

HPU Design Students Gain Real-World Experience, Network at High Point Marke

By Alex Abrams

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From left at the Hooker Furnishings showroom are HPU senior interior design majors Hailey Morris from Swedesboro, New Jersey; Tierra Dukes from Greensboro, North Carolina; Meghan Wests from Walpole, Massachusetts; and Anna Sanders from Greensboro.

HIGH POINT, N.C., Oct. 17, 2023 – HighPoint University students learned more about their future profession as they worked alongside industry leaders from Oct. 14-18 at the High Point Market, one of the world’s largest home furnishings trade shows.



From left, working at the SUNPAN furniture registration desk are HPU students Beverly Yarborough, a senior computer science major from Raleigh; Ashley Levister, a senior business administration major from Yorktown, Virginia; Ella Ott, a freshman business major from High Point; Ridge Lanzi, a senior business administration major from Greensboro; Hayley Bracci, a senior interior design major from Stow, Massachusetts; with Lilly Wingate, a 2017 nonprofit leadership and management major from Bainbridge Island, Washington.

“I have loved working at the market, and I know it will be very beneficial for me when I graduate,” said Meghan West, a senior interior design major from Walpole, Massachusetts, who worked in the Hooker Furnishings showroom. “I have made great connections with some amazing companies and individuals. It has allowed me to see and experience what my future career will look like.”





Kari Lambert, a senior interior design major from Stillwater, Minnesota, worked at the Century Furniture showroom for a second time in the past year.

Hayley Bracci, a senior interior design major from Stow, Massachusetts, enjoyed working as a sales assistant and connecting with other HPU students at the SUNPAN furniture showroom.

“Through my High Point Market experience, I have been able to supplement my interior design knowledge with a bit of sales and supply chain knowledge, making it easier to understand how lead times work and how long it might take to receive ordered pieces once I become a practicing designer,”

Lilly Wingate, a 2017 nonprofit leadership and management graduate from Bainbridge Island, Washington. She has continued to work during markets at the SUNPAN showroom.



Jade Harloff, a senior interior design major from Apex, said working with Norwalk Furniture at the High Point Market has been a valuable learning experience.

“They meet people from all over the world and from different parts of the industry,” said Wingate. “It’s just great to meet people and be involved in what makes High Point. You see the city come alive twice a year, and it’s fun to be part of what’s going on. It gives students a good chance to experience something outside of campus. I love working with them.”



“While working at Century Furniture, I am often in the fabric selection room. This has allowed me amazing insights on current styles, patterns and colors. I believe that this has given me a leg up when it comes to furthering my career, as it provided me with an understanding of the current trends. I have also learned so much about the industry and the actual day-to-day business of interior design.”

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Working for a third time at the High Point Market with Norwalk Furniture has been a valuable learning experience for Jade Harloff, a senior interior design major from Apex, North Carolina.

“It has allowed me to immerse myself in the world of furniture design and sales, and I've been able to keep up with the newest trends and innovations Norwalk has to offer,” said Harloff. “I have interacted with several industry professionals, which has increased my professionalism and communication skills,



furniture design, and learned about how the professional world will be after graduation.



From left at the Caracole showroom are Mary Kate Hewitt, a junior interior design major with a visual merchandising minor from Hamden, Connecticut; Kaylin LaFleche, a senior interior design major from Severna Park, Maryland; Sara Lafontaine, a junior interior design major from Southington, Connecticut, and Grace Womack, a sophomore business administration major from Greensboro.

Kaylin LaFleche, a senior interior design major from Severna Park, Maryland, gained knowledge about furniture and design through working as a market associate for Caracole and Jonathan Charles Fine Furniture. She toured designers around the showroom, answered questions about products and helped them place orders.

“Through this experience, I have been able to speak with designers from all over the world and pick their brains for what life after college will entail,” said LaFleche, who was recently elected president of HPU’s new American Society of Interior Designers student chapter. “One of the scariest parts about senior year is having the quickly approaching deadline to get a full-time job in your field or get into a graduate degree

LaFleche can talk confidently with designers because she has knowledge about products in the showroom. The experience strengthened her specification skills and her general understanding of what pieces work best for different spaces.

“Overall, working at the High Point Market has been one of my favorite opportunities HPU has exposed me to and encouraged me to participate in,” said LaFleche. “I will truly miss it, but I can't wait to attend in the future as a designer.”

