

Hilton Head Wine and Food Festival Accepting Applications for Scholarship

The Department of Hospitality Management at the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) and the Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training (CEMHT) are pleased to announce the offering of a scholarship for students majoring in Hospitality Management. This scholarship was created by the Hilton Head Island Wine and Food Festival which feels that tourism is vital to the local community and would like to give back to the area by assisting USCB students. Multiple scholarships are available, totaling \$2000.

Scholarship applicants are evaluated based on previous academic accomplishments and potential to make a positive contribution to the hospitality and tourism industry. The donor wishes for individual(s) receiving the scholarships to have a desired career focus in the general tourism and hospitality industries, and special preference will be given to those who desire to reside in Beaufort County, South Carolina upon graduation. However, ultimately the award will be competitive based on academic excellence and dedication to the industry.

The recipients are interviewed and selected by CEMHT faculty and related personnel. The scholarship recipient(s) will be required to volunteer at the Hilton Head Island Wine and Food International Judging, planned to be held on the USCB Hilton Head campus in May. The festival is planned for September 2021.

“Study, Work, Play @ the Beach Campus”

This is the fourth consecutive year that Conde Nast Traveler’s Readers’ Choice Awards has named Hilton Head Island the #1 Island in the US. Our sunny, sandy little island beat out the likes of Oahu, HI and Amelia Island, FL...again. So, excuse us for being proud to be the brand-new, world-class hospitality management educational facility on the best island tourism destination in the country!

See a [video highlight](#) about biking to the beach on Pedals HH bikes from our beautiful campus!

[Apply to our program here.](#)



Alumna Spotlight: Essence White

Essence graduated with the Class of 2019 from USC Beaufort. A first-generation student, she completed her first two years of college at USC Sumter, then finished her degree at USCB with assistance from her very proud parents and a transfer scholarship from the Hospitality Management Department.

Essence is currently enrolled in a program called Leadership Development Program (LDP) at Islamorada Resorts. This program allows her to travel every six months to work at various properties owned or managed by the company. “During my time at USCB, I was exposed to different hotels and their Manager in Training (MIT) programs. I knew that I wanted to be enrolled in such a program after college, so I made it my mission to apply mostly for those kinds of jobs.” She started out as a Food and Beverage Manager, managing an upscale Italian restaurant in Bar Harbor, Maine. During the winter of 2019, she transferred to the Florida Keys and was tasked to help manage multiple outdoor F&B outlets at one time on a daily basis. In 2020,



she transferred to Bolton Landing, New York to manage another restaurant for a few months. With a passion for food and beverage, Essence admits she is someone who wants to learn everything and have a hand in as many ventures as possible.

Currently, she is a Front Desk LDP in the Florida Keys once again. She remarked, “I am greatly enjoying my new position. The training and mentorship that I am receiving here have exceeded any expectation I could ever have. I know in the long run I want to continue to work with resorts. It is the perfect place for busy-bodies, such as myself, who grow anxious at the idea of becoming stagnant.” As glamorous as it may sound, she mentioned that there were some challenges she had to overcome. A significant cultural difference was inevitable. Essence noted, “Living in the New England area was hard. I knew no one there, no one looked like me, no one spoke like me or was accustomed to the things that I was comfortable with coming all the way from South Carolina. I had to continuously prove myself as a manager to people who obviously did not view

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me as someone who could manage a restaurant. However, I persisted and allowed my skills and knowledge to lead before anything.”

Essence was introduced to the hotel and resort industry by USCB. She received her first job at a resort by going to an on-campus job fair and meeting an HR recruiter there. Her favorite parts of receiving a HRTM degree at USCB were the professors and the opportunities they were able to introduce to her before and after graduation. They expressed encouragement when needed and aided her with sorting out her options for post-graduation and her future in general. “I am forever grateful for the HRTM faculty and staff, even as cliché as it may sound.”

So what does the future have in store for Essence? Ever since she was younger, Essence’s dad taught her the art of developing a product and selling it to consumers. She explained, “I remember when I was in the fifth grade he took my younger brother and me to a peanut farm. We picked fresh peanuts from the ground, took them home, and my dad seasoned and boiled them. He had us place them in bags, then we sold them at school the next day. He allowed us to keep whatever we made. At the time I was simply content to have a few extra dollars in my pocket for snacks and sweets. However, to this day, I cannot forget the pride I felt in operating my own little business. My dad planted an entrepreneurial seed in me. I know in the end, I want to start a business that caters to the hospitality sector.” For now, Essence plans to continue in the LDP program and learn as much as she can from the different departments she works with. She’d like to progress into a Director of Operations position, and is also considering going back to school at some point to earn an MBA.

Even while expressing interest in revenue management and other areas of hospitality, Essence noted that Food and Beverage will always be her passion. “Even today while I work at the front desk, there are times I find myself slipping into the kitchen just to watch the beautiful madness commence. Eventually we will find each other again.”

HRTM Faculty Complete the BOLT Course

This summer, Lori Vargo, Director of e-Learning for USCB, launched an initiative to help faculty transform their courses into an online or hybrid format and enrich the e-learning environment for students. As part of that initiative, Ms. Vargo developed and taught several 4- to 6-week rounds of a course entitled, “Getting Ready to Teach Online.” In it, faculty learned about new, innovative technology tools available to make online courses more engaging, exciting, secure and collaborative. One of the best parts of the course was the group exercises which included written discussions, video messages and group assignments. Faculty shared best practices, asked each other tough questions and debated everything from the functionality through to the core value of various course formats, policies and technology tools. “I have plenty of experience teaching online, so I thought I might get a few ideas from taking this course and that’s all. Not so! The course was so thorough and interesting. I learned so much, and have already integrated several new tools and ideas into the courses I’m teaching this semester,” says Su Gibson, one of the four hospitality management faculty who completed the course. Sections of the course ran from June 1 to August 31 with more than 40 USCB faculty members participating.

The HRTM faculty members who completed the course and are now certified through Beaufort Online Learning & Teaching (B.O.L.T.) are:

- Tom Henz
- Laurie Savidge
- Kelly McCombs
- Su Gibson



Faculty Spotlight: Laurie Savidge

With almost fifteen years at Marriott International and Marriott Vacations Worldwide (MVW), our Adjunct Instructor Laurie Savidge has been promoted to the role of Director of Operations at the largest MVW resort on Hilton Head Island: Marriott’s Grande Ocean. Mrs. Savidge will be responsible for all daily operations of the resort and ensuring that the highest levels of guest satisfaction are achieved. Located just 5 minutes from our island campus on South Forest Beach Drive, Grande Ocean is a 290 two bedroom/two bath villa resort located directly on the Atlantic Ocean. Set to undergo a major renovation to the resort beginning this Fall and ending in April 2021, Grande Ocean is the ideal spot for visitors to Hilton Head Island to enjoy their vacation. If you are interested in a tour of the resort or potential employment opportunities, please reach out to Mrs. Savidge at laurie.savidge@vacationclub.com.



Laurie has been a competitive runner since the first grade. Running a marathon and the New York City Half Marathon as seen in this picture to raise money for Team Fox have been some of her favorite races.

INDUSTRY CORNER: ANDREW CARMINES OF HUDSON'S SEAFOOD

Our nation's restaurant business has had an uphill battle during the pandemic. What are some key takeaways you have learned as a restaurant owner during this tumultuous time?

I've learned so much. Anytime we have a crisis situation whether it be a hurricane, a pandemic or a flood the most important thing I've learned (and we've had a lot of adversity over the years) is to try to get something positive and learn something out of the situation. Turn an awful situation into something that makes your business stronger as a result. We have looked at our efficiency and have created plans to see this through.

The team at Hudson's is known for giving back to the island community. Why is it important at Hudson's to support local and operate sustainably?

Giving back to the community is something that my Dad instilled in me at a very young age. I feel fortunate in the regard that my parents are service minded. They taught me that it is our responsibility to take care of the community we live in. That upbringing makes it very easy for me to say yes when people ask me to do things.

Sustainability – if you are going to make your living off shrimp, oysters and crab, you need to be prepared to do what you can to protect that resource, not for selfish reasons but because it is the right thing to do. The Port Royal Sound Foundation that I am on the Board of is doing great things to educate young people in Beaufort County about the environment and why our local ecosystem is so important.

What are the plans for the annual Seafood Festival?

A possible date for the 2021 Seafood Festival is during the first two weeks of December which have historically been some of the quietest weeks on the island. My sincere goal is that we bring lot of visitors to the is-



land for the festival during that time. Current discussion about the festival includes smaller events with Michelin Star Chefs taking over restaurants on the island. The festival started with my parents having a Kayak race with 200 of their friends. The event has just kept evolving and the pandemic is just another opportunity to evolve it further and see what happens.

What are some of the most important qualities someone who is in college and interested in working in the restaurant business should have?

Strong work ethic; Patience; Keeping focus on what is important; Creativity.

What good managers in the restaurant business do is they have an ability to prevent problems from happening instead of fixing them after they happen.

You are known as a very present and hands on leader at Hudson's. How important do you feel this is to the success of your restaurant and your team engagement?

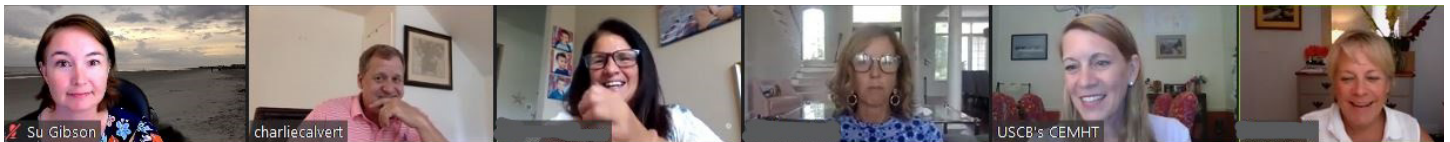
Very important. We are so lucky at Hudson's to have such a nice group of people working here. Everyone is respectful of each other and it makes working here a joy.

You have heard the adage, if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life. What do you love about what you do every day at Hudson's and what advice would you give to our hospitality students about pursuing their career dreams?

Be creative. Do not be happy with status quo. Push the envelope to do things a little better. Continue to evolve.

Interview by Laurie Savidge of Andrew Carmines, President of Hudson's Seafood House on the Docks and Shell Ring Oyster Company. For more information, visit www.hudsonsonthedocks.com

Island Ambassador and Bluffton Ambassador Success Online



Faculty with USCB's Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training taught its Island Ambassador and Bluffton Ambassador programs in a virtual interactive classroom to several groups this summer. Attendees were able to view the presenter as well as the material, ask questions, and make comments during the class, which was held in real time. The ambassador programs are designed to inform hospitality professionals, local residents and the area's workforce about the unique history, culture and ecology of the lowcountry. The Bluffton

Ambassador program was developed in partnership with the Town of Bluffton and launched last year. It was modeled after the incredibly successful Island Ambassador program, which has certified more than 2200 "Island Ambassadors" to date.

Classes are provided at no cost to attendees. If you are interested in joining an upcoming class or scheduling one for your group, please reach out to Keri Olivetti at olivetti@uscb.edu.

Making Sense of this Summer's Lodging Statistics

COVID-19 has caused an international economic disruption of historic proportions. Our local economy has felt the impact of this disruption, especially within the hospitality industry. For an update on our local hospitality industry and current conditions we turn to Hannah Horne, Vice President of Public Policy and Programs at the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce & Visitors and Convention Bureau:

"Unprecedented..." That is the word used so often to describe the COVID pandemic and what is being called "The Great Pause" in the world economy. World leaders, corporate moguls and small business owners have all felt the effects of disrupted supply chains, desperate cash flows and dynamic business model twists.

The Lowcountry's tourism sector was hard hit when the pandemic began in March, 2020. However, there have been major strides to meet and exceed pre-COVID numbers in several sectors given the help of economic stimulus, marketing message overhauls and a commitment to overcoming customers' safety fears.

Accommodations and Lodging

Hilton Head Island hotels experienced a brisk reopening in May, 2020, but with only a 41% occupancy rate. By July, the area was experiencing a 75% occupancy and the average daily rate (ADR) had reached year-to-year numbers.

One success story in the sector was the Home and Villa rentals that reflected consumer needs for safe, cordoned spaces and outdoor areas where social distancing could be controlled or maintained. Home and Villas maintained optimum occupancy levels as consumers avoided air travel and preferred destinations within a reasonable drive time.

The area has not, however, seen the return of steady group/meetings business. The combination of restrictions on group size, as well as corporate bans on travel are fueling the nearly 40% of excess unemployment that still exists in the Leisure and Hospitality sector, according to US Travel.

Restaurants, Retail, and Small Business

As COVID spread, restaurants and many small businesses shuttered their doors. Those that remained open, had a curb or carry-out model to capture what revenue they could with minimum staff levels. Unemployment numbers were staggering both nationally, and locally. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports local unemployment in March, 2020, at 2.7 percent. By April, it had risen to 11.6%!

The federal CARES Act provided 263 loans to Beaufort County businesses, totaling \$83 million. Because the loan stipulations required keeping staff levels at or above pre-COVID levels, unemployment crept down, and currently rests at 5.1% in/around Hilton Head Island.

What happens next?

Consumer confidence and small business sentiment indices are higher, signaling what could be a continued recovery. However, significant steps are still needed to:

- Reinforce and reiterate safety measures for dining, shopping and travelling
- Help those small businesses and non-profits with lagging sales and income potential
- Pass additional stimulus legislation for hardest-hit sectors (restaurants/airlines, etc.)
- Make aggressive strides for a COVID19 vaccine or drug-therapy
- Keep childcare facilities, schools and colleges as safe as possible with additional PPE

Last, but not least, we remember those around the world who have faced an illness or death as a result of this devastating virus—including the families of the 89 who have died here in Beaufort County. The health and wellness of our community, as well as our business community, will always be our top priorities.

At USCB, we will continue in our mission to prepare our Hospitality majors for leadership roles throughout the industry so that they will be ready and able to meet the challenges of today and develop opportunities for tomorrow.

McCombs to Host Cooking Demos for International Week on Campus

"Because global education and diversity enhances our understanding of our role in this world."

November 16-20, 2020 is International Education Week (IEW). This week offers an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of exchange programs and international education worldwide. This celebration is a collaboration between US Department of State, US Department of Education, and various institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities; businesses and associations; and community and international organizations.

This year's celebrations at USCB include both virtual and non-virtual activities. Each day will have different social media themes for everyone to take part, and there will be different challenges and games for students, faculty, and staff to participate. The kickoff on Monday, November 16th has Chancellor Panu giving opening remarks for the Keynote Speaker, Dr Kim Cavanaugh, who will discuss her experiences as a Fullbright Scholar in Jordan.

A highlight of any celebration, of course, is food! Chartwell's dining services will be highlighting international foods all week, in the Sand Bar, for students, faculty and staff to enjoy. There will also be cooking demonstrations by faculty and staff, giving stage to various international flavors. Many of these cooking demonstrations will be performed in our fabulous teaching and demonstration kitchen at the USCB HHI Campus, hosted by HRTM Senior Instructor Kelly McCombs, and be videotaped for viewing.

We invite you to participate and celebrate International Education Week!

Recruiters Still Seeking Students



Holly Strohm, recruiter for Marriott Vacations Worldwide (MVW), was upbeat while waiting for students to speak with her in between their classes on the Hilton Head campus one Tuesday in October. When asked about how Hilton Head MVW properties were doing, she enthused, "Occupancy is up for this time of year. It's very busy – we're looking to fill 16 positions!" Ms. Strohm has been one of many recruiters consistently seeking out our hospitality management students. When Covid-19 slowed tourism to the Lowcountry in the early Spring, job prospects for hospitality students seemed at risk. However, our area was quick to rebound, and opportunities have returned with gusto. MVW, for example, held a hiring event at Marriott's Barony Beach Club in mid-October where they advertised a variety of full-time positions and added sweeteners such as work transportation assistance and six-month wage increases. The pandemic is sure to change the hospitality landscape, but, it seems, our students are marketable and in demand now more than ever.