As recent graduates from the Hospitality program, we wanted to share some words of wisdom and look back on our days at NDSU. Coincidentally, the five of us graduated consecutively since the fall of 2008. We all have different backgrounds in the hospitality industry and different experiences that led us to the CVB, but each of us enjoys the work we do and exciting challenges that come along with it.

For starters, what is a CVB? A Convention & Visitors Bureau is an organization that exists to bring visitors, meeting groups, and events to our destination. We promote Fargo, ND and Moorhead, MN around the country through our positions in marketing, sales, group tours, and event services. Our CVB is funded by the lodging taxes in Fargo and Moorhead, so by educating visitors on what our destination has to offer, we hope they spend a night or two in our hotels.

During a variety of classes at NDSU, we were each introduced to the CVB world by speakers from the bureau. Our passion for travel and tourism and love of the Fargo-Moorhead community brought us into our line of work. Some of us started in a hotel and/or restaurant position, and used that experience to better understand what we are promoting in our city.

While we were attending NDSU, professors encouraged us and shared when positions opened at the CVB. Our staff and the HTM Program Coordinator have a working relationship to allow students to gain experience in our field during their college years. We appreciated the off-site tours and ‘hands-on’ experience like visiting area hotels and planning the Food and Wine Show as a means of preparing us for the industry we work in.

Our advice to you, current students in HTM, is to continue to be active in college programs and take advantage of travel opportunities. Looking back on our years in the HTM program, we can agree on a few things. We wished we would have: 1) participated more in HSA and got involved in other school activities, 2) taken on a management or leadership role in both college programs and in our career, 3) studied abroad or joined a HTM Study Tour, and 4) started planning for our careers while still in school.

Somehow, we must have done something right while preparing for our current jobs, but we still miss plenty of aspects of college life. All five of us agree that we miss the social activities with classmates (we mean the extra-curricular activities like HSA) and the community of students in the Hospitality program. Our favorite classes we took included Beverage Operations, Catering, Restaurant Operations and Resort and Spa Operations.

We want to thank our professors, including the ones that have started endeavors somewhere new, for sharing their passion for the hospitality industry and providing opportunities to advance our careers. We encourage future HTM graduates to make the most of their time at NDSU and take advantage of the opportunities before you. Go Bison!
It has been a very busy year for me, but I think it was very fitting to end it with a hospitality experience overload! Once again, I was very excited to be able to join students on another study tour. The sights, sounds, and flavors of New York City are the epitome of hospitality experiences. The study tour this May provided the students with a glimpse of New York’s vibrant hospitality and tourism industry.

Because the group was small, students were able to have very focused conversations with the industry professionals who hosted us. Aside from site tours and discussions about the operations, students received tips on career planning, resume and interview preparation, and networking.

We visited a variety of businesses that included luxury hotels (Ritz-Carlton and Millennium), large scale special events (Winick Productions), corporate event planning (Accenture and American Express), destination marketing (NYC & Co.), restaurant operations (Union Square Hospitality Group, Pera SoHo), and culinary tourism (Chelsea Market Food Tour). HTM students also enjoyed the different sightseeing tours (by bus around the city and by a cruise along the harbor), one-of-a-kind meals, and Mama Mia! on Broadway.

Next up...Chicago in the fall!

A Note from Jooyeon Ha

This is my second year in Fargo, and I experienced a real Fargo winter for the first time. It was very cold and we had lots of snow this year, but I am happy to have survived! :)

This semester I taught the same classes as last semester: ADHM 435 Cost Controls and ADHM 411 Food and World Cultures. We had the food tasting functions again this semester in ADHM 411, which is the most fun part of the class. We had European cuisine, Latin American cuisine, Asian cuisine, and Regional American cuisine for functions. The students enjoyed the food tasting functions, and it was definitely a great opportunity for them to experience foreign food cultures.

As an advisor of Hospitality Student Association (HSA), I went to Minneapolis for the field trip with HSA and FABO members in February. We toured the Johnson Liquor Company, W hotel, and Mall of America. We also attended the annual student fashion show held at the University of Minnesota. We all had a great time there! Also, the Food and Wine Show by HSA was held in March. I am glad that all HSA members worked very hard and made it successful.

This semester seemed longer than any other semester. This was probably due to the long winter, but finally it is done. I am ready to enjoy the summer vacation.
Greetings! It seems like spring 2013 just came and went! I don’t think the gloomy, cold, long winter weather really helped us to realize we were near the end of the spring semester.

It was another busy semester for me, as always. Along with my regular spring class, ADHM 141 Tourism and Travel course with 84 students, I taught ADHM 360 Lodging Operations (formerly Front Office Management). I restructured the course to a general lodging operation management course in order to provide students the overview of lodging property management. There were 47 students enrolled in the class. The class was full of activities, and several guest speakers were invited. Through Skype calls, a couple of guests from other cities (Minneapolis and Dickinson) were able to speak and interact with the students in class. With this technology, we were not limited to guest speakers in town. I am planning to use the Skype calls or other teleconference tools to invite more guests from remote locations to all my future courses. Students also got to learn how to use an interactive property management system (PMS) called FrontDesk Anywhere which provided basic knowledge about a property management system. For the course final project, they analyzed a hotel property outside of Fargo-Moorhead area and compared with a comparative set of three similar properties. For tourism class, we had a new guest speaker: Mr. Charley Johnson, the new president of FM CVB. While he visited the class he expressed high interest in our HTM program, especially when five of his employees are from our program!

As one of the advisors (along with Jooyeon Ha) for the Hospitality Student Association (HSA), we made a trip to Minneapolis in February, and toured different hospitality businesses such as Johnson Brothers Liquor Company and W Hotel. The 9th HSA Annual Food and Wine Show was another successful one this year. HSA was able to raise $4,332 total from the ticket sales and donated silent auction items. This was all possible because of the hard work from members, officers, local vendors, and business. We are seeing more and more support from our HTM alumni through donations and attendance. We hope that this trend continues in the future. HSA finished the successful year with a celebration dinner at the Oxbow Country Club. New officers for next year were elected at the meeting.

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During the summer months, I will be finishing up a grant project that we received from the North Dakota Department of Human Services to investigate the gambling problem in ND. I am also visiting family and attending a conference. A full summer is ahead of me. Have a safe and great summer!

I think my first year at NDSU went too fast with the variety of meaningful, fun, and exciting activities and student projects. Students taking the Hospitality Marketing & Sales course in the spring 2013 were asked to identify various sales and promotional strategies for a new restaurant concept currently under development (Blue Bison). Specific promotional and sustainable marketing strategies were presented, and the summarized report was delivered to the developer, John Campbell. Blue Bison is a cutting-edge, fast casual restaurant specializing in fresh, delicious, highly customized burgers, wraps, and sandwiches and freshly cooked and seasoned chips and fries (from potatoes straight from the field). Mr. John Campbell said “The name of the restaurant would be ‘BLUE BISON’. We would offer bison burgers as well as the classic beef. There may be more marketing potential with this, for 3 reasons: (A) the obvious association w/ NDSU’s mascot, (B) a somewhat silly concept with a very distinguished, iconic logo and mark, and (C) the healthy, nutritious benefits and untapped market of bison.” Some student proposals included using social media prior to/after the restaurant opening, distributing coupons, selling BisonBasin mug, day by day specials, sweepstakes, and entertainment events.

In addition, students taking Hospitality Marketing & Sales course in the spring 2013 were asked to evaluate the official ND tourism website (www.ndtourism.com). The website was evaluated under three aspects; technical, user friendliness, and site attractiveness of the website. Students suggested various points including updating the color scheme, adding videos and pictures on the events, linking to downloadable travel brochures, and making a “home” button to go back where the website visitors started. The summarized report was delivered to Sara Coleman, the director of division of ND tourism for improving the ND tourism website. Ms. Coleman said “it is a timely project, since ND tourism put a lot of efforts renovating the website and will be launching the new pages in May 2013. The ND tourism division offices will be sharing the students’ suggestions.” Since students in the summer online class of ADHM 381 Hospitality Marketing and Sales also conducted the ND tourism website evaluation project, students’ effort for supporting ND tourism will be continued.
Hello, my name is Laura Kowalski, and I am currently the Business Development Coordinator for the Greater Phoenix area Heart Ball at the American Heart Association (AHA) in Tempe, Arizona. Since graduating from the Hospitality program at NDSU in the spring of 2011, I have held three different titles within the AHA. This organization is very near and dear to my heart as my grandfather has struggled with his own heart health for several years—his most recent operation was having 2 stents inserted into his heart to help the blood flow normally.

To get where I am today, I made a connection while being President of HSA (Hospitality Student Association) at a luncheon held at the NDSU Alumni Center. Dr. Virginia Clark Johnson, Dean of the College of Human Development and Education invited all Presidents and Vice Presidents of student organizations within the college to attend. This was a great opportunity as it connected me with Executive Directors locally and across the country. It was here that I met Nancy Wolff, Vice President of Major Gifts in North Texas previously the Executive Director of the AHA, Dallas Division.

At the time, I was working for ACR Homes—a group home for young adolescents with mental disabilities. However, it was during my final year at NDSU that I knew I wanted to work for a non-profit and kept in contact with Nancy and other non-profit women from the luncheon. After graduating with a Hospitality and Tourism Management degree, I reached out to Nancy about possible job openings in the North Dakota/Minnesota area. She didn’t know of any, but instead she offered me the position of Executive Director Assistant/Office Manager in Dallas as a starting point in my non-profit career. I jumped at the chance to work for this organization though at the time, I knew very little about it.

After just 3 months of being with AHA, I was able to move into the role of Development Specialist for Social Events, helping with both our Go Red For Women (#4 in the country) and Heart Ball (known as Cotes du Coeur in Dallas - #1 in the country) events. In this position, I helped recruit volunteers, oversee Registration, keep track of revenue and expense as well as other logistics for both events. I really enjoyed this new role as I was able to oversee two of the three big events in Dallas. To see and hear survivors talk about their personal stories is a true blessing and not like any other job I’ve ever had. It’s rewarding knowing our mission helps impact so many lives each and every day!

Although my career is very rewarding, I should mention that I am a new mother of a lovely little boy—Cameron. Being a mom and working for a non-profit is not a typical 9-5 job. You can definitely expect to work night and weekend events that can create some bumps in your work-life balance, but if you’re willing to work hard and occasionally a few extra hours—it can be a great career choice!

The best advice for students in the Hospitality and Tourism Management program would be to gain as much work experience as possible while going to school. This will help your resume and give you something to talk about while interviewing for jobs. Also, I highly suggest getting involved in student organizations and talking about your future ambitions/goals with those around you. If it wasn’t for being President of HSA and talking about working for a non-profit—I wouldn’t be where I am today! For those students that are specifically interested in working for a non-profit...VOLUNTEER, ask non-profits about internship opportunities and just be involved as much as possible because opportunities can arise at any time. Those who are dedicated to the mission of the organization are definitely noticed and will have an easier time getting into the non-profit they so choose.

For more information or questions regarding my experience, please feel free to email me at laura.kowalski@heart.org. Good Luck in your future endeavors!
In the summer of 2012, I had the privilege of interning at the Courtyard by Marriott located in Moorhead, MN. I had never even thought of doing my internship at the time since I was new to the hospitality program at NDSU and I wanted to get more involved in my coursework before I did an internship. I was lucky enough to have the General Manager of the Courtyard, Barry Kuhnke, speak to one of my classes. He sparked my interest in the Courtyard and I decided to apply for a job to get started in the hospitality industry. After interviewing for a guest services associate position, I was offered the position with an internship attached. I could not have asked for a better opportunity. Barry Kuhnke, being an alumnus from NDSU and the hospitality program, knew exactly the type of internship that would benefit me the greatest and provide me the opportunities to expand my horizons within the industry.

My internship consisted primarily of me as a guest service associate at the front desk. I was also able to spend time in each of the other various departments such as Housekeeping, Sales, and the Bistro Restaurant to gain a better understanding of the overall property. Having the opportunity to intern at a property with a conference center and experience more than one department of the hotel was the most beneficial aspect of my internship. I was able to learn more than I ever would if I only worked the front desk. Throughout my internship I gained a better understanding of the overall Marriott brand as well as the Courtyard Marriott brand. I was given the opportunity to learn about our service essentials and ensure guest satisfaction through each department and at all times of a guests’ stay. I am so thankful for Barry Kuhnke and all of the Courtyard Marriott staff for helping me learn and grow throughout my internship. I am still currently employed at the Courtyard Marriott and I learn something new every day. No matter where I may end up in life I know that because of my internship and current experiences with the Courtyard Marriott I will have a long and happy future in the hospitality industry. I am excited to see where my next step will take me.

I encourage students seeking internship opportunities to always keep their minds, eyes, and ears open. You never know what you will have the chance to experience. I could not have asked for a better internship experience and I was not even planning on it. Strive and pursue what you are passionate about because in the end that is where you will find your strengths and opportunities that will lead you to greatness.
The 9th Annual Food & Wine Show with Silent Auction was held on Thursday, March 28th, 2013. The show sampled food from 7 local vendors including HoDo, Hilton Garden Grill, Nichole's Fine Pastry, Josie's Corner Bakery, Gastropub, Starbucks, and Mezzaluna. The alcohol was provided once again by Happy Harry's Bottle Shops. 165 guests attended and bid on items from over 50 local vendors. Silent Auction items included multiple hotel stays, Mall of America fun packages, concert tickets, as well as various donations from local food vendors. The Food & Wine Show was the most successful event HSA has ever put on. The show was able to raise over $4,000 dollars to be put to use for student activities for the current and next year.

The Final HSA meeting was held at Oxbow Country Club on Tuesday, April 30. The group toured the facility with GM Joel Livingood and learned a bit about the club management lifestyle. The group enjoyed a fantastic assortment of delectable dishes in a professional setting while the President discussed milestones and achievements for the year. The group also discussed the budget for the year, as well as plans to use the money raised through various activities for the betterment of the University.

Another great year has come to an end. It is great to be a Bison and to be part of a very exciting student association known as HSA. I cannot believe how fast this year flew by! A challenge was offered and once again all the students accepted that challenge. It is a bitter sweet time of year, as many of my peers that I have had the privilege of attending so many classes with will be graduating. As they move onto bigger and better things, I wish them well. I know their hard work will pay off, just as it did here at NDSU. I will be graduating this coming December, and as much as I am looking forward to that time coming, I know I will have a hard time saying goodbye to everyone that I will be leaving behind. My time here at NDSU will never be forgotten. I have made friendships that will last a lifetime, much like the military. I have met instructors that will forever be mentors to me, and ones that I know I can contact and discuss most any personal or career challenges that I may face along the way. I hope to someday very soon come back to one of the many classes that I attended and be a guest speaker, providing insight to future hospitality students.

HSA President—Joshua Williams

HSA Vice President—Tony Baker

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