Career Fair ‘07
Interviews by Jonathan Salazar

For the last seven years, when leading local and international businesses have looked for top employees, they have looked at the students of ACMT. This year, 17 companies – from telecommunications firms to hotel management – invited ACMT students to more than 250 job interviews at the college’s seventh annual Career Fair January 25 and 26.

ACMT students learned firsthand about the operations, hiring practices, employment needs and working conditions at leading companies in Croatia and the region, during two days of presentations, interviews, testing and networking at the Hotel Dubrovnik Palace. Company representatives explained their businesses in multimedia presentations and answered questions from students in the audience.

Students who submitted resumes and were selected for interviews are eagerly waiting to hear the results. Last year, 60 ACMT students were hired for permanent positions or internships as a direct result of interviews held during Career Fair.

Alumni Profile: Ines Presecan
By Nina Mimica

ACMT graduate Ines Presecan never thought she would have to negotiate on the spot with the U.S. Secret Service. And she never thought she would win. That experience was just one of the surprises she has found in her management job at the 5-star Dubrovnik Palace hotel.

Ines has been working as Banquet Sales and Event Manager at Hotel Palace since she graduated from ACMT in April 2004. She creates new banquet packages, plans events and activities, meets with clients and partners and presents the company to a wide range of business associates. An important part of the job is being proactive during every event and improvising in new and unexpected situations, she said.

One of her most interesting and challenging experiences was the day that U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney checked in as a guest of the hotel during his visit to Dubrovnik last year. Two weddings were also booked at the hotel that same day.

Dubrovnik: A Photographer’s Dream see page 7

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Photo by: Willie Osterman

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Business Ethics

Business Ethics, taught by Prof. Kresimir Buntic, analyzes the responsibilities of managers and corporations facing difficult ethical conflicts and dilemmas. Real-life examples and case studies focus on current, and sometimes controversial, topics such as bribery and human cloning.

“The Business Ethics Course is designed to make the students re-examine their own attitudes towards the ethical dilemmas in real life situations,” said ACMT student Ivan Milacic.

“Every ethical dilemma has at least two sides,” Ivan said. “For example, bribery is a normal part of doing business in certain societies, while it is immoral in others. How should a company or businessperson behave while conducting business in a culture with different values? Should they follow their own moral standards, or should they follow the old aphorism, ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do?’

“This course does not present moral absolutes or try to convert student to a particular moral code,” Prof. Buntic said. “Instead, its aim is to get students to think critically and responsibly. They evaluate managerial and corporate ethics at the level of the individual manager, and the broader social, political and economic environments in which the firm operates.”

“Successful students avoid simplistic, dogmatic answers to questions about the role of business and the obligations of managers to the wider community and within the company,” he said. “In this course, students struggle with complex ethical dilemmas, just like managers and organizations in the real world.”

New Venture Development

The New Venture Development course taught by Prof. Bill Myers is new to the ACMT Small Business Concentration. This advanced course helps senior students develop the analytical and leadership skills necessary to start, own and operate a small business.

Many students use this course and the final business plan project as a testing ground for future professional plans, or for the development of current family businesses.

One team of students is currently working on a business plan for outsourcing electronic data management in Vukovar, a city which was occupied and devastated during the Croatian War for Independence and is still struggling to recover.

“We are proposing an outsourcing company that would specialize in electronic data management, starting with database entry and eventually expanding to a broader range of services,” explained ACMT senior Latica Ivkovic. “Our new venture is designed to stimulate local economic activity and employ disabled war victims. We hope our project will improve the image of Vukovar and motivate other companies and corporations to practice corporate social responsibility and invest in Vukovar’s economy.”

“There currently isn’t a single company in Croatia that specializes in this field,” added team member Sanja Vale. “Companies in developed countries have for years outsourced this part of their operations. We believe that outsourcing data entry will become essential in this region as companies are faced with modernization, downsizing and growing competition.”

“For students interested in starting or managing small and medium enterprises, this class provides actual step by step guidelines for effectively starting a new venture,” Latica said. “Sometimes, an entrepreneur has to begin by realizing, that the potential idea is really not worth the investment. In reality, only a few of thousands of ideas become successful businesses.”

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Writing a business plan in nine weeks is not an easy task, said student Marina Varvodic, whose team is working on a plan for a beauty shop. “But if you follow the timeline given by the professor and the in-class work sessions, you would be amazed at the work you can accomplish in a short amount of time.”

“For this business plan, you have to be realistic,” Marina said. “You can’t get $100,000 from nowhere to start a business. You have to start from nothing and make something.”
Winning Essay: Zoran Obradovic

ACMT Junior Zoran Obradovic recently won first prize in a nationwide essay contest organized by the European Committee for Croatia. Zoran’s essay, “The Union of Prosciutto, Cheese, and Olives” used a motif of three beloved traditional foods to illustrate some of the potential benefits from Croatia’s expected accession to the European Union.

The essay, inspired by a real experience at his grandmother’s dinner table two days before the contest deadline, tells the story of a traditional smoked ham, which looks and smells delicious. But when it is cut and tasted, the meat proves to be barely edible. The customers have been tricked!

“This sort of disgrace to our agricultural tradition is exactly the kind of fraud which European Union regulations and inspections are designed to stop,” Zoran said. “A company which sells defective products in misleading packages should face penalties and embarrassment in the marketplace.”

“I support joining the EU,” Zoran said, “because I believe it will improve daily lives for most people in Croatia. Contrary to popular opinion, our traditional family agricultural businesses are not prohibited under EU rules. They will simply be better inspected. The quality of most products will eventually improve and consumers will be better protected.”

Zoran was awarded the first prize, and 500 Euros, by Vincent Degert, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in the Republic of Croatia. The awards ceremony, held in Zagreb in December, was part of the opening festivities of the EU Information Center in Croatia.

“After the awards ceremony, I asked Mr. Degert about the possible disadvantages of joining the EU,” Zoran said. “To my surprise, I received a very honest and direct answer. He said that Croatia should stop trying to balance between planned and market economies. Instead, Croatia should fully accept a competitive model in which our domestic companies play fairly.”

Faculty Scholarship

An article by Prof. Jennifer Matic, titled “The Degree of Uncertainty Avoidance Present in Croatian and American Undergraduate Students; a Comparative Analysis,” was published in the November issue of the European Journal of Psychology.

Prof. Rick Lagiewski recently presented and refereed a paper at the International Tourism Conference “New Perspectives and Values in World Tourism and Tourism Management in the Future” in Alanya, Turkey. He co-authored Experiential Marketing of Tourism Destination, with ACMT and RIT graduate Bozana Zekan. He also presented and refereed a paper at the 24th EuroCHRIE Congress in Thessaloniki, Greece. He co-authored A Bipolar View of Island Tourism Planning: The case of the Maldives with M. Maleeh Jamal, and Advancing Tourism and Tourism Education through Public and Private Partnerships: The Case of the New York Wine & Culinary Center, with Francis M. Domoy.

An article by Prof. Davor Ljubimir, titled “Immanuel Kant: A Philosophical Foundation of Science or a Scientific Foundation of Philosophy?” was recently published in the book Philosophy and Science, by the “Theoria” Philosophical Association of Sarajevo and Zagreb. The article demonstrates that Kant’s philosophical works, including his scientific works, should first and foremost be understood through his work in anthropology.

ACMT President and Dean Don Hudspeth gave a presentation via conference call on “Leadership in Volunteer Organizations” at the Australian Croatian Youth Conference, in Melbourne, Australia in December. The Dean, along with ACMT senior student Vesna Butorac, of Melbourne, gave a brief presentation on ACMT. The presentation was held at 11:00 am, Melbourne time, which was 1:00 am Dubrovnik time, for Vesna, and 4:00 PM (the previous day) in San Jose, California, for the Dean.
8th Children’s Winter Festival
Students Raise Over 10,000 Kuna for Charity

As a holiday gift to the children of Dubrovnik, ACMT student volunteers organized the annual Children’s Winter Festival at Hotel Plakir in December. More than 300 local children came to play holiday games, sing along to karaoke, eat sweets, win prizes and, of course, visit with Santa Claus. Donations of pastries from Pekara Ruica, toys from Croit and musical entertainment from the Dora band (which also shot a short video) helped make the day a special success.

ACMT’s annual Holiday Auction and party raised more than 10,500 kuna for Dva Skalina, a humanitarian organization for parents of special needs children in Dubrovnik. ACMT students, faculty and staff donated valuable and interesting items which were auctioned off to the highest bidder. The auction, organized by ACMT Student Council leaders and volunteers, was held in December at Revelin nightclub. Students Mirjana Sutic, Ivan Birkic and Nikolina Birimisa hosted the event.
Career Fair 2007

Continued from page 1

ACMT Senior Marko Roscic, who completed long-term internships in China and Colorado, USA, as part of his ACMT education, was invited to interviews with Phillip Morris, Microsoft, Proctor and Gamble and T-Mobile.

Junior Neven Mardjetko interviewed with Coca-Cola and Hrvatska Lutrija, and said he felt positive about both experiences.

"The more interviews you can participate in, the more you learn," Neven said. "Regardless of the outcome, it is a great experience for the future."

For some students, Career Fair is an important step toward finding a job, while many others learn simply from listening to presentations and participating in a formal business event.

Sophomore Domen Ovcar, originally from Marbor, Slovenia, attended Career Fair for the second year.

"It is nice to know that my options are open for employment around the world," he said. "It is especially interesting to hear about how businesses in Croatia are developing."

"I did not apply for interviews this year, but Career Fair was still a great experience," said senior student Mara Stipic Bagaric. "I consider it an excellent networking opportunity."

Human Resources executive Mirjana Vidakovic of Procter and Gamble said she was impressed with ACMT students' "positive and proactive attitudes," their enthusiasm, and well-prepared resumes.

Zrinka Vidovic Perisic, a human resources expert at Atlantic Grupa, said she plans to contact qualified candidates soon for available positions. "I was very impressed with ACMT students," she said.

Students explained ACMT to company representative with an entertaining video and slide presentation at the opening session. Third-year students Drita Emurial, Bojan Kavas, Dino Dekleva, and Mirna Pokas explained the highlights of the college's 10-year history, while describing some of the projects, research and skills students have gained.

More than 70 student volunteers also donated their time to assist with all aspects of Career Fair. These students welcomed company representatives, prepared information for Croatian media, arranged logistics and provided interview assistance, among other important tasks.

Several ACMT graduates, who attended previous Career Fairs as students returned this year to present the companies they work for and recruit potential new employees. Maja Novak and Tanja Vukovic, who graduated from ACMT in 2005, returned this year for the second time to conduct interviews as representatives of Phillip Morris tobacco company. Other ACMT alumni who returned to represent their current employers included Maja Demonja, Vladimir Dujic, and Jasmina Garbin of Suncani Hvar; Sandra Miletic and Dragan Mrkajic of Valamar Hotels; Marin Susac of T-Mobile; Nikola Avram of Vienna International hotels, Maja Jukic and Jelena Njiric of Libertos Rixos hotels; and Ines Presecan and Antonija Cvjetovic of Adriatic Luxury Hotels.

Career Fair 2007 was organized by Corporate Relations and Professional Development Manager Nina Skoric, and Co-op and Corporate Relations Coordinator Christina Petrovic.

From Istanbul to Dubrovnik

This fall, ACMT senior Masja Mirkovic joined over 600 students and professors from recognized colleges and universities across the US and abroad, on a four-day educational cruise from Istanbul to Dubrovnik. Masja was selected to represent ACMT aboard the Explorer cruise ship, on an educational program known as Semester at Sea. She attended classes on board the ship, interacted with students and gave a presentation about life in Dubrovnik and its unique position as a tourist destination.

"People and history of Croatia, and providing basic information on 'Many professors onboard asked me to come to their classes and speak about useful topics like currency exchange and local food.'"

"My 'homework' during the program to actively interact with the students," Masja said, "helping them learn about the culture, people and history of Croatia, and providing basic information on useful topics like currency exchange and local food."

"Many professors onboard asked me to come to their classes and speak about current issues in the region, university life, and other topics of interest to students and other passengers of the ship. I faced all sorts of questions, from one extreme to the other, from 'How many seats are there in Croatian parliament?' to 'Where are cool places to go out in Dubrovnik?'"

"The Explorer is a floating campus," Masja explained. "It has everything that students need, from dormitory to classrooms, library, and computer labs with wireless Internet access, to a student union, disco, and cinema."

Upon the ship's arrival in Dubrovnik, Masja and her new friends enjoyed several local excursions and sightseeing trips. This special opportunity was arranged through the generous sponsorship of Generalatirist travel agency.
ACMT Graduates On The Job

Ivan Zec
Project Manager,
Strategy Department
Agrokor
Graduated from ACMT: 2001

By Nina Mimica

ACMT graduate Ivan Zec is currently working as Project Manager in the Strategy department of Agrokor, one of the leading food and beverage companies in Croatia. Every day on the job is different, Ivan said. However, his usual duties include financial modeling, commenting on legal documentation, coordinating projects, making site visits to potential acquisitions, traveling or holding conference calls to structure transactions with domestic and international banks.

The most interesting and enjoyable part of this challenging job, he said, is structuring and negotiating complex transactions, closing bond issues and defending strategies to creditors and rating agencies. This past year his team successfully completed a refinancing package of close to a billion Euros and an issue of 110 million Euros equity.

Ivan said that the education he received at ACMT helped him broaden his horizons, and encouraged him to take initiative. His student experience boosted his confidence, leadership skills and work ethic, he said.

“Start developing your career while you are still in college,” he advised current ACMT students. “Later on you will find your permanent job much easier. Whatever job, co-op, or volunteer experience you pursue, make sure it will help you gain experience to be competitive when you search for a job after graduation.”

Elaa Mohamad
Business Analyst
HITROREZ
Special Task Force
Government of the
Republic of Croatia
Graduated from ACMT: 2004

By Ana Durkovic

The education and experience that ACMT students gain doesn’t only lead to careers in management or service; some of the college’s finest graduates also find jobs in government.

A 2004 ACMT graduate, Elaa Mohamad now works as a business analyst for the Special Task Force of HITROREZ, an innovative reform instrument of the Croatian government. This organization is responsible for collecting, reviewing and simplifying business procedures and regulations in Croatia, as part of the transition to a market economy. Croatia is just one of many member nations of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development which has used this approach.

As part of this team, Elaa analyzes regulations affecting businesses in Croatia, and assesses the impact of those regulations on current businesses. He then delivers his findings to the directors of HITROREZ, and eventually, this information is communicated to the public by the Prime Minister of Croatia.

The practical experience he gained at ACMT was invaluable for grasping how the real business world works, Elaa said. It helped him develop the professionalism needed for his current career.

ACMT-ers Compete in St. Vlaho Soccer Tournament

The ACMT Soccer Club recently competed in the annual Dubrovnik Sv. Vlaho Tournament, January 5-13. The ACMT Tigers played against rival teams Omla, Pizzeria Mama Mia and Frigo Term. The Tigers had a big victory over Omla 6 to 2, but fell to Mama Mia 6 to 4 and Frigo 5 to 0

“If you value your contacts as you value your future, you will be successful at whatever you do" Elaa said. He advises current students to keep their grades up, and remember to maintain a healthy lifestyle. “All those future business people still sitting at their college desks can benefit from going to the gym,” Elaa said. “And if you haven’t already, start exploring the universe.”
RIT Photography Students to Join ACMT

About 15 photography majors from Rochester Institute of Technology will spend the spring academic quarter in Dubrovnik, documenting the city's unique architecture, culture, landscapes and people. These visiting American students, enrolled at ACMT's parent institution in Rochester, New York, will live as working photographers in Dubrovnik for 10 weeks, under the supervision of RIT photography professor Willie Osterman. As part of this advanced course, each student will regularly meet with and photograph a local resident (outside of ACMT) and produce an individual portfolio of work.

"It is very important for these students to get to know the people of the city and this country," Professor Osterman said. Working and living outside of their native country and language will also be an important part of the students' experience, he added. In preparation for their stay in Croatia, these students will read extensively about the history and culture of the region.

Prof. Osterman, who has exhibited, lectured and taught extensively, and served as a juror for the Fulbright Foundation of the United Nations, is also interested in working with current ACMT students. He hopes to organize some joint photography projects or exhibitions during his stay in Dubrovnik.

Join Big Shot April 12

The RIT "Big Shot" 2007 photo event will be held April 12 at Pile Gate. During this special community event, hundreds of volunteers will help create a unique night-time photo of one of Dubrovnik's most beautiful locations. The "Big Shot" relies on a lighting technique known as "painting with light." Participants use camera flash units and flashlights to bathe the subject area in luminance during an extended period of exposure. Participants from ACMT and the Dubrovnik community will be invited to a reception following the event and will receive a souvenir copy of the final photo.

Alumni Profile: Ines Presecan from page 1

Ines Presecan
Banquet Sales and Event Manager
Hotel Dubrovnik Palace
Adriatic Luxury Hotels
Graduated from ACMT: 2004

with more than 300 expected guests, and Ines was scheduled to be the manager on duty with a shift lasting over 24 hours.

"Each minute was filled with unexpected situations that required quick thinking," she said. Those few days were extraordinary for nearly everyone in Dubrovnik, Ines recalled, and for her, balancing the needs of the US Secret Service, the Croatian Police, hotel staff, hotel guests and finally, the wedding parties, was no easy task.

Ines remembers the hotel looking like an airport, with x-ray machines at every entrance. Each guest and employee had to be checked by the Croatian Police Security Service and not a single car was allowed past the nearby checkpoint. Ines managed to persuade the US Secret Service to allow 20 cars from the wedding party to park in front of the hotel, even though she had been warned that such a task would be a "mission impossible."

"We managed to survive Dick Cheney and two weddings at the same time, even though he was staying in the Presidential Suite just above the night club where one of the wedding parties was held," Ines said. "Either he sleeps really well or he simply being polite."

Ines says her job is never boring, even when there are no Vice Presidents as guests. Each event has its own story. Dealing with many different sorts of people is the most interesting aspect of her job, she said. She might spend one day in her office, working on budgets, event plans, or banquet offers, while she might spend the next day, meeting with clients, monitoring events or visiting national or international industry fairs.

The theoretical projects she wrote in ACMT classes turned out to be great preparation for the real work she does on the job, Ines said. After preparing so many presentations as a student, she now has no fear of public speaking.

"By the time I graduated, I felt competent to get into the fast-paced working environment in the hotel industry. My student experience made a great difference for my self-esteem during interviews and in performing everyday tasks on the job." She especially appreciates a bit of wisdom emphasized in Prof. Ljubimir's class: the only constant in life is change.

Her advice for ACMT students: "Seize every learning opportunity you come across, and don't think you have it all, because nobody does. A good employer would rather hire someone who admits she is ready to learn, than someone who acts like a "know-it-all."
Local Managers Sharpen Key Skills at ACMT Workshops

Business professionals from the Dubrovnik area are improving their skills and gaining new knowledge through at ACMT’s current series of professional development seminars. These workshops, led by ACMT professors, provide intensive, hands-on learning experiences for working professionals on a variety of current topics.

Marijana Deranja, from the head office of the Dubrovnik Airport, attended a session on Customer Service at the college last year, and returned this year to the Business English seminar.

“The English seminar was very useful, especially the discussion of common mistakes in business communication,” Ms. Deranja said. “In just a few hours I really refreshed my knowledge of English.”

The seminar, taught by Prof. Rebecca Charry in January, provided helpful tips and hands-on practice at creating effective, clear, polite business letters and email messages. Participants also learned to correct some of the most common grammar and usage mistakes in English.

Participants in the first three seminars of 2007 in January and February came from leading businesses and organizations in Dubrovnik, including the Dubrovnik Tourist Board, Grand Villa Argentina, Hotel Croatia Cavtat, Dubrovnik Travel Agency, Hotel Plat and others.

Prof. Jennifer Matic taught a seminar on relational selling, focusing on strategies for reaching and keeping customers for long-term business relationships.

“The internet is changing how sales is conducted,” Prof. Matic said. “While many companies in Croatia still tend to do business face-to-face, some people only deal with their customers through e-mail, which makes it very difficult to get to know them.” In a specially designed personal consultation, Prof. Ted Popovich focused on the cultural backgrounds of Asia.

Upcoming seminar topics include strategies for being an effective supervisor, led by Prof. Fred Smith.

Prof. Agnesa Secerkadic will teach a full-day workshop on business communication strategies, including techniques for finding, selecting and organizing information. “In an age of vast information, some of the technology can be overwhelming,” she said. This seminar is designed give managers confidence using those technologies.

To register for an upcoming workshop, or for more information, please contact Professional Development and Corporate Relations Manager Prof. Nina Skuric at nskrusic@acmt.hr.

Photo by Jurica Bogdanovic

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