Welcome to another edition of Presidents Quarterly, your connection to the “top-level view” from presidents across the foodservice industry.

I’m pleased to report that, from my viewpoint, SHFM’s event season is in full swing. We had a wonderful (and very impactful) Critical Issues Conference in April. This was the first event that showcased our expanded focus on both Corporate Foodservice and Workplace Hospitality. It was very well attended and the venue, New York’s fabulous CitiField, offered incredible insights into all that a multi-purpose, state-of-the-art hospitality venue can offer both diners and guests. The topic and the venue spoke to the interrelatedness of space with food and hospitality. Our educational lineup offered thought-provoking speakers who delivered lots of learning for all who attended and the pre-conference sessions offered focused topics for a good number of liaisons and self-operators. There were lots of new faces... I encourage all of you to keep the conversation going and stay involved! Many, many thanks go out to our hosts, Aramark and CitiField, and our hard-working planning committee. It was a job well done!

Planning is also underway for a great National Conference that will celebrate the 35 years SHFM has been serving our industry. We are in discussions with many recognizable names so stay tuned for exciting announcements in the very near future. I want to see ALL of you there... Don’t forget, November 4–6 at the Mohegan Sun in Connecticut. (Just a short trip from Boston, New York and Philadelphia for those of you in the region!)

And last but not least... Want to hear from the Jamie Oliver Group? You’re in luck! We have another event in the works: on May 29th our “Voices and Viewpoints” webinar series will kick off, featuring Daniel Nowland with the Jamie Oliver Group as he discusses sustainability and the importance of creating collaborative supply chains. Daniel has been working with Jamie Oliver since 2009 and has recently been appointed Head of Technical for the group. He is responsible for researching, developing and managing the standards of farming and food production associated with the Jamie Oliver Group. You’ll also hear from Konrad Brits, Founder and Managing Director of Falcon Coffees, a UK-based green coffee trading company focused on building collaborative supply chains between rural coffee farmers and roasting companies around the world. It’s a webinar that’s not to be missed... register today!

In the meantime, enjoy this issue — and the warmer weather!

Best Regards,

Sabrina Capannola | President
How has your company incorporated environmental responsibility within recent years?

Unidine approaches environmentally responsible dining with a forward-thinking approach that differentiates us from all other foodservice companies. Throughout the continuum, from strategic partnerships with local growers to the replacement of Styrofoam and paper with biodegradable and reusable alternatives, Unidine implements exacting standards of practice.

Unidine’s approach to production and procurement is managed within a framework of sustainable practices to ensure protection of natural resources, while providing our clients with the freshest and healthiest products available. Unidine sources products that are fresh, healthy and environmentally conscious and takes an innovative leadership role to align our fresh food pledge to these requirements. Cornerstones of our sustainable practices include, among others:

- Environmentally beneficial or not harmful by its production
- Free of harmful biological or chemical contaminants
- High animal-welfare standards of production and transport
- Healthy as part of a balanced diet
- Locally accessible and affordable

What do you think creates the greatest challenge to corporate foodservice?

The greatest variable in the corporate dining industry begins and ends with People. Our clients, customers, team members and leaders all have unique needs and we must balance all of their priorities and expectations to consistently deliver success. As the composition of our workforce changes, we must modify our service requirements and operational strategies to meet those ever changing demands. From the client perspective, this may translate into identifying the right service partner who provides transparency and continuous solutions to exceed expectations on all levels. For our guests, this means creating differentiation, offering authentic menu items in healthy portions across non-traditional day parts to maximize participation. In our kitchens and cafés, operators must engage talent to build competencies, contribute knowledge, drive innovation and lead by example. And finally, an organization needs to be poised for success and focused on growth delivering a high performance, purpose driven culture. The alignment of strategy, heightened focus on customer interaction and execution of delicious menu items are the byproduct of the actions of People: internally, externally and at all levels of your organization.

Where do you see the most opportunity to grow the industry?

The largest opportunities for growth will be through innovation and customization. Creative, savvy organizations are positioning themselves to meet evolving foodservice demands by providing unique dining solutions which are flexible, scalable and transferable. Each client wants differentiation, making “one size fits one” the new normal. Clients are looking for nimble providers, with empowered unit owners, who can make effective business decisions that link customer satisfaction with financial performance. This creates growth opportunities for mid-level foodservice companies able to augment dining amenity programs or offer best-in-class solutions with value added benefits unique to each client organization. While the outsourced footprint may not increase, the repositioning of market share will continue to maximize growth opportunity for organizations like Unidine.
What is the most valuable part of doing business with Unidine for your customers?

When I came to Unidine over a year ago, I was primarily attracted by our unwavering commitment to culinary integrity. Unidine’s success with providing freshly prepared foods from fresh ingredients is unique in our industry of convenience products. Our “made from scratch” philosophy and focus on the guest experience are not simply words, they are standard practice referred to at Unidine as Fresh Thinking. This is emphasized by our Credo: “We Create Authentic Food from scratch using fresh responsibly sourced, seasonal ingredients and culinary creativity. We are guided by environmentally responsible practices, avoid additives, chemicals and preservatives. Experience the Difference!” What I learned over the past sixteen months is that this foundation is supported by a clear mission, vision and values which drive our culture. Having guiding principles, rooted in customer satisfaction, financial performance and a commitment to do what we say we will, are refreshing attributes in the corporate landscape and a key value in any dining partnership.

Please share a good story about your early foodservice career that still serves you well today.

Earlier this year I had the honor to represent Unidine at my alma mater – The University of Massachusetts. I was invited by the Isenberg School of Business to be a speaker at their first annual Women in Business Symposium. The focus was about preparing future female graduates for the work world, not unlike the strategic mission of the former SHFM Women’s Council. When tasked with sharing the wisdoms that have informed my career choices and discussing how I strive to be an effective leader, I thought back to four vital principles that my mentors have taught me.

- **Be Impeccable with Your Word.** Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using words to speak against yourself or gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and integrity.

- **Don’t Take Anything Personally.** What others say and do is a protection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the negative opinions and actions of others, you won’t be the victim of needless suffering. You will be focused on goals, results and advancement of personal and organizational objectives.

- **Don’t Make Assumptions.** Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others a clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, disappointment, and drama. This works top-down and bottom-up.

- **Always Do Your Best.** Your best is going to change from moment to moment and will differ depending on your state of mind. Under any circumstance, simply do your best and you will avoid self-judgment and regret.

Victoria Vega | VP, Operations & Business Dining | Unidine Corporation
ASSOCIATION INSIGHT: LAURA WATSON
PRESIDENT | ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE FOODSERVICE

What are your goals as the current President for AHF?
I bring a passion for educational excellence and professional growth to my role as AHF President. From the very beginning, my platform has been focused on expanding and enhancing educational tools and resources for our members. My goal is for AHF to be the best resource to help members elevate their business practices and become the “best of the best.” Our membership represents the top tier of healthcare foodservice, but there’s always room to expand the services we offer as we support the drive for continual improvement.

Are there any new benefits or features the association has introduced lately?
There are! I’m pleased to see growth within our expanded benchmarking program, which now offers an “Enhanced Benchmarking” level. This level includes a robust suite of tools and interactive, real-time reports. The program allows our members to benchmark their successes, improve their efficiencies and compare their operation to those in similar facilities. And the reports allow those comparisons to be communicated in the concise, user-friendly way that our hospital executives appreciate.

We also recently introduced two new Regional Networking Meetings — Atlanta and St. Louis — to offer localized education to operators in member-rich areas. They were very well received and more will be coming soon.

What is a common challenge within the self-operated hospital foodservice industry?
I know this sounds like a broken record, but the uncertainties of the Affordable Care Act challenge all of our members to be more operationally efficient, to better manage our labor costs and control expenses — all while enhancing the patient experience. Fortunately, AHF creates an arena where we can network with other self-operators to share tips and best practices to accomplish these demands. It’s so refreshing to know that, even in uncertain times, we have a powerful network of support.

What is one key take-away you hope to have from your position with AHF?
It is such a pleasure to work with AHF’s members, who represent some of the most innovative and creative operators in the industry. There is a real camaraderie and openness to dialogue. I find myself sharing ideas with leaders who practice at the top of this industry — just look at how many silver plate winners we have! I hope that we are able to provide a dynamic environment where members will come to share successes and create solutions together. So many ideas come from sharing experiences!

What is the best meal you’ve ever eaten?
Since I’ve moved to Utah, I have to say I really miss the home cooking of my native Texas. There’s nothing quite like it. And of course, there’s Granny’s chocolate meringue pie. I’ve been to some of the best restaurants in the States… and yet nothing quite compares!

Laura Watson | President | Association for Healthcare Foodservice
What do you see as the biggest challenge facing corporate foodservice and workplace hospitality in today’s business climate?

There are numerous challenges for operations that are not necessarily new. A key one continues to be keeping customers on-site in our urban areas where a multitude of competing foodservice options are within a few blocks walk or where companies, for a variety of reasons, contemplate removing or reducing foodservice options. The SHFM White Paper published in 2011 focused on the value of on-site foodservice and the compelling reasons for companies to invest in their foodservice programs. With the continued strong focus of health and wellness that is in the marketplace today, on-site foodservice can and should be a tool used to augment any company’s program. And on-site foodservice adds not only the value of productivity to its workforce but reinforces the message of health and wellness through the programs that are incorporated into the food program.

In what ways has the association grown/stayed consistent since your Presidency?

The passion for the industry from our members continues to be its strength. As the economy continues its rebound there is more emphasis coming back to attracting and retaining best in class employees across all sectors and part of that process is having a robust foodservice program. With this renewed focus on foodservice, we are seeing new members come to the association for the knowledge they can acquire or need to drive this new direction within their companies.

Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently?

As president, you want to reach out to members and understand what their expectations of the association are and hope to exceed those targets. Continuing to understand the needs of the membership is every president’s mission. I hope I left that imprint and I am proud to have served in a role where each person, before and after me, has done so with such great success.

How has your professional role changed since your 2010-2011 year of Presidency?

My role has remained the same but I have continued to grow and learn. While the economy continues to rebound, the role foodservice plays in different companies can be so dynamic that the learning component will always be there. That’s what makes SHFM so valuable — the continuous opportunity to learn.

What is your most fond memory from that year?

At the end of conference, I had the opportunity to thank the people that helped me get to the Presidency and who supported me throughout my year leading SHFM. As I thanked the various committees and individuals, it was overwhelming to me how great our association is when its members give so much to make it what it is.
NRA BREAKFAST
Monday, May 19
Chicago, IL

SHFM FOUNDATION GOLF TOURNAMENT
Tuesday, May 27
White Plains, NY

VOICES & VIEWPOINTS WEBINAR: Collaborating Forces for the Global Good
Thursday, May 29

SHFM LOCAL — CHARLOTTE
Thursday, June 5
Charlotte, NC

SHFM LOCAL — WASHINGTON DC
Thursday, June 12
Washington, DC

SHFM FOUNDATION SCHMOOZE CRUISE
Wednesday, June 25
Atlantica, NY

SHFM LOCAL — CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, September 17
Mountain View, CA

NATIONAL CONFERENCE
November 4-6
Mohegan Sun, CT