First Class
UNLV Singapore Marks Major Milestone
PREMIER
The official magazine of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

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As we prepare to celebrate the graduation of our first senior class in Singapore on June 7, I’d like to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can expect in the future. The purpose in offering our undergraduate and graduate program in Asia was twofold: first, we wanted to extend our offerings to where the majority of our international students resided (Asia); secondly, we wanted to extend the UNLV brand internationally. We have accomplished both.

At the forefront of this effort has been Andy Nazarechuk, dean of UNLV Singapore. I want to thank him for the spectacular job he has done in the role as Singapore campus executive officer.

One of the lessons we have learned in having a campus of the hotel college far away from the main Las Vegas campus is that the campus executive officer must be responsible for all of the services the main campus provides to students in Las Vegas that are not available to students in Singapore. Dr. Nazarechuk has accepted that responsibility and has provided for his students in an amazing manner.

He and his superb staff have had to understand, organize, offer, and administer services and assistance related to admissions, housing, transportation, healthcare, hiring, safety and security, information technology, student services, purchasing of books and supplies, recreation, transfers between campuses, finances, development, faculty contracts, and library services. And I am sure there are many other things that they do that I have forgotten or just don’t know about.

We have offices and conduct classes in about 12,000 square feet of space on two floors of the National Library Building in Singapore. This is a beautiful new building that functions similarly to our Library of Congress in Washington. It is an ideal place for the hotel college, and the UNLV brand gets great exposure in this facility. We leased space there with the understanding that we probably could accommodate about 250 to 300 students at a maximum. Today we have 200 students studying in our undergraduate and graduate programs. I believe our UNLV Singapore Campus has been a resounding success.

If we choose not to restrict enrollment, we will shortly need to seek other facilities for our programs. We have been in discussion with the Economic Development Board of Singapore and their plans to create a “hospitality education campus.” This campus would provide facilities for a number of hospitality-related curricula and perhaps include some of the two- and three-year Singaporean polytechnic colleges. None of the programs on the proposed campus would be competing.

This concept is identical to the “ihottz” (international hospitality trade and training zone) concept that we have agreed to become part of in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In the Emirate of Ras al Khaimah of the UAE we will be the “anchor tenant” on a 100-acre hospitality education campus. We will offer our undergraduate and graduate programs there, identical to those we offer in Singapore. There will be related programs such as culinary arts training, spa and fitness management, travel agency and tour management, entrepreneur management, and hotel management training programs offered by other institutions. I anticipate that we will begin activity on this new Board of Regents-approved campus within 18 months.

As we continue to reach out to other areas of the globe for the development of UNLV campuses providing our undergraduate and graduate programs in hospitality management, we begin to achieve yet another major objective. Soon, we will be able to offer the B.S. in Hotel Administration to a student who wants to start in Singapore and complete one year there and then transfer to the UAE campus. The student could stay one or two years there in the identical degree program and then transfer to Las Vegas to finish the degree. Of course, other combinations are possible as well. Were we to create additional campuses in the future, UNLV would have established a global network for hospitality management education. A student graduating after experiencing multiple campuses would have a bachelor’s degree in international hospitality management and would have the added experience of interacting with multiple cultures. No other university is currently offering such a capability. We are proud of our international efforts and hope that they can continue to be a source of pride for all of UNLV.
Stressful economic times emphasize the importance of having great leaders in place to provide vision and guidance. Consider the following scenario:

Tom Bartini and 200 of his peers were called together by their company’s board of directors. Tom was anxious to know what the meeting was about. There had been rumors of some changes at the top; maybe they were going to announce the changes today.

All heads turned toward the door as the chairman of the board entered. He quickly cut through the tension by getting right to the point. Everyone sat stunned as the chairman announced a new president was to be selected from the management present in the room today. Tom had been with the company for 12 years in several key positions. He knew he had the qualities of a leader needed in these stressful times. His peers and supervisors had praised his intelligence and creative thinking. Tom was willing to take risks, but only after carefully analyzing the pros and cons. High integrity and sensitivity toward his peers and subordinates were also among his top qualities.

Tom knew no one else in the room was more courageous, committed, communicative, or change-oriented than he. Having been promoted often, Tom always used his newly acquired power wisely. Tom couldn’t believe what he was witnessing. This is how he was picking our next president? The good news was Tom was still standing. Then Tom’s world came crashing down; the Chairman announced that all those who were not six feet tall or taller must now sit down. Could the chairman really pick the next leader based on these old mythologies? Tom knew the two people left standing. They did not measure up to him and lacked many of the qualities he knew were needed to give the company new direction it sorely required. The chairman determined who came from the wealthiest family and announced that he would be the next president.

By now you are aware this story itself is a myth. This case of nonvalue-based decision-making could not have happened. Unfortunately, many American businesses still deal with other forms of myths, which are equally subjective and equally destructive to morale, when it comes time to selecting their leaders. For example, there is still that tendency to promote the person who makes us the most money.

Promising knights of business must avoid these many myths to foster modern-day leadership. They must not let antiquated myths distract them from applying good common-sense practices that assure future success.

Jim Moore is the author of First You Slay the Dragon: Overcoming the Myths of Leadership. Contact him at jmoore@mooreideas.com.
Innovation UNLV moved a step closer to reality this spring after UNLV officials selected three companies to help complete the hotel college’s much-anticipated hospitality campus.

Renowned developers Concord Eastridge, in cooperation with Cooper Carry architects and Crestline Hotel Management Company, have been chosen to develop the new seven-acre project on the corner of Swenson Street and Flamingo Road, although no contracts had been signed at press time. The project will include a 330-room hotel, a conference center, and a new academic building, which together form the foundation of the Innovation UNLV concept. When completed, it will provide the only opportunity in the world for vendors who serve the hospitality industry to demonstrate and conduct research on their products and services in a commercially operated facility. “This project will further enhance the world-wide reputation of the hotel college and position UNLV at the forefront of research related to the hospitality industry,” says Dean Stuart Mann. “We selected partners with excellent reputations in their respective fields of development, design, and management and we are looking forward to working with them.
to make Innovation UNLV a reality for the university, the Las Vegas community, and the industry."

Aside from the obvious benefits to vendors who choose to test market their products and services at Innovation UNLV, the project will also provide a unique benefit for the hotel college’s international students. Under current immigration law, foreign students cannot work in the U.S. until they have completed two academic semesters. However, because the hotel and conference center will be considered an academic entity, foreign students seeking employment in the industry will be able to gain real life experience much quicker than they might elsewhere.

It’s a further enhancement of the comprehensive education students receive at UNLV’s hotel college and a natural evolution for a program widely regarded as the best of its kind. Ed Hoganson, senior vice president of finance and business development for Crestline Hotels & Resorts, says the proposed hotel and conference facility will reflect the academic excellence of UNLV as well as help fulfill the university’s mission for community involvement and concern. “UNLV is one of the most highly regarded hospitality administration schools in the world,” says Hoganson, whose company will help manage the Innovation UNLV Hotel and Conference Center. “To operate a hotel on this campus is a privilege for us and provides an opportunity to work with the school to showcase exceptional service and operation practices to an international audience. Together, we can build the next generation of hospitality management leaders and help create new ways to manage guest service through innovation.”

Crestline currently manages hotels across the country with some of the best known and respected brands in the United States (Marriott, Hilton, Westin, Renaissance, Sheraton, Crowne Plaza and Wyndham). They also manage two premier university conference centers—Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center and the Emory Conference Center Hotel, both in Atlanta, Ga.

The project’s hotel and conference center will also benefit from Crestline’s new corporate initiative, called EarthPact, which sets a new standard for sustainable practices and development in the industry. EarthPact includes an energy management plan that presents guidelines to improve performance and limit energy usage. It addresses issues such as interior and exterior lighting; HVAC and domestic hot water systems; central cooling systems and air handlers; building management systems; laundry and kitchen equipment; sauna, pool and exercise areas; as well as ice and vending machines. It also sets criteria for green meetings, sustainable sales logic, and guest relations programs.

Innovation UNLV is being designed by the Virginia-based architectural firm Cooper Carry to meet silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program—the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings. The design and development goal reflects UNLV’s mission of being a model of sustainability for the community through such efforts as recycling, construction of energy-efficient buildings, xeriscaping, and retrofitting facilities.

Above all, though, this project holds more than just a promise of innovative educational and professional opportunities. It can be seen as an important component to the success of our community.

“Las Vegas is obviously a community based on the hospitality industry,” says Mann. “And through the Innovation UNLV project, this community will see that the university has further strengthened our commitment, not only to the well-being and excellence of the industry, but to our city and state as well.”

An official groundbreaking for the campus will likely occur this fall, with project completion slated for mid-2012.

The Innovation UNLV project is made possible, in large part, by a $30 million gift provided by the Harrah’s Foundation in 2007—the largest single corporate gift in the university’s history. Of that gift, $25 million will go toward construction costs of the new academic building and $5 million for related research, recruitment, training, and education initiatives.

Vendors interested in participating in the Innovation UNLV concept should contact Stuart Mann, dean of the hotel college, at (702) 895-3308.
Software Donations Help Advance College’s Teaching Methods

The Harrah Hotel College was the recipient recently of some important software donations related specifically to the hospitality industry. Two leading computer software companies, MICROS Systems, Inc. and TRIRIGA, donated software solution packages for the college to use in educating both faculty and students.

MICROS Systems donated the MICROS OPERA Enterprise Solution, which includes OPERA Property Management, OPERA Sales & Catering, and OPERA Vacation Ownership. It will serve as the hotel software used to educate UNLV students in practical applications. By teaching hotel, events, and condo management with this program, up to 200 students at a time will be taught on OPERA applications in various classes.

The company’s association with UNLV is not something new. MICROS has had a relationship with the university for years, starting with the deployment of MICROS 9700 Hospitality Management System for the food and beverage operations at the Thomas & Mack Center. The company also donated the 9700 HMS application as the core restaurant and retail software for use in the college’s classrooms.

MICROS Systems, Inc. provides enterprise applications for the hospitality and retail industries worldwide. Over 310,000 MICROS systems are currently installed in table and quick service restaurants, hotels, motels, casinos, leisure and entertainment, and retail operations in more than 130 countries and all seven continents.

TRIRIGA IWMS Products gave the college approximately $1.3 million in software and services to be used as training and teaching tools. The college plans to use these products to educate faculty and students about TRIRIGA’s enterprise software and how it applies to the hospitality industry, including the management of hotels, resorts, and event centers. TRIRIGA provides the industry’s most extensive functionality in a full integrated IWMS (Integrated Workplace Management Systems) solution, including real estate management, project management, facility management, operations management, workplace performance management, and environmental sustainability for real estate assets.

“Software and hardware systems donated by technology companies such as MICROS and TRIRIGA allow our students to take classroom theory and apply it to the actual systems used throughout the hospitality industry,” says Judy Nagai, director of external relations for the Harrah Hotel College. “When students step into a hotel or restaurant, they will be familiar with how comprehensive property management software is utilized.

“The industry is now faced with developing comprehensive sustainable environmental strategies. By applying real-world issues in the classroom, students will now be able to examine how facilities such as convention centers and hotels can measure and reduce their environmental impact using TRIRIGA Real Estate Environmental Sustainability software.”

Facility Receive Grants to Study Environmental Sustainability

Two interdisciplinary teams of hotel college faculty will embark on new research endeavors this summer designed to improve the environmental sustainability of the hospitality industry, thanks to two $40,000 seed grants from the UNLV Urban Sustainability Initiative.

The first project, “Impacting Environmental Sustainability in the Global Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure Industries,” will develop and evaluate a comprehensive cross-disciplinary curriculum that prepares graduates from the various fields of study within UNLV’s hotel college to implement and champion sustainable professional practices locally, regionally, and globally.

The research team, comprised of UNLV professors Thomas Jones, Ken Teeters, Cinny Carruthers, Carola Raab, Yen-Soon Kim, Chris Brown, Gael Hancock, Chrysostomos Giannoulakis, and doctoral candidate Michelle Millar, have set the following goals for the project: identify curricular competencies related to sustainable practices; assess faculty knowledge about those practices; educate faculty and staff on sustainable topics in which they are deficient; develop a comprehensive curriculum that incorporates service learning and extracurricular activities; measure student attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behavior regarding sustainability; and evaluate curricular outcomes.
You could tell golfing was in Chad Campbell’s blood when he began unofficially competing at the age of 8 against the older kids just for fun—and he won. Alumnus Chad Campbell is still winning today as a professional golfer on the PGA Tour and member of the 37th Ryder Cup Team USA, which secured the coveted Ryder Cup trophy in September 2008.

Campbell, a 1997 graduate of the College of Hotel Administration, played golf at UNLV with fellow tour player Chris Riley, under the leadership of men’s Head Golf Coach Dwaine Knight, whom he credits for dramatically improving his short game.

Today, UNLV can credit Campbell for promoting the game of golf by designating a PGA of America donation of $30,000 to UNLV PGA Golf Management, an academic program housed in the College of Hotel Administration. Each year the Ryder Cup team members select charitable organizations and universities to receive funding from the Ryder Cup Outreach Program. This gift to UNLV will support Play Golf America University, a program designed to teach and engage students in the game of golf through PGA Professional Instruction and other related golf programs.

Today, the program has touched more than 2,000 UNLV students through a variety of golf-related programs. Across the country, more than 24,000 college students have received instruction from PGA professionals thanks to the Ryder Cup Outreach Program. Since its inception in 1999, The PGA of America has distributed more than $6.1 million to 65 participating colleges and universities throughout the United States. UNLV first received funding when Campbell and Riley designated a combined gift of $180,000 to establish a program to expand the game of golf.

The ongoing funding received from the generosity of alumni Campbell and Riley has allowed UNLV to broaden its reach in advancing the game of golf. Play Golf America events have been initiated on the UNLV campus and at Angel Park Golf Club. The response from students and the community has been extremely positive.

“Our goal is to provide the hospitality industry with the next generation of future experts in the game and business of golf. We are fortunate to receive funding for growth of the game initiatives because it provides our students with the opportunity to serve our local golfing community while reinforcing the important role each student will play in promoting the game of golf when working in the industry,” says Christopher Cain, UNLV PGA Golf Management director.

It is clear that bringing the high quality instruction together with the support of the PGA has already made a significant impact on growing the game of golf. Additionally, the UNLV PGA Golf Management Program further develops students into teaching professionals through these initiatives.

Researchers will seek additional funding from The American Hotel and Lodging Educational Foundation, the Corning Foundation, and the National Science Foundation to help distribute research results to campuses that have similar programs and to other disciplines at UNLV and within the Nevada System of Higher Education.

The second project, “Reducing Energy and Water Use by Food Service Operations,” will examine the primary energy uses by the U.S. commercial foodservice industry (equipment purchasing, equipment maintenance, and operation behaviors) and provide foodservice managers with the information they need to help reduce their energy and water usage.

The research team, which includes UNLV professors Christine Bergman, Mehmet Erdem, Yen-Soon Kim, and Carola Raab, also seek to demonstrate how environmentally sustainable changes to restaurant operations can financially benefit a company’s bottom line. The team will seek to extend their research by applying for additional funds from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Harrah’s Hospitality Research Center, and the National Restaurant Association. One of the major deliverables from this research will be the development of educational materials about best practices for energy and water reduction in the foodservice industry.

Established in 2007, The UNLV Urban Sustainability Initiative (USI) is a campus wide effort encompassing multidisciplinary research, academic programs and community partnerships related to the study of urban issues. The aforementioned research projects are two of five UNLV projects funded by the USI this spring. Visit urban21.unlv.edu for more details.
Despite the great success that Alumnus of the Year Bob Boughner has had in his 40-year career with Boyd Gaming, he is still a modest man at heart. “When I learned I was being honored with this designation, I was very surprised and humbled,” he says. “I just love UNLV and everything the university has done for the community.”

When Boughner was looking into schools in the mid-1970s, he was working as a room service captain at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix. “It was that job that made hospitality an easy choice for me,” he recalls. “I knew that the hotel business was where I wanted to be.” Although he was offered a job to stay on at the Biltmore as a manager, and despite the fact that he enjoyed the property and its clientele, he turned it down to move to Las Vegas and attend UNLV.

“UNLV was really a great place for me—it was affordable and not too far from my family in Arizona. Plus, I knew that being in Las Vegas would be convenient to apprentice a bit in the hotel business.”

Boughner began working for Boyd as a timekeeper in 1976 at downtown Las Vegas’ California Hotel and Casino. He began at UNLV the following year. “The regimen of school and work together provided me with a level of discipline,” he says. “Further, the process of having to read technical material—in Frank Borsenik’s class—was tough but worthwhile. I’ve applied some of those principles in my work life over the years and have found it very gratifying.”

In addition to Borsenik, Boughner was impressed by then Dean Jerry Vallen, Jim Abbey, and Charles Levinson, among others. “My professors were inspirational to me in regard to this industry and the sheer practical nature of the work enabled me to be better informed and a more disciplined manager,” he says. “The way the courses were set up allowed me to work full time and be a full-time student.”

In 2007, Boughner gave a $1.2 million gift to fund a new career services center within the Harrah Hotel College. He remembers that when he was a student, the “career services center” existed as a corkboard with 3-by-5 cards tacked to it. Through his generous gift, the process of finding job opportunities has become much more convenient for students and graduates.

During the fall 2008 semester, representatives of the Bob Boughner Career Services Center met with 1,170 students, which was up 500 students for the entire 2007 - 2008 year. In addition to hosting mock interviews and providing career development resources, the center’s staff also coordinated 225 classroom visits by industry professionals, instructed 57 classroom presentations on a variety of topics (from resume writing to professional attire to networking) and hosted 35 employer information marketing tables and 20 employer information sessions.

As you can tell, Boughner’s dedication to both his education and profession helped him advance through the ranks over the years. Now, as the president of Echelon Resorts, a subsidiary of Boyd Gaming, and as a director of Boyd Gaming Corporation, Boughner is inspiring tomorrow’s hoteliers and gaming executives. What does he suggest to those who wish to emulate his success? “Stay in school! Listen attentively and ask a lot of questions. Take your education seriously but have some fun along the way.”

Robyn Campbell-Ouchida, ’00 MA
FROM PROFESSORS TO HOSPITALITY EXECUTIVES TO CO-WORKERS, BOB BOUGHNER SEEMS TO HAVE FANS EVERYWHERE.

“Bob is one of the most valued members of the Boyd Gaming team. He started with us in 1976 as a line-level employee, and worked his way up through the ranks, learning every aspect of our business. He helped establish a new standard of excellence for our company in 2003, when he led the development and opening of Borgata, a property that proved Boyd Gaming could offer a compelling luxury product. His leadership with Borgata made him the natural choice when it came time to find someone to lead Echelon, our future resort development on the Las Vegas Strip. Bob is a true visionary of our industry, and it is hard to imagine Boyd Gaming without him.”

—Bill Boyd, executive chairman of Boyd Gaming

“In all of the years I’ve known Bob, I’ve never known him to settle for the traditional solution to a problem. He is innovative and fearless in his approach to implementing new ideas in human resources, training, customer service and other management areas. He is always looking for the right answer, not the easy one.”

—Gail Sammons, UNLV professor of hotel management

“Bob Boughner has displayed to the gaming and hospitality industry the dedication and vision necessary to be successful and continue to understand the consumers’ behaviors and react accordingly. He has also never forgotten the fundamentals of success through education while developing the leaders of tomorrow by his support of UNLV in many facets. He truly is a pillar in this industry as he continues to raise the bar for those pursuing a career in gaming and hospitality. This is a well-deserved award.”

—Jeff Voyles, visiting UNLV professor and authority on international gaming

“Bob has been a tremendous friend and mentor throughout my 14 years with the company. He brings out the best in the people he works with and does it in a very inspiring manner. He has the ability to challenge people in a very supportive way.”

—Rob Stillwell, vice president of corporate communications for Boyd Gaming

“Bob is a great teacher and a person with very high expectations, and provides the same level of support for you to achieve those expectations. For those of us who have been lucky enough to be associated with him, we’re likely to follow in his footsteps in demanding excellence of ourselves and our team members.”

—Sid Vaikunta, assistant general manager of the Suncoast Hotel and Casino

“I first met Bob when I was working at the Stardust in 1983. He approached me personally when the Boyd Group was named as the interim operator of our casino, as he and Mr. Boyd did with every employee. He introduced himself to me and my coworkers in a very warm and friendly way. Ultimately, Boyd acquired the Stardust and it’s been one of the best things to happen to me. It’s been the same consistent and friendly support that I experienced during that first encounter then and today, and I’m grateful for all that I learned from Bob over these many years.”

—Audrey Anderson, casino cage and credit manager at The Orleans Hotel and Casino

“Bob is not the type of guy who stands on the sideline. He may not be a household name to the general public, but he is well known and respected within the industry.”

—Rossi Ralenkotter, president and chief executive officer of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

“Bob Boughner’s reputation for working with people in a manner that allows everyone to reach the pinnacle of success is manifested in his interactions with us in the UNLV hotel college. His sincerity in wanting to help students achieve their career goals is never more evident and demonstrated than when he is on campus with the students and faculty. He is the exemplar of what all of our students should strive for. We are thrilled to be able to award him our “Alumnus of the Year.”

—Stuart H. Mann, dean of UNLV’s William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration
UNLV Harrah Hotel College  
Dean Stuart H. Mann  
and the  
College Alumni Association Board of Directors  

CONGRATULATE THE VALLEN DINNER OF DISTINCTION HONOREES  
FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY  

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VALLEN DINNER OF DISTINCTION  
HONORING EXCELLENCE IN HOSPITALITY
UNLV Singapore Dean Andy Nazarechuk at the Esplanade, a pedestrian promenade in downtown Singapore.
It is difficult at the outset of any bold endeavor to envision the landmarks that will define your success. After all, success is so often a moving target, and the only way to hit it is to work hard and hope everything you’ve got is enough. Three years ago, UNLV opened the doors to its first international campus — a big dream, to be sure, and one long-envisioned by UNLV hotel college Dean Stuart Mann. Now, as that campus hits its first major marker of success, UNLV’s hotel college can be proud of its accomplishments overseas, and reflect further on what it’ll take to create an even brighter future for its students, both here in Las Vegas and around the globe.

Photos by Rory Daniel

First
Class

UNLV Singapore Marks Major Milestone
UNLV Singapore’s first cohort of students—aptly named Rebel One—will graduate this June. UNLV Singapore Dean Andy Nazarechuk provides his thoughts here about the first three years of the program.

What have been the most rewarding aspects of operating a new campus overseas?

It has been an amazing experience to see the internationalization of UNLV’s hotel college and to be given the opportunity to provide quality hospitality education in an area where it was not readily available. An unexpected bonus is seeing the students’ delight and enthusiasm at being taught by UNLV hotel college faculty. The students are enthusiastic about the U.S. style of teaching, which is vastly different from what they are used to in Asia.

What has been the most surprising thing you’ve learned so far from the experience?

The most surprising aspect of setting up and managing this campus has been the warm and welcoming reception we’ve received from the Singapore government, the hospitality industry, and the students—not only from Singapore but from the entire region. So many people are excited that UNLV’s hotel college is here.

What does the future look like for UNLV Singapore?

Soon Singapore will have two new state-of-the-art integrated resorts, which promise to be among the most exciting properties in the world. Singapore will be opening many new hotels and the hospitality industry is expanding everywhere in the area. Generally, South-East Asia is becoming a more sophisticated travel destination. As the industry continues to grow, so will UNLV Singapore. In fact, we expect to reach the capacity for our current facilities by the end of the year.

What have been the students’ most significant accomplishments since you arrived?

Our students continue to astonish us with the leadership skills they demonstrate in our Student Management Program, in which they take on responsibilities for student-focused and certain school operations. They have excelled and are constantly making improvements to the areas they oversee. It seems that each year our students take us to a higher level of accomplishment. For example, our students organized the first International Convention and Expo Summit held in Singapore, and many delegates raved about what an impressive and well-planned conference it was.

What about UNLV Singapore are you most proud of?

There are many things I’m proud of in the program, but the most significant personal source of pride for me is being able to see students who did not have a clear educational and career path excel in the program and establish clearly defined goals for their hospitality careers. Some of these students have transferred to the main campus, and I know they will become leaders in the hospitality industry wherever they decide to go.

What are some of the greatest challenges you faced in running the campus, and how did you overcome them?

Although Singapore is a very modern and international city, it is still a different culture with different customs and procedures. It took me months to figure out the myriad of acronyms used in Singapore. It’s like learning a whole new language, and some shopkeepers and taxi drivers speak “Singlish” which is a combination of Chinese, Malay, Tamil, and British English. These kinds of differences can be fun, but there are many challenges that aren’t apparent to the casual tourist visiting this great city.

Opening a new campus is an overwhelming task. I was fortunate to have had a great deal of experience teaching in universities throughout Asia, so I was familiar with some of the cultural differences in education style and management style. This helped provide me with insights on how to set the standards for hospitality education in the region. I also had the help of our director of admissions, Clare Ng, who is a UNLV graduate. She is Singaporean, so her assistance has been invaluable.

Today many other universities visit UNLV Singapore to see what we’ve accomplished and to seek advice on their own international expansion. UNLV is being perceived as a leader in international education development, and that is very gratifying.
How has the support from the dean helped the program succeed?

The very existence of UNLV Singapore is due to Dean Stuart Mann. It was his vision to internationalize UNLV’s College of Hotel Administration to give our students and faculty the opportunity to experience an increasingly important part of the world to our industry, to bring to this area the expertise and experience of UNLV’s faculty, and to reach out to students who might otherwise not have the opportunity to earn a degree from a renowned institution like UNLV. Dean Mann is the one who worked toward obtaining the necessary approvals, and he continues to be UNLV Singapore’s chief advocate and most important supporter on the main campus and around the world, and he continues to research and pursue other international opportunities for UNLV’s hotel college.

How else has the main campus in Las Vegas helped with the success of UNLV Singapore?

We owe a great debt to so many people on the main campus for their support. The visiting professors not only bring their expertise, but they add prestige and credibility to our program. They have been generous with their advice on how we can improve our programs and we take all of their advice seriously and implement their ideas. But, you know, there are so many others without whose help we could never have survived: our friends in the finance department, the registrar’s office, the admissions department, the graduate school office, the hotel advising office, to name just a few. Both officially and unofficially, the people in these offices have offered their time and effort to help us in setting up and running our program. I hope they know how much we appreciate their assistance. It’s the team effort of many departments and many individuals that makes it possible for us to offer the same level of excellence at the UNLV Singapore campus as on the main campus.

We have also been lucky enough to have a remarkable local staff. Clare Ng, Gerry Koh, and Emily Woo are all loyal UNLV graduates here in Singapore who have gone above and beyond anything I could have hoped for in supporting our program. I am proud to acknowledge our other staff members as well: Noryati Durame, my personal assistant, has been with us from the very beginning; Percy Huang is our miracle worker IT expert; Janice Gwee is our finance manager; Noruhunda Chumari, Lee Hon Yang, Noelle Lai, Adeline Wonoseputro, Serene Kng, Gaylene Levesque, Suzy Ang, and our latest addition, Jennifer Weinman, who is helping us plan our first graduation. They are all hard working and dedicated to seeing our program grow and excel.

Was there a moment or a specific experience that you’ve had in Singapore that symbolizes the program’s success or sums up how you feel about this accomplishment?

There are a lot of “moments” that symbolize the success of UNLV Singapore. Some of these may sound very mundane, but for us they have been very significant. For example, one high point for us was when we were finally able to get our online registration system to work. Creating new processes for transferring our students to the main campus was another highlight; the first time we issued our students their laptop computers was an exciting event—and actually continues to be. We see how thrilled the students are when we provide them with the tools to operate in a high-tech learning environment.

There are, of course, others as well. We feel pride in establishing our own UNLV Singapore traditions—such as our annual “Loh Hei” celebration and our anniversary celebration.

We recently had our first visiting professor, Merry Xing, associate professor with the Shanghai Institute of Tourism, the oldest hospitality university in the People’s Republic of China. She was very impressed with our program and took back with her a lot of ideas that she is hoping to implement in their classes.

We recently started our student exchange program. Two students each from Thailand and Taiwan spent a semester here and returned home with glowing reports on our program and on our students.

We are proud of our Podcast Studio, which is managed and run completely by our students. They take photos and videos of UNLV Singapore events and are working on videotape resumes for our students to use when applying for jobs online.

We are especially proud to have been selected to host the 7th Annual APacCHRIE conference, the largest conference for hospitality educators in Asia, which is also being planned and managed by our undergraduate students.

A lot has happened within the past three years, and we are continuing to create interesting innovations. We are adding new programs and creating the best student learning environment we can in order to help UNLV enhance its international reputation.
The Las Vegas casino industry, and the city itself, is in a real pickle. For nearly 40 years before the downturn of 2008, the gaming industry had been touted as “recession-proof.” But, as the economic downturn intensified and the national gambling spend declined, it became clear that consumer demand for casino gambling was indeed sensitive to larger economic fluctuations. In Las Vegas, the drop-off in both visitor arrivals and gaming revenue was heralded as particularly surprising. Though the city has faced adversity before, most recently after 9/11, this was seen as an unprecedented decline that augured a grim, uncertain future.

The 2008 downturn, however, was not unprecedented. In the early 1980s, the city suffered the triple-whammy of competition from Atlantic City, the 1978-1982 national economic downturn, and the MGM Grand fire, which was a major public relations nightmare in the city’s newest, largest resort. Some thought that Las Vegas had seen its best days, and nearly everyone agreed that the future would likely be grim.

The alarming success of Atlantic City, which was drawing more than double the visitors of Las Vegas in the early 1980s, sparked anxiety in the desert. More than 3,000 new high-end hotel rooms had just come online in the desert resort, and it now seemed that gambling junkets and conventions from the East Coast might not be coming to the party in Las Vegas, but instead might play closer to home.

The world’s economic troubles also hurt Las Vegas—gaming revenues, which had soared throughout the 1970s, were suddenly reflecting the dismal economy. In 1980, the inflation rate almost exactly matched the increase in gaming revenue, so that the gaming industry essentially was stagnant. The next year, accounting again for inflation, Clark County gaming revenues declined by almost seven percent. Rising fuel costs and gas shortages had severely cut into the drive-in market, and the dismal national economy and a dampening market for air travel similarly restricted traffic at McCarran International Airport—from a high of about 10.6 million passengers in 1979, visitor totals dropped slightly in 1980 and more dramatically in the next two years. In 1981 and 1982, less than 9.5 million passengers used McCarran airport. In the latter year, hotel occupancy rates dropped to 76 percent, the lowest rate since 1971, and the first dip into the seventies since that year.

There was a very visible symbol of the ongoing crisis. On Nov. 21, 1980, a deadly fire ripped through the MGM Grand Hotel Casino, then Las Vegas’ newest and most modern resort. Eighty-seven people died, and footage of black smoke billowing from the casino entrance—and trapped guests in the hotel towers desperate for rescue—aired on the national news. The fire, which was...
made far worse by the casino’s failure to install sprinklers, was a public relations nightmare for Las Vegas. If guests couldn’t be safe in this ultra-modern palace, could they feel comfortable in any Las Vegas hotel? Four months later, a fire at the Las Vegas Hilton—which killed eight people, injured 200, and left blackened scorch marks along the tower’s façade—compounded the fiasco. Retrofitting the massive casinos of the Strip to mitigate such blazes would be costly, time-consuming, and would make far less impression on the public than the tragic fires.

But casino operators did not surrender themselves to an inexorable decline. Instead, they innovated. If the high roller market was drying up or moving to Atlantic City, they’d court a demographic described as “low roller” and “middle market.” Described as the “Burger King Revolution,” this shift allowed Las Vegas casinos to benefit from mass marketing and a larger pool of potential visitors. Though the new customers spent, on average, less than the old, there were more of them, and with their patronage Las Vegas quickly recovered.

At the time, the mass market brought a new audience for Las Vegas. Families who’d never think of coming to Las Vegas came, and left behind enough of their discretionary income to convince casinos that the future of the industry was growth, not decline. The result was the 1990s boom, which happened despite—or perhaps because of—an expansion of casino gambling nationally.

For today, the lessons of the early 1980s are clear: if business is down, the industry needs to identify and pursue new customers. In today’s crowded casino market and challenging times, this will not be easy, but it may be the only way for the industry to thrive.
Las Vegas has been tested before, and has proven to the world its ability to adapt, recreate, and reinvent the product visitors seek to experience in this desert paradise. Is this time any different? Well, just a bit. The economy has reached depths of historic proportions, stressing even the most stable and promising corporations in the world. As the saying goes, when the tide goes out, we will see who is wearing a swimsuit. Well, the tide has certainly gone out, and many naked companies are scrambling to get dressed. The shift in gaming (35 percent) and nongaming (65 percent) revenue, although a comfortable and multi-dimensional approach to a well-rounded gaming business, proved to be a crumbling model under this economic distress.

Does this mean hope is dwindling for recovery and Las Vegas as we know it? Absolutely not! It does mean we must depend on the experience, resiliency, and determination of the current employees and executives who have been fortunate enough to survive the drastic layoffs and cutbacks around the world. The financial freefall must first find a resting spot comfortable enough to begin the recovery period, either through bankruptcy, lender negotiations, deadline extensions, sales, or simply displaying the ability to find that silver lining while not reducing and sacrificing a guest’s Las Vegas experience.

Is there a silver lining worth pursuing? The Las Vegas experience 50 years ago was once based on value and relationships rarely seen in a hospitality venue. One was able to pay a very reasonable price far below industry average while receiving service and an experience that provided guests with $1.50 worth of experience for every $1.00 spent. Oh yes, and they knew the guest by name, not number. The burden had shifted from the operator’s responsibility to work diligently to establish relationships, to the guest’s responsibility to just show up and be loyal.

Loyalty is transient now, and the Las Vegas scene remains hypercompetitive with enormous amounts of debt steering the ship. Where do we go from here? Well, we cannot remove the billion dollar structures or ignore the debt, so the silver lining lies somewhere in between.

The gaming operator’s previous excessive spending resulted in one-of-a-kind products that also translated into high prices for the consumer and a level of corporate greed that eventually stressed and deteriorated the overall guest experience. Las Vegas for years has successfully tested the theory of “build it and they will come,” going back to the 1950’s. The cover of Time magazine in 1955 asks the same question we are asking today, is Las Vegas overextended? Maybe overextended and overcommitted—time will tell.

Now, where is the silver lining? We talked about the distressed part; let’s talk about the blessed part. Las Vegas has some of the most qualified, experienced, and talented staff in the world. And for
that Las Vegas must be grateful. Las Vegas must go back
to the basics and not forget the customers are still here. The
key term that seems to translate into the value that guests
seek and once experienced is affordability and now luxury.
The aggressive spending by operators has built the world’s
most beautiful and luxurious products the travel and tourism
industry has to offer. And for that we must be grateful. It is
now up to the operators to complement these products with
customer service, affordable pricing, and continued high
quality experience.

The operators must first begin to aggressively pursue
and understand the drastic change in consumer behavior
and how that translates into how we present this affordable
luxury. Consumers are more honest today than ever before
when describing the change in spending. This is also
a natural and ideal time for academics and industry to

The information we acquire by evaluating and studying
the consumer’s behavior becomes the formula for giving the
consumer what they want. This will include the old school
style of relationship building and not relying on loyalty to
drive the business. The strategy for the future must focus
on the development of people, recognizing the human
differences or diversity, and realizing this is also what makes
Las Vegas unique and valuable to the global traveler. And
for this we must be grateful. 

LAS VEGAS REDUX
Guest Expectations

UNLV survey examines the future of technology in the hospitality industry

Just like the majority of industries worldwide, the hospitality industry has become more technologically advanced over the past few decades. With computerized procedures and delivery systems, the way things are done is continually changing. What does that mean to those in the industry and where will it go in the future? One Harrah Hotel College professor hopes to be on the forefront of these trends.

Last year, professor Pearl Brewer embarked on a study to assess the current use of technology by the hospitality industry and project future trends. Funded by the Educational Foundation of American Hotel and Lodging and prepared for the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA), the study was conducted by Brewer and three additional UNLV researchers: Jungsun Kim, Thomas Schrier, and John Farrish.

After being initially approached by the AH&LA in 2007 to oversee such a study, the team, with help from UNLV students and faculty, launched an e-mail survey to key members of the hospitality industry. The purpose of the research was to survey the AH&LA’s membership to determine its knowledge of currently available information technology (IT) systems, gauge their understanding of future IT requirements in the hotel industry, and gain an understanding of the IT needs of the hotel industry in the near term. Approximately 6,000 surveys were distributed via e-mail and 244 responses were received. This is a response rate of 4.1 percent.

Those who responded were mostly managers (61 percent) and directors (11 percent) of hotel operations with more than 10 years in the industry. They work for mainly mid-range and luxury hotels and the ratio of independent hotels to chain properties was nearly equal.

The e-mail survey method was chosen because it was the most effective method of data collection. It provided researchers with faster data collection times and more geographic flexibility with virtually no costs. Since the participants are AH&LA members, the majority are used to dealing with technology issues as part of their jobs, so the limitations of an e-mail survey are mitigated.

Brewer believes that it is critical for hotel operators to consider the results of the study. “Even in bad times (in terms of the economy), it still may be the best time to introduce technologies that will help operations and enhance guest services,” states Brewer. “It will be the operation that best positions itself for the future that will win in the long run of competition.”

The survey found overwhelming agreement that IT is important for increasing employee efficiency (79.9 percent), increasing customer satisfaction (82.4 percent), and generating revenue (71.3 percent). However, there was no agreement on whether technologies or systems contribute as engines for lowering expenses.

Respondents did agree that customers most care about access to Wi-Fi services (82 percent). With so many business travelers as well as those who want to surf the Internet or check personal e-mail accounts, this has become a sought-after amenity in many hotel/resorts.

Other amenities deemed important by hoteliers were in-room entertainment systems and on-site airline check-in kiosks. Respondents felt that they have met these needs in proportion to perceived concerns and those that did not yet offer these amenities plan to within the next five years.

In regards to operational improvements that are facilitated by IT, two-thirds of respondents reported that they had a branded hotel website and over 70 percent reported using the internet and Wi-Fi networks to improve their operations.

Nearly half stated that they use on-line purchasing systems and nearly 40 percent reported using energy management systems in their properties.

Brewer says she was surprised that security was not the most important issue of the moment. “There is a lot of discussion around (credit and debit) card industry compliance standards that must be met … and the penalties for noncompliance can put a company out of business in a hurry. Part of the solution to this lies in IT initiatives, but this did not come to the surface.”

The security of IT systems was of concern as was the ability to interface with existing systems. It was also found that properties with their own IT departments were more likely to use and plan a wide array of information system security systems.

“In this down economy, it is clear that new expenditure in technology must solve more than one issue such as enhancing customer service and reducing expenses, or increase revenue and guest service,” says Brewer.

“I believe that guest expectations for new technologies need to be considered. I’ve heard a lot of talk about the ‘room of the future’ and examples of these tend to showcase some potential technologies … but what do guests really want?” asks Brewer. “This may also be true for nearly any customer facing technologies—self-service is a great example. Are these options empowering to a guest or are they a turn-off?”

Ultimately, technology is clearly playing a large role when it comes to guest satisfaction. By providing amenities that guests are looking for and using technologically advanced systems for purchasing, security, energy management, and other key operations, hoteliers are able to better give guests what they want.  

Illustration by Grant Codak, ’08
A summer sojourn to South Africa? While it may sound like the ultimate vacation, professor Kathy Nelson has traveled there a handful of times on a special mission—working with a small group of events professionals dedicated to creating the EMBOK, the Event Management Body of Knowledge. The “Embokers,” as this original group of seven refers to themselves, is comprised of the world’s top event management academics and practitioners who are out to make standards the norm in this ever-evolving industry.

When she got the call from future Emboker Janet Landey (a special events practitioner based in South Africa) in 2004, Nelson was preparing to graduate with her Ph.D. from UNLV.

“I was so honored to be thought of by Janet for this group,” says Nelson. “I’m not one to self-promote, so I was thrilled that someone knew of my lengthy experience as well as my education and research in the field. Before I knew it, I was sitting in the bush in Africa, realizing that I had just received my Ph.D. and was now in this incredible place just a few days later. It was like a dream.”

The first International EMBOK Imbizo (pronounced im-bee-zo, it is the Zulu word for gathering) took place at the Edeni Private Game Reserve near Kruger National Park and was sponsored by the Institute of Event Management in Johannesburg. The
academic and practitioner experts from around the world convened to define standards consistent with the needs of a global event management environment.

Bill O’Toole initiated the EMBOK concept in 1999 in his master’s thesis work at the University of Sydney comparing project management methodology with the management of events and festivals. He created a website to collect data and promote discussion of this topic. Julia Rutherford Silvers, an event practitioner and instructor, who had been researching the scope of core competencies for event management, took notice of O’Toole’s work and the two began working to develop EMBOK. Nelson and four others soon joined.

One goal was to create a solid foundation that could be “customized to meet the needs of various cultures, governments, education programs, and organizations,” says Nelson. “It’s something to make the profession more credible as well as set standards throughout the event-planning process. When all is said and done, we, as event management professionals, want to ensure that people attending our events are safe.”

The first Imbizo resulted in the International EMBOK Executive designation, which set standards based on a researched and tested model of event management functions, processes, phases, and core values. Using this model, the complex job of event management may be approached in a comprehensive manner, ensuring all critical functional responsibilities, possibilities, and opportunities are addressed properly and competently. According to Nelson, “A mission of the EMBOK is to regulate ourselves as an industry. If we don’t do it, governments will eventually step in and do it.”

In 2005, during another trip to South Africa, the International EMBOK model was unveiled.

“(The model) takes into account things such as accountability, risk assessment, cultural issues, and insurance liabilities,” Nelson says. “In an academic context, many universities are now going to the EMBOK to assist in their curriculum development. And practitioners are using it each time they begin to plan an event. It’s become a worldwide, recognizable resource in the industry.”

The model describes the scope and processes that are used in the management of events. It includes five knowledge domains encompassing 35 functional areas (classes), five phases, five processes, and five core values. According to Silvers, the five phases emphasize the importance of time in any project and the fact that each component in the knowledge domain has a time dimension. The processes detailed form an integrated system for every phase, with tools and techniques that may be used for all. Creativity, strategic thinking, continuous improvement, ethics, and integration are the values that must permeate all decisions in event management. “It was so exciting to see what we had accomplished thus far,” Nelson says. “Through our various research projects on different event planning models used throughout the world, we were able to construct an amazing model. We knew that we were onto something and that this global framework would be helpful for a systematic analysis of events, from the beginning phase all the way through evaluation.”

The Embokers met almost every year to fine tune their body of knowledge. “It’s important for the industry to have a set of standards,” says Nelson. “Other countries do this very well in many industries but not the United States. This is primarily because we have so many states with differing laws; it’s not used as widely here as it could be. We hope to one day change that mindset.”

The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council’s Foreign Credential Recognition Education Projects National Advisory Panel now uses the model. “Philip Mondor, one of my fellow Embokers, presented the International Events Management Standard (IEMS) to the Canadian government and it now provides the standard by which events management professionals operate in that country,” says Nelson. “The IEMS builds on the International EMBOK framework as well as other recognized and established occupational standards and curricula from six countries, and has been ratified by leaders from 16 countries. We’re very proud to have helped with this endeavor.”

The International EMBOK model has been released into the public domain on the International EMBOK website, which features a full description of the model’s structure. There is also a portal for interested persons to make contributions toward the further development and improvement of the model. The model has been vetted at numerous industry and academic conferences throughout the world. “We’re seeing all kinds of usage,” says Nelson. “It is the most important project I have been involved with and I thank Dean (Stuart) Mann for being so supportive. I’m able to incorporate what I’ve learned through the EMBOK experience into the classroom.”

To view the model, visit embok.org.
While the majority of businesses worldwide seem to be speeding up due to technology, some leaders in the food industry are trying to slow theirs down.

“Slow food” may seem like a foreign term to those of us bombarded daily by fast food restaurants, quick-fix meals, and other conveniences, but the nonprofit organization Slow Food International is quickly educating the public about its mission. Founded in response to the 1986 opening of a McDonalds outlet in Rome’s famed Piazza Spagna, Slow Food International aims to counteract what its founders believe is a vanishing appreciation for local food traditions, tastes, and understanding of how our food choices affect the rest of the world. Today, the slow food movement boasts 80,000 members worldwide, with a growing membership right here in Southern Nevada, as part of its American membership, Slow Food USA.

With its arid conditions, you might not be aware that Las Vegas is a bountiful, richly diverse locale for a Slow Food convivium (how each local chapter refers to itself). Slow Food Las Vegas was chartered in January 2008. The primary goals and missions of the organization are to develop bridges between local/regional producers and consumers; encourage an appreciation in the diversity of cuisines and culinary roots; and partner with organizations in the promotion of sustainability, biodiversity, and better foods.

Paula Pudwill holds a sprig of Anise Hyssop, a licorice flavored member of the mint family. Photos by Aaron Mayes, ’06
In Southern Nevada, the movement has grown quickly. With top chefs believing in the importance of locally grown and sourced foods, they are educating their employees and saving money at the same time. Likewise, members of the general population are shopping at farmer’s markets around town and taking advantage of more locally grown items by companies like Winder Farms and Whole Foods.

Holly Mae Lindsay, ’99, is the business manager for Emeril’s Las Vegas. In her line of work, she has heard the buzz building around this movement. “My husband works for one of Mario Batali’s restaurants and I love hearing the stories he brings home about the food their pastry chef sources from King Ranch, Arizona, and the honey from the fifth generation Guatemalan beekeeper in North Las Vegas,” Lindsay says. “Batali is very active in the slow food movement across the country and makes sure his employees are educated in the same manner. It really helps them feel good about what they are serving to their customers.”

Batali pastry chef Doug Taylor works with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension to bring awareness of locally grown supplies to the Las Vegas market. “I started working with one farm a little over a year ago and now work with 26,” he says. “When everything is in season, I’m at the farms four to five times a week. I pick about 70 percent of my own produce during the summer and am buying every other local ingredient I can get my hands on.”

Taylor says that the goal of both the Cooperative Extension and his company (commonly referred to as “Molto Vegas,” the name of Mario Batali and his partner Joseph Bastianich’s Las Vegas restaurant empire) is to support local farmers by helping them form a sustainable and local market in the Las Vegas area and to educate each other on local production. “By supporting our local farmer, we are opening the door to fair pricing, fresher products, a reduced carbon footprint, and the creation of a local farming community.”

One local company that supplies Batali with produce is Penguin Produce, a husband and wife team who live near Las Vegas. Paula and Rodney Pudwill own a two-acre boutique farm and drive produce 50 miles into town, six days a week. In addition, Paula is a dealer at Caesars Palace and, coincidentally, met Chef Bradley Ogden at her table one evening. When the conversation turned to food, she told him about her garden. The rest, as they say, is history.

What started out as a hobby now supplies some of the Strip’s best restaurants with produce and fresh herbs. “I know that Penguin grows a specific variety of tomatoes just for the Batali restaurants,” says Lindsay. “Restaurant owners are learning that they can save a lot of money by not having to transport their supplies from so far away, as well as having fresher ingredients, which is so important. It’s like sharing produce from your backyard garden with your neighbors.”

Today’s chefs are passionate about the ingredients they use. It’s not a new trend but one people are rediscovering—you need to put good things into your body for better health. Likewise, servers believe more in what they’re serving to you when they can tell you its history.

Christine Bergman, professor of food and beverage management in UNLV’s hotel college, is a believer and member of the Slow Food movement and is sharing that philosophy with her students through her UNLV class “Global Food and Nutrition Issues.” The course provides students with an introductory look at the governmental, industrial, environmental, and individual consumer factors that influence the types and quality of foods available in the world’s market places and impact who can afford to eat them.

“there is a great deal of evidence that our current food production paradigm (i.e., industrial globalized agriculture) is not sustainable—not for the environment, not for the well-being of those that produce our food, and not for our health,” says Bergman. “By exposing my students to the Slow Food movement they learn actions that they can take personally and in their careers to help create a new food paradigm that elevates food to its rightful place as an important component of human culture and will lead to food security for all.”

For more information, visit slowfoodnasvegas.org.
UNLV researchers study leisure and hospitality preferences of Muslims

Tracking guest preferences in the hospitality and leisure industry has become both an art and a science, with savvy marketing professionals developing increasingly creative methods to understand what drives customers to choose certain hotels, restaurants, gaming devices, leisure activities, or retail establishments. There is one segment of the population, however, that seems to have eluded even the most sophisticated loyalty cards, focus groups, and even scholarly inquiry.

According to Jennifer Livengood, assistant professor of recreation and sport management in UNLV’s hotel college, very few empirical investigations in hospitality and leisure scholarship have focused on the religious and spiritual influences on leisure behaviors, with a particularly surprising dearth of data about non-Judeo Christian religious traditions, such as Islam. Until now, that is.

Livengood, along with UNLV Associate Professor of Recreation and Sport Management Kurt Stahura and UNLV Assistant Research Professor Beth Barrie, received a seed grant from the UNLV hotel college to determine the hospitality and leisure preferences of Muslims within the United States and to further understand Islamic perceptions of the industry.

“Given the substantial number of adherents to the Islamic tradition in this country and around the world, it is puzzling that this population has received so little attention from the hospitality and leisure discipline,” Livengood says.

She says the lack of attention to the needs of Muslims residing within the United States is surprising for many reasons, particularly since so many other countries with large hospitality sectors, such as the United Arab Emirates, have made significant advances in providing religiously appropriate services to Muslims. It’s an area that researchers say amounts to a huge missed opportunity.

“Las Vegas has done a wonderful job of accommodating the unique cultures and traditions of a variety of people, including those from the Middle East and the Far East,” says Stahura. “If our research can provide additional insights about how people who practice Islam have been
burdened then there might be opportunities for the hospitality and leisure industry to procure additional patrons from that particular population.”

And that might be an understatement. According to the Council on American Islamic Relations, there are approximately 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide, seven million of whom reside in the United States. Previous research has shown that establishing places designated for prayer, offering gender segregated floors for individuals traveling alone, and providing more “halal,” (Arabic for “permitted”) food choices for Muslim guests could help the industry better attract a relatively untapped and potentially lucrative market.

Beyond the profit motive, though, researchers also believe that hotel and leisure operators can send a message that they welcome people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds simply by providing amenities that cater specifically to different faiths.

“We are ultimately in the business of improving people’s lives, and that means being inclusive of everyone, including those who are religiously diverse,” says Livengood of the hospitality and leisure industries. “If somebody somewhere could not do what they wanted to do because of their religious beliefs, traditions, or other constraints, I would see that as a tremendous failure in our field.”

Livengood, Stahura and Barrie will use an ethnographic approach to the study, which requires in-depth interviewing and participant observation. The researchers will interview adults between the ages of 18 and 70 who identify with the Islamic tradition and who are either active or inactive at their local mosque or Islamic center. All data obtained from this process will then be analyzed and organized into emerging themes.

Researchers hope the study will eventually evolve into a larger-scale investigation, resulting in the development of training programs and published training manuals for professionals working with religiously diverse communities. And for students.

Next spring, Livengood will teach a new course called “Leisure Services in a Diverse Society,” which is designed to expose students early in their educational careers to the importance of being culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Stahura and Barrie, who both teach introductory and advanced courses on leisure delivery, say the research will also further inform their classroom instruction and help forge a new path of academic inquiry.

“We think it is critical to expose our students to the multitude of diverse people that we serve and will continue to serve as the United States population more closely reflects the diversity of world cultures,” Stahura says. “If we’re not in tune with those cultural differences within the population, then we’re not serving our constituents.”

This is not the researchers’ first investigation into the influence of religion and spirituality on leisure. Livengood has written extensively about the perceptions of leisure constraints and the role of leisure in the spirituality of New Paradigm Christians. Last year, Stahura collaborated with Livengood on research that examined the role of leisure in the lives of Catholics. Results of the current study will be submitted to the leading journals in the field and serve as the foundational building blocks for future scholarly inquiry.

To learn more about their research, contact Jennifer Livengood at 702-895-2734.
Reaching Out

CityCenter employment opportunities bring hope for job seekers, students

MGM Mirage’s CityCenter project is rapidly rising into the Las Vegas skyline. The massive project will include a hotel tower, casino, convention center, and condominium units, and is being engineered as a “city within a city” for residents and visitors.

What does such a project mean for our current economy? When it opens at the end of the year, will it help pull Las Vegas, in particular, out of the recession? Just how many jobs will CityCenter provide and what types of jobs are they?

To get the answers, Premier went to CityCenter’s Director of Recruitment David Reese.

CityCenter’s Jan. 5 call for applications was the largest single new employment opportunity currently offered by any U.S. corporation. MGM Mirage expects to offer more than 12,000 jobs when CityCenter is complete. Within the first week of announcing it was accepting job applications, MGM Mirage received nearly 35,000 online inquiries from prospective employees (applications must be submitted online). It is expected that the company will receive more than 100,000 applications for positions at the $9.1 billion project. The plan is to first fill the positions at CityCenter’s Aria tower, the 4,000-room hotel-casino, and the Vdara tower, a 1,573-room nongaming condo-hotel project.

According to Reese, “CityCenter anticipates filling approximately 6,000 of the 12,000-plus job openings with..."
current employees from other MGM Mirage properties." That means there will be a lot of open positions at the company’s other properties, both in Las Vegas and Mississippi. Applicants will be asked if they would be willing to accept a position at another MGM Mirage Strip property (there are currently 10) to back-fill a job lost to CityCenter.

Reese says, “MGM Mirage has a strong tradition of promoting from within, and CityCenter embraces this tradition. Current employees have inside access to apply prior to external applicants, and we hope to fill approximately 50 percent of our positions with internal candidates.”

It comes without surprise that the word about job openings has spread quickly. So quickly, in fact, that hiring specialists scheduled 600 to 700 job interviews a day through mid-February, according to CityCenter’s Vice President of Human Resources Michael Peltyn.

Local applicants are able to self-schedule an in-person application review at the Career Center while qualified out-of-market applicants will complete this process over the telephone. Peltyn says that approximately 300 telephone interviews will be conducted every day.

“We will have rewarding career tracks in areas such as hotel operations, food and beverage, finance, gaming, and more,” Peltyn says. “The CityCenter campus is a remarkable architectural masterpiece, and now we are seeking the diverse men and women who possess a commitment to providing exceptional customer service to bring this project to life.”

“CityCenter has a variety of positions available for both people with and without college degrees. There are opportunities for part-time employment for current students as well as management-and-above opportunities in all areas for individuals who have obtained a college degree,” says Reese.

CityCenter is participating in several college/university job fairs as well as local job fairs. The company has partnered with UNLV to offer recruiting events throughout 2009, says Bobbie Barnes, ’93, ’05 M.Ed., director of the hotel college’s Bob Boughner Career Services Center. It is hosting “Signature Week” at the hotel college and attending the annual Diversity Mixer.

She continues, “We’re very excited about this partnership and what it can mean to our students and alumni. Like we continue to say...if you don’t want to limit your opportunities, a college degree is key.”

Times have definitely changed in the past few years when it comes to job opportunities in the Las Vegas hospitality industry. According to Harrah Hotel College Dean Stuart Mann, “Prior to this significant economic downturn, it was not uncommon to listen to the corporate HR folks on the Strip discussing the difficulties they expected in filling all of the positions being created by all of the new rooms coming on line. So while it is difficult to hear because of the severity of the downturn, as far as new properties coming on line are concerned, it may be a blessing in disguise. Due to the many layoffs, there are a large number of very qualified people who can fill the positions being created by properties like CityCenter, Fountainebleau, and others.”

Bill McBeath, ’86, is the president and chief operating officer of CityCenter’s 4,000-room ARIA Resort & Casino, which will open first (in mid-December 2009). It’s his job to introduce the public to their first taste of CityCenter. He’s a longtime MGM Mirage employee, who began his career at the Golden Nugget under the tutelage of Steve Wynn. In a Las Vegas Sun article, McBeath said he believes that his UNLV degree taught him how to “break down complex issues, figure out what’s important and how to make it better.”

Only time will tell what will bring us all out of this recession, but CityCenter and its multitude of jobs is a step in the right direction for Las Vegas hotel professionals.

For more information, visit CityCenter’s job website at www.citycenterjobs.com.
Integrity and quality are the two most important ingredients in Chef Eric Klein’s recipe for success. Without them, he says, aspiring chefs won’t have much of a chance in a turbulent industry known for chewing up and spitting out even the most principled and skilled practitioners of the craft.

It has been Klein’s strict adherence to that rule that has earned him an impressive career filled with culinary acclaim. It’s also the lesson he chooses to share with students he meets, which he did recently at UNLV’s Chef Artist Dinner Series in March.

“Knowledge is hard to come by and it’s important, I believe, to share what I have learned to ensure the success of future chefs and the profession,” says Klein, who is executive chef at Wolfgang Puck’s Spago in Las Vegas. “Now more than ever we must teach our students to be true to the profession . . . not to be greedy or to make a quick buck but to strive for integrity and quality.”

Known for his creative kitchen skills, Klein uses his European background and influences to craft simple menu items at Spago that enhance the quality and true flavors of each ingredient.

“As a professional, I want to learn everything, from A to Z, about what I do,” says Klein. “I want to know why things are called what they are, why they are made a certain way, and why we get food from one place, but not another.”

It’s that precision to detail that has earned Klein numerous awards and accolades during his career, including being named one of the Top 10 Best Chefs in America by Food & Wine magazine in 2004 and being featured in the pages of top-epicurean publications, such as Bon Appetit and Gourmet magazines. But Klein’s success is about more than just his integrity and pursuit of quality, it’s also a reflection of the hard work, passion, and commitment he’s invested in his craft over the years.

A native of the Alsace region of France, Klein received his diploma from Lycee Professional and cooked for French military officers early in his career. Then, after assisting German Chef/Restauranteur Hans Rockenwagner open
his restaurant Holzschopf Gasthaus in Germany, Klein made the move to America to take on new challenges at Rockenwagner’s self-named restaurant in California. Klein joined the Wolfgang Puck Fine Dining Group in 1996, where he spent seven years working alongside Wolfgang Puck at his restaurants Chinois and Obachine in Los Angeles and Spago in Beverly Hills. Klein’s creativity, leadership, and support enabled him to advance quickly through the ranks. When Spago opened in Beverly Hills in March of 1997, Klein was named sous tournant and assisted Wolfgang Puck and Managing Partner/Executive Corporate Chef Lee Hefter in the restaurant’s daily developments. Klein also shared his own ideas for new, seasonal items and was appointed to executive sous chef/chef de partie-garde manager in 2001.

He struck out on his own in 2003, as the executive chef and managing partner of the popular Maple Drive in Beverly Hills. Within three months of opening, Klein’s restaurant had earned three stars from the Los Angeles Times. In January of 2005, Klein came to Las Vegas to launch his first steakhouse, SW Steakhouse at Wynn Las Vegas. Klein then took his talents to Bellagio’s FIX as executive chef before getting the call from Puck to return to Spago—this time in Las Vegas as executive chef.

Working again for Puck was a no-brainer for Klein, who says it’s easy to work for somebody who believes in the same things you do.

“Wolfgang Puck is a wonderful person to work for because he believes it is more important to provide guests with quality then quantity,” Klein says. “We both come from a place where that matters.” And it was that signature quality that more than 100 guests enjoyed this past March at the Chef Artist Dinner—a biannual event that brings top chefs to UNLV to work with students and prepare some of their favorite dishes for the public.

The money raised from the event, which was underwritten by Bon Appetit magazine, benefits the students and faculty in UNLV’s food and beverage department through scholarships, professional development opportunities, and new equipment for the kitchens.

Washington Pink Lady Apple Salad

TOTAL TIME: 20 MIN
SERVES: 4

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons ice wine (Eiswein) or other sweet white dessert wine
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon Champagne vinegar
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar preferably aged
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 Pink Lady apples—halved, seeded and cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick slices
1/2 pound burrata (cream-filled mozzarella) or fresh buffalo mozzarella, at room temperature, cut into 4 slices
4 thin slices of prosciutto
2 cups micro-arugula (1 1/2 ounces)

Directions:
In a small bowl, combine the ice wine, olive oil and Champagne and balsamic vinegars and season with salt and pepper.

In a shallow dish, drizzle the sliced apple with 1 1/2 tablespoons of the dressing and toss to coat. Arrange the slices on plates. Set a slice of burrata on the apple and drizzle the plates with 1 tablespoon of the dressing. Drape a slice of prosciutto over the cheese. In the shallow dish, toss the arugula with the remaining dressing. Top the salads with the arugula and serve right away.
From the Boardroom to Classroom

Executives offer expertise to students

Each semester, executives from every aspect of the hospitality industry lend their time and expertise to students in UNLV’s hotel college. Whether it is a presentation about employment opportunities, tips on how to land the job of their dreams, or industry insights that help them better understand their chosen educational and career paths, these presentations complement the classroom instruction, and for many students supplement the internships they serve. It's just another example of how the UNLV hotel college provides the most comprehensive education available, based on scholarship, teaching, and real-life experience.

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Roni Terry blames her horses. An accomplished barrel racer, Terry has won 23 saddles, more than 100 buckles, and graced the covers of top racing magazines. So, when faced with a decision to stay near the semi-rural environs of her home near Mount Charleston (where she likes to ride her horses) or study film in Los Angeles, she took stock of her three favorite things.

“I love horses, I love food, and I love movies,” Terry says, recounting her method for selecting a major. UNLV offered two out of three. “Because of my horses, though, I figured it was far more plausible for me to stay in Las Vegas and study food than to go to L.A. and work in the (entertainment) industry.”

Since enrolling in UNLV’s culinary arts management program in 2004, she has applied the same philosophy to her education as she does to her rodeo training: You’re only going to get out of it as much as you put into it.

“Rodeo and the food and beverage industry will eat you alive if you don’t push back and be persistent for what you want to accomplish,” she says.

And she’s accomplished a lot so far. She landed a job during her first semester at Bouchon—the upscale French restaurant in the Venetian Hotel—and hasn’t looked back since. She admits the schedule can be grueling (she just worked 50 hours in four days … the week before mid-terms!), but considers herself lucky to be simultaneously working in the industry while studying culinary arts management. Over the past five years, she has worked in various front-of-the-house positions there, including breakfast bartender, retail bakery supervisor, and private dining event server and bartender.

With such a demanding job, it’s hard to imagine she has the time or energy to succeed in school. According to her professors, Terry not only succeeds, she excels.

“She’s responsible, enthusiastic, self-motivating, and has a great personality,” says professor Kathy Bell, who has twice selected Terry as a teaching assistant for her classes. “She’s everything you look for in a student and a leader. Roni will be successful at whatever she chooses to do.”

Terry earned a trip this May to the “Salute to Excellence” awards hosted by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation in Chicago. The event honors the country’s most promising students and leaders of the restaurant, culinary, and foodservice management industry and is designed to give future trailblazers, like Terry, a glimpse into what they can achieve in the field. She was selected for the honor by a committee of faculty in food and beverage management based on recommendations from professors, her GPA, work experience, and involvement in department classes and activities.

“She is one of the brightest students I’ve had in many years,” says Food and Beverage professor Mohsen Azizsoltani, for whom Terry is currently a teaching assistant. “I cannot speak highly enough about her. She has an amazing knowledge of food and beverage and is not afraid of taking charge. She has a very bright future ahead of her.”

Terry says she enjoys learning every part of the industry, front and back, and believes having a well-rounded resume is critical to becoming a future leader in the industry—something she says the hotel college has trained her and her peers well for.

“I think that students who come out of other high-ranking colleges don’t get the same kind of experience that we get here,” she says. “They may learn how to sit behind a desk, push papers, and become the general manager in record time, but they can’t carry a tray of drinks, they don’t know how to work the floor with their colleagues, and some really don’t understand the physical aspect of the front of the house. In that regard, UNLV prepares students better than any other college of its kind.”

Although she’s been on a brief hiatus from rodeo, she says she will continue to follow the same principles that have guided her this far, regardless of whether she is barrel racing or running a restaurant.

“Persistence and passion are the two most important things, both in barrel racing and the food and beverage industry;” she says. “There is a lot of hard work involved, and it can seem really fun at first, but there are days when it gets gritty and it gets hard; you just have to push and finish strong.”

Terry is on track to finish very strong this summer, completing her UNLV degree in July.
Premier magazine received the following awards from the Las Vegas Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators: Award of Merit for Design and Color Photography for the story “The World in His Palms”; an Award of Excellence (Publications) for the Fall 2008 issue; and an Award of Excellence (Feature Writing) for the story, “A Rebel Becomes One,” which appeared in the Spring 2007 issue.

Elizabeth Barrie, associate professor in the Department of Recreation and Sport Management, has been elected vice chair of the College and University Academics Section (CUA) of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Barrie is also a research assistant professor in recreation with UNLV’s Public Lands Institute, where she manages the Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer and Take Pride in America programs.

Christine Bergman, professor in the Department of Food and Beverage Management, was a member of a team of scientists that petitioned the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to obtain a health claim for brown rice. The following health claim was approved in 2008 for use on all brown rice products sold in the U.S.: “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.” Bergman’s specific involvement was the writing of the literature review focused on the potential health benefits of rice bran phytochemicals which was incorporated into the FDA petition.

James Busser, professor in the Department of Recreation and Sport Management, co-authored an article titled “The Influential Attributes that Affect Resident Slot Gamblers’ Repatronage Intentions and Willingness to Recommend Casinos to Others” with UNLV alumna and Venetian Hotel Manager, Sunyoung Yi, in the Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing. (Volume 16(4), 343-367). He also presented a paper titled “Sport Tourists In A Gaming Destination: Predicting Gaming And Non-Gaming Expenditures” along with UNLV colleagues Chris Brown and Seyhum Baloglu at the 2008 EuroCHRIE conference held in Dubai, UAE.

Michael Dalbor was promoted to full professor in the Department of Tourism and Convention Administration.

Chrysostomos GiannoulaKis, assistant professor in the Department of Recreation and Sport Management, proudly supported the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Boise, Idaho (February 2009). He was the delegation assistant liaison for Special Olympics Hellas (Greece). The team was comprised of 50 members, including 30 athletes. He is currently collaborating with Special Olympics International on research projects related to sponsorship evaluation and volunteer management issues.

Christian Hardgree, ‘93, was selected as the new assistant president/chief of staff for UNLV. Previously, she served as the department chair for the Hotel Management Department. In her new position, she serves in a combined set of roles—deputy to the UNLV president, senior advisor to the president, and chief of staff—coupled with serving as the primary liaison between the University and the Board of Regents.

Kathryn LaTour, associate professor in the Department of Tourism and Convention Administration, followed her publication this February comparing online vs. casino gambling in the Journal of Consumer Research (co-authored with June Cotte) with an acceptance at the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly using the qualitative early memory technique she developed to inform cross cultural gambling behavior. That study investigates differences between U.S., French, and Chinese (mainland) gamblers and is co-authored with Franck Sarrazit, Rom Hendler, and Michael LaTour.

Curtis Love, associate professor in the Department of Tourism and Convention Administration, co-authored a study, “Trade Show Websites: An Examination of Critical Websites’ Quality Factors and Content Items,” in Journal of Convention & Event Tourism (Vol 9(1)) and wrote chapters for five separate books covering the hospitality industry.

Gary Waters, ’79, ’93 MS, lecturer in the Department of Hotel Management, taught a class on gaming at UNLV Singapore during the Fall semester and presented three workshops on gaming to Singaporean hospitality leaders, including the Singapore Tourism Board.

Robert Woods, professor in the Department of Hotel Management, was named a guest speaker for the Davis Lecture Series at Oklahoma State University. He also had his paper nominated as “best of year” at Cornell Quarterly (decision pending), chaired Ph.D. committee for Valentin Kalargyrou, and was nominated for a Lifetime Achievement Award (to be awarded at CHRIE 2009).

Cheri Young, associate professor in the Department of Hotel Management, co-authored a case study that won the Silver Award at the North American Case Research Association conference. The case, “The Road to Tortuguero,” was based on more than a year of field research in the tiny village of Tortuguero, Costa Rica, a village that has 800 residents and is accessible only by boat. The case addresses issues of tourism impact and social equity.

Carola Raab, ’93, ’96 MBA, ’03 Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Tourism and Convention Administration, published two articles in 2008 and has five articles forthcoming, three of them to be published in top tier hospitality journals. She is an integral member of two teams that were awarded grants this year, one for $40,000 and the other for $42,000, for which they will be conducting research on sustainability in the hospitality industry.

You Have What it Takes!
Alumna Christine Kiely Makes Her Mark

With her infectious laugh and outgoing attitude, you might not take Christine Paskvan Kiely, ’90, seriously from the get-go. As dynamic as she is, she’s also a community-minded career woman who has made her mark on Las Vegas. She is one of the founding members of the Harrah Hotel College Alumni Board of Directors, which she was recently re-elected for a second term as president. She currently works as a sales manager for Greenspun Media Group.

In the late 1980s, after moving back to her hometown in Ohio, she was “quite frankly sick of it and wanted to do something different.” Basically, her life wasn’t going in the direction she wanted it to. She needed change. For someone whose mantra has always been “I can do it. I can do anything,” Kiely knew it was time to do something major.

She’d never traveled to Las Vegas, but her parents loved the city and told her it might be a good place to check out. “I knew that they had plans to retire in Las Vegas so they would end up there eventually,” she remembers. “So sight unseen, I decided to go. I broke up with my boyfriend, sold nearly everything I owned, and my cat, mom and I began the drive. As we drove away, I remember my dad yelling down from the balcony that I would always be welcome at home if I needed to come back.”

So in late July 1987, in a car without a functioning air conditioner, Kiely’s journey out west began. “My mom and I had no idea what we were in for,” she says. “My car broke down on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico and the people there were so nice to us.”

She recalls driving up from Laughlin and coming over the crest near Railroad Pass where she saw the famous Las Vegas lights for the first time. “My first thought was, ‘There are no trees, and there is no grass.’ It looked kind of dismal to me.”

Even though it was a culture shock, Kiely says she has no regrets about making the move. “The first 30 days, my mom had me in a casino every day. While she was playing slots, I planted myself in the various lounges and got to know a lot of the local entertainers, including Las Vegas’ own Cook E. Jarr and the Crumbs. I made friends and had a good time.”

She enrolled at UNLV and began classes at the end of August. “I was immediately impressed by the school,” she recalls. “I made some great friends right from the beginning, many of whom I am still in contact with today.”

She also worked a variety of hospitality-related jobs as a college student, including a stint selling tickets to the Lido de Paris show at the Stardust, a position that her father helped her obtain. “My dad was in town visiting me and we were all at the Starlight Lounge at the Stardust when we met the hotel manager, Drew Baker,” recalls Kiely. “My dad told him that I needed a job and a few days later, Drew helped me get one. He really pushed my application through the system, and I had my job almost instantly. That experience was my first introduction to the concept of ‘juice’ and its importance in this business.”

With an associate’s degree from the University of Akron in marketing and sales technology already under her belt, Kiely had trouble deciding what to study at UNLV. “I was trying to decide which way I wanted to go,” she says. “I loved what I had learned in marketing and advertising but also knew that I really liked to travel and stay in hotels. I was also aware of the importance of studying hospitality in a place like Las Vegas and how the right connections could really help me later on. Once I chose the Harrah Hotel College, I knew I had made the right decision.

“I have always been a people person, and I knew that I could use those skills somehow in hospitality. My dad owned a general store/ice cream parlor, and I worked there while growing up, which I think fine-tuned my skills,” says Kiely. “At UNLV, I became actively involved in the Hotel Association and did some great internships at the Showboat, the Tropicana, and the Dunes.”

When Kiely was in the hotel college, it was headed by Dean David Christianson. Some of her favorite instructors included Skip Swerdlow, Chef Claude Lembertz, Patti Shock, and Pat Moreo. She remembers that her section of Lembertz’s FAB 367 class (where the students run a “restaurant”) gained recognition for generating the most tips in the course’s history.

“I really enjoyed my time at UNLV. All the parts of my life meshed together well,” she says. “Going to UNLV changed my life. … If I had stayed in Ohio, where would I be by now? I got a chance to start my life again here. I went from being ‘Chris’ to ‘Christine,’ and I didn’t want to screw up the good thing that I had going. I was offered a few choice jobs before I graduated but ended up turning them down because I really wanted to finish my degree. Looking back, I’m so glad I did. It has opened all sorts of doors for me.”

After graduation, Kiely relocated...
to Denver and managed a restaurant chain. But after two years, the lure of Las Vegas brought her back. It was here that she met her husband, Jim, also a UNLV graduate. Kiely says the networking opportunities and connections she has made over the years through her UNLV affiliation are invaluable. As an educated professional in sales and marketing, and with her contacts in the hospitality industry, Kiely is a sought-after executive. Since graduation, she’s held positions at such influential companies as Clear Channel Taxi Media, Shonkwiler Marcoux Advertising, and WMS Gaming.

“I always knew I would stay connected to the hotel college somehow,” says Kiely. “I was at a tourism luncheon at the convention center and got to talking with Deborah Young, who used to work for the college. She asked me if I might be interested in sitting on the new alumni board they were creating and I said, ‘Definitely.’ It was very surreal how it all happened, but I love being a part of it. My husband is very supportive of the college as well.

“I love meeting students and enjoy their energy about the future,” she says. “UNLV has opened so many doors for me and has really helped me get my name out there. I find that there are Harrah Hotel College graduates all over the place. I’ve even met them on vacation.”

What’s her advice to students? “Talk to your professors, find out who they know. When times are tough, like now, you need to rely on your networking skills. The more people you know, the more opportunities you’ll find.

“Be yourself. Be professional and reliable and trustworthy. Take ownership of what you want and who you are. Things aren’t just going to come your way; you have to work at it.”

She goes on to say, “My dad always said two things that have stuck with me. One was that you should be a chameleon and adapt to your surroundings. The second was that if you don’t like something, change it. Complaining about it won’t help anyone. I have taken these beliefs to heart and believe they have helped me along the way. I hope that I am able to enthuse others the way my family and UNLV has for me.”

“It is important to us when our alumni give back in a consistent manner. We are appreciative of the time they give to the university by serving on our board, attending events, and being our programs’ ambassadors,” says Robyn Hadden, director of alumni and college relations. “The Kielys also provide generous financial support to the college. We are very grateful to them.”

SPRING 2009 PREMIER
On behalf of the Harrah Hotel College Alumni Association, we extend our appreciation to the 547 current dues-paying members (effective July 1, 2008 – March 27, 2009). A portion of your UNLV Alumni Association dues supports the Harrah Hotel College Alumni Association. Your support is greatly appreciated.

MEMBER HONOR ROLL

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Nancy ’86 & Mark ’86
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Hope & David ’81 Hernandez
Masaaki Hirayama ’76
Vicki ’74 & William ’73 Hitzhusen
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Dwayne Hushaw ’84
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Michael Orlovich ’96
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Meghan Popely ’95
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Michael Starr ’81
Whitney ’00 & Anthony ’04
Stirling
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Ken Suzuki ’78
Lora Swatko ’87 & Kurt Bircher
Diana ’89 & Mark ’83 Tabor
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Jennifer Winscott ’03
Jean Witherow ’98
Dale & David ’75 Wolfe
Megan Woodman ’94
Jung Hee Yu ’04

Invent the Future is UNLV’s first comprehensive effort to secure the promises of tomorrow through a $500 million fundraising initiative.

Alumni have made up the largest constituency of donors, and 8,063 alumni have supported the campaign since it began in 2002. Alumni support is important to the success of the university’s future, and a revamped Rebel Ring Phonathon program has helped to reach a greater number of alumni to ask for their support of UNLV. Alumni donations play an important part in UNLV’s ranking in U.S. News and World Report, so alumni participation is not only benefiting students and programs, but also the reputation of the university. Thank you for being part of our success.

For more information on the campaign, visit campaign.unlv.edu or contact Judy Nagai at (702) 895-2934 or Judy.Nagai@UNLV.edu.

To view our entire progress, visit campaign.unlv.edu

Invent the Future THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN
### Member Honor Roll

**Annual Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Jeffrey Abodeely</td>
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<td>Laura '94 Del Castillo-Gainey &amp;</td>
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**Final Note**

We strive to ensure accuracy in this listing of benefactors who supported the Harrah Hotel College during July 1, 2008 – March 27, 2009. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions and feel free to contact Robyn Hadden, '05, Director of Alumni & College Relations at Robyn.Hadden@unlv.edu or call 702-895-3148.
1970s

Paul A. Carpino, ‘74, has released his first career development book, Now, Launch Your Career, a compilation of personal career advice letters from the world’s top professionals such as Donald Trump, Chef Mario Batali, Showman Danny Gans, Commercial Baker Cordia Harrington, Hotel Developer Richard Kessler, and many more. The paperback edition is available at www.iuniverse.com.

1980s

Sal Semola, ‘81, is an associate with Warner Gaming, a gaming industry consulting firm in the Las Vegas Valley. Sal was honored as the Hotel Management Industry Executive of the Year at the 2009 Vallen Dinner of Distinction. He can be contacted at sal@warnergaming.com.

Kai H. Fischer, ‘85, took over Dallas Marriott Plano at Legacy Town Center as General Manager after completing the expansion of the Dallas Marriott Solana. Kai is the business council chairman for Marriott, leading efforts for the 70+ Marriott products in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Area. Kai resides in Southlake with his wife, Colleen, and three children.

Craig J. Frigaard, ‘85, ‘08 MHA, has held numerous F&B management positions in Arizona, Las Vegas and Reno areas after graduation, including F&B director of the Stardust Resort Hotel & Casino for 5 years, executive director of F&B at the Atlantis Casino in Reno for 2 1/2 years, and corporate director of F&B for the three Primm properties for one year when MGM Mirage owned them. He taught as an adjunct professor at UNLV from 1997-99 and transitioned full time into culinary arts/management education in 2005 at the International Culinary School at the Art Institute of Las Vegas. Craig earned his master’s degree from UNLV in hospitality administration in 2008, and is currently pursing an Ed. D. in educational leadership through Argosy University.

Jill S. Kano, ‘85, will be joining the master’s program for environmental science and policy at Columbia University (MPA ESP). At the end of May 2009, she will be leaving an eight-year hospitality career with Marriott Hotels to pursue her education full time for one year. Friends are encouraged to contact her at jill_kano@hotmail.com.

Angela (Hutchinson) Roberts CMP, CSEP, ‘85, recently accepted a position with Pacific Event Productions as the event sales and design manager in their Las Vegas office. She is really excited to be back in the industry she has come to love.

1990s

Denver B. Forester, ‘90, has invented an interactive game for the casino industry. The game, based on the popular premise of Risk/Reward, was recently noticed by USPTO has published the patent application for the Casino Wagering Game.

Rachel A. (Ego) Conneely, CCM, ‘96, has been with TheClu at Cordillera since 2008. Recently she was promoted to director of operations. In her new role, Rachel is responsible for the oversight of the club’s three full service clubhouses. Since moving to Colorado in 2006, Rachel has enjoyed the mountain lifestyle and is looking forward to her new position with Cordillera.

2000s

Seth G. Grabel, ‘05, graduated with a hotel administration degree. Grabel has since become a professional magician and is the opening act for The Amazing Johnathan at the Harmon Theater attached to Planet Hollywood. Please visit www.SethGrabel.com for more information, or e-mail him at sseth@sethgrabel.com.

Valentini Kalargyrou, ‘05 MS, ‘09 Ph.D., defended successfully her dissertation and she will be joining the faculty at the University of New Hampshire as an assistant professor at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics in the Department of Hospitality Management in the Fall of 2009. Kalargyrou earned her Ph.D. and Master’s at UNLV and worked at the MGM Grand for two years as an HR project manager. She invites friends and colleagues to reach her at valentini.kalargyrou@unh.edu.

Robyn E. Mathis, ‘06, has accepted the position of sales and marketing manager at the Hard Rock Cafe. The new cafe is set to open this summer on the famous Las Vegas Boulevard. The current Cafe will remain open at Paradise in front of the Hard Rock Hotel. Before accepting this position, Robyn was the Sales Director at AWG, a local DMC and Transportation Company.

2010s

Megan Dode, ’07, moved to Bend, Oregon, and works as a personal assistant. She also is the chapter administrator for one of the Young Presidents’ Organization Completion Awards Dinner. She helped secure a donation from Emeril’s Homebase of kitchen ware to the ProStart schools. Her individual award was presented for her dedication to the foundation and the ProStart program.

Brian E. Shedd, ‘06 MHA, joined the staff of The Radiate Group as corporate vice president in August, 2008. The Radiate Group is a holding company of 19 marketing service agencies worldwide and owned by Omnicom. Shedd moved to Dallas, Texas in 2003 from Las Vegas after 5 years as a Marketing VP with Mandalay Resort Group. Brian can be reached at bshedd@radiategroup.com.

Lisa (Young), ‘07 MS, & Nick, ‘02, ‘06 MHA, Thomas were married on July 24, 2008, at Marche Bacchus in Las Vegas. They both teach undergraduate courses in the hotel college. Lisa is the sales recruiter and trainer at Bluegreen Resorts. Lisa and Nick are both doctoral students, planning to graduate in 2010.

Jacob D. Montoya, ‘08, was promoted to assistant front office manager at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa. He began his career with Hyatt in 2001. As a UNLV Harrah Hotel College student, Jacob joined the Hyatt Tamaya during the summers. He has been successful obtaining experience in several rooms’ division roles, including PBX, reservations, concierge, front desk, guest services, housekeeping and the spa.

Matthew Lim, ’09, joined Intercontinental Hotel in Singapore, as an i-Grad: Corporate Trainee Program. A unique landmark in the heart of historic Bugis, InterContinental Singapore is Singapore’s only Peranakan-inspired luxury hotel with 403 rooms. Matthew moved to Intercontinental Hotel Singapore in 2009 after working for two years for the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore. He invites friends to reach him at matthewlim@interconti.com.
Hold a cocktail party on campus? How about a wedding reception or a sports bash? It can be done, as can a number of different types of events, thanks to the banquet and meeting room space available at the Stan Fulton Building. With more than 6,000 square feet of space as well as a professional catering staff, the Stan Fulton Building can accommodate small meetings and conferences as well as receptions for up to 300 people and full-service dinners for 200 people. The Stan Fulton Building is also home to a hip yet comfortable lounge-style bar.

Conveniently located at the edge of campus on the corner of Flamingo Road and Swenson, the Stan Fulton Building is an ideal setting for special events and meetings. Executive Chef John Gremo and his talented culinary team will deliver an unforgettable dining experience, whether your group is in need of a continental breakfast, a working lunch, or an upscale, seated dinner. A variety of menu options are available and Chef Gremo can also personalize a custom menu to enhance the overall goal of your event.

The next time you’re looking for the perfect space in which to host your special event, look no further than the experts at the Harrah Hotel College. With the range of services and room styles available, there is certain to be one that fits your needs perfectly!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT FRANK VITUCCI AT (702) 895-3903 OR SFBEVENTS@UNLV.EDU.
UNLV Alumni Clubs

GET INVOLVED. STAY CONNECTED. Alumni Volunteers Wanted!

If you are interested in joining an existing alumni club or if you would like to start one in your area, please contact your fellow alumni:

**Austin Area**
John Friday, ’01
bonitavista92@yahoo.com

**Chicago Area**
Stephanie Fisher, ’00
773-858-6753
stephaniefisher313@yahoo.com

**China (Hong Kong/Macau/Shenzhen)**
Josh Ziegler, ’99
8526-078-0644

**Dallas/Ft. Worth Area**
Melinda (Simpson) Chaney, ’00
214-552-9010
simpsonchaney@sbcglobal.net

**Korea**
Won-Suk Seo, ’95, ’97
wss114@khu.ac.kr

**Los Angeles Area**
Christian Gonzalez, ’00
818-264-6072
unlvrebelsinla@gmail.com

**Mississippi**
Lori Beth Susman, ’86
228-832-7004
jackpot@digiscape.com

**New York City Area**
Allison Verrino, ’99
347-728-7089
unlvallie@hotmail.com

**Ohio**
Cheryl (Sawyer) Lyons, ’93
csaw712@columbus.rr.com

**Phoenix Area**
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unlvrebelsinphoenix@yahoo.com

**Portland Area**
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503-997-4020
techingenuity@comcast.net

**Reno Area**
Quenton Owens, ’07
qowens@unr.edu

**San Diego Area**
Scott Gulbransen, ’95
858-216-7594
scott@sdunlvalumni.com

**San Francisco Bay Area**
Tony Llanos, ’97
tony.llanos@gmail.com

**Southern Utah Area**
Kathy Pontius, ’99
435-867-4763
kipontius@hotmail.com

**Tokyo, Japan Area**
Masaaki Hirayama, ’76
mhirayama282@yahoo.co.jp

**Willamette Valley, OR Area**
Denise Phillips Beban, ’95
541-461-2011
heyreb95@comcast.net