



**FAIRLEIGH  
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UNIVERSITY**

International School of Hospitality,  
Sports, & Tourism Management

# Hospitality and Tourism Monthly Newsletter



## Beyond the Classroom, Into the Holidays: A Year-End Chronicle

**As we reach the end of 2025,** our Hospitality & Tourism community reflects on a semester filled with learning, collaboration, and memorable experiences.

November was an especially exciting month for our students as we explored new environments, strengthened industry connections, and continued growing as a vibrant academic community.

One of the standout moments of November was our Whistler Field Experience, where students toured The Westin Resort & Spa Whistler and Fairmont Chateau Whistler, learned directly from industry leaders, and explored the rich history and traditions of the Squamish and Lil'wat Peoples at the Cultural Centre. The day blended professional exposure with beautiful mountain scenery, cultural appreciation, and time to enjoy the festive village atmosphere.

A proud moment for our school this month was honouring Dr. Michael Lever, who received the prestigious Bright Idea Award from Seton Hall University for his impactful research on robot role positioning in hospitality.

Additionally, we are delighted to celebrate MHMS students Aqsa Khan and Anand Chendkapure, who earned an Honorary Mention in the New West Experience program.

Meanwhile, experiential learning continued as Professor Sandra's HRTM 7748 class visited the Vancouver Convention Centre to study its innovative sustainability practices.

As we conclude the semester and look ahead to a joyful holiday season, **we extend our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a bright, successful New Year ahead!**

### Upcoming Events in December

**What:** Last Day of  
Classes for Fall Term  
**When:** Dec 09, 2025

**What:** MHMS Program  
Advisory Committee  
Annual Meeting  
**When:** 4:30 pm to 6:30  
pm Dec 09, 2025  
**Where:** Online  
**Who:** *\*by invitation  
only\**

**What:** Reading Days  
**When:** Dec 10 & 11, 2025

**What:** Final Exam Week  
**When:** Dec 12 - 18, 2025



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## Highlights from November 2025

### FTRLNK Vancouver 2025

FTRLNK Vancouver 2025, held November 6, 2025 at Fairmont Hotel Vancouver brought together students, industry professionals, and emerging leaders for an inspiring evening of connection and career discovery. The event featured interactive networking sessions, employer meet-and-greets, and insightful conversations about the evolving landscape of hospitality, tourism, and service industries in Canada. Students engaged directly with recruiters, explored current hiring trends, and received practical career advice. Overall, FTRLNK 2025 delivered an energetic and future-focused platform for professional growth.



**What:** Hospitality Enrollment Quarterly Webinar

**When:** Dec 17, 2025

**Where:** Online

**Who:** *\*by invitation only\**

**What:** Special Project Presentation Festival

**When:** 8:00 am Dec 18, 2025

**Where:** Cambie 130

**Who:** *\*all are welcome\**



### Dr. Michael Lever Honored with Prestigious Bright Idea Award

We are proud to share that Dr. Michael Lever has been honored with the prestigious Bright Idea Award for his outstanding scholarly contribution. **His research article, "Partner or Servant? The influence of robot role positioning on consumers' brand evaluations,"** was selected as one of the top 10 manuscripts from an impressive pool of 154 submissions, a recognition sponsored by the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University in collaboration with New Jersey's business-school community. This award highlights exceptional faculty research across the state and reinforces FDU's strong academic reputation. In his remarks, **Dr. Lever expressed his gratitude for the recognition and his pride in representing FDU's Silberman College of Business at the ceremony.** Beyond this achievement, Dr. Lever is widely respected for his ongoing contributions to hospitality and tourism research, publishing in leading academic journals, serving on editorial boards such as the Journal of Travel Research, and holding leadership roles, including his involvement with the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) Canada Chapter. His accomplishment brings immense pride to the FDU Vancouver community and continues to inspire students and colleagues alike.







### Mountains, Moments & Management: Our Whistler Field Experience

On November 13th, our MHMS cohort embarked on a rainy morning journey from Burrard SkyTrain Station to **Whistler Village**, arriving after a scenic 2.5-hour drive. Our first site visit was at **The Westin Resort & Spa, Whistler**, where we were warmly welcomed by **Natalie Perreault, Assistant Director of People & Culture**, along with members of the leadership team and the General Manager. They shared valuable insights on career pathways, application processes, and the unique perks of working both at Westin and within the Whistler tourism community. A guided property tour followed, showcasing guest rooms, suites, the pool, and F&B outlets. After lunch, we visited the **Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre**, where the team greeted us with a traditional song before presenting a short film and a guided tour highlighting Indigenous culture, tools, clothing, canoes, and traditional craftsmanship. Our final industry stop was the iconic **Fairmont Chateau Whistler**, where **Tilly Pennington, Talent Acquisition Manager**, introduced us to Fairmont's brand culture, hiring process, and employee benefits, followed by a tour of their rooms, outlets, pools, and unique ski-in/ski-out facilities. The day concluded with free time to explore Whistler Village illuminated by festive lights, a warm dinner, and a comfortable return trip to Vancouver.







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### **HRTM 7748 Sustainability Field Visit: Exploring the Vancouver Convention Centre**

On November 18, our HRTM 7748 class, led by **Professor Sandra Louie**, visited the **Vancouver Convention Centre** to experience firsthand one of the world's most sustainable meeting and event facilities. The tour showcased the centre's remarkable green design features, including its six-acre living roof, on-site blackwater treatment system, seawater heating and cooling technology, and industry-leading waste-management practices. Students gained meaningful insights into how large-scale venues can integrate sustainability into daily operations, aligning perfectly with course concepts and demonstrating real-world applications of environmental stewardship in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Additionally, **the Vancouver Convention Centre is also set to achieve LEED certification for the third time**, further solidifying its position as a global leader in environmentally responsible venue management. This milestone highlights the centre's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and long-term environmental stewardship.

**VANCOUVER**  
CONVENTION  
CENTRE



### **MHMS Students Recognized for Outstanding Proposal at New West Experience Program**

Master of Hospitality Management Studies students Aqsa Khan and Anand Chendkapure submitted a proposal to the New West Experience program. With more than 50 submissions, the selection process was extremely competitive, and the judges faced many difficult decisions. **Aqsa and Anand received an Honorary Mention and a certificate of recognition with the opportunity to receive mentorship from the program in 2026.**

**We extend our heartfelt congratulations to both students, and we are incredibly proud of their achievement.**

**NWX**  
NEW WEST EXPERIENCE







## Upcoming in Winter 2026

### **Certification in Hotel Industry Analytics (CHIA) Training Program Offered in Winter 2026**

In the Winter 2026 semester, Dr. Michael Lever will be offering the **Certification in Hotel Industry Analytics (CHIA)** training program to MHMS students. The CHIA, provided by STR (a leading global data benchmarking company for the hospitality industry), is a highly respected certification that covers essential topics in hotel industry analytics.

Through this program, students will gain a solid understanding of key hotel industry concepts, including terminology, major players, hotel classifications, and important benchmarking practices. The training also covers crucial performance metrics, formulas, and methodologies used in the industry to assess hotel performance and make data-driven decisions.

The CHIA certification is a valuable credential for students interested in pursuing careers in hospitality management, as it provides a comprehensive foundation in the data analytics used by hotels and resorts worldwide.



# STR

