

Graduates Honored at Special Reception



The Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management program is offered both in-person and online. This spring, several of our graduates completed their degree through USCB in partnership with the Palmetto College degree completion program. This program offers online options for students who have previous college coursework but are unable to come onsite to campus. These students are usually seasoned hospitality professionals who are already working in the field and who use the program to boost their career progression with the completion of their college degree. Lori Vargo,

USCB's Director of e-Learning, arranged for a special reception to be held directly before the main graduation ceremony to honor students graduating at USCB through the Palmetto College program. Dr. Eric Skipper, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and many of the university's faculty were at the reception to welcome graduates and hear about their future plans. Su Gibson was one of the faculty members there to congratulate hospitality management graduates, such as Brittany Lord (pictured), who lives in the Charleston area and works as a full-time supervisor.

Field Experiences in Hotel Management

The HRTM 260 Hotel Management class went on a number of field experiences during the spring 2023 semester. The course, taught by Dr. Nancy Hritz, visited the Marriott Grande Ocean, Courtyard Hilton Head Island, Hilton Ocean Oak, and Marriott's Surfwatch. The students interacted with members of the executive staff ranging from General Managers to Sales and Marketing Directors to Directors of Guest Operations. The class went on front- and back-of-the house tours at each property and gained a greater perspective into managing different types of properties. In addition to the site visits, the class welcomed guests Ashley Desplat from Expedia, Inc. and USCB Hospitality Management alumna, Sarah Sheedy, now at Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort. The speakers shared personal insights on their careers, as well as the inner workings at their places of business.



Alumna Spotlight: Sarah Sheedy

We are so happy to have Sarah Sheedy as the subject of our alumna spotlight for this issue. Sarah embodies our goals as the hospitality management program at the University of South Carolina Beaufort. She is flourishing in the events industry, and puts her knowledge and skills to great use right here, in the Lowcountry.

Why did you choose Hospitality Management at USCB?

I graduated high school right outside of Pittsburgh, PA and was never a big fan of the cold weather. As soon as I started researching colleges, I knew I wanted to move down South and be as close to the beach as possible! I grew up vacationing on HHI so when I found USCB, it immediately felt like home to me. With my dad also being in the hospitality industry, I always knew I wanted to go that route in my career. When I got my acceptance letter to USCB and started to focus more on event planning, everything just seemed to fall into place, and I knew I couldn't have picked a better college!

What were some of your favorite parts about studying with us?

One of my favorite parts about my studies at USCB was the fact that it was a smaller school that allowed for more personal connections and learning experiences. I got to know every one of my professors and every person in my class. Compared to a school with 100+ people per class, I was able to become very involved with the school by joining clubs, being an orientation leader, and even a founding member of the Phi Mu Fraternity. I genuinely feel that if I went to a larger school, my college experience, friendships/connections, and the person I have become would have turned out so differently. I'm so grateful for the experience I had at USCB!



How did your education impact your career?

Being in hospitality, a huge part of your career depends on your personality, confidence, and experience. All my classes involved individual participation and offered opportunities outside of class, such as volunteering for community events, that really helped build my resume by creating experience and connections before I even graduated. I was able to explore different aspects of the hospitality industry, gain confidence in what I was doing and help narrow down what I wanted to focus on after graduation. Being involved in clubs is actually how I landed my first job after school! I was on a tour with the Hospitality Students Association at a local country club that was hiring for an Events Coordinator. I applied for the position after our tour, was offered the position based on the experience I gained during my time at USCB and started right after graduation!

Where are you working now, and what are you doing?

I currently work at the Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort on Hilton Head as their Catering and Events Sales Manager. I field all the inquiries we receive for events, from weddings, corporate dinners, baby showers, catering deliveries and more. Through the sales process, I help paint the picture of having their event with us. Then, I put together proposals, contracts, collect deposits and work alongside our events coordinator to plan and execute each event.

What are your plans for the future?

I plan to stay in the Bluffton/HHI area since my fiancé and I own a home and are getting married here next year. Over the next few years, I plan to continue growing my knowledge and experience in the events industry and work towards starting my own planning business when the time feels right.

Peanut Butter Putters with Pockets Full of Sunshine

On Wednesday, April 5th, Pockets Full of Sunshine graced Dr. Sean Barth's class on the HHI campus with another round of baking Peanut Butter Putters, their locally popular gluten free cookies. Students, faculty, staff, and friends joined in to help them bake over 700 cookies for the Heritage 5K, a local race run by The Heritage Classic Foundation and Palmetto Running Company which supports the annual golf tournament. Everyone was treated to lunch after the cookies were baked, and fun was had by all. The best days are when we, as a university, are able to help our local community thrive.



Hospitality Marketing Sales Marketing Plan for Tiki Hut



The HRTM 450 Hospitality Marketing Sales course, taught by Dr. Nancy Hritz, prepared marketing plans for the Tiki Hut on Hilton Head Island. The students visited the famous beach bar on the island in January to learn about the Tiki Hut's operations, current marketing, and future goals. The students built the marketing plans throughout the semester.

Each included three promotional ideas for the business in the future.

"It's always great to get new perspectives and ideas from such a talented group of students. I'm definitely interested in using their ideas to better market Tiki Hut and our amazing island!" - Matt Suckow, Director of Food and Beverage, Beach House

Law Course Comes to Life on Daufuskie Island



A day in the life of a hospitality management student at USCB is never dull. This semester, Professor Keri Olivetti's Hotel, Restaurant and Travel Law course included real-life examples of interesting cases from local hospitality companies. The final project centered on the legal woes of the once beautiful, but now dilapidated Melrose Resort on Daufuskie Island. Guided by Prof. Olivetti, students spent a day on Daufuskie island, touring via golf carts the resort property and seeing local historic and tourism sites which contribute to the interesting background of their case study.

HERITAGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Under the guidance of Dr. Sean Barth, Professor and Internship Coordinator of Hospitality Management, USCB students took part in the 2023 Heritage Golf Tournament by working at the concession stand between the first and ninth holes, which will hopefully be our post for the next several years. The students earned shift pay while working all positions in the concession stand, including running, stocking, and counter help. The 1/9 concession stand mimics the setup of a traditional Master concession stand where patrons can walk through and grab their own food and beverage before checking out at one of six manned registers. The Heritage Foundation will, in turn, provide scholarship money for the Hospitality Department in addition to the staff pay. Many thanks to all the students, The Heritage Classic Foundation, and USCB's Hospitality Management department for making this a reality.



Finnegan in the HHI St. Patty's Day Parade

Finnegan and more than a dozen USCB faculty & staff, including Lori Vargo and Su Gibson from the HHI campus, students, and family members made a splash in this year's HHI St. Patrick's Day parade. Just ahead of the Oscar Myer Wiernermobile, Finnegan handed out candy to the delight of paradegoers of all ages. The Hilton Head Island campus was at the end of the parade route and an excellent location to regroup and dry off after what ended up being a quite soggy parade in one of the area's common early Spring storms.



A Playful Campus



USCB's beautiful Hilton Head Island campus is less than one mile from the beach, but sometimes the weather doesn't cooperate, or our students don't have time before, after or between classes to make it out of the building. So, faculty members have donated puzzles, games and cards which dot some of the little tables and lounge areas on the second floor

where students gather. In today's rapid-fire, high-tech, work and study environments, it's important to encourage students to unplug and decompress when they can. This Spring, the community puzzle was a beautiful Thomas Kinkadee version of a scene from Disney's Princess and the Frog. Swing by campus sometime this Fall to see what the new puzzle is (hint: "Arrrrr," "Yo ho!"), or play some cards with our students to get a feel for what student life is like.

Introducing Rod Casavant at the Center for Strategic Planning



The USCB Center for Strategic Planning is delighted to announce the addition of our newest facilitator, Rod Casavant. Rod is Chairman Emeritus, SCORE SC Lowcountry Chapter, where he led a team of 40+ certified business mentors supporting start-up businesses and in-business clients in Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, and Colleton counties. He is a SCORE certified Business Mentor and on the National Advisory Council. SCORE is the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors dedicated to helping small businesses get off

the ground, grow and achieve their goals. During his tenure the Chapter was recognized as South Carolina's District Chapter of the Year in 2018, 2019, 2021, and was selected as National Chapter of the Year in 2019. Rod had a 30+ year career with Eli Lilly & Company in multiple leadership roles with a track record of developing high performing teams focused on successful implementation of strategic and operational initiatives. He has been active in the Lowcountry community serving on various boards including Sandalwood Community Food Pantry and the Don Ryan Center for Innovation. Rod graduated with a BA in Chemistry, Summa Cum Laude, University of South Florida, and an MBA, Magna Cum Laude, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.

"It is my distinct privilege to join USCB's Center for Strategic Planning and assist in supporting organizations in our Lowcountry community with this important initiative fundamental to long term success." Rod Casavant

You can find more updates and the Center's published newspaper articles, podcasts and presentations, at uscb.edu/csp.

You Can Help Us!

Do you know of someone who might be interested in starting or completing their degree? We have in-person and online degree options. Please tell them about us!

Please also share this newsletter and encourage your colleagues and friends to sign up for them at hhicenter.com/sign-up-today. It's a great way to stay connected with the happenings of the department and learn about upcoming events on the Hilton Head campus.