Finding Job One

BARNEY TEACHES STUDENTS HOW TO BE CAREER READY

Barney is providing students with free access to TheStreet.com, where they can read about current events. When students eventually go to job interviews, they need to be prepared to answer questions about interest rates and other business and economic news, Roth explains. “This faculty [are] taking advantage of this resource and structuring it into their classes,” says Hickman. “They’re requiring that students use the Journal to prepare for guest speakers and corporate visits that classes make. Students are getting used to the idea that reading the daily news is something business people do, so that it becomes part of their daily ritual.”

Barney student Henry Kajisu ’17 says it helps him connect classroom lessons to the real world. “In class, we learn kind of abstract concepts, and the fact that we have access to this media informs us about the actual business environment and prepares us for the outside world,” Kajisu says. “We are able to apply what we’re learning to what we’re reading in the Journal.”

In addition to providing the WSJ, Barney has significantly expanded weekly professional-development workshops. Students, for example, can learn how to land an internship, dress for success, and communicate effectively across generations. The goal is to make them confident in their business communication and professional presence.

They can also go to an area company to have a mock interview with human resources or other managers, then receive feedback on what they did well and where they need to focus more in order to do better during a real interview. These experiences also connect students to business leaders, thereby helping them to develop their professional networks.

“I feel it’s a really good experience that we probably couldn’t get in another school,” says Kila Hickman ’16.

Hickman had a mock interview at Stanley Black & Decker this spring and, as a result, is doing a summer internship there.

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In addition to mock interviews, all Barney sophomores now spend a day at a company in an industry and location they’re considering for a career. In January 2015, Barney students visited Wall Street to learn about the history and current practices of investing. Accompanied by Roth and Owen Svealsted, professor of economics, the students spent the morning at UBS, a global asset management firm, where Stephens and Justin LaLeer ’16 described their career paths.

After lunch, the group toured the New York Stock Exchange floor and took with equity traders who described the evolution of the historic exchange from verbal, relationship-centric, and paper-based processes to information-intensive, technology-driven systems. They saw firsthand how many different skills—such as research fundamentals, technical analysis, trading, and risk management—come together to inform market transactions. Similar visits were made to Cantor Fitzgerald, FM Global, The Hartford, HIMCO, TBWA, and Travelers.

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—Nancy Stuart, HAS Dean

Students in the University of Hartford’s Hartford Art School (HAS) are learning not only how to enhance their artistic skills but also how to make a living from the art they create. A new experience in the business of art “pepped up” when the art school opened a Pop-Up Shop in West Hartford Center in February.

What was previously vacant store space in West Hartford’s Blue Back Square shopping area was transformed for a week into a cash-and-carry art gallery featuring the work of 29 students, 26 alumni, and several HAS faculty and staff. Of the more than 600 pieces on display, 110 were sold.

The Pop-Up Shop is the brainchild of Jenni Friedman, assistant professor of premarketing at HAS. She says the concept of a pop-up shop is something business people do, so that it becomes part of their daily ritual.”

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INTEGRATED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES INITIATIVE

In continuing to ensure career readiness for HAS graduates, the art school has launched an Integrated Professional Practices Initiative for fine arts majors—those in photography, printmaking, drawing/painting, sculpture, ceramics, and media arts. The initiative is a coordinated and comprehensive program that, over four years at the art school, develops the practical and professional skills and know-how needed to thrive as artists upon graduation.

“The professional practices initiative was inspired by alumni feedback and the University’s strategic plan’s emphasis on “career readiness,” says Stuart. “The fine art faculty recognized that all of our graduates needed certain business skills that could best be taught in a cross-disciplinary manner.”

The first phase of the initiative begins with the offering of a Professional Practices course in fall 2015. In this one-semester course, students will learn critical professional skills in topics such as publicity and marketing, professional writing, business finances, grant writing, artwork documentation and management, and more.

The course will be taught by a Hartford Art School faculty member with presentations from active professionals who are experts in the subject matter being discussed. Students will also participate in breakout sessions where they will work through subject matter in small groups of peers.

The initiative’s second phase is tentatively scheduled to launch in 2016–17. This “vertical” program will be integrated into each year of the students’ academic careers and will include an extensive internship/entrepreneurship program, an integrated career-counseling program, and ongoing short workshops on aspects of professional practice.
Finding Job One

BARNEY TEACHES STUDENTS HOW TO BE CAREER READY

The University of Hartford's Barney School of Business is upping its game in preparing students for careers using several innovations, including free subscriptions to The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), mock job interviews with company human-resource managers, and visits to nearby corporations. Dean Martin Roth says Barney has always been career oriented. But now, the business school, along with the rest of the University, is putting even more emphasis on preparing students, whatever their path may be.

Barney is providing students with free access to The Wall Street Journal this year, after Barney board members, most of whom are business leaders, said students need to be more informed about current events. When students eventually go to job interviews, they need to be prepared to answer questions about interest rates and other business and economic news, Roth explains. “This faculty are taking advantage of this resource and structuring it into their classes,” Roth says. “They are requiring that students use the Journal to prepare for guest speakers and corporate visits that classes make. Students are getting used to the idea that reading the daily news is something business people do, so that it becomes part of their daily ritual.”

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he very thought of traveling to Iceland in the
winter may give you shivers. Yet even
a blizzard that was about to close down
Boston’s Logan Airport could not deter the
approximately 30 students, alumni, and faculty
of the Foot in the Door (FITD) contemporary
music ensemble from the University of Hartford’s
Hartt School from boarding a plane to Reykjavik,
Iceland, on January 26, 2015. They were on their
way to participate in that country’s showcase for
innovative and progressive contemporary music,
the annual Dark Music Days Festival. They had
been invited to perform two concerts at the
festival and would perform an additional four
concerts at a variety of nearby venues.

Traditionally a mixture of graduate and
undergraduate Hartt students that fluctuates in
size depending on the music being played, the
Foot in the Door group in Iceland included alumni
and professors as well. The ensemble’s repertoire
consists of established as well as emerging
20th- and 21st-century composers. Its co-directors
are Glen Adsit, director of bands, and Edward
Cumming, director of orchestral activities. Ken
Steen ’82, professor of composition and music-
theory, is the group’s artistic advisor.

It is Steen who started the connection with
Iceland through an artist residency he had at
Guðjónsdóttir was installed outside Harpa Concert Hall
above: Hula Concert Hall and Conference Centre in Reykjavik was
the site of the 2015 Dark Music Days Festival. Photo by Steve Gryn.
right: The statue of Danish cellist Erling Blöndal Bengtsson by
sculptor Oddur Fjolnir was installed outside Harpa Concert Hall
and Conference Centre in 2014. Photo by Jeff Rie.

In late August 2014, FITD students had to
make a commitment to go to Iceland, which also
meant making a financial contribution. Additional
funding came from Hartt’s Faculty Development
Fund; from Hartt’s acting dean, T. Clark Saunders;
from the Graduate Professional Travel Grants fund;
and from a special fund set up by Hartt donor
Kayla Herrmann M’13, GPD’15, who plays
viola. Says Ken Steen, “Playing the duo
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(and most stressful) experiences of the trip.”

Catherine Phang ’14, whose Airang
Spirit for chamber orchestra was premiered, and
Ben Park M’12, AD’14, whose violin concerto,
Hústufublik (The Hidden People), was performed
by Hartt alumnus Gísla Margrét Valdimarsson
GPD’11, AD’13, for whom the work was
commissioned by FITD in 2012. A new work
by Steen titled DEPO FLUX composed for the
occasion of the festival, featured faculty members
Rita Porfiris, associate professor of viola; and
Hartt alumna víziþtir Þas Guðjónsdóttir M’13,
along with the entire FITD ensemble.

In addition to performing at Dark Music
Days and elsewhere, Hartt faculty offered master
classes and lessons to IAA students, thereby
deepening a direct pedagogical link between
the two schools. Perhaps the most dynamic
activity of the trip was the reading/recording
session in which FITD collaborated with three
IAA student composers. The new works were
rehearsed, performed, and recorded, providing
insignificant feedback about the practicalities of
score and parts preparation, orchestration,
rehearsal protocols, and many other elements
of compositional craft essential for these young
composers as they begin their professional
careers. The session also provided essential
experience to members of FITD in cross-cultural
cooperation within the context of interaction
with young composers in the realization of their
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Students and faculty alike praised the
benefits of going to the festival. Eugenio Figueroa
M’16, who plays viola, says, “Playing the duo
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Kayla Herrmann M’13, GPD’15, who plays
viola and manages the ensemble, adds, “Foot in
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hanging out. We were with them 24/7.”
The very thought of traveling to Iceland in the winter may give you shivers. Yet even a blizzard that was about to close down Boston’s Logan Airport could not deter the approximately 30 students, alumni, and faculty of the Foot in the Door (FITD) contemporary music ensemble from the University of Hartford’s Hartt School from boarding a plane to Reykjavík, Iceland, on January 26, 2015. They were on their way to participate in that country’s showcase for innovative and progressive contemporary music, the annual Dark Music Days Festival. They had been invited to perform two concerts at the festival and would perform an additional four concerts at a variety of nearby venues.

Traditionally a mixture of graduate and undergraduate Hartt students that fluctuates in size depending on the music being played, the Foot in the Door group in Iceland included alumni and professors as well. The ensemble’s repertoire consists of established as well as emerging 20th- and 21st-century composers. Its co-directors are Glen Adzick, director of bands, and Edward Cumming, director of orchestral activities. Ken Steen ’82, professor of composition and music theory, is the group’s artistic advisor.

It is Steen who started the connection with Iceland through an artist residency he had at Guðjúkjun Center for Creativity in 2013. That residency provided opportunities for discussion of exchange possibilities with faculty and administrators at the Iceland Academy of the Arts (IAA). A fledging exchange program between the two schools has already begun. Two violin students came to Hartt from Iceland between 2009 and 2014: one to pursue both Graduate Professional and Artist Diplomas, and the other, to pursue a Master of Music degree. In fall 2015, one senior Hartt composition student will go to IAA, and one or two composition students will come from Iceland to Hartt.

According to Adzick, the invitation for the group to perform is quite an honor—partly because FITD is a student group and also because it was coming from outside Iceland.

Traditionally, few international artists are featured, and the festival, which places emphasis on innovative and progressive contemporary music, consists of established as well as emerging 20th- and 21st-century composers. Its co-directors are Glen Adzick, director of bands, and Edward Cumming, director of orchestral activities. Ken Steen ’82, professor of composition and music theory, is the group’s artistic advisor.

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In late August 2014, FITD students had to make a commitment to go to Iceland, which also meant finding a financial contribution. Additional funding came from Hartt’s Faculty Development Fund, from Hartt’s acting dean, T. Clark Saunders, from the Graduate Professional/Travel Grants fund, and from a special fund set up by Hartt donor Susan Blake.

The ensemble’s two performances at the Dark Music Days Festival included exciting combinations of alumni, faculty, and students from both schools, including IAA students Árni Ólafsson, Hartt students featured on this program included Catherine Phang ’14, whose Airinag Spirit for chamber orchestra was premiered, and Ben Park M’12, AD’14, whose violin concerto, Hvitstabli (The Hidden People), was performed by Hartt alumnus Grína Margrét Valdimarsdóttir GPS’11, AD’13, for whom the work was commissioned by FITD in 2012. A new work by Steen titled DEPO FLUX composed for the occasion of the festival, featured faculty members Robert Black ’79, professor of double bass, Carrie Koffman, artist teacher of saxophone; Christopher Ladd ADG’13, artist teacher of guitar; Rita Porfiris, associate professor of viola; and Hartt alumnus violinist Ása Guðjónsdóttir M’13, along with the entire FITD ensemble.

In addition to performing at Dark Music Days and elsewhere, Hartt faculty offered master classes and lessons to IAA students, thereby deepening a direct pedagogical link between the two schools. Perhaps the most dynamic activity of the trip was the reading/recording session in which FITD collaborated with three IAA student composers. The new works were rehearsed, performed, and recorded, providing invaluable feedback about the practicalities of score and parts preparation, orchestration, rehearsal protocols, and many other elements of compositional craft essential for these young composers as they begin their professional careers. The session also provided essential experience to members of FITD in cross-cultural collaboration within the context of interaction with young composers in the realization of their musical works.

Students and faculty alike praised the benefits of going to the festival. Eugenio Figueroa M’16, who plays viola, says, “Playing the duo with my teacher, Rita Porfiris, was one of my best (and most stressful) experiences of the trip.” Saxophone teacher Koffman says she enjoyed the opportunity for exchange. “We came back with ideas we didn’t have before we went. Everybody grows in a collaborative environment.” Kayla Herman M’13, GPS’15, who plays cello and manages the ensemble, adds, “Foot in the Door offers opportunities to work intimately with faculty, with small ensembles, with soloists, with Ken as composer. Going to Iceland made it even more so. We saw them practicing and hanging out. We were with them 24/7.”

Opposite, top: The Foot in the Door ensemble on stage in Reykjavík, Iceland. Photo by Lyn Harper.

Hartt’s Foot in the Door ensemble takes its unusual name from a figure of speech used by Alfred C. Fuller to describe a technique used by door-to-door salesmen for the Fuller Brush Company. Fuller, company founder, and his wife, Primrose Fuller, were major benefactors of The Hartt School.