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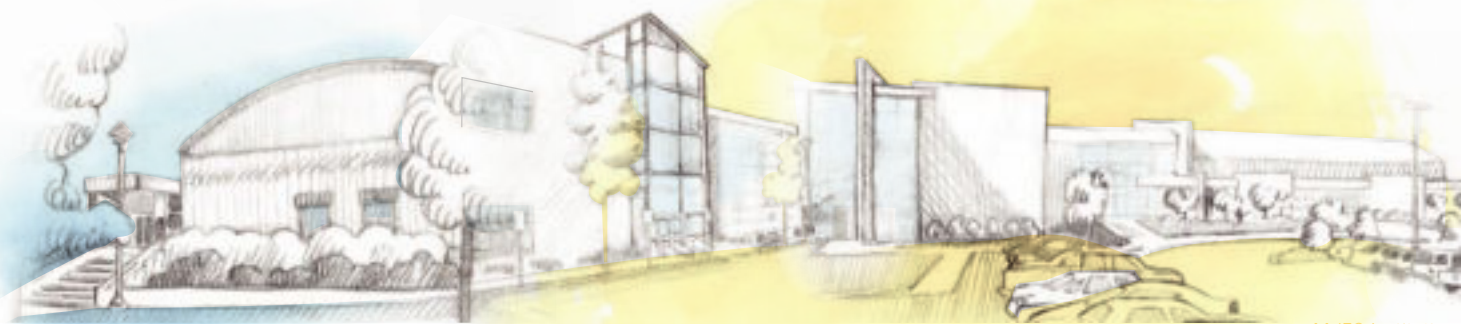
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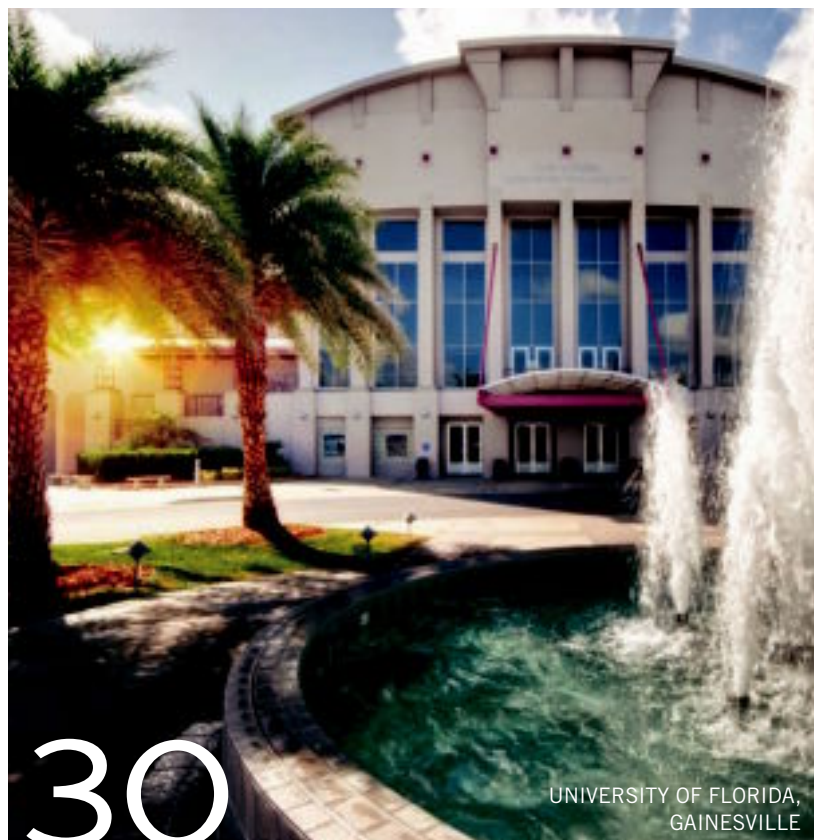


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PRODUCED BY  
TIGER OAK MEDIA  
900 South Third St, Minneapolis, MN 55415  
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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



A PUBLICATION OF:  
UNIQUE VENUES

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# PUBLISHER'S LETTER



**I**T'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE we've heard the words "housing boom," but one is, in fact, currently happening on college and university campuses. Today, there is a premium placed on higher education as more and more people seek advanced degrees; and the more people that move to campus, the more attention that is being paid to upgrading and expanding living arrangements.

As old buildings are torn down or rehabbed and new high-rises are erected in their place, the way of the old dormitories is changing. Yes, this is the dawning of a new age in collegiate accommodations. Welcome to the modern residence hall.

Because what's good for the student population is good for the collegiate conference guest, we have dedicated the cover story in this magazine to this very topic. Our "Resident Adviser" feature will help you navigate the new terrain and give you all the knowledge you need to understand accommodations for your next meeting or event held on campus. Unlike other publications that just cover meeting space, this first-of-its-kind story will give you an exclusive look at where you'll be convening—and also where you'll be staying. You won't find this in any other magazine!

Interviewed are four major universities across the U.S. and Canada that, together, give an in-depth tour of four types of rooms, from the shared residence hall to the hotel-like guest room, that fit every type of budget. This story is brimming with illustrative photography that lets you see inside each room and understand what comes with it. We also dig deep into the bathroom arrangements, the linen availability and the extra amenities you might not know are available to you.

Residence halls are not the only area where universities are building, though. Profiled in our "State of the Student Union" feature, you will read about the trend of expanding and enhancing these central hubs. As more locations add on to existing structures, many are opening up the doors to visiting guests with meeting spaces, rec areas, food courts and even movie theatres so groups can have a self-contained business and entertainment center.

With all of this new construction, you have to wonder: Is there something special happening on campus I should know about? We think so.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Nichols".

Michele Nichols, Founder  
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# CLIFF NOTES

## power points

BY SANDY DAWSON



Campuses like the Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Indiana, PA offer many benefits for meeting planners over traditional hotel ballrooms.

## CAMPUS TOUR:

### 3 TIPS to Make the Transition from HOTEL BALLROOMS to UNIVERSITY VENUES

*Just like your first day at school,* making the transition to a new place can be challenging and nerve-wracking if you don't have all the information. Thankfully, **Sandy Dawson**—a planner with Accelerated Christian Education (ACE Ministries) who has booked events at Indiana University of Pennsylvania—has three helpful tips on how to easily make the move from planning with hotels to hosting meetings in a campus setting.

1

**START THE PROCESS EARLY.** You'll want to provide RFPs and secure your space several months to a year out from the date of your conference. Because universities have to be mindful of student and athletic schedules, the more notice, the better chance of getting your preferred date.

2

**DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP.** The best first step is to make contact with the conference coordinator right away, and give him or her all of your specs in writing. It helps to ensure a smooth line of communication between you and the campus and also prevents anything important from being left out in those important initial conversations.

3

**LOOK FOR PACKAGE DEALS.** Colleges and universities usually have great food in their dining halls so you should look here first for meal options rather than outside catering. Many times you can arrange per person packages that will save your budget and bottom line. **uv**

#### GET CONNECTED

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# CLIFF NOTES

expert advice BY JIM JENKS

## *Spirit Guide:* Reasons for Hosting Faith-Based Meetings on Campus

*From creating kosher kitchens to adhering to no-alcohol policies,* colleges and universities are becoming more and more attuned to the needs of religious-based organizations looking to host meetings in a collegiate setting. With these advancements, trends are showing that up to 20% of faith-based planners now consider campuses for their meeting and event needs, says Jim Jenks of Collinson Media & Events (the organizer of the annual Rejuvenate Marketplace tradeshow). Here is his advice on the benefits of hosting religious functions on campus.

### COST SAVINGS ADD UP

Cost is one of the biggest factors behind choosing a campus setting. Because the rates of the residence halls are so much more affordable, planners can get more bang for their buck, including saving on meals.

### UNIVERSITIES ARE ADAPTING TO CUSTOMS

Collegiate conference departments are eager to accommodate religious groups that are different and unique in their own ways. And many are adapting, especially when it comes to food and making sure kitchens are primed to meet the customary needs of these groups. There are more and more people of all faiths with special dietary needs and catering is keeping up with the demand for providing gluten-free, kosher and vegetarian menus.

### HOUSING IS ADAPTABLE

More so than hotels, campus housing is arranged to meet the needs of traditional groups who'd like to book separate spaces for men and women. As well, there are a number of options suited to family or youth groups, too.

### MAKE RFPS DETAILED

The biggest rule of thumb for planners is to work on building a relationship with a collegiate conference department and always be as specific as possible with them, especially on the RFP. If there are any unique needs for your group, large or small, you'll want to list them in your proposal so that the team can know what you will need and will be able to accept or decline the request if they can't meet the requirements. **uv**



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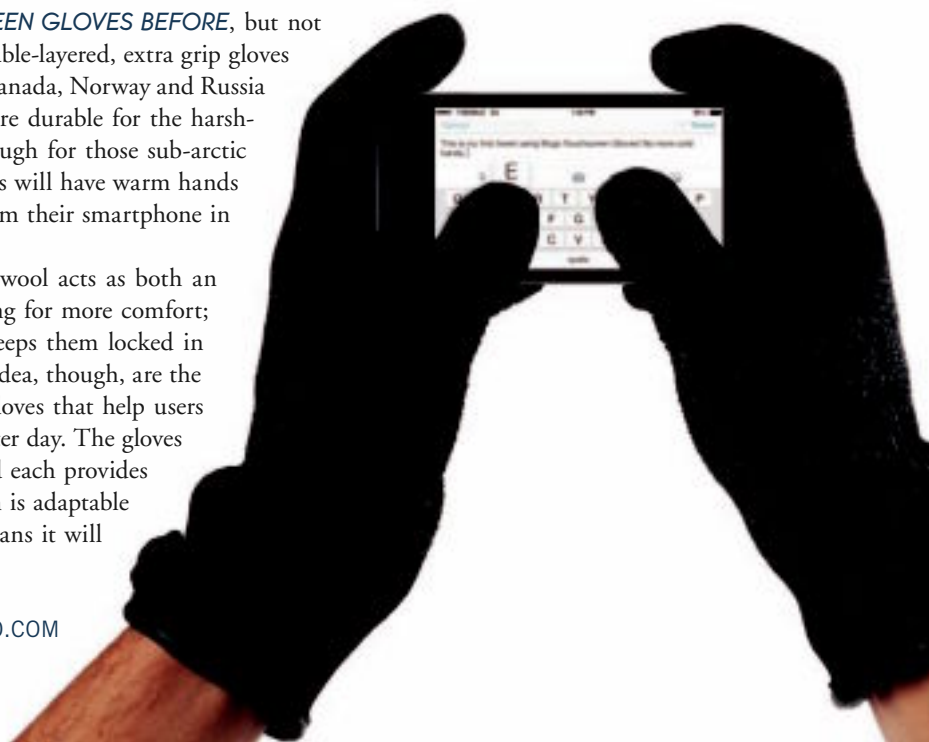
## cool gift idea

### GOLDEN GLOVES

*YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN TOUCHSCREEN GLOVES BEFORE*, but not like this. Developed by Mujjo, these double-layered, extra grip gloves were made in response to customers in Canada, Norway and Russia who needed something warmer and more durable for the harshest winter weather. And if it's good enough for those sub-arctic residents, you can be assured your clients will have warm hands while they're answering your e-mails from their smartphone in the dead of February.

Inside these gloves, an extra layer of wool acts as both an insulator and additional lining, providing for more comfort; as well, a stylish button strap closure keeps them locked in place. What's really cool about this gift idea, though, are the grip dot patterns on the palms of the gloves that help users hold on to their devices on a snowy winter day. The gloves come in sizes S/M, M/L and L/XL, and each provides extra stretch to fit any hand. The design is adaptable for any smartphone or tablet, which means it will also warm the heart of any recipient. [uv](#)

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*BUZZ REGISTRATION RECENTLY LAUNCHED* a new website that provides enhanced technology for QR code name badge production, cloud-based check-ins, scanning and lead retrieval. It's just more ways the company is catering to modern meeting planners with a full technology suite that offers assistance every step of the way, including a more streamlined check-in process for events large and small. Other capabilities include housing selection and travel services, making Buzz Registration a one-stop shop for busy planners to get their job done with ease. [uv](#)

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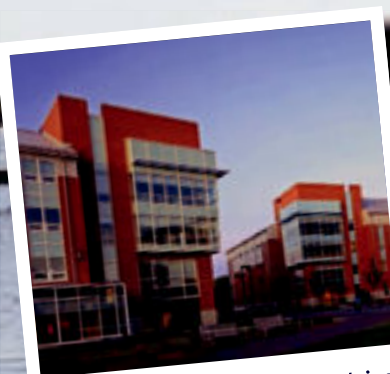
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# CLIFF NOTES

home-cooked meal

## *Charred Tomato & Espresso Bisque Soup,*


Courtesy of The College of Idaho

*This recipe was crafted by Tim Reinbold, executive chef, College of Idaho in Caldwell, Bon Appetit*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 6 Heirloom tomatoes, char-grilled and cooled
- 1 Small onion, diced
- 2 cups Cream
- 1 Clove garlic
- 2-4 Shots of espresso
- Fresh tarragon

### TO PREPARE:

1. Sauté the onion and garlic until translucent.
2. Add diced tomato and simmer until all three ingredients are cooked together.
3. Puree and strain the mix through chinois.
4. Return the ingredients to heat and add cream and espresso to taste.
5. Season with salt and white pepper and garnish with chopped tarragon. 



### GET CONNECTED

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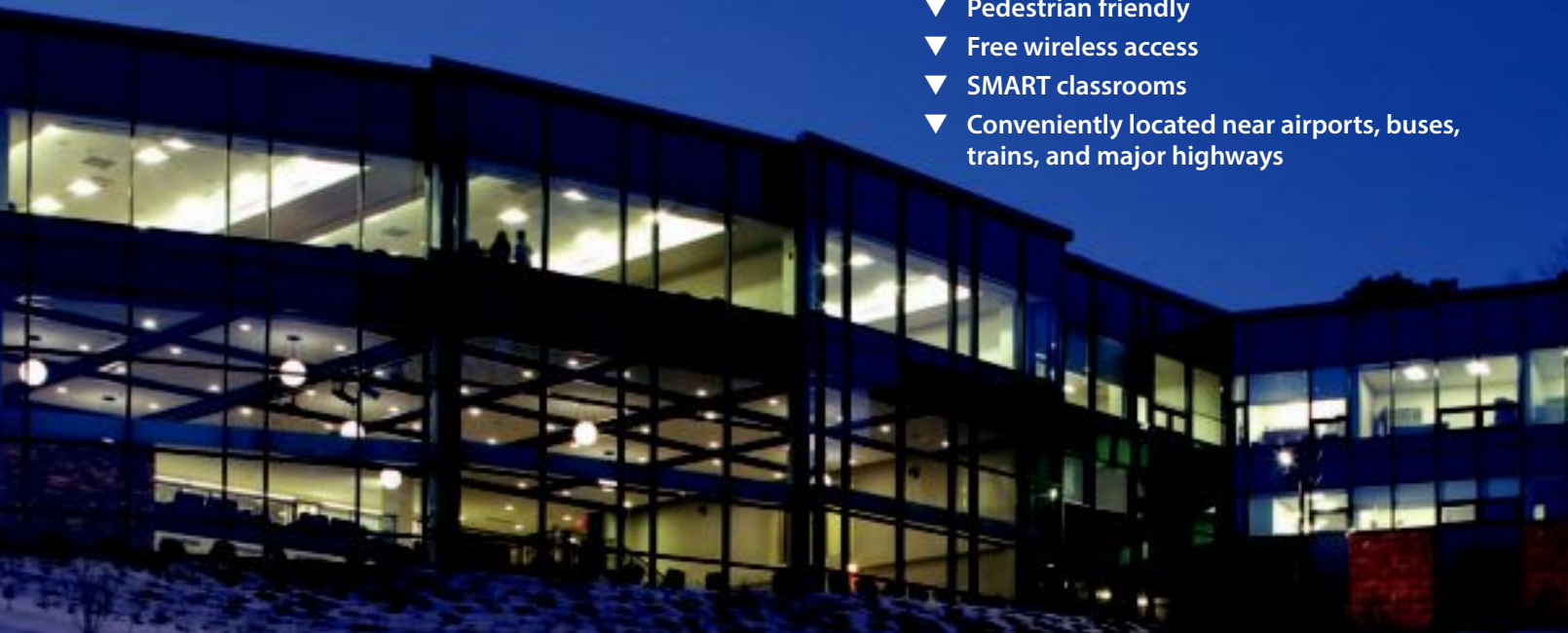


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# CLIFF NOTES

## home-cooked meal

### *Wilted Spinach Salad with Digby Scallops*



#### INGREDIENTS:

- 24 Digby Scallops (approximately 1.5 lbs.)
- 1 Lime (zest with a fine grater and reserve the juice)
- 3 Tbsp Extra Virgin olive oil
- 4 tsp Garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp Shallots, finely chopped
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1-½ lb. Fresh baby spinach
- Salt and pepper

#### FOR CANDIED WALNUTS:

- ¼ cup Walnuts, coarsely chopped
- 3 Tbsp Granulated sugar

#### FOR CRANBERRIES:

- ¼ cup Fresh cranberries
- 1-¼ cup Granulated sugar
- 1 cup Water

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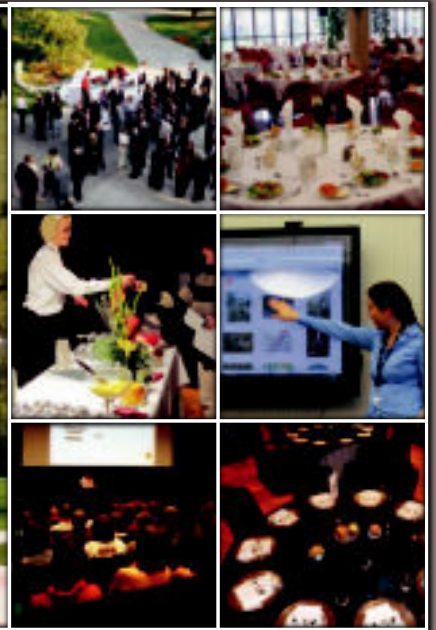
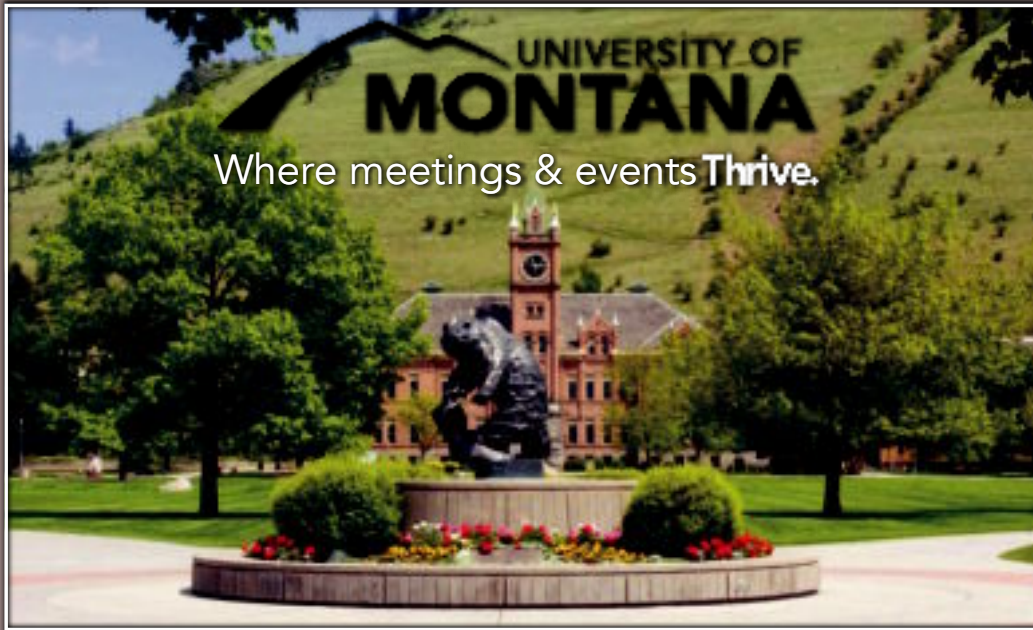
Courtesy of The University  
of New Brunswick

*This recipe was crafted by Leanne English,  
executive chef with Sodexo at  
UNB in Fredericton*

#### TO PREPARE:

1. Start making the candied walnuts: Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat and add the walnuts and sugar. Stir until the sugar melts and the walnuts are well coated, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and transfer to a parchment lined pan and cool until ready.
2. Then prepare the cranberries: Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium heat and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Bring to a simmer for 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the cranberries. Pour mixture into a bowl and let cool. Wrap and refrigerate for at least 8 hours. Drain and set aside.
3. Remove muscle from scallop.
4. Combine lime zest, lime juice, 1 Tbsp olive oil, 2 tsp garlic, shallots and Dijon mustard. Add the scallops and toss to evenly coat. Let them marinate in the refrigerator for about 20 minutes.
5. Heat a large frying pan over medium heat and add 1 Tbsp of olive oil.
6. Remove scallops from marinade and pat dry with paper towel. Season with salt and pepper. Reserve 2 Tbsp of scallop marinade.
7. Sear the scallops until they are nicely browned on one side and continue to sear the other side until the internal temperature reaches 145 degrees. Remove and hold temperature of 140 degrees.
8. Heat another large frying pan over medium heat and add the reserved marinade from the scallops and chopped garlic. Cook until the garlic is lightly brown. Add the spinach and stir just until wilted. Season with salt and pepper. **uv**





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# CLIFF NOTES

## signature drink

### *Mountain Magic*

courtesy of Colorado Mountain College

*When Colorado Mountain College says their coffee is “fresh,” they really mean it.* “I can get coffee beans delivered to the campus within 24 hours,” assures Skip Lee, dean of student affairs for the Leadville, Colorado school, “and it’s some of the best around.” It’s all because of a unique partnership the school’s food service provider, Sodexo, has with local roaster Kirk’s Coffee. Founder Kirk Jeffrey exclusively provides his fair trade, estate grown beans to be used for drip coffee service during conference meetings and also supplies the higher-end specialty espresso drinks for year-round purchase at the school’s onsite Coronado Café.

“The relationship really aligns with the college’s sustainability efforts to buy as much local food products as we can. We want to support the local businesses in our community,” Lee asserts. In fact, the two share a common bond: in a town with an impressive elevation of more than 10,000 feet, Colorado

Mountain College/Leadville is the highest college campus in the U.S. while Kirk’s Coffee is one of the highest roasters. To celebrate, Kirk’s even gifted the school with its own signature Colorado Mountain College Blend. “Once Jeffrey educated us on what good coffee is, we just won’t settle for less.”



#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 oz. French roast espresso shot\*
- 6 oz. House blend coffee\*
- 1 oz. Hot water
- Cinnamon stick
- Whipped cream
- Sprinkle of nutmeg & cinnamon
- (\*Kirk's Coffee is recommended; order at [kirkcoffee.com](http://kirkcoffee.com))

#### TO PREPARE:

1. Make one shot of French roast espresso and pour into bottom of your favorite mug.
2. Add 6oz. of house blend coffee and 1 oz. of piping hot water.
3. Add fresh whipped cream and sprinkle with fresh ground cinnamon and nutmeg.
3. Garnish with a fresh cinnamon stick for stirring. **uv**

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# INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

BY SELENA FRAGASSI

## The State of the *Student Union*

As more and more universities expand their central hubs, community is becoming the focus.



When it is completed, the ASUC Student Union at UC Berkeley will offer a 10,000-square-foot ballroom among other spaces.

*A recent report on Best College Reviews* unveiled the “25 most amazing campus student unions,” going on to say that, “Universities and colleges are currently in the midst of a building boom nationwide, as they are investing tens and hundreds of millions of dollars to revitalize their student unions.” So why the sudden interest? It’s a two-fold mission, says Kelsey Finn, the executive director of the soon-to-be-opened ASUC Student Union at University of California Berkeley.

“There’s been an abundance of research about creating community space for students outside of the classroom so they can engage and interact with each other as well as faculty and the community. Also, we are getting smarter in knowing that there are certain times of the year when these buildings just sit empty, and if we open up the spaces and utilize them for outside groups that could benefit from an affordable, convenient, accessible venue, it’s a win-win for everybody.”

When completed, the ASUC Student Union will host a 10,000-square-foot

ballroom, multiple meeting rooms that can seat 6 to 90 people, a business center, food service and coffee shop. “We will be open to weddings, camps, conferences, business groups, etc.,” Finn states, noting the center will be available year-round, unlike other campus buildings.

Kevin Slesh, director of real estate at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, eyes a similar approach for the school’s new Tinkham Veale University Center, which will open in August with a 9,000-square-foot event space among other amenities.

“Our hope is that this facility becomes a place for the community to collaborate and congregate, so it’s not just a student center that is frequented or visited only by our students, but open to the public as well.” The 82,000-square-foot building is a \$50 million dollar project, most of which came through donors, allowing a more liberal, open-door policy.

Although, at U.C. Berkeley, student fees cover a good deal of the cost, Finn says there needed to be something to make up the difference. “We couldn’t rely on all operational costs coming from



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# INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

BY SELENA FRAGASSI

the fee. So we decided that commercial activities would help fund and support the building during the academic year.”

It's an initiative that's worked well for Ohio's Bowling Green State University at their Bowen-Thompson Student Union, which offers a full-service pub, movie theater, food court, post office and two-story bookstore. A grand ball-room has hosted previous guests ranging

from the National Youth Conference to the Heavy Metal Conference as well as a special book signing and talk by activist and author Elizabeth Smart.

“Our motto in conference services is ‘transforming our space into your place,’ says Michael Brown, manager of guest relations. “We can take our space and transform it over and over again depending on what group is in that building.

We've brought in dueling pianos and a real casino with slot machines. We've worked with our animal science program to bring in animals for various events. We have a pretty open policy as long as we're not starting a fire inside of the building,” he says, laughing.

It's a similar situation at Queen's University in Charlotte, North Carolina, which has hosted everything from the



Left: In August, Case Western Reserve University will welcome the Tinkham Veale University Center. Top: Queen University's Levine Center for Wellness and Recreation has hosted the DNC and YMCA.



Top and Right: Bowling Green State University has formal spaces in their student union. It's one of the offerings in a multi-level building that also has a two-story bookstore and movie theater.





Democratic National Convention to the yearly Father-Daughter dance sponsored by the YMCA. Here, the Levine Center for Wellness and Recreation is considered the school's student center. Opened in August 2013, the three-story, 145-square-foot building offers classroom spaces alongside a 33-meter pool, basketball courts, volleyball courts, dance studio and walking track. A large conference room seats 152 people. "The great thing about that space is that it's right next door to our parking garage," says Tamara Osborne, director of conference and event services. "Plus, our onsite caterers are able to do meals in this space."

Although there are a number of benefits to hosting events at a student union, Slesh is quick to make sure planners know, "this is not an exclusive type of arrangement where there would be the run of the building. ... there's the chance that you'll be interacting with the students or other people casually using the center."

But for Finn, that's just one more plus. "Groups come to a campus because of the vibrant environment, so I think there is a great learning process and an educational opportunity when the public meets higher education." **uv**

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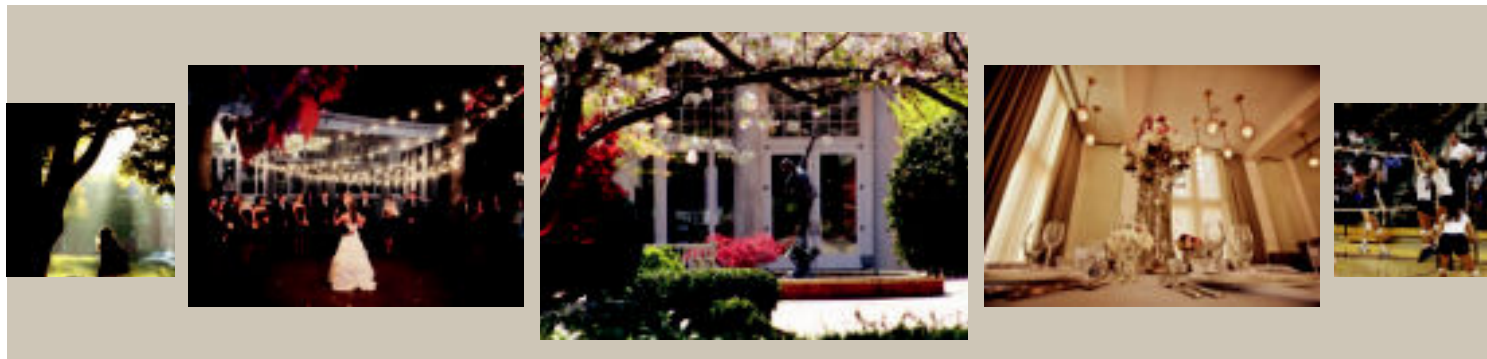


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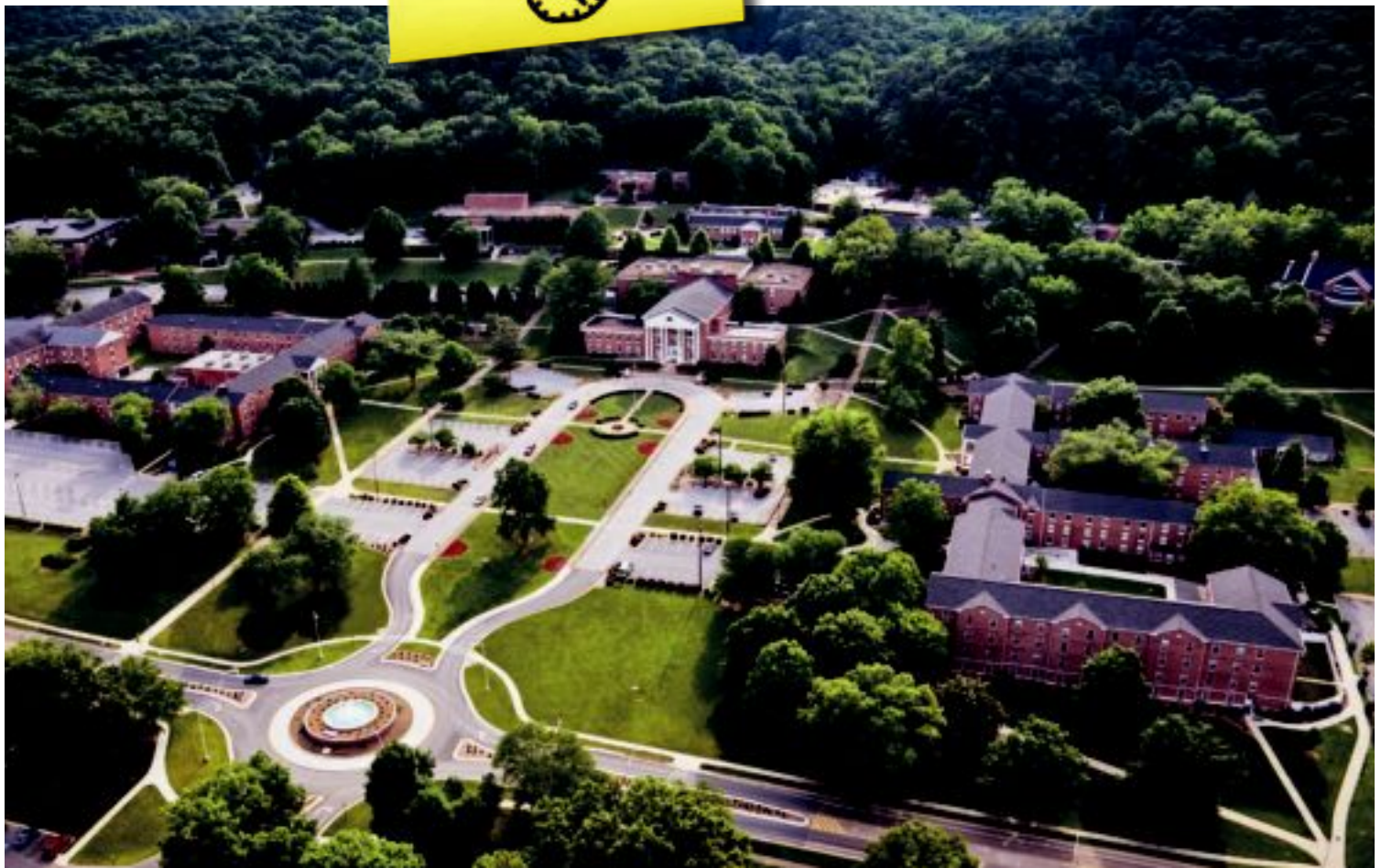
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# THE MAIN EVENT

BY SELENA FRAGASSI

## The *Competitive* Advantage

When asked to host a room full of competitors at Unique Venues Annual Marketing Conference, Loyola University Chicago found success by sharing...everything



Clockwise from top left: Aramark, the catering provider for Loyola University Chicago, prepares a buffet style spread for the conference's luncheon. Guests were seated for meals in the school's elegant Kasbeer Hall with views of the city. The lunch was finished with a selection of desserts, including this parfait.



*If hosting a multi-day conference for 120 of your closest competitors sounds like a huge risk*, you might be right. Yet, when Loyola University Chicago was approached by Unique Venues to be the site for its Annual Marketing Conference last October, Dana Adams and his team jumped at the chance—even with the knowledge that all eyes would be closely on them.

"We always welcome competition and open our doors for other venues to come see what we offer," explains Adams, executive director of conference services for the university. "We even welcome their critiques, which we use to see what we might be doing right or wrong."

What Adams, in a nutshell, is referring to is a developing business practice for niche markets and an ideology that was touted a number of times over the course of the conference's different presentations. Called Co-opetition, it's the idea that there can be "cooperation between competitors in business" and furthermore, "it occurs when companies cooperate with

each other to reach a higher value creation [when] compared to the value created without interaction."

In Adams' mind, and for others starting to adopt this way of doing business, the situation is a win-win for everyone. "I think the more information sharing we do with one another and with groups, it certainly helps all of us," he says. "By doing so, somebody may come across a group heading to Chicago and tell them, 'I know just the place for you.' The more people that understand what our spaces look like and how we can accommodate groups, the more referrals we might potentially get. In the end, it's people's real

experiences that sells spaces."

So when it came time for the university to prepare for this important incoming group, they spared no effort to make a good impression. First, Adams and his team (including Manager of Conference Services Judy Sunvold) decided on the space, ultimately choosing the 10<sup>th</sup> floor Power Rogers & Smith Ceremonial Courtroom at its downtown Corboy Law Center for daily sessions.

"We thought it would essentially be better to hold everything in one building instead of making people migrate throughout the day," says Adams, noting that the aesthetic of the space was important, too.



"The courtroom shows off well, it has great windows with impeccable views of downtown. We also just had a video wall recently installed over the summer, which was a nice addition."

Outside the courtroom, an open lobby space was utilized for session breaks, with dedicated co-opetition-inspired areas to network and pick up marketing materials from various attendees. "We thought adding some extra tables in the pre-function area would encourage people to gather and talk," says Sunvold who worked with Unique Venues President Chuck Salem to finalize every detail in the last 30 days leading up to the event. That included arranging accommodations for overnight guests in the onsite Baumhart Lodging or securing rooms at the Tremont Chicago Hotel for the overflow.

The final pièce de résistance was reserving Loyola's lavish 15<sup>th</sup> floor Kasbeer Hall for daily lunches, serviced by the university's food provider, Aramark, who had extra inspiration for making a memorable meal for this particular group. "In our conversations with Aramark, we informed them this would be a golden opportunity to put their best plate forward in front of all these professionals from across the country—some of whom may use Aramark already and some of whom might even be looking for a new catering provider," says Adams.

When he ran into several of the guests at the Rejuvenate Conference a few weeks later, everyone had nothing but complimentary feedback. For Sunvold, it's more proof that co-opetition is the best way to move forward for the industry. "It's always said that imitation is the best form of flattery, so if people end up applauding or even using our practices, it just means we are doing something right." **uv**

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# COLLEGE ROAD TRIP

BY SELENA FRAGASSI

## UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

The Phillips Center is one of the luxe meeting spaces on campus.



## SUNNY DAYS AHEAD

The sun may never set in Florida, and neither does the fun for groups looking to have a unique experience on campus

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### University of Florida, Gainesville

"We're not Orlando, so I can't promise you Mickey Mouse," jokes Robert Ostrow, assistant director of housing operations for the university. Yet, as he talks about all the nature and incredible spaces on campus, you soon realize there is something even more magical for guests to experience here.

"We have our own lake, Lake Wauburg, which is owned by the university. Guests can rent canoes, start up a game in the volleyball pits and there's even a meeting space at this site as well." For conferences, the university welcomes groups from 50 to 3,000 people and offers the largest campus residence hall system in the southeastern U.S. "Each of our 16 buildings has its own meeting spaces inside, so guests can work and stay in the same contained unit," says Ostrow.

Coming in 2015 is an additional residence hall with a floor specially created for guests with physical disabilities. It's just another way Ostrow and his team are trying to make a lasting impression. "Once you step foot on our campus, it's hard to forget about us."

### University of North Florida, Jacksonville (Adam W. Herbert University Center)

Want an urban safari? Come to this Jacksonville campus, which also doubles as a wildlife sanctuary and 1,000-acre nature preserve with incredible views to take it all in. "We are right on the water, and we have a lake outside of our building, which makes the space great for leadership retreats," says Katie Chenard, assistant director of marketing and events, noting other opportunities include a ropes course and 9-hole golf course.





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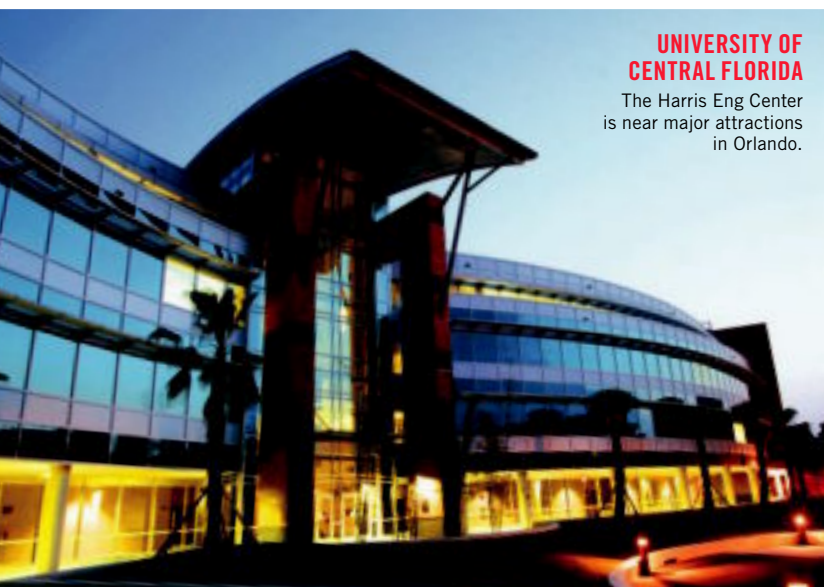
# COLLEGE ROAD TRIP

BY SELENA FRAGASSI



## UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

The University Center is a place of public engagement hosting up to 400 in this ballroom.



## UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

The Harris Eng Center is near major attractions in Orlando.



## FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

A 15-acre solar field fuels buildings on campus.

Specifically, the university center—named for a revered former school president—is considered a public forum. “Our venue is the community center where the Jacksonville community and our students can have events together,” Chenard explains. Of use are 35 meeting rooms in a fully-fledged conference center. “Two of those are ballroom or banquet-style rooms, the largest offering 9,700 square feet of space to accommodate groups of up to 400 for a conference or 700 for a lecture.” Planners who book with Chenard and her team can look forward to one other convenience: “We are One-Stop-Shop certified, which makes the process so much easier.”

## University of Central Florida, Orlando

The university might as well have a banner that reads, “Summer, year round,” jokes Dorothy Loman, coordinator of UCF Continuing Education. It’s not just for the temperature (which on average stays about 70-80 degrees all year), but also for the incredible attractions minutes away.

For groups that want to see Disney World, the Kennedy Space Center and Daytona Beach, Loman and her team offer a unique concierge service. “We can work with the groups to find the best hotels for any outside visits, with all the same attention to detail we’d provide here on campus,” she says, noting many attendees bring their families and tack on a vacation after.

Back onsite, planners will be happy to find a variety of meeting spaces and some of the best technology around. “We can arrange to do a live stream for people who can’t make the conference,” says Loman. As well, a staff designer can help create banners, signage and logos while another team member can offer video and photo services. “This way, groups can have highlight footage to share long after the sessions have wrapped.”

## Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers

Although this campus is situated near the Everglades, there are other reasons it’s known for being green, including a 15-acre solar field that provides 85% of the energy needed to run the Engineering and Business building as well as servicing air-conditioning through chiller plants. “It saves us hundreds of thousands of dollars and is appealing to people that are looking for campus spaces which coincide with their own green missions,” explains Ruth Rodrigues, director of campus reservations.

Another appealing feature? An onsite wine tasting room, which is part of the hospitality management department and also open to guests. “It was modeled after a room in the Napa Valley Branch of the Culinary Institute of America,” Rodrigues explains, noting an expansive wine cellar just outside the doors.



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# COLLEGE ROAD TRIP

BY SELENA FRAGASSI



## FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

The campus offers a unique wine tasting room, modeled after Napa Valley.

After a long day of conferences (or wine tastings), groups will enjoy the Northlake Village residences, four-bedroom apartments with a full kitchen and full living room that, like all of the residence halls, were built after 1997 with modern amenities. Even better, says Rodrigues, “A number of them are right on the beach!”

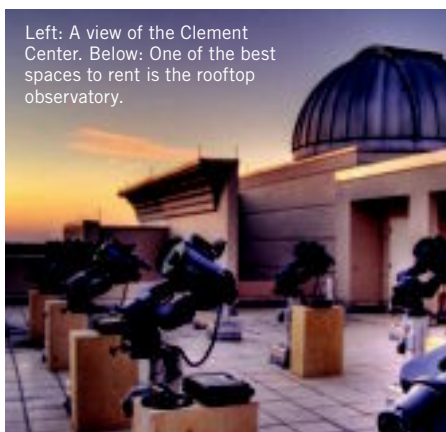
## Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne

This centrally located campus is a One-Stop Shop in more ways than one. Not only are they certified as such by the Association of Collegiate Conference and Events Directors-International (ACCED-I), but the full range of amenities on campus also make a group stay just as convenient. “You can literally show up on campus, have your five-day meeting, sleep here, eat here, meet here and do all of your work in an environment that really fosters learning,” says Erica Spencer, director of the conference services bureau. As an added bonus, she says, “We can tap into our student population for volunteers and use our faculty and staff members for speakers.”

The campus offers 65-plus meeting spaces, including a variety of classrooms, five auditorium-style rooms, a performing arts center and an adaptable gymnasium, which has hosted a number of galas and expos in its time. Yet, according to Spencer, some of the most unique spaces the institute offers are a botanical garden, chapel and a rooftop observatory. “This is what sets us apart from any hotel or traditional meeting venue.” **uv**



## FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



Left: A view of the Clement Center. Below: One of the best spaces to rent is the rooftop observatory.

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# Resident

We tour four universities to get the full picture of the rooms you can expect when you stay on campus. And NONE of them are like the dorm rooms from your past.

*Indiana University of Pennsylvania has a simple rule for its residence halls: “No more than two share a room, no more than two share a bath.” The school has been putting its words into action lately with all of its remodels, including a recent expansion that added 3,000 beds, says Mike Lemasters, executive director of housing, residential living and dining. After all, they are just following the new standard. “The idea of suite living is becoming more and more common as campuses are building or renovating to meet modern needs. You’ll see this room style abundant in residence hall expansions across the country over the next few years.”*

That’s right, the old way of the dorm is out and privacy is in as more and more schools attempt to appeal to incoming students whose tastes have become more...exclusive. “That old, double-loaded corridor with multiple beds and one bathroom for 40 to 50 people is not attractive to the students we are trying to recruit,” continues Lemasters, saying all schools are in the same race right now and have to step up to compete. “If you don’t have what they want, they’ll go someplace else.”

In so doing, universities have also been able to attract discerning conference guests who enjoy the comforts they are used to in

a hotel (and are further persuaded by the savings, the service and the convenience of staying on campus).

Don’t just take our word for it, though. Here, we tour four campuses that are heavy-hitters in the collegiate conference industry—*Indiana University of Pennsylvania, University of British Columbia, University of California Davis and University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown*—to discover just what’s inside the four types of modern residence halls and how each can make guests feel right at home.





# Adviser



**THOMPSON HALL  
AT UC DAVIS**

Traditional residence halls are still useful for visitors like youth groups that need to be housed together.

## OPTION

### 1

## RESIDENCE HALL, SHARED ROOMS

First things first. “We do still have some traditional halls left, if a planner requires it for budget purposes or for a visiting camp that needs to house younger guests together,” says Lemasters, noting these are mostly older buildings that have yet to be renovated.

Lina Layiktez, director of conference and event services at the University of California Davis, adds that there is a huge benefit yet for these older styles. “It’s actually easier for a chaperone to keep an eye on their students in these types of accommodations

and the students get really excited about that because it’s the picture in their heads of what staying in a college dorm looks like.” At UC Davis, this traditional layout style offers a double room with basic additions such as a dresser, desk and lamp. Restrooms are shared, typically one for men and one for women on each floor. Yet, as most conference departments understand, this style is not for everyone, which is why many are expanding to have more variety to fit the needs of more groups.

## OPTION

# 2

## RESIDENCE HALL, SEMI-PRIVATE ROOMS

Take the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, for example. The name of the Living/Learning Center has taken on new meaning as the school has come to better understand how students and overnight conference guests prefer to live during their stay. “The spaces here are a bit more upscale than your typical dorm,” says Tammy Barbin, manager of conferences and special events. “They’re slightly larger than you’d expect and each has its own bathroom with a shower.”

A closer look inside and you soon realize how right Barbin is—nothing about these spaces look anything like the dorm room you might remember. Each room has two single beds, two armoires, two desks, cable TV, a refrigerator and microwave, as well as bed linens and towels with daily housekeeping service included. Conference guests who book any of the 403 beds during

the summer will also enjoy air conditioning while winter guests can take a trip to the lobby and sit next to the fireplace. But that’s not all—other benefits of the building include a 24-hour fitness center and rec room, 24-hour front desk staff, laundry facilities and a quick trip to the attached conference and meeting rooms in the next building.

UC Davis calls this style “pod living,” and while their layout still has shared restrooms, it’s with less people. “We know adults typically need their space, so for most conference groups, we will book them in these types of shared arrangements or one of our apartments.” Like the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, UC Davis also offers added perks such as access to the recreation center with state-of-the-art workout facilities, basketball and racquetball courts as well as a jacuzzi and pool. “It’s all part of our complete package.”



UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, JOHNSTOWN

Within the residence halls at this campus are flexible meeting spaces that can be tailored for events, receptions and other functions.

## OPTION

# 3

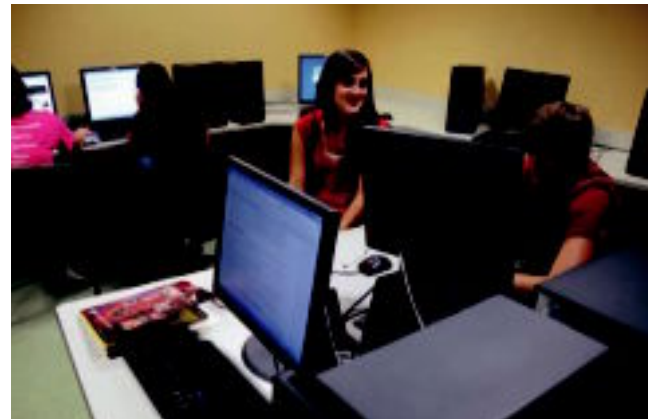
## PRIVATE SUITE-STYLE APARTMENTS

Of the six different room types at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, many follow traditional campus-style living, but there is one that Kathy Evanko, director of conference services, likes to call “the Taj Mahal ... this is where two people have their own bedroom, their own bathroom and they share a living room,” she says. Another great benefit of booking a suite at this campus? “We

have a full computer room and multipurpose rooms in each suite-style building,” adds her co-worker Lemasters.

It’s a similar setup at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown. Among the 1,771 beds on campus, in Willow Hall there are 25 apartments, each consisting of four bedrooms connected to a common living area and kitchenette, plus two bathrooms. Each





#### **INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

The sprawling campus offers a number of residence halls, most offering communal gathering areas and computer rooms or business centers that accommodate both students and conference groups.

room comes with linens, a desk, dresser and closet, while in the living area, furniture includes a loveseat, two chairs and coffee table. “This option is always great for groups that can and want to house together, but still want some privacy,” says Barbin. “Individuals can retire to their bedrooms at night and lock their door, but they can eat meals together in the kitchenette or socialize in the common living area.”

Also at the campus are a selection of similarly styled lodges with nearly 350 beds and townhouses with 225 additional beds. Soon, the university will unveil a brand-new building, the College Park Apartments, which is undergoing an overhaul right now. “We remodel constantly,” Barbin says, noting the school has a rotating schedule of buildings that get touched so that the school in total is adhering to modern standards.

A growing need to renovate at the University of British Columbia inspired the change to suite-style living. “We had a lot of things that were just not working well,” says Teresa Rempel, director of group conferences and accommodations. Normally the school will just repaint or provide maintenance every year for its 3,600 rooms, but the most recent overhaul was one of their biggest projects to date, taking two years to complete. “We completely gutted the inside of the existing building and changed everything. Our suites now have new kitchens with granite countertops and new furniture, hardwood floors and new bathrooms. All the furniture has been updated, too.” By 2016, the campus anticipates the addition of an entire building of private suites to keep up with growing demand.

## OPTION

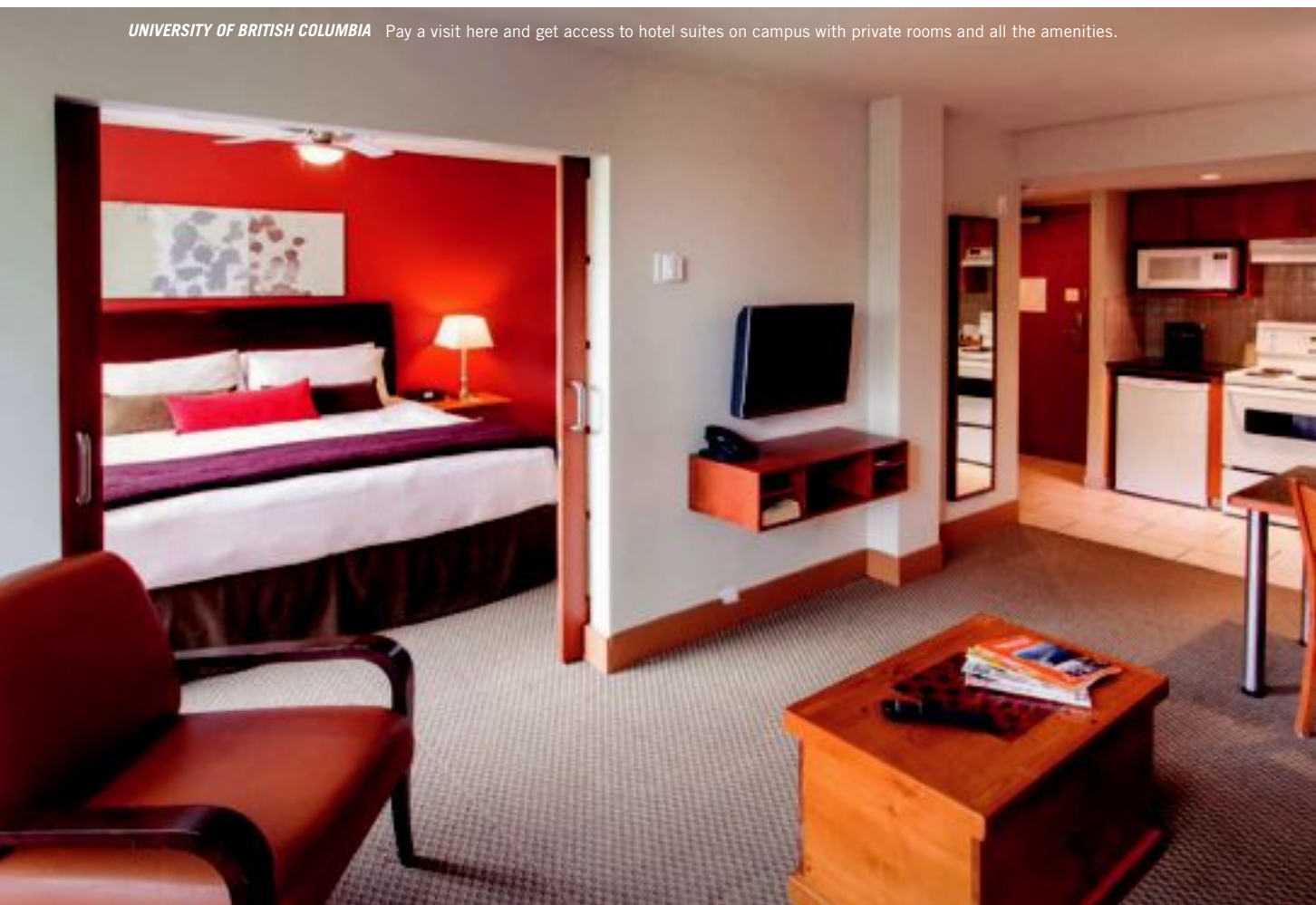
# 4

## HOTEL-STYLE GUEST ROOMS

But the University of British Columbia doesn't stop there. They have their own hotel onsite, too. It's quickly becoming a growing trend at campuses nationwide for one big reason: year-round availability (most of the other rooms profiled here are only available in the summer to accom-

modate student schedules). The West Coast Suites have all the creature comforts with 47 rooms, "each with free Wi-Fi, a fully-equipped kitchen, an ironing board, in-room safe, and most importantly, Starbucks coffee," Rempel says of the luxe accommodations.

**UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA** Pay a visit here and get access to hotel suites on campus with private rooms and all the amenities.



### CHOOSING THE RIGHT ROOM TYPE

With so many options, you might think it would be overwhelming to find your home away from home during your stay. Yet the conference departments are more than ready to help you find the right match, based on a number of criteria. "It really depends on the budget, and also the type of client or delegates we are welcoming," concludes Rempel. For example, if the group is mostly students, out of safety concerns they won't be booked in any of the residence towers where there are higher balconies. Instead, they'll room in the junior residences where there are also playing fields and basketball courts that they can enjoy in their free time.

At the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, Barbin and her

team go through a series of questions with planners to determine the best fit. "We like to get to know what they'll be doing in the course of a day," she says, providing examples of some of the questions that might be asked of the planner, including, "Will they have children that are part of the group? Do they need to be centralized near the meeting space or dining? Do they have elderly guests who need special access?"

There are also those that have smaller groups who don't need to have a specific meeting room, and for that experience, IUP's Evanko suggests choosing a suite-style room. "Some visiting groups might just use their living room to accomplish their



agenda. Rest assured," she says. "In either case, whatever a planner needs, we can be flexible to their needs."

That certainly was the experience Sandy Dawson—a planner with Accelerated Christian Education—had when she planned a meeting for 2,000 overnight guests at the university. "With a large conference such as ours, the convenience of being on campus was paramount for our staff. It allowed us to work late into the evenings, without having to travel to our lodging," she says, noting that in addition to convenience, major factors for choosing the university were also cost savings and the availability of meals on campus. "We loved the experience so much we are planning to book again for May."



## THE GREAT ADD-ONS

Beyond modern rooms and cost savings, there are additional benefits afforded by staying on a campus for the duration of your conference. "The number-one benefit is the included meal package," says Layiktef. Although not all schools offer this as a standard, places like UC Davis provide all-you-can eat breakfast, lunch and dinner with your stay. "We have a conference-style dining venue, which means it's unlike the traditional dining commons where you'd walk through a cafeteria line." Instead, on the menu are fresh items like Mongolian-style cooking and oven-baked pizza.

At the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, there is much flexibility with custom menus, too, especially when hosting groups like the National Vegetarian or Vegan Conference.

"Although we may not be able to provide five-star amenities like hotels, we always get great feedback on our five-star service," says Barbin of the university, a facet that has helped them bring repeat business for 35 years in some cases, such as the International Atmiya Youth Convention 2013, a group of 1,400 that recently stayed on campus. Planner Mehul Thakkar says, "The quality contribution by each and every member on the team was clearly visible through a continued and proactive presence during the moments of need. Such courteousness and patience speaks a lot about the staff and its leadership." While flattering, Barbin sees that as the daily job of the staff that makes every concerted effort to make guests feel at home.

"The staff here bends over backwards to do anything we can, truly, to make the guests feel welcome from the moment we see them pulling into our circular driveway and are grabbing their bags. We want to make sure they always remember their stay here, for all the right reasons." **uv**

## When You'll Need to Pack Extra

While there is a long list of benefits to staying on campus, there are some things you might not be provided that you would expect in more traditional settings. It varies from campus to campus, and most all will be upfront with you before reserving your room block.

### A/C / PHONES / TV

At UC Davis, for example, "Not all of our rooms are air-conditioned, and there aren't televisions or telephones included in any of the rooms,"

Layiktef informs, adding though, "with the advent of smart phones and iPads, guests have been needing these fixtures less and less."

### Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi can also be spotty in guest rooms, yet campuses are working to correct that. The University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, for example, just added more than 100 wireless access points to residential facilities, which brings Wi-Fi to every room on campus.

### LINENS

Linens are different from campus to campus, building to building. While many do offer sheets and towels, they might not be the highest thread count like you'd get at a hotel. "I'm upfront with the planner in letting them know they won't be getting a five-star towel and linen package when they come here," says Barbin, "so that if they feel more comfortable bringing their own, they can plan for it."

At Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Evanko says, "We don't own our own linens, although that's something we are thinking about adding in the future. However, if requested, we will find a way to get them." Such was the case for visiting international groups; in this situation, Evanko and her team supplied linens from a rental company.

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# TECHNICALLY possible

When it comes to modern meetings technology, colleges and universities are more plugged in than you might think.

BY SELENA FRAGASSI

*If you build it, they will come.* In today's modern times, that is the guiding principle for meeting and event spaces when navigating the ever-changing world of technology. Just as everyday people pitch tents on sidewalks overnight to secure the latest Apple technology, it's just as essential for venues to keep up with the joneses in the business sector—and that means providing the latest in A/V, upgrading bandwidth and introducing new tools that make meetings easier.

Yet, if you think that colleges and universities can't handle the challenge as well as more traditional outlets, think again. Campuses are often at the head of the tech class with routine upgrades that have to appeal to a very demanding audience: their students. In the process, benefits trickle down to conference guests as well.

"I think there's this impression that a campus space will be maybe less clean, a little bit more run down, a little less customizable, but that is certainly not the case, especially when it comes to technology," affirms Jennifer Cucura, a director at the New York Institute of Technology's Auditorium on Broadway, which offers a comprehensive 262-seat theatre space for multimedia events, screenings and panel discussions. "I've had clients who have held their events in other locations and had to bring in far more equipment to get their meetings done. And they complain that's just one more thing to rent and pay for and worry about. Here, the full breadth of our A/V capabilities really shows how seamless and convenient it can be."

Onsite, NYIT offers state-of-the-art enhancements such as an HD projection for Power Point presentations, movie-grade Digital Cinema Projector and 7.1 Dolby Dish full surround sound. As well, the venue is currently in negotiations with RealD to be the "largest private screening facility to be 3D compatible in Manhattan," says Cucura. "It makes the quality that much more impressive, which is important for our clients."



## HDMI AT YOUR SERVICE

At Savannah, Georgia's Armstrong Center, quality was the key motivator for a recent upgrade to HDMI projectors in its ballroom last summer. "We felt that we needed to take it to the next level because everybody was coming in with presentations and the quality just wasn't there with our old equipment," says Ken Reich, director of conference services.

HDMI, in fact, is a hot topic for all conference centers, according to Kent Hilton, director of the Miller Conference Center at Salt Lake Community College in Sandy, Utah. He predicts that, in two years when the school updates the venue again, the first thing they will add is this technology. "It is our mission to stay state-of-the-art," he says. "We are aware of the trends in other conference centers nearby and want to be able to compete."



## • MORE THAN VIDEO CONFERENCING •

Sometimes, colleges and universities are the trendsetters. Such is the case at the University of Denver with the addition of the impressive Cisco TelePresence technology at the Morgridge College of Education. With this fully immersive video conferencing system, three large side-by-side screens and high-quality video feed brings together conference guests in different states (or countries even) and lets them feel like they are in the same room.

"The quality is really unbeliev-

able," says Mary Kay Mauro, manager of client services for conference events and special programs, noting that a meeting with the *Denver Business Journal* helped spread the word about the service. "It's called a QOS, the highest quality of service. When the feed comes through, it really does feel like you're all sitting at the table together in the same room without the separation of miles." As well, the video is audio activated, which means that whenever someone is speaking,

the camera will automatically turn to focus on him or her, which allows for fluid conversation.

The best part is, both parties don't have to own the TelePresence technology in order to connect. "There is free software that can be installed on any computer, which will plug into the TelePresence system," says Mauro, further stating, "we have a full technology support team during all hours of operation who can support the planner and make it an easy process."



## ON-CALL I.T. DEPARTMENTS

Indeed, one of the great benefits for almost all colleges and universities is the addition of an on-call, onsite IT team who can help manage complex systems such as this.

“Our technology team is part of our service team for conferences and events, so I think that helps the flow and also the communication with the planners and the groups in general,” confirms Mauro with the University of Denver.

At the University of Central Oklahoma, where a \$450,000 renovation project was just completed in the conference rooms, the team taps into its built-in resources. “We have an agreement with the IT department that we can utilize one of their student workers for a certain number of hours a week to help us with the A/V that might have a little more complicated setup,” says Amanda Tucker, assistant director for the Nigh University Center.



## THE BIG **WiFi** DEBATE

No matter how complex and state-of-the-art colleges and universities become with their latest gadgetry, however, there is always the eternal, simple question all planners ask: Do you have free Wi-Fi?

According to Corbin Ball, meetings technology expert, Wi-Fi and broadband are becoming the lifeblood of events and communication. “Nowadays, every attendee has multiple devices (3.6 in 2013, up from 1.4 in 2010), and the demand is on the event planner to choose a venue accordingly,” he says, noting that when polled, 64% of planners said the availability of Wi-Fi affected their choice of venue.

At the University of Denver, complimentary Wi-Fi is available campus-wide, “and we just switched to ‘always on access’, which doesn’t require a password,” says Mauro. “It’s become a huge asset to the planner and the meetings industry we attract.”

Likewise, the Miller Conference Center at SLCC has a policy of “Wi-Fi for the people,” and the school just added 500 access points, says Hilton. Although it does require a username and password in order for the IT department to ensure nothing inappropriate is conducted over their firewall. “Otherwise, we are very open-minded to allowing this access to everyone.”

It came in handy for one planner who used the Miller Conference Center at SLCC in the past: “Without a dedicated Internet connection for presenters, the success of our live demos could be greatly affected,” says Michelle Kolbe.

There’s even further reason for Wi-Fi, says Cucura, and it has to do with social media. “When our planners come through, they want to make sure their attendees are able to Tweet or Facebook content from the sessions,” she says, noting that when the former spotty service in their theater was brought to her staff’s attention, they addressed the problem right away.



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"It's assumed that this technology will always be available."

At the University of Central Oklahoma, Tucker notes that the department can switch screens over to a live Tweeting session so everyone can see what is being said. This interactive service is just one way the school has been able to attract more and more planner interest, which has resulted in their success. "In this last year since we initiated our upgrades, the usage of our A/V equipment has almost doubled."

## MORE IS LESS... IN COSTS

Rest assured though, all the upgrades do not mean increases in price for usage, says Hilton. "We review our costs every four to five years, and it's not indicative of whether we've enhanced our technology," he says, noting that most of the A/V amenities are included in the cost of the room rental.

Which is one of the reasons why Kolbe chose the university: "Cost is the most important factor for our group. We like that at SLCC the A/V is already in the room rental so there are not added costs that we might not be budgeting for."

That's the win-win for groups, especially the non-profits that Cucura hosts. "Not only do we have the best technology," she says, "but often we have the best rates, too." **uv**



SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MILLER CONFERENCE CENTER



# INDUSTRY UPDATES

## news & awards

BY SELENA FRAGASSI

### *Kenyon Institute Touts Award-Winning, User-Friendly Website*

EduStyle, a web design gallery and resource dedicated to higher education websites, recently awarded a big honor to The Kenyon Institute, part of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. The school won the prestigious award for “Best School, Department or Faculty Site” in both the Judged and People’s Choice categories. EduStyle hosts more than 6,000 websites with a community of more than 4,000 active users, making Kenyon’s win even more impressive. With this nod, planners can look forward to a website that is navigable and easy to use.

[UniqueVenues.com/KenyonCollege](http://UniqueVenues.com/KenyonCollege)

### *Vanderbilt’s Alumni Hall in Nashville Graduates with Honorable Renovations*

Originally opened in 1925 as the first student center, Vanderbilt University’s Alumni Hall was recently added to the National Register of Historic Places. With that noted accolade, the Nashville, Tennessee university got to work on rehabbing the space to make it usable for future generations. The renovations maintain the integrity of the building’s Collegiate Gothic style, while also updating the interior spaces and expanding the east and west side terraces.

[UniqueVenues.com/Vanderbilt](http://UniqueVenues.com/Vanderbilt)

### *Sonoma State University Has New Center of Attention*



Within three hours of opening last November, the brand-new Sonoma State University Student Center in Rohnert Park, California welcomed more than 2,000 students, faculty, staff and community members who were curious to check out the updated amenities offered inside. Included are six meeting rooms with advanced A/V technology, multiple dining venues including the campus pub Lobos and the dining hall Kitchens, as well as the pièce de résistance: the largest ballroom in the county. Both students and conference guests are welcome to use the building, which offers a more centralized facility to meet, eat and relax.

[UniqueVenues.com/SonomaState](http://UniqueVenues.com/SonomaState)



### *Great Minds Think Alike in new Washington College Campaign*

President George Washington set the standard when he visited his namesake college in the 18th century—but he’s just one of the first. Since it opened in 1782, many of the world’s great ideologists have visited the Chestertown, Maryland campus. That history is the inspiration behind the school’s new Great Minds Meeting campaign, aimed at planners looking for a site that can help generate some serious brainpower for meetings, retreats, banquets or other events. State-of-the-art academic buildings and various venues help foster a place of learning, while the Dining Services department offers new customizable catering guides to provide healthy brain food between sessions.

[UniqueVenues.com/washingtoncollege](http://UniqueVenues.com/washingtoncollege)



## More Beds Will Be Made at Emory University in 2014

May marks a significant achievement at Atlanta, Georgia's Emory University. The opening of the brand-new LEED Gold Certified Eleonore Raoul Hall (named for the first female graduate of the university's law school) will be the sixth residence hall to open in seven years. The completed construction will offer nearly 350 additional beds for summer conference guests. Options will include single and double rooms with a sizable number of semi-suites that feature private bathrooms. Also inside the hall will be a two-story event space with attached catering kitchen as well as the centrally located office spaces for the University Conferences Department.

[UniqueVenues.com/EmoryUniv](http://UniqueVenues.com/EmoryUniv)

## Art Has a New Home at Penn State Great Valley Campus

The Conference Center at Penn State Great Valley now has an art gallery with rotating exhibits. The Henry Gallery was opened in the spring and provides respite for conference guests (and the public) Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Recent shows at the Malvern, Pennsylvania venue include "Parts of a Whole Mosaic" as well as the "Darkness to Light" student mural and the "Story Quilts" exhibit. **uv**

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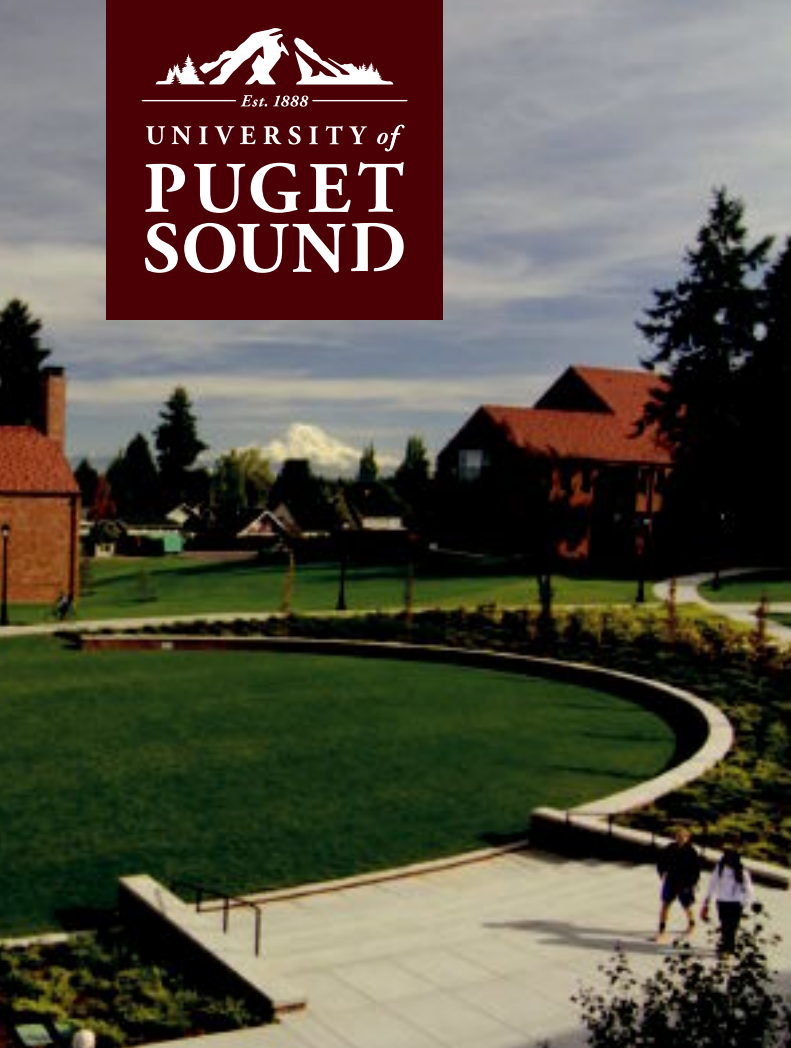
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**Contact us today to discuss your event with a Puget Sound conference team member.**

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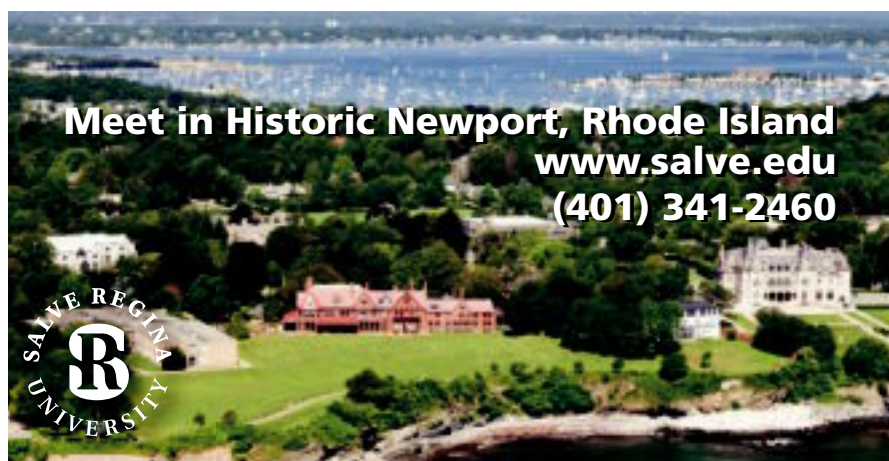
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# DEAN'S LIST

BY SELENA FRAGASSI

## *ANN-imated* Character

In the vast world of collegiate conference planning, Ann Knoebel has emerged at the top of the chain with communication and personality.

***Ann Knoebel is never short on words***—and for good reason. “In all of my previous jobs, including teaching, I’ve learned that communication is the hallmark of business success,” she says. As the assistant vice president for conferences and special programs at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas the past three decades, Knoebel has put those words into action. That means translating the mission of a burgeoning collegiate conference program into monetary support from key departments and developing a strong lecture series with noted speakers including Doris Kearnes Goodwin, David Axelrod and Condoleezza Rice. Knoebel, too, has much to say about her own profession—and it’s clear from this conversation that hers is quite the story.

**Unique Venues:** How did you ultimately land in your current role at Trinity?

**Ann Knoebel:** “Before Trinity, I was the director of public relations for a national health organization. I was asked to come to the university to help coordinate national and international solar energy conferences. When that grant money was no longer available, Trinity asked me to stay with the office of continuing education and, together, we changed the direction to become a flourishing conference business over the last 25 years.”

**UV:** What were some of your challenges developing the program in the beginning?

**AK:** “To start any kind of new business, you have to educate your colleagues so that they understand your role, your mission within the university and then translate that into support. No one can ever be successful without support from the top, so the process really is to get everyone on-board and then to have buy-in from the people that will let you do your job.”

**UV:** What is one of your favorite parts of your job?

**AK:** “Since the beginning, I’ve created

and managed our Policy Maker Breakfast Series. I also secure the speakers for the three major lecture series we have on campus with noted individuals from the fields of business, economics and media. I enjoy the working relationship I have with the faculty and assisting their professional development programs.”

**UV:** What have been some of the milestones for you over the past 30 years?

**AK:** “I find it personally rewarding to see a project completed, from the initial contact of receiving a proposal to finally getting a note from a planner saying, ‘This was our best conference ever.’ I also love connecting with new professionals in the industry and being a resource or mentor for them. On a more personal level, I was so honored when I received the Association of Collegiate Conference and Events Directors-International Jack Thornton Award and the Mentor of the Year Award.”

**UV:** What is something people may be surprised to learn about you?

**AK:** “I’ve come a long way from wanting to be a nun!” **uv**



**ANN KNOEBEL**  
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