



HOTEL EZRA CORNELL

ISSUE TWO

Welcome Back!

Happy last day of fall semester classes and welcome to the second edition of the Hotel Ezra Cornell (HEC) 101 Newsletter! Stay tuned throughout the year for all of our updates, highlights, and insights from across the Hotelie community. Join us each month as we count down to HEC 101! Happy Holidays!

Upcoming Events

-  **12/9** ▶ **Destress for Finals with Alumni Affairs Student Engagement Committee**
1:00pm - 3:00pm Willard Straight Hall - Lobby
-  **12/11** ▶ **Calm Down With Cookies**
11:00am - 1:00pm Willard Straight Hall Memorial Room
-  **12/12** ▶ **Student Film Screening**
5:00pm, Schwartz Center for Performing Arts

Industry Insider



Company Challenge

Hyatt wants to reduce costs and move toward an asset-light model by reducing property ownership.

Company Solution

For instance, in June 2025, the company sold Playa Hotels & Resorts' real estate but will continue managing the resorts under long-term contracts.



Company Challenge

Short-term rentals continue to be a fast-growing sector, and even Airbnb is feeling the pressure from new competitors.

Company Solution

Airbnb is expanding its offerings with Airbnb Services and an upgraded app that combines stays, activities, and guest services on one platform.



Company Challenge

McDonald's is trying to compete with the booming specialty drinks market that is dominated by Starbucks and other beverage chains

Company Solution

McDonald's continues to experiment with CosMc's, its small-format drink-and-snack concept, in more cities.



The Behind the Scenes of Hec

Check out more behind the scenes on our Instagram!



October Bonding: Halloween Bonding

People & Culture assistant directors Max Wadwa, Matthew Korniczky, and Cindy Zhao worked together to plan the Halloween themed HEC kick off bonding event. HEC members mingled over pumpkin pie, Halloween candy, and apple cider all while listening to Charlie Brown jingles in the background

November Bonding: Charcuterie Board Bonding

People & Culture managers Callie Shroff and Stacy Qu organized another exciting HEC bonding event that was centered around creating charcuterie boards. Members of HEC were able to bond over their personalized arrangements of cheese, crackers, fruit, and more!



Hotellie Weekend

The HEC Board of Directors spent the weekend meeting hospitality leaders and organizations such as Campari, Hudson Table, and the Food Education Fund. They also attended the Hotellie Hall of Fame, led by Ted Tang '79, which inducted twelve new alumni, all of whom are former HEC board members. Inspired by the stories and perspectives shared, the directors are excited to bring these fresh ideas to HEC 101.

Sales Telethon

Hotel Ezra Cornell members of all departments came together to support the sales team's telethon event. Through this program, students gained experience in pitching the conference to potential guests and developing further networking skills.





The Details Behind the Support Pod

Procurement Department



The Procurement Team's role is to serve as the backbone of the organization and support all of the other HEC departments. Because of this, the team has one of the broadest-reaching impacts on Hotel Ezra Cornell. At its core, Procurement has three main functions: budgeting (managing event revenues and donations), donor relations (reaching out to and negotiating with sponsors), and purchasing (obtaining all necessary items for the conference).

These responsibilities are essential for enabling every other department to operate effectively. This year's conference theme, *All in the Details*, especially resonates with Procurement Director Jason Orenstein '27, who explains, "The details have always been so important to the Procurement Team... we can't lose a detail with the money." Jason plans to be highly intentional in selecting sponsorships, ensuring that each brand aligns with HEC's values and reflects well on both parties. The department is also committed to providing donors with valuable perks and visibility.

Working with the Rooms and Guest Experience Department, the Procurement Team also plans to source amenities that are exceptionally "individualized, personalized, and detailed, instead of just whatever someone will give us for free," said Jason. These decisions help create a truly bespoke experience for every guest. The Procurement Team is excited to build connections and deliver the most incredible weekend possible!

People & Culture Spotlight

The HEC People & Culture (P&C) department is essential for maintaining a positive and collaborative culture within the HEC 101 teams. Two of their major roles this year are to design different HEC bonding events and to manage and train volunteers for HEC weekend.



Some of the bonding events the P&C team have put on so far this year, as seen in *Behind the Scenes of HEC*, include a Halloween gathering and a Thanksgiving charcuterie board event. The Thanksgiving event united all HEC teams for a night of food, fun, and TV. They built charcuterie boards and played the Thanksgiving episodes of the show *Friends*. Since all of the HEC teams are interrelated and rely on each other for success, events such as these help build a welcoming and collaborative environment. Aside from bonding, the P&C team spends a lot of their time working on hiring volunteers that other departments need for HEC weekend. After the volunteers are recruited, the P&C team is responsible for onboarding and managing them throughout the weekend. While this team's work may not be as visual from the outside, they are an essential part of setting the organization culture and why the conference runs smoothly.



Holiday Dish Special

Salmon and Spinach Quiche

Inspiration:

Eva Spak '28, a HEC Sous Chef on the Culinary team, designed a fun recipe for salmon and spinach quiche for you to try at home! Spak's inspiration for this item came from her travels over the summer. On her first day ever traveling alone, she stumbled into a café in Vienna and ordered a salmon quiche. The moment was perfect, and she knew she had to return to Vienna to order that quiche again. And she did return. One month later, while working in Budapest, she impulsively hopped on a train to Vienna on a day off and visited the same café for lunch. She chose to serve this quiche at the HEC Alumni Homecoming event because she wanted to share the joy it brought her with others.

Ingredients:

Crust:

200 g all-purpose flour
5 g salt
100 g cold unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
60 ml cold water

Egg Mixture:

1 large egg
230 ml heavy cream
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
50 g grated Gruyère or cheddar cheese

Salmon and Spinach Filling:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion (finely chopped)
1 clove minced garlic
400 g baby spinach
½ teaspoon salt
100 g smoked salmon, chopped into small pieces
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill



Instructions:

- 1. Crust:** Sift the flour into a large bowl. Add the salt and diced butter. Rub the butter in flour with your fingertips until the mixture is like fine breadcrumbs. Add the water gradually, just enough to make a firm dough. Knead the dough briefly on a floured surface. Roll out the pastry large enough to cover the bottom and sides of the tart pan. Carefully place the dough into a 20 cm (8") fluted tart pan and tuck it in. Prick the dough all over with a fork. Fill the tart with pie weights. Bake for about 15 minutes at 180 °C (360 °F). Remove pie weights. Cook for another 8-10 minutes until golden brown. Let the crust cool.
- 2. Filling:** Sauté onions and olive oil in a large pan on medium heat for a few minutes until translucent. Add garlic. Sauté for 30 seconds before adding the spinach. Cook until the spinach has wilted. Transfer into a sieve to drain excess liquid. Add the dill. In a medium sized bowl, whisk the egg, cream, salt, pepper, and nutmeg.
- 3. Building the quiche:** Spread the salmon pieces and cheese on the bottom of the pie crust. Add the spinach and onion. Pour in the egg mixture carefully over the top. Bake the quiche at 175 °C (350 °F) for 30 minutes or until just set in the centre. Let it cool before serving.



Student Spotlight

As the fall semester wraps up, Matthew Merrill '26 shares insights from his time as a Dean's Assistant, building on his experience on the Dean's Board as well as HEC 100 Design Director. Merrill was first intrigued by the Hotel School since he saw it as a way to bridge his passion for food and entrepreneurial mindset.

He comments on how important mentorship is to him starting out and how he learned so much from the seniors who guided him. The hotel community has always been there for him, which led him to wanting to get as involved in the school as possible to pay it forward.

Merril speaks to the unique role as a Dean's Assistant in that he has the opportunity to interact with both alumni and freshman students. As a student, he has seen it all, from the day students walk through the Statler Hall doors for orientation; they are part of a strong community that supports one another.

Merril expresses how now, with graduation coming up in May, he is able to be the connection between alumni and the new Hotelies and, "inspire the next generations of Hotelies to make this place as good as it can be."

When asked about the key leadership skills he has developed as an HEC director and now as a Dean's Assistant, Merrill highlights the unique opportunities the school provides by giving students both the resources and the trust to make a meaningful impact as leaders. He shares that he has been inspired by a principle within the Hotel School's culture that "you get further in life when you treat others better," and he works to model that for other students in his leadership roles. He notes that carrying this level of responsibility while still a student helps students grow and fosters lasting relationships.



Matthew Merrill '26

Merril reflects on his time at Cornell and the takeaways he will bring with him when entering the hospitality industry as an alumni. He argues that, "there is a necessity for an education in hospitality in today's world now more than ever." Merrill continues to explain that in order for companies to succeed, they need to bring a strong culture, and that starts with bringing service and showing appreciation towards their employees. In addition, with the rise of AI, people are increasingly seeking genuine human connection, and there is no better place to learn how to cultivate it than the Hotel School.

Merril makes his final remarks in sharing that many of the Dean Distinguished Lecture speakers passionately spoke about their time in HEC and strongly recommended getting involved as it greatly impacted their time at Cornell. With this in mind, he encourages students to volunteer for the conference as it provides the space to support your peers. If these were not reasons enough, you can also see Merrill in action as a bartender in April!



Connections

Each game contains five groups of four words, and the words in each group all relate to one another. Can you find all four groups?

GAME #1

Mirror	Itinerary	Espresso	Stitch
Candle	Concierge	Hem	Embroidery
Wake-up	Check-in	Timeline	Feedback
Centerpiece	Chandelier	Napkin	Spreadsheet

GAME #2

Panel	Budget	Sponsorship	Keynote
Pour	Agenda	Inventory	Outreach
Alumni	Plates	Menu	Reservation
Timeline	Name Tag	Garnish	Instagram

ANSWER KEY FOR GAME #1:

Group 1: Finishing Touches
Stitch, napkin, embroidery, hem

Group 2: Guest Journey
Espresso, check-in, wake-up, concierge

Group 3: Atmosphere
Chandelier, centerpiece, candle, mirror

Group 4: Back of House
Feedback, itinerary, timeline, spreadsheet

ANSWER KEY FOR GAME #2:

Group 1: Food and Beverage
Garnish, Menu, Pour, Reservation

Group 2: Conference
Agenda, Panel, Keynote, Name Tag

Group 3: Support
Inventory, Timeline, Budget, Plates

Group 4: Outreach
Sponsorship, Alumni, Instagram, Outreach



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THANK YOU FOR READING!

All of the content was written and created by the HEC 101 Communications Team. Happy Holidays!

Yours in Service,

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