students wrote essays about what they hoped to gain by participating in the prestigious event. The three scholarship winners share their experiences below:

David Mikowski
David Mikowski is the current president of the UNLV Gaming Management Association Student Chapter and on track to graduate in the summer of 2012. He said he maximized all the opportunities that were afforded to him by attending G2E and has had some great accomplishments from the relationships built at the conference. “There are plenty of takeaways that you normally don’t get,” Mikowski said. “It adds to the educational experience.” One of Mikowski’s successful ventures came from a relationship he built at G2E with another student, Adam Miller, who started the Lodging and Gaming Management Association at Michigan State University. Mikowski teamed up with Miller to bring together the Lodging and Gaming Management Association of Michigan State, UNLV’s Hotel Association and UNLV’s Gaming Management Association to have a “Thank You” mixer at Caesars Palace in March. “Our relationship started at G2E, and it’s been worthwhile and ongoing since,” Mikowski said.

Another noteworthy accomplishment came from his affiliation with the UNLV Gaming Management Association of which he was the president and founder. Mikowski attended, along with many of his colleagues, an etiquette dinner with Mila Spresser. The dinner led directly to employment opportunities for many people. “I was able to assist 17 people in getting jobs from a contact made at the conference, and that’s a pretty meaningful accomplishment.”
Mikowski, who works as a dealer at the Paris Las Vegas, said his current position offers flexibility while attending school. He expressed a true love for the gaming industry. “It’s just fun. The energy on the gaming floor and meeting new people every day makes it a low-stress, high-fun environment,” he said. “The job is about the people. The cards are turning themselves at this point.”

**Michael Juan**

Michael Juan of Scottsdale, Ariz., is set to graduate from Northern Arizona University in spring of 2012. He had similar experiences with networking benefits at G2E. The 2010 conference was the fourth G2E he’s attended, and he said he was able to bring something a little different to the table. “I’m 31-years-old and meeting these young minds, they didn’t really have any idea about the gaming business and only really saw hospitality management,” Juan said. “They have never been inside a casino, and I was able to communicate to some of the people I met there who don’t necessarily know about the business.”

Juan is also a veteran of the gaming community, working as a pit shift supervisor at the Talking Stick Resort in Scottsdale, Ariz. He is in a management intern program and has plenty of experience to have a well-rounded understanding of how daily casino operations are run. From working in slots, to security to marketing, Michael said, “We have to know every position and what they do, which is essential to being a good manager.”

Juan said he always leaves the G2E conference feeling rejuvenated after sharing ideas and concepts with others in the business. “I go as someone who identifies possible new things for the casinos,” he said. “I sat with a CEO and was able to share ideas.”

**Milan Perazich**

Milan Perazich graduated from Arizona State University in 2010 and is currently working as a business analyst at World Bank. He hopes that the knowledge that he took away from the G2E conference will help him in future ventures in starting an online gaming business. “I definitely have an entrepreneurial vein which I hope to pursue and apply the knowledge that conference has afforded me,” Perazich said.

He added that he had a clear idea as to what experiences he wanted to take away from the conference and he went for it from the moment he got there. “I came out to learn about the industry, and specifically online legislation,” Perazich said. “I loved it. I learned about so many different things from going to the seminars that were offered.”

Perazich said he was there to learn about the industry and that is exactly what he did, attending eight sessions.

Another benefit that the winners were able to take away from the conference was the chance to meet people they wouldn’t otherwise have had the opportunity to meet. As part of the conference, students were able to participate in several career development activities during its four-day run. Mikowski agrees with Perazich that meeting the leaders in the industry was one of the major benefits to attending this conference. “These are your celebrities when you are in the business,” Mikowski said.

The conference was an important benchmark for these students to learn new things, but they have also been triumphant in their personal achievements. They have all had to successfully balance their work schedules while also keeping up on their school requirements.

**Greenberg Traurig’s commitment to IGI Program**

In February 2011, Greenberg Traurig announced its support of the International Gaming Institute (IGI) and the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas by establishing the Greenberg Traurig IGI Program, a Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Student Development Program.

Greenberg Traurig is looking forward to helping 50 other college students get to the 2011 conference and make memories like the ones Mikowski, Juan and Perazich received. “We are delighted to be able to partner with UNLV and the International Gaming Institute to make this opportunity a reality for students pursuing this exciting career path,” said Martha Sabol, Co-Chair of Greenberg Traurig’s Gaming Practice. “There’s no better place for students to learn about hospitality and gaming than in one of the world’s top entertainment destinations. I look forward to meeting the students in October. It’s our hope that we can continue this valuable learning opportunity for years to come,” she added.
“This program provides a unique opportunity for students to learn about gaming companies, regulation, and the current technology associated with gaming manufacturing,” said Patricia Becker, executive director of IGI. “Students will have the occasion of networking with industry professionals from around the world, which is truly a beneficial experience. We are excited to have the law firm of Greenberg Traurig as a partner in this experience,” she added.

“The International Gaming Institute is a real asset for the UNLV Harrah Hotel College and the gaming industry,” said Donald Snyder, dean of the UNLV Harrah Hotel College. “The institute relies on private funding, and a gift of the type provided by Greenberg Traurig allows the institute to continue with the G2E student development program, allowing college students an opportunity to explore Las Vegas, the gaming industry and UNLV. These types of programs are vital to the gaming industry and acknowledge UNLV’s leadership role in hospitality and gaming education,” he added.

**Looking Forward: Greenberg Traurig IGI 2011 Class**

Students from around the world will have the opportunity to attend G2E 2011 and participate in several career development activities during the four-day conference in October. Administered by and in conjunction with the International Gaming Institute and the Harrah Hotel College at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the Greenberg Traurig IGI program is intended to provide the 2011 class of future gaming, meeting and event planning leaders with a similar career-boosting experience as past scholarship winners, including networking and learning the latest trends in the industry.

All three scholarship winners had a similar message to the Class of 2011. “Take advantage of this opportunity,” said Perazich. “Every second that you are not working, utilize the resources presented to you.” Juan reminded students to, “be outgoing and introduce yourself to people. Let them know why you are there and what type of job you are looking for. If you want to be in marketing, let them know.” Probably the most valuable information was provided to us by Mikowski, who wanted to remind students to “be sure and get the free box lunch.”

*Patricia Becker is the Executive Director of the International Gaming Institute and a Boyd Distinguished Professor at UNLV. She has over 30 years of experience in the gaming industry. Her public sector experience includes serving as a member of the Nevada Gaming Control Board, Chief of Staff for Governor Bob Miller, Chief Deputy Attorney General for the Nevada Gaming Control Board and Commission, and law clerk for the Chief Justice of the Nevada Supreme Court. Her private sector experience includes serving as an Independent Director on three public companies and holding the positions of Senior Vice President and General Counsel for Harrah’s Hotels and Casinos and Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Legal for the Aladdin Hotel and Casino. In addition, Ms. Becker has operated a gaming consulting company, Patricia Becker & Associates, since 1995. Ms. Becker is an internationally recognized expert on gaming law and past president of the International Association of Gaming Advisors. In 2003, Ms. Becker was inducted as a Counselor into the International Association of Gaming Advisors."

*Christina Bonner is a member of the marketing team for the international law firm of Greenberg Traurig where she performs a variety of functions in business development, communications and public relations. A native Nevadan, she has worked in the legal field for eight years in Las Vegas in the areas of marketing, litigation, accounting and other administrative functions. She graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. She is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, a political science honor society and was a volunteer for One, a non-profit organization promoting humanitarian efforts in third world countries.*