University this fall and share your knowledge, experiences and advice with current students. We are eager to learn from you.

The weekend will kick off with a wine tasting and social hour on Thursday night. Career Day begins early Friday morning with registration and a continental breakfast followed by an informational meeting for alumni. Then the breakout sessions will begin which consist of question and answer sessions between students and alumni. The topics discussed in the breakout sessions will include: meeting and event management, catering, hotels, restaurants, sport management, and tourism and attractions. Lunch will follow the breakout sessions, and then a third session will be offered exclusively for alumni, seniors and juniors. Later on in the afternoon everyone is invited to a casual dinner at the Brickyard in Lewiston.

Career Day is an important component of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. It is a vital asset that helps graduating students find jobs in the industry, which in turn, better the reputation of the college. Career Day is also beneficial for underclassman: it helps them learn more about the industry. Please consider attending Career Day — your wisdom, like always, will be greatly appreciated! Please RSVP using the form on the next page.

Above: Alumnum Louis Quagliana, food and beverage director of the newly opened Hard Rock Theme Park in Myrtle Beach, S.C., addresses an overflow crowd of students, alumni, and industry friends at the opening of the Career Day program. Quagliana was one of the lead students in developing the college's Code of Professionalism some nine years ago.

Below: Students Jillian Shank (at microphone) and Nicole Marinchick address the students and alumni during the luncheon of the annual Career Day program.

American Cruise Lines
American Hospitality Academy
AAA Western & Central New York
Beaver Hollow Conference Center
Buffalo Bills
Buffalo Bisons
Buffalo Lodging Associates
Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau
Buffalo Sabres
Carlson Hotels Worldwide
Carnival Cruise Lines
Chevy Chase Club
Crowne Plaza
Conference Center NF
Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Expedia.com & Hotels.com
Gurney’s Inn Resort Spa Conference Center
Hart Hotels Inc.
Hyatt Hotels and Resorts
Hyatt Regency Buffalo
Keswick Hall, Club and Estate
Monroe Golf Club
Nemacolin Woodlands Resort
Niagara Power Baseball
Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation
Niagara University Athletics Department
Niagara University - Graduate Admissions
Oak Hill Country Club
Red Lobster
Red Roof Inn
Rochester Yacht Club
Rolling Rock Club
Rosewood Hotels and Resorts
Scott Enterprises
Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel
Starbucks Coffee Company
The Country Club of Rochester
The Leading Hotels of the World
The Sagamore
The Travel Team
Waldorf-Astoria
Walt Disney World College Program
Watkins Glen International
Alumni Career Day — Friday, Oct. 10, 2008
All people working in the industry, alumnus or not, may participate in any/all of these Alumni Weekend events.
St. Vincent’s Hall, fourth floor
☐ Day begins with 7:30 a.m. registration featuring career panels, networking lunch, and many other events
☐ Attending networking lunch with students

College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Convocation — Thursday, Oct. 23, 2008
Honorees at this showcase event include:
John Doherty, executive chef, The Waldorf=Astoria
John M. Scott, president and CEO, Rosewood Hotels and Resorts
Thomas Shepard, CEO, The Festival Network, LLC
Jan Shrem, owner and founder, Clos Pegase Estate Winery, Napa Valley
Bring guests to this impressive event to strengthen the college’s industry linkages.
☐ 4-5:15 p.m.       Alumni Hall, Convocation (awards ceremony)
☐ 5:15-6:30 p.m.    Reception, St. Vincent’s Hall, fourth floor

College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Waldorf=Astoria Reception — Sunday, Nov. 9, 2008
☐ 6-8 p.m.          Alumni/Industry/Student Reception, Conrad Suite, fourth floor.
                     Business attire. No charge.

Name: ___________________________________________________________
Company: _________________________________________________________
Job title: _________________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________
Phone: ___________________________________________________________
E-mail: __________________________________________________________

Please return to:
Pat Navaroli, Secretary to the Dean
College of Hospitality and Tourism Management
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