

the CIVSA WELCOMER

Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association



As leaves start falling, planning begins...

By Julian Olivas, CIVSA President
Texas Tech University

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It's hard to believe that the holiday season is here! I know the fall semester can be busy and hectic but hang in there, it's almost over. Before you know it, you'll be in San Antonio enjoying the annual CIVSA conference (June 6 – 10, 2011). I would like to take a moment to acknowledge those of you that recently joined CIVSA. I assure you that you'll enjoy every minute of your involvement. You'll notice right away that this group of professionals loves to share the tricks of the trade, and they are always willing to listen to your contributions to this profession as well. Let me encourage you to hit the ground running and get involved! A special thanks should go out to our veteran members that have hung in there with CIVSA through the years. We would not be the organization that we are today without your participation and input. I hope your fall semester finishes strong and as the winds of change bring on the new year, may you have a wonderful happy holidays! Below are some items that I would like to make you aware of.

We've just concluded a productive mid-year meeting held at the Omni La Mansion del Rio Hotel in San Antonio! This year, in an effort to be mindful of our school budgets, we consolidated the mid-year meeting with the annual pre-conference site visit of the host city and institution. This provided us the opportunity to discuss the business of the association and also solidify plans relating to the annual conference. Meeting minutes and reports from all board meetings are posted in the member's only section of the CIVSA website.

Founded in February 2004, Facebook is a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with friends, family and coworkers. It is hard to believe that only a short time ago there wasn't Facebook.

The possibility of updating and informing your friends of exactly what you are up to at any given moment was very much a foreign concept. Today, Facebook gives us the ability to remain connected despite our location and keep up with our CIVSA friends! There are over 500 million Facebook users of which, according to Facebook, over 50% of them will log-in almost daily. This includes me and you! Not to be left out in today's media age, CIVSA has quickly adapted and joined the age of social networking. You can be a "fan" of CIVSA on Facebook and keep up with the happenings of the association and well, whatever else we deem fun and interesting to share with the membership. We hope to be able to update you on the happenings around the country among our members. You can receive updates on the planning of the annual conference and of course, keep up with CIVY, our official mascot. I would like to see everyone also interact with CIVSA through Facebook. If you are on Facebook, become a fan today!

We hope to see all of you at the Annual Conference coming in June. Registration opens January 15, 2011!

In CIVSA Pride,

Julian

Greetings!

The 2011 Collegiate Information and Visitors Services Conference will be held on June 6 - 11th at the historic Omni La Mansion del Rio in San Antonio, Texas! The conference committee has been hard at work to plan a monumental experience for all attendees and is promised to be the professional highlight of your year. The conference committee has been busy finalizing superb keynote speakers, educational sessions opportunities for our membership to share ideas, unforgettable experiences and more!

For a sneak peak into what will be coming this summer, this year's keynote speaker will be Jason Young, a former Southwest Airline executive (www.jasonyoungspeaks.com). Jason will present an address to our membership titled The Southwest Effect: The Ultimate High-Performance Workplace. Additionally, his book, 'Culturetopia' will be provided to each conference attendee!

The Call for Proposals is NOW OPEN online at www.civsa.org/conference. Visit us online to submit a proposal to present an educational session, lead a collaborative discussion, or both! The education we receive from our colleagues at our annual conference is invaluable, and we need your participation in order to keep our curriculum strong! We are all experts in something - consider presenting alone or with a colleague! Proposals are due December 31, 2010, so submit your proposal today!

We look forward to giving you more details about the conference in the coming months, and the Programs Committee is excited to see all the proposals we receive. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes for the upcoming holiday season,

Lea R. Hanson
Programs Chair, 2011 CIVSA Conference Committee
Associate Director, Office of Admissions
Colorado State University



An Invitation to Join the Nominating Committee

Are you interested in helping to identify the best candidates to move CIVSA initiatives forward in the future? If so, the Nominating Committee can use your help!

According to the CIVSA Bylaws, Article 1, Section 2:

The Nominating Committee will develop a slate of nominees for office which will include biographical information for each candidate. This information will be provided to the General Membership 30 days prior to the Annual Conference. Additional nominations may be taken from the floor or submitted in writing to the Secretary prior to the start of the Annual Conference.

As Immediate Past President it is my responsibility to chair this committee consisting of a minimum of four members (one from each CIVSA Region). While it is not required, it is preferred these individuals will have been a member for at least three years and have attended two CIVSA conferences. These standards are based on the need for historical knowledge of the association as well as some personal knowledge of those suggested for nominations.



This committee requires a very small time commitment and is an excellent opportunity to become involved in the work of our association. Please email me at spengler@umd.edu or give me a call at 301-314-7968 if you are interested.

Betty Spengler
Immediate Past President
2011-12 Nominating Committee Chair

Have you seen CIVY?

CIVY is a civet and he is traveling the country to meet CIVSA members. If you find CIVY in your mailbox, continue his adventures by sending him to another member of CIVSA within ten days. Before you drop him in the mail, make sure to take a creative photo of him on your campus. You may also choose to teach him something unique that your office does. E-mail your photo and lesson to web@civsa.org!





Member Profile

Denise Wellman,
University of South Carolina

In the CIVSA Communications survey, several members suggested a "get-to-know-other-members" or "get-to-know-the-Board" feature for the Welcomer. This is the ninth; look for more profiles of other members in the future issues.

How long have you been in the information/visitor services world? To some extent, since college where I spent all of my summers working in a resort on Lake Michigan (my favorite place). I filled a number of roles over those 5 summers and really began to understand the concept of exceptional service. Rush forward 15 years and I found myself back in the field of information/visitor services when I was encouraged to apply for a new position on the USC campus, that of the director of our visitor center.

When did you join CIVSA? 1993

What is the most fun thing that your office does? At least twice a year, we offer ghost tours throughout the campus. The South is rich in folklore and ghosts, and in that Columbia was important to both the Revolutionary and the Civil War, there are some spirits around and we have fun with this special format of tours the night before classes begin in the fall, for Parents Weekend, and sometimes Halloween.

What is your favorite part of working in visitor/information services? The energy that comes from working with visitors and students and the fact that we are always trying to do new things to support our relationship with them. We just finished our iPhone tour and have one of the first collegiate iPad tours – I had no idea what I was doing most of the time but it is fun to always have something new to learn and try.

What is your best piece of advice for other CIVSA members (about student training, customer service, unique traditions, your website, or anything!)? First, I think you have to really believe in customer service and the power it has in our business. Good customer service transcends everything we do. Also, I am a big supporter of using volunteer students as tour guides and especially the parents of our college-bound students agree. I do not believe there is any amount of money I can pay them to bring the authenticity, attitude, heart, professionalism, and passion they need to bring to work each and every day. I carefully look for candidates that are intrinsically motivated as they work best in our environment here and we intentionally market this experience as a professional internship.

What is a typical day like at your job? Not unlike many of you, it's pretty crazy here. We have seen more than 300% growth over the past 7 years. Lots of email and phone calls, people to meet and greet, I mostly to deal with special requests from development officers, our central administration, the Board of Trustees, and any number of colleagues throughout the city and state that need support from the University. I try to meet with each member of the staff on a weekly basis, we have a weekly staff meeting with all full-time staff (now a team of 7 with the addition of 2 new full-time positions and a graduate assistant), meet individually and collectively with the University Ambassadors who need personal and professional support, and probably most importantly try to keep everyone motivated, satisfied and mission focused. We are constantly assessing so we can work on how to be more effective and efficient as we all know we can't be working any harder.

*Can Academia Boost Tourism?
A doctoral student explores universities' potential for
creating visitor destinations*

By Freda Sacharow

Reprinted with permission from Rutgers News in November 2010.

In Rolando Herts's vision, universities both public and private can play a vital role in generating tourism – and tourism dollars – a boon especially when those schools are located in economically distressed communities.

The Rutgers doctoral student is examining how institutions of higher learning might partner with local stakeholders to position themselves as tourist destinations, using two regions and the universities located in them as case studies.

Herts's work focuses on New Jersey's Gateway Tourism Region, which includes Rutgers' Newark and New Brunswick campuses, and the Mississippi Delta region, with Delta State University and Mississippi Valley State University.

By sharing their expertise with convention and tourism bureaus, municipal officials, chambers of commerce, and festival planners, Herts believes that academics can help energize a grass-roots movement to bring visitors to the nations' campuses and their environs.

"There are all kinds of possibilities, especially with the recent advent of 'staycations' during the recession," said Herts, who is completing a Ph.D. in urban planning and policy development at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy under the direction of tourism expert Briavel Holcomb. "Universities as cultural institutions and repositories of history have a lot to offer both local residents and out-of-town visitors."

For his dissertation – "The Roles of Universities in Tourism Planning and Development" (working title) – Herts chose venues with which he's particularly familiar.

In addition to completing a commitment with Teach for America in the Mississippi Delta after receiving degrees from Morehouse College in Atlanta and the University of Chicago, he serves as associate director of the Office of University-Community Partnerships (formerly the Office of Campus and Community Relations) on the Newark Campus.

Working with Diane Hill, assistant chancellor for university-community partnerships, Herts is exploring ways to apply his research to engagement efforts linking Rutgers and Newark.

"Tourism has been identified as a potential growth area for the city. As an emerging destination, Newark is an ideal place to investigate the roles that Rutgers can play or is playing in the tourism planning and development process, and how this activity may be beneficial to both the community and the institution," Herts said.

The graduate student comes by his passion naturally. His mother is a retired school district administrator and assistant dean of education, and his father, currently a university dean, was the first African-American superintendent of schools in an Arkansas Delta town that was still segregated in the 1980s.

*Can Academia Boost Tourism?
A doctoral student explores universities' potential for
creating visitor destinations (continued...)*

Herts said he has long been intrigued by what he calls the “community-building capacity” of schools and universities.

“People coming from all over the world to attend school and academic conferences in Newark, for example, may hear all the negatives, but why not find ways to expose them to the positives?” he suggested, like the city’s Ironbound District, with its Portuguese and Spanish restaurants; the Cathedra Basilica of the Sacred Heart, a national historic landmark; and downtown Newark, with its thriving arts and entertainment scenes.

“How might we at Rutgers be able to build on those treasures using the expertise and experience of people at the university and in the community?” Herts wondered. He sees a symbiosis developing to create a pride of place, spurred partially by campus information and visitor services – in many instances the first points of contact students and their families have with a university and its host community.

Herts is reaching out to faculty members, administrators, community activists, and tourism and community-development experts to gauge the current level of engagement and the potential for future partnerships.

He noted that institutions such as Rutgers, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Stanford University market on-campus museums, galleries, gardens, and historic structures as tourist attractions through campus-visitor information websites, while some state universities like North Carolina State and Texas A&M advise local communities on agritourism and festival planning through cooperative extensions.

Others serve as management entities for National Heritage Areas (NHAs), regions designated by Congress for their distinctive natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources. For example, he said, the University of North Alabama manages the Muscle Shoals NHA, a site rich in history pertaining to Native Americans as well as the transportation and music industries. Delta State University and Mississippi Valley State University both are eligible to become the management entity for the Mississippi Delta NHA, where cotton, culinary arts, and Blues music are prominent cultural heritage themes.

Although Rutgers does not manage a NHA, its three campuses are located within the boundaries of the Crossroads of the American Revolution NHA, with [Old Queens Campus](#) identified as one of the NHA's many historic assets.

In the end, Herts believes, the type of partnership he is tracking not only will improve a university's engagement with its community but also has the potential to educate and revitalize an entire region.

Welcome New Members!

Eloise Alexis Spelman College	Ellen Hedrick James Madison University	Dee Perkins Virginia Tech
Debbie Alfredson Rock Valley College	Tori Hirata University of California, Berkeley	Jessica Petri Savannah College of Art & Design
Beau Benson Polytechnic Institute of New York University	Safiya Jetha Oxford College of Emory University	Shanna Pomager University of Denver
Elizabeth Bergren New College of Florida	Sandy Johnson Purdue University	Megan Pound Bethany College
Jared Burgess John Brown University	Jared Jones University of Texas at San Antonio	Liza Beth Shirmer New York University
Jennifer Byers DePauw University	Dnyee Kayl University of Denver	Claire Strope Marian University
Jamila Canady Spelman College	Liz Koomler Savannah College of Art & Design	Catie Taylor University of Evansville
Joseph Capurso Savannah College of Art & Design	Geneva Lane Spelman College	Jennifer Thompson Rock Valley College
Meghan DeFord University of Maryland	Kelley Lips Oxford College of Emory University	Janeen Todd University of Denver
Amber Denman University of Idaho	Anna Logan DePauw University	Julie Weires Clarke College
Beri Dolan Rock Valley College	Gary Lupinacci Hunter College	Deidre West Polytechnic Institute of NYU
Darla Elliott MidAmerica Nazarene University	Jill MacBeath University of Calgary	Leslie Woltenberg University of Kentucky
Heather Fomin Polytechnic Institute of New York University	Marisol Mandujano University of Texas at San Antonio	Nicole Wong UC Santa Barbara
Terri Franks University of Georgia	Jamie Marcus New College of Florida	Christina Wright University of Alberta
Jeffrey Graham Heartland Community College	Kanani Martinez Portland State University	Cristal Xavier-Cohen New York University
Helga Greenfield Spelman College	Dustin Mayfield University of North Texas	Audra Yarborough University of North Texas
Karla Harper University of South Carolina	John McEachern Boston University	
Julie Hartness University of Texas at El Paso	Mark Meleney Florida State University	
Linda Hazelwood Virginia Tech	Alfred Miller New College of Florida	
	Gustavo Monzon University of Texas at El Paso	