Choosing the right university and program of study are some of the most important decisions young people ever make, but they are also among the most difficult. Lack of information, pressure from parents or friends, financial concerns, and simple confusion can be overwhelming for young people and their families making this important life decision. But there is help out there! RIT Croatia professors, students and enrollment specialists offer guidance and suggestions to help make sure the college you choose is right for you.

Think about the skills and knowledge you want to develop over the next few years. Consider your strengths (what you are really good at), and how you can build on them.

Look back on your past educational experiences and be honest with yourself about what works for you. What kind of learning environments, schedules and workloads bring out the best in you? How do you want to spend hours, weeks, and months of your time and energy in the next few years?

If some aspect of your high school experience was particularly stressful or discouraging for you, don’t sign up for more years of the same problems - make sure you choose a college that offers something different! // continues on page 7
Choosing a university isn’t easy. So it isn’t surprising that sometimes students enroll in a program that they expect will be interesting and useful, but later discover they made the wrong choice. Sometimes they find out that the subjects they are studying are not for them, or the relationships with professors and learning atmosphere simply isn’t motivating. That’s when transferring to RIT Croatia can be a great solution, and the start of a whole new chapter in their lives.

International Business student Mate Kozina transferred to RIT Croatia after studying for two years at the public university Zagreb. “For the two years I spent there, I was just a number on the paper, black and white. It was that simple. Zero professors knew that I exist. They had thousands of students, and no time for human interaction,” Mate said.

“In an atmosphere like that, naturally you lose motivation and inspiration to grow as a person and as a future academic member of society. After two years, I couldn’t stand that anymore and decided to change the course of my life completely.”

“I talked with my family, and some people I know who attend RIT Croatia. They told me that the college is a place where professors are people who actually care about the students. There are professors to whom you can talk and they will actually help you. That was what I found, something that is totally different from anything else that Croatians are used to, a college that pushes me to be the best version of myself.”

Of course, transfer students need some time to make the transition to a new college and program of study, but professors find that transfer students often turn out to be among the most mature, motivated and successful students at the college.

“Transfer students have some life experience. They know themselves and they know what it’s like to study something they are not interested in, or in a school that they don’t like.” said Enrollment and Recruiting Manager Ivana Silić. “There are many students in universities and colleges in Croatia who are not happy with their choice and are currently looking for something different.”

“However, their decision to change schools is often a hard one, because they probably feel as if they’ve failed, or they are afraid of disappointing their families. In many cases transferring also prolongs their studying time. This often seems like a big deal to them in that moment, but once they start here, they realize they are finally doing something they want to do, and a year or two more to get their diploma is worth it in the long run. All it takes is the courage to make a change.” //

Ivana Silić, Recruitment & Enrollment Manager

student Mate Kozina
MEET OUR PROFESSORS:

Kevin Walker

Among the many things that make RIT Croatia special are our professors: experts from around the world with real life experience in a variety of fields, whose strong relationships with students make classes lively, fun and engaging. There’s no better example than our Dubrovnik campus hospitality program professor and current Area Head, Professor Kevin Walker.

With a bachelor’s degree from Stanford University and an MBA degree in finance from the University of California at Berkeley, Professor Walker came to Croatia in 2005 and has been teaching at the Dubrovnik campus since 2008. With a background in financial markets and equity options trading, and co-founder of his own trading firm, Professor Walker teaches a variety of courses including Financial Accounting, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing. But the course that students seem to remember and enjoy the most, is the Public Speaking course that Dubrovnik campus students take in the first semester of their freshman year.

In this legendary course, students are welcomed into the RIT Croatia world of studying in English. This means much more than just passive listening; students in this course have to collect the courage and skills to give short presentations in front of their peers. Although most students are a little scared at first, and have never done something like this before, Prof. Walker is just the right person to encourage them through it with a sense of humor. Many students end up remembering this course as one of the most important and memorable in their years at RIT Croatia.

“I always try to have some fun while I’m teaching,” says Prof. Walker. For example, students who come late to class or whose phones ring during a lecture, have to sing a song for everyone. “The relaxed atmosphere keeps students engaged and open to new concepts.”

When he is not teaching, Professor Walker spends his time helping manage and run his family restaurant, Steakhouse Domino. “Working in the restaurant industry provides me with real-life examples and insights to concepts discussed in the classroom. (Another nice aspect of being involved at the restaurant is that I get to eat a lot of great steak!) While at the restaurant, I have learned that a career in hospitality gives one the opportunity to make people happy. People don’t talk about that much when discussing hospitality careers, but, to some people, it really matters. Some people just enjoy making other people happy. And I can see this at the restaurant. Some of the employees feed off the positive energy associated with making others smile.”

After nearly 15 years in Dubrovnik, Professor Walker says he definitely feels at home here. An avid runner, he especially appreciates the beautiful views of the Adriatic Sea that surround him everywhere in Dubrovnik: “The only difficult part of living here for me is the Croatian language. I have to admit -- it crushes me. I really don’t seem to have the mental acuity required to grasp languages. (Let’s just say that I didn’t shine when I took Spanish in high school.) I have a tough time, for example, with pronunciation; I don’t catch the nuances. I’ll listen to a Croatian person pronounce a word, and when I repeat it, I swear that I pronounced it the same. But the Croatian person will politely inform me that my pronunciation is … let’s just say… a little off.”

Professor Walker says he has no plans to return permanently to the US (other than holidays) and considers Dubrovnik and RIT Croatia his home, where students and colleagues can always count on him to brighten their days with laughter.
An adventurous journey starts at RIT Croatia

While most students at RIT Croatia come from Croatia and the nearby region, an increasing number of students are joining us each year from countries and cultures around the world. They are an important part of what makes our community vibrant and diverse—an international atmosphere that prepares our graduates to become citizens of the world.

We spoke with two of our current students who enrolled at the Dubrovnik campus. Denim Behn, a first-year computing student, comes from Durban, South Africa, and Kaitlin D’Costa, a second-year hospitality student, comes from Dubai.

“So far the RIT Croatia experience has been outstanding,” said Denim, who has Croatian heritage and dual citizenship. “I have had the opportunity to meet some amazing people not only from Croatia but from around the world and it has been interesting to hear about their past experiences and cultures. The best part about RIT Croatia has definitely been the atmosphere and people that I have met.”

Since he does not speak much Croatian, Denim found the choice of RIT ideal for studying in his native language, English, and getting to know the Croatian language and culture at the same time, while earning a degree in IT that would be recognized around the world.

For our international students, joining RIT Croatia is an exciting new chapter that often pushes them out of their comfort zone. It’s ideal for people who are looking for new challenges and a chance to push themselves.

Kaitlin grew up in Dubai and had not spent much time abroad before coming to Dubrovnik. “When the time came for me to apply to college, I realized I needed some new experiences, new opportunities, and challenges. My sister graduated from the RIT campus in Dubai, so the name of the college has been always there in all our family conversations,” she said.

“I come from a family of food and beverage professionals so the hospitality program was a natural fit for me. The development of the hospitality industry in Dubai is so dynamic, I feel I will never get bored. Hospitality is a people-driven business, and to succeed you need great communication skills. The courses I’ve taken at RIT Croatia helped me to open up and become better prepared and more comfortable dealing with all sorts of people.

The best part of my academic experience at RIT Croatia is definitely the professors. They genuinely engage with students. They are not shy to show their human side and liven up the classes with humor. It creates a friendly, encouraging, comfortable atmosphere for studying, with professors as wise and helpful mentors.

I also appreciate that students know our tasks and due dates way in advance. Everything is well organized, so if you manage your time wisely, you don’t have to worry about pressing deadlines and sleepless nights.

I see my future in Event Management. I genuinely enjoy being a part of organizational processes. It involves creativity, stress management, interpersonal communication as well as leadership. I love this challenging mix.

To any student thinking of joining RIT Croatia from abroad, I would definitely encourage them to step up and take the risk. For me it’s been an amazing adventurous journey.”

Kaitlin D’Costa (on the right) with her sister

Denim Behn is a Freshmen student from South African Republic

Student TETIANA KULBAKA contributed to this article.
Dubrovnik Campus Chapter of Hospitality Honor Society wins International Award

The Dubrovnik campus chapter of the prestigious Eta Sigma Delta hospitality studies honor society recently received the Chapter of Distinction award from the International Council for Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE). The annual award is meant to recognize a leading local chapter that exhibits efforts to advance the five pillars of ESD: excellence, leadership, creativity, service, and ethics.

Members of ESD are selected based on their academic achievement and leadership qualities. The RIT Croatia chapter was established only three years ago, and in that time has maximized its impact through a variety of events, guest speakers, and workshops, under the leadership of faculty advisor prof. Milena Kužnin.

Belma Sokolović, President of RIT Croatia’s ESD Honorary Society, said, “This award means a lot to us, since ICHRIE is widely known and recognized by various hospitality industry companies and professionals. The honor society celebrates the excellence of students who are proactive, creative, open-minded and passionate about the hospitality industry.”

Computing students develop air quality and pollution monitoring solution for leading telecommunications firm

Students in the fourth year of the computing program at RIT Croatia are currently at work on an exciting new project – teams from the Zagreb and Dubrovnik campuses will work with colleagues at all of RIT’s global campuses to develop a software solution for monitoring air pollution in Croatia for A1 Hrvatska telecommunications company.

The capstone research course, Senior Development Project, is the students’ final work before graduating, and thus involves real projects for real clients – a variety of companies in Croatia, America and beyond.

The air pollution monitoring project will be developed for A1 Hrvatska, part of A1 Telekom Austria Group – a leading provider of digital services in Central and Eastern Europe. A1 Telekom Austria Group operates in seven countries providing services for approximately 24 million customers.

Students will work on developing a web and mobile solution for the business user and the public, which will measure the concentration of particulate matter and air quality in real time. The solution sends data from sensors to processors through the Narrowband Internet of Things network, (NB IoT) which allows the flow of information from locations where the standard mobile signal has no penetration. Currently, A1 Hrvatska is the first and only provider with national coverage.
Entreprenuerial Success

RIT Croatia graduate Tana Zimmermann and her brother Viktor were recently ranked as owners of one of the fastest growing Central European technology companies. In a ranking of the top 50 fastest growing companies from 18 countries, conducted by the prestigious auditing and consulting firm Deloitte, the Zimmerman’s company, BAZZAR.HR, ranked 5th with an average growth rate of over 2.8 percent. BAZZAR.HR is currently the largest online marketplace in Croatia having more than 200,000 products offered by 250+ partner sellers from Croatia and the European Union. Ms. Zimmermann graduated from the hospitality management program at RIT Croatia’s Dubrovnik campus in 2009 and started her career with Philip Morris where she spent 4 years. At that time, she was recognized as one of the most successful business people in the category “30 under 30” by the Croatian daily newspaper - Jutarnji list. Also, in 2015 she was recognized by Forbes magazine, Croatian edition, as one of the most successful female entrepreneurs in the country. //

Global Day of Service

Graduates of RIT Croatia gathered at the Zagreb campus in September to contribute their time and energy in giving back to the community through a day of fun and educational activities aimed at increasing environmental awareness.

Alumni were joined in Zagreb by professors, current students and members of the public. Activities included collecting returnable plastic bottles and donating the collected to funds to Green Sea Safari, a nonprofit sea cleanup endeavor started by prof. Marlena Ćukteras, who teaches Environmental Science at the Dubrovnik campus. Alumni also collected toys which were donated to Children’s Home in Nazarova and held a recycling craft workshop for local kids. Prof. Dr. Staša Puškarić gave a lecture on ecology.

The events were part of the annual Global Day of Service, in which thousands of RIT Alumni around the world participate in a variety of service projects that make a positive difference in their communities. This year, RIT alumni participated in 43 different service projects in the U.S., Croatia, Peru, and New Delhi, India.

“This event shows alumni firsthand the difference the RIT community can make. Our network is so strong. Together, we can truly make a difference in local communities. We’re putting our Tiger pride to work and it’s amazing to see it all happen on just one day,” said Bill Sachman, Senior Associate Director of Alumni Relations for RIT. //
Choose a college that will help you develop as a person, not just gain technical skills. The modern job market is changing so fast that today’s knowledge quickly becomes out of date. Today’s employers are looking for more than just technical skills; they want people who are good communicators and creative thinkers, team players with emotional intelligence, who are well organized, independent problem solvers.

Remember: you will be in college for you - not to make your parents happy, or to impress your friends. Once you get there, the responsibility of doing the work will be on you. You will do best if you truly want to be where you are and are motivated and interested in what you are doing.

DON’T

• Choose a college based on how hard or easy it is to get in. College isn’t about enrolling, it’s what happens during the years after you get there. Just because you can get in, doesn’t mean it’s right for you.

• Choose a school just because your friends are going there or your parents went there. You aren’t your friends or your parents.

• Believe everything you read in chat forums! Remember, you have no idea who those people actually are. Look for a more reliable source of information, like someone who actually attends that school.

• Let tuition costs stand in your way. There are many forms of scholarship, loans, student jobs and subsidies that can help you and your family afford the education you really want.

DO

• RESEARCH current employment and job market trends. What kinds of jobs will be most in demand in the future? Where do you see yourself fitting in?

• VISIT several potential universities before you enroll. Attend some lectures if you can.

• TALK to current students, their parents, and graduates about their university experience.

• ATTEND open houses or info sessions that allow you and your parents to talk directly to the university staff and ask questions.

• START EARLY. Begin your research in the third year of high school and avoid last-minute panic.

• TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. Look for a place where you can see yourself fitting in and feeling good.

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Help! I have no idea what I want to study. I like many different subjects, but I don’t have a specific career path. Honestly, I have no idea what kind of career would be right for me. #confused.

@confused, don’t worry. Many other students enter college in exactly the same state of mind. If you’re not sure what your strengths and interests really are, check out online tools for assessing your personality type, learning style, and intelligence type. Reputable sites can help, and even offer career suggestions.

Also, make sure you choose a college that offers a personal career counseling service with real people you can talk to. Look for a college that connects you with people who actually work in today’s jobs and gives you an opportunity to try various different employment experiences before you graduate. Internships during college are some of the best ways to figure out what kind of career will be right for you.

I’ve never lived away from home before and I’m not sure I’m ready for such a big move, especially if I have to leave my friends and family. #alittlescared

@alittlescared. Everyone is a little scared when it comes to starting a new chapter in life. But you can do it! One of the greatest benefits of college is the chance to widen your horizons and start adulting. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself. Most adults will tell you that some of the most important parts of college weren’t the classes they took, but the life skills they learned: managing money, housework, bills, roommates, cooking, cleaning, and getting around a new town. The first few weeks can be a little tough of course, but you’ll be amazed and proud at how quickly you can rise to the challenge. When it comes to meeting new people and making friends, choose a college with a friendly, positive atmosphere. Talk to students who currently attend and go visit the college if you can.

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QUICK TIPS

College enrollment do’s and don’ts

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At RIT Croatia you’re on to something amazing!

RIT Croatia offers over 350,000 EUR for scholarships! Apply now!

- 70% of last year’s applicants that had applied for financial aid were awarded RIT Croatia scholarships and financial aid.
- Candidates who apply by February 15th 2020 will be given priority consideration for need-based financial aid.
- The results will be published on March 15th 2020.
- Apply by December 15th 2019 and you can get an additional tuition discount!
- Students with excellent grades in high school are automatically eligible for the scholarship of 4000 €

Your chances of getting a scholarship are high.
Visit https://www.croatia.rit.edu/applicationform/ and apply now!