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HOTEL EZRA CORNELL

ISSUE FOUR

One Month Until Hotel Ezra Cornell!

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Hotel Ezra Cornell (HEC) 101 Newsletter! As we continue counting down to HEC this April, this issue brings you further behind the scenes of what makes HEC come to life. Alongside these inside looks, you will find personal columns and insights into our F&B teams. We hope you enjoy this month's issue and join us as you discover more details that shape HEC 101!

Food Education Fund: Meet the Faces



Chayil Hyland '25, developed industry experience through the Food Education Fund (FEF) through classes, competitions, and internships throughout NYC

What was your favorite part about being a student of FEF?

It's hard to choose just one thing, but I mostly loved being able to experience all of these life-altering opportunities with my friends. I ate at my first fine dining restaurant, traveled to Italy, and had countless opportunities to learn from renowned chefs all through FEF, and I got to experience all of those things with my closest friends (we are still friends to this day)! It felt extremely special being able to experience my favorite things with my favorite people, and also cheering them on as they also got access to opportunities they worked so hard for. Truly a privilege!



Alice Navadeh '21, the Senior Director of Partnerships and Development at Food Education Fund

What inspired you to get involved with FEF?

Although I didn't expect to build my career in the nonprofit space, I realized early on that hospitality and nonprofit work are very closely aligned. They're both all about service to others, and this passion for service is what drew me to the Hotel School in the first place. Getting to help build a nonprofit that supports the next generation of an industry I love is a dream come true. Everything I learned at the Hotel School—from relationship-building to experience-making, and even finance—helps shape the meaningful partnerships I build every day. They also mirror what we aim to teach our students: how to create value, lead with intention, and serve with excellence.



Danielle Beam, the Executive Director of Food Education Fund

What does FEF's mission mean to you personally?

FEF's mission is personal to me because hospitality shaped my own trajectory. My mom told us to work in service before doing anything else while growing up because it teaches you how to read a room, anticipate needs, and solve problems under pressure. I've drawn more from my experience in FOH in boardrooms and donor meetings than from any textbook. FEF is about delivering that kind of professional development at a formative age and in an approachable way. A hospitality mindset builds transferable skills that elevate you in any career. Ultimately, this mission is about launching students toward opportunity with agency, competence, and a real village of support behind them.

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HEC Columns: Hospitality in all Industries

Lessons to be Learned from Walt Disney

By: Laura Fenessey

Walt Disney is one of the most famous people to ever come out of the hospitality industry. His unmatched creativity, business ambition, and vision have allowed the Disney brand to thrive for decades. His theme parks have pushed boundaries never seen before in the world of hospitality and amusement parks. The first lesson we can learn from Walt Disney is to focus on creating a “magical experience” for guests. Guests look for places that give them unique experiences and unforgettable memories. Disney has gone above and beyond to create theme parks that are far from ordinary. Their four different parks in Florida- Epcot, Animal Kingdom, Magic Kingdom, and Hollywood Studios- all offer completely different rides, amenities, and attractions.

The second learning is to deliver exceptional customer service and pay attention to detail. The small moments are what can make or break a customer’s experience, which is why Disney focuses on building well-trained, energetic, and motivated employees who can deliver exceptional customer service.

The final takeaway from Walt Disney’s legacy is to build a strong culture. Company culture is such an important part of a successful business because it focuses on teamwork, mutual respect, and a passion for work. A happy and positive company culture shows through interactions with guests and has contributed to Disney’s long-term success. The Disney theme parks are a perfect example of combining unique memories with exceptional customer service, leaving guests with a memorable experience.



Disney World in Orlando, Florida, opened in 1971, known as “The Most Magical Place on Earth”

Elevating the Pre-Flight Experience: How United Polaris Lounges Redefine Airport Hospitality

By: Rena Salsberg

Airports are becoming increasingly linked to hospitality, specifically in the approach to airport lounges. Lounges are places where guests of certain airline statuses can comfortably await their flights, United Polaris Lounges, in particular, illustrate how airport spaces can embody the core principles of hospitality. Designed for international business-class passengers, these lounges move beyond the standard waiting area and create an environment focused on comfort, privacy, and attentive service. In doing so, they reflect how hospitality is not limited to hotels and restaurants, but extends to any setting where guests are served and cared for.

A key element of hospitality is anticipating guests' needs, and the Polaris Lounges demonstrate this through intentional design. The spaces include quiet seating areas, private workstations, shower suites, and rest areas to ensure each guest's comfort. The lounges allow guests to escape the bustling and sometimes overwhelming, high-stress environments of airports and enjoy a hotel-like experience before their flight. The various food and beverage offerings at these lounges also embody the core values of hospitality, ranging from snacks to plated meals and premium drinks.

This attention to quality and details communicates high respect and care for guests, and elevates the overall experience. United Polaris Lounges demonstrate that lounges are more than just a place to rest and recharge before your flight. The thoughtful design, quality amenities, and a focus on guest well-being make lounges an integral part of the travel experience and a pillar in hospitality overall.



Polaris Lounge, an exclusive, premium airport lounge for long-haul international business class passengers on United

*the people, the moment, the brand.***Where Masterpieces Meet Michelin Stars: Dining at The Modern**

By: Larissa Mallen

The Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh is one of the most iconic paintings, housed at the Museum of Modern Art. Within the museum's walls lies another treasure: The Modern. With a view of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, The Modern is the perfect restaurant to enjoy a meal after exploring the MoMA. Located at 11 West 53rd Street in Midtown, Manhattan, The Modern is a two-Michelin-star restaurant that has been in operation for 20 years.

The restaurant is not just located inside the museum; its menus reflect the current exhibits. The Food and Beverage Director, Diana Delli Santi, described the process of meeting with the exhibition team and developing drinks and menu items to celebrate those works. The Modern offers à la carte or eight-course tasting menus, including Maine lobster atop smoked eggplant and roast lamb with spiced cherries.

A signature dish is *Eggs On Eggs On Eggs*, a multi-layered dish served in an egg-shaped vessel with fried eggs, dill-infused olive oil, a runny poached egg yolk, and finally topped with caviar, created with the intent to match the MoMA masterpieces.

The Modern also holds a three-star review in the New York Times, four James Beard Awards, and the Grand Award from Wine Spectator. Keep this spectacular restaurant in mind at your next museum visit!



The Modern, a French/New American fare in a modernist space with garden views at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC

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April 16, 2026 – April 19, 2026

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



**The registration link
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www.hotelezracornell.com

Or scan the QR code below:



The Details Behind the F&B Pod

Check out more behind the scenes on our Instagram!



Design Team Department

The Design Team has the holistic role of conceptualizing and creating menus, color palettes, lighting, music, and service. The team creatively translates abstract concepts into tangible designs through communication within their own team and with others, to successfully bring the theme of “All in the Details” to life. This month, they have been busy preparing order forms, building installations,

and most notably, executing Pop-Up, a dress rehearsal event for the official Saturday plated dinner in April. Within the design, the intricacies are what define the event ambiance. Assistant Director of Design Logistics Lily Miller '28 highlighted how small details—like wax-sealed menus and individualized key place cards—create a cohesive brand and elevate the guest experience. For first-year students, HEC requires learning new skills quickly while upholding the conference’s high standards. Design Manager Lovely Gerochi '29 shared that organizing the bouquet-making station meant working through logistical hurdles, backup plans, and sustainability concerns, ultimately leading to a strong solution. After collaborating across departments, the design team is eager to see their vision come to life and watch guests experience the final result.

Culinary Service Department

The Culinary Department is responsible for all meals served to guests and staff during HEC weekend. This includes designing the menus, scaling the ingredients, cooking the recipes, and making sure all of those are executed timely and efficiently. The culinary team is one of the larger HEC departments, but it is split into subgroups for each meal. Each subgroup is tasked with creating the menu for one meal throughout the weekend.



Many of the meals include multiple courses and an array of various delicious recipes. The Culinary Department also works closely with the Beverage Department to ensure that the food and drink menus complement each other. The culinary team has to place a special emphasis on the scale to which they prepare the recipes, ensuring they have enough for each guest. HEC 101’s Pop-Up event was a great opportunity for the Culinary team to test one of their menus and fix any issues that arose. Using Pop-Up as a learning experience allows Culinary, as well as other departments, to better prepare themselves for what to expect on HEC weekend. Executive Chef, Evelyn Wu, described her team as very “energetic”, a quality that is represented in their dedication, collaboration and commitment to delivering meals that exceed expectations.

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Beverage Service Department

As HEC quickly approaches, the Beverage Department is beginning to shift into execution mode, laying the groundwork for a successful weekend behind the bar. Over the past few weeks, the team has been preparing for the conference, and has mostly focused on refining the menu, confirming ingredient lists, and scaling recipes for large-volume service.

The team has simultaneously planned operational details such as how to practice safe food/beverage handling. Beyond crafting and creating the beverage menu, the department has prioritized building a strong service team for the weekend. After recruiting volunteer bartenders, leadership organized in-depth training sessions designed to prepare the team for the conference weekend events ahead. These sessions covered a variety of lessons, including event flow to proper drink construction and presentation standards. With multiple events on the schedule that the beverage department will be involved in, they are thoughtfully planning, organizing, and preparing. The department is positioning itself to deliver a polished, high-energy experience that will elevate HEC and leave a lasting impression on attendees.

Conference Service Department

The Conference Services department works closely with all the teams in the Food and Beverage Pod to coordinate the logistics and floor plans for HEC weekend. This involves determining bar placement, arranging each table, and deciding where certain design elements would best be highlighted. The members of this team have spent the year working on the floor plans and safety procedures for HEC 101.



Right now, they are working on creating tutorial videos so volunteers will know how to assist them in setting up and taking down each event. This department requires constant communication with other teams such as culinary and design so that everything flows smoothly between them and looks seamless. Chase Schwartz '29 adds that he likes working on the Conference Services team because he gets the “creativity of getting to personalize an event.” Being on this team gives the members a holistic view of the conference, as they are closely involved in all aspects of bringing the conference together.

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Opinion: ILR Perspective on Hotel

By: Emma Nguyen

I knew from the start that Hotel Ezra Cornell (HEC) was not the typical club for a student majoring in Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR). At Cornell, HEC is widely known as a predominantly “Hotelie” organization, a place where students knowledgeable in hospitality operations, service standards, and guest experience design come together to run one of the university’s most celebrated events. Walking past the club fair table, I remember wondering what it would be like to join a hotel-based organization as someone who knew virtually nothing about the industry. I will admit there is an initial awkwardness to it. You are surrounded by people who speak a professional language you never learned. I have learned the acronyms “DDLs” and the ins and outs of Food & Beverage courses from peers in HEC.

Being an ILR student in a hotel club like HEC means experiencing hospitality through a lens that goes beyond service delivery and guest experience. While many Hotel School students are trained to excel in hospitality business education, the ILR perspective centers on the people, structures, and workplace dynamics that make those outcomes possible.

From this perspective, the event becomes more than a hospitality operation: it is a living example of organizational behavior. ILR has taught me how to observe how roles are structured, how decisions are made, and how communication shapes efficiency and voice under pressure. The coordination among Food & Beverage, Conference, Support, and Outreach teams highlights the division of labor and interdependence that society runs on in the labor force.



By doing so, HEC makes the work of multiple departments visible and helps strengthen the shared purpose that allows the organization to function as one coordinated system.

An ILR perspective also brings attention to the human side of service work. Hospitality depends on emotional labor — maintaining professionalism, warmth, and composure even in high-stress moments. Rather than viewing these as soft skills, the ILR perspective recognizes them as essential forms of labor that influence workplace culture, morale, and guest experience alike.

Ultimately, being an ILR student in a hotel club has taught me to see hospitality not only as a service industry but as a complex system of human relationships and coordinated labor. It reveals that exceptional guest experiences are inseparable from the quality of collaboration, leadership, and respect within the workplace itself.

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THANK YOU FOR READING!

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