Student learning in the Virgin Islands. Wow! What a great place to have classes!

by Stuart Wilson, Hospitality Management Instructor

Even Tropical Storm Maria did not prevent Sullivan students from visiting St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands on their Learning Journey! One of two fantastic trips students take as part of their degree program. Nearly 60 students and six faculty and staff from Sullivan’s Louisville and Lexington campuses’ Tourism & Event Management and Hotel/Restaurant programs departed from Louisville International Airport at the end of the 2011 summer quarter for a learning journey to St. Thomas. Even though the plane was diverted to San Juan, Puerto Rico due to refueling and strong winds, the trip went off without a hitch and provided many great opportunities for learning. The group arrived in St. Thomas, an old Danish settlement bought by the United States in the early 1900's. Students stayed at the Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, an all inclusive resort nestled in a small bay on the beach. Students had ocean view rooms and easy access to the private beach. After a long flight from mainland, students rested, explored their new resort home and had dinner on their own, completing their first night in paradise.

Shopping in Charlotte Amalie

Many students signed up for shopping in downtown Charlotte Amalie. After a short talk by a local shopping expert, students boarded open air buses for the quick 20 minute ride into town. Designer stores blanketed the downtown area and students enjoyed duty free shopping till they dropped. Even a scavenger hunt was arranged for free prizes if you followed the map properly! You could even bang on the salsa bottles!

Nightly dinners and entertainment

Students eagerly anticipated the dinner hour when the entertainment started. Located within the resort was Iggy’s, an outdoor cafe’ nestled along the waterfront that even Jimmy Buffett himself could easily call home! Students enjoyed a pig roast buffet one night and an all-you-could-eat crab leg dinner the next - not to mention the entertainment: Karaoke Night, Carnival Night and just listening to the live music on other nights was awesome. Some students watching the surf roll in and the warm tropical breezes after a day of sightseeing and educational talks. Louisville seemed like a world away especially after the Sullivan Beach Olypmics where students tried their expertise on ocean tricycles, paddle boards, raft swimming and more.

Tours and educational talks

Students were kept busy and could not wait for the tours and educational learnings. Students toured St. Thomas and all that it had to offer. A visit to Coral World gave students the unique opportunity to pet petting zoo turtles and even sea lions. Iguanas roamed freely along the grounds and marine life could be explored via an underwater platform with instructional narratives.

One morning the resort staff reviewed island challenges in completing a full scale resort. Can you imagine hosting a huge dinner party and the main entrée not being shipped? If it doesn’t make the ship, it is not going to be available. Purchasing in and of itself is a real challenge in an island economy while running amenities is another. Students also enjoyed the honor of having two representatives from the United States Virgin Island Tourism Office speak on the challenges of marketing a destination; the island is dependent on tourism dollars to thrive.

One of the last tours was a ferry ride to the island of St. John. This “sister island” of St. Thomas is more rural and has a vibe all its own. Students enjoyed a half day of snorkeling at “swimming in one of the world’s top ten beaches” was awesome.

Students also boarded a catamaran sailboat and cruised the harbor while being served appetizers and cool drinks. After a long day of sightseeing, it was time to board the plane back home to prepare for their Fall quarter. But the memories of the Learning Journey to St. Thomas will last a lifetime.

Students Jim Bradford, left and Gary Bajdek demonstrate a brewing process.

Beer anyone?

by Professor Eddie Maumey, CHE, CBFE Hotel/Restaurant Management and Professional Beverage Management Programs

While Beer, Wines & Spirits sounds like a fun and exciting class, it could also be challenging without tasting the subject matter! Sullivan faculty opt to use the most effective techniques of interactive and collaborative learning. Students are encouraged to research topics related to the course’s main learning outcomes and share the knowledge with the class. This year’s summer quarter has been exceptionally productive. I felt blessed to have a remarkable group of curious and talented students who made the Beer, Wines & Spirits class extremely producive and enjoyable through Power Point presentations and demonstrations.

Gary Bajdek, an enthusiastic home brewer exhibited a home brewing process in class. Gary, Jim Bradford, and Lisa Poe used ingenuity to support their presentation on distillation by creating an apparatus as a visual aid to help their classmates to understand the mystery of distillation. What great role model Sullivan’s faculty looks forward to continue making learning fun and productive.

Distinguished Visiting Chef Series is terrific perk for Sullivan students

Each quarter Sullivan students have an opportunity to gain tips, techniques and recipes from famous chefs who visit the campus and demonstrate their skills. The main campus has had two outstanding guest since the last issue of the Herald.

2011 Spring Quarter: CHEF WALTER BUNBY

Chef Bundy, Executive Chef from the famous Lemaire Restaurant at the historic Jefferson Hotel in Virginia was also a featured chef at the renowned James Beard House in New York and has appeared on the Food Network with Bobby Flay. Dedicated to providing upscale Southern cuisine that showcases the bountiful seasons of Virginia, Chef Bundy delighted students with his demonstrations of Vidalia Onion Bisque with Virginia Country Ham, Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab and garlic chives. His entre was a Fried Green Tomato and Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Salad with a Mango Salsa. Each quarter Sullivan students and faculty from Sullivan’s Louisville and Lexington campuses take a beach break for a quick 20 minute ride into town. Designer stores blanketed the downtown area and students enjoyed duty free shopping till they dropped. Even a scavenger hunt was arranged for free prizes if you followed the map properly! You could even bang on the salsa bottles!

2011 Summer Quarter: CHEF DAVID RUSSELL, CEC, AAC, CB

Chef David Russell has more than 25 years experience in the food service industry and currently serves as a Corporate Cheif Executive. He is very active in the culinary community serving as Past President of the American Culinary Federation (ACF), Chicago Chefs of Cuisine and as the ACF National Vice President. He specializes in Italian cuisine and his Evan’s Bluestem demonstration reflected his culinary expertise. Chef Russell prepared VPN Authentic Neapolitan Pizza, Farro Salad, Linguistina and Chick Pea Soup, Pepperdalle alla Lepre, Roast Veal Breast with Roasted Potatoes and a Swiss Chard Tart.

Chef Colby Garrelts, owner of the famous Bluestem restaurant will be the Distinguished Visiting Chef for the Fall 2011 quarter. The next Herald will highlight his November 10th presentation.