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Abstract

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Keywords

Elisa Moncarz, Education, FIU

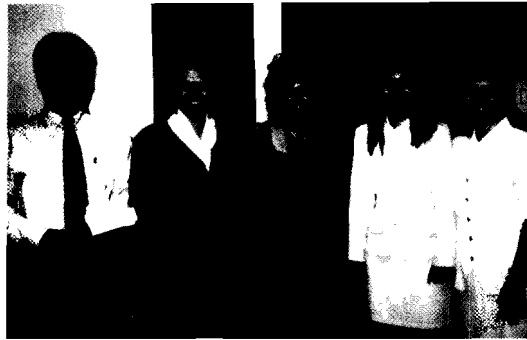
Diversity in Education: Profiles of Students at FIU's School of Hospitality Management

by
Elisa Moncarz
and
William O'Brien

The authors are conducting a study of career patterns for students enrolled in the Florida International University School of Hospitality Management. A preliminary ethnographic phase of the study was to profile a variety of student participants in order to identify potential factors which might affect career patterns. The result is a fascinating and diverse mosaic of ambitious young people and a wealth of insight for corporate recruiting.

The full depth and scope of diversity that may exist within a single college class becomes apparent only to the professor who is willing to expend time and effort to reach behind the young faces arrayed before her the first day of the semester. As students graduate, managers in industry also confront this same diversity – and must learn to deal with its many nuances. At the World Hospitality Congress III, Professor Albert Wrisley of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst said: “Management has to find ways to meld unlike people into work teams ... To manage well, a hospitality manager must deal with four changes affecting the hospitality industry, one of which is population diversity.” He pointed to an ethnic diversity that is unparalleled since the beginning of this century.¹

To portray that diversity, this paper presents 14 student self-profiles, as well as current statistics of the entire body of students enrolled in Florida International University's School of Hospitality Management. Students were asked to write a profile as part of a group project in a Financial Analysis class during the period from 1993 to the present. This is the first stage of a long-term study, the aim of which is to determine factors accounting for the diversity of students who select FIU's School of Hospitality Management, as well as their choice of



Toshiyuku Goto, Peichun Lai, Shu-chuan Chen and Shu-Fang Chen join Professor Elisa Moncarz during their project presentation in summer 1996.

career goals and success in meeting those goals. In this preliminary, and largely ethnographic, stage, the objectives are to suggest what factors should be addressed over the long term and to portray a case study of diversity in education at an international university. Each student profile presented is unique, but together they comprise

a rich mosaic of life in a major international school which cannot be represented by the bare descriptive statistics of Table 1.

Diversity Affects Management

Such diversity creates a need for managers who can bridge cultures. Even prior to the creation of NAFTA, the European Union, and similar recent trading blocks, overseas corporations increased their ownership of U.S. hospitality properties during the 1980s. There is no question that Americans will have to deal with other cultures more and more in coming years; therefore, it is imperative that American managers make a conscious effort to understand the other cultures. Holtzman, Murthy, and Gordon present guidelines aimed at building an understanding of different cultures (with emphasis on the Japanese). Business agreements can be made or broken based on a proper respect for cultural business etiquette. Speaking of the need to understand other cultures, they say, "Like each American, each Japanese is an individual who cannot be stereotyped. To have profitable business relationships with the Japanese and others, start by building bridges..."²

The U.S. is now second only to France as the most popular tourism destination in the world. In 1994, almost 50 million tourists visited the U.S. and spent over \$57 billion. If the U.S. hospitality industry desires to maintain its share in the tourism market, its practices must accommodate the culturally based needs of foreign visitors. It must train personnel to appreciate diverse cultures. "Tourism has assumed a prominent socioeconomic position worldwide. Today's tourism is generated from and received in a global community that continues to celebrate culture and linguistic diversity among its members."³

The impact of a changing ethnic and racial composition of the labor force is expected to be dramatic. Net increase of workers by the year 2000 will be dominated by women, native non-whites, and immigrants (only 15 percent of the net new workers are expected to be native white men by the year 2000, as compared to 47 percent in 1985).⁴ Food

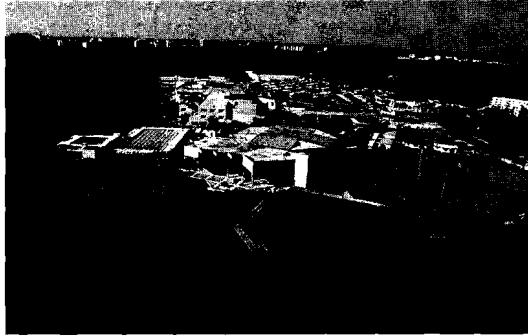
Table 1
Student Diversity within the School of Hospitality Management
Fall Semester 1996

	Undergrad	Graduate	Total Student Count
By gender:			
Male	283 (47%)	79 (46%)	362 (47%)
Female	315 (53%)	92 (54%)	407 (53%)
Total	598	171	769
By race: U.S. only			
Asian	22(5%)	4(8%)	26 (5%)
Black	67(15%)	3(6%)	70 (14%)
Hispanic	127(28%)	8(15%)	135 (26%)
White	241(52%)	37(71%)	278 (54%)
Total	458	52	510
By origin:			
Florida Resident	297 (50%)	32 (19%)	329 (43%)
Other U.S.	50 (8%)	11 (6%)	61 (7.9%)
Foreign	251 (42%)	128 (75%)	379 (49%)
Total	598	171	769
By present employment:			
Full Time	390 (65%)	143 (84%)	533 (69%)
Part-time	186 (31%)	22 (13%)	208 (27%)
No Employment	22 (4%)	6 (4%)	28 (4%)
Total	598	171	769
Average Age:	25.5	28	26

service and lodging employees will be largely comprised of individuals of many cultural backgrounds with different values, religions, languages, and ethnicity, a workforce so diverse that managerial know-how in dealing with them becomes urgently significant.⁵ If the diverse workplace is not managed effectively, these changes in the workforce composition are bound to cause reduced productivity, alienation, conflict, and burnout.⁶

Students Make Considered Decisions

Cullen⁷ studied over 600 hospitality management students at four-year universities to profile their expectations for post-graduate careers, reasons for attending college, and factors in career choice. Hospitality majors cited reputation of the school and quality of education as



The School of Hospitality Management fronts on the bay at FIU's North Campus.

principal reasons for choosing a college. Fewer than 1 percent indicated they were following in family footsteps or seeking intellectual challenge, job security, or an active social life. Fifty-five percent of hospitality majors reported having entrepreneurial intentions but a scant 8 percent of the hospitality students

saw themselves pursuing an entrepreneurial career immediately after graduation. Nearly half the hospitality students expressed more interest in management of people than in management of money.

Students form a perception of whether aspirations can be met by the industry during their university period. Program quality is an important factor in such perceptions. In a survey of 143 heads of hospitality programs, 100 randomly selected hotel company presidents and vice presidents, and 100 randomly selected restaurant company presidents and vice presidents, FIU received a No. 4 ranking from the educators and hotel executives and a No. 3 ranking from restaurant executives among the top 10 bachelor's programs in hospitality management. Moreover FIU received a third place ranking from restaurant executives among the top five master's programs in hospitality management.⁸

The hospitality management classroom can expose students to diversity and, thus, help young men and women to live, work, and manage in a culturally diverse environment. Tanke has developed at Florida International University a course in Multicultural Management that allows for differences in values arising from gender, socioeconomic level, and age group, as well as ethnic group, thereby preparing hospitality students for a work environment that is multicultural, multiethnic, and multiracial.⁹ Holt, et al., recommends that multicultural education be incorporated throughout the hospitality curriculum.¹⁰ Woods believes that in-class experience has helped students explore and understand what is involved in diversity through observing and interacting with students of different cultures.¹¹ No matter whose method or point of view is to be followed, the bottom line remains that future managers need to develop skills for dealing with diversity in individuals and groups.¹²

School Is a Model of Campus Diversity

Since opening its doors in 1972, Florida International University (FIU) has become one of the most dynamic and fastest growing universities in the United States (currently enrolling more than 30,000

students). In just 25 years FIU has achieved many benchmarks of growth and excellence that have taken other universities as long as a century to reach. It has a strong commitment to diversity. In fact, in its 1996 Strategic Plan, "Reaching for the Top," FIU President Modesto Maidique identifies diversity as one of two major management philosophies, stating: "One of the most pressing challenges facing institutions of higher education over the next decade is how to respond effectively to an increasingly diverse population. FIU is unique because of its location... which gives it access to a multiethnic pool of highly talented students." Indeed, FIU is located in Miami, a city which continues to evolve as an international metropolis in which nearly half of the population was born outside the United States. Miami prides itself in being diverse.

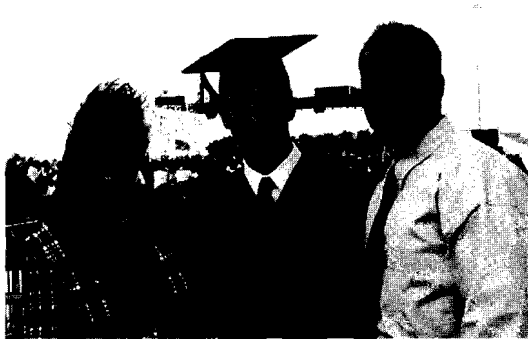
Since its inception in 1972, FIU's School of Hospitality Management has graduated more than 5,000 individuals who have assumed leadership roles in all segments of the hospitality industry. It has an international reputation and it is most frequently ranked as one of the top four programs of its kind in the United States. It has been designated as a Program of Distinction by the legislature of the State of Florida. Students from almost every state in the U.S. and approximately 100 countries are attracted to FIU's School of Hospitality Management due to its international reputation, talented faculty, outstanding recruitment program, and cosmopolitan location. Moreover, a major strength is the diversity of the student body and the proximity of a truly international hospitality industry. Each class at FIU's School of Hospitality Management becomes a laboratory in experiencing and understanding what is involved in diversity.

In fall 1996, FIU's School of Hospitality Management had 598 students enrolled in the undergraduate program and 171 in the master's program, for a total headcount of 769 students (407 female, 362 male); 390 students were non-resident aliens, whereas 135 of the U.S. students were of Hispanic descent, 26 Asian-American, and 70 African-American.

The Class Becomes a Learning Tool

Interpretation of Hospitality Industry Financial Statements is a required class for all candidates for the baccalaureate degree and for candidates for the master's degree who do not have a bachelor's degree in hospitality management or finance.

In meeting the course requirements, students are expected to complete a very in-depth term project involving the financial analysis of a publicly-held company in the hospitality industry, focusing on where the company has been, where it is now, and in what direction it seems to be going. Professor Elisa Moncarz asks her students to form groups



Rick Pujals celebrates with his brother and sister-in-law at his graduation from FIU in April 1996.

of five or six to work on this project over a period of almost three months. Due to the vast diversity of students' backgrounds, this project becomes an excellent experience in expanding the range of cultural experiences of students, and broadening their vision of the world. They learn about flexibility and adapt-

ability in dealing with students with different values, beliefs, ethnicity, and traditions. Accordingly, the project promotes sensitivity and cultural awareness.

One of the preliminary steps is for each student to complete a student profile which will be part of the final project. Professor Moncarz asks her students to focus on where each student has been, where each student is now, and where he/she wants to go in the future; 100 profiles obtained in Professor Moncarz' classes from 1993 to 1996 will serve as the sample for this study.

Selected student profiles comprise different sets of experiences that make each student unique. They depict an incredible diverse student body, not only in terms of race, gender, age, or ethnic group, but, most importantly, in terms of experiences that influenced who they are and how they view themselves. Yet, they all have one thing in common. They were all attracted to the hospitality field and to FIU's School of Hospitality Management. The profiles are told in the first person by each individual student.

Constanze Balig



My name is Constanze and I was born in Germany. My first four years were spent in Lisbon, Portugal. My family returned to Germany where I finished high school. As soon as I got my diploma I left Germany with the desire to learn French and to broaden my mind by living in another culture. At the University of Nice I obtained the basics of the language and learned about a different country with its own mentality and history. As I was very interested in staying in France, I applied to a Tourism Management School in Paris. The school offered a very active education where I could work for the Sofitel Hotel chain on one hand and learn the techniques of tourism management on the other.

During these two years I had the opportunity to work in all the departments of the hotel, open the second largest convention center integrated in a hotel in Europe, organize the world congress of all Sofitels on the international market, and work in a casual leisure sport hotel in Greece. Those experiences led to my decision to finish my education in hospitality management at Florida International University in the U.S.A. My next goal is to work in the meeting and convention division of an international hotel chain, where I can explore such traits as flexibility, integrity, responsibility, and people and task-oriented skills.

Hasan Tarik Brown



I was born to the name Hasan Tarik Brown, July 24, 1972. It is really difficult to put a finger on what makes me tick. I, myself, do not really know. I think life's experiences and how they affect us are what make us the people that we are. I think that I have led a unique life, for it is filled with so many positive and negative experiences (and adventures).

I have experienced everything from being kidnapped to playing basketball on national television (ESPN). I grew up on the streets of Harlem, New York. I've almost shot, and I've been shot at; I've been involved in big brawls and riots; I've been held at gun point, and been beat up by a group of guys; but I've also received student-athlete awards, and been on the dean's list and the honor roll. Further, I've made friends of all races and creeds, and treasure dearly the friendships that I've made.

I graduated from Cardinal Hayes High School in June of 1990. I went on to Colgate University, where I started for the varsity basketball team for four years, and was captain for the last two years. I graduated as a history major in May of 1994. After my acceptance into the program I immediately agreed to come to Florida International University in the fall of 1995. I have also been active on campus. Finally, I must say that I've made many friends, some of which I've been working with on this project.

As a child of nine years old, I recall going over to a schoolmate's house for the first time. His name was Richie Rose. Since I had never been there before, I was quite anxious. He lived in an expensive part of Manhattan, one I could only dream about. What I saw changed my outlook on life and created a goal for me to one day achieve.

On the way to Richie's house we stopped in this tall building. We first went into a gift shop. It was strange because everybody knew him by his name; he was also nine at the time. We went into a garage, and the workers there also knew him by name. When we reached the

restaurant, we ate lunch for free. I learned that everyone knew him, but it didn't occur to me why. When I figured out what was going on, I couldn't believe what was happening. He lived in a hotel in a wonderful suite which seemed larger than life. His father was either the general manager or the owner (I was too young to know the difference). I looked at Richie and said, "I want to live in a hotel." So, since that day I've been intrigued by the hotel business.

I plan to graduate in April 1997 with a master's in hospitality management. After graduation my goal is to obtain a management position in the front office of a hotel. When I reach my late 20s, or early 30s, I plan to be general manager of the hotel of MY CHOICE! By the time I'm 45 I plan to own my first in a chain of hotels.

Andrew Cooper



My name is Andrew Mark Cooper. I was born in Brooklyn, New York, and I am a third generation Jewish-American citizen. My family moved out to Syosset, Long Island, a couple of years after I was born because they wanted my brother and me to have a really good education. When I entered junior high school I asked my guidance counselor if I could be placed in an advanced class, just to see how I would do. They refused. When I entered high school I asked again. This time I had to bring my parents into the meeting. They let me in on a trial basis. I did really well. I was motivated to study harder and go to the library for more information and my grades proved it.

During all of this commotion I joined the Boy Scouts of America, where I learned how to excel in the real world. The Boy Scouts taught me many things about dealing with reality. They taught me what it means to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. I attained the highest rank in Boy Scouts, "Eagle Scout," after eight strenuous years climbing the ranks they had to offer.

On top of being involved in the Boy Scouts I was also working at homeless shelters, cooking food for the homeless, I was captain of the bicycle racing team, and the swim team, and weekend cook at Wood Crest Country Club. As far back as I can remember I was interested in cooking. Working part time at the Wood Crest Country Club really made me strive to become a famous chef. In the beginning of my senior year of high school I applied for an early admittance to the Culinary Institute of America. Once accepted, I then received the best training any good chef would want. I wanted to go to a school that was reputable and very well known. The Culinary Institute of America fit into all of those categories.

After I received my associate degree in culinary arts I figured that I was still young and I wanted to receive a degree in hotel and restaurant management. So again I did research to see which schools would accept my credits and which ones had a good reputation for producing good hospitality management graduates. From there I went deeper and looked at which of the schools was in a major tourist area where I could actually see in practice what I am learning and apply it. Florida International University had all of those qualifications, making it a perfect choice.

My future goals are to travel to Paris, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and Japan to learn different styles of cooking and different traditions and cultures, and then after all of that either come back to the United States and apply what I have learned, or stay overseas and apply it to restaurants in some other country. Then when I feel I have learned enough to start and maintain a restaurant, I would like to open my own as executive chef/owner.

Elena Lebedeva



My name is Elena Lebedeva, and I am from Russia. Since high school I had a great interest in economics, and after graduation went to study economics at Moscow State University. I studied the economies of foreign countries and foreign economic ties, majoring in German economics.

When I was in the fourth year at the university, I had the opportunity to go to Germany as an exchange student. I spent two years in Germany: the first year at the Katholische Universitaet Eichstaett in Bavaria and then a year at the Freie Universitaet Berlin in West Berlin. At the same time I worked for a German-Russian export-import firm and had a great opportunity to gain experience in marketing and dealing with clients. Then I returned to Russia to write my diploma thesis.

After graduation I planned to work for an economic research institute, but the recent political changes in Russia caused a recession in the research field. At that point, I decided to continue my education to bring it to standards corresponding to the new economic situation in my country. I came to the United States to study for the master's degree in hospitality management. I chose the hospitality industry because I believe it has a great future in the United States as well as in Russia. Until now I am very pleased with my choice. I am planning to graduate from FIU in the summer of 1998. During my tenure at Florida International University I want to gain knowledge about the hospitality industry and experience working at different places in order to decide in what segment of the industry I would like to work after graduation.

Marlene A. Hendricks



In these eventful times, one must journey down various career paths in order to determine one's true strengths and "right career." Finally, I have arrived at my career destination, hospitality. Actually, my journey began in November 1983 when I was hired at the Miami Airport Hilton Hotel as a room attendant. I was fortunate to be surrounded by managers who recognized my potential and determination and gave me the opportunity to expand my career path. Initially, I was afraid. There was only one African-American in the front of the house at the hotel. In any event, once I embarked on meeting and surpassing the challenge, I began soaring like an eagle from housekeeping supervisor to PBX (switchboard) operator, front office supervisor, and reservations agent. These positions provided me with a tremendous opportunity to interact with other departments as well as clients of the hotel, including business travelers, convention participants, and banquet attendees.

In my view, hospitality is the ultimate in career choices. It provides significant challenges, varying daily operational requirements, and demands for creativity, resourcefulness, and excellence. Additionally, it provides opportunities to hone one's skills in the areas of organization, planning, administration, sales, and service. Furthermore, the associated networking provides opportunities with favorable implications beyond the hotel and restaurant fields.

After evaluating my skills, potential, and personality, I have come to the conclusion that hospitality and Marlene Hendricks represent the perfect match — the dream combination! I am energetic, creative, resourceful, and self-motivated. I constantly receive compliments in

connection with the pleasantness of my personality. I enjoy meeting people and making them feel warmly welcomed. Now is the time to complement my innate talents and characteristics with additional effective training relating to the hospitality industry. It was easy for me to reach the decision to attend Florida International University's School of Hospitality Management. FIU has a stellar reputation for high



FIU students visit Applebee's Restaurant in October 1996 at the invitation of the assistant manager, an FIU alumnus: Elena Lebedeva, Brian Fry, Colleen Bee Gek Teo, Marlene Hendricks, Gregg Brenner, assistant manager, Nicholas Taylor, Noel Sloey, and Jana Hlasna.

quality education as well as a committed faculty and staff. There is a saying: "You can run but can't hide." In that regard, I do feel like the prodigal child coming home. The hospitality industry is where I get the adrenaline flowing in my professional life. This is where I feel most confident to perform. This is where I excel; this is home, and I am glad to be here.

Colleen, Bee-Gek, Teo



My name is Bee-Gek, but my friends call me Colleen. I was born in 1972 in Singapore and growing up in a multi-cultural society has made me yearn to be in a field that would involve public relations. I finally found what I was looking for in hospitality management.

My search led me first to an education in fashion design at the Hong Kong Polytechnic. My involvement in this creative field enabled me to interact with people from various facets of society. Yet it did not provide me with the diversity that I needed to grow in my career. After three years in Hong Kong, I felt that it was time to widen my horizons. That was when I decided to come to the United States to pursue a course in computer graphics. The course was stimulating but in time it grew monotonous and my interest in it started to fade. It was not until I realized that my fondness for cooking and the knack for organizing could lead into a stable and rewarding career in hospitality management.

I know I have made the right choice because of what I had experienced and learned throughout my journey into self improvement.

Michael V. Pardo



I graduated from the University of Florida in spring 1994 with a bachelor of arts degree in geography, and a minor in business administration and environmental studies. As a geography major, my studies focused on urban and regional planning, and land use. While attending the University of Florida, I was active in numerous organizations and clubs. I am a member of the

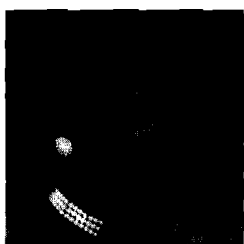
Florida Key Club Leadership Honorary, the Order of Omega Greek Leadership Honorary, and the Kappa Alpha Order social fraternity. I have also served as facilitator for UF's Race Relations Forum, and as a delegate of Florida Boys State in 1989.

I financed approximately half of my undergraduate career by working as the kitchen manager for a local women's social sorority, and as a waiter at several food establishments in Gainesville. These experiences allowed me the opportunity to become familiar with the

hospitality industry, and instilled an interest to pursue graduate school in hospitality management.

I have always been fascinated by the hospitality industry. Since I was a teenager, I have had many opportunities to attend corporate conventions and visit my father during business trips. These occasions instilled a strong interest in the hotel and restaurant business. All my experiences have provided me insight into the rigors and responsibilities demanded by the industry. I am excited and passionate to work in an industry that involves direct contact with others and has been clear to me for a long time. Being very motivated, I take comfort in the challenge of approaching graduate school. I look forward with anticipation to the day I will be a pioneer in the efforts to establish and promote innovative ideas to help catapult the hospitality industry to a new level. My graduation with a master's degree in hotel and food service management will be a credit to FIU, to the hospitality industry, and to myself.

Sandra Bouroncle



I was born in Lima, Peru, in 1968. I went to elementary school in Peru and high school in Caracas, Venezuela. My family moved to Caracas when I was nine because my father was designated to work in the "Corporation Andina de Fomento," an international organ of the Andean Pact. He was the finance director.

After high school, my family and I decided that it would be a good opportunity for me to come to the United States to further my education. I first enrolled at Nova University to learn English. That was in 1987. After learning the language I continued my education at Broward Community College and completed my associate in science degree in hotel and restaurant management.

While attending BCC, I started working as a hostess/cashier at the Holiday Inn in Fort Lauderdale. After three months I moved to Miami and got a job as front desk clerk at the Viscount Hotel, part of Forte Hotels. I worked at the Viscount for about four months and then applied at the Mayfair House Hotel in Coconut Grove. I moved again. And it was a wonderful experience to work in such a beautiful and classy hotel. I was at the Mayfair for 12 years. I started as front desk clerk and was promoted to front desk supervisor. After working there for eight months, I was offered the position of night manager (audit). That was a very hard decision because of the schedule. It was from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. in the morning. I had already enrolled at FIU to pursue my bachelor's degree, so it was not easy. But I realized that it was important to work the night audit as part of my experience.

In November of 1990, the resident manager of the Mayfair went to work to the Travelodge Hotel (same as Viscount) and offered me the

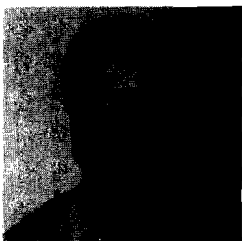
position of front office manager. Because of this opportunity I left the Mayfair and school as well. The hours that I had to invest made it just impossible for me to continued with school. I tried to go back to school a couple of times but work made it very hard.

After being at the Travelodge for 12 years, I was promoted to rooms division manager. I worked in this position for two years. The hotel then was sold in 1994 and converted into a Comfort Inn. I decided that I did not want to work for this company. I always wanted to go back to work to a higher standard hotel. That is what made me stop and put in order my priorities. I understood that if I wanted to move on in this industry, it was essential for me to obtain my bachelor's degree.

I then applied again at FIU in 1995 and started my studies again, this time to graduate. I started working at Shula's Hotel & Golf Club in February of 1995. I told them I wanted a part-time job if possible, something that would not require too many responsibilities. I started in reservations working part time. But after three months they offered me the position of guest service manager (front desk manager).

I truly enjoy this career, and while it is hard now because I'm full time at school and work, I know it will pay off at the end. I also received this month my diploma as certified room division executive, which is a title from the Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Motel Association. My goal is to be a general manager in five years.

Victor M. Ovando



I was born in Mexico in 1969. I have lived most of my life in Mexico City. I completed my bachelor's degree in hospitality management at the Universidad Iberoamericana, obtaining an "Honorable Mention" certificate. My first hotel-related experience was during my undergraduate internship in Cancun and Puerto Vallarta. My professional experience began in a part-time job as a sales promoter for a small Mexican resort-hotel chain while completing my undergraduate degree. After discovering that I am not a sales-oriented person, I shortly changed to FONATUR, the government office in charge of managing public trust funds for tourism development promotion. I worked in the development area as a market analyst, reviewing market studies for future projects. After graduation, I was offered a position at Grupo SITUR, which is one of the biggest tourism development companies in Latin America. As a market research consultant, I had the opportunity to travel all around Mexico, analyzing sites for future developments, as well as planning development strategies for existing ones. While working at SITUR, I also lectured the Marketing Seminar course at the Universidad Iberoamericana for hospitality management students. A year later, I

had an offer from Hospitality Valuation Services to work in the Miami office. Working as a senior consultant for Latin America and the Caribbean, I traveled throughout Latin America, completing feasibility studies for proposed hotels and mega-resort development projects. This excellent opportunity allowed me to increase my experience in fieldwork research data analysis and consulting services in foreign countries.

Approximately a year later, I realized that I needed more skills to be able to continue my career development. Therefore, I decided to pursue the hospitality management master's degree at FIU. Unable to continue as full-time consultant, but eager to increase my professional experience, I found an excellent opportunity at the Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts corporate office for the Americas, where I currently work in the Global Partners Hotels & Resorts area as a intern, but with full responsibilities. After graduation, I expect an offer from Inter-Continental or another international company in the development area, hopefully in projects related to my country. I expect to continue all my life learning new skills and taking more humanities/ arts-related courses, like human relations, psychology of the individual, history, literature, and languages. I have very high goals and expectations for my future development, including people's recognition as an example to follow somebody to learn from, and as a leader.

Joyce Fernandez



A Glass Window: What is reflected? An image revealing childhood memories that seem if they occurred yesterday, yet transpired so long ago. A little girl who was originally born in Miami, Florida, yet moved to Spain at the age of three and then to Germany at the age of five. It became a childhood that was unforgettable: sledding down mountains, fighting with snowballs, picking strawberries in a forest. What more could be desired!

Although it was a perfect childhood, I realized at a young age that being a Cuban-American would lead to play as a strong influence in my life. As I sit and ponder, I can only reflect on the notion that my parents' struggles have instilled in me a sense of determination and drive which I might not have possessed otherwise. I consider my ethnicity to be of preeminent importance to my identity because their position of having to work harder than the rest in order to achieve has instilled in me a sense of fortitude which has made me strive to discredit people's notions about minorities. In turn, this strength has, at the same time, benefited my character by serving as a learning experience.

I came to realize this when I moved back to Miami and attended Westwood Christian School where I feel that my character was fully developed. It was here, during my freshman year, that I suffered a severe knee injury which required surgery. My persona would never be the same. My doctor said that I would never be able to play sports again. The normal reaction would have been to heed the advice of this imposing authority figure. I could not, however, relinquish something as important to me as athletics without at least an effort. I acted on the assumption that I would eventually be able to play again. In a painfully gradual manner, I began to step out onto the various playing fields to which I was accustomed. After using my sophomore year for my recovery, I was named Athlete of the Year for both my junior and senior years.

After completion of high school, I was offered a scholarship to attend Florida International University. I decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in English since throughout high school I had always felt strong ties toward literature and the classics. It was here where a similar experience occurred during my first semester. I was involved in a car accident in which I suffered an injury in the same knee. Again, I was faced with surgery and with the same ostensible obstacles. My doctor and my parents urged me to leave school for at least a semester. Refusing to be limited by my injury, I successfully completed my courses without missing a day of classes.

Upon completion of my degree, it was then that I decided to specialize in a career which would enable me to have a great deal of responsibility and control over the outcome of my work. For this reason, I decided to pursue a career in hospitality management by enrolling in the graduate program. I felt that my conscientiousness, determination, and creativity could have a direct and tangible impact on the lives of others by working in a service-oriented field.

I am currently working at Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, and have had the opportunity to interact with people and help them achieve their ultimate dreams. I plan to graduate in December of 1997 and interview with a large lodging institution. I hope that my experience from this will lead to my ultimate goal: working for Walt Disney World in an upper management position.

Misty Miller



I was born on April 19, 1974, in Miami Beach and have always resided in Florida. I lived in North Miami until I was three, and then moved to Kendall; I have been residing there ever since.

I attended the University of Alabama for my first two years of college. Since I was always interested in the hospitality industry, I decided

to take an Introduction to the Hospitality Industry course. I enjoyed it tremendously and knew from then on I had a great interest in this field. In addition, my mother worked for the Miami Airport Hilton for eight years, and had expressed her interest in my working in the field.

As my grade point average was high enough, I transferred to Florida International University after completing two years at University of Alabama, in order to attend the best hospitality program in the country. I am enjoying the program at FIU and learning a great deal.

I have also always worked in the restaurant/hotel industry. I was a hostess at Miami's Tropical Bar and Grill, as well as at the Cypress Inn in Alabama. I also worked at the Outback Steak House for three years, gaining a lot of experience. Since last December I am employed as a front desk/concierge at the La Voile Rouge hotel on Miami Beach. In my current position I have gained a lot of hands-on experience with various aspects of running a hotel.

Upon graduation, I plan to work for a hotel corporation. I am a cheerful and outgoing individual who loves working with people. I am looking forward to a wonderful future working in a field I love.

Marthe Henry



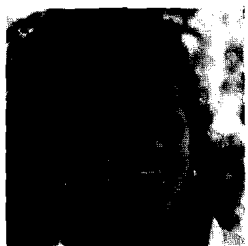
On a beautiful May day in 1970, I came into this world in a paradise called Haiti. Arriving in Miami at the tender age of 13, I spoke very little English. As a result, I was placed in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages.) There I got to interact with people of different backgrounds. I began to appreciate and understand various cultures and love their languages. At school I spoke English, Spanish, Creole, and French. I even learned one or two words of Chinese and Japanese.

In 1992, my love of cultures led me to a semester in Salamanca, Spain, where I stayed with a Spanish family to experience their culture. I have managed to travel thus far to the Caribbean, Mexico, Canada, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. These experiences led me to pursue my undergraduate study in international business with a certificate in Latin American Studies.

I wish to follow my grandfather's footsteps in becoming an ambassador prior to opening a resort in the Caribbean where my love for people and other cultures will prove to be a valuable asset. At present, I am working as a manager for AMC movie theaters. I have been working there for almost two years. During my tenure as a manager, I have

trained the staff for Concession Olympics. They placed third and were praised for being the best team, in terms of customer service, ever to represent the Omni. I love my job because I am able to make a difference in some of the staffs' lives. Consequently, I am always challenged at work.

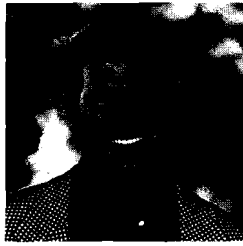
Celeste Ilsa Ritch



I feel like I have been all over the world in my lifetime. It all started with my birth in Barnet, England. My father was doing his medical residency there at the time. Therefore, I started my first two years of life in England. Being a baby, I do not really remember anything and cannot call it home, but it is where I started. My parents, both Jamaican, returned home after the end of my father's residency. This is the place that I call home. I am Jamaican. This was also the next stop on my journey. I have lived in Jamaica for all of my life and despite where I was born, I will always think of it as home. This is where I grew up and learned all the values that I hold strong. It is where my entire family lives.

Despite this, I still had to take another trip, to the United States. I had decided to go to the university and get my bachelor's degree. Therefore, I made my way to Boston, Massachusetts, where I was to live the next four years of my life. While in Boston going to school, it was the first time that I was truly on my own. It was here that I learned three of the most important lessons in life: self-reliance and independence, what I wanted to be when I grew up, and the ability to expand my horizons and be more open-minded. It was during my school years at Boston University that I realized that I wanted to be in hospitality management. After coming to that realization, it just seemed so logical to me and I wondered why it never came to me before. Jamaica, where I want to go back and open my own restaurant, is largely dependent on tourism. Additionally, I am from a big family which entertained often. So, I have always been trained to make my guests happy. It seems naturally ingrained in me. After a wonderful four years in a college town, I decided it was time to move on and take the next step in my journey. I wanted to finish my education and this is what led me to FIU I don't think that any journey is complete because I still am young and there is a lot to see. It has exposed me to different cultures and I think that it will help me in the future in my chosen career. It has given me a world of experiences, but then again, they say "you learn something new every day." The journey is never-ending.

Nicholas Palassis



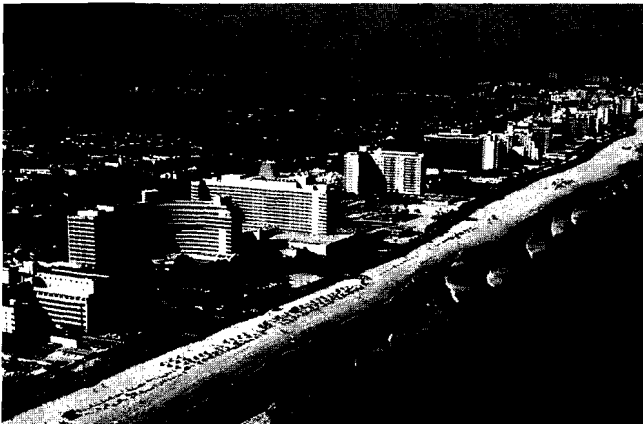
My name is Nicholas Palassis. I am currently finishing my final year at FIU in preparation for graduation in spring. I am from Charleston, South Carolina, the state where my family is in the hospitality business. We own and operate two hotels and three restaurants in various cities. I have worked in this industry since I was 12 years old, traveling up through the ranks. I have performed every job from shucking oysters to cleaning rooms to managing a 122-unit full-service property. After graduation there will be several decisions to be made as to where I will be going with my life. Upon graduation I have been contemplating traveling to New York where I will work and live for about nine months. The reason for traveling up north is to get experience in the industry in a professional atmosphere.

It is here that I also plan to learn the value of a dollar, increase my ambition, and learn how to stretch my earnings in such an expensive city. After this period of time, I plan to return to my home in South Carolina.

My family has two hotel projects that we hope to have come into fruition by 1998. At this time I will be working with my father, helping him manage several properties. My goal is to create a management team to run all the operations in the hotels. I plan to implement heavy training programs in the hotels and restaurants so that we will be able to run an efficient corporation. Since we will operate several properties by 1998, efficient management will be the key to success.

Diversity Is Valued in the Hospitality Field

As we approach the year 2000, the hospitality industry already holds a prominent position in a global community that increasingly



This famous view of Miami Beach draws visitors from all over the world. (Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau)

values the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity among its members. To serve the tourist market in the 21st century, aspiring hospitality managers and other personnel need to have more of a global understanding and awareness of diverse people

and cultures while recognizing the need for multicultural skills in coping with the new risks and opportunities of globalization.

In educating 21st century hospitality managers, highly ranked international programs must capitalize on and take full advantage of the vast cultural and ethnic diversity of their student population which should be regarded as a major program strength. Accordingly, Florida International University serves as a model program of diversity because it includes one of the most diverse student populations in the world. Students choosing hospitality management at Florida International University not only come from diverse locations and ethnic groups, but also have different cultural backgrounds and work experiences. They come from Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Their educational backgrounds include the hard sciences, liberal arts, culinary arts, business, and social sciences. They describe themselves as competitive, cooperative, understanding, and concerned about their ability to serve people.

FIU's model of campus diversity promotes the sensitivity and cultural awareness that the hospitality managers of the next century will require in order to function in the increasingly global industry environment. Moreover, benefits of diversity in the classroom include the following:

- expanding students' range of cultural experiences
- providing fresh perspectives on students' own cultural traditions, helping the resolution of cultural, ethnic and racial differences
- reducing stereotyping and prejudicial opinions on specific ethnic groups
- broadening students' vision of the world
- expanding career horizons
- promulgating heritage pride
- respecting and understanding cultures other than their own (e.g., American students learn to appreciate the hard-working nature of groups such as Asians).

This article presented the FIU School of Hospitality Management as a model of diversity in educating hospitality managers of the 21st century. It included selected students' profiles depicting different backgrounds, ethnic groups, gender, interests, and work experiences which made each individual unique. Diversity has been perceived as an important asset which will foster a rich exchange of ideas and greatly enrich the classroom experience of aspiring hospitality managers. It presents major challenges and opportunities, influencing how students are taught, what is taught, and how faculty must dedicate their own diverse talents and backgrounds to address the diverse class environment. This is therefore a source of information and analysis for a

better understanding of the value of diversity in educating aspiring hospitality managers. It is also hoped that this study serves as a basis for further research concerning career patterns of hospitality students and how their exposure to diversity in the classroom will influence their future.

The next phase of this study will examine specific components of diversity based upon a much larger group of students and will attempt to determine factors accounting for diverse students' selection of Florida International University's School of Hospitality Management, their choice of hospitality career goals, and then success in meeting those goals. A successful school must understand its students in order to serve them well. Finally, the authors believe the presentation of autobiographical sketches by hospitality students gives the industry useful managerial insights. The authors are convinced that where students go in their careers depends upon where they came from, how they view themselves, and what their aspirations are.

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