

Houston Futures

Preparing Foresight Professionals



SPRING 2012

Houston Futures Graduates New Class Certified in Strategic Foresight

Leading strategists, CEOs, and aspiring futurists once again found their way to Houston to take a week long certification course on strategic foresight from January 9-13.

Traveling from all over the world to learn key concepts in foresight, key leaders in such industries and areas as military, marketing, education, and finance, all were instructed over the 5 days by Houston Futures' own Dr. Peter Bishop, Andy Hines, and Terry Grim.

After an introduction into the world of foresight through an understanding of ideas such as social change and systems dynamics by Dr. Bishop, the group also



engaged challenging exercises and methodologies they can now take with them in their soon-to-be blossoming careers as foresight professionals.

Congratulations to the January 2012 Graduates. We look forward to you being a part of our community. For information on the next seminar click link below

<http://tech.uh.edu/programs/professional/strategic-foresight/>

HF's April 13-15 Meeting Looks To Expand Ideas On The Future of Capitalism

Emails will soon begin to fly out on the thoughts of our macroeconomic world as UH is hosting an After Capitalism Gathering April 13-15 weekend.

Conceived about after an interesting APF listerv post seen by Andy Hines, the gathering will hope to capture the most provocative and important points when it comes to a possible world after capitalism and opportunities, threats, and obstacles

that may impact the future of markets. There will be a morning and evening session on April 14 with a pre and post party to promote our community esprit de corps.

An invitation has been thrown out to anybody in the Houston Futures community to include alumni, current students, and foresight certificate holders. Email Andy at ahines@central.uh.edu for details.



COUGAR TALKS CALENDAR

World Futures Talks

Derek Woodgate - March 5th
Economics

Dave Rajeski - March 19th
Nanotech

Josh Calder - March 26th
Politics

Strategies Talks

Larry McEvoy - March 20th
Creating Change

Bob Chapman - March 27th
Leadership

Contact Christopher at clmanfre@central.uh.edu to listen in.



No one can predict what will happen tomorrow, but the Futures Program at the University of Houston (UH) provides students with the tools to imagine possibilities. UH students are trained to anticipate significant changes and to develop the skills necessary to influence those changes.

Our trained futurists help organizations address these concerns by focusing on forecasting and planning for discontinuous and transformational change; by analyzing rapid alterations in external environments; and by applying futures thinking to increase the chances of achieving preferred futures.



Houston Futures has been receiving some great news about alumni over the past few months, so for this month's newsletter we've decided to highlight some great stories we've been hearing. Three alums, **Darko Lovric**, **Sara Robinson**, and **Gary Whittredge**, have all been landed great jobs that are propelling their futures careers. We're proud of them and look forward to hearing more great news about our graduates.

2010 Houston Futures Graduate Darko Lovric Takes His Futures Studies Degree To The World Economic Forum

Darko Lovric finished his Master's of Futures Studies at UH in 2010 and joined the World Economic Forum as a Project Manager in 2011 after time as a consultant for Deloitte and as an analyst for Goldman Sachs. Darko has Bachelor's in Economics from the University of Zagreb and one in Psychology from the University of Warwick. He is currently pursuing another Master's of Studies in Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy at the University of Oxford.



Houston Futures: So it's been a great year for you, how did 2011 end up shaping up for you?

Darko Lovric: Well you know I think I was quite lucky in many ways. Many of the things I hoped for in this job actually happened. I am thrilled to be working with my team on really engaging projects at the very senior level. I am also able to see how powerful scenarios are, demonstrating how these techniques can get decision makers to engage and align a broad variety stakeholders around a vision that they can take a part in. Forum has surpassed my expectations with the people, networks, and the spirit of the place and has shown me that future studies definitely have something to contribute, that we can really move the needle forward in issues that are rich and complex in ways that many people can engage with.

HF: When it comes to your work, what do you find the most exciting about it?

DL: It's futures work, but it's in the context that is very unique. We deal with global decision makers across the world, a mixture of

of CEOs, heads of government, heads of NGOs and a wide variety of experts. I think the quality of the projects are based on the quality of the input that the Forum receives, so I feel that I'm probably in the best place I can be to do work that is deeper and more intense and interesting.

HF: What are some things about the program at the University of Houston that you took with you that you might not have learned when you were at Warwick or Zagreb?

DL: I think there are a lot of things but specifically I think that the program was excellent at giving the student very practical and pragmatic approaches to the discipline. All the professors have been practitioners and consultants in the field, and many projects and relentless assignments were very good preparations for how to approach something as rigorous as futures work and how to use the tools to structure a project to come up with something of substance. This bedrock of work cemented by the program has allowed the very difficult problem of getting your head around some of the issues that we have not have been able to tackle before. This makes our work very exciting and meaningful in the larger worldview abroad.

HF: What is one tool in your futures toolkit that you couldn't live without?

DL: We use scenarios quite a bit. Scenarios are obviously the mainstay of the foresight world, with other tools often supporting them. For specific tools, futures wheels tend to be very useful, and the imminently basic and simple technique of the 5 Whys has proven useful again and again.

HF: What are some things you'd like to tell graduates that you think they might find beneficial when it comes to the program?

DL: I think one of the key things that is that crafting a final year project is very important. It's more than just creating a good project or having fun while you do it; it's the key reference you have in terms of this is you have done and how you approach complex issues. Choice of the issue is important as well. You want to choose something that is relevant and topical and use your project to gain a foothold towards your career. My final year project was on the future of health treatments, and by luck and serendipity, I will actually be working in exactly this area in the Forum. Sometimes things just click.

Sara Robinson ('11) Finds Her Ground As Senior Editor At Alternet



Sara Robinson completed her Master's in Futures Studies in 2011, capping it off with a project on the future of progressivism in America that she gave at the WFS conference in Vancouver and the online APF V-Gathering, both last year. Sara has recently been selected as a Senior Editor of Visions for the online magazine, Alternet. She is a fellow at the Campaign for America's Future and consultant at Cognitive Policy Work as well as a journalist of 30 years.

Houston Futures: Great land with Alternet. Is this the type of job you always wanted to have?

Sara Robinson: Absolutely. After getting my degree in journalism from USC-Aberdeen and 30 plus years of writing in various forms and publications, I think this amalgamation of futures and journalism is just about the perfect fit for me. I think I've always talked "big think," but now my writing takes on "the big picture."

HF: What did the futures program do for your thinking?

SR: It gave me a way to take that big picture thinking I've been doing and trained me to do that always. Now that I'm a journalist on a large platform like Alternet, I have a fairly large audience that loves to read this type of analysis.

HF: Why do you think this audience is eating all this up?

SR: I think there is a whole world

out there that is starving for more information about the future. We are definitely in the era of what comes next. I do not think people out there are wallowing in despair; they're engaged as people who want change.

HF: How did your work in the futures of progressives start out?

SR: It all started with one of my projects while in the program where I created a survey with a 30 year time horizon on the future of progressivism in America. I started to work with the Progressive Caucus in Congress, and I did the first ever strategic planning for progressives. By that time, I was firmly positioned within the progressive movement as I am today.

HF: So you became the progressive's futurist?

SR: Well America's right has had strategic planners for years, so I figured that it was about time that the left had one too. I am just another

voice I guess. When it all started to come together, I saw my work as a sign that this movement found a real use for foresight, and I was looking forward to be another voice for it.

HF: What's excites you about your work?

SR: I think I'm most excited about just going out and finding the people who are the real visionaries, the ones that are looking for real solutions. I feel like I'm always wandering around, figuring out where the future is happening, and now I am talking to the people who can really make things happen.

HF: Anything to share to new futurists?

SR: I think people are hungry for this information. I have placed faith in that hunger and firmly believe that in every domain, there are groups of people looking for information. Every domain needs to have a futurist.

Houston Futures Andy Hines Spreads ConsumerShift Gospel At Sustainable Consumption Conference in January

Andy Hines participated in an a two-day Expert Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption on January 18-20, 2012, at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread facility in Racine, WI.

He briefed the panel on the findings from his recent book ConsumerShift to provide a deeper understanding of consumer decision making and

behavior. He also participated in collaborative problem solving approaches with other guest experts to explore innovative solutions to our society's most vexing issues.

The overall goal of the Forum is to use those insights to reshape the direction of the ongoing debate regarding the environmental and natural resource impacts of consumption.

Teaching About the Future To Debut at World Futures Society Conference in Toronto

Peter Bishop and Andy Hines' Teaching about the Future is scheduled to be out in in July.

This timing will enable it to be featured at the World Futures Society General Assembly in Toronto from July 27 -29, where Peter and Andy will do a "meet-the-author" session. it will also be available in the conference bookstore.

Gary Whittredge (10') Finds New Calling As Executive Director

After spending 20 years in sales, strategies, and management, Gary Whittredge gave himself a chance to go back to school earning both his BS and Futures' MS in 4 years. A forever peoples person in his studies and in his previous work, Gary has currently taken a position as an Executive Director at the University of Houston's College of Technology to continue giving back to educational community he embraced not too long ago.



HF: Gary, we've heard that you were just appointed a new position? That's great! How'd that come about?

GW: I finished my Master's in Futures Studies in 2010, and of course, working with Dr. Bishop that whole time, I guess I rubbed off well. When Dr. Ray Cline, head of Wind Alliance and Associate Dean of Research at UH, was looking for someone to head his group, it sort of fell into place.

HF: What's this new position all about?

GW: I wear two hats. Dr. Cline is managing director of Wind Alliance, a collection of companies in the turbine and wind power industry. I work with

Dr. Cline on the development of WA, and for the College of Technology, I'm beginning to run the Center of Technology Literacy.

HF: What excites you most about this new position?

GW: The Center for Technology Literacy is literally a startup, which I love. It's very exciting. As for the Wind Alliance, this technology is a major energy sector that I think we've been overlooking in the United States. If we're going to get to 30% of our energy being renewable, wind power is going to have to be apart of it.

HF: How do you think your futures training could help you in this new position?

GW: The futures program fits really

nicely with the directions of the Wind Alliance. We're trying to look forward and see where we can take this technology. Working with the university and other agencies that need to interface and engage on the strategic view of the future is a big part of the position.

HF: Where do you see this position taking you in the future?

GW: I'm definitely not retiring (haha). I had a wonderful career before, and I went back to college because I never got a chance to get an education early in life. Now I'm working in education, which is exciting itself, and maybe I'll get an adjunct professorship in the future. That'd be great.

Houston Futures Teams Up with FERN For New Foresight Professional Employment Initiative

The Foresight Education and Research Net (FERN), a global community of foresight students, alumni, faculty, employers, and advocates, has begun to recalibrate the vision and goals of their organization to seek to place and find job opportunities for foresight professionals just

foresight professionals just entering and already established in the futures field.

"We're really looking to create a space where companies and futures folks alike can meet to fit the right projects for the right people," says FERN Executive Director Susan Fant.

Houston Futures alums John Smart, Jeremy Mancuso, Garry Golden as well as students Sean Daken and Christopher Manfredi and professor Dr. Peter Bishop are all helping to make FERN's vision a reality.

To learn more about FERN's initiative, please join their open Linked In group or visit <http://www.fernweb.org/>

Houston...Futures...Bullets...Emily Empel started interning at the Futures Working Group at Walt Disney this past January...**Anne Boysen** has recently taken a position as a content analyst for the Austin, Texas-based firm Bazaarvoice...HF Alums **Andy Hines, Garry Golden, Terry Collins,** and **Alexandra Montgomery** have all begun to teaching undergrads at UH's College of Technology...**Dr. Cindy Frewen** continues her great work as chair of Association of Professional Futurists going into 2012...**Amy Mayfield's** Eco-Modern Concierge hit it big in *New York Times* article last October...**2012 Houston Futures Proseminar students** working on rewriting futurist Wikipedia pages this semester for group project