Co-op in New York: the world in your hand

Nevenka Anamaria Krželj, Petar Gregović and Danijel Bilić will remember the summer of 2015 for a long time. These students of RIT Croatia have been cooperating with the well-known agency Drap for a while now, and they have spent the last summer in New York. The goal was to research and analyze the startup scene in New York.

Davor Runje, co-owner of the Drap agency, started his cooperation with RIT Croatia two years ago, by hiring Danijel for co-op. One of the tasks Danijel had was to create the mobile application for the Android platform. Danijel did an excellent job with a positive and proactive approach. Drap was so pleased with Danijel's performance that they have decided to continue to cooperate with our students. “

After Danijel's summer co-op, we continued to cooperate on our projects, and during the winter period we have started a project where we included Nevenka Anamaria Krželj and Ena Paponja”, says Davor Runje.

"This summer we have decided to spend some time in New York, and students who were working on the project deserved to take part in this whole process along with us in order to see for themselves how it is to work and live in New York”, Mr. Runje emphasizes that the primary goal was to motivate students, and to demonstrate to them that knowledge and effort are fundamental values for building a career.

“After spending an entire summer in a co-working environment surrounded by startups and young people who are trying to change the world, these students themselves have changed. I hope they will transfer some of that positive energy to others upon returning to Zagreb.”

“We were working on Manhattan and living in Brooklyn, and I will definitely remember this experience for the rest of my life,” said Nevenka, a student in the IB program. “My tasks were related to marketing. I did market research, contacting potential clients, presentations, content development for online communication, and may other activities”.

“I worked at the project as a front-end developer, an other tasks included house cleaning and washing the dishes (I did not do my best in this area)”, Petar commented.

Nevenka and Petar emphasize that the knowledge gained on classes was a foundation for doing a successful co-op. “Studying at RIT Croatia provided me with enough knowledge to understand and actively participate in the process of creating business plans and presenting; I have also learned the business vocabulary and how to conduct conversations with other business people”, says Nevenka.  

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Dubrovnik Seniors Present Original Research

The world of hospitality and business is full of intriguing practical questions: If a restaurant waiter thinks you are going to leave a big tip, will he give you better service? Are well dressed hotel guests treated better than those who are casually dressed? Which foreign languages are most important for Dubrovnik hotel workers to learn? What do tourists really think about the food and beverage service at Dubrovnik airport?

These are just a few of the interesting research questions asked and scientifically answered by IHSM program seniors in the fall semester. Through both a review of the current literature on the topic and collection of original data through surveys and observations, students investigated a wide range of topics in hospitality and business. At the end, students offered solutions to current problems, and suggestions for improvements that could benefit local businesses, or even help these students start their own businesses after graduation.

Students came up with a fascinating variety of interesting topics, directly related to current trends and problems in hospitality and business,” said Prof. Rebecca Chary, senior project course instructor. “This capstone course helped them identify a real situation or problem, and become knowledgeable about the current professional theories and concepts behind it. Then, the most exciting part of the project was collecting original data from people and businesses around them through scientific methods – from live interviews, stealth observations in real life, surveys and online data collection.”  

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Travel Writing Course

Alumni Success Stories

New Student Clubs

Prof. Kevin Walker with mentees Branimir Boraš, Marko Glavor, Pero Matušić and Stanko Boraš
The beautiful, historic city of Dubrovnik has been a source of creative inspiration for artists and writers for centuries. During the January intersession, the city also provided the ideal location to learn the creative art of travel writing. RIT students from our global campuses on three continents joined Professor Karen vanMeenen, who traveled from the Rochester campus to teach the Creative Nonfiction course Writing the Literary Travel Essay. This intensive, three-week course encouraged students to “follow their own curiosity, improve their writing and storytelling skills, and spend time in reflection on the ideas of place and their position in the larger scheme of things,” Professor van Meenen explained.

Twenty-two students were enrolled, including 17 students from the Dubrovnik campus, two from the Rochester campus, and three from the Dubai campus. “In the course, we read travel essays on topics ranging from mermaid shows in Florida to strolling through urban environs to cruise ship voyages,” Professor vanMeenen said. “The students were charged with describing favorite places from memory, as well as finding new locales to explore. One of the most popular assignments was to wander through a physical space with no destination in mind, and experience the subsequent psychogeographic effects, and write about them.”

As writers, we worked on many elements of the personal essay form, including observation and description, voice, perspective, tone, writing about place, approaching cultural difference, ethical considerations, and even incorporating historical elements and conducting research.”

In addition to traveling, wandering, writing and revising, students were inspired by reading creative nonfiction, a genre that was new to many of them. “I liked reading travel essays, because I wanted to understand how the authors experienced the places they visited and their imagination,” said Dubrovnik campus student Andriana Marega. “Professor van Meenen’s feedback encouraged me to improve my writing and my self-confidence. Working in peer review groups was also really interesting. I liked sharing our opinions to improve our writing.”

“After finishing the course I feel like I can better express myself,” said student Filip Brkic. “I expanded my vocabulary with some new words and broadened my views when it comes to describing places, people and events around me.”

Professor vanMeenen explained her longtime interest in the genre of travel writing. “I have a profound, indefatigable case of wanderlust. I get in a car, step on a train, or board a plane at the very start of almost every RIT break—whether a three-day weekend or the long summer months. Ever since I did a study abroad program in London my junior year of college, travel has been in my blood. While I have a passion for teaching, for being in the classroom, for interacting with students of all stripes, whenever I am not charged with being on campus, I seek out new places, new people, new adventures.

My students would tell you that I do not preach about any subject but one: how travel, how study abroad opportunities, can expand your outlook, can enrich your life, can even change it forever as it has mine. These experiences of culture and landscape, this ability to see and learn new things, to hear new voices, and above all to understand the world from multiple perspectives, make me a better educator—and I dare say a better citizen of this planet. So when I learned about the opportunity to teach at RIT Croatia, I was thrilled to have a chance to marry my vocation and my passion for travel and to entice a few students to join me on the adventure.

In total, the students each wrote five personal essays in under three weeks, with additional revisions required for their final portfolios. These essays were self-reflective true-life narratives and we all of course learned much about the myriad places that were their subjects, but also about each other in the reading and sharing of them.”

Students in the Travel Writing course with visiting Rochester campus professor Karen vanMeenen
**Meet the Experts**

**Guest speaker series puts students in contact with professionals**

One of the most important parts of an RIT Croatia education is the opportunity to meet and learn from professionals in a wide variety of fields. Whether they are seasoned professionals from the region, or young alumni who have started their own businesses, these guests are eager to share their career experiences, stories and life advice with current students through live guest lectures, video conferences and site visits.

**Communication and teamwork**

In Dubrovnik, students filled a large classroom to overflowing in December to hear from Slobodan “Bobi” Kecić who works as Marine, HSEQ & Training Superintendent at Teekay Shipping Norway AS. He spoke with students about the importance of communication, motivation and teamwork, with personal stories from his long and successful career. He talked about how to listen and be listened to, how to avoid common excuses for failure, and whether it is possible to change yourself.

At the end Mr. Kecić gave the following recommendation to our students: “Be willing to leave your comfort zone. Staying where you are comfortable is the greatest barrier to achieving your potential.”

“Mr. Kecić is a man with a solution. His lecture had a very positive influence on me,” said freshman student Niko Katusic. “I like his attitude and his determination. The most meaningful message I got is, don’t limit your expectations, and don’t think that if you come from little country like Croatia that you cannot manage in the world.”

**IT Operations**

In Zagreb, more than 50 RIT Croatia IT students visited KING ICT to gain insight into the IT company’s daily business practices. The students attended two lectures: the first by the Director of Software Delivery, Roko Roić, on science lessons from the history of software development methodologies and the second lecture by the main KING ICT architect, Matija Capan, on software quality assurance.

Students heard first-hand information on the company, their methods of operation, technology and the programming languages they use in their projects, working conditions, and the required profile of potential employees. By visiting the KING ICT facilities, students learned about the products and services they currently offer as well as information on future projects.

Expertise leads to successful business, and in it one must find space for relaxation and inspiration; hence, the students visited KING’s nooks for relaxation, including their gym, sauna, billiard lounges, and table soccer areas. After all...that’s the world of a successful IT company and a pleasant, modern, working environment that is waiting for new, young professionals to join them.

Students from both RIT Croatia campuses participated in a video conference presentation with Extension Engine MANAS d.o.o., an IT company with offices in Split, Zagreb, Los Angeles and Boston. This company was founded 15 years ago, and today employs 200 programmers, developers, testers and designers. The company has twice been listed among the 5000 fastest growing companies in the United States. Their main project is called edX, an online learning platform. RIT Croatia is very happy to host Extension Engine/Manas d.o.o. at the Career Education Days this spring for the first time.

Another interesting guest speaker was Mr. Ceco Gaković, a founder of cities.io. Students enjoyed Mr. Gaković’s presentation about Smart cities and Internet of Things concept, how startups can positively change our lives with advanced technology. Three of our IT students have been participating at the Startup events and their projects under mentorship of Mr. Gaković have won from first to second place.

CEO of Evolva, Mr. Matija Tomašković also held a lecture for IT students in Zagreb about the technology his company is using - Evolution Framework. Mr. Tomašković showed students the tools for efficient development of web applications and shared how experts in his company are monitoring work of the applications and implementing continuous improvements in demanding web-based information systems. After the lecture, some students used the opportunity to ask Mr. Tomalikovic about supervision of work applications, the security of data and performance of web-based systems. Hosting Mr. Tomašković was an excellent opportunity for the students to hear more about this award-winning technology from its author, and also to learn more about employment and internship opportunities with Evolva.

Similarly, Mr. Tomislav Bilić, Founder and CEO of Inchoo, talked about his entrepreneurial path: and the story of the company: idea development, company beginnings, and the main challenges they faced when starting the business.
Mr. Bilić discussed implementation of content marketing strategy through knowledge sharing on their web/blog, and introduced the Magento platform to students. He gave advice to students on what skill set a successful candidate needs to have, what languages/technologies an Inchoo programmer needs to know.

Earlier this fall, IT program students visited the entrepreneurship incubator at Dubrovnik Development Agency (DURA), where students met with Nikša Vlahušić from the Futura club. He gave a brief presentation about 3D printing technology and its everyday use. Students had a lot of questions on developing 3D printer from scratch and challenges that arise in that process. After the lecture, Mrs. Marijana Puljas, an associate in Dubrovnik Development Agency gave students and faculty members a tour of Idea Factory offices, where 30+ startup companies have begun their business life.

**Quality of Service in Hospitality**

Tatjana John, Quality Manager at the Importanne Resort discussed aspects of Quality Management in the Hotel Industry, with students in Prof. Milena Kuznin’s Assessing and Improving Service Quality course at the Dubrovnik campus. According to Ms. John, quality service is about creating magic moments in everyday situations that get you noticed, remembered and referred. Many little things from employees’ attitudes, to team work, standards, trust, and planning, are of great importance for the quality service in the Hotel industry. Students were very pleased to hear many real examples from Ms. John’s working experience.

**Leadership**

Mrs. Ivana Šoljan, Board member of IN2 delivered a lecture on Startup vs. Big Company Leadership - What can mature companies learn from start-ups? Through the presentation, Mrs. Šoljan introduced some key differences between a start-up and a corporation; she spoke about corporate culture and what it takes to create a high performance teams.

As start-up scene is becoming more and more popular, especially within the IT field, this presentation was tailoried to give students a better distinction between corporation and a start-up and what these two can learn from one another.

One of the key messages was the about leadership and what it takes to become a successful leader who will inspire others. Mrs. Šoljan shared how it is extremely important to create an affirmative culture based on trust. It’s important to hire motivated people, inspire and empower them and then leave them alone to do their work.

Other interesting business speakers in Zagreb included Mr. Teo Vujčić, CEO of Zvijezda, who spoke about finding your own path in a competitive business environment. He shared his experiences and personal stories, including some of the main challenges and difficult situations he faced through his career, and how he managed to balance private and personal life.

Dr. Darren Treasure, Partner at Round Midnight Investments and Owner of NK Istria, 1961 delivered a lecture entitled Applying lessons from elite sport to the world of business- Developing a Champion’s Mindset. The lecture he delivered triggered the interest of students any many of them expressed their interest for Sports industry and conducting internships with NK Istria, 1961.

**Finance and Investing**

Jason Berry, CEO at Positive Equity spoke to students about the trading world: what is it like to be a trader, futures trader or commodities trader in Croatia or Ireland. He spoke about his career path and why he decided to open up a business in Croatia. He explained how a regular day of trader looks like and what skill set they’ll need to have in order to succeed.

Morgan Stanley representatives from Budapest spoke about Finance and Risk Department in their company, providing insight into the daily operations and skills necessary for the job. After the presentation, MS representatives held a drop in session for all students who wanted to learn more about the company operations and the opportunities they offer and for those who wanted to have one on one conversations with representatives. Two representatives held mock interviews with students who applied for potential positions- giving students feedback on what they did well and what they need to improve for future interviews.

**Young alumni and current students**

In addition to experienced industry experts, guest speakers at the Dubrovnik campus this fall included recent alumni and even current students. One of the first guests was the Croatia by Boat team, led by RIT Croatia Alumni Toni Njirić and Mihovil Kisić and their partners. They created their own innovative business, applying the modern technology of online booking to the sailing and yacht market, which was previously dominated by e-mail or phone requests. So far, the team has signed contracts with multiple agencies with their offers of excursions, yacht charters and exclusive boat trips.

Our own senior IT student Andrej Šarić, who has developed, along with his team, several iOS applications, such as Libertas app, Dubrovnik card app, held an iOS workshop based on programming in Swift, for all interested students. He is currently working on the several projects that will be finished soon, such as Smart park – based on smart sprinkler system for the parks in Dubrovnik area, and Smart Parking- system that helps drivers find nearest available parking place. Andrej’s passion for technology and dedication to his education and work has become widely known among our students, whose comments were very positive.
Inspiring success stories from RIT Croatia Alumni

Bozana Zekan ‘04
College lecturer, MODUL University, Vienna

Bozana Zekan graduated from the IHSMS program in Dubrovnik in 2004. Today, she is a Researcher and Lecturer, in the Department of Tourism and Service Management at MODUL University, Vienna, where she was recently awarded a certificate for Outstanding Teaching Performance. Although she jokingly describes herself as “a geek,” she truly does love learning and teaching.

“One of the most important parts of my education was advice from my professors at RIT Croatia, who were not only my professors, but also my mentors and friends. They knew that I wanted to stay in academia after I finished my studies and were always supporting me down this path. I have learned a lot from them.”

“ar front of a job, she feels amounted to be taught me about organization and priorities.”

Maria Sentić ‘04
Owner, Accounting, Leap agency, USA

Maria Sentić, who graduated from RIT Croatia Dubrovnik in 2004, recently opened her own digital accounting firm, AccountingLeap, an online platform that connects accountants and bookkeepers directly with clients.

Her business is based on today’s innovative employment structures — all her employees work online from home, with flexible hours.

As a mother of four young children, she knows how important these innovative working conditions are for maintaining work-life balance.

Although she works from home, it isn’t easy. Often she works up to 18 hours per day. “As an entrepreneur, I actually work more than I would in a traditional company. But still, I would never go back to working for someone else.”

Izet Ždralović ‘03
Award winning app designer, Zagreb

Izet Ždralović ‘03 co-designed an innovative app that was named one of the best innovations of 2014, and won a prestigious Grand Prix award at the Netexpo Forum in Paris. Izet and his team at their startup company MicroBlink created a free educational app called Photomath, which uses text recognition to help students understand math better. Using the app, students take a photo of a math problem. The app then shows them step by step how to solve it. The app has been downloaded nearly 12 million times and is used to solve over 700,000 math problems each day.

Josip Lucić ‘15
Junior associate, MOL group, Budapest

Josip Lucić, a recent graduate of the Zagreb IB program, is currently working in Budapest for the MOL energy group. Selected for the company’s Growww program, Josip is employed in a junior position with ongoing on-the-job training and education. When he is not working, he enjoys the history and culture of Budapest, which he describes as “a vibrant city offering lots of activities to participate in and events to attend — perfect for a young person.”

The smooth transition from college to work was enabled by his coop experience, Josip said. “The internships I completed during my studies at RIT Croatia provided me with a good understanding of obligations and responsibilities. Also, the various projects we delivered through group work in class provided me with an analytical and critical thinking approach to solving problems.”

He advises current students to take advantage of all the opportunities that the college offers. “If your class schedule allows you to do so — try to gain additional work experience before you graduate. Work in a position you haven’t worked before and do things that you find really challenging. This will provide you with a deeper insight of which industry to apply to as well as what type of position to aim for.”

Mihaela Calis ‘15
Business Development associate, Oradian, Zagreb

A fresh graduate of the IB program at the Zagreb campus, Mihaela Calis currently works in the sales department at Oradian, a cloud-based financial services company that connects people in developing countries around the world with financial services such as microloans and credit unions. Her current job began as a part time job during her senior year, secured at Career Education Day, and has now become a full time position with increased responsibilities. Although she spends her days in Zagreb, her job brings her in close contact every day with clients and partners in Nigeria, Ghana and other countries.

“It is amazing when you realize the impact this product has on microfinance institutions that are serving people at the base of the economic pyramid. Instafin enables microfinance institutions, co-operatives and credit unions to serve the most rural clients affordably and effectively. It creates ability to provide more loans to more people, to open new branches and to reach rural areas, which are usually left behind by the banks. Just imagine having over 10,000 clients and their loans and savings accounts managed only on paper or an excel sheet — that is what our customers are struggling with.

Mihaela Calis with colleagues at Oradian

When I see the growth of our clients on a weekly basis, it definitely puts a smile on my face. I thought I understood different cultures, but every day I get surprised by how often we, citizens of developed countries, take things for granted.”

Mihaela said she is grateful for the skills she learned at RIT Croatia that prepared her for her current career.

“RIT Croatia provided me with lots of technical knowledge, especially Prof. Jurkic-Condic’s finance classes. College especially helped me develop the habit of working hard every day. The most valuable things I learned in college are not just technical things, but also the attitude towards career and behavior towards different types of people. Co-ops and extracurricular activities, especially being part of 5G, taught me about organization and priorities.”
New Student Clubs

The student-run Robotics club at the Zagreb campus brings together students who share a passion for the fields of robotics, programming, and electrical engineering.

The club began to take shape when students Mateo Sokač and Tino Herlević held a successful lecture at the Zagreb campus during the European Robotics Week 2014. The lecture covered the interesting field of sensors and their application in robotics. The first proper hands-on experience started in the fall semester 2015. Each week, the students exchange their knowledge and apply it in assembling elements and design their own devices. An important part of their meeting is the program design where the real fun happens. As Filipe Aleixo, a 3rd year IT student and club member put it: “Finally, the device gets a behavior.”

As a result of learning, knowledge exchange, weekly meetings, hard work and a lot of fun, the Robotics club designed its own weather station to measure temperature, humidity, etc and display this information in real-time on an LCD screen. This project was developed under the code name “project Vakula”

Today, about 13 members of the club explore new technologies and continually evolve through finding exciting new opportunities for challenge that will enhance their programming skills, team work, and critical skills.

Faculty member, Prof. Iva Bacic, has introduced the concept of the Internet of Things to the club members this semester so they can link their knowledge of robotics and programming with the IoT. “If this works out well, soon all of them redesign they homes and apartments into smart houses,” she said.

Mateo Sokač
President of the Robotics club at RIT Croatia, Zagreb:

During my sophomore year, as I continued developing my programming skills, I started designing my own electrical circuits and I got to work on some really interesting projects. In addition, I was very lucky to have the help of professor Iva Bačić, who was also interested in robotic and was able to answer few of my questions. Soon enough, we decided to found Robotics club here at RIT Croatia.

The goal was to get the students familiar with the Arduino platform and to teach them the basics of electrical engineering and programming in C. I would start the meeting with a short presentation, after which the students were given practical tasks. For our first project, we chose to make a little weather station which displayed information on its LCD screen. When we covered transistors and DC motor control, we were able to move onto more complex projects. We are currently working on building remote control cars, and after that we plan on developing a primitive AI for them, allowing them to avoid obstacles.

Since RIT Croatia’s IT program is heavily oriented towards web technologies and high-level programming, this is a great opportunity for students to try their hand at low-level programming languages like C/C++.

Filipe Aleixo
3rd year IT student:

So far I have really enjoyed being a part of the robotics club at RIT Croatia. I like the technical aspects, assembling the devices but as a more software oriented person I really like the coding part and how that can in certain ways influence how the device behaves. So one of the best parts of the club for me is how it has introduced me to a new programming language.

Patrik Durasek
2nd year IT student:

Since I was a kid I always wanted to create a robot, and Robotics Club finally gave me a chance to do that. I love the fact that we work in teams on all different sorts of projects and create useful inventions. We started creating simple projects such as a LED display, using infrared sensors and later combining everything we learned to create a complete weather station. Robotics Club has definitely taught me a lot and improved both my coding skills and my creative thinking in order to solve problems.

In the future of Robotics Club I look forward to program the Arduino powered cars, because it looks like a really fun challenge to write code for a car that would have to drive on its own. I hope that we would get to work on drones and write some more advanced code for our robots. I hope even more people would join our club, so we could even organize events on our own campus. I believe anyone who has interest in these kinds of things should join and at least try it out or just show up at one of our meetings and see how it all works.

Anyone who is interested in joining the Robotics club is encouraged to email Mateo Sokač or Prof. Iva Bacic. The club is open to all students, not only IT students. Welcome!

Investment Club - Entering the business world while still in college

Most student clubs at RIT Croatia are created to relax, to socialize, or to do some physical activity alongside being a full-time student. But one of the Zagreb campus’ newest clubs is a bit different – the Investment Club not only offers students hands on experience of investing in the markets, it also helps them work in teams toward a common goal; a trait every employer looks for.

The idea for the club was first proposed by Zagreb campus seniors who graduated in the spring of 2015, inspired by their peers at the Rochester campus who have a similar club. However, the RIT Croatia club is adapted to Croatian laws, bureaucracy, economy, and mindset, only to name a few.

The main goal of this club is to enable students to work in the real world and experience it in practice instead of only learning about it in theory. For all students who are interested in the world of finance and investments, this is a very good opportunity. The ability to learn by participating in the market itself rather than reading a book describing it is invaluable.

In September, sophomore student Mislav Horvatić assumed the role of a president, and got the wheel rolling by forming a team of people who will manage the first RIT Croatia portfolio of investments: Marko Madecki (Vice-president), Stella Kupres (General Secretary), Ana Perica and Kata-rina Milutin (Portfolio Directors), Mihovil Čužić (Information Manager), and Domagoj Hruškar (Director of Marketing). As the club is approaching its official recognition as a legal entity, all interested students are invited to join. New members would assume roles of Portfolio Analysts, Market Analysts, and Marketing Assistants, and we invite everyone interested to contact our faculty advisor, Professor Vanja Vežagić (vanja.vezagic@croatia. rit.edu) for further information.

Club members will get real life experience on the markets of equity, debt, and commodities, and show potential employers that they have the capacity and knowledge to compete and work with the best.
Co-op in New York: the world in your hand

“I have no words to describe the experience of living and working there. I am enormously thankful to Drap and my bosses who gave us this opportunity of living and working there, as it was literally a lot changing experience where I made many friends and learned a lot”, says Nevenka.

Petar considers this co-op as the best experience regarding his career development and he emphasizes “This experience had a great and strong impact on my view of the IT world and wishes, and it made me realize that I can easily compete with IT people in USA. My future career path will definitely include working and living in USA, and I hope that New York will be the next city I will be working in.”

Nevenka and Petar continued to be a part of the Drap team upon returning from the US. Nevenka is working on a new project as an assistant to the executive director of the company, and Petar is busy working on many digital agency types of projects.

When asked about his opinion about RIT Croatia students, Davor Runje answers: “I am pleasantly surprised with their positive attitude and initiative. We are living in a time of great changes and great opportunities, which were not available in this part of the world until recent years. I think these students will know how to use those opportunities well.”

Dubrovnik Seniors Present Original Research

“Mommy, buy me this!”

Senior Antonia Kolić was curious about children’s behavior in grocery stores, particularly those who beg or cry for treats.

“I have seen many young children convince their parents to buy things by crying or screaming. Some of my friends with children tell me it’s nearly impossible to say no. I was curious about what is really happening, so I focused my senior research project on finding out.”

After reading extensively about children’s growing influence on families’ purchasing decisions, Antonia organized a live observation in several Dubrovnik grocery stores. She quietly observed dozens of families as they went about their shopping, and kept careful records of children’s and parents’ behavior.

“In the end I found that the children almost always win,” she said. “Most children who asked repeatedly, cried, or screamed, got what they wanted. One very interesting trend was that children seemed to cry the most with their mothers. When they went shopping with grandparents or fathers, their behavior was much better. My findings can be helpful both to marketers, who see children as a growing customer base, and for parents, who want some control over their children’s behavior.”

“I can tell a lot about people by the brands they wear”

Curious about the role of brand names in millennials’ decisions to buy clothing, Senior Antonia Bošković investigated her peers’ perceptions of popular clothing brands, and was surprised by the results she found.

“A lot of current marketing research on millennials tells us that our generation is extremely brand conscious. We associate specific brands with personality traits, and even form our own social identities through the brands we wear,” she said.

However, through a survey of students at RIT Croatia and the University of Dubrovnik, Antonia found that this was only partly true. She asked students how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as “I like the brand name or logo to be visible on the outside of my clothing” or “The brands I wear represent my personality.”

“Darwin’s theory tells us that we have the ability to learn from each other. But in the case of marketing, the information is often one-sided,” Antonia said. “Parents often do not know what they are actually teaching their children. My results showed that there is a group of students who are extremely brand conscious, and choose their brands carefully to create their own sense of identity. This group includes as many males as females, but it is also a minority. More students actually objected to the idea of the brands being connected to personality. Their survey answers sort of rebelled against the entire idea of logos and brands. This is important news for clothing marketers – in some cases, their efforts are actually backfiring.”

Dubrovnik restaurants and sustainable agriculture

In creating his senior project, Vedran Petrušić was inspired by his interest in concepts of sustainable agriculture. “Developing sustainable agricultural practices is so important for the future of our planet, and I really wondered what was happening in Dubrovnik in that regard. Particularly, I wanted to know more about the relationships between our local restaurants and suppliers of organic local produce.”

By surveying both local restaurants and local food suppliers, Vedran was able to identify some significant gaps and areas for improvement.

“One interesting result I found was that many people don’t even know what local produce means. There’s a lot of confusion about the term, and even people in the food industry assume it simply means the same as domestic.”

“However, restaurant owners really do want to use local produce but are limited by a lack of supply. This means there is a huge business opportunity out there, for the right companies with knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices.”

“The senior project course really prepares students for life after college, especially since most of them will be heading out into the business world in hospitality and management fields,” Prof. Charry said. “Not only have they gained in depth knowledge of the field, but they have learned to identify problems, collect data, and suggest solutions. Those are key skills that prepare students to be excellent employees and even self-made entrepreneurs.”
Prof. Majda Tafra recently contributed articles on Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro to “The World Guide to Sustainable Enterprise,” volume 3, published by Greenleaf. She also published an article titled “Public opinion on adaptation of companies to climate change,” in the journal Informatologia.

Prof. Jasmina Samardžija was elected to the academic scientific title znanstveni suradnik, or research associate in the field of economics. She published an article entitled “Tertiary education increases productivity – Croatia vs. EU-10” in the News and Views newsletter of the American Chamber of Commerce in Zagreb.

Prof. Barbara Perić and Prof. Nikolina Božinović attended the Fifth International Congress of Applied Linguistics Today - New Tendencies in Theory and Practice, held at the Faculty of Philosophy, in Novi Sad, Serbia. They presented a paper entitled, “Cross-linguistic influences in Spanish L3 acquisition by learners with Croatian L1 and English L2.”

Prof. Kristijan Tabak published a paper, “On Hadamard groups with relatively large 2-subgroup,” in the European Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics. He is also one of the organizers of the conference, Network Coding and Designs, to be held in Dubrovnik in April.

Prof. Maja Vidović has been selected to teach an online course entitled “International Human Resource Studies” at the undergraduate level for the Pennsylvania State University in summer 2016. Penn State is among the largest US universities, and their online program has been ranked the No. 1 for the best online bachelor’s programs in the US by the U.S. News & World Report in both 2015 and 2016.

Prof. Iva Bačić was elected to the academic title of lecturer (predavač) in the field of technical science. She also attended and participated at the International Symposium ELMAR2015, where she presented a co-authored research paper titled “Empirical Channel Model for Communication in Urban Areas with a Hilly Region”. In addition, her co-authored paper titled “Measurement of DVB-S and DVB-S2 parameters” was published in the proceeding of the International Conference on Software, Telecommunications and Computer Networks 2015. Both papers are the result of research collaboration with the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing.

Prof. Peter Schmidt was elected to the academic title of lecturer (predavač) in the field of economics.