

the people, the moment, the brand.

HOTEL EZRA CORNELL

ISSUE THREE

Happy New Year from HEC!

Welcome to the third edition of the Hotel Ezra Cornell (HEC) 101 Newsletter! As we kick off the New Year, we are counting down to HEC this April with fresh stories and behind-the-scenes looks at what is happening across the hospitality industry. From seasonal inspiration to industry insights, there is plenty to explore as we head into an exciting few months. Happy New Year—we hope you enjoy this month's issue and join us as the excitement for HEC continues to build!

Food Education Fund: Did You Know?

HEC has partnered with the Food Education Fund (FEF), a New York City-based nonprofit that empowers the next generation of hospitality leaders through classroom learning, hands-on experience, and mentorship. FEF hosts several programs, including:

Dine Out: Students attend three workshops facilitated by FEF staff as they begin to develop their professional networking skills. 119 students from High Schools across Manhattan participated, working with restaurants such as Tao Downtown, Cecchis, and Lillia.

Visiting Industry Professionals (VIP): Students meet with industry professionals for interactive demonstrations. Past programmings has included sessions at Ole & Steen with President Joshua Pickens, where the students learned the process of flour milling and how to make Focaccia and making donuts with Chef Brian Lance. This program has 628 participants with 46 demonstrations across 9 schools.

Workforce Development: The development course is a semester-long job training experience that delivers the skills and experience necessary to navigate a competitive career landscape. Students engage in resume-building, interview preparation, and goal mapping. 298 students completed a minimum of 80 hours of training. Professionals from Union Square Hospitality Group, Warner Bros. Discovery/ Food Network, and José Andrés Group introduced aspects of the industry to the students.

FEF also provides internship placements for participants in areas such as back of house, front of house, food media, and food tech. Internship sites range from Cafe Carmellini, Wegmans - Manhattan, Union Square Cafe, and Magnolia Bakery. According to the FEF 2024-25 Impact Report, there were 124 paid internships completed, a 21.6% increase from 2024, with the average income earned of \$17/hr.

In addition, FEF hosts challenges with corporate partners like Colavita Culinary and Hello Fresh, encouraging students to tap into their culinary talents. FEF is also proud to have donated \$81,500 in scholarships in 2025, supporting 43 students in attending University.

Want to learn more or donate today? Turn to the [HEC website](#) for more information!



Food Education Fund hosted immersive student event

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HEC Columns: Hospitality in all Industries

Why Stadiums are Becoming Hospitality Destinations

By: Zayaan Amersi

For today's fans, the ticket is no longer the product - it's the entry point. Modern stadiums are starting to feel less like giant setting venues and more like layered hospitality spaces, filled with clubs, lounges, and areas built for socializing. People aren't only showing up to watch a game; they're coming for the overall experience and the chance to feel part of something bigger.

One of the biggest changes has been the rise of clubs inside stadiums. Instead of seats being defined only by how close they are to the action, venues now offer different hospitality tiers, each with its own vibe. These clubs pull ideas straight from hotels and nightlife - private entrances, elevated food and drinks, and spaces where fans can move around and connect instead of staying glued to one seat. The game is still the focal point, but it's no longer the only reason people stay.

The shift reflects how fan expectations are evolving. Winning will always matter, but many fans now value comfort, access, and the social atmosphere just as much. A stadium club can turn a two-hour game into an all-night experience, from pregame drinks to postgame conversation. Venues like Intuit Dome, the Los Angeles Clippers new stadium in Inglewood, CA, highlight how hospitality-first design and service are reshaping live sports. In the end, attending a game today is less about simply watching and more about being part of an experience.



Banc of California Stadium, home of Major League Soccer team, Los Angeles Football Club

Redefining the Guest Experience: AI and the Future of Hospitality

By: Emma Nguyen

A traveler's convenience reimagined: the ability to experience personalized, seamless service powered quietly in the background by technology. Introducing artificial intelligence in hotels: blending advanced data analytics with hospitality and operations. As hotels adapt to shifting guest expectations and competitive pressures, AI has emerged as a tool to enhance both experience and efficiency while preserving the human core of service.

Today, AI is increasingly present from the moment a guest books a stay. Intelligent pricing systems adjust room rates in real time based on demand, seasonality, and local events, while chatbots and virtual concierges assist with reservations, check-ins, and questions at any hour. Inside the hotel, smart-room technology can learn guest preferences for lighting, temperature, and entertainment, creating a more tailored stay without requiring constant staff intervention.

Behind the scenes, AI supports hotel management in less visible but equally impactful ways. Predictive maintenance systems monitor building infrastructure to anticipate repairs before issues disrupt guests. Workforce management tools help forecast staffing needs, improving scheduling efficiency while addressing labor shortages. These systems also protect the long-term value of hotel real estate by reducing operational costs and extending the life of physical assets.



Mocked up visual of the Lybra Assistant Revenue Management System, an AI-data-driven revenue management system

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Detoxing in the Alps: Inside the Boom of Luxury Wellness Retreats

By: Lindsay Reis

If you have spent any time on social media in the past year, you have likely seen an influencer or two documenting their detox stay at a luxury wellness retreat in the Swiss Alps. These elevated wellness getaways have rapidly grown in popularity, positioning themselves as the ultimate escape for individuals seeking to reset and recharge both physically and mentally.

Prices for these experiences vary dramatically, ranging from approximately \$1,600 per night to upwards of \$24,000 per week, reflecting the exclusivity and highly personalized nature of the services offered. Park Hotel Vitznau, located on the shores of Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, encourages guests upon arrival to fully immerse themselves by walking around in their robes and slippers. Similarly, Chenot Palace in Weggis, Switzerland, offers advanced detox programs like diagnostic tests, medical consultations, and fully customized, specialized diets. Together, these retreats illustrate a broader shift in the hospitality and luxury tourism industries toward experience-driven and health-centered travel.

Rather than focusing solely on leisure or sightseeing, travelers are increasingly prioritizing long-term well-being, preventive health, and mental clarity as key components of their vacations. This trend is especially prominent among high-net-worth individuals, for whom wellness is not viewed as an indulgence but as an investment in longevity and overall quality of life. As demand continues to rise, luxury wellness retreats are likely to become even more technologically advanced and medically integrated, further blurring the line between hospitality, healthcare, and lifestyle branding.



Waldhotel by Bürgenstock, located 1476 feet above Lake Lucerne on the Bürgenberg mountain

**REGISTER FOR THE
CONFERENCE TODAY!**

April 16, 2026 – April 19, 2026

Cornell University
Statler Hall and The Statler Hotel
Ithaca, NY 14853



**The registration link
is live on our website:**

www.hotelezracornell.com

Or scan the QR code below:



The Details Behind the Food & Beverage Pod

Check out more behind the scenes on our Instagram!



Food & Beverage Department

The Food and Beverage department is one of the most influential teams that will allow HEC 101 to run smoothly. The F&B department has a largely managerial role, as they oversee the entire F&B pod. In addition, each member of the F&B department is responsible for managing their own function teams, which include a representative

from each department within the F&B pod and are tasked with planning and executing all F&B experiences during HEC weekend. Currently, the F&B department is working on its annual Pop-Up event. Pop-Up is an opportunity for the F&B departments to practice for HEC weekend by testing menu items, centerpieces, floor plans, designs, and overall service for Cornell faculty and Statler Hotel staff. It allows teams to identify potential issues and improve their events. Function teams receive feedback to refine details and ensure the event's success, and are responsible for implementing any necessary adjustments. This is just a snapshot of the work that the F&B department does in managing and preparing the entire F&B pod for HEC weekend. We are appreciative of their hard work and are excited to see their months of planning come to life in April!

Food & Beverage Service Department

Alongside the F&B department and the other teams in the F&B pods, the F&B Service Team is busy preparing for Pop-Up, an annual event that helps them perfect their service in preparation for the April conference banquet. First-year students in this department are quickly learning under the guidance of their



director, Vegas Chiddick '27. Melody Xu '29 said, "We have been working on the details of our food displays... what equipment we need and how much." As she explains, this Pop-Up event is valuable because "professionals can give us tips, things that we can't really see, things we might have overlooked." HEC 101's theme of All in the Details is especially reflected through teamwork in service: while collaborating with Conference Services and Design, Deacon Coffman '29 said, "We're all working together to make sure that everything we are doing is cohesive... to make sure that the details in each group are matching." Alisa Arana '29 adds that, "it's good to work in a team because sometimes they can see details that you would not have seen." The F&B Service Team is excited to work together and ensure the events runs smoothly!



Beverage Spotlight

You Survived the Stacks!

Inspiration:

Lucy Abrahamson, MMH Beverage Lead, developed the featured drink for Friday's MMH Lunch at HEC 101 by drawing inspiration from the event's "golden hour" theme. While searching for ingredients that naturally carried a warm, golden hue, she was drawn to tamarind for its rich color and distinctive tangy flavor. Wanting the beverage to feel both elevated and celebratory, Lucy incorporated bubbles as a nod to milestone moments, creating a bright, refreshing drink that captures the warmth, joy, and sense of accomplishment at the heart of the celebration.

Beverage Ingredients:

1.5oz Tamarind and Ginger Simple Syrup
0.5oz Lime Juice
3oz Sparkling Water

Beverage Recipe:

Build in a flute/champagne glass and garnish with a sugar swizzle stick!

If you want to jazz it up, replace the sparkling water with Sparkling Wine (HEChampagne perhaps!)

Tamarind and Ginger Simple Syrup Ingredients:

6 Tamarind Pods
2 inch piece of Ginger, peeled and grated
1 cup Granulated White Sugar

Tamarind and Ginger Simple Syrup Recipe:

Peel the shell of the tamarind off and remove the seeds. Soak the tamarind for 15 minutes in warm water to help break down the flesh. After 15 minutes, combine 1 cup of water with 1 cup of sugar and heat in a saucepan on medium until sugar is dissolved. Add the ginger and tamarind (discard the water the tamarind soaked in). Change the heat to low, and occasionally stir for 12-15 minutes. Remove from the heat, let cool to room temp, and strain using a cheesecloth. Store in an airtight container in the fridge until use.



Dish Spotlight

Karaage Chicken & Waffles

Inspiration:

Matthew Cheung '29, a member of the HEC Culinary team, created a nostalgic twist on the classic chicken and waffles. Inspired by his Asian heritage and his experience working in Japanese restaurants, Cheung incorporated karaage-style chicken into the dish. He paired it with Eggo waffles to reflect the blending of comfort food nostalgia with personal culinary influence. By serving this dish at HEC, Cheung hopes to share a familiar favorite reimagined through his own background and experiences.

Ingredients:

- 300 g Boneless Skin-On Chicken Thigh
- 3 tbsp Soy Sauce
- 1 tbsp Sake
- 5 g Ginger, minced
- 10 g Garlic, minced
- ¼ cup Potato Starch
- ¼ cup Maple Syrup
- ¼ cup Soy Sauce
- Eggo Waffles



Instructions:

1. Cut chicken thighs into 1 inch pieces.
2. Combine soy sauce, sake, ginger, and garlic together. Add to the chicken pieces and marinate overnight or a few hours.
3. Drain any excess liquid from marinated chicken. Add potato starch and mix until each piece is fully coated, thoroughly press each chicken piece to create bits of starch, add additional starch if needed.
4. Make glaze by combining maple syrup and soy sauce in a pot. Cook until reduced and can coat the back of a spoon. Let cool fully.
5. Fry marinated chicken in 300°F oil for 2 minutes. Set aside.
6. Reduce soy sauce and maple syrup together until slightly thickened and coats back of spoon.
7. Fry chicken again at 350°F until golden and crispy (~3 minutes).
8. Toss chicken in soy-maple glaze.
9. Toast Eggo waffle until warm. Place 1 waffle and 3-4 pieces of chicken into a paper cup lined with deli paper.

Hotelie Travel Adventures

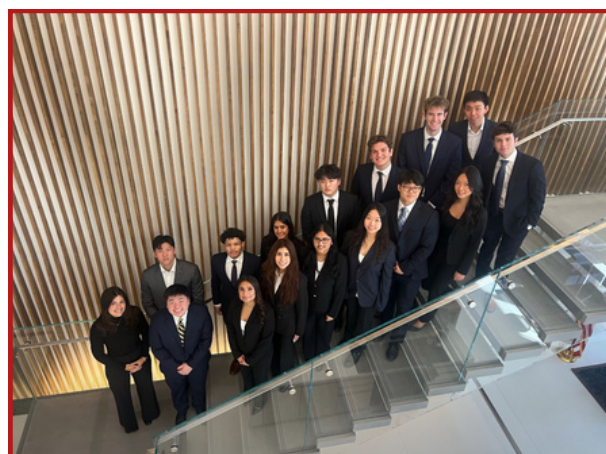
NYC Career Trek

225 Miles from Ithaca, Hotelies traveled to New York City this January through a program offered by the SC Johnson College of Business, delving into a field of their choice: Real Estate, Consulting, and Finance. Students specifically interested in Real Estate, such as Max Wadhwa '28, had the opportunity to visit Colliers, a firm brokering hospitality deals; Link Logistics, a Blackstone portfolio company focused on distribution centers; and Tishman Speyer, a real estate firm that acquires and develops properties.

Immersed in these Manhattan firms, Wadhwa was able to “hear directly from directors, senior analysts, and Hotelie alumni to learn more about the companies.” Wadhwa found it particularly valuable to learn about employees’ work-life balance and what they actually do, sharing, “You can see yourself in their shoes.” Networking with people who might read a student’s resume and gaining insight as to what happens inside the buildings is an invaluable experience. As a bonus, the career trek allowed students to explore New York City, providing a hands-on look at the business world beyond their Ithaca classrooms.

Napa Valley HLDP Trip

2,754 miles from Ithaca, members of Statler’s Hotel Leadership Development Program (HLDP) flew out to California’s famous wine region, Napa Valley. Outstanding student employees of the Statler Hotel from various departments were accompanied by the Statler Hotel’s general manager, Arthur Keith, and HLDP’s professor, Lily Jan, on a winter immersion trip. The group visited a variety of resorts, wineries, and vineyards, such as Stanly Ranch and Solage (both part of the luxury Auberge Collection), along with Opus Winery and Sequoia Grove Winery. Students also peeked behind the scenes of the Michelin-starred Four Seasons Auro restaurant.



SC Johnson College of Business Students pose for a photo at Colliers International



Peek behind the scenes at the Opus Winery

Evelyn Wu '27 said it was “a great trip to learn about West Coast hospitality, pretty different from the East Coast.” She explained, “I myself am in the Rooms Department, and outside of Statler Hotel, I’m all about F&B...I was really able to take advantage of his trip and see both sides.” Evelyn also said this trip would be an eye-opening experience, allowing students to learn about the high standards of these outstanding establishments and apply those lessons to their chosen field. Overall, students gained practical exposure to renowned hospitality while enjoying the California sun.

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We Want to Hear from You!

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THANK YOU FOR READING!

All of the content was written and created by the HEC 101
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Yours in Service,

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