They have come from all over the world, eager to begin their studies in International Business and Information Technology, while diving into a completely English-speaking environment. The first generation students of ACMT Zagreb campus have arrived.

With their first quarter behind them, students say their classes have been an extraordinary learning experience. The professors know their names and are interested in building relationships with them.

Students in the International Business program enjoyed attending Prof. Robert Foley’s Ideas and Creativity class. Prof. Foley has more than 25 years of experience in service management, operations and finance, and shares his real world experience with students to help them relate the material in class. Students were particularly interested in the virtual Stock Market game they played as part of the class.

“The online program that Professor Foley introduced to us for our assignment is a great way to learn how the Stock Market works,” said student Krešo Cosić. “It’s fun and definitely helps us understand the business behind the numbers.”

Student Katarina Nikšić came to ACMT Zagreb from Mississauga, Canada, to reconnect with her cultural heritage while studying in English.

“The teachers here are phenomenal,” Katarina said. “They are always there to help and guide us.”

But of course, not everything goes smoothly, especially in the first year of college. Some students have never set foot in Zagreb before, and others never lived without their parents before. A handful of students have never attended a school where all the classes are in English. This adjustment has been a challenge for many students, but with time they have all learned to adapt, and are pleased with how quickly their English skills are improving.

“At first I was frustrated and a bit nervous listening to all the lectures in English, but after the first couple of...
What could be better than one RIT/ACMT degree? How about two!

After earning bachelor of science degrees from RIT/ACMT, and joining the workforce as successful managers, ACMT alumni have come back for more. With several years of work experience behind them, these young executives are ready to take the next step towards becoming the leaders of tomorrow’s global companies, expanding and improve their knowledge with an RIT Master of Science degree in Service Leadership and Innovation.

The latest group of graduate students started the program this fall, with a combination online sessions and face to face classes at the new ACMT Zagreb campus, which allows working professionals to continue their educations without interrupting their careers.

The program emphasizes critical thinking, teamwork and problem solving in a dynamic and challenging interactive classroom environment.

Professors from RIT teach both theoretical foundations and practical applications. Courses in the 6-quarter program include customer relationship management, strategic processes, service performance metrics, research methods, and writing strategies.

Students particularly enjoyed the Elements of Service course, taught by RIT’s Dr. James Jacobs this fall. “We discussed future-oriented approaches toward running a service business and what a company has to do to stay sustainable and profitable,” said Alen Jazbec, who earned a bachelor’s degree from RIT/ACMT last year and decided to return for his masters. “Professor Jacobs is excellent. He encourages us to express our views and opinions through dialogue. It is the same open, friendly and dynamic approach that made my undergraduate studies so interesting.”

In Dr. Jacobs’ course, students learned how to adapt old methods of marketing to today’s global business environment. Today everything is a service. Customers are buying an experience, not a product or a brand, and the whole business has to be focused on that.

“With a master’s degree, I am not only improving my knowledge, but also improving my chances for a better paying job,” said student Anela Bajric. “The classes let me express my creativity with new innovative projects.”

ACMT and RIT were proud to host the annual meeting of EUROCHRIE, one of the largest professional associations of hospitality educators and industry professionals from Europe and around the world, this fall in Dubrovnik. This year’s event brought together more than 170 experts to share their research and discuss the latest trends in the industry.

Under the theme “Tourism and Hospitality: Drivers of Transition,” more than 90 professional papers, workshops and poster sessions were presented at the 3-day conference at the Excelsior Hotel and the ACMT Dubrovnik campus.
Volunteering to help in the communities where we live, work, and study is an ACMT tradition. Each year, the college’s Community Service Day benefits a local humanitarian organization.

This year, the Dubrovnik campus worked to clean up and repair the animal shelter on Žarkovica, on the hill above the old city.

The Dubrovnik Animal Shelter was founded in 2011 to prevent cruelty to animals, and to promote humane approach towards their care. Currently, there are 378 abandoned dogs in the shelter. When students arrived at the shelter for the cleanup, the dogs welcomed them with loud barking. But that did not mean that they were aggressive; they were just safeguarding their territory and surprised by having so many visitors at the same time.

Soon the calm behavior of the students helped calm the dogs down too. They were curious and happy to interact with their visitors, and even seemed grateful for the help they provided.

Students faculty and staff at the Zagreb campus worked together to help clean up and plant flowers for the local elementary school Pavleka Miškine.

“When we arrived in front of the school, there was nothing but dirt. But with everyone’s help, we cleaned up the yard and planted many flowers to create a lively environment,” said student Marina Milos. “The first ACMT Zagreb Community Service Day was definitely a success!”
Minna-san Konnichiwa!
Welcome to ACMT Japanese Club

ACMT students know that the whole world is out there waiting for them after graduation, if they are prepared for it. So some students at the Zagreb campus are getting ready for global careers, by helping each other master the basics of Japanese language.

“If I want to go further than the economies of the US and Europe, then I believe Asia is the next step,” said club founder student Crystal Hall. “I have been studying Japanese on my own for a while, but it’s much more fun to study in a group, so I decided to start a club.”

The Japanese club meets regularly for student-led classes (with homework!) that focus on the basics of the Japanese alphabet (did you know there are four different Japanese alphabets?), pronunciation, common phrases and cultural traditions.

“It’s a challenge, but not really as hard as some people fear it is,” Crystal said. “We use some Japanese popular music, anime movies and manga comic books to make it fun too.”

Right now, the club is focused on learning the two styles of phonetic alphabets. Later, they will progress to some of the 2500 kanji or pictogram symbols that Japanese language is famous for.

In addition to regular meetings at the Zagreb campus, the Japanese club also has an extensive blog and website, which is open to the general public, at http://acmt-japanese-club.blogspot.com.

Student Mislav Pećek says learning Japanese is a challenge but fun. He is surprised at how much he has learned already. “I expect that the knowledge of Japanese that I am getting from the club is certainly going to help me in my future career,” he said. “Japan might be geographically far away, but in today’s world we are more and more in contact with their business and culture. Just imagine what will be five or ten years from now.” - Emil Varga

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Where's the party?
Students find fun in Dubrovnik, even when the beaches close

By Pamela Kolega

Hang around the Dubrovnik campus on a Friday afternoon, and you’ll probably hear a conversation like this:

“What are you doing this weekend?”
“I have absolutely no idea. Is there anything to do?”

The answer to that question is YES! Students would be amazed at what’s available. Whether it’s a cool cafe for hanging out, a nightclub with good dance music, checking out a 3D movie, cheering for a sports team or getting in shape yourself, there is actually plenty of fun to be had in Dubrovnik, even in winter.

It seems that in Dubrovnik there is a cafe on every corner. As I was walking through the forest of cafes in Uvala Lapad, I noticed a mystifying, neon-purple glow and music that put a little groove in my move. It’s the site of ACMT’s student Welcome Party this fall: Insomnia Night Bar, where students can feel relaxed and energized at the same time.

There are also recent international movies every night at Kino Sloboda in Old Town, (a great way to practice your English listening skills, by the way) as well as 3D movies at the new Dvorana Visia theater.

For students who want to get a little crazy, Revelin Club is a popular favorite. “My friends and I love going to Revelin because it’s big and it fits more people. The music is always different and they get well-known singers to perform,” said freshman Ana Dubelj. Plus, it is always fun to check out the student “fashion show”, with girls in little black dresses and guys in their best Sketchers.

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Marina Juric, graduated from ACMT in 2006, and is now Training and Development Junior Supervisor, at Coca Cola HBC.

“My job is to help the company find, motivate and develop the best employees,” she said. “It’s not just the produce that defines the company, it’s the people who work there.”

During her studies at ACMT, she chose the Human Resources (HR) specialization, then spent 5 months working at the Sheraton Suites hotel in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, for her co-op. She improved her English, met new friends, and learned a lot about the real world of work. By the time she graduated, she had the skills, knowledge and determination that helped her find a job in just three days, and the courage to move to a new town on her own.

“In my first month at Coca Cola I had a chance to show the skills that I developed at ACMT, through an innovative presentation. After that I was invited develop and implement my first workshop for employees.”

Her advice for current students, is be who you are and do what you love. Some experiences are more enjoyable than others, but you can learn a lot even from unpleasant things. Get out of your comfort zone and try something new.

Andela Matić graduated from ACMT in 2000 and today is event and PR manager for Dubrovnik PartnerR, in charge of Meetings Incentives Conferences and Events (MICE).

“I really enjoy my job,” she said. “Every day is different, dynamic, unexpected. Of course sometimes its very busy and challenging, but I feel passionate about what I do.”

“One of the most important things I learned at ACMT was how to express myself fluently in written and spoken English. Today, all the current literature and new trends in PR are in English. More than half of the business in our company today is with foreign companies, which requires fluent communication in English. ACMT prepared me for work in an international environment.

My advice to current students is to choose a career that you truly enjoy and feel passionate about. You will be spending a big part of your life at work, and if your work isn’t something that fulfills you, you will probably not be happy. Try out as many things as you can, and be honest with yourself about what you really want to do with your life.“

Tana Zimmermann, now Distribution Executive for Croatia at Phillip Morris, remembers her first experiences in the professional workplace through her co-ops as an ACMT student.

“I spent 2 years in New York state, working at one of the first conference centers in America, and it was an experience that definitely changed my life. I learned so much about the hotel industry, and really learned how to be independent. I earned my own money, bought my first car, met people from all over the world, and traveled on my own.”

After returning from her co-ops in New York, she found a permanent job through the annual ACMT Career Education Days, where student have a chance to present themselves to leading companies from Croatia and the region, and apply for jobs. After submitting her resume, Tana was selected for interviews at 14 different companies.

“The best thing was, I had a choice. I didn’t have to take the first job that was offered to me. I could choose the one that really seemed right for me.”

Vlado Raunig graduated from ACMT in 2002, and found his first job right away with Disney Cruise Lines. He spent the next 8 years of his life working on cruise ships, traveling the world, and working his way up over the years from assistant waiter to hotel director. Now he has returned to Dubrovnik to open a combination club, restaurant and hostel on the location of the former King Richard’s Pub. The Up & Down Club and Cocoon Hostel are planned to open in the coming months.

While Dubrovnik has many cafes and restaurants, Raunig’s combination with a hostel will be unique, he says. He sees a great business opportunity filling this unmet need.

“Dubrovnik has many luxury hotels, but we chronically lack more affordable options for our guests. Not everyone can afford a luxury hotel. In fact, with the current world economic crisis, the profile of hostel guests is changing. It is not just youth backpackers anymore. Today, we are seeing families and middle aged couples who are looking for quality lodgings that they can afford.”
weeks, it got easier” said student Mirta Perković, who came to ACMT Zagreb from Zadar. “I learned that I have to spend extra time on my homework, to be sure that I understand the material.”

A number of students who have to face this challenge get help in the Writing Lab, where individual tutoring helps them focus on grammar and vocabulary.

As the first quarter of the first generation came to a close, the Zagreb campus, was jumping with life. In the hallways students chatted and laughed, read flyers about clubs, student council, and community service day, or worked quietly in classrooms and computer labs. Others were doing research for their next essay, or in the library looking for a book to check out.

The freshman class has four bright years ahead full of assignments, community service, and Co-ops.

Ahh, the Freshman experience, even for professors. The hallways are glistening and await the arrival of the eager new students. Students start arriving and soon the halls are buzzing. Friendships are being made, cliques are being formed and we are off to start of a new quarter.

Despite the small student body, the students seem to embrace the challenge to become the leaders of this campus and set the stage for others who will follow. New computer labs with both Apple and Dell equipment provide plenty of access for the social networking that feeds us all. Soon enough the labs become crammed right before classes as students print off the last minute paper that is due in 5 minutes.

A steady flow of visitors from Dubrovnik provides a refreshing presence on campus and the students have the opportunity to access a great deal of information. The library is gaining publications daily and the class of 2015 is starting to form clubs, student Government and co-ops.

After many conversations with students, I realize this is truly a special place. A new breed of student for me. Some comments I have received thus far:

"I came over here from the States so I could focus on my studies."

"I live in small town near the coast in Istria and RIT provides an engaging environment where I get the experience of living independently in a larger city."

And lastly, “Will my mother know what is on my Konzum receipt if I use a debit card? ” Yes, the freshman have arrived at RIT Zagreb campus.

WITH CROATIA’S UPCOMING EU MEMBERSHIP, THE ZAGREB CAMPUS POSITIONS US WELL FOR ENROLLMENT EXPANSION INTO OTHER EU COUNTRIES. - DEAN HUDSPETH
Participants heard from key note speakers, including Ms. Pave Zupan Ruskovic, former Minister of Tourism in Croatia, who shared a fascinating presentation about the development of tourism in the City of Dubrovnik since the Middle Ages, and talked about the challenges the country is currently facing.

Ms Ginny Clark, Vice-President of Constellation Brands, shared the success story of the world’s largest wine producer, while Mr. Ivica Vrančić, director of the Croatian Verantius HR firm, discussed the challenges of hiring the right people, and keeping employees motivated on the job, especially younger generations like ACMT students who are just starting their professional careers.

While participants enjoyed presentations, lectures, networking and sightseeing around the beautiful Dubrovnik region, ACMT students were busy behind the scenes making the whole event happen.

As part of the Assessment of Service Quality course taught by Prof. Milena Kuznin, more than 30 RIT and ACMT students got hands-on experience in professional event planning, from start to finish.

“One of our objectives was to see how well the students function in a multi-cultural and cross disciplinary team. We had Study Abroad students from RIT working together with the ACMT students, as well as students from the IT program working together with the students from the IHSM program. Did they work well? More than well,” Prof. Kužnin said. “The students received nothing but praises for their wonderful work.”

“Our second goal was to provide the guests with exceptional service. Even if it meant pouring coffees during the break, the service was delivered with a big smile!”

“Participating in the organization the conference was a great experience,” said ACMT Dubrovnik junior student Ivana Raguž.

“It gave me an opportunity to work in my future profession and apply some of the concepts I learned in my classes. Watching the conference participants, I had the feeling I was looking at my future.

“Being a student volunteer at the conference was a great way to further educate myself. Listening to presentations I heard a variety of experts from around the world who shared many of their experiences,” said student Dimitri Rajko.

“This networking was extremely important for my personal and career development.”

But it’s not all about nightlife. Students find time to keep in shape and relax with sports too. Freshman Antonio Ostrić plays power forward for Dubrovnik basketball team. “It’s good to play sports in college,” he said. “It helps keep me healthy and helps me relax after studying. It’s hard to do both, so college is on first place and basketball on second.”

For those who would rather watch than compete, Dubrovnik’s own Maro Joković, has played in the 2008 Olympics, in Beijing, and will be playing again this summer in London. Personally, I wasn’t a fan of waterpolo until I went to my first game. Then I was hooked! I will always remember the way the pool stadium, music blasting to hype up the fans, and feeling the passion of every local patriot in the room as they cheered for the team.

Who says that students in big cities are the only ones who can have a little fun? If we start taking advantage of the opportunities, we can easily show how the students of ACMT Dubrovnik know how to pump up the party!
FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP
Research, publications, and accomplishments of ACMT professors

Professor Vanda Bazdan has been elected to the educational title of Lecturer in history of philosophy.

Professor Mara Dekovic Kesovija has been elected to the educational title of Lecturer in philology and Romance languages.

Professor Robert Foley was awarded the Excellence in Improvement and Innovation award by the Shared Services and Outsourcing Network organization for a paper he co-authored on a training program for the United States Postal Service.

Among the many international professionals at the annual EUROChrie conference, ACMT and RIT professors also presented the results of their original scientific research to their colleagues, in fields from foreign language education to hospitality. In addition to the 30 minute presentations, formal scientific papers were published in the official conference proceedings.

Prof. Rebecca Charry presented her research on methods of English language instruction in Croatian high schools, in a paper titled, “Communicative Language Teaching in Croatian English Classrooms.”

Profs. Milena Kužnin and Besim Agušaj presented their research on the impact of ACMT graduates on hospitality employment in Croatia, in a paper titled, “The Impact of an International Institution on Hospitality and Tourism in a Transitional Economy.”

Profs. Nikolina Božinović, Zrinka Friganović Sain and Barbara Perić presented “Students’ Perceptions on the Importance of Foreign Languages for Careers in Tourism.”

Profs. Mara Deković Kesovija and Mario Matković presented “Front Desk Foreign Language Proficiency in Dubrovnik 5-Star Hotels.”

In addition, many RIT professors who have taught at ACMT over the years also participated in the conference and presented their research.

Prof. Edward Ganster presented research on “The Academic Habits of American and Balkan College Students: A Faculty Perspective.”

Prof. Richard M. Lagiewski presented “The Role of Exporting Hospitality and Tourism Education in a Transitional Environment and Internationalization.”


Dr. Jeffrey Lasky, chair of the Information Technology program at RIT, presented a workshop titled, “Toward the Development of Tourism Informatics,” in which he discussed opportunities for an increased presence of computing, such as smart phones, tablets, and social media in hospitality and tourism degree programs.