RESIDENTS GATHER TO “IMAGINE” YOUNGSTOWN’S FUTURE
NU STUDENT-LED COMMITTEE SHARES PROJECT UPDATE

Article courtesy of Joshua Maloni/Niagara Frontier Publications

Standing before a group of 35 or so Youngstown residents, merchants and local business leaders recently, Dr. Jan van Harssel said, “I don’t have to remind you this is a very special village.”

The Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management professor, and six of his students, updated the audience on “Imagine Youngstown.” The project, which went public last fall, is a “tourism planning and destination branding” initiative — engineered in the classroom — designed to grow Youngstown.

“This … project started late last year when a few stakeholders started meeting (to discuss) the dreams and the hopes and the aspirations for the Village of Youngstown,” van Harssel said. “It translated at that time into a series of ideas, suggestions and preliminary recommendations.”

In December 2008, a five-question survey was published in the Sentinel and printed within the village. Interested parties were asked to identify what they valued about Youngstown; what it’s like to live in the village; what changes they’d like to see; hopes and dreams for Youngstown in the next 15 years; and ways to make it all happen.

Approximately 30 people took part in the questionnaire.

“(Each student) took some of those responses and put the answers together from our findings,” student Jamie Richmond said.

The majority of answers, so said the students, suggested Youngstown is a quaint and strong community filled with interesting events (Level Regatta, soccer tournaments) and establishments (the Jug, the library). The village should work to preserve the waterfront;
Dear Friends & Alumni:

Thank you for giving back so generously to our students this year! Our focus has and continues to be practical industry applications. Our success with industry is because they know that our students have excellent work experiences and are well-prepared and focused to enter the workforce. Our industry partners respect that our students, by and large, have realistic expectations upon entering the workforce. You bring to our students the reality of the industry in many different ways. In essence, you bring to life our practical industry focus.

Thank you for the internship and placement opportunities that you have created for our students over the course of the year and for your presence at the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair. Thank you for serving as mentors in the mentorship program or for hosting students on site for the “Spend a Day with an Alumnus Program.” Thank you for returning to campus for Alumni Weekend and for participating in the annual Career Day program at that time. Thank you for setting up tours for our students on site, for speaking in our classrooms, for setting up student consulting projects, for attending the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Convocation, for attending the college’s reception at the Waldorf=Astoria during the Hotel Show, for attending our student-run dinners, and for attending our fundraising events. Thank you, too, for contributing to our college to sustain its practical industry applications focus.

This newsletter tells how our practical industry applications focus is brought to life. Thank you for making it possible and please continue to give back to our students.

Dates to remember for 2009-10:

- Alumni & Friends Career Day program for our students, Oct. 9, 2009, from 8 a.m.–2 p.m.
- College Reception at the Waldorf=Astoria, Sunday, Nov. 8, 2009, 6–8 p.m.
- College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair, Feb. 10, 2010, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

On April 30, the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management held its fourth annual dinner and wine pairing fundraiser at Salvatore’s Italian Gardens. The event was, once again, made possible by the generosity of Burt Notarius, managing director of Prime Wines and Spirits; Tom Kition of Southern Wine & Spirits; and Joe Salvatore, owner of Salvatore’s Italian Gardens.

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make more amenities available; establish affordable senior housing; create jobs; and utilize assets.

To that, the audience added more ideas, advancing the creation of a hotel at Fort Niagara, forging better access to Youngstown’s state parks, and setting up a peace garden signifying the historic battles that occurred within the municipality.

Students said the key to seeing those answers manifested lies in tapping into the Niagara Falls and Old Fort Niagara tourism markets; enhancing the number and quality of businesses in the village; creating signature events; and strengthening the bond between Youngstown and neighboring villages. Moreover, students said it’s imperative that residents become involved and engaged within their village.

“Supporting each other’s businesses and helping each other out is something we all need to work on,” student Frank Arena said.

“Imagine Youngstown” has three goals: to maximize year-round economic development opportunities for Youngstown; to enhance brand awareness of Youngstown’s image; and to promote the engagement of residents in support of the village’s economic vitality.

In addition to compiling data, the students also visited Youngstown to obtain an understanding of its economic and social climate.

“When you think of Youngstown, you think of UNPERS and former University President,” said Youngstown mayor Neil Riordan.

Van Harsel recommended Youngstown maximize its comparative advantage, drawing on and promoting its unique strengths. Those include the village’s location, its history, its people and sunsets unparalleled in Western New York.

“For visitors, you are the end of the road,” van Harsel said. “You are out of the way. Therein lies the challenge.”

“Whatever you do to entice people here, it must be special.”

A concluding report — the students’ final exam — will outline benefits and present scenarios of what Youngstown could be for visitors and residents alike.

For additional background information on this subject, visit www.wnypapers.com.
COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY STUDENTS CONSULT AT WORLD-FAMOUS HOTEL

For more than a century, the Waldorf-Astoria has been known as one of the world’s most famous hotels. The New York City landmark has hosted celebrities, presidents and tourists looking for that elegant experience. It has also been a home to many graduates of Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. That’s why it is not surprising that the hotel approached the college with a unique opportunity last year. During a weeklong faculty internship in June 2007, Steven Siegel, associate professor in the college, asked Mark Lauer, hotel manager at the Waldorf-Astoria, if NU could help in solving a major problem the hotel was currently facing.

“We are always looking for good experiential learning opportunities to supplement in-class learning at Niagara,” Siegel said. That experience ended up being a semesterlong course during the spring called the Waldorf Consulting Project.

WALDORF’S PROBLEM

In January 2008, the Waldorf presented the college with its problem: the “room turn.” The hotel was having an issue turning around rooms for new customers during peak times.

The three-credit consulting project asked students to analyze not only the cause of the turn issues, but also the cost of a slow room turn and its impact on the hotel’s SALT scores.

GET TO WORK!

Upon returning to Monteagle Ridge, the students hunkered down for two months, allowing them to gather additional information and go over data. “At first we thought it was just a front-desk problem,” said Samantha Marks, a native of Fairport, N.Y. “But as we looked deeper, we saw how the problem affected housekeeping, property operations … and especially the guests.”

Marks was the only junior who participated in the project.

Each group was required to work independently so that their results would not be the same. It was a tough task seeing that many of the students in both groups were friends. “Evan Hanrahan and I are close,” said Ken Newhart. “There were several times when we wanted to bounce ideas off of each other, but could not.” He and Hanrahan graduated from Niagara in 2008; Hanrahan is currently working at the Waldorf-Astoria.

Like all of the students, however, they were keenly focused on figuring out how they could assist the Waldorf-Astoria, and coming up with different solutions was part of the class. “If we had two exact solutions, or even alike solutions, we were doing them a disservice,” added Newhart.

In early April, each group provided Siegel with a nearly 50-page written report detailing their solutions. “The students were really proud and excited to have been chosen to take on this project,” he said. Throughout the remainder of the month, both groups rehearsed their oral presentations before each other, different classes, and the college’s advisory council. The next step would be the toughest challenge yet.

BACK TO THE BIG APPLE

On April 27, Siegel and the two groups returned to the Waldorf-Astoria for their individual presentations; the scene was something out of the hit television show, “The Apprentice.” Each group was asked a series of questions by the hotel’s staff regarding their findings. “We had to be creative and think outside the box to come up with solutions that would effective,” said Newhart. Marks agreed, adding that something that may seem like a small problem can actually be bigger than anticipated.

The Waldorf staff was pleased with the solutions the students proposed, and felt that many of them merited implementation, said Siegel. Mark Lauer has even invited the college back next year to tackle the hotel’s next big problem. (As of publication that has not been defined.)

The hard work each student and group put into the project has had lasting effects: it will help them grow as hospitality professionals and people. “Instead of looking for the simplest answer to the problem,” Marks said, “I will look for one that will benefit all the different departments involved.”

Newhart, a native of Marlton, N.J., added, “I understand better the process of critical thinking that it takes to make strategic decisions at that level.” He is already putting the experience to good use, working at the Four Seasons Hotel in Philadelphia. His goal is working in hotel management.

“Regardless of the conditions or constraints within a problem, there is a solution that will satisfy everyone,” Newhart added. “You just have to be diligent and creative.”
WORKING ABROAD IN PERU: ONE STUDENT’S EXPERIENCE

By Jacob Emmanuele, College of Hospitality and Tourism Management student

There’s a first time for everything. Everyone has heard this phrase before, but not many people have had the chance to take part in the first-time experience that I was able to. I can proudly say that I was part of the first group of students in Niagara University’s history to be able to participate in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s Cusco, Peru, work-abroad program. Four other students and I spent the summer of 2008 working, living and exploring in Cusco. We resided at the Casa De Don Ignacio, which is part of our sister school in Lima, Peru, and worked at the Libertador Palacio Del Inka, one of the country’s two five-star properties. The hotel was built over Incan ruins, and Incan walls still make up part of the structure. When walking through the hotel, you can appreciate the history surrounding you and the beauty of the architecture.

Unlike other internships, where you may be more familiar with your surroundings and culture, this experience allowed me to see how other cultures live in society. The only thing the five of us knew was each other. We were away from everyone else we knew and we were forced to go out and meet new people and adapt to the ways of their culture. This was a new experience for me. I was not used to having to put myself out there and try all of these new experiences at once. The language barrier was the hardest thing to overcome. However, with all of the friends that we made, we were able to pick up the language quicker than we would have been able to on our own. We discovered early on in the trip that if you show people that you are giving it your best effort to learn how to speak their language, and actually care about speaking correctly, they will go out of their way to help you learn the necessary skills.

The employees at the hotel helped us out greatly; we would have been lost without them. They took the time out of their day to help show us what to do in the hotel, as well as give us advice for what there was to do in the local culture. In the beginning, the employees took the time to acclimate us, and we are all still grateful for that. Near the end of the work-study program, the employees grew to become great friends of ours and we spent a good deal of time hanging out and enjoying each other’s company.

Along with working and living in Cusco, we also went on excursions to see more of the land. One of the excursions was a white water rafting trip, during which we took a ride down the Urubamba River. The next weekend was spent horseback riding in the Sacred Valley. We also spent a few hours in the Pisac Market, which is one of the largest markets in Peru, and took a city tour of Cusco, along with the ruins of Sacsaywaman, which were old fortifications for Cusco. While those trips were only a few hours each, we also set up two longer excursions. One was a four-day hike on the Salcantay Trail to Machu Picchu. This was the most demanding activity that I have ever done in my life. We hiked every day for about eight hours a day. We were told we would be climbing two mountains by the end of the trip, which basically meant up one side and down the other. Once we were back and got to reflect on what we had just done, I felt the greatest sense of accomplishment. Also, to see Machu Picchu in the early morning was so amazing. Our other longer trip was spending a week in the Amazon rainforest. While this was not as demanding as the hike was, it was rewarding in its own sense. The Amazon rainforest was more of a relaxing stay, like a vacation. We had more free time and were able to enjoy ourselves a bit more. While we did go on many hikes and a few boat rides to different places, this was still a much more relaxing excursion. The highlight of the trip was zip lining through the canopy; it was so exhilarating.

Pictures are only so powerful. Until you are actually able to experience Cusco, Machu Picchu, and the Amazon, you can never understand the true beauty of these places. While you are in these different locations you feel something more than if you had just looked at pictures of the places. You start to realize that even though you knew before that there is more to life than where you live, there is more than you could have ever imagined. I am completely changed because of this experience and I have gained much more confidence. I can do anything I put my mind to.
John M. Scott, president and chief executive officer of Rosewood Hotels and Resorts; John Doherty, executive chef at the Waldorf=Astoria in New York, N.Y.; Jan Shrem, owner and founder of Clos Pegase Winery in Napa Valley, Calif.; and Thomas Shepard, chief executive officer of San Francisco-based Festival Network, were the honorees at the Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management's annual convocation on Oct. 23, 2008. The event was sponsored by The Maid of the Mist Corp.

Scott, who received the Lifetime Hotelier Leadership Award, joined Rosewood in 2003. During his tenure, Scott doubled the number of luxury hotel properties under Rosewood management. The company now manages 18 ultra-luxury properties in seven countries with more than $500 million annually in gross revenues and nearly 5,000 employees. A hospitality industry veteran, he has held senior management positions at the Interpacific Group, the Walt Disney Company, and Maritz, Wolff, and Co.

In 1985, Doherty, who received the Food Industry Leadership Award, was the youngest person ever named to the executive chef post at the world-renowned Waldorf=Astoria. Doherty has cooked for more presidents, royalty and heads-of-state than any other chef in the country. A Silver Spoon Award winner from “Food Arts,” he recently released his first cookbook, “The Waldorf=Astoria Cookbook,” which features over 120 recipes that cover the best in the hotel’s dining experience.

Jan Shrem, founder and proprietor of Clos Pegase Winery in Calistoga, Calif., received the Wine Industry Leadership Award. Shrem, who founded the vineyard in 1983, originally was a book publisher in Japan. In 1980, he enrolled in the enology program at the University of Bordeaux in France, where he became fascinated with the idea of combining ancient winemaking practices with emerging technologies. His winery has been described as a “temple to wine and art.” Shrem has spoken four times to the National Press Club in Washington.

Thomas Shepard, chief executive officer of the Festival Network, a company that organizes major festivals worldwide, received the Travel Industry Leadership Award. Since Shepard joined the company in 2007, Festival Network has refined its positioning and rebranded; hired key talent; revamped and strengthened its partnership and revenue models, programming and digital initiatives; broadened the scope of its festivals; and increased the number of festivals in the network. Shepard was formerly the executive vice president of international marketing, partnerships and sponsorship for Visa International.

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SCHOLARSHIP DATABASE FOR THE COLLEGE’S STUDENTS NOW AVAILABLE

Thanks to Dr. Jan van Harssel, students in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management may now access scholarship information on more than 80 scholarship grants through a recently launched link on the college’s Web site. The site provides up-to-date information on scholarship opportunities, contact information, requirements and eligibility, and application guidelines.
The 2008 – 2009 academic year has been a very busy one for the students from the Niagara University chapter of the Club Managers Association of America. We have achieved much, demonstrating our ongoing and growing commitment to the club management profession. I wanted to take a moment to share with you some, though not all, of the activities that the student chapter engaged in this past academic year:

- Fifteen members returned from club internships during summer 2008.
- Twenty-five new members joined our ranks at the start of the academic year.
- Our official membership for the 2008–2009 dues year increased from 25 to 40, a 60 percent increase.
- In conjunction with the New York state and Central New York chapters, we attended the following educational and networking sessions:
  - Cobblestone Creek Country Club
  - Skaneateles Country Club
  - Absolut® Club Manager of the Year reception at Oak Hill Country Club
  - Park Country Club
- We hosted an educational session for the New York state and Central New York CMAA chapters at Niagara University on April 21, 2009.
- We enrolled 20 students in the Club Management certification course at Niagara University during the spring 2009 semester.
- In addition to the educational sessions, we visited the following clubs for tours and presentations:
  - Country Club of Rochester
  - Rolling Rock Club
  - The Buffalo Club
  - Niagara Falls Country Club
  - Transit Valley Country Club
  - Country Club of Buffalo
  - Genesee Valley Club
  - Oak Hill Country Club
  - Rochester Yacht Club
- We collected more than 100 toys for Toys for Tots as part of the club’s Collecting for Communities campaign.
- We supported The Buffalo Club, Rochester Yacht Club, Rochester Country Club, and Genesee Valley Club with students to work large-scale club and member functions.
- Seventeen members were certified in TIPs (Training for Intervention Procedures) for the responsible service of alcohol.
- Two students were awarded scholarships through the New York state CMAA chapter.
- Twenty-one student members and one club manager was certified in Heartsaver CPR/AED for adults, children and infants in March 2009.
- We provided concessions at 30 Niagara University athletics events which raised more than $6,000 to help fund education travel.
- We planned, worked and executed a themed fundraiser dinner at the Country Club of Rochester which raised over $5,000 to fund travel to the World Conference on Club Management.
- Seven members attended the fifth National Student Education Conference in Charlotte, N.C., Oct. 31 – Nov. 3, 2008.
- Fifteen members attended the 82nd World Conference on Club Management in New Orleans Feb. 5 – 10, 2009.
- Thirteen members are seniors. Ten graduated in May; one will graduate in August and two in December.
- The remaining 22 active members have all been placed in internships this summer and are expected to return in August for an exciting new year.
- By May 2009, every active member of the Niagara University CMAA student chapter was certified in CPR/AED and TIPs, completed the club management course, attended more than 80 percent of all off-campus education sessions, has devoted at least 10 hours to fundraising through concessions, and most importantly, is currently employed full time in the club industry through either a summer internship or a supervisory or management position, or is engaged in study abroad or graduate studies.

None of this could have been accomplished without the unyielding support of others who have made these opportunities possible for us. Every member of the Niagara University student chapter wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations who have contributed to our success:

- Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management
- Dr. William Frye, CMAA faculty adviser and associate professor
- Al Antonez, CCM, CCE, senior chapter liaison

All the managers and their respective clubs in the New York state chapter of CMAA
- Our friends in the Central New York chapter of CMAA
- Those clubs and managers across the nation that have provided us employment after graduation, summer internships, part-time employment, and their ongoing support
- Those instructors who excused us from classes so we could attend off-campus educational sessions
- The Niagara University athletics department
- The Club Foundation of CMAA
- Our parents and family members

As you can see, we have made significant progress this year. But this is only the beginning for the student chapter from Niagara University. While greater growth may not be sustainable, our level of professionalism
and involvement in the club industry will certainly increase. Our goal is quite simple: We want to be the best of all student chapters in CMAA. We strive for 100 percent participation, 100 percent placement, and require 100 percent commitment throughout the year, nothing less. May we demonstrate even greater results in the 2009 – 2010 academic year.

Congratulations to the following newly elected officers of the NU CMAA for 2009 – 2010:

President: James Mason
Vice-President: Lauren Kenney
Secretary/Treasurer: Bethany Wood

Their term of office runs May 1, 2009 – April 30, 2010.

CHANCE ENCOUNTERLeads to EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

The Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management programs have all built their reputations on strong “real world” practical experiences for their students. A chance encounter in early February led to one such experience for a group of students enrolled in the Sport Facilities Management class during the spring semester.

One of the traditions within the sport management program is a two-day visit to Cleveland and the Cleveland Cavaliers career fair, held annually in February. This excursion typically includes the career fair, a Cavaliers game that evening, and a panel discussion the following morning with representatives of various sport entities from the Cleveland area, including the Cavs, the Indians, the Mid-American Conference, and members of the Cleveland sport press. This year, however, the group took a short detour off I-90 on the trip back to Buffalo and stopped at the Family First Sports Park in Erie, Pa. This is where the experiential learning activity began.

Katie Finamore, director of experiential opportunities, and Dr. Dexter Davis, assistant professor of sports management, introduced themselves to a staff member at the sports park and inquired about internship opportunities the complex might have available for summer 2009. Finamore and the staff member exchanged business cards, the students toured the facility, and the group continued back to Niagara. A few days later, Finamore received an e-mail asking if there was any way that students from NU could perform a risk analysis for the sports park. Davis presented the idea to a group of students in his Sport Facilities Management class during a lecture on this very topic.

Working with the “safety team” headed by Jennifer Pier, the complex’s controller, Davis arranged for students Stephanie Caso, Santina Grenier, Kevin Jennings, Jimmy McCarthy, and Andrew Nesbit to spend two days examining the various components of this complex for liability risk factors. The sports park is an 80-acre, multipurpose “playground” and consists of the following components:

- A 100,000 square-foot field house which contains two NPSL regulation-size indoor soccer fields; a 12,000 square-foot fitness center; and four regulation-size basketball/valleyball courts
- A Golf Dome, Family Fun Center, and Outdoor FunZone, which includes both indoor and outdoor miniature golf facilities, indoor driving range, batting cages, video arcade, and much more
- Eighteen regulation-size outdoor soccer fields and eight outdoor basketball courts
- A housing and conference center with full-service dining facility.

Working in teams, the students explored nearly every inch of this complex, looking for both large and small risk factors that could potentially cause harm to anyone using the complex. After eight hours of “walking the property” over two separate days and filling four legal pads with their observations, the students and Davis wrote a report that compiled all of the various risk factors that the group identified. Fortunately, there were no major issues, but the students were able to identify a number of small, easily remedied risk issues. Davis presented this material to the safety team and will be continuing the process with Kevin Jennings, who is interning at the sports park this summer. Jennings has been given the task of developing a policies and procedures manual for the facility to help avoid potential liability lawsuits in the future.

This type of experience is what sets the Niagara University sport management program apart from many other programs. Students at NU receive practical experience with real applications and they help make a difference in the organizations where they are gaining those experiences. Whether it’s by attending major league baseball spring training or providing a risk assessment for a local sport enterprise, Niagara University sport management students have the opportunity to learn first-hand important pieces of the sport enterprise puzzle.
Students from the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management participated in the annual Tourism Cares for America project at Spangler Farm in Gettysburg, Pa. GETTYSBURG and Spangler Farm are sites whose significance in U.S. history cannot be overstated. Sitting on 80 acres in rural Pennsylvania, Spangler Farm was used as a field hospital for thousands of wounded soldiers during the Battle of Gettysburg. Spangler Farm also serves as the site of the death of Confederate general Lewis Armistead, who led the climactic event of the three-day battle — Pickett’s Charge. Today, the property is one of the last field hospitals kept intact as it was in 1863. More than 300 volunteers from all over the United States came together to kick off a major restoration of the property. A day full of removing brush and clearing debris off of Civil War-era buildings completely transformed the farm. Dr. Jan van Harsel, the professor who organized the trip, noted, “The hard work of these students really made an impact on the Gettysburg community. Through their help, the farm will soon be back to its 19th century appearance and serve as a tourist attraction and education center.” Participating in the event were Mary Gibson, Claire Hogan, Brie Reid, Lyn Gonlag, Courtney Farfaglia, and Julie Dorsey.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION UPDATE

By Lauren Kenney, 2009-10 HTA president

The 2008/2009 school year marked a new beginning for Niagara University’s Hospitality and Tourism Association. With a new and enthusiastic board in place, HTA members began planning what was sure to be a successful year, full of events to help students learn more about the hospitality industry as well as provide the opportunity to network with their peers. Members of HTA attended backstage tours at HSBC Arena, Shea’s Performing Arts Center, and the Niagara Fallsview Casino, and participated in an overnight trip to Cleveland, Ohio, which included sporting events, a brewery tour and more. Throughout the year, students helped out around the community, participating in a breast cancer walk in Buffalo, the Relay for Life at Niagara University, and other community-service opportunities. During the second semester, the board helped to put together a fundraiser to sell College of Hospitality and Tourism Management apparel to students, faculty, family, and friends. With more tours, guest speakers, excursions and industry networking, the 2009/2010 school year for HTA is shaping up to be a great one!
HOSPITALITY TRAINING AND RESEARCH CENTER OFFERS TWO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Niagara University's Hospitality Training and Research Center, under the direction of Dr. Deborah Curtis, is offering a professional development program that focuses on revenue generation, improving sales strategies, and closing the deal. We are all aware that the economy is struggling and companies are looking for ways to reduce their expenses. It is also much easier to maintain your customer base when the economy is strong. We believe that now is the time to focus more on sales training and to emphasize the importance of quality sales techniques that will help increase your revenue. Our interactive program will help sales associates develop a plan that will put them ahead of the competition. We will also discuss how to write a quality proposal and organize an effective site inspection. The goal is to enable participants to ultimately improve their closing ratio. We are flexible on the training location and can host it on campus or bring it on site for your entire sales team. Prior to conducting the two-day training, a “sales shop” will be completed to determine current competency levels. The cost is of the training package is $1,295 per sales/catering manager. For teams of four or more sales/catering managers, the price is $4,995.

We will guarantee a return on your investment of at least $10,000. For more information or to ask us any further questions, please e-mail us at hospitality@niagara.edu or call us at 716-205-0072.

The Hospitality Training and Research Center has also developed an interactive online “Excellence in Customer Service” module that is available for your entire staff. The program demonstrates professionalism, effective communication, handling diversity, and effectively dealing with customer complaints. Participants are given a password to access the online program, and, using the accompanying workbook, complete a pretest before following the narrator through a series of interactive exercises. At the end of the program, a post test is taken to determine retention. Each participant will receive a certificate of completion from Niagara University for successfully completing the module. The cost is $129 per person and you have the option to sign up on our Web site at www.niagara.edu/hospitalitytraining. Organizations that are interested in offering it to the entire staff should call the Hospitality Training and Research Center at 716-205-0072 for a group rate.

NU-TRAINED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INTERN AT AREA HOSPITALITY ORGANIZATIONS

Last July, two local high school students completed a six-week internship at the Buffalo Museum of Science as part of a Niagara University program to prepare disadvantaged minority youth to work at nonprofit organizations and attractions in the Buffalo-Niagara area. Anneliese Hock of Hutchinson Central Technical School, and Anthony Dobbins of McKinley High School, were trained by the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s Center for Hospitality Training and Research. The program was launched in February with the support of The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and the Niagara Area Foundation. The students, paired with a museum “mentor,” provided various types of support, according to Anne E. Conable, director of museum experience. “They gave assistance by greeting visitors and in-gallery interpreting, as well as supporting two of our events with advance preparation tasks,” she said. Both students were given a letter of recommendation when they completed the program. “We were glad to have them here,” Conable said, “and we hope that their time with us was satisfying and useful.” In all, Niagara trained 12 high school students for internships at area hospitality organizations, including Niagara Area Arts and Culture, the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Comfort Inn and Suites in Niagara Falls.

DO YOU KNOW PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS?

Many alumni work in the hospitality, tourism and recreation industries. Do you know of any high school or college students working in your company who would be good candidates for management careers in these industries? Do you know of any community college or college students unsure of a career focus who would be a good fit for the industry’s abundant career opportunities?

If so, tell them that Niagara University’s curriculum offers a:

- Bachelor of science degree in hotel and restaurant management with concentrations in foodservice management, hotel and restaurant planning and control, and restaurant entrepreneurship.
- Bachelor of science degree in tourism and recreation management with concentrations in special event and conference management and tourism destination management.
- Bachelor of science degree in sport management with a concentration in sport operations.

For additional information, contact or return this form to:

Dr. Gary D. Praetzel, Dean
College of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Niagara University, NY 14109-2012
Phone: 716-286-8272
Fax: 716-286-8277
gdp@niagara.edu

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT REFERRAL FORM

| Name: | [ ] |
| Address: | [ ] |
| Phone: | [ ] |
| E-mail: | [ ] |
| Comments: | [ ] |
| Referred by: | [ ] |
In mid-November, I attended the National Tour Association Conference in Pittsburgh. People involved in this organization include buyers, sellers, tour operators, destination marketing organizations and suppliers within the hospitality industry. The purpose of the conference is to make contacts within the tour industry and, for tour providers, to uncover new business from organizations that purchase group tours. It gives these parties the opportunity to meet with professionals from all over the world.

I received a scholarship through the NTA philanthropies organization, Tourism Cares. The main goal of Tourism Cares is to preserve travel for future generations. It provides scholarships and grants to students and works to restore cultural and historical sites around the world. As a recipient of this scholarship, I was asked to attend the NTA conference. Students from all over the country were in attendance. It was nice to meet them and hear about their experiences and career goals.

Throughout the weekend, we were assigned to three different mentors. My first mentor worked for a South Carolina destination marketing organization. During our time together, he took the time to answer my questions and help me network with his contacts in the meeting planning field. My second mentor was a tour operator from New Hampshire. I was able to sit in on his meetings with tour providers, which was very interesting. After each meeting he had, he asked me to tell him 10 things I’d learned. This was very productive and informative. One thing that I learned from him is to always be prepared. It is crucial to know the product you are trying to sell and who you are selling it to. He had a very aggressive personality and if the sellers did not “sell” him their product, he would tell them he was uninterested in their business. My last mentor was from Amtrak. She was trying to promote traveling by train as most of the tour operators travel by motor coach. There were many other learning opportunities throughout the weekend, such as a tour of the events center and various roundtable discussions and breakouts. During one of the lunches, we were able to tour behind the stage to see how the sound and lighting worked — this was an experience in itself.

Everywhere I looked people were sharing their business cards, networking and mentoring. It was an experience I will never forget. I learned so much about a different side of the industry at this event because it was so interactive and informative. I think it was very inspiring to be in attendance and I am glad that students got to be involved. We came from all over the country and it was really nice to see students my age sharing the same passion and dedication to the tourism industry. Even though I do not want to be a tour operator, supplier or buyer, I walked out of this conference feeling confident that I had made good contacts with people in the industry and learned a good deal.

As part of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s international exchange program, each fall international students come to Niagara to study at the college. This past fall we welcomed 12 students. Ten were from the University of Insubria in Como, Italy, and two were from Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola in Lima, Peru. Here, the students are pictured with Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the college, and the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, president of Niagara University.

CLASS PROJECT: “TACKLING HUNGER ONE MEAL AT A TIME”

“Tackling Hunger One Meal at a Time” was a multievent community service project organized by 12 College of Hospitality students last November. The project was assigned through an event management and sports marketing class taught by Drew Cerza, founder of the National Buffalo Wing Festival. The project included a series of activities held on the NU campus November 16-18. The highlight was a “Monday Night Football” tailgate party on Nov. 17, when the Buffalo Bills took on the Cleveland Browns. David and Myra Conley of East Amherst, who donated $100,000 to the Food Bank in September during Hunger Action Month, were honored by the students in a separate ceremony as the recipients of the first annual Community Inspiration Award.

“With hunger becoming an increasingly serious problem in our community, we thought the food drive was an ideal class project to help those in need. That’s part of our Vincentian mission here at Niagara University,” said Lyn Gonlag, a senior who helped to organize the project. The Food Bank, through a network of more than 400 member agencies in Western New York, distributes close to one million pounds of food each month. Food collected in the “Tackling Hunger” project was distributed to Niagara County agencies.

2009 HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM CAREER FAIR ATTENDEES

The annual Hospitality and Tourism Career Fair was held on Feb. 11 at the Castellani Art Museum. Thirty-five companies attended and recruited our students for summer jobs, internships, co-ops and full-time positions, including:

AAA Western and Central New York
American Cruise Lines
American Hospitality Academy
Beaver Hollow Conference Center
Boston Culinary Group
Buffalo Bisons
Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau
Buffalo Sabres
Carlson Hotels Worldwide
Chatham Bars Inn
Chevy Chase Club
Country Club of Rochester
Delaware North Companies
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts
Hart Hotels
Hotel Niagara by Amidee
Hyatt Hotels and Resorts
Niagara Power Baseball
Niagara Tourism & Convention Corp.
Niagara University Athletics
Oak Hill Country Club
Red Lobster
Rochester Yacht Club
Rolling Rock Club
Scott Enterprises
Six Flags Darien Lake
The Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel
The Conference Center, Niagara Falls
The Leading Hotels of the World
The Sagamore
The Travel Team, Inc.
Walt Disney World College Program
Watkins Glen International
Wheatleigh

If you are interested in reserving a booth for next year’s Career Fair, please contact Katie Finamore at kfinamore@niagara.edu.
Our College Grows Up

By Steve Siegel, who just completed his 32nd year teaching hospitality courses

Some years back, I was watching a movie from the late 1960s filmed in New York City entitled “Midnight Cowboy.” A scene with Jon Voight and Dustin Hoffman takes place in a “flophouse” hotel. As I watch the scene I am overcome with a feeling of deja vu — everything looks very familiar. Then it hits me: 1982 — The International Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Show. Me, another faculty member and five students from Niagara had stayed in that — and I use the term loosely — hotel. Though in the movie, filmed in 1968, the place was intended to be dirty and decrepit, it actually appeared to be cleaner than I remembered it to be in 1982. But there was no mistaking that this had been our base of operations the first year that a group from the college (then known as T.T.T.) attended the hotel show.

Flash forward 27 shows later to 2008. Our dean, two faculty members and 39 students walk into the grand lobby of the iconic Waldorf=Astoria — our third consecutive year as guests of the W=A. We are greeted by some of the many alumni of the college who currently work there. (Four more students were interviewed by the W=A that weekend, with three more interviews confirmed for February 2009 at the college’s career day which the W=A attends.) Instead of the postage-stamp sized room that I was assigned in 1982, I am escorted to my five-room suite overlooking Park Ave.

If any one constant can be viewed as an analogue for the growth of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management over the 40 years of its existence, it can most certainly be found through viewing the college’s changing fortunes as yearly attendees of the largest hotel/restaurant show in the world.

This year’s itinerary included a Sunday tour of the W=A, followed by an information session conducted by the hotel manager, Mark Lauer, culminating in the college reception in the storied Conrad Hilton Room. On Monday morning, the Four Seasons hosted us for an information session and tour. Monday afternoon found our group split in two with half visiting the New York Palace for a reception and tour, and the rest touring the venerable University Club in Midtown Manhattan.

The college’s quarter-century journey to get from the flophouse in Columbus Circle (since torn down to make way for the Time-Warner Building) to the Waldorf was definitely not as easy as simply taking the No.7 train cross town.

In 1982, the college had no information booth at the show, so we were essentially invisible to all who were attending. We had no students being interviewed by the top hotel chains because no large hotel chains knew of our existence. If memory serves me right, we spent most of our time walking around the city, perhaps 20 percent of that time looking for a destination and the other 80 percent totally lost. Not a very productive trip.

As the years went by we managed to borrow a display booth from the then-Niagara Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau. We were able to actually attract people to our booth, but unfortunately, not because of any great name recognition for the college. Actually, they came over to have a gag photo taken by putting their head through a hole in a picture which, from the front, gave the impression that you were going over the Falls in a barrel. Unfortunately, no discernable increases in student enrollment or job opportunities were ever traced back to the gag barrel.

In 1987, we somehow managed to give back the meager gains that we had made over the last five years in the quality of lodging accommodations. We ended up in the Times Square Hotel on 42nd Street (this was before Times Square was “Disneyized”). I recall that our dean at that time received a call from the parents of one of the attendees informing him that his daughter had just called him from the hotel and that she was in a panic — afraid to leave her room (or for that matter open her door) and he demanded that we move the entire group to another hotel. The dean informed him that: 1) There were no rooms to be had, and 2) If there were, we couldn’t afford them. We stayed and she eventually transferred.

By the 1990s we had some graduates working in New York City in some management capacities who were gracious enough to contact us with some offers of tours and receptions (thank you Kevin Fiske and Jason Pallen). I believe that this allowed our students to not only get exposure to the excitement of working in major properties in New York City, but also convinced them that their education in the college prepared them for success in that environment.

We continued to make small gains in the quality of the program as well as in the quality of experiences that we could offer our students attending the hotel show. As we entered the 21st century under the vision of new dean Gary Praetzel, we put a heavy focus on building a college presence in the New York City hospitality industry. Through the confluence of more and more alumni not only being employed in New York, but going to great lengths to open doors for us, as well as our presence at conferences, numerous faculty internships, our student driven “Code of Professionalism” and being a founding member of the “Leading Hotel Schools of the World,” we were able to slowly develop a reputation as a program which turned out students who possessed both the talent and temperament to be successful in one of the most challenging and demanding hospitality environments in the world.

In November of 2003, the efforts of our dean, our faculty and our alumni culminated in the Waldorf hiring five of our students and placing them in its Management Development Program. Through both word of mouth within the industry in New York City and efforts on the part of the college to publicize this tremendous achievement on the part of our students, other hotels took note and started to actively recruit our students.

We have certainly come a long way since that first trip in 1982, both as a presence at the show and more so as a hospitality program. Students from the college have been employed or are currently employed at such hotels and clubs as the Waldorf=Astoria, the Carlyle, the Princeton Club, the University Club, the Four Seasons, and the New York Palace.
MEET JOE SCARCELLI, THE NEWEST PROFESSOR IN THE COLLEGE

Joe Scarcelli, the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s newest professor, brings an extensive background in hospitality and a passion for travel to his position. Shortly after receiving his undergraduate degree in Italian studies from Purdue University, Scarcelli moved to Italy, where he taught English as a second language for about a year. When he returned to the states, he was hired by his alma mater to teach Italian in its department of foreign languages and literature. About three and a half years later, Scarcelli entered Purdue’s graduate program in hospitality and started teaching within that department, drawing upon his 15 years of experience in the foodservice industry. He taught a production (kitchen) lab and its accompanying lecture course, a food safety course and a sanitation course. Additionally, Scarcelli co-led two study-abroad programs for hospitality students, an opportunity that he calls “a real blessing” because he has a passion for traveling. While still at Purdue, Scarcelli was honored with a graduate student teaching award as the hospitality and tourism management department’s 2009 outstanding teaching assistant.

Scarcelli looks forward to the opportunity to continue sharing his passions with the students at Niagara. He will teach courses in sanitation and restaurant operations and would like to develop new courses in topics such as wine and beverages, global food history, cuisine and culture. He also anticipates participating in many more study-abroad opportunities.

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 440 five-star Leading Hotels of the World. LHSW won the best partnership award at the Paris hospitality awards in 2005.
- The college was the 2002 recipient of the Institutional Achievement Award of the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators.
- We were the seventh hospitality/tourism program in the country to be accredited.
- We were the fourth hospitality and tourism program in the country to have achieved college status.
- We are ranked in the top 20 hospitality and tourism programs in the country.
- Niagara University is the only program in the country to publish a journal for industry managers — The Rooms Chronicle.
- We offer work-abroad programs in luxury hotels in Lake Como, Italy, and Cusco, Peru.
- The college organizes eight to 10 major industry excursions each year.
- The college’s alumni association sponsors mentoring and Career Day programs and helps to secure employment and internship opportunities for our students.
- More than 20 leading regional, national and international industry leaders speak in our classrooms 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.
- Approximately 40 leading regional, national and international companies participate annually in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair.
- Average class size is 17 students.
- We offer a wide range of programs in lodging, foodservice management, tourism, recreation and sports management, and entrepreneurship.
The tradition continues … . Students are busy planning the 2009 College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s Alumni and Friends Career Day. The strong commitment demonstrated by alumni and friends has no doubt contributed to the college’s success. No event demonstrates the dedication of our alumni to the success of the students more then the annual Alumni and Friends Career Day. Career Day brings alumni and friends to campus for an event that allows students to network and gain valuable knowledge from these industry leaders. This year’s event takes place on Oct. 8 and 9. We will kick things off the first day with a wine tasting sponsored by one of our valued alumni, and on the second day, alumni will get the opportunity to share their wisdom with our students through a variety of different panel discussions and breakouts. We will also host a networking lunch and a casual dinner at the Brickyard in Lewiston for students and alumni.

Career Day is an important component of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s focus on experiential learning. By exposing the students to distinguished college alumni who are willing to share with them their experiences and advice, they become more educated about life outside of the university and are better equipped to enter the workforce. Additionally, this vital program helps current students find jobs and internships through the networking opportunities provided.

Please visit the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Web site at www.niagara.edu/hospitality to register and learn more about Alumni and Friends Career Day 2009 Schedule of Events

All events will take place in St. Vincent’s Hall unless otherwise noted

(Tentative)

Thursday, Oct. 8

5 – 6:30 p.m.

Wine tasting

Friday, Oct. 9

7:45 – 8:30 a.m.

Registration

9 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Breakout sessions

12:10 – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch

1:25 – 2:20 p.m.

Unique Jobs in the Hospitality Industry

2:20 – 3 p.m.

Mentorship meeting

5 – 7 p.m.

Dinner at the Brickyard, Lewiston

Career Day. More information will be mailed in the coming weeks. The students, staff and fellow alumni look forward to seeing you on Oct. 8 and 9!

Please contact alumni communications team lead Christopher Zukas at czukas@mail.niagara.edu with any questions.

We look forward to seeing you in October!
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 • Fax: 716-286-8277

Please print

Year Graduated Niagara University: ________________ Major: __________________________

Current Industry Category: (check one)
☐ Hotel ☐ Group Tours and Attractions ☐ Sports, Incentive and Event Planning
☐ Meeting Planning ☐ Convention Centers/Bureaus/Facilities ☐ Restaurants/Catering
☐ Other __________________________

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: __________

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Patricia A. Navarroli, Secretary to the Dean
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Eddie Friel, Expert-in-Residence
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WWW.NIAGARA.EDU/HOSPITALITY

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