By Rebecca Charry

Career Education Days 2010

If what you’re doing isn’t working, try something else. Don’t smash your head into a wall over and over, like a fly trying to escape through a closed window. Be smarter than a fly. Stop trying harder – try differently.

Vision. It makes a difference. Do you have one?

That little voice in your head. What is it saying? Are you listening?

These provocative ideas helped kick off ACMT’s newly renamed Career Education Days, with a new focus on introducing students to real life challenges and requirements of today’s world of work.

The event started with a dynamic, 2-hour presentation from Mr. Derek Small. A British business leadership consultant, karate black belt and former bass guitar player, Mr. Small had students standing up on chairs, wrestling with each other, and “attacking” him with hundreds of paper airplanes – all in a lively attempt to get them thinking about what leadership really means.

“Right away I could see that this was not going to be another pretentious business presentation from some suit who claims to know what life is about. Not at all,” said freshman student Sanja Cvitan. “Instead, Mr. Small asked us if we talk to ourselves. Of course we do! The room filled with laughter as we all looked at each other and realized we are all equally insane.”

“He made us understand that we shouldn’t let our inner voices discourage us from doing something different. His exercise showed us how easily we follow the crowd, and how really afraid we are of taking chances,” Sanja said.

You don’t become a leader by having a fancy job title, Mr. Small said. You become a leader by the way you behave and the example that you set. Never ask anyone to do something you would not do yourself.

In fact, geese seem to know more about leadership than people do, explained Mr. Small, with the help of a short video. Geese fly in a V formation because it’s easier in a team. They take turns leading, so no one gets too tired. If one falls behind, the others honk to encourage him to keep up.

“I was really impressed and surprised how much I learned about leadership from those geese” said student Ivona Erecegović.

Mr. Small explained that the companies that really make lots of money are the ones who are truly excited about what they do – everyone in the company feels it. That’s what makes the company great.

“Career Education Days were also an important opportunity for students to present themselves to potential employers. The opening student presentation showed the evolution of an ACMT student from confused freshman to confident graduate, helped along the way by friends, professors and potential employers.

“The funny and upbeat opening video – written, acted and directed by students -- showcased ACMT’s international student body, with students from Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Kosovo, Ecuador and China “calling home” in many languages to invite their friends to ACMT.

“The movie was great. It really captured the feeling of life at ACMT, and made me feel proud to be a student here,” said student Lejla Dilberović.

Of course, for many students, Career Education Days were an important step to finding a job, either after graduation, or for summer co-op. Hundreds of interviews were held with 13 companies, including newcomers Deloitte Croatia consulting and financial advisory company, the 24sata media firm, Radisson Blu Resort and Spa, Hrtvatske Telekomunikacije (Croatian Telecom) and ApCom Croatia Apple Computer distributor.

“I was listening to the presentation from HT (Croatian Telecom) when I suddenly realized that I would actually be working somewhere after college,” said freshman Dora Medved. “To be a good manager I am going to have to be responsible, experienced, and customer-oriented. I’ll have to be able to work in a team, be a good leader.”

ACMT professors also shared their expertise on a variety of topics, from emotional intelligence to choosing a career path. Prof. Besim Agušai presented a workshop on the importance of managing meetings well.
Students Partner with Guide2Croatia Website
Hands-on experience in site design, journalism, marketing for the web
By Rebecca Charry

Juniors in Prof. Edward Ganster’s Technology in Service Systems class have put their skills to a real life test as members of the Guide2Croatia website, a news and events information franchise owned by ACMT graduate and outgoing Alumni Association President Jernej Masnec.

In a brand-new element of this traditional course, students worked in teams, writing news articles, suggesting design changes, contacting potential advertisers, illustrating articles and linking with social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to draw readers to the site.

Students got valuable real world experience in what actually goes into maintaining a website, keeping it updated, and maximizing readership, said Prof. Ganster. “One thing we work on in the course is carefully choosing headlines and domain names that are more likely to show up in the top 10 Google results, not the last 10,000. It’s amazing the difference a word or two can make.”

“Since they are working on a real website, they can easily see how many hits their articles got, or how high up on the list of search engine results their articles appeared.”

Students created content for both the Guide2Croatia and Guide2Dubrovnik sites, including announcements and news articles about everything from the Croatian national handball team, to Dubrovnik’s December power blackout, to the recent Metallica concert in Zagreb.

“This is a great initiative, and it has surprised me in a good way,” said student Sydney Viaccoz. “We control almost the whole website, from the design to the content, the sales and marketing.”

“It’s great to have a chance to work with a real business, not just a theoretical project,” said student Marko Dojić, a member of the sales team. “With our real 1000 kuna budget, we created a flyer which will help us find advertisers among local hotels, restaurants and private accommodations in Dubrovnik.”

On the other hand, Guide2Croatia got quality content and useful recommendations on how the site can look and operate better, Mr. Masnec said. “This has been a successful --learning experience for both ACMT students and my G2C team. I also hope that we will get some students who will want to continue working for G2C even after the course is finished.”

Technology in Service Systems is focused on the latest technology trends in use and in development around the world. Students learn to spot trends that can help service businesses keep ahead of the competition, Prof. Ganster explained.

Students are introduced to many examples of real cutting-edge technologies being developed and used by some of the world’s leading companies such as Dow Chemical, Phillips, LG, and Samsung, Prof. Ganster said. Many restaurants, for example, will soon be using touch-screen menus for tableside ordering. A night club could benefit from a “sustainable” dance floor which generates electricity from the movements of the dancers. And any business can save money with “smart” thermostats that predict exactly how much it will cost to heat or cool the room. Consumers, too, will soon be using smart home appliances which can be controlled through SMS text message to heat, cool, and cook while the customer is away.

Career Education Days 2010
Continued from front cover

“Meetings for many of us and for many business organizations are probably one of the most critical communication channels. They take a considerable portion of businessperson’s workday and if managed poorly: time, money and other resources are wasted,” Prof. Agusai explained.

Student Darija Drazeta said this workshop was her favorite part of Career Education Days.

“Students felt free to express their opinions. There was great open communication and that was why the workshop was so successful. Teams of students had to come up with a way to solve a meeting that went wrong. At the end the Professor concluded his presentation exactly at the time he was supposed to, with the words “Time management!”

Ružica Klešković contributed to this report
It’s week eight of the quarter and Prof. Fred Smith can barely find his desk. That’s because his everyday workspace has been transformed into an art studio, bursting with origami birds, bamboo plants, dollhouses, and model cars. In fact, every corner of Room 16 seems to be piled high with strange and exotic creations – sculptures, posters, boxes, and baskets of every shape and color. Soccer balls, guitars, tennis rackets, umbrellas and clocks have been carefully colored, decorated, shaped and transformed to tell the stories of students’ lives.

A tiny baby shirt covered with drawings and cartoons explains the challenges of being a student, and at the same time, a father. A decorated chair symbolizes a student’s struggle to achieve her own ambitions. A mailbox filled with mysterious letters reminds one student of the importance of communication. A giant map of the human brain traces another student’s path through tough life choices.

This explosion of creative energy is the collective work of ACMT seniors in Prof. Fred Smith’s Conflict Management and Negotiation class. Each project is a creative representation of the student’s own personal conflicts – her past, her present and her future. Students tell their stories not primarily with words but through art – using drawings, ribbons, Christmas ornaments, tiny dolls, buttons, paper clips, toothpicks, burned paper, leaves and dozens of other ordinary and extraordinary objects.

“This project asks students to look introspectively at their own lives, the conflicts they have faced within their families, with friends, within themselves,” Prof. Smith explained. “Conflict is not only out there, in the world, in the workplace, in the community, among neighbors, family, co-workers and nations -- conflict is also in here, in ourselves.”

Many students create reflection projects that describe the difficult decisions they face, regarding where to go to school, how to choose a career, or where to live.

“This project forced me to look at some parts of myself that are not necessarily my favorites,” said student Josipa Lukić. “When I look at the conflicts I’ve faced in my life, I can see that sometimes I am lazier than I want to be. And I can’t blame anyone else.”

In addition to the individual reflection project, students in the course work in teams to write, cast, direct, produce and perform an original 30-minute costumed play, which depicts a conflict, and some kind of resolution. They focus on the role of a mediator, and the importance of compromise for a lasting resolution.

Many plays are funny (and get lively audience reactions) but the conflicts they depict are often serious and familiar. “On stage,” families fight about intermarriage, inheritance, or unexpected pregnancies. Other plays are based on current political events, like the Croatian-Slovenian border dispute, fishing rights in the Adriatic Sea, or ethnic tensions in the town of Mostar.

“There are no multiple-choice, true or false, or fill in the blank questions in my classes,” Prof. Smith explained. “Students get plenty of that elsewhere.”

“Being creative is hard, especially for some of us who are not used to doing this kind of thing, but all of us wanted to show our professor that we can think out of the box,” said student Reanna Brajković. “I’m very grateful to Professor Smith, because we didn’t just learn a lot, we had fun!”

Some of the best projects come from students who aren’t typical Dean’s List students or who don’t think of themselves as artistic at all.”
Alumni Career Updates

Selim Lika ’07 was hired as Programme Manager for Biodiversity and Climate Change for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Montenegro.

Mira Dasić ’07 was hired as III Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, Sector for Consular Affairs and Diaspora. She was recently awarded a scholarship to pursue a Master of Diplomacy degree at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies at the University of Malta.

Hana Đapo ’09 was hired as Account and Event Manager by Advertus Event and marketing agency in Sarajevo.

Samir Kovacević ’05 recently returned to Sarajevo after several years of employment in real estate and finance in Bulgaria and China. He was hired as Director of Sales for Bosnia and Herzegovina at NEXE Group, a construction materials specialist.

Matko Kovacević ’06 was promoted to Executive Internal Communications for Central Europe South and Public Affairs Croatia for Phillip Morris tobacco company in Zagreb. “If anybody else has a longer job title, please let me know!” he says.

Nikia Glavočić ’08 writes, “I left Grand Circle Cruise Line after four years, and joined Hotel Villa Dubrovnik in December 2009. I hold the position of Purchasing Manager. And I love it!”

Kristina Mandac ’07 was promoted to Restaurant Manager at the Cafe des Architects in the Sofitel Hotel in Chicago. This is her second promotion in just over a year with the company.

Marina Varvodić ’07 was hired as Sales Manager at the Chicago Marriott hotel in Schaumburg, Illinois, USA. “I love my job and it always keeps me on my toes,” she writes. “But I’m looking forward to coming back to Croatia this summer. My fiancé is from Dubrovnik and we’ll be getting married there in July!”

Jasmina Garbin ’05 was promoted to General Manager of Hotel Globo in Split. She is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Economics and Management at the University of London.

Bruno Grubešić ’02 was hired by the Croatian government agency for small enterprises (Hrvatska Agencija za Malo Gospodarstvo) in Zagreb. He earned a Master’s Degree in International Project Management from the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce, Clermont-Ferrand, France in 2008.

Maja Novak ’05 sends best wishes from Hartford, Connecticut, USA, where she enrolled in a graduate degree program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology at the University of New Haven. “I left my career in Philip Morris Zagreb last year in order to continue my education and I am a full time student, again! My concentration is Consulting and Organizational Development.”

Goran Babin was promoted to Director of Hotel Operations with Sunce Koncern in Zagreb.

Lea Sekulović ’08 opened her own business, “Lea Exclusive” Bridal Shop, in Slavonski Brod.

Ivan Cvitanić ’03 was hired as director of the Tourist Board of the Town of Supetar on the island of Brač.

Alumna Lina Hrpka

Understanding the Human Brain

Greetings from New York City: ACMT/RIT graduate Lina Hrpka describes her exciting career in biopsychology research.

I have always been fascinated by details, numbers, and how the human mind operates “behind the scenes.” It was during my sophomore year at ACMT that I noticed that my interests always followed the same pattern, even in management courses that had nothing to do with science. So, after receiving an associate degree from ACMT in 2007, I decided to explore my interests in the human mind.

In March 2008 I transferred to RIT with a different major — psychology, with a biopsychology track. I was passionate about the human mind in both a scientific and a philosophical way, and this was clearly the right choice for me.

At first, being at RIT was a little scary. Everything was unfamiliar, and every red brick building on campus looked the same! My classes started a day or two after I arrived, and I was dizzy from culture shock.

But soon my RIT experience turned out better than I could have ever imagined. With help from Maureen Shannon (RIT’s staff liaison with ACMT), I met several ACMT alumni on campus. And it took only one Thanksgiving dinner to feel like family with Dr. Merrill, my Human Biology professor who brought a group of RIT pre-medical students to Dubrovnik for study abroad in Spring 2009.

My academic studies were exciting, from general classroom lectures to extracting DNA and to measuring the electrical activity of my friend’s brain with an electroencephalogram (EEG) in the labs.

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OPEN TO CHANGE: A NEW CAREER IN LIFE COACHING
ACMT ALUMNA LIDJIA RADAČIĆ

It's a long way from hotel marketing to life coaching. ACMT graduate Lidija Radačić shares the surprising story of her life and career path.

When I graduated from ACMT in 2006, I thought I had my life all figured out. I knew I wanted to work in marketing and I couldn’t wait to use the sales and psychology skills I had learned in school. I was ready to be a hot-shot on first my super marketing campaign. So I followed the path I thought I wanted, and after a lot of hard work, it seemed that I got there. Soon I was working as a senior marketing executive for the biggest tour operator in Ireland. But it turned out hot shot was wrong.

When I graduated from ACMT in 2004, I knew my future would be in marketing. Over the years, my passion for this field has grown enormously. Not only have I had interesting and challenging jobs in which I really helped the companies I worked for, I’ve also gotten the opportunity to travel around the world and meet incredible professionals in my field. Now, as a graduate student, I’m part of a movement of young professionals who are working to make the business world more socially responsible and environmentally friendly. We call it “conscious capitalism.”

The idea of conscious capitalism means that companies are interested in more than just making the biggest possible profits in the shortest amount of time. It’s more than just maximizing profit for shareholders.

As practitioners of conscious capitalism, we see ourselves as members of a bigger society, with responsibilities to the people we employ, the society in which we do business, and the physical and natural environment around us. We are interested in this new way of doing business, not only because we want to help create a better tomorrow, but also because old ways of doing business clearly don’t work anymore. The public does not trust business – and for good reasons. Recent corruption, fraud, and scandals around the world have damaged the global economy enormously. In many places, business has more power and influence than government --- and we have to use that power wisely. It’s time for a change, and I am working to be part of it.

After graduating from ACMT, I held marketing positions in several leading firms in Zagreb, including HGspot, Valamar Hotels and Resorts, and T-Mobile Croatia. Last year I was selected for the “Fulbright for The Future Scholarship,” a special program started by former U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Robert Bradke, which covers my tuition and living expenses for a two-year MBA program at Bentley University in Boston. The whole experience so far has been phenomenal.

Just recently I helped to found a Net Impact Chapter at Bentley. Net Impact is an international non-profit organization with a mission to inspire and educate individuals to use the power of business to create a more socially and environmentally sustainable world. Our chapter decided to put additional focus on the topic of conscious capitalism. Currently, I am serving as President of Professional Development and Networking for our chapter.

Beside the heavy work load at school, Boston is a great place to live. People call it a walking city which it truly is – truly different from other US cities. The high concentration of top ranked schools in the area means we live in a vibrant community of intellectuals – there are hip, smart and interesting people wherever I go. The geographic location makes it easy to visit New York City, and travel all over New England.

My advice to students who are applying for scholarships or other opportunities would be to apply for something that you are really passionate about (like I am for marketing studies). Choose a field that excites you, and that you are planning to stick with, because the panelist reading your essays and listening to your interview can feel who is in it for the long run.

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ACMT Helps Out: Aid for Haiti

ACMT students, faculty, staff and alumni raised more than 2500 kunas to assist the survivors of the recent earthquake that devastated the island of Haiti, and killed more than 150,000 people.

“We’ve all seen the pictures from Haiti, and know how badly people there need help. This country was poor and in trouble even before this earthquake hit,” said student Barbara Beroš, who helped organize the event. “We students tend to get lost in our own little worries, but when you see these pictures, you realize what real problems are. Now we finally have a real chance to do something as a group to help.”

ACMT PR Club and Student Council organized a “Haiti Aid” party with a live DJ at the Living Room café, owned by ACMT graduate Kristina Vujnović. Proceeds from a 20 kuna per person entrance fee and a raffle drawing for prizes, were sent to the Croatian Red Cross, especially for Haiti.

“It’s always fun to have an ACMT party, but this one was even better,” Barbara said. “It’s amazing when you realize that the pocket money we spend on a night out with our friends could make a big difference in someone’s life.”

Auction Raises Over 17,000 Kunas for Ill Children

ACMT’s tenth annual Holiday Auction raised 17,660 kunas --- a new record – for the Association for the Health of Chronically Ill Children in Dubrovnik. The December event, held at King Richard’s Pub, was hosted by student auctioneers Maja Matković and Luka Ćuk, who kept everyone laughing as the exciting evening of bidding progressed.

Association President Roberto Machiedo and Dr. Tea Matijević from the Pediatric Department of the Dubrovnik Hospital said they were impressed and truly grateful for the generosity and enthusiasm of the whole ACMT community. They especially noted that volunteerism of this sort is not often promoted in the media and discussed in society, but saw ACMT as proof that a generous volunteer spirit still exists.

The funds were used to purchase inhalers and for children with cystic fibrosis, and medical equipment for children with asthma, including Epipen adrenalin injections, used to treat emergency asthma attacks.

Winter Festival Delights Children of Dubrovnik

ACMT’s finest jugglers, stilt walkers, unicycle riders, and Santa’s helpers entertained and delighted the children of Dubrovnik at the college’s annual Winter Festival at Fort Revelin in December. This annual tradition, provided an afternoon of fun, games, prizes and sweet treats, thanks to the hard work of student volunteers and ACMT Event Manager Jelena Zvono.
Life coaching is very different from counseling - we do not go into the past, but focus on the future, setting goals towards the life client wants and then working on attaining them. There is nothing more thrilling than seeing a happy client who has just reached a goal they have been working towards for the past few months!

Right now I am helping a person who is unhappy about her job, to the point that her health is suffering. She is very well educated and smart, but is not making a decision about starting something new. I would love to tell her that she should just quit and focus on searching for another job, but I can’t - life coaching isn’t about telling people what to do. It’s about helping people commit to change themselves.

So, instead, I am asking her to think about small daily steps towards her goal. She is focusing more and more on the alternative options. The idea of change can be very frightening, and it sometimes takes a lot of patience to follow my clients. But when they finally do come through, it is worth it.

I have clients from all around the world, and right now a lot of my work is done over the phone or email, or through social networking sites like Facebook, and the LivePerson expert portal.

My career path has turned out very differently than I expected, but I feel much happier now. I thought I had picked my life path at college, but that actually turned out to be a springboard into something much more interesting.

My advice for current students would be - don’t be afraid to try things you are passionate about. You might think you know now what you want to do for the rest of your life, but you might be like me and find out later that you really want something completely different. Allow yourself to follow what you are really passionate about. At any stage of your life, you can re-train, get new experiences and set new goals. If a job is not fulfilling, then there is no reason to stay with it. There is a whole world out there.

I worked as a teaching assistant and met practicing professionals in the field. I developed my nine-month independent research in neuroscience in collaboration with the Croatian Institute for Brain Research. The institute provided me with two human brain specimens, a lab with all the equipment and software, and a mentor. This research became the basis for my thesis, “Quantitative Analysis of Specific Structures of Magnopyramidal Cognitive Neurons in Broca’s Region.”

What does this mean in normal English? Well, I was looking at a particular layer in one of the main centers of the brain where language is processed. Using the microscope and specialized software I drew the neurons and observed their sizes and structures. I looked at differences in sizes on each side (left and right) of the human brain, and see what these differences could tell us about understanding mental illness better.

After graduation, I moved to New York – living in the city is amazing! I am currently working as Research Program Coordinator at Weill Cornell Medical College. My work involves research and cognitive-behavioral therapy of patients with severe mental illness such as schizophrenia.

I’ve learned a lot about mentally ill patients: not all illnesses include damage to the brain, and not all patients have low IQ (on the contrary, some have quite high IQs). Some illnesses are recognizable from the patient’s appearance or behavior, but most patients look like everyone else and are functional in everyday life.

To current students who may not know where their career paths are headed, I would say, be proactive. Always do a little extra, more than you are asked for, whether it is a paper in school or your everyday life choices.
When Spell Check Doesn’t Help: A True Story

Hooray for spellcheck! Now English spelling is easy, right? Wrong! Spellcheck can do more harm than good if you just click on the first word that the computer offers.

The following sentences will “pass” spellcheck but still contain hilarious mistakes. Can you find them? Can you correct them? Test yourself, and laugh along the way.

I learned a lot in collage, and hope to apply this knowledge to my carrier.

Global worming is one of the biggest treats to the world today. This problem will affect every human bean. But it’s not too late yet. Infect, we can concur any problem if we work together and fight. After all, it seems that life is just one big beetle!

Dubrovnik is often called The Pear of the Adriatic.

I had a very bed experience with one of my costumers.

We must accelerate the lunch of this company!

There is a hidden massage in this text.

If I got a bed grade in school, my parents would lover my launch money. I was not good in math, but that did not mean I was dump!

I come from the beautiful town of Zadar. We have a very famous sea orgy.

Dear professor, I am sorry I did not read the essay in your curse pack.

Remember, you can’t always rely on spellchecker!

By Rebecca Charry

Lost in Translation?
A Guide to Common Sayings

ACMT’s native English speakers and native Croatian speakers always do their best to communicate, but slang terms and colloquial sayings often create confusion along the way. But Croatians and Americans can really be saying the same thing even if it doesn’t seem that way.

One is the hand is better than two in the bush.
Boj vрабac u ruci nego kolub na grani.
A sparrow in the hand is better than a big pigeon in the tree.

You can’t have your cake and eat it too.
Ne mozii imati i jare i pare.
You can’t have sheep and money too.

The early bird gets the worm.
Tko rano rani dvi jevrece grabi.
He who wakes early is twice as fortunate.

Look before you leap.
Ispeci pa reci.
Think before you speak.

A watched pot never boils.
Strpljen, spašen.
Be patient and you’ll be saved.

I gave you an inch and you took a mile.
Dam ti prst, a ti uzmeš cijelu ruku.
I give you a finger and you take the whole hand.

What comes around, goes around.
Tko drugom jamu kopa sam u nju upada.
If you dig a hole for someone else, you’ll fall in.

Don’t bite the hand that feeds you.
Ne sjeci granu na kojoj sjediš
Don’t cut the branch you sit on.

You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.
Ruka ruku mije.
One hand washes the other.