Hotel-Restaurant Management and Travel & Tourism students traveled to the west coast in September where they toured Los Angeles and took a four-day Carnival cruise that visited Catalina Island and Ensenada, Mexico. For the first time, all 41 students who participated on the tour were first required to complete an online tour orientation course that utilized the new CLEGIA distance education online platform. “We found this to be a tremendous way to prepare the students for the realities of modern-day travel,” said Hospitality Studies department chair, Kerry Sommerville. “There’s so much about travel that they don’t know – especially post-9/11.”

The online course not only focused on such things as airline and cruise ship travel, but it also provided insights into the history, geography, and culture of each of the areas that the students would be traveling to.

Universal Studios & Hollywood were kick-off points

The group began their tour in sunny Los Angeles where they were provided admission tickets to Universal Studios Theme Park. “Universal was fantastic,” said Travel student, Holly Hill. “The back lot and studio tours were my favorite part.”

The next day, students toured famous Hollywood and Beverly Hills, taking in such sights as Grauman’s Chinese Theater, the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and Rodeo Drive. A quick pit stop at one of Hollywood’s most famous eateries, Pink’s, was also on the itinerary. “For a hot dog stand, this place was really cool,” said Hotel/Restaurant Management student, Rashauda Anderson. “They had autographed photos of every celebrity imaginable.”

Catalina Island & beautiful Ensenada, Mexico

Long Beach was the final stop on this second day of the tour, where Carnival’s new passenger terminal is situated beside one of the world’s most famous ocean liners, the Queen Mary, which now operates year-round as a permanently docked hotel. “I had no idea we would be seeing the Queen Mary,” said Travel student, Loretta Aud. “That was a real bonus.” Students then boarded Carnival’s MS Ecstasy which would become their luxurious home-away-from-home for the next four days.

The ship’s first port-of-call was Catalina Island, where students awoke to see the glistening, yacht-laden Avalon bay. “I loved Catalina,” said Hotel-Restaurant Management student, Jeremy Downs. “There’s a lot of history there, and Avalon is beautiful.” Some students tried their hand at snorkeling while others chose to tour via rented golf cart.

“They don’t allow cars on the island,” said Travel student, Richard Jordan, “so getting around by golf cart is a great way to check things out.”

The final stop was Ensenada, Mexico, located on Mexico’s scenic Baja Peninsula. Students spent the day shopping and sampling the region’s famous fish tacos. Some of the group visited a nearby winery; others hiked cabs and toured the beaches and resort hotels. “We had over eight hours in the port of Ensenada,” said Hotel-Restaurant Management student, Aaron Embry. “There was plenty of time to explore and even relax a bit before heading back to the ship.”

Touring the cruise liner’s galley

“Ten-thousand pounds of beef; 8,000 pounds of poultry, 1,200 gallons of milk, and 48,000 eggs! This is a sample of our weekly grocery list,” said the ship’s food and beverage director as he led students on a tour of the ship’s nerve center, the galley. “We prepare and serve more than one and a half-million guest meals here annually,” he explained. As students toured the ship’s galley, they soon realized that catering on this grand scale requires a great deal of planning, preparation, man-hours, and food. “Considering all that’s going on here,” said student Matt Wilson, “I’m amazed at how clean and orga- nized the kitchens are.”

This five-day tour of the west coast wrapped up at Los Angeles International Airport where the tired but happy group boarded their Louisville-bound flight for home. “It was an awesome experience,” said student, Ashley Levett. “I can’t wait to go on the spring tour.”

Hospitality instructor speaks at Arkansas tourism convention

Hospitality Studies instructor, Chef Albert Schmid, recently visited Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was invited to speak at the 59th Annual Food, Lodging and Travel Convention and Trade Show. State tourism officials asked Chef Schmid to conduct two seminars: “Gastronomic Tourism and its Potential Economic Impact on the State of Arkansas.”

The annual convention, sponsored by The Arkansas Hospitality Association, includes the Arkansas Travel Council, Arkansas Lodging Association and the Arkansas Restaurant Association. The convention and trade show attracted several thousand visitors, and Schmid’s presentations were well-attended. “Most people don’t realize that Arkansas supports six good-sized wineries,” said Schmid.

Schmid has been with Sullivan University for nearly five years, and he is currently completing a Master of Arts degree in Gastronomy from the University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia. His recently published textbook, “The Hospitality Manager’s Guide to Wines, Spirits and Beers” is now on bookstore shelves and also available on campus.

Sullivan instructor Michael Yarmuth, Finance, was recently invited to speak at the Arkansas Hospitality Association. His comprehensive lecture, “Fundamental Common Stock Analysis” was very well received by the students who are now using Yarmuth’s information for their portfolio simulation project.

Waiting at Carnival’s Terminal in Long Beach are left to right: Aaron Embry, Jeremy Downs, Rachel Bonfiglio.