Students Apply Skills to Pequawket Trail Scenic Byway Project

One of the most scenic roads in southern Maine is also one of the quietest, economically speaking. A small group of planners and community members from six towns along route 113, also known as the Pequawket Trail, would like to change this. And now faculty and students in the USM Program in Tourism and Hospitality are trying to help.

Dr. Tracy Michaud Stutzman is using the Pequawket Trail Scenic Byway, which stretches from Standish to Fryeburg near the New Hampshire border, to teach her tourism students about the potential and challenges of using tourism to generate economic development in rural areas.

Stutzman, at the invitation of officials from the Greater Portland Council of Governments and the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, met with members of six towns over the fall semester. She then approached students in her class, “Tourism and Community Development,” with a special assignment. The students worked in teams to complete assessments for all six towns along the route: Standish, East Baldwin, Cornish, Hiram, Brownfield, and Fryeburg. The assessments gave an outsider’s perspective on what each town has to offer from a tourism perspective, ranging from natural areas to cultural heritage and local amenities.

Communities and planners have been meeting about Route 113 for years, discussing ways to generate economic development while respecting the environmental and cultural heritage of the region. Tourism has always been a part of that discussion, but has taken on greater importance in recent years as traditional resource-based industries have declined in the area.

Students made site visits to their respective communities, doing “windshield tours” as well as stopping at local businesses and even visiting tourist attractions like the Stone Mountain Arts Center in Brownfield. They also met with local officials to interview them about their towns’ assets and liabilities with respect to attracting visitors. Students presented their analyses at a meeting of the Route 113 Planning Committee, as well as at a USM conference on civic engagement.

The Pequawket Trail project is the type of engaged learning that will be a hallmark of the BA in Tourism and Hospitality program, providing services to communities while giving students the chance to apply what they learn to real-world settings.

USM-SMCC Agreement Builds Degree Bridge for Students

In September 2012, USM and Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) presidents Theo Kalikow and Ronald Cantor signed an articulation agreement between their schools’ programs in tourism and hospitality.

The agreement makes it easier for SMCC students graduating from SMCC’s new associate’s degree program in hospitality management to enroll in USM’s bachelor’s degree program in tourism and hospitality. Up to 60 credits will automatically transfer, making it possible to complete the BA with an additional two years.
First Crop of Majors Brings Experience and Enthusiasm

The new BA in Tourism and Hospitality already has more than two dozen students enrolled as majors as of spring 2013 -- just four months into the program's first year!

Our majors aren't your typical college students. Many come to the program with years of experience in the hospitality industry. For these students, completing a degree is not just about exploring their interests, but about gaining an important credential that will help them achieve their life and career goals.

Lindsay Abraham, one of the first students to enter the program, knows what it means to work in the industry—she has worked for years at her father's restaurant, the Muddy Moose, in North Conway, NH. “I grew up in the hospitality field,” says Lindsay. “I work there on vacations and during the summer. I would not be able to be a hostess, server, or floor manager without the hospitality skills I’ve learned.”

Lindsay’s career plans include “hopefully working at Disney World,” or in international hotel or restaurant management.

Stephanie Jannelle, who joined the program in spring 2013, says, “I’ve worked in the hospitality industry since I was 15. I started at a local bed and breakfast in Scarborough, traveled to the Caribbean, and now while finishing college am back in Portland working for one of the Hilton Properties.” Stephanie was a student at SMCC before transferring to USM in 2007. As for her future career plans, Stephanie says, “I plan to open a small inn either in southern Maine or the Midcoast area.”

Meet Our Faculty

A core group of faculty throughout the University of Southern Maine designed the Program in Tourism and Hospitality and oversee its development. Its members include:

- **Kreg Ettenger** (program chair), Associate Professor of Anthropology, Program in Geography–Anthropology, Muskie School of Public Service
- **Tracy Michaud Stutzman**, Lecturer in Anthropology, Program in Geography–Anthropology, Muskie School of Public Service
- **David Jones**, Associate Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies and Coordinator of the Minor in Nature Based Tourism
- **Robert Sanford**, Professor of Environmental Science & Policy and Chair, Department of Environmental Science
- **Travis Wagner**, Associate Professor of Environmental Science & Policy and Coordinator of the Minor in Sustainability, Department of Environmental Science
- **Firooza Pavri**, Associate Professor of Geography and Chair, Program in Geography–Anthropology, Muskie School of Public Service
- **Elizabeth Bischof**, Associate Professor of History, Department of History and Political Science

Industry Experts Share Insights with Students

Students in the fall class “The Travel Experience: Intro to Tourism & Hospitality” gained firsthand knowledge and advice from some of Maine’s most experienced and innovative leaders. From the founder of the Stone Mountain Arts Center to the creator of Maine Restaurant Week, and industry leaders in lodging, food service, and event planning, students were treated to a series of notable voices in the field.

Speakers included Carol Noonan, Stone Mountain Arts Center; Jim Britt, gBritt Public Relations; Greg Dugal, Maine Innkeepers Association; Liz Morin and Sherry Phillips, USM Conferences; Lynn Tillotson, Greater Portland CVB; Steve Hewins, AAA Northern New England; Tracy Michaud Stutzman; and Vaughn Stinson, Maine Tourism Association.

Faculty Spotlight

Tracy Michaud Stutzman

Not many people know more about the relationship between tourism, community development, and the arts than Tracy Michaud Stutzman. And of those who do, few know as much about the challenges facing small towns and rural areas in Maine. Tracy, who started this past fall as a lecturer in anthropology at USM, grew up in Dover-Foxcroft, and with the exception of a span in Pennsylvania to obtain her Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh, has always lived there—at least until her recent move with her family to southern Maine.

She spent the last decade working to bring economic development to the “Maine Highlands,” a term she helped coin to describe the region encompassing the mountainous central part of the state. She led the way toward redevelopment of downtown Dover-Foxcroft based largely on renovating a community theater; she helped found the Maine Highlands Guild and the Maine Crafts Association; and she helped create the Maine Center for Craft at the West Gardiner Travel Plaza, and then a second center at the Maine Mall.

Now she’s bringing her years of experience to the Program in Tourism and Hospitality at USM, showing students how they can foster development while helping communities understand what can be gained from university-community partnerships. Her fall class worked on tourism development along the Pequawket Trail Scenic Byway (see page 1), while her spring classes are working with local arts and culture organizations, and will study the potential local economic impacts of BikeMaine2013, a group bike tour that will visit several Maine towns later in the year.
Spotlight On: Steve Hewins, Advisory Board Chair

Steve Hewins knows travel. He’d better—he’s the vice president for travel products and services at AAA Northern New England, one of the region’s largest travel agencies. He’s been working in the industry for more than 30 years, having established one of the most successful “travel consultants” in Maine, Hewins Travel, before the age of online travel. In 2006 he sold his business to AAA Northern New England, where he and his wife now work.

Steve is also the first chair of the USM Program in Tourism and Hospitality Board of Advisors, and brings his experience and passion for travel to this new role. “I believe education is the key—not only students being educated on today’s elements of tourism, but the public at large understanding the value of tourism. There’s still plenty of preconceived ideas—that tourism is low-paying, seasonal, with no future. We have to capitalize on the core attributes that we have in Maine, like this program focuses on: people and culture, history and the environment. Companies like AAA are looking for people who want to change things, who want to make things happen. I like the idea of working with younger people.”

Hewins is a graduate of the University of Maine and lives in Cape Elizabeth with his wife, daughter, three dogs, two rabbits, hamster and a horse.

Students and Faculty Attend 2013 Maine Governor’s Conference on Tourism

Tourism and Hospitality students Kristen Byrnes (L) and Alexandra Souza (R) share program information at the Maine Governor’s Conference on Tourism. Eight students, as well as Prof. Kreg Ettinger and Tracy Michaud Stutzman, were generously hosted by the Maine Hospitality and Tourism Alliance at this year’s conference, where they met with industry leaders and received a first-hand look at the state’s new advertising campaign.

Program Advisory Board Represents Spectrum of Tourism Industry in Maine

The new Program in Tourism & Hospitality has assembled a board that represents various facets of the tourism industry in Maine, from lodging and food service businesses to retail, attractions, and community planning and development. The various aspects of the new program are represented by individuals with expertise in, among other things, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, sustainable tourism and hospitality, public relations, event planning, transportation, and policy and planning.

The board met for the first time on October 12, with board chair Steve Hewins introducing members and proposing several ideas for board involvement with the program.

Advisory Board Members 2012-2013

- **Steven Hewins** (Chair), Vice President Travel Products and Services, AAA Northern New England
- **Paul Bradbury**, Airport Director, Portland International Jetport
- **Ronald Cantor**, President, Southern Maine Community College
- **Charles Colgan**, Chair, Community Planning & Development Program, Muskie School of Public Service, USM
- **Gary Deethlefsen**, Project Manager, Maine Woods Initiative, Appalachian Mountain Club
- **Greg Dugal**, Executive Director, Maine Innkeepers Association
- **Janet Dutson**, Executive Director, Freeport Merchants Association
- **Jennifer Hutchins**, Executive Director, Creative Portland, Portland Arts & Cultural Alliance
- **Richard Grotton**, President & CEO, Maine Restaurant Association
- **Martha Honey**, Co-Director, Center for Responsible Travel
- **Rauni Kew**, Public Relations Manager, Inn by the Sea
- **Gerard Kiladjian**, General Manager, Portland Harbor Hotel
- **Matt Mattingly**, Owner, PineCrest Bed & Breakfast, Gorham
- **Carol Noonan**, Founder and CEO, Stone Mountain Arts Center
- **Carolann Ouellette**, Director, Maine Office of Tourism
- **Edward Palmer**, General Manager, Portland Marriott at Sable Oaks
- **Curtis Picard**, Executive Director, Maine Merchants Association
- **Amy Powers**, Director, CruiseMaineUSA
- **John Schultzel**, VP of Hotel Management, The Olympia Companies
- **Vaughn Stinson**, Chief Executive Officer, Maine Tourism Association
- **Barbara Whitten**, President & CEO, Greater Portland CVB
In Brief

Student Bloggers Explore Maine Attractions

Students in the fall course TAH 101, “The Travel Experience,” completed a final project that let them see Maine tourism attractions first-hand. Working individually, they visited tourism destinations of their own choosing and prepared formal travel reviews, which are now part of a larger class website. Check out the reviews and photos on TravelPod (www.travelpod.com - search for “TAH 101.”)

Royal Carribean Hosts Students for ‘Jewel of the Seas’ Visit

In October, students in the USM course “The Travel Experience” learned what it’s like to sail the seas in a luxury cruise ship. The Royal Caribbean vessel Jewel of the Seas, docked in Portland for a one-day visit, hosted the students as part of a trip arranged by Amy Powers, director of CruiseMaine-USA.

Students received a personal tour and met with the captain, hospitality director, and others responsible for running the ship, which was on a cruise from Boston to the Canadian Maritimes. Among other activities, the class learned what it takes to feed some 2,500 passengers and 860 crew members for a one-week journey—such as 18,450 eggs, 24,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables, and nearly 36,700 pounds of meat and poultry. Passengers also consume some 8,500 cans of beer and 7,500 bottles of liquor in several onboard dining rooms, bars, casinos, and nightclubs.

According to Powers, cruise ships bring important revenue to several Maine ports, including Portland, Rockland, Camden, Boothbay Harbor, and Bar Harbor. Shore excursions bring customers to local shops, restaurants, bars, and other businesses, contributing millions of dollars in revenue every year. Cruise ships also help extend the tourism season in Maine, since many visits occur from September through November.

usm.maine.edu/tourism