Graduation 2010
A message from the Managing Director

This is the time of year when I look back and marvel that we have packed in so many events and achievements into the past months. We have a lot to be proud of in our accomplishments during 2010.

This has been a year of contests and awards—our student team under the expert tuition of Director of Culinary Arts Michael Kitts won second prize in the prestigious MLA Black Box Challenge for 2010. An individual student, Shahrin Mushary, won a bronze medal in the Emirates Salon Culinaire, and the Academy was named second runner up for glass collection in the Emirates Environmental Group recycling awards for this year. Recognition such as this is pleasing in itself, but to me it also signifies an active, engaged academic community, and if we have succeeded in creating that, then we truly have succeeded. Within the Academy, events like the annual flambé contest and best project competitions in some courses, as well as the Deans List ceremony (now called the Recognition Ceremony to reflect its broader nature) all contribute to an environment where every student can strive for excellence in his or her own way. I extend warm congratulations to all award winners.

I would also like to acknowledge the current Student Council for its active participation in all spheres of Academy life during 2010. Other students have made a difference too: for example, Baha Darwish and Jijo John from graduating established a student website, dubbed The Dubai Pie, for one of their courses and it has become a thriving interactive medium for student communication.

With the new academic year came some interesting changes on the academic front. Our Master’s degree in International Hospitality Management was launched in September, and the undergraduate programme has a new face, with three trimesters instead of two semesters, allowing students to complete an honours degree in three years.

Our student exchange programme developed in a very satisfactory way last year, with several new agreements signed, and existing ones renewed. Particularly gratifying is the fact that Dean Johnson of the Cornell School of Hotel Administration approached us to see if we were interested in entering into partnership for exchange visits and other projects. I am happy to announce that the first Cornell exchanges—both to and from—will take place during the academic year.

Perhaps the most satisfying recent accomplishment in my view has been our accreditation by the Institute of Hospitality. Recognition by the leading professional hospitality organization worldwide makes a very strong statement about the Academy’s high standards and performance.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to our successes in 2010, and I look forward with confidence to what the new year will bring.

Ron Hilvert

Celebrating at the 2010 Graduation Congregation and Ball

Where are they now?

Of this year’s 56 graduates three-quarters have accepted jobs in the hospitality industry while an unusually high 22% have opted to further their studies. More than half have chosen to start their careers in Dubai.

Just a sampling of post-graduation jobs:

- Karina Nielsen is Front Office Manager at the Hankø Fjordhotell & Spa in Norway.
- Samantha Mendonca and Venetika Moser were chosen for the competitive Future Leaders Programme in the Intercontinental Hotels Group. Samantha is working in Festival City, Dubai while Venetika is in Muscat.
- Juliana Papaioannou is Assistant Manager for Guest Relations at the Armani Hotel in the Burj Khalifa, Dubai.
- Max Moeller is in Baku, Azerbaijan, working as a corporate trainer for Hyatt.
- Chris Dutt is a Junior Lecturer at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management.
**First year student “snapshots”**

The Academy's first year students typically come to us directly from high school. However sometimes it is exposure to the industry that sparks someone's interest in pursuing a hospitality management degree. Several of our 2010 freshmen came to us with substantive experience in the hospitality industry. We asked them why they chose to return to school.

**Silveria Gansallo** ran her own successful catering business in Lagos, Nigeria, after attaining a post-secondary diploma in cake baking and decorating. She started by supplying cakes and confectionary to schools and community organizations, and then moved on to providing full meals for big corporate events, weddings, anniversaries and a wide range of other events. After seven years of this she felt that, for personal satisfaction and career development, she wanted to further her education and learn more about the hospitality industry.

**Manjit Singh** grew up in a family that owned and managed hotels. He started work at a hotel front desk at the age of 16, and then at 18 started a three-year, full-time stint at the Wyndham Hotel. It wasn’t surprising that he chose to study hospitality management at Humber College in Toronto, Canada, where he earned two diplomas in the field. He worked part-time all through his studies, and secretarial studies, she discovered hospitality, and completed a two-year apprenticeship as a chef. The requirement was for one year, but Christopher was enjoying it so much that he extended. During his last year of high school he had a part-time job as a cook in a specialty food store, and started his own catering business with a friend. Although he loves food & beverage work, his long-term goal is to be a hotel manager.

After **Nina Jenkins** from the UK, graduated with 3 A-levels, she took a job as a receptionist in a small hotel. She was quickly promoted to the HR department, and by the time she left to come to the Academy, she was in charge of personnel recruitment for four hotels. Her work experience confirmed that hospitality was the career for her. She chose to come to the Academy rather than continuing to work, because she wanted to learn everything about the hospitality industry, so she had more choices in terms of career development.

**Teresa Wangombe** from Kenya graduated with 4 O-levels and 2 A-levels. After acquiring certificates in computer studies and secretarial studies, she discovered hospitality and completed a course in food & beverage service and sales. For five years she worked at the Hyatt Hotel in Dubai, in various departments. She decided to further her education to ensure that she could progress as far as she wanted in her career. Her aim now is to go into hospitality and events management when she graduates. Events work brings the best out in me.

After **Christopher Jarodd’s** interest in the industry started at the age of 10, which led him to study “hospitality and food processing trades” in high school. He completed a two-year apprenticeship as a chef. The requirement was for one year, but Christopher was enjoying it so much that he extended. During his last year of high school he had a part-time job as a cook in a specialty food store, and started his own catering business with a friend. Although he loves food & beverage work, his long-term goal is to be a hotel manager, and his studies at the Academy will prepare him for that.

**An update on Student Council activities**

by Genene Barraclough

In the last few months, the Student Council (SC) has been working hard on several projects and exciting plans for the future. We recently welcomed five new members to the team: Samuel Moult, Chris Pieri and Manuel Schneider as our new 1st year representatives, Marcus Cronvall as our new 3rd year representative and our very first Master’s course representative: Mathias Varga. We also gladly welcomed back Annike Baë and Anna Mellström for a second term in office.

Reflecting on recent activities, the SC would like to acknowledge all the support we received from the student body and faculty. Our first event of last semester was the Earth Hour held on the rooftop, which helped create awareness and showed our contribution to the environment. Then there was ‘La Noche Latina’, described below. We already have plans for more themed social events, such as an Arabian night and a Midsummer party... Watch this space!

Aside from social events, the SC also supported academic activities. Several members became temporary paid Library Assistants so the Library could open on Fridays during the busiest part of the semester. Two fourth year SC members painstakingly produced a yearbook for the graduating class, which was distributed at the graduation ceremony.

Finally we are excited to announce the launch of our new logo: the EAHM Falcons! We held an SC “welcome back barbecue” at the beginning of the academic year, at which a sample of new merchandise carrying the logo was modeled. These items will be available for purchase next trimester.

We would also like to highlight our efforts to install a donation box for unwanted clothes and shoes in the student residence. During the Eid holidays this year, 105 kilos of clothing were transported to a charitable organisation for distribution to those in need. A big thank you to all who donated! The box is now a permanent fixture.

For more information and to keep up with all the exciting upcoming events, or simply to share your ideas, check out our popular fanpage on Facebook, The Emirates Academy Student Voice. Also don’t forget to contact us anytime on our new email address: StudentCouncil@emiratesacademy.eu.
La Noche Latina

Santiago Vázquez Manjarrez (an exchange student from Mexico) and Baha Darwish (then a 4th year student) had a great idea while sitting around the pool: why not hold an evening event that is not only fun but also teaches people about Latin culture and food? Student Council was approached, and in no time the idea became a flurry of organizing activity. An authentic Latin menu was devised and cooked up by a team of enthusiastic student volunteers. Among other delicacies, nine different types of salsa were prepared, using chilis shipped in from Mexico for the purpose (thank you to Santiago’s mother!)

The almost one hundred guests enjoyed their tamales, pollo pibil, tings, and arroz con leche (and other Latin American specialties) while watching demonstrations of cumbia, salsa, and bachata dancing. It wasn’t long before the braver students joined the experts on the dance floor.

At the end of the evening, Santiago and Baha concluded that their idea had been a success, and it appears that the participants were in full agreement!

Young Hoteliers Summit @ EHL

by Chris Dutt

Liz Naglestad and Chris Dutt were the first Academy students to attend the Young Hoteliers Summit (YHS) organised and hosted annually by Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. The event brings together students from leading hotel schools worldwide and industry leaders such as (this year) Guy Crawford, CEO of Jumeirah Group. The main event of the 2000 summit was a creativity challenge set by Jumeirah Group: generate a new strategy for promoting demand without cutting prices. Over the course of the two days, competing teams devised, developed and finally presented their strategies. In between the demanding strategy meetings, there were many seminars hosted by EHL students and industry professionals about various hotel companies and issues in hospitality management. In total, 41 students from nine schools around the world participated in the summit.

The winning team comprised three student chefs: Sharihan Mashary, Nipul Laxman and Nadeem Massoud, headed by Executive Chef Michael Kats and three servers: Richard Newell, Manuel Hesse and Gabrielle Thompson. By the next evening they had to create a stunning table display and produce a meal for 30 (plus judges) based on their menu.

In between strategising for our own presentation we managed to join the experts on the dance floor.

Overall it was a really fun and challenging experience. We definitely advise that this becomes an annual excursion for two stalwart Academy students!

Competitions & awards

Student chefs shine again

For the second time, the Academy’s student team has made an outstanding showing at the MLA Black Box Culinary Challenge. Sponsored by Meat & Livestock Australia, the event brought together 60 young chefs from 15 top hotels in Dubai and students from the Academy. Just 24 hours before the Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner, the teams were presented with ‘black boxes’ containing all the ingredients needed to produce a four-course meal. Within one hour they had to devise a menu. By the next evening they had to create a stunning table display and produce a meal for 30 (plus judges) based on their menu.

The Academy’s team comprised three student chefs: Sharihan Mashary, Nipul Laxman and Nadeem Massoud, headed by Executive Chef Michael Kats, and three servers: Richard Newell, Manuel Hesse and Gabrielle Thompson. The teams were presented with ‘black boxes’ containing all the ingredients needed to produce a four-course meal. Within one hour they had to devise a menu. By the next evening they had to create a stunning table display and produce a meal for 30 (plus judges) based on their menu.

The Gastronomy course aimed to develop the students’ appreciation of good food and beverages as well as their technical skills. Such topics as the sociological and cultural aspects of food and dining, current food trends, and how to combine food and beverages successfully were taught by a team of both academics from the Academy and practitioners from Jumeirah. The students were assessed on four activities completed in teams, culminating in the planning and preparation of a six-course dinner for 30 guests.

A gastronomic triumph

A little healthy competition among the members of one class is sometimes just as motivating as an external contest like the Black Box Culinary Challenge as the students of a new elective on Gastronomy discovered recently. A team of five senior Academy students won the Nestle Gastronomic Trophy and a six course meal in celebrity chef Gary Rhodes’ restaurant Mezzanine, for their exceptional performance in the course.

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The members of the team with the highest overall standing were Karina Nielsen, Veronika Moser, Nareen Feerasta, Nargiz Suleymanova and Stephanie Hannay. Although they all like cooking at home, none of them had ever worked as a chef and most of them have no plans to make a career in food and beverages. “It was a great course even though I don’t plan to specialize in F&B”, said Karina. “I think about food in an entirely different way now”. But what the winners may remember most about the course is meeting Gary Rhodes when he came out and congratulated them in person!
Where are they now?

Elisabeth Elaassen
In-House Sales Manager, Clarion Hotel Royal Christiana, Oslo, Norway

Elisabeth and Mads Elaassen graduated only three years ago but both have already established exciting careers in events management, with impressive experience in three very different parts of the world.

Neither Mads nor Elisabeth had decided to study hospitality management when they graduated from high school in Norway. Instead they took some time to have adventures: they were ski instructors at a mountain resort, and spent a season skiing in France. Mads did his year of military service, and taught school for six months. Elisabeth worked as maître d’hôtel in a restaurant. Both this experience and a summer job as head chef at a summer camp (where she and Mads met in 2008) set Elisabeth on the path to a hospitality career while for Mads, the ski resort job sparked an interest. When they heard about the Academy at an education fair in Oslo, they were hooked. They joined the third intake in 2003, spent six months in 2004 and a family business! Elisabeth, “but this is still a few years in the future. However, we are expecting a baby, so if not a family business, at least we are building a family.”

Mads Elaassen
Sales Manager MICE Sales, Scandic Hotels Head Office, Oslo, Norway

it was time to go back to Norway. Elisabeth is now In-House Sales Manager for the Clarion Hotel Royal Christiana, in charge of both large and small events at the hotel. Mads has a challenging post at the headquarters of Scandic Hotels, as Sales Manager. MICE Sales with responsibility for the MICE market (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) for the fifteen Scandic Hotels in Norway.

According to Elisabeth, the combination of their studies and their work experience was good preparation for the real world of work. They both had part-time jobs while they studied, working for a team-building company which held events for many large UAE companies, and also occasionally for a restaurant at Nad al Sheba race track. “It didn’t pay much but the experience was invaluable.” The study abroad year was also useful, as it gave them a broader perspective on the industry:

Although they enjoyed studying at the Academy, “the moment that sticks out is on the final day, after presenting our finance project and all the work was done, and we jumped into the pool in our uniforms. It was a fantastic feeling to know that we were finally finished!”

What does the future hold? Mads is very happy working at Scandic Head Office in Oslo, where the hospitality industry is large and there are endless opportunities if you are willing to work hard. Elisabeth worked as Events Manager at the British Museum, for a company called DO&CO. From there she moved to the Hilton London Metropole as Conference & Events Sales Manager. In the latter job, Elisabeth coolly coped with large events for 400 or more delegates!

The couple began their post-Academy work life in London, where “the hospitality industry is large and there are endless opportunities if you are willing to work hard.” Elisabeth worked as Events Manager at the Royal Garden Hotel. When they decided to get married, they agreed to become thoroughly involved in Dubai life. There’s DIFF coming up, and I haven’t seen Karama or Bastakiya, and there are all the art galleries … It’s great to be here!

Focus on faculty:
Marianne Saulwick

Marianne joined us as a Senior Lecturer at the beginning of the 2008/2009 academic year. An Australian, she comes to us with such an eclectic and interesting career history that we had to share it!

The first thing new acquaintances usually ask each other in Dubai is “Why are you here?”

I’ve always had an interest in the Middle East, and when I heard that there was a job at the Academy, it seemed like the chance of a lifetime. I’m looking forward to travelling around the region and just immersing myself in the culture: food, poetry, arts, architecture …

Were you involved in the hospitality industry in Australia?

Actually my first career was in nursing. I put myself through university by working as a midwife. But when I got married we moved to Byron Bay, a seaside town, where we opened a beach café. For the next twenty years I ran the café and then a fine dining restaurant called The Orient. It specialized in “mod Oz cuisine.”

That’s quite a change, from beach café to fine dining…

Both were great fun! And through the restaurant I got involved in all sorts of food-y community activities. I started an annual food festival and became a restaurant reviewer. I even co-founded a theatre company! I also found time to raise two sons and a daughter!

How did you get into academic life?

After completing a master’s degree in education, I got a job teaching business subjects at the University of New South Wales. Because of my restaurant background I found myself working at The Hotel School too. It wasn’t very different to what I’m doing here.

What’s next for you?

Well, for the next few months I just want to enjoy Dubai, but I am planning to start a PhD in September. I’ve also just agreed to write a regular food column for BBC Food magazine. I’m looking forward to becoming thoroughly involved in Dubai life. There’s DIFF coming up, and I haven’t seen Katara or Bastakiya, and there are all the art galleries … It’s great to be here!

The end of an era

We said goodbye to long-time colleagues John Mowatt and Ofelya Gokoyan recently, as they moved on to new adventures. Both John and Ofelya came to the Academy in 2002 to set up and run the Communications Department, with a mandate to teach business communication to the first year students.

But John’s creative mind never stayed idle for long. He came up with the idea of running a series of “hospitality summer camps” designed to introduce hospitality as a career option to Emirati high school students. In three summers, 300 young men and women attended the camps.

As the next logical step, the Maharat programme was launched in 2005. It targeted Emirati job seekers, and again, aimed to encourage them to enter the hospitality industry. In 2007, a parallel programme, the retail Menhary, was held for the first time, and in 2009, the Idad: or job readiness, series was added.

By the time they left the Academy John and Ofelya had trained 1200 nationals for employment in hospitality and other service industries. Even more impressive, 90% of their graduates received job offers and found work with companies such as the Al Futtain Group, Hyatt, Rotana and many others. In 2007, John and Ofelya, on behalf of the Academy, accepted an award from Tamza for their efforts.

“It wasn’t just a job” says John. “We saw the programmes as a contribution to the community.” With the departure of John and Ofelya, the Emiratization programmes have been moved to the Academy’s Training & Consultancy Department.

After almost 20 years of working in Dubai, neither John, an Australian, nor Ofelya, an Armenian married to a Scot, is ready to leave. “So much can be done to take the process of developing local talent a step further. I want to be involved,” John asserts.

We look forward to hearing the next instalments in their stories.
To further develop the Academy promote its programmes and benchmark its syllabi against other leading hospitality programmes, the Managing Director, Dean, and other members of the Executive Team sometimes visit other universities. I thought it would be nice for us to occasionally write a letter from the places we visit, describing our adventures and achievements.

In December I had the great pleasure to visit Ithaca in New York State. Ithaca is home to Cornell University, which is ranked as the 12th highest university in the world and in which Hotel Administration is frequently cited as being the leading hotel school.

Last year the School’s Dean, Michael Johnson, visited the Academy, and expressed an interest in developing a student exchange programme. As a result of his visit, two students, Bernd Kraeer and Florian Kriechbaumer, will be studying at Cornell for this coming spring semester.

The principal purpose of my visit was to determine the programme that students from Cornell will follow when they study abroad at the Academy. The model that has emerged is that their students will come to us in the spring trimester. Each week they will spend two days on an internship in a five star hotel in Dubai, and then three days will be designed to facilitate interaction among those writing dissertations or crafting scholarly articles or books for publication, giving them an opportunity to share experiences, resolve problems and clarify concepts.

Cornell’s School of Hotel Administration has its own hotel, and I met with the General Manager, Mr. Rick Adie. Rick explained that students who were committed to careers in hotel management were placed on the hotel’s Leadership Programme. They worked about two shifts each week in the hotel, initially in operative positions, but then developing into supervisory roles. This is an interesting concept and I wonder if it is something we could look at developing at the Academy, perhaps to follow on from the internship, giving students an opportunity to gain further experience and develop leadership skills.

I also had time to walk around the campus of this 150-year old university. It is a magnificent campus full of trees and historic buildings, with squirrels running wild across the lawns. I did find that minus 5 degrees Celsius was rather too cold for me, and I had to quickly acquire some gloves, a scarf and a woolly hat. One of the places that I really enjoyed visiting was the on-campus Art Museum, and their featured display of tree-focused art. The main part of the art gallery is also interesting, with some superb paintings largely acquired through alumni donations.

I do hope that you have enjoyed reading this first letter from a visited destination. Visits of this nature not only facilitate opportunities for students, but they also give us the chance to learn from other institutions and to reflect on what we do and could be doing in the future.

Best wishes from The School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University, Ithaca, US.
Students ‘attend’ Formula 1

by Katharina Ebert

In November, Abu Dhabi hosted the final race of the Formula 1 world championship, which the German driver Sebastian Vettel won for the first time. But it was also an exciting weekend for some students of the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, because many of them worked at the special events taking place as part of the race weekend. Some students were assigned to work at the launch of a new Ferrari car, in the recently opened Ferrari World; others were servers on the exclusive yachts in the marina or at a charity event on a private island nearby, while the rest assumed various roles in the Yas Hotel. For many students, this meant a three-day work marathon with long hours, but everyone was rewarded with the great experience of having worked for such a prestigious event.

Luftansa goes Arabic

In November the Academy welcomed fifteen Executive Chefs from Luftansa LSG Sky Chefs, for a course on Arabic-style cooking. Led by the Academy’s Director of Culinary Arts, Michael Kitts, and Ghassan Khattar, Executive Chef, Oriental, Conferences & Incentives, Madinat Jumeirah, the Luftansa chefs learned how to craft tasty Arabic salads, main courses and desserts. Feras Almelhem, Arabic beverages expert from the Jumeiriah Beach Hotel, demonstrated how to make Moroccan tea and other liquid delicacies. “At the end of the day the chefs said they were keen to put it all into practice”, said Chef Kitts.

Academy’s MD goes (back) to high school

In the autumn, Ron Hilvert, the Academy’s Managing Director, made a tour of several private high schools in Germany. His aim was to spread the word about the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management and about hospitality as a career choice. Judging by the interest his presentations generated, we should see even more German students at the Academy in coming years.

Academy students join the AHIC Advisory Board

Twelve fourth year students attended the Advisory Board meeting of the Arabian Hotel Investment Conference held at the Academy in November. The meeting’s aim was to generate ideas and come up with a plan for the next conference, to be held in May 2011. The students’ official role was as note-takers and moderators of small group sessions, but the top hoteliers, owners and investors who comprise the Board seemed happy to have them take an active part in the discussions. “Not only was it a learning opportunity” says one of the student-‘advisors’, Chris Lund, “but we were able to hear about things you just can’t read about in magazines or the press: what is happening right now and what will happen in future”. For their efforts, the students all got free tickets to attend AHIC.

The winner

Organisers of the student website – Dubai Pie – held a contest to find the best student action shot taken by a student or staff member within the Academy. Third year student Kirby Daughdrill’s photo of the clubhouse at night won the first prize; an underwater camera.