

For Immediate Release
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Five Ferris students aid planning for new Grand Rapids hotel

BIG RAPIDS – Five students from the College of Business at Ferris State University will have their imprint on a new luxury hotel being planned for downtown Grand Rapids.

The Ferris Hospitality program was chosen by Alticor Inc., the parent company of Amway Hotel Corporation, to conduct a marketing research project for the new Marriott International hotel opening in the summer of 2007. The 24-story, 340-room hotel will be built across Pearl Street from the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel.

Ferris' Julie Doyle, coordinator of hospitality programs, selected a graduate student and four hospitality students to complete the research. The project manager was Amy Dorey of Stanwood, adjunct faculty member and master of business administration graduate student. The students chosen were: sophomore Joseph Madison of Ada; sophomore Benjamin Powell of Manton; senior Stephan Sepanski of Waterford; and senior Susan Veine of Manistee.

The students worked together for the last three months using a Marriott analysis software tool to identify food and beverage concept opportunities in Grand Rapids. The team has stayed at the Amway Grand Plaza, completed personal surveys, compiled demographics, spoke with the Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention & Visitors Bureau, identified attractions in Grand Rapids, analyzed local food and beverage competition, and compiled their findings into a formal poster and power point presentation.

The first presentation was made last month at the Ferris Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center for University administrators and George Aquino, general manager, and Darin Jemison, food and beverage director, representatives from the new Marriott hotel.

The next step for the Ferris student team is to make its final presentation later this month to the members of management from Marriott, as well as the architect and interior designers from Chicago and New York who will be implementing the research findings.

PHOTO CAPTION:

FERRIS STUDENTS AID HOTEL PLANNING – Five students from Ferris State University's College of Business recently made their first presentation of research findings from a three-month study to help plan a new Marriott International hotel opening in 2007 in downtown Grand Rapids. Pictured are (from left): Benjamin Powell of Manton, George Aquino, general manager of the new Marriott, Joseph Madison of Ada, Stephan Sepanski of Waterford, Susie Veine of Manistee, Amy Dorey, project team manager, and Darin Jemison, food and beverage director for the new hotel.