




HOTEL EZRA CORNELL

ISSUE FOUR

We're One Month Away From HEC!

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!

Upcoming Events

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3/10 ▶ **Career Fair: Hospitality & Real Estate**
 9:00am-2:00pm Barton Hall
- 
3/11 ▶ **HEC Bonding Event: Cultural Cupcakes**
 4:30pm Statler Hall - Room 396
- 
3/20 ▶ **HEC Bonding Event: Ice Skating**
 7:00pm Lynah Rink

Industry Insider



Company Challenge

Fast-casual brands are under pressure from rising food costs and labor shortages, while consumers demand faster, more frictionless ordering experiences.

Company Solution

Sweetgreen is scaling its “Infinite Kitchen” automation model to boost speed, labor efficiency, and order accuracy in high-volume markets, while driving stronger digital adoption. The initiative reinforces Sweetgreen’s position as a tech-forward hospitality brand redefining fast casual operations.



Company Challenge

Event demand remains strong, but venue operating margins are tightening due to security, insurance, and production costs. Fans also expect seamless digital ticketing and premium experiences.

Company Solution

Live Nation has expanded dynamic pricing tools and premium VIP experiential packages across major venues, while investing in mobile-first venue experiences (cashless concessions, faster entry tech). The company is leaning into transforming venues from ticket-based businesses into fully integrated hospitality ecosystems.



Company Challenge

High production and operating costs require consistent premium demand to justify immersive venue investments.

Company Solution

Sphere expanded branded immersive experiences and corporate partnerships to diversify revenue beyond headline residencies. The focus: maximizing content monetization within a fixed-cost mega-venue model.



Inside Nolan

If I Were Starting Nolan Again, I'd Do These Things Differently

At the Nolan School of Hotel Administration, it is easy to believe that success comes from doing everything: joining multiple organizations, attending every company information session, and constantly expanding your network. But when seniors reflect on their time at Nolan, the advice they often give is surprisingly simple: be more intentional with how you spend your time.

One of the biggest lessons is understanding what networking actually means. Many students arrive thinking the most important connections will be with recruiters or industry professionals. In reality, **the relationships that often matter most begin inside the Nolan community itself.**

As senior Austin Friedman explains, “Relationships with my peers, who might one day become my colleagues. Relationships with professors who become lifelong mentors. Relationships with alumni who guide me in the Hotelie community wherever I am.”

Another common realization is that **comparing yourself to others rarely helps.** Nolan students follow very different paths, and trying to measure your progress against everyone else can quickly become distracting. Instead, focusing on your own trajectory allows you to build stronger relationships and explore opportunities more naturally.

Students also tend to learn that **being busy is not the same as making progress.** With so many organizations and events available, it is easy to say yes to everything. Friedman admits he did the same early on, joining several Nolan organizations and attending nearly every company information session.

Looking back, he believes a more thoughtful approach would have been better. “Being intentional with your time is often far more valuable than simply filling your schedule.”

Finally, many of the **most meaningful experiences at Nolan come from stepping into situations that feel uncertain.** Studying abroad, exploring new internships, or pursuing opportunities outside the Hotel School often leads to the most growth.

As Friedman puts it, the mindset that matters most is simple: “Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.”

At a place like Nolan, where opportunities are everywhere, the real challenge is not doing more. It is choosing what actually matters.



The Details Behind the f&b Pod

Check out more behind the scenes on our Instagram!



Design 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 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 Department 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. Director, 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.



Beverage 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 Services 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.



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.



Hospitality Riddles!

**(1) The more I shine, the more you pay.
I cannot be bought, only earned.
What am I?**

**(2) I arrive when you're finished,
But I'm not part of the meal.
You don't order me,
Yet you always receive me.
What am I?**

**(3) I open doors but have no teeth.
I disappear when you check out.
What am I?**

Answers: (1) a five-star rating, (2) the bill, (3) a keycard



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THANK YOU FOR READING!

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