

Hospitality Management Alumnus Serves Up Industry Insight

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Paul Kramer, an alumnus and the president of Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour Restaurants, recently spoke to hospitality management students as a professor for a day.

Students in a hospitality management class got the industry scoop. But it didn't come from their professor. It came from Paul Kramer, president of Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour Restaurants.

During his visit, Kramer asked students how many had visited Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour Restaurants. Most of the students raised their hands. The president of Farrell's then evoked chuckles after chiding them to "Bring back the silverware you took."

Kramer, who graduated from Cal Poly Pomona in 1989 with a bachelor's in hospitality management, returned to campus for the Professor for a Day program.

The program began in 1997 to give current students an idea of what they can look forward to in their prospective fields after graduation by introducing them to successful alumni who can provide real-world experiences and insight.

"For many of our students, this is their first opportunity to meet and interact with someone who is working full-time in the field of study that they are pursuing," said Melissa Riordan, the executive director of Alumni and External Relations.

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Many of the alumni return year after year to reconnect with former professors and departments, and to make a contribution to their alma mater.

Alumni Association President Jill Escoto ('83, communications) described the program as "an opportunity for alumni to give back to the school, engage with the community and connect with the students."

Since its inception, Professor for a Day has welcomed back more than 1,000 alumni, including Roy Conli ('79, theater), a film producer who recently won an Academy Award for Disney's "Big Hero 6."

The returning alumni, who were paired up with current Cal Poly Pomona professors to prepare their lectures, were honored at a luncheon at The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch on May 14 attended by the Alumni Association board of directors and university President Soraya M. Coley.

Coley spoke to alumni about their part in inspiring Cal Poly Pomona students. "A lot of our students, many of them first-generation, may not see the trajectory that leads them to the success you enjoy. Your stories are important," she said.

During his lecture, Kramer divulged course-relevant tips about maintaining quality service in the hospitality industry, but also shared his professional arc with the class: he was the youngest general manager of a Pizza Hut at age 18, became president of Bullwinkle's International before 30 and helped re-establish Farrell's as a household name.

Aside from his industry knowledge, Kramer served up other sage advice: "There's no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."

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PolyCentric Editor

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