



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

L. Robert Payne School of
Hospitality & Tourism Management

Thank You

*Our vision is to be the most
personalized school
of its kind in developing
hospitality leaders.*



Carl Winston

*Director, L. Robert Payne School of
Hospitality & Tourism Management*

resources and environment to create something that would grow – and exceed everyone’s expectations.

As I reflect back on the past 14 years, I can only shake my head in wonder at the number of things we got right. Some of this was by design and some of it was luck.

Our school mission is pretty simple: “To be the most personalized school of its kind.” So what does that mean? Well, we are a public school that acts like a private one, thanks to the unwavering support of our philanthropic partners. We are relentlessly focused on student success and constantly improving curriculum. We don’t let unreliable state funding and changing political agendas limit our robust programs and excellent service.

“ *In short, because of you...
we’re able to be who we are* ”

As a school with an “applied academic discipline,” our students come to SDSU with a pretty good idea about how they see their futures unfolding. Some want to be a wedding planner, work with people and travel the world. Others want to save the world with sustainable practices. Some are mid-career pros in our master’s degree program who want to gain a competitive edge at work.

In every case, our approach is “uniformly customized.” We sit down with students one-on-one (sometimes many times over the years) to help them figure out what their ideas really mean – and then give them a roadmap to their dreams. More often than not, that roadmap takes them through realities they never envisioned.

Design...and luck.

Back in 1999,

a few folks who we call “Visionaries” today (Bob Payne, Patti Roscoe, Joyce Gattas, Mike Hergert, Gene Lamke, Mark Butler and Steve Weber) had the simple idea to create a hometown hospitality school for San Diego. They brought academia and industry together to provide the setting, re-

Tough love? We’ve got a lot of that here. Sugar-coating? Not so much. Our students seem to appreciate that.

A key principle we got right is using what I call a “three-legged stool” to graduate a superbly prepared student. In my experience, all three legs are equally important.

- ***The first leg is academic.*** Our academic rigor is second to no other school. We have a solid business and leadership core and faculty who push, push, push.
- ***The second leg is working while in school.*** This is easy in San Diego where our industry partners are flexible with changing schedules, part-time and summer work. We owe them so much!
- ***The leg third is what we call “getting involved” or “going above and beyond.”*** We do this with volunteerism (I laughingly call some of what we do “voluntold-ism.”) We mentor high school students, work local industry events and participate in trade shows.

These are timeless principles (academic rigor, working the right job and going above and beyond.) We rely on our industry friends to make sure we can do these and to make sure we are timely and relevant as well. It works. The proof is that virtually every student graduates with a job in his or her field of choice. We have been adept fiscal planners and stewards. Careful caretakers of the strong financial support of our committed donors and revenue-producing programs. All of which allows us to keep our class sizes small, our attention highly personal, and our faculty extraordinary.

Our amazing external support got us through the Great Recession and now positions us for the next phase of our development. In short, because of you...we’re able to be who we are: a widely recognized global school where 80% of future students will be required to study abroad. A renowned place of learning where 99% of our graduates find professional work in the industry – and the opportunity to be their professional best. Whether they’re giving someone their dream wedding... or dreaming up new ways to save the world.

*So my question to all of our constituents is...what do you think?
What should we be thinking about next?
I look forward to hearing from you!*



Brian Blake

Director, The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation Student Center for Professional Development

and China. China, that burgeoning international superstar, became the largest outbound market in 2012 with an expenditure of US \$102 billion.*

The implication for us is that hospitality students, now more than ever, need to have a global perspective. “Studying abroad” can no longer simply be a lovely choice largely reserved for children of the affluent. With borders eradicated through



Student Alexa Provezano completed an internship while studying abroad in Australia

the Internet, and distances eliminated through email, text messages and social media, it’s an undeniably international world and workplace. So studying abroad can no longer be an option. It’s absolutely essential for the success in the HTM industry – which is why studying abroad will be mandatory for 80% of all of our future students.

Studying Abroad

Can No Longer Be an Option

A massive flood hit U.S. shores in 2013.

And it has major implications for the HTM industry.

We’re talking, of course, about international tourists. In 2013, they numbered 1,087 million, a five-percent increase from 2012 – with an additional 52 million international tourists traveling the world in 2013. Leading this astounding growth? Russia

In addition to our excellent curriculum, we offer flexibility. Our students may choose from many of the great hospitality schools in other parts of the world by spending one semester studying abroad. These classes transfer back to SDSU. Even better, the cost in most cases is minimal, as our students swap places with their students.

“ HTM is also able to offer a special scholarship which pays up to 80% of students’ airfare, thanks to longtime donor Mary Sample Willette, who established the William Sample Jr. and Fern Sample Stanford Memorial Endowment. ”

Some of our students also complete their internships abroad, and may participate in one of our faculty-led overseas programs. Take a look at page 3 and learn more about our recent adventures into rural Turkey with Dr. Joyce Gattas.

Talk about paying it forward! Mary never forgot her own life-changing experiences as a young woman studying abroad



Student Liza Newell studying abroad in Europe and exploring Barcelona

– and is intensely committed to providing that same global opportunity for SDSU students and faculty in the L. Robert Payne school of HTM. Thank you, Mary – and all of our generous donors. Your gifts will live on in so many incredible ways,

as summed up by one grateful student: *We got the chance to live with people who have different values, beliefs and lifestyle... understand these differences and respect them.*

* Source: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer

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And a wide world it is. We not only send our own students abroad, we also receive many incoming international students, too. In addition to our large group of students from China, we also have students from Russia, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Sweden, France, Denmark and the UK.

These students take classes here with our students, leading to an increased cultural awareness and diversity on the SDSU campus. Imagine a group project where students have to work not only with other students, but with students from different cultures, too! This enables a greater understanding of cultural differences, adds a key dimension to our students' learning

“I loved my experience abroad so much! Edinburgh, Scotland is an amazing city and place to live!! I wouldn't trade this experience for the world! I loved it so much I am planning on moving back in a couple years.”

–Danielle Stathas

– and makes them much better-prepared for a global workplace.

Following a trip home to the UK, I journeyed to Edinburgh to visit Napier University. Napier has one of world's top specialty degrees in Festivals and Event Management. As a result of this new exchange, students have enjoyed a semester in this understated European capital city.



Student Danielle Stathas at Arthur's Seat in Scotland, overlooking Edinburgh while studying abroad (second from right)

Our students on the RTM side are also lucky to have several exciting opportunities. Dr. Jess Ponting led several groups into wonderful tropical locations such as Bocas Del Toro, Panama and Nicaragua. On page 15, read more about how Dr. Ponting's passion for sustainable tourism isn't just teaching students – it's inspiring many of them to choose it as a career.

We're excited that our students are able to participate in all of these wonderful international opportunities. We sincerely believe they'll fondly remember these adventures made by possible by SDSU and our donors for the rest of their lives. We know we will.

“I could see the bonding...it immediately sparked this wonderful energy and ‘aha’ moments.”

When asked about the 2013 study abroad trip to Turkey, Dean Joyce Gattas is unabashedly enthusiastic. There were many memorable moments. But what most surprised Dean Gattas was how quickly both groups of students bonded – despite being raised on opposite sides of the world.

“They were both so open to each other,” she recalls. “All the preconceived notions – they all just melted away so quickly. I could see the bonding immediately going on in such a joyful, curious, interested and interesting way. It sparked this wonderful energy and ‘aha’ moments from both sides.”

The two-week trip started with three inspirational days in the ancient city of Istanbul followed by an intensive field study in the ancient town of Kostamonu. There, students from both countries teamed together to develop a master plan in sustainable tourism for the history-rich region – and an experience that will impact them for a lifetime.

The students wholeheartedly agree. “I thank this program for giving this life-changing experience to me,” says student Raquel Muñoz. “I've learned how to deal with other cultures in a more professional way.”

“I developed a better understanding of sustainable tourism, specifically ecotourism and cultural tourism while strengthening my ability to team up with students from a different country and culture,” says student Mathew Johnson. “Overall, the program was a huge success.” - Made possible by the decades-long generosity of donor Mary Willette, the 15 students who took part in this experience had their perspectives – and careers – changed forever.



Norman Brinker in March 2009 with Carl Winston and Jeff Campbell.

If there were such a thing as a true Fountain of Knowledge for HTM students, it just might be right here with SDSU's Norman E. Brinker Executive in Residence program.

“Mr. Brinker believed it was important to connect students to ‘real-world people’ who could give them a different perspective than those in academia”

—Carl Winston
Director of the Payne School

Established in 2002, this important endowment is due to a generous gift by the late restaurant entrepreneur, chairman emeritus of restaurant conglomerate Brinker International, and SDSU alumnus, Norman E. Brinker '57. Mr. Brinker was a tremendous success in the hospitality world – and wanted to pass on his passion for the industry to others.

A Legacy Lives On

Twice a year, the EIR program brings mid-to senior-level restaurant industry executives to campus. Speakers are from the restaurant industry from regional, national, and international locations. It gives Payne School students the perspective and expertise of industry insiders, adding to their academic experiences.

Norman Brinker is fondly remembered by those who had the pleasure and privilege of working with him.

“Perhaps the most memorable thing about Norman to me was his whole approach to leading others,” says J. Jeffrey Campbell, Brinker Executive in Residence. “Norman’s way of leading was by asking questions and then listening intently to the answers he received. He was always interested in what YOU thought. His belief was that the job of a leader was to help people discover their own greatness in the process of coaching them toward the goal line.”

Other endowed programs are the C. Terry Brown Family Executive in Residence and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Distinguished Lecturer series. These programs have brought the following luminary speakers to San Diego State University and the San Diego community in the past year: Alan Orlob, Vice President of Global Safety and Security for Marriott International; Kevin Kirby, Consultant and Former Head of Global Marketing and Sales for Hard Rock International; Richard Aaron, President for BizBash Media.

“I believe this program was very beneficial for both my personal and professional life,” says student Jenna Klinchok. “This collaboration definitely contributed to a better overall understanding of international communications and also provided me with a better insight of how bi-national relationships operate.”

“We talk about gifts having impact. This is one of those gifts that keep on giving,” Dean Gattas says. “If students are going to succeed in the hospitality and tourism industry, they have to have a global perspective. That’s one of the cornerstones of our HTM and RTM programs. And because of the vision of donors like Mary, students are able to develop a world-view through these experiences. Mary knew how impactful it would be to give in this way.”

The students weren’t the only ones deeply moved by the trip to Turkey. “What was amazing to me was what happened in such a very short period of time,” says Dean Gattas. “Watching our students immediately removed from any fears and trepidations...with this feeling of ‘we’re all in this together, we’re going to learn from each other.’ It transformed every student – and it transformed me.”



15 students & 1 faculty member from San Diego State University and 13 students and 3 faculty members from Bogazici University pictured at the City Tourism and Culture Department in Kastamonu City.

“I left the school more confident and motivated than I have been at any point in my life.”

**DRIVE. TENACITY. SELF-CONFIDENCE.
AN APPETITE FOR LEARNING AND PROBLEM SOLVING.**

These are all key traits of successful military personnel – and successful HTM professionals. And the industry is taking note.

For example, Hilton Worldwide has created a comprehensive initiative to actively attract vets looking for new careers. The company is pledging to hire 10,000 military veterans over the next five years, along with donating millions of Hilton HHonors points as part of Operation: Opportunity. A dedicated military career website, www.hiltonworldwide.com/militarycareers, helps vets match their military skills with open positions at the company.

HTM grad Cory Orcutt '12 is a perfect example of this new synergy. “Teamwork, honesty and integrity were the most important things I learned in the military that have already helped me boost my career in the hospitality industry,” he says. “In my current role, I have two assistant managers and over 50 employees. It is important that we have team chemistry and keep everyone honest.” He adds, “I left the school more confident and motivated than I have been at any point in my life.”

HTM student Casey Teague agrees. “The most important thing I’ve learned in the military that has helped me greatly in my college career and in hospitality is the ability to adapt and stay focused,” he says. “The Air Force core value of “excellence in all we do” has carried over well in the hotel industry by going above and beyond guests’ expectations.”

But like most HTM students, Cory and Casey’s pull toward hospitality and tourism also have personal roots.

“I think by default I just grew up to love the hospitality industry,” Cory says. “I was raised in a small town in Montana and I knew everybody. My parents owned Lakeview Mini Store from the time I was in 5th grade to my junior year in high school and that’s the only job I ever had before joining the military. I enjoyed being around people.”



Cory Orcutt (HTM '12)

The “people connection” is important to Casey, as well. “I was attracted to hospitality for its travel opportunities, the wide range of career paths within the hotel industry, and the ability to connect with so many people and make a difference in their lives on a daily basis,” he says.

So what would they tell a military veteran considering the hospitality industry as a new career? Casey is frank about the opportunities – and the challenges. “I would tell a vet that this is a great field to get into and although it can seem a lot easier than the military, it is a very different environment. You must be able to adapt to the new workplace.” But he’s confident he made the right decision. “The program has helped me transition to civilian life by introducing me to a lot of great students along with many networking opportunities. The most important thing I’m learning in the HTM program is that networking and first impressions are extremely important in this industry.”

Cory’s counsel as a successful graduate? “Pay attention in class and give every project you do 110%,” he says. “When you’re finished with school, everything they’ve taught you is for a reason. You will repeat most of these projects again on the job very quickly. You’ll already have the experience and confidence you need to succeed.” He finishes with some welcome news for hardworking vets. “It’s better pay and a few less hours than you’re used to!”

Going Above and Beyond

Barry Lall, CEO of Pinnacle Hotels USA, speaks frankly about the staffing challenges faced by the hospitality industry. “I think it’s so difficult to find individuals within our industry to work with us and be in a leadership position. We compete with so many different industries. A lot of the high school grads who work for us aren’t aware of the opportunities that potentially exist in the hospitality arena.”

“We believe everything begins with education – and not everyone has the resources to get a good one. So we’re happy and excited to be in a position to assist in this way.”

This lack of overall awareness among hospitality employees is one of the primary reasons Barry and his wife Hema continue to support the school through an annual scholarship award. “The school and its curriculum do a very good job of preparing the students for the workplace. It gives them the awareness of all the options in hospitality and helps them develop a strong career. So we in the industry value what the school does for all of us. And the fact that it’s local is a big plus.”

The Pinnacle Hotels scholarship is a flexible award, allowing students to use it for a variety of educational needs: attending industry meetings and conferences, textbooks, and even business attire.

“My wife and I care deeply about education,” Barry explains. “We believe everything begins with education – and not everyone has the resources to get a good one. So we’re happy and excited to be in a position to assist in this way.” He adds, “We’re in the second or third inning of our nine-inning ‘giving game.’”

Advice from Founder, Bob Payne

“Make room in your life for a certain number of hours of volunteerism. You might not have money, but you can give your time. From a selfish point of view, it gives you exposure, for one thing. Who knows what it might lead to? That exposure is a good thing. But it’s really the feel-good thing, helping make a difference.”

We hope to increase our involvement with the L. Robert Payne School as the years go by.”

In addition to funding an annual scholarship, Pinnacle Hotels offers internship programs at all nine of their hotels. Alongside the “nuts and bolts” training, Barry says the most important thing interns learn is “discipline, commitment, how to work well within a team, to be great professionals. If we’re able to accomplish that, then we’ve done a good job. From our standpoint, it’s more than a routine job. It’s important that we go above and beyond.”



Barry Lall, President & CEO of Pinnacle Hotels USA

One of his biggest intern success stories? “Success can be defined in many different ways,” Barry says. “Overall, we can develop any young student. But one that stands out is Vanessa Klein. She started out in a very junior level, and then progressed to becoming a sales manager with us. After overseeing several hotels and becoming very active in hospitality and tourism, she’s now in a very senior position as a district manager with the 7-Eleven chain. It’s very exciting to see the progress of someone like her.”

When asked to give his most important piece of advice to a new hospitality grad, Barry laughed and said, “I could write an essay on that topic! But if you had to pin me down, I’d say students need to understand that to have any success in life, you have to be prepared to work very, very hard and be prepared to make sacrifices. I believe family should always come first in life. But thereafter, there should be a total commitment to your chosen career path. If we do those two things, we’re generally going to have a very, very happy life.”



Bob and Patty Payne with alumna Maritza Koponen (HTM '13)

“In all my wildest dreams, I could not imagine such an amazing honor bestowed upon me.”

You could say Patti Roscoe’s incredible life and career happened by accident. After all, the one-time TV production assistant hadn’t planned any of it: Starting a highly-successful business. Serving as an ongoing inspiration to students and an icon in the San Diego community. Being awarded an honorary doctoral degree from SDSU this past May.

“In all my wildest dreams, I could not imagine having such an amazing honor bestowed upon me,” she says. “I never had the opportunity to go to college and have been living that dream vicariously through all my time on campus and with the students.”

But happen it did, every bit of it – and hundreds of Payne School students have benefitted from the engaging business woman’s drive, determination and unwavering support.

“When I moved to San Diego in 1966, I had a background in television production,” she recalls. “People who had those jobs here were in their 40s and 50s, and I didn’t want to start over in that field. I had solid clerical skills so I found a job at the then Vacation Village Hotel (now Paradise Point) as a secretary to the General Manager. That turned out to be the turning point in my life. Martin Blatt was my boss, mentor, friend, and biggest supporter.”

After working for a decade in San Diego’s hotel industry, Patti joined the destination management sector. But when her company was sold to a Chicago-based firm, Patti made a major change to her career itinerary – and created PRA Destination Management Company with not much more than “a small business loan, a folding table, a typewriter and a telephone.” And over the next 26 years, transformed her small local company to an international franchise and key player in the destination management field.

Not only is Patti legendary among event managers in San

Diego, she’s also a co-founder of the Payne school and is the chair on its board of advisors. She remembers that fateful meeting with her best friend, SDSU’s Dean Joyce Gattas, and SDSU alums Bob Payne ‘55, ‘12.



Patti Roscoe and PSFA Dean Joyce Gattas at commencement.

“Joyce and I had long been chatting about why the school didn’t start a four-year degree program in HTM,” she says. “As an industry colleague and Aztec alum, Bob Payne, also had been urging the school to establish such a program. Bob agreed to give us \$1,000,000 as seed money to get the program started if Joyce and I would do the “heavy lifting.” So I convened an industry leadership breakfast consisting of hotel general managers and owners/operators of ancillary businesses. Dean Gattas’ team put together a very impressive presentation on why we needed a four-year degree program, and what it could mean to the industry. We established various committees to work on the project and never looked back. It took a lot of time, commitment, passion, and money to make it happen.”

Patti emphasizes the unique partnership in those previously uncharted waters. “It took the complete backing of then-President Stephen Weber, who helped us wind through the complex roads of University politics and regulations. It was uncommon to have a public/private partnership in the creating of a college – in this case, PFSA – with its own specialty program – HTM.”

She adds, “Today our program is an official school and one of the most well-respected in the nation. Our director, Carl Winston, sits on industry boards of directors and is often called upon for advice and counsel by other universities.”

In addition, Patti’s ongoing financial support has helped established the Institute for Meetings and Events, as well as the Roscoe Meeting and Events Professorship within the Payne school.

With her decades-long track record of industry success, Patti

looks to the road ahead. “The infrastructure – hotels, attractions, gaming facilities, etc. – looks the same, but the way we’re doing business has changed. In addition, the number of ancillary businesses is growing at a rapid pace. And, as in all other industries, technology has played an enormous role. What once took a potential traveler many hours and consultants to accomplish can now be done in far less time on a computer. That has made the industry more transparent in its offerings and pricing. Everyone has to work harder to improve their products, services, and profitability structure.” Despite the rapid pace of change, Patti says the critical basics – networking and relationship building – are still the same. “We teach our students leadership skills in these areas and it is a proven formula,” she says. “Our students graduate with a real working relationship with the industry through their internships, non-profit volunteer job hours, and networking with industry professionals locally and nationally through conferences and meetings.”

Patti’s best advice to students and new grads?

“I urge our students to take advantage of each and every chance they have to interact with industry leaders. As a student in our HTM School, they are looked upon as tomorrow’s leaders because past HTM graduates are making such a difference as leaders themselves in all parts of our globe.”

–Patti Roscoe

Ever the enthusiastic supporter, she proudly adds, “Our 99% placement rate after graduation speaks for itself.”

“You can only learn so much from a textbook in this industry.”

“Anyone can learn how to plan a meeting or an event. There are countless tools, websites and other resources readily available,” says Stephanie Dathe, Director of the Institute for Meetings and Events at the L. Robert Payne School. “I feel that one of the biggest things that sets us apart from all other schools is our strong partnership with industry professionals who provide our students with experiential learning opportunities. You can only teach so much in the classroom.”

She emphasizes that the ongoing commitment of donors is a game changer for both students and the school.

“The opportunities provided to our students through this support are countless and cannot be taught in the classroom:

strengthening their leadership skills, networking with potential employers, being exposed to different areas of the industry they may not have even known existed and the importance of giving back to our community – to name just a few!” Stephanie says.

As just one recent example, the local chapter of PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association) has partnered with the school to create a new student chapter. In addition, they provide sponsorships to enable students to attend their

monthly educational events and mixers, as well as attend the annual conference. In addition, the school will be partnering with PCMA to plan a community service event.

The incredible support from donors also gives students a real edge where it really counts: getting that first important professional job. “We’ve found that what the students learn outside of the classroom sets them apart from all other candidates,” Stephanie says.

Proof of that competitive advantage recently came true in a most unexpected way with Maritz Travel Company.

“Prior to Maritz’s first visit to SDSU, their team was told by one of their Vice Presidents that under no circumstances were they permitted to offer anyone a job, because they do not hire anyone straight out of college,”

Stephanie recalls. “But after spending just two days on campus interacting with our students and faculty, learning more about our curriculum, and hearing about the number of work experience hours we require...the Vice President not only retracted her comment, she wrote down three student names...one of whom is now working for Maritz!”



Stephanie Dathe with alumnae Christy Jones (HTM '13) and Melissa Rosas (HTM '13)

... We're happy to tell you more about HTM grad Christy Jones and her great new job with Maritz Travel on page 11.

“It was really amazing to be welcomed and treated like VIP’s from beginning to end.”

They’re three HTM alumni who well remember the intense days and long nights they spent as students at the L. Robert Payne School. But for Andrea Zelinksi, (’08), Alyson Pullman, (’10) and Kristin McDonald, (’10), their hard work is paying off in wonderful ways in their own careers – and they want to inspire those following in their footsteps.

“*But for Andrea Zelinksi, (’08), Alyson Pullman, (’10) and Kristin McDonald, (’10), their hard work is paying off in wonderful ways in their own careers – and they want to inspire those following in their footsteps.*”

So what better way to do that than to sponsor a Foodies trip to San Francisco – one of the best foodie cities in the world? The three alumni donated money to pay travel expenses for current students – so they could enjoy the same wonderful opportunities they had. “Foodies first trip of the year was a great success and beyond what I had hoped for!” says then Foodies President Crystal Dossman (HTM ’14). “The guest speakers and hosts were informative, approachable and excited to have us there.”

One such host was Lindsey Berg ’04, another SDSU HTM alumna, and city sales manager for Kimpton Hotels. Her surprise visit included gifts of macaroons for everyone, complete with a customized message.

Crystal says the hospitality was impressive from the start. “Juan-Pablo Pagoadacruz, the Front Office

Manager, and Jasper’s chef welcomed us with information on the Kimpton culture and their leadership philosophy. It was really amazing to be so welcomed and treated like VIPs from beginning to end.”

But we all know San Francisco is all about the food! And the Foodies certainly sampled their share. From Off The Grid Food Trucks, to the famous Ferry Famer’s Market to a tour of TCHO Chocolate and Boudin, the Foodies filled their stomachs – and their minds.

“The director of the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market was such a captivating speaker that even though everyone was excited to explore and eat, the Foodies could not stop asking questions!” Crystal enthusiastically recalls. “I especially enjoyed learning about their education program and partnerships.”

And the chocolates? Well, that almost goes without saying.

“I enjoyed how educational the TCHO tour was. We learned about the process of making chocolate from beginning to end,” says NSMH member and Foodie friend Sean Belluscio (HTM ’14). “Then of course, we had the privilege to try out many of their dark and milk chocolates.” He adds, “Despite being a member of NSMH, I felt like I was always a part of the Foodies



Foodies Student Association in San Francisco

family on that trip. I had the chance to meet many new people and strengthen already familiar bonds. Looking back, it was never about the food itself, but of the sense of communion we all enjoyed. It was all about the hospitality.”

And that’s exactly the kind of legacy our three generous alumni donors had in mind.

“Sponsoring a student is the least I can do to give back to a school that has given me so much.”

Recent HTM grad Shannon Baccaro '14 is loving her first professional job as a Corporate Management Trainee at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza in L.A. And though she's just getting started on what promises to be a great career, she's already thinking about how she can help the next upcoming grad.

“Sponsoring a student in 2015 is the least I can do to give back to a school that has given me so much,” Shannon says. “While I attended SDSU, I was able to take part in mentoring high school students through the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality's Pre-College Outreach program. Now that I've left, I realize I must find other ways to give back in hopes that other people can find the comfort and happiness that I have in my life by discovering my passions.”

Shannon is thankful for the philanthropic partners who make it possible for HTM students to have the kind of career and life changing experiences she had. “Donor support is critical to be able to give deserving students all the opportunities that I had. Creating a community that focuses on the success and learning of young people is the only way to train the next generation of leaders that will eventually fill my shoes.”

She remembers the day she found her true career calling, thanks to a donor-sponsored student trip. “I attended the NSMH trip



Shannon Baccaro (HTM '14)

to Orlando, Florida in 2013,” Shannon recalls. “I had the privilege to hear a woman named Susan Santiago speak about her career with Hyatt. Her passion and dedication to the company was inspiring and has led me to where I am today. It truly gave me such a great perspective of where I could see myself and confirmed my decision to work in this industry.”

It's a natural fit for Shannon. “What I love about the hospitality industry is being able to interact with different people from all over the world,” she says. “It also allows me to travel and work in places that put me outside of my comfort zone and push me to not only work harder, but to be a better person. Hospitality is all about people and that is ultimately what drew me to work in hotels. I love pleasing people and have been lucky to find a company where I am surrounded by like-minded people who love what they do.”

She also feels lucky in her choice of schools. “Honestly, what initially drew me was the 99% job placement rate that the L. Robert Payne School boasts,” she admits. “However, what I discovered was just how much opportunity the school offers and what a great education they provide to those who are willing to put in the work. It was clear the investment that is put into the students that truly prepares us to uphold that 99%.”

“Many of us would not have been able to attend without donor support for HTM and RTM students in the Payne School.”

There's a bright light every student wants to reach at end of the academic tunnel – that first professional job. Helping RTM students make valuable industry connections is SDSU's Recreation and Tourism Management Association (RTSA). Through conferences, workshops, job fairs and other networking opportunities, the student-led organization helps undergrads start developing key professional relationships from the start.

RTM student Caroline Nuñez attended this year's California Park and Recreation Society Conference and Expo in Ontario, CA. She says it was a valuable learning experience. “I had the opportunity to attend workshops based on special interests and learn about industry-specific trends within Park and Recreation agencies,” she says. “The professionals who attended were thrilled to see students attend the conference. CPRS District 12 has been a great support for SDSU students, by inviting us to conferences, trainings, workshops, and partnering with RTSA.” RTSA's mission? To bridge the gap between students and profes-

sionals in the field of recreation and tourism. Caroline urges every student to take advantage of the career-enhancing opportunities RTSA has to offer. “I would recommend both HTM and RTM students to attend this conference because you have the opportunity to network with professionals and meet other students who have similar career goals.”

Caroline emphasizes the importance of donor support. “Thank you to the L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management for supporting students to attend this conference,” she says. “Professional development is an important aspect of the student experience, and many of us would not have been able to attend without donor support for HTM and RTM students in the Payne School.”



RTSA students at the California Parks and Recreation Society Annual Conference

“One simply needs to step foot into the L. Robert Payne School to see the innovation this school offers.”



Alumnas Christy Jones (HTM '13) and Carly Rubin (HTM '13) working on a Maritz program in New Orleans

Recently, executives at the Maritz Travel Company did something they almost never do. And they couldn't be happier.

“We don't typically hire recent college graduates into Travel Director roles, as we require a couple of years of post-graduate experience,” says Laura Dryer, Talent Acquisition Director, Maritz Travel Company. “However, since SDSU requires all students to work in the industry while also going to

school, it clearly gives their students a competitive edge and experience that most new graduates simply do not have. This is the reason we hired Christy Jones as a Travel Director.”

Christy (HTM '13) felt more than ready for the challenge. “The education I received from the HTM program helped me to understand the entire picture on how a hotel operates, how an event is planned and executed, and how to manage all of these areas by being a leader,” she says. “It provided me with an extensive amount of hands-on experiences that helped me develop my own leadership style, taught me how to plan and execute an event/trip on my own, and how to be successful in the hospitality industry.”

“One simply needs to step foot into the L. Robert Payne School of hospitality campus to see the innovation this school offers,” says Ann Gravette, Director of Process Improvement/Training at Maritz. “From the demanding entry criteria for incoming freshman to the impeccable senior employee placement records, they do an extraordinary job for the students from beginning to end.” She adds, “The professionalism of the students is remarkable, even unparalleled. They are mature, professional and poised. They dress in “A-day” business suits...they are ready to professionally interact with people in entry level positions up to top executives.”

These insights are important to both undergrads and new grads to discover what it really takes to be an industry success – from industry leaders themselves.

“For an incoming freshman, I would encourage them to take the time to understand the many jobs in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry and look at things like the hours, days required to work, travel and potential compensation,” Laura says. “Each student should think not only about his or her first job out of college, but also look long-term to what career he or she would like to achieve. While extensive travel may sound exciting and incredible now, will he or she want to travel or move later in life?”

And for the new grad? “New graduates should also understand that their first job is really an ongoing interview for future opportunities,” Laura advises. “How they show up every day (both with time and attire) matters, as well as initiative and attention to details. There is an old saying ‘dress for the position you want to be in, not the one you are in’ which I think should also include actions and words. I think this speaks volumes for a road to a successful career.”

Christy is already seeing that hard work pays off. “One thing that I did not realize is how quickly you move into a leadership role in this industry,” she says. “I thought because I was new to this position and fresh out of college, that they would give me more time to learn in the ‘real world’ before they had me lead things on my own. I was wrong. I was leading twenty temp staff from a local DMC at a 10,000 person meeting within my first two months on the job. You have to be confident, believe in yourself, and trust that you know what you are doing and that you are capable of managing something so large.”

She also feels the personal rewards are tremendous. “I love to create lasting experiences for people,” she says. “I love that my career allows me to be a part of someone's special memory during their travels. Having my guests tell me at the end of their trip that they loved every minute and that they had the best time is what makes me so passionate about this industry.”

Christy isn't the only one who believes the L. Robert Payne school offers a top-notch education. The program also gets raves from Ann Gravette. “I can tell you, if ever I decide to pursue a Masters in the hospitality industry, I would complete only one application and it would be to SDSU's L. Robert Payne program,” she says. “With their remote program, it would be perfect for me!”

From Shy Freshman to HR Superstar



Quetzalli Serrano (HTM '11)

To look at HTM Class of 2011 graduate Quetzalli Serrano now, you'd never guess the confident Harrah's professional was once a painfully shy freshman who felt she'd never fit in.

"I did not have any other friends in the program and I felt I was too introverted to join the associations and clubs," she recalls. "Once I was accepted and told that I NEED TO BE IN-

VOLVED, I began to talk to students in my classes who felt exactly the same way. Although I may be naturally introverted, I was able to find peers and professors who helped me learn the skill sets to be outgoing and approach strangers!"

“ *The most important thing I learned was to not be afraid to ASK for help when needed. Once I began to ask questions and connect with my professors I was receiving scholarships, finding great jobs, attending conferences at no cost and networking with industry professionals.* **”**

After that essential realization, Quetzalli's life changed dramatically. "The school was very critical (in helping me) because of the connections that were made with other students and the professors," she reflects. "The classes gave us the background knowledge to go to events and be 'in the know' about the hospitality industry. But the most important thing I learned was to not be afraid to ASK for help when needed. Once I began to ask questions and connect with my professors I was receiving scholarships, finding great jobs, attending conferences at no cost and networking with industry professionals."

Those skills didn't just help her in school – they helped her snag her first professional job as an HR Coordinator with Harrah's Resort Southern California. "I began with Harrah's as a Marketing Associate for my final HTM Internship," she says. "I was interested in going into the HR field within hospitality, but with my final year ending, I had to figure out a way to somehow get my foot in the door. I used my initiative skills the HTM program taught me. I went into my HR department and asked to shadow their department for a day just to get insight on what the department does. A few months later there was an opening for the HR Front Desk. The department had remembered my initiative to shadow them...which landed me the job!" Her latest project? Developing Harrah's new Resort Operations Management Associate program – a program close to Quetzalli's heart.

"This program is specifically designed for students who are passionate about the Hospitality industry," she explains. "We did a trial run with our Front Desk associates and are ready to roll it out with new grads looking to get into the industry. The program is a great way to develop an upcoming grad into a supervisory role for our Hotel and F&B departments." Remembering her own experiences, she says, "This gives us the opportunity to partner with local colleges and hire the best students who can bring their ideas from their school background. The students who participate will get an opportunity to develop their professional background and skill sets that can be transferred to any employment. They may even have a job ready to go once they graduate!"

Since our interview with Quetzalli, she received a new opportunity with Omni La Costa Resort and Spa and is joining their team as Employment Coordinator. Congratulations, Quetzalli!

Quetzalli's best advice for a young professional?

Network, network, network, and "be open to any projects or work thrown your way. If you are not prepared to put in the time and work then someone else will. Also, do not be afraid to let your boss know what your goals are in your professional life because more often than not they can help you reach them."

“Dazzling. Scintillating. Fascinating.”



CHEI Teaching Conference 2014

When talking about his impressions of China, SDSU Professor Emeritus Gene Lamke reaches for superlatives to describe the phenomenal shifts in this rising international powerhouse.

“It seems like just yesterday it was a third world country struggling to find its feet economically, and now it is one of the fastest growing economies in the world,” Gene says. “The hospitality industry in China is growing exponentially and the needs of the industry for an educated workforce are growing much faster than the supply of quality workers to fill the need.”

This exponential growth is the driving force behind the Payne School’s China Hospitality Education Initiative (CHEI), created with industry partner Marriott International and The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation. The innovative program enhances the hospitality education of Chinese youths, preparing them for careers in China’s booming travel and tourism industry. SDSU’s Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management was selected as the program’s academic advisor and partner because of its successful hospitality and tourism management, in addition to its work with Chinese schools, industry experts and government officials – and its ability to develop customized programs that are uniquely Chinese.

Gene Lamke says it’s the right program at the right time in history. “Let’s face it, the Chinese, as well as other Asian nations, will become the largest group of tourists the world has ever seen as they grow economically and decide to travel abroad!” he says. “The Payne School and Marriott Foundation are working together to improve the level of hospitality education. Over the next five years or so, nearly four million new hospitality jobs will need to be filled in China. Our hope is to create dynamic and engaging educational programs that will produce a high quality workforce for this service-oriented industry.”

Not only does the CHEI program help fill a great need in China, it provides essential opportunities for HTM and RTM students here at home. “Our world is shrinking and the boundaries that once existed to separate cultures have nearly vanished,” Gene says. “Think about it. I can send a message anywhere in the world in a matter of seconds, I can fly just about anywhere in the world, I can order products and have them shipped to me overnight, and I live side by side with individuals from all over the world. By being the Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management with significant global connections, it improves the education of our students and also prepares them for the global audiences that they will work with in the very near future!”

Gene says the similarities between U.S. and Chinese students are strong and significant. “I believe that students in China, like students here in the U.S., are enthusiastic about learning how they can become a professional in the industry,” he says. “They possess the skills and abilities to become upwardly mobile career professionals just like their American counterparts.”

But the contrasts are also profound. “The services industry in China is in its infancy. A fresher approach to teaching and learning is necessary to meet the demands of this industry if it is to become as great as it can be for consumers and career professionals,” Gene explains. “The Chinese educational system is much different than western educational systems and the culture of higher education in China is different from what we know. People skills are so important in the hospitality industry, but they are often not addressed strongly in the Chinese educational system.”

So how do you go about changing an educational system steeped in its own rich history, cultures and traditions – so it can successfully master the complex challenges of a new global world? Gene says the strategy is long-term and comprehensive.

“Our approach is multi-faceted with faculty internships, guest lectures, field trips, faculty fellowships, teaching conferences, and customized curricula to impact the educational framework in vocational schools and universities,” he says. “But what we think is happening is that faculty and students are becoming more excited and interested in this professional field and that there’s an increase in the broader appreciation

of the industry overall. Both students and faculty are now realizing what it takes to succeed! We're hopeful that this comprehensive approach to educating individuals will yield graduates who are better-prepared for the hospitality field – and will drive the growth and success of the industry over the next 20-30 years!”

Patience. Planning. And a lot of perseverance.

Clearly, they're all at the foundation of the immense change happening in China's hospitality and tourism industry. But Gene's best advice for HTM students and grads? Focus on China's intricate, deep, and unique culture. “Gain a thorough understanding of the Chinese culture,” he counsels. “It's drastically different than western culture, but fascinating and scintillating with all of its history, foundations, and traditions!”

“Nothing takes the place of persistence.”

Vince LaRuffa is coming out of a self-described “intellectual hibernation.” Though you'd never know it from his impressive career track record, the Vice President of Resort Sales & Marketing at Universal Orlando says he needed to “re-engage” his brain. He'd pondered getting his Master's degree for many years, but never found the right fit. Until he discovered the HTM Edge program.

“Initially, I was considering an MBA but I was concerned about the time commitment of traditional executive graduate programs,” Vince explains. “As I had been contemplating life after Universal and teaching college students in a hospitality program, I thought this program would add value to that objective. I liked the HTM Edge curriculum and the focus on leadership. I found it to be most relevant for what I needed at this point in my career. Because of the flexibility of this format I decided it was time.”

Led by director Jeff Campbell, a seasoned executive from the restaurant industry who's also been the Norman E. Brinker Executive-in-Residence in the HTM Program since 2005, the innovative graduate program offers a Master of Science in Hospitality and Tourism management.

“The commitment of the faculty and staff is beyond belief and the quality of the instruction is second to none”

“The most rewarding aspect? The intellectual stimulation and the learning that is taking place, even for someone such as me with 30+ years of industry experience. I also continue to be impressed with the very personalized instruction, which I never expected.”

Vince strongly believes this kind of personalization not only makes a key difference in the classroom, it's critical for professional success. “One size fits all simply doesn't work today,” he says. “Like every industry, our business is

being impacted dramatically by the changes taking place in the way people communicate. Engaging the guest in a very personal way is now possible, and advancements in technology continue to raise the bar in terms of enhanced personalization. The ability to surgically target the guest with highly-relevant messaging has changed the game.”



Vince LaRuffa, Vice President-Resort Marketing at Universal Orlando Resort

Vince believes in a classic strategy for a successful career: “Read, read, read” he advises, while also being sure to “embrace technology. The best way to understand the impact and the immense potential of the tools is to use them.”

When asked how he sees his career continue to unfold, Vince wants to share the knowledge and savvy he's gained over the years. “I hope to teach one day and hang my own shingle in hospitality consulting,” he explains. “Having the degree will add credibility to my personal brand, but most of all it has kept my brain nimble and engaged and has grown my knowledge.”

Vince's words of wisdom to the nervous new freshman – or the newly-minted grad? It's the same advice he's followed all these years. “As Calvin Coolidge said, ‘nothing takes the place of persistence,’ he counsels. “Find your passion. Don't be afraid to try different pursuits until you find something that you can be excited about every day. You will not excel at a career that doesn't interest you. Also, don't be afraid to change jobs as you search for the right fit. Just don't burden yourself with debt. Big car payments, an expensive rent payment, or credit card debt can force you to maintain an unhappy job situation because you can't afford to make a change. Live within your means and maintain the flexibility to make a change if you have to.”

“Clearly, the surf industry should be involved in ensuring its own long term viability.”



Dr. Jess Ponting with students on a educational trip to Panama

In July 1997, 24 year-old old Jess Ponting had just finished a 12-month community development placement in the vast jungle flood plains of northwestern Papua New Guinea.

Living among villagers with no access to money, health care, or education, he understood how tough it was for impoverished people to preserve their environment in the face of cash offers from those that would destroy it. It was clear that a viable and sustainable plan B was needed if they were to achieve development through conservation.

A big part of the solution? Sustainable tourism. Over the last 17 years, the now Dr. Jess Ponting, SDSU Associate Professor, Sustainable Tourism and Director of the Center for Surf Research, has dedicated his life and career to this vital, growing field.

“Sustainable tourism means that the hospitality industry can play its part in ensuring a livable planet for future generations,” Jess says. “If the travel industry were a country, it would rank fourth in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, yet it stands to be disproportionately impacted by climate change. Clearly the surf industry should be involved in ensuring its own long term viability.”

The L. Robert Payne School was one of the first to incorporate a sustainable tourism program in the U.S. The Center for Surf Research – conceived and championed by the School – was instrumental in developing the world’s first sustainable tourism certification program (STOKE Certified) to specifically focus on surf and snow tourism. Additionally the Groundswell Education Travel partnership with the Center for Surf Research allows scores of the school’s students to learn about sustainable tourism management in the field. Some of the exciting destinations have included Panama’s Caribbean Coast, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Fiji, and Peru.

Learn more about the
Dr. Ponting’s Center for Surf Research at
www.centerforsurfresearch.org

*View video of students studying sustainable tourism
in Panama: youtu.be/ZtXvAp0DUb0*

Scholarship awards and donor support are key to opening up these experiences to students who wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford them. Jess says they try and provide as many scholarships as possible, with eight being offered this year alone.

“Students who go on these trips have experienced real and lasting personal transformation. I’ve seen many moderately motivated students return from these trips completely energized and inspired and with a new direction and purpose to their academic career,” Jess says. “It’s a wonderful and humbling experience to be able to facilitate that kind of impact on a young person’s life. It’s my personal mission to provide for as many students as possible.” He adds, “Scholarship recipients have a life changing experience in the communities they visit, partly because of the sense of purpose that comes from helping others. We’re forming lasting relationships with communities and organizations in many different countries.”

Given Jess’ adventurous life and career, his best advice to a new grad isn’t surprising – but is absolutely essential. “Follow your passion,” he advises. “Don’t be afraid to take risks, particularly if it is in pursuit of your passion. Don’t be afraid to invest in yourself. Find out what you love to do and go after it with everything you have. Success – whatever that might look like to you – is inevitable under these conditions.”

Elevating Casino Operations from an Art to a Science

The mechanics of gaming? Indian gaming executives and staff have it mastered. But when it comes to a clear global vision for Indian gaming as the industry expands, there's still work to be done.

That's where a new, all-inclusive Executive Training Program for Indian gaming comes in. Developed in collaboration with the Sycuan Institute on Tribal Gaming (SITG), and housed at the L. Robert Payne School at SDSU, the certificate program, unique to Indian Country, will be presented by professors and professionals who are currently teaching these subjects at colleges and universities. The Executive Training Program is offered at no cost to attendees of the AIGA Expo 2014, held November 5 – 7, 2014 at the Radisson Fort McDowell Resort & Casino in Scottsdale...and will likely continue to be a free program for future AIGA attendees.



Tribal Gaming Student Association (TGSA) officers (left to right): Tyegaria Halloway, Michelle Jackson, Korine Dang, Bernadette Najera, Ismael Barajas and advisor Dr. Kate Spilde

Kate Spilde, SDSU Associate Professor, Tribal Gaming and Chair of the Sycuan Institute on Tribal Gaming, says the new program is vital. "As the tribal gaming industry continues to grow and expand, tribal governments are taking the lead in professionalizing the industry through formal education and training," she says. "SDSU is the only university offering a four-year degree in tribal casino operations. So we are eager to expand our reach beyond the traditional on-campus student body and offer this formal education to current employees and managers as well."

The new curriculum, which provides a global vision for tribal gaming education and development, emphasizes cultural sensitivity and competence, government-industry relations, and industry intelligence from the perspective of native nation building. SITG will launch an online version in the fall for continuing education.

Kate says the program is innovative on several levels. "It extends our on-campus efforts into the tribal gaming professional community. With over 400 operations in 28 states, it is critical for educators to go out into the tribal community rather than wait for students to come to campus."

- ***The Integrated Resort Management*** curriculum emphasizes Return on Investment (ROI) of elements of the resort and how to analyze to determine whether each area is pulling its own weight. It's aimed at Finance, CEO and GM-level staff.
- ***The Table Games Management*** track examines the balance on the gaming floor, with special focus on new electronic games and how to increase revenue retention. It's geared for floor managers, pit and floor supervisors.
- ***Tribal Customer Service Advancement*** concentrates on inspiring tribal employees to maximize their potential and mentoring techniques. This track is designed for customer service staff, trainers and mentors.

"The Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation created the Institute on Tribal Gaming here at SDSU in order to elevate casino operations from an art to a science," says Kate. "We are pleased to take this perspective and our experience in teaching casino operations beyond campus through online classes and Executive Training Programs, like the one we are offering in Arizona in November."

"We often think of bringing on interns to mentor them, and give them valuable experiences. But in this case, I also benefitted, and may benefit again."

—Anthony Bollotta,
President, Bollotta Entertainment

Professors For a Day: *Thank you for making it personal!*

Adam Miller
Alan Orlob
Alexandra Borrelli (RTM '13)
Alicia Feito
Allison Vassallo
Alyssa Alarcon (HTM '11)
Amanda Armstrong
Amy Harbert
Andrew Mosblech
Andy Baumann
Ann Marie Kimble (HTM EDGE '13)
Anthony Belef
Barry Lall
Bill Saumier
Bree Lewis
Brian Hughes
Brigitte Bower (HTM '07)
Caitlyn Toretto
Carl McCullough
Carlie Nagel (HTM '11)
Chris Lee
Christian Braemer
Christian Herrera
Christina Ear (HTM '08)
Christopher A. Ford
Craig Jacobs
Cristin Munley (HTM '07)
Dave Rudel
David Oates
DeeAnne Snyder
Dejuan Benford
Demi Ortega
Diane Pham (HTM '07)
Don Gillette
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Harmony Walton
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James Tate (HTM '06)
Janet Bachtel
Janet Beronio
Janet Devaney
Jason Bayona
Jeanette Weston (HTM '08)
Jeff Schroeder
Jeff Villani
Jody Blackinton
John Anastasopoulos (HTM '05)
John Kolek
John Reilly
Jon Carder
Jorge Herrerias

Program Manager, College Relations & Talent Acquisition
Vice President, Global Safety and Security
Vice President of Sales & Marketing
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Assistant Director, Education Abroad, International Student Center
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Director of Event Services
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Vice President of Global Gaming Development
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 Ms. Andrea G. Zelinski (HTM '08)

Thank You

Professors For a Day Continued...

Judy Hoffman
 Keegan Gerhard
 Keith Guilbault
 Kent Rideout
 Kevin Kirby
 Kevin Konopasek
 Krzysztof Celuch
 Larry Colby '79
 Linda Wells (HTM '08, HTM EDGE '13)
 Lindsay Berthiaume (HTM '09)
 Lori Rodriguez
 Margaret Lee
 Michelle Lucey
 Michelle Metter
 Mike Brooks
 Monica Haleh (HTM '10)
 Nicole Burke
 Omari Head
 Paul Thiel
 Rachel Horgan
 Randall White
 Rich Fox
 Rich Mitrovich
 Richard Aaron
 Richard Coraine
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 Rylan Reilkoff (HTM '07)
 Shahid Kayani
 Steve Cast
 Teresa Love O'Bannon
 Tim Kirkland
 Tim Ripke
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 Strategic Relationship Manager, Hospitality & Tourism
 Senior Director
 Sales Manager
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 San Diego State University
 Pechanga Resort & Casino

“ *The students are taught the real world, not the words-on-a-page world. It seems SDSU's success is also largely attributed to the amazing local industry presence, partnership and support.* ”

–Ann Gravette,
*Director of Process Improvement/Training,
Maritz Travel Company*

L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality & Tourism Management

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