

The Added Touch

Hotel and Restaurant Management Program

Spring 2010

Volume 1, Issue 2

Inside this issue:

HRMT Program Events	2
Student Updates	3
Graduate Student Highlights	4
HRMT Advisory Board	5
Faculty Spotlight	6
The West Paces Hotel Group	7

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 once again have this opportunity to introduce our program newsletter "The Added Touch". As indicated during our inaugural issue, it is our intent to produce this newsletter on a twice annual basis in order to keep you abreast of developments both on and off campus as they relate to the program, our partners The West Paces Hotel Group, our students and alumni. Put simply, the HRMT faculty and students view this as a wonderful way of staying in touch and cementing bonds both old and new.

Moving on to actual news, it has been a busy academic year thus far – not least with respect to programmatic developments. We are fast approaching the end of this academic year with the new undergraduate curriculum and so far, so good. The feedback received from both students and employees has been wonderful, and we remain excited about our new course offerings including: Lodging Management, Hospitality Information Technology, Facilities and Operations Management and our new Food and Beverage courses. I am also happy to announce that we have just completed a comprehensive review of our graduate programs which will see the introduction of a new Graduate Certificate in Hospitality and Retail Management. Dr. Ayoun, our graduate program officer, will report on this in detail later in the Newsletter.

On the faculty front there have been a few changes. I am sad to report that Mrs. Carol Dillard retired from the faculty in December 2009. Mrs. Dillard served the program for

over 37 years and is well known to each and every one of you as a professional educator. While retiring in a full-time sense, she remains on faculty in an adjunct capacity, continuing to work on the delivery of our various food-related courses. Dr. Abel Alonso, who joined the faculty in 2008, left for pastures new in May 2010. Dr. Alonso gave tirelessly to the program and the department during his two years with us, making excellent contributions to both our teaching and research efforts. Needless to say, we are in a search mode right now and hope to have a new faculty member in place for the beginning of the next academic year.

I am also pleased to report the creation of the program's first Industry Advisory Board. The faculty completed an intense strategic planning exercise in 2009, and the establishment of this board was identified as a top priority. The board had its first meeting in the fall semester and, as you will see later in the newsletter, is comprised of representatives from the broad hospitality and tourism sectors. It was truly wonderful to welcome members to campus, and they will be a wonderful asset in growing the program into the future.

In closing, I hope you enjoy reading our latest installment of "The Added Touch" and look forward to working with you all as we continue to grow and cement our bonds in the future.

Best regards and War Eagle!

Martin O'Neill

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.

6th Annual California Epicurean Tour

For the 6th straight year, 15 competitively selected senior HRMT students spent May 17 – 22, 2010 experiencing the exquisite food and wine of California's famed Napa Valley. This year's all-expenses paid study trip was made possible through the generous support of the following: Mr. and Mrs. John Aribzzani, Mr. and Mrs. Owen Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Harris, Mr. and Mrs. Tim Wellborn, Chef Tim Creehan, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Keenan, Mr. and Mrs. George Compo, Southern Spirits & Wine, Sysco, and Royal Cup.

During their time in Napa, students, accompanying faculty, and sponsors were given first-class tours of such notable vineyards as Pisoni, Beringer, Far Niente, Quintessa, and E. & J. Gallo and had the opportunity to learn firsthand the complete process of winemaking, beginning with how the grape vines are grown and nurtured to the various wine cellars and barrels used for aging.

European Study Tour

The annual HRMT European study tour took place from May 16 - June 13, 2010. Participating students spent months in advance planning an impressive itinerary around the theme "Gastronomy Tourism," which incorporated visits to a range of food and beverage attractions throughout Europe. The month long backpacking adventure was led by Dr. Martin O'Neill and covered 9 coun-

tries with stops in the following cities: Barcelona, Florence, Salzburg, Prague, Munich, Freiberg, Reims, Paris, Bruges, Amsterdam, and Dublin.

The Hospitality Gala

On March 25, 2010, students in the Catering and Events Management class, taught by Dr. Alecia Douglas, hosted the much anticipated 18th annual HRMT fundraiser, THE Hospitality GALA: An International Affair. In collaboration with the management team at the Hotel at Auburn University, the class successfully planned, organized and executed the record breaking event for 300 guests. The evening's cuisine was prepared by renowned chefs Tracy Griffith, Ford Fry, and Andrew Litherland, newly named executive chef of the Hotel at Auburn University.

THE GALA raised \$22,000 from ticket sales, \$12,000 from the silent auction, and \$41,000 from the live auction which featured Auburn University assistant football coach Trooper Taylor. Items for the silent and live auction were donated by many local, regional, national and international hospitality businesses, including travel packages from the recently formed HRMT Industry Advisory Board.

A special highlight of THE GALA was the presentation of the inaugural Distinguished HRMT Alumnus Award to Ms. Katy Law. Katy is currently employed by Design Hotels as Director of Sales for the Americas. She is a 2001 graduate and a member of

the HRMT advisory board.

Mark your calendars now. Next year's GALA will be held on Thursday, March 31, 2011.

Hospitality Career Fair

The 21st Annual Hospitality Career Fair was held on November 5, 2009. This event, which was planned exclusively for hospitality majors, seeks to introduce students to a worldwide range of vendors. Approximately 100 students had the opportunity to interact with representatives from the following companies: 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 22nd annual Hospitality Career Fair is scheduled for November 4, 2010.



Student Organizations

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

Eta Sigma Delta: The Auburn University Student Chapter of Eta Sigma Delta International Hospitality Honor Society held its annual initiation ceremony on April 26, 2010 at the Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center. The guest speaker was John Wild, director, Auburn-Opelika Convention and Visitors Bureau. With the support of faculty, as well as family and close friends, the ceremony honored 22 outstanding juniors and seniors in the HRMT program.



CMAA: CMAA's World Conference on Club Management and Golf Industry Show is the Association's most visible event of the year. Over the past several years, audiences of nearly 5,000 have attended CMAA's Conference and Expo, which are held in major cities throughout the United States. San Diego, CA was the site for this year's CMAA conference which was held from Feb 8-13, 2010. Mrs. Carol Dillard, Leah Green, Reed Forbus, and Emily Tant, Student Chapter President attended the meeting.



Alumni Update

I just wanted to write and tell you how Orlando has been treating me these past few weeks. It is going great. I have started my first week in housekeeping at the Boardwalk Resort. It is beautiful at the resort. I feel completely prepared for the job, in large part due to the amazing practicum class that I had taken this past year. Everything that my trainer has told me thus far I already had learned while in the housekeeping section of practicum. It has been really nice to know that I have already received the proper training and feel very confident that I am going to be prepared for the job at hand. I just wanted to tell you and your staff thanks so much for all the help that I have received in the past and cannot express to you enough how much I valued your advice to us before we graduated that night at our dinner. I am so proud of our major and have been extremely blessed to have had this opportunity in Disney. I will keep you informed of how it progresses. I hope all is well in Auburn! Please tell everyone at the hotel I send my best and let me know if anyone would like to visit. Thank you again for your mentoring and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes,
Rachael Cink, Class of 2009

Student Scholarship

The following scholarship opportunities are available to HRMT students. For more information on these and other scholarships, students are encouraged to contact Dr. Alecia Douglas by email acdoug-las@auburn.edu or phone at 844-1434.

American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation (AH&LEF) offers a wide array of scholarship opportunities available for incoming freshmen through graduate students.

International Flight Services Association Scholarship Awards: The Lois Campbell Scholarship and The Tommy DePaola Scholarship are \$2,250 cash awards administered through the school at which the

award recipient is enrolled.

The National Association of Catering Executives (NACE), the nation's oldest and largest professional association dedicated to all aspects of the catering industry, is once again seeking candidates for the Vince DeFinis Scholarship, a \$10,000 grant that will be awarded to two full-time undergraduate students pursuing a degree in an accredited hospitality program.

The National Restaurant Educational Foundation Scholarships (NRAEF) awards scholarships to motivated individuals who are committed to furthering their education and succeeding in the restaurant and foodservice industry.



Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award:
John-Michael

Roehm, Jr. was honored as the male recipient of the 2010 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. This award is given annually to one male and female student of the graduating class and one non-student "in recognition of those high qualities which ennoble and beautify living and bind man to man in mutual love and helpfulness".

Students at IQLA

The Auburn University College of Human Science awarded the 16th annual international Quality of Life Award to Nancy G. Brinker, Ambassador and Founding Chair of Susan G. Komen for the Cure on December 7, 2009 at the United Nations in New York City. Dr. Martin O'Neill, Dr. Alecia Douglas, and Dr. Kyungmi Kim participated in the ceremony with students, Yang Cao, Courtney Ritterbush, Amanda Mason, Xiaoming He. In addition to the award ceremony,



all HRMT participants attended the Greenwich Village Food Tasting and Cultural Tour.

Southeast CHRIE Conference

On February 19, 2010, Kyle Townsend and Benjamin Nemec attended the Southeast Chrie conference and career fair in Atlanta. This was their first hospitality graduate research meeting, and they were selected to present their recent class project to fellow graduate students, faculty, and industry professionals from across the region.

Developed under the supervision of Dr. Martin O'Neill, their Quality Science class assignment provided them an opportunity to assess football game attendees feelings about tailgating and the game day experience at Auburn. With help from some of their undergraduate classmates, Kyle and Benjamin collected data from tailgaters on home game weekends during the 2009 football season. The feedback they received provided valuable information regarding tailgaters' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses. Kyle and Benjamin will continue this study during the 2010 football season with the goal of helping Auburn enhance the game day experience for its devoted fans.

Their experience in Atlanta at the Southeast CHRIE conference and career fair proved to be full of lessons ranging from proper graduate etiquette to interacting with potential employers. They highly recommend this meeting or one similar for undergraduates interested in continuing their education or simply desiring to make contacts in the industry.



15th Annual Graduate Student Conference



Douglas Murray, first year Ph.D. student, presented his research at the 15th annual Graduate Student Conference held in Washington D.C. in January 2010. His presentation examined the potential of home brewers and craft beer enthusiasts to become a niche market for independent restaurateurs who are looking for a unique way to compete with large chain operators. Dr. Martin O'Neill, Doug's research supervisor, and Dr. Baker Ayoun, HRMT graduate coordinator, were also in attendance actively recruiting new students for the graduate program.

HRMT Graduate Program Highlight

The HRMT graduate programs have a lot of which to be proud. The doctoral program is one of only a dozen similar programs in the U.S., and the distance education master's degree was the first graduate hospitality program in the nation to be offered online.

We are excited as we look forward to a larger than usual internationally diverse graduate student body starting this fall, adding to the 14 students currently enrolled in the doctoral and master's programs. In addition to welcoming new students, we are pleased to announce that we are in the process of undertaking a comprehensive review of our graduate program, working to build an even more rigorous curriculum.

It is a special pleasure for the HRMT graduate program to announce the launch of its first international endeavor. We are collaborating with the Auburn University Department of Consumer Affairs to offer a Graduate Certificate in Hospitality and Retail Studies in partnership with the Kochi International Business School in Kerala Province, India.

We are also especially pleased to congratulate a number of our graduate students who continue to publish their research in academic journals, present their work at professional and scholarly meetings, teach undergraduate HRMT courses, earn graduate assistantships, and win scholarships.

Congratulations to all involved in the HRMT graduate programs for their continued excellence, and a genuine Auburn welcome to those about to join us this fall.

Dr. Baker Ayoun
HRMT Graduate Coordinator

Advisory Board Meeting

The Hotel and Restaurant Management program hosted its 1st Inaugural Advisory Board Meeting at the Hotel at Auburn University on November 19, 2009. The board's role is to offer professional input regarding the HRMT curriculum. The group discussed at length what employers are looking for when hiring for entry level positions within the hospitality industry, as well as what core competencies a student should have upon graduating from the program. Members also reviewed course learning outcomes and met with undergraduate and graduate students. A second meeting of the board was held on March 26, 2010, with further discussion about the academic and experiential preparation of HRMT students.

HRMT Advisory board members:

Mr. Tobin L. Counts: Area Director, Hotel Sales, Residence Inn, Atlanta Airport, Courtyard Atlanta Airport North

Dr. Alleah Crawford: Assistant Professor, Department of Hospitality Management, East Carolina University

Chef Tim Creehan C.E.C.: Chef Tim Creehan and Company

Mr. Alain Gruber: Vice President, Hotel Operations
Residen Sea – The World

Mr. Sandy Heely: Captain, United Airlines (retired), Colonel - US Airforce (retired)

Mr. R. McLean Hicklin, III : Chief Operating Officer Greater Valley Hospitality Group

Mr. K. Roger Holliday: Vice President, Business Development
Russell Lands, Inc.

Ms. Katy Law : Director of Sales, The Americas Design Hotels, New York

Mr. Ryan Magnon (Chair): Vice President, Quality West Paces Hotel Group L.L.C.

Mr. Pedro Mandoki, CHA: President and Chief Executive Officer, Mandoki Hospitality, Inc.

Mr. John Russell: Senior Vice President, Operations Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort

Mr. Trip Schneck: President, TIG Global

Mr. Peter Schwartz: Chief Executive Officer, International Beverage Company, Inc.

Ms. Pam Wellbarn: Business Owner, Wellborn Forest

Mr. John Wild: Director, Auburn-Opelika Convention & Visitors Bureau



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



Mrs. Carol Dillard retired on Dec 3, 2009. She began teaching in the Nutrition and Food Science Department in 1980 and continued to teach in the Hotel and Restaurant Program after its transition from Food Science Management in 1987. We all thank Mrs. Dillard for the opportunities for professional and personal development that she provided students over the years. Although retired, we are delighted that she will return to the department to teach on a part-time basis.



Dr. Martin O'Neill attended the inaugural International Conference on Sport and Leisure, in Vancouver, British Columbia. Organized and hosted by the University of British Columbia, the event took place on the heels of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. The conference was designed to explore the connections between sport and its broader context, addressing, among other things, the organizational, educational, technological, ethical and political relationships between sport and society. Key note speakers included Mr. Richard Pound, Director of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games; Mr. Robert Barney, International Center for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario; and Dr. Patricia Vertinsky, University of British Columbia.

Dr. Kyungmi Kim attended the 2010 Hospitality Law Conference held in Houston, Texas from Feb 3-4. The conference



was designed to discuss legal issues related to the hospitality industry. All sessions were presented by legal practitioners and experts in the field who discussed solutions to real life issues that the industry deals with routinely. Dr. Kim stated, "To attend the hospitality law conference was a unique experience. It is a leading source for the latest information on

hotels' loss prevention, and it will update you about the industry."

Dr. Baker Ayoun was recently awarded an Emerald/FEMA Highly Commended Research Award for his dissertation work.



Dr. Ayoun's research focused on the influences of national culture on approaches to business strategy development by hotel executives in the U.S., Malaysia, Turkey, and Thailand.



Dr. Abel Alonso links class and textbook material to real-life scenarios. On April 8, his Hospitality Financial Management class visited a recently established coffee beanery owned by young entrepreneur Sarah Barnett. Sarah has a great passion for coffee roasting and coffee making. During the visit, she explained many details concerning the establishment of a small business, including challenges and opportunities. On April 13, the Hospitality Facilities Management class met with Lisa Beck, owner of Opelika's Events Center, a new facility that had its grand opening on Thursday, April 15, 2010.



Dr. Alecia Douglas' Hospitality Marketing class worked with local Auburn restaurants on a real-world marketing consulting project. The goal was to formulate marketing strategies tailored to the needs of their respective businesses. Participating restaurants included: Piccolo, Zazu Eclectic Eatery, Johnny Brusco's, Moe's, In Italy/Speak Easy, Gourmet Tiger and Daylight Donuts. Paulie Hufstedler, Manager of Zazu, was very impressed by the professionalism of the students who worked with him and fully enjoyed interacting with them. Mr. Hufstedler exclaimed, "They did an AMAZING job...WOW!" He further stated, "The information they relayed to me will TRULY be helpful to us. We really need more intelligent and success-orient people like your students in this industry."

Community Connection

The Hotel and Restaurant Management Program at Auburn University will be connecting with the Auburn community and the state of Alabama with its upcoming Reaching out to Alabama High Schools initiative. The Reaching out to Alabama High Schools program will focus on increasing high school students' awareness about present and future career opportunities in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The West Paces Hotel Group is very excited to announce The Hotel at Auburn University has been named a finalist in the American Society for Quality's International Team Excellence competition. On May 24, 2010, the hotel will compete with 24 other companies from around the world to determine the winners of this highly regarded Quality Improvement Award Program.

The theme of the hotel's presentation is "Maximizing Customer Engagement" and it will review how the property maximized customer engagement in order to secure repeat business. Within three years, The Hotel at Auburn University has driven performance to a world class level of 95 percent overall customer satisfaction while continuing to consistently increase a previously stagnant hotel occupancy each year in spite of a challenging global economy. The project has also propelled the hotel to number one in its respective marketplace.



Capella, Georgetown, Washington DC - Opening 2012

2010 will be an exciting year for The West Paces Hotel Group as the company expands its global presence and opens three new international luxury properties. The stunning Borgo Egnazia Resort and Spa on the Adriatic Sea near Brindisi, Italy [some 300 miles southeast of the College of Human Sciences' Ariccia, Italy campus] will open this summer while the Solis Palmyra in storied Rose Hall, Jamaica is slated to open before the end of the year. In April, the Group will announce when and where Capella will open its doors to the world in New York, New York. The arrival of January 2012 will be punctuated by the Capella Georgetown opening in Washington, D.C. This elegant and exclusive hotel will cater to a highly sophisticated and discerning clientele certain to include global leaders of industry, heads of state, and other distinctive visitors. Students and graduates of the Hotel and Restaurant Management program will have the opportunity to add these properties to the growing list of superior hotels where they can gain real life experience in the luxury hotel industry.

Providing a benchmark of a customer-driven hotel operating by Quality Sciences right here in Auburn for the students to receive instruction and experience is consistent with the standard West Paces expects of its hotels around the world. A number of West Paces Hotel Group Properties have been nominated for a World Travel Award, the most prestigious award in the travel industry. The following properties are nominated for 2010: Ayana Resort

Singapore (Leading Resort Singapore), Breidenbacher Hof, a Capella Hotel (Leading Hotel Germany), Solis Palmyra (Leading Hotel, Leading Resort Jamaica), Capella Pedregal (Leading Hotel Mexico), Capella Ixtapa (Leading Resort Mexico), Capella Telluride (Leading Hotel USA), The Cambrian (leading boutique hotel Switzerland), Schloss Velden, a Capella Hotel (Leading Hotel Austria).

In addition, the Solis Lough Eske Castle in County Donegal, Ireland was awarded World's Best Luxury Country Hotel, the Best Wedding Castle Venue in Ireland and The Irish Hotel Association's National Quality Employer Accreditation Award. The Ayana Resort & Spa in Bali was awarded "Best Resort in Asia" and one of the top five Best Resorts in the World.

The West Paces Hotel Group, established in 2002 and headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, was founded by Horst Schulze along with several other founders and former executives of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. The Principals of the Group collectively leverage their distinctive hospitality experience with a diverse track record of operating world-class hotels and resorts to create unparalleled value and results through the ongoing



Borgo Egnazia Resort and Spa, Brindisi, Italy

study and application of Quality Sciences. By sustaining superior service at world-class properties and conference centers in gateway cities and high-profile resort destinations around the world, they are on their way to realizing their Vision of being recognized as the Global Leaders in the service business.

With their roots on the campus of Auburn University and their launch of two top-tier international hotel brands – Capella Hotels and Resorts and Solis Hotels and Resorts, The West Paces Hotel Group has illuminated the standards of service luxury on a global scale, combining a new sense of superior personalized customer service and distinctive designs.

The Added Touch

HRMT News Letter
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**THE HOTEL AT
AUBURN UNIVERSITY**
AND DIXON CONFERENCE CENTER

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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Lobby Sitting Area

