

# The Added Touch

Hotel and Restaurant Management Program

Fall 2009

Volume 1, Issue 1

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## The Added Touch

The Auburn University Creed states that, "I believe in the human touch, which cultivates sympathy with my fellow men and mutual helpfulness and brings happiness for all". This statement in conjunction with our program's mission statement supports our program's unstated belief in "The Added Touch" which is the extra "je ne sais quoi" which our students possess. This quality is what allows for our students to emerge as "exceptional leaders for the Global Hospitality and Tourism industries". The ability to transform the hospitality industry from a science into an art form comes from "The Added Touch" which Auburn students put on everything they dedicate themselves to.

- Anna R. Michal, title winner

## Greetings from the Program Director



It is my great pleasure to share with you our First Annual Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRMT) Program News Letter at Auburn University. This is an exciting time at Auburn University and for its HRMT program in particular.

Consequently, the faculty has decided to instigate the wonderful practice of sharing with you on at least an annual basis in newsletter form.

Our goal here is quite simple - to strengthen our alumni ties and update you on course developments and success stories. Therefore, we would like to hear from you and your career progression following graduation. Please do, therefore, stay in contact and keep us updated on a yearly basis.

Programmatically, our core objective remains the same, namely to provide within a diverse and dynamic learning environment, university education of globally recognized quality, especially for those employed in, or seeking employment in the hotel, restaurant and broader service professions. The program team remains dedicated to the continual improvement of all scholarly activities associated with teaching, learning, research, consulting and its day-to-day administration. We ensure a strong focus on fostering a learning environment where all students, faculty and staff are valued. To this end, we have recently instigated a formal strategic planning exercise and are hopeful that the finalized document will be ready for sharing in online format by October 2009. This process was designed to give direction to our future growth and contributions throughout the university and wider Auburn communities, and it has been an incredible exercise to go through with this team.

As part of this exercise we have determined to move forward with National Professional Accreditation. The Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) met with the program team in the spring of 2008 and offered many wonderful suggestions on curriculum review,

engagement and teaching, and learning practice. I am happy to report that this has forced a complete curriculum model review which is presently before the University Curriculum Council, and is currently being used for the fall 2009 semester. The intention is to seek accreditation the following year, fall 2010.

Our partnership with the West Paces Hotel Group has gone from strength to strength, and the many exciting opportunities now presented to our students, nationally and internationally, will only serve to strengthen this relationship. The West Paces Hotel Group is renowned for its management approach in the ultra-luxury hotel sector and, in addition to managing a very busy national and international property portfolio, also manages our on-site learning laboratory. The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center is where our students engage in hands-on teaching and learning activities, as well as working part-time while pursuing their HRMT degree. The West Paces Hotel Group also recruits graduates into its Leadership Development Program, which offers opportunities for advancement within the group and throughout the world.

The program continues to enjoy an excellent working relationship with the broader tourism and hospitality communities, placing graduates throughout both sectors. Employers of choice are in regular contact with the program and its faculty, promoting employment opportunities to all students.

So there you have it! Please do check in with us from time to time and update us on what you are doing. Please also feel free to connect with the faculty at any time with news and views and photographs that you would like us to share with your peer group in this forum.

Sincere best wishes and War Eagle!

Martin O'Neill, Ph.D

Professor and Program Director



*CMAA students on Field Trip.*

## Student Organizations

HRMT students have a variety of options for getting involved with extracurricular programs. Program specific options include:

**Eta Sigma Delta:** Hospitality Honor Society

**Event Planning:** HRMT Gala fundraising event

**CMAA:** Club Managers Association of America

**PCMA:** Professional Convention Management Association

**HOSPITALITY CAREER FAIR:** The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Hospitality Career Fair was held in November 2008. This event was planned exclusively for hospitality majors. Approximately 100 stu-

dents and 13 vendors attended the event, including: Honours Golf, Jason's Deli, PCH Hotels and Resorts, Zoe's Kitchen, Marriott International, Waffle House, Inc., Valley Hospitality, The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center, Momma G's, Inc., McAlister's Deli, Longhorn Steakhouse, Larry Blumberg and Associates, Inc., Drury Hotels and the West Paces Hotel Group. The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Career Fair is scheduled for Thursday November 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 and is being planned by students as part of the Conference Coordination class.

## The Hospitality Gala - An International Affair

The Hospitality Gala, formerly The HRMT Silent Auction, was held on May 2, 2009 and was planned and executed by students in the Catering and Event Management class who were responsible for all facets of the event including set up, registration, guest services and overseeing both the live and silent auctions. Oversight for the event was provided by Dr. Alecia Douglas, Assistant Professor and Mr Hans van der Reijden, Managing Director of the Auburn University Hotel and Conference Center. The event was deemed a tremendous success having hosted 154 guests who helped raise just over \$32,000 for the program's educational initiatives.

This year's event, appropriately themed "An International Affair," featured the

cuisine of three award-winning international chefs representing Capella Hotels, the ultra luxury hotel and resort brand of the West Paces Hotel Group. Guests were treated to live cooking demonstrations by each chef and participated in the silent auction while listening to the sultry sounds of the Tim Chambliss Jazz Band. This was followed by a delightful four-course plated dinner. The evening's other highlight included a live auction featuring international travel packages to destinations such as Ireland and Mexico.

Special thanks to the 2009 Catering and Event Management class for their outstanding work ethic and dedication in helping to make this year's event a success. Also, special recognition goes out to our guests, friends of our program and the many donors that made contributions.

The success of our annual fundraising event would simply not be possible without the overwhelming generosity and support received from the program's many friends and donors. It was our pleasure to create fond memories for our guests and we look forward to again hosting The Hospitality Gala in Spring 2010.





## 5th Annual California Epicurean Tour



*Students and sponsors of the 5th Annual California Epicurean Tour at Far Niente with Beth Nickels, proprietress.*

For the 5th year in a row senior and graduate students of the HRMT program had an opportunity to visit and experience the California wine region. Sixteen students were competitively chosen to spend a week in May touring the vineyards of notable wineries and learning about the winemaking process. The tour included stops at Bernardus Lodge, Pisoni Vineyards, Far Niente, Opus One, Franciscan Estates, E & J Gallo, and Beringer, as well as a visit to the Culinary Institute of America and Master Barrel



Makers Seguin Moreau .

The annual tour offers students the opportunity to gain exposure to the entire wine production cycle from grape growth to final production. This is a once in a lifetime experience to interact with the men and women who have dedicated their careers to creating the best wines California has to offer. During the trip, students not only visit the vineyards, but have the opportunity to

learn about viticultural practice, wine tasting and food pairing. Through this experience they come to appreciate the factors that influence the creation of a truly great



wine.

A few students expressed their feeling about this unique experience:

"I had the opportunity to participate in the HRMT California Wine Tour trip this past May. It was such a fabulous experience! From visiting private wineries and dining with the owners to meeting famous chefs, this trip was filled with great memories. I gained insight into the wine industry through this trip that I will never forget!!! I am so grateful for this opportunity through the HRMT program. I encourage all students to participate in this trip!" - **Stacey Benefield**



"The Senior Study Tour was a week filled with once-in-a-lifetime experiences that opened my eyes to a higher level of quality and service. From the off-road jeep ride and wine blending competition, to gourmet dining with top professionals and five star

accommodations, every day offered new and exciting ways to learn more about our industry. The experience also pushed me to perform at a higher level, helping to raise the bar for my professional career. Moreover, I was personally touched, not only by the people we met, but also by the professors and donors. They each showed a tremendous amount of care for each student and helped to guide me throughout the process. I know the support and encouragement that I received will be a major contributor to my success in the future. And for that, I am very grateful.



The Napa Valley trip has also opened the door for Stacey Benefield and me to return to California for harvest in September. We will both be spending a week at Quintessa Winery to assist with harvesting and events. We are both thrilled about this opportunity and hope it may lead to future career opportunities in Napa Valley." - **Kari Stinehour**





## European Tour



For four weeks each summer Dr. O'Neill leads a group of students on an educational backpacking study tour of Europe. The topic for this year's course focused on food and beverage. Having set the parameters (time, space, budget and risk) for the course in the spring semester, the students met and planned out



their entire trip. Each student was assigned a city where s/he would be the group leader. Students were responsible for identifying appropriate accommodations, activities and transportation options. Additionally students were required to highlight their city's unique contribution to food and beverage while ensuring appropriate learning opportunities for cultural immersion.

During their trip the group visited Dublin, Amsterdam, Bruges, Frankfurt, Prague, Munich, Salzburg, Venice, Florence, Rome, Barcelona, and Madrid. Students engaged in a wide array of activities including visits to local food markets, renowned restaurants, beverage producers and wineries. A few of the more unique

visits included the Anne Frank's house (Amsterdam) and Dachau Concentration Camp on the outskirts of Munich.

While that may seem like a lot of cities in a short amount of time, Junior HRMT student Eli Vaughan called it the "best month of my life!"



This trip provided a hands-on, up-close look into other cultures and how food and beverage affects cultures.

Let's hear from another student:

"There are some once in a lifetime opportunities that arise in people's lives. Backpacking through Europe for a month and staying in twelve cities in eight different countries were mine. It was a class held at Auburn, NUFS 5380, where fourteen strangers decided to go to Europe and live together for a month. It was food and beverage related, but any student could join. My expectations for the trip were very few. I did not want to have expectations and them not be met. I wanted to get over there and take it all in whether it was good or bad. I really had no clue what I was getting myself into or how it would affect me while I was there and when I got

back. I did hear that I would eat some of the best food that I would ever eat and that was one expectation that was met when Spain and Italy came around. There was no bigger high than being in a foreign country and seeing the country side and saying that I have been to twelve different cities and had the opportunity to experience something that other people usually do not. I would like to say thank you to Auburn University, Dr. O'Neill, Dr. Alonso, and my parents for giving me the opportunity to participate in such a great program."—**Sadie McElwee**



## HRMT Student Scholarship Recipients

### The 2009 Alabama Hospitality and Tourism Industry Scholarship is awarded by the Alabama Travel Council.

2009 recipients include:

Ms. Stacey Benefield

Ms. Mary Louise Gore

Mr. Coleman Thompson

### The American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation Annual Scholarship

2009 recipients include:

Ms. Kari Stinehour - \$1,000

Ms. Catherine Anderton - \$1,000

Ms. Stephanie Cox - \$1,000

Ms. Mary Louise Gore - \$1,000

### 2009 Women's Philanthropy Board Annual Scholarship

Ms. Stephanie Cox - \$5,000



"I sincerely appreciate all the consideration given to me and am complimented that I have been chosen to receive a scholarship from the Alabama Travel Council. I am very excited to receive this honor! This is the first scholarship I have ever applied for or received. I received very strong faculty support by way of the various references that were written in support of my application and I am very grateful. I could not have received this award without the help of the Hotel and Restaurant Management program. Truly, it is wonderful news to receive this scholarship. Again, thank you."- **Stacey Benefield**



## Vision Statement

The HRMT vision is to be recognized globally as a leader in Hospitality and Tourism education and a program of choice for students, faculty and employees.

## Community Connection

The Hotel and Restaurant Management Program at Auburn University is reaching out to the wider Auburn and state communities with a variety of outreach initiatives. Currently, initiatives include partnership with Alabama high schools to offer targeted career development advice and the development of a Hospitality and Tourism Summer Academy for state high school teachers. These programs are intended to broaden aware-

ness of the hospitality and tourism industry to students and teachers at the high school level.

The program aims to increase awareness about present and future challenges and opportunities in the hospitality and tourism industry. Additionally, the program is designed to introduce students to the multitude of careers available in the hospitality and tourism industries, as well as to

offer advice on career development.

The Hospitality and Tourism Summer Academy is a five-day, intensive program for high school teachers. Participants will come away from this concentrated teaching experience with a sense of excitement about and commitment to the teaching of hospitality and tourism concepts at the high school level.



## Partnership with The West Paces Hotel Group



Auburn students learning wine-making techniques from the best California vintners, apprenticing in some of the finest hotel kitchens in the world, vying for scholarships to spend a semester abroad in Ariccia, Italy, and training to be the next generation of leaders in the hospitality industry.... all through Auburn University's Hotel and Restaurant Management Program (HRMT) and a special partnership with The West Paces Hotel Group.

The Hotel and Restaurant Management Program debuted in 1987 as part of Auburn University's Department of Nutrition and Food Science in the College of Human Sciences. At that time, Mr. Horst Schulze, already one of the most illustrious names in the hospitality industry, was introduced to the Dean of the College, Dr. June Henton. His admiration for her visionary leadership led him to accept her invitation for appointment as an advisory board member to the College and the Program. Schulze's appointment signaled the start of a relationship that would grow to establish Auburn University's HRMT program as one of the finest hospitality leadership and training programs in the world.

A legendary leader in the service world, Mr. Schulze was co-founder, President and Chief Operating Officer of The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company, LLC. Under his dynamic leadership, that company was twice awarded the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige Award for its scientific approach to creating and sustaining premium quality service in the hotel industry. Today, through his West Paces Hotel Group, Mr. Schulze and his partners are reshaping concepts of customer service throughout the hospitality and service industries. But, Schulze's impressive background is not nearly as commanding as his vision for the future. His global development strategy and obsession with researching ways to improve his own hybrid system of Total Quality Management consistently deliver the most reliable and discriminating personalized guest experiences and are the key drivers in his company's quest, *"To be known as the Global Leader in the Service Business."* The West Paces Hotel Group's association with the College clearly provides a unique academic and business partnership committed to creating an outstanding learning experience for the HRMT students.

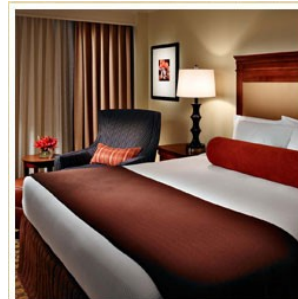
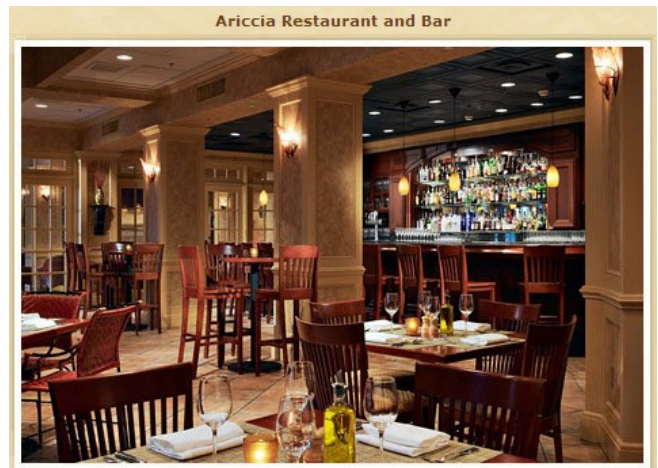
"The partnership between The West Paces Hotel Group and Auburn University offers students unique access to the hospitality industry's leading figures and benchmark practices," says Schulze. "Since its inception, the Program, under Dean Henton's leadership, has been committed to excellence and staying on the leading-edge of change."

THE WEST PACES  
HOTEL GROUP LLC



One look at the curriculum bears that out. Through management of The Hotel at Auburn University & Dixon Conference Center, The West Paces Hotel Group offers hotel-as-classroom instruction with Practicum Classes designed to provide hands-on experience in all facets of hotel and restaurant operation. Company executives and guest lecturers in the classroom, the hotel and distinctive off campus venues, representing the finest purveyors, wineries, restaurants, service companies and providers, give students unprecedented insight into best practices. With the launch of Capella Hotels and Resorts and that brand's global recognition for the most discriminating of highly personalized service as well as the uniquely sophisticated Solis Hotels & Resorts, The West Paces Hotel Group is able to offer students a Leadership Development Program in distinctive domestic and international settings.

Providing students both classroom theory and practical experience with a model of continuous quality improvement as a fundamental component of their degree requirements, The Hotel and Restaurant Management Program is preparing students to make their own way and define their own positions as the future "Global Leaders in the Service Business."



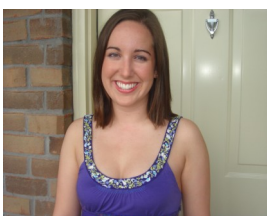
## Student Highlights!



**HRMT graduates presented at the 2009 Graduate Research Conference.** Graduate students Douglas Murray and Megan Johnson attended and presented at the 14th Annual Graduate Student Conference,

Harrah College, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (January 3rd to January 6, 2009). Douglas' presentation examined the "Relationship between sustainable development practices and employer attractiveness to hospitality students." Megan's paper addressed "Water conservation in the foodservice industry as an evaluation of employees perceived knowledge and importance."

Douglas graduated from the Culinary Institute of America. His past resume includes a substantial career as an executive chef with experience in private clubs and independent restaurants, as well as experience as a corporate executive chef for two regional restaurant companies. Both Douglas and Megan are enrolled in Auburn's PhD program. Douglas' goal is to translate his education and industry background and become a researcher/educator at a college or university. Megan shares a similar goal to enter the workforce as a trained researcher and teacher.



**Anna Robinson Michale won the title competition for the HRMT News Letter.**

"I used my wonderful prize for dinner for two at Arriccia at The Hotel at Auburn University. I invited my husband to join me for dinner to celebrate our June birthdays and to celebrate my success in winning the newsletter naming contest.

We truly enjoyed ourselves at the Arriccia restaurant and hope to return there soon to try out the new Piccolo lounge facility!"

Anna Robinson Michale of Jacksonville, Florida is a Senior on the HRMT program. Upon graduation in December 2009 she plans to work in her family's restaurant in Jacksonville and attend culinary school.



**Mary L. Gore won a 2009 Alabama Hospitality and Tourism Industry Scholarship awarded by the Alabama Travel Council**

Dear Scholarship Committee and the Alabama

Travel Council:

"I wanted to express my deepest gratitude for selecting me for the Alabama Travel Council Scholarship. It means so much to me to have this wonderful organization supporting the industry and its future in this capacity. It is so comforting to know that the industry itself is giving back to the students in preparing us for our future careers. This scholarship will lessen the financial burden of attending school, especially when my family has 3 of its

members enrolled in a university.

I am a senior at Auburn University in Hotel and Restaurant Management. My area of interest is event and wedding planning. This curriculum has done nothing except prepare me for my future. The diverse class offerings and exceptional leadership and faculty have given me the knowledge to excel in this industry. I am so fortunate for this wonderful school and department. After graduation in May, I hope to work in Sales and Catering or Event planning at a hotel or other venue in Alabama. I have lived in this state my whole life and could never imagine leaving it. I am looking forward to what the future holds!

I am so blessed and honored to have received this scholarship. It not only relieves some financial burdens but also gives me confidence in myself. Thank you so much for your role in helping me further my education and knowledge. I greatly appreciate it!"

Sincerely,

Mary Louise Gore



## Faculty Spotlight

### Carol Dillard, M. P. M., R. D.

Mrs. Dillard has been teaching in the Nutrition and Food Sciences Department since 1980 and has taught in the Hotel and Restaurant Management Program since its transition from Food Science Management in 1987. She teaches the Restaurant Management, Private Club Management, Food Production and Foods Systems classes and oversees the internship program. Mrs. Dillard is also the faculty advisor for the student chapter of the Club Managers Association of America. Mrs. Dillard also works with Auburn Sports Medicine as its Sports Dietitian.



Mrs. Dillard (4th from the left) and CMAA students at conference.



**Dr. Martin O'Neill**, originally from Northern Ireland, is a professor and director of the HRMT program. He teaches a range of courses and has significant teaching experience in the tourism and broad services fields.

His primary research thrust relates to the concept of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and its application within the broad services field. His research niche is in the area of disconfirmation modeling as a tool for garnering customer feedback and informing continual system improvement.



**Dr. Baker Ayoun** received a recent Outstanding Achievement Award.

The Decision Sciences Institute (39th Annual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, November 22-26, 2008)

awarded the paper entitled "The effect of information technology (IT) steering committees on perceived IT management sophistication in hotels" the best application paper. Dr. Ayoun, originally from Jordan, is an assistant professor in the HRMT program. His research interests are in the areas of international and strategic management as they specifically apply to hospitality.

**Dr. Kyungmi Kim** presented at the 2009 International CHRIE Conference in San Francisco.

Dr. Kim's paper was entitled "Serious leisure Tourism: A case study with the first Knoxville Marathon." Dr. Kim is from S. Korea and is an assistant professor in the HRMT program. Among her many duties, she is the Editor-in-Chief of the program's inaugural newsletter. Her research focuses on the relationship between employers, employees, and customers in the hospitality industry. She specializes in hospitality and tourism marketing and development, as it relates to small business and special events, and tourist behavior and tourism impacts on the quality of life of residents.



**Dr. Abel Alonso** is an assistant professor in the HRMT program. Dr. Alonso has extensive international experience across three continents. He has held positions in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the

United States. His current research interests include rural and agri-tourism development, hospitality entrepreneurship and wine tourism. He is currently working on a variety of projects related to the development of farmers' markets, value adding



### Mission Statement

To educate exceptional leaders for the Global Hospitality and Tourism industries. We concentrate on service excellence, social and ethical responsibility, and diversity in a practically oriented and intellectually challenging environment.

farm produce through the establishment of industrial kitchens, consumer motivations for attending farmers markets, and international wine tourism development and strategy.



**Dr. Alecia C. Douglas** guided the success of this year's Hospitality Gala.

Dr. Douglas is an assistant professor in the HRMT program. Her primary research interest is in information technology applications for the hospitality and tourism industries. More specifically, Dr. Douglas has focused on e-marketing applications and the design of emotionally evocative Website interfaces for tourism destinations and other hospitality entities. Courses taught at Auburn University include Hospitality Marketing, Hospitality Practicum and Special Events and Catering Management.



## The Added Touch

HRMT News Letter  
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## HOTEL AND RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Hotel and Restaurant Management Program at Auburn University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees. To find out more, please visit our website at:

<http://www.humsci.auburn.edu/nufs>

If you have any questions or require additional program related information please feel free to contact:

Mrs. Tanya Stringer (334) 844 4261

<http://www.humsci.auburn.edu/nufs>



## The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center

The West Paces Hotel Group Leadership Development Program is part of the dynamic vision and legacy of Horst Schulze, President & CEO, of The West Paces Hotel Group.

The West Paces Hotel Group has partnered with Auburn University in developing a world leading curriculum for the University's bachelors and masters programs in Hotel and Restaurant Management. This program allows for the hotel executive management team and HRMT faculty to work together in team teaching courses. This program offers students classroom and laboratory experience based on the operation of The Hotel at Au-

burn University and Dixon Conference Center with its 236 rooms and 28,000 sq ft meeting space. This partnership was designed to provide students with both classroom theory and laboratory experience based on a model of continuous quality improvement as part of their degree requirements.

### The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center

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[www.westpaceshotels.com](http://www.westpaceshotels.com)

Lobby Sitting Area

