

HILTON COLLEGE DEAN'S REPORT/FALL 2016 – SPRING 2017

STUDENT SUCCESS



UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
CONRAD N. HILTON COLLEGE

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& Eric Hilton Distinguished Chair*
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*Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
& Donald H. Hubbs Professor*
Mary Dawson, Ph.D.

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Director of Business Operations
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WHAT'S DEAN'S REPORT: STUDENT SUCCESS/FALL 2016 – SPRING 2017 INSIDE



SUPER AMAZING MAGNIFICENT FRIENDS,

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS REPORT MARKS THE end of my second year at this amazing College. What a ride it's been! What I am most proud of are the things our leadership team has accomplished.

For example, we spent this past academic year building on the recommendations from our external review and acting upon the resulting strategic plan that we finalized last summer. Specifically, we focused on five key areas: student success, research efficacy, international reach and recognition, engagement, and organizational optimization.

Each of these are essential to our continued success as a top hospitality program, and our emphasis on student success is particularly paramount. Student success is Provost Short's No. 1 initiative. It is the reason we are all here. Because we are so committed to this initiative, this *Dean's Report* highlights what we are doing in this area, the people who are making it happen, and our vision for the future. When you read these articles, you'll understand why I am the College's biggest cheerleader!

1. STUDENT SUCCESS

- ▶ We recently moved into our new Center for Student Success, which puts our recruiting and enrollment, undergraduate academic services and career development student success functions in one centralized area. Our alumni engagement office will relocate there as well.

- ▶ We created the first-ever Dean's Undergraduate Advisory Council, whose members were selected for their leadership and diverse representation of our student body. In the Council's first year, it made numerous and invaluable recommendations – including writing and adopting an undergraduate student culture statement, and introducing the new tradition of a student convocation speaker.
- ▶ We formalized an undergraduate teaching assistantship program, which provides paid undergraduate assistantships.
- ▶ Our faculty worked to identify learning outcomes for our graduates. These 25 competencies will substantially shape our curriculum review in the upcoming academic year.



2. RESEARCH EFFICACY

- ▶ We provided travel funding for every research-productive faculty member. This resulted in a record number of research presentations around the world and a record number of publications in leading academic journals – a whopping 60 publications in 2016. These efforts are also tied to our third strategic objective.

3. INTERNATIONAL REACH AND RECOGNITION

- ▶ One objective measure of our success in this area is the recent ranking of our MS in Global Hospitality Business. It was ranked No. 2 in the world in the *Top 100 2017 Best Masters Ranking* by Eduniversal Group, a global leader in higher-ed information. This is notable as the program is only two years old!

4. ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ We radically reorganized our alumni engagement office and practices. As a result, we had record-setting attendance at our alumni events in Houston, as well as Los Angeles and Chicago. With the excitement generated at these socials, we are now committed to annual alumni events at the international hotel show in New York in November, the Americas Lodging Investment Summit in Los Angeles in January, and the international restaurant show in Chicago in May.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIMIZATION

In addition to centralizing our student success functions and reorganizing our alumni engagement structure:

- ▶ We strategically redesigned our recruitment and enrollment office and have hired a new director who will oversee our recruiting managers in Houston and San Antonio.
- ▶ We reorganized the maintenance and engineering functions of the College and hotel, which resulted in an incredible savings.
- ▶ Most recently, we reorganized the hotel's sales function and are integrating a student-involvement program. Students interested in sales can now graduate with real hotel-sales experience that doesn't require an external internship.
- ▶ As the saying goes, we had mostly the right people in the bus. Now we have the best people and all are sitting in the correct seats!

In terms of our finances, I'd like to reference a snapshot of our financial health (*see page 28*). The College has not shared this information in the past, but I believe this is a best practice as we strive for transparency and shared governance.

The projections show that we will end our fiscal year with cash reserves totaling approximately \$1 million more than what we had at the beginning of the year. This will be used to offset our roofing project that will total around \$1.2 million. All of our expenses were at or below budget; these included undergraduate scholarships, undergraduate assistantships, graduate-tuition fellowships and graduate assistant salaries of close to \$900,000.

Finally, our endowments – the lifeblood of the College – totaled some \$35.5 million at year's end. In today's economic environment, these endowments are more important than ever. In fact, they are the vehicle for one day ensuring our financial independence. For example, the 85th Texas legislative session ended as we expected. And though the University of Houston fared better than most higher-ed institutions, the state simply doesn't have the revenue to fund universities to our desired or even needed level.

If we are to remain a leader in hospitality education, we cannot count on tuition increases or state funding alone. We can no longer rely as heavily as we once had on the Hilton Foundation to fund our renovations. We must broaden our base of donor support. Today, your involvement is more important than ever.

In closing, I want to emphasize how bright our future is. And that is because we have the *best* students, faculty, staff, alumni, industry partners and friends in all of hospitality education. Together, we are changing the future of hospitality management. You make my job more gratifying than you will ever know.

Yours in service,

Dr. Dennis Reynolds
Dean and Barron Hilton Distinguished Chair





Redefining STUDENT SUCCESS

BY DEBRA KAY MAURER

Super seniors (students who require five to seven years to graduate) can be found in colleges and universities throughout the country. For the last several years, there has been a nationwide push to encourage students to earn their degrees in four years. The University of Houston is making great strides in improving both its retention and graduation rates, and Hilton College is piggybacking these efforts.

“We want our students to receive their diplomas in four years and find great jobs upon graduation – that’s student success,” said Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Mary Dawson. “To be successful within our industry also means that students have engaged with the College through student organizations and events, collaborated with their classmates, taken advantage of networking opportunities and gained industry experience. That’s what we want for every student.”

UHin4

Student success is Provost Paula Myrick Short’s No. 1 initiative. One of the most tangible programs of this initiative is UHin4. Incoming freshmen sign a contract with the University and commit to taking at least 30 credit hours a year (120 total) and to graduate in four years. In return they receive a fixed four-year tuition, regardless of the number of hours taken each semester. Those who don’t fulfill their contract pay the current tuition rate. Just two years after the program was introduced in 2014, nearly 70 percent of the more than 4,300 entering freshman class have opted in!

“Graduating in four years saves time and money and helps students enter the workforce or begin their graduate studies as efficiently as possible,” Dr. Dawson said. “Another benefit of UHin4 is priority registration. And if a student needs a particular class to graduate, another section will be opened up so graduation is not deferred.”

UH is also looking at class size. The next big push is articulation agreements with two-year schools to keep transfer students on track to also graduate in four years. It’s these kinds of student success initiatives that will help more students to cross the finish line.

Personalizing Data

UH has also invested in a new software program called the *Student Success Collaborative*, which uses data to help schools improve retention and graduation rates. It’s been a game-changer.

“By using predictive analytics, we can calculate a student’s likelihood of graduation success based on a number of success markers,” Dr. Dawson said. “This software allows us to track every aspect of a student’s academic record and also alerts us to any red flags, so that we can step in if a student is struggling.”

There are any number of reasons students don’t enroll for their next semester, including personal issues that force them to drop out, transferring to another college or financial difficulties. Now, if a student hasn’t enrolled, the College’s academic advisors can call to find out why.

If money is the reason for not enrolling in that final semester,

advisors can encourage students to apply for the Provost’s Completion Grant to help them with tuition. There are also College scholarships and other means that could assist them as well.

“It’s easy to see why a student could just give up,” Dr. Dawson said. “Tracking this data and reaching out to students personally puts them on our radar and encourages them to continue because we’ve shown we care.”

College Initiatives

Hilton College’s biggest and most visible student success initiative is the renovation of its West Wing to consolidate and integrate all student services under one roof (*see related story on page 22*). And, in addition to embracing the Provost’s initiatives, the College continues to establish its own traditions to improve student success.

For example, in August the College hosted its 3rd Annual Welcome Picnic where students and their families learned about student organizations and events, met faculty, staff, alumni and other students, and found their classrooms.

“We started this picnic to improve student retention but more importantly, we wanted to make our incoming freshmen and transfer students feel like they are part of our College from day one,” Dr. Dawson said. “This picnic is an opportunity for students to meet new friends within their major on their first day and to start building their own hospitality networks that will benefit them throughout their careers.”

Career Development, in collaboration with the members of Eta Sigma Delta and the National Association for Minorities in Hospitality, has also started a new tradition to support student success. The very first pre-Career Fair mixer, held the night before our Spring Career Fair, allowed students to market themselves to potential employers with their one-minute “elevator speeches.” Recruiters also shared tips on how to best ace an interview. The event was so well received by recruiters and students alike that organizers plan to make this networking mixer an annual event.

With the College’s current

placement rate at 93 percent, events like this, combined with professional development workshops, will only bolster our students’ success in landing that first job.

Measuring Student Success

Student success will be measured by overall student satisfaction, which relates to student retention and having our students graduate in four years across the board.

“We’ve got a 76 percent retention rate – the second highest among all the colleges at the University – and we know we can do even better,” Dean Dennis Reynolds said. “We’ll be looking at how these initiatives are making a difference as we evaluate quantitative improvements in our retention and graduation numbers.”

Ultimately, Deans Reynolds and Dawson agree that measuring student success going forward will be evaluated by what types of jobs our graduates are being offered and what they accomplish down the line.

“Our job is to create *true* future leaders of the global hospitality industry,” Dean Reynolds said. “Over the years we’ve seen an increase of managerial-level and leadership positions being offered to our graduates immediately following graduation. What’s going to be more telling is 10 years from now. What will today’s graduates be doing?”

A student of 20 years ago may have had aspirations to be a general manager. Students today talk about running an international chain of hotels.

“No doubt,” he said, “they will be doing even greater things.”



Dedicated to student success
Guiding our students every step of the way
From application to graduation
Through resume writing workshops
to those first job offers

We impact every single student at Hilton College!

#SQUADGOALS

BY PEARL K. CAJOLES

RECRUITING & ENROLLMENT



Nick Howell
Director of Recruiting & Enrollment

Nick believes the most successful people are those who have pursued their passions through education. This fuels his own desire to get students excited about going to college. He brings nearly a decade of higher education experience to his position, including a stint with The University of Texas at Austin. Most recently, he served as assistant director of admissions for the University of Houston. Based in San Marcos, he helped recruit students from the Austin area for all of the colleges on UH's main campus. In fact, many of our freshmen and transfer students learned about our program after meeting Nick, and he's proud to have seen these same students graduate and achieve their goals. When the opportunity arose to lead the College's recruitment and enrollment efforts, Nick packed his bags, sold his house in the Texas Hill Country and moved to Houston. Since joining the College this past July, he hasn't stopped networking, planning recruitment events, collaborating with high school counselors, or meeting prospective hospitality majors and their families. Having witnessed students succeed in our program, he's one of our biggest advocates. Supported by his new team and a creative and aggressive recruitment plan, Nick is ready to take our enrollment numbers to record levels!

- FINANCIAL AID
- SCHOLARSHIPS
- TUITION AND FEES
- HOUSING

ADMISSIONS

CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS

RECRUITING EVENTS

HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE FAIRS
 FUTURE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

SUMMER CAMPS

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

WELCOME PICNIC

TOURS

COUGAR PREVIEW

Mandi Anderson
Recruitment Manager



Mandi ('14) transferred to Hilton College from Texas State University as a junior with dreams of becoming a wedding planner. But, her plans changed immediately upon graduation when she was offered a newly created position to serve as the College's liaison to assist prospective students. Her job involves bringing future Cougars to the College, introducing them to student life, and guiding them through the enrollment process. She enjoys her job so much that she has redirected her career goals to focus on helping students to succeed, and is beginning her second year as a graduate student to earn a Master's in Higher Education. When Mandi isn't on campus giving tours, or mentoring the Conrad N. Hilton College Ambassadors, she recruits at area high schools. When June comes around, she runs a series of experiential learning summer camps geared to show juniors in high school the exciting career options possible with a degree from Hilton College. Mandi is also instrumental in planning our annual Welcome Picnic for freshmen and transfer students. With her infectious enthusiasm, eye for detail, "insider" knowledge as an alum and ability to connect with both students and parents, Mandi is key to helping our newest Coogs find success before even taking their first class!

OPEN HOUSES

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC SERVICES

Khristyane Lopez

Recruitment Manager,
Hilton College-San Antonio



Early in her career, Khristyane worked with Advise TX, a program that encourages low-income, underrepresented high school students to attend college. She helped them identify their goals and apply to schools that would best fit their interests. Because she found so much joy in working with students, Khristyane went on to become a regional admissions counselor in the Rio Grande Valley for the University of Houston. When her former boss, Nick Howell, recommended her for an open position with our San Antonio program, Khristyane jumped at the chance to recruit for Hilton College and moved to the Alamo City. She joined Nick's recruitment team this past August, and is excited to work with our partner community colleges in San Antonio and Central Texas to bring transfer students one step closer to earning their hospitality degree. In addition to school visits and helping prospective students navigate the admissions process, she is the staff advisor to the Conrad N. Hilton College-San Antonio Ambassadors. And like Mandi Anderson, she too, is working on an advanced degree in her field. Khristyane plans to receive her Master's in Higher Education this December, and will begin working on her Ed.D. in January 2018. Through leading by example, Khristyane is an inspiration to future students who are just beginning their educational journeys.

RECRUITING EVENTS

HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE FAIRS

FUTURE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

INFORMATION SESSIONS

TRANSFER OPEN HOUSE

CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS

ADMISSIONS

Kevin Simon

Director of Undergraduate Studies & Director of Fred Parks Wine Outreach Programs



Kevin ('92) likes to tell students to choose a job that truly fulfills their passions. And he knows. Kevin began waiting tables at his family's restaurant when he was 10 years old, and has been in hospitality ever since. He grew up in the industry, working in food & beverage management, and in the wholesale wine and spirits business. After what he calls a fortunate work-related injury, he decided to return to school as a non-traditional student and graduated from Hilton College in 1992. Two years later, he returned to his alma mater as an academic advisor and, since 1996, has led the Academic Services team. In his multiple roles here, he melds his passion for wine, customer service and hospitality. He helps students plan their degrees, and offers academic, professional and personal guidance when needed. He also teaches Wine Appreciation, takes students to the Sonoma and Napa Valleys every May as part of the California Wine Experience, and leads the College's partnership with the Sugar Land Wine & Food Affair. In Kevin's 24 years at the College, countless students and alumni have thanked him for changing their lives. At the end of the day, helping students find success with a job he truly loves – and a great glass of wine – is as good as it gets!

ACADEMIC ADVISING

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATES

DEGREE PLANS

CLASS SCHEDULING



Jeremy Dafoe

Academic Advisor
& Scholarship
Coordinator

Before he found his love for academic advising, Jeremy worked as a federal property inspector. The job paid the bills, but he wanted a career that would make a

difference in people's lives. Here, Jeremy sees students

through their entire collegiate journey – from the time they come to the College as freshmen or transfer students, all the way to graduation. He considers them his kids, and finds personal fulfillment in watching his students grow and succeed. In addition to coordinating the scholarship process, running new student orientation each fall and organizing the spring and fall commencement ceremonies for the College, Jeremy assists students with their degree plans, takes time to explain the University's policies and procedures, and connects them to available resources. In some situations, Jeremy shows his students how to take responsibility for their actions. He also chaperones and coordinates the logistics of our class trip to Chicago each May to attend the annual National Restaurant Association Show. In Jeremy's 13 years at the College, he's learned that providing his students with total support – academically, professionally and personally – empowers them to earn their diplomas, no matter the challenges along the way. So, when he sees his "kids" walk across that stage during commencement, Jeremy is proud to know that his guidance has truly made an impact.



SCHOLARSHIPS



GRADUATION

EDUCATIONAL
ADVOCATES



ACADEMIC ADVISING



ORIENTATIONS



Dawn Deurell

Undergraduate
Academic Advisor



ACADEMIC
ADVISING



ORIENTATIONS



DEGREE PLANS



CLASS SCHEDULING



EDUCATIONAL
ADVOCATES

Dawn enjoys seeing students grow wings. She meets many of them for the first time during new student orientation, where they come with worries about their future or their abilities to succeed. To give encouragement and support, Dawn keeps her door open and always goes the extra mile to provide optimum customer service. Our students are her most valuable clients. And, as a true believer that success depends on holistic development, Dawn encourages them to pursue new ventures, including getting involved in campus activities and exposing themselves to new ideas. She believes that these experiences, in addition to academic performance, are the true keys to student success. Without question, Dawn says the best part of her job is seeing her students flourish and finding the confidence to achieve their goals. She joined Hilton College in 2015 after moving to Houston from New Hampshire, but has worked in academic affairs for more than 20 years. If given a chance to do it all over again, Dawn would still choose the same path. Higher education is not only her career, but also her passion. And for Dawn, there is nothing sweeter than watching her fledglings take flight!

GRADUATE PROGRAM



Tara Soma
Undergraduate
Advising Assistant



Alisha Harrison
Graduate Programs
Manager

 **ACADEMIC TROUBLESHOOTER**

 **COMMUNICATIONS LIAISON**

 **APPOINTMENT SCHEDULES**

 **GRADUATION**

Always with a welcoming smile and quick service, Tara loves helping our students. She joined Hilton College this past February, after working with veterans' education programs at San Jacinto Community College. Her past experience makes her the ideal person to sit behind the reception desk and provide answers for anyone who needs help. Whether it's about how to make an online advising appointment, registering for classes or navigating the admissions process, Tara is eager and willing to help. She also has a major hand in helping students graduate on time and succeed with the UHin4 program. By analyzing predictive reports, she identifies students who have fallen behind due to personal, financial or academic reasons. When someone is facing a life challenge, Tara believes that the simplest transaction – a phone call, a piece of information or a referral – could be just the catalyst toward getting them back on track. So, she's there every day, ready to connect our students with the tools and support systems that will lead to that coveted diploma. Because mission accomplished for our students means mission accomplished for Tara, too!

 **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

 **GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

 **ADMISSIONS**

 **CAREER CAPSTONE PROJECTS**

 **PROFESSIONAL PAPERS**

A proper support system is essential for success in graduate school. In addition to the financial commitment, a variety of personal and professional factors can present challenges along the way. This is where Alisha comes in. From the time a potential student makes contact to inquire about one of our master's degrees or our Ph.D. in Hospitality Administration, and then through the entire application process, she is there every step of the way. Once a student is accepted, Alisha plays a vital part in planning the program and welcoming our newest grad students to campus during the College's graduate student orientation. She's also available year round to provide support and guidance on all academic and related matters. Alisha only joined the College this past summer, but she's already doing a fantastic job because she can relate. Having earned two master's degrees herself, she knows firsthand how to balance life as a graduate student with the demands of work and home. Her previous position as a senior graduate admission counselor at the University of St. Thomas has also helped her to hit the ground running. By sharing her experiences and offering valuable insight, Alisha is helping our graduate students "master" their degrees. Besides, she has always had a heart for service. She learned early in life about the importance of helping others, and has found a place to do just that here.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Jennifer Glickman

Director of International Programs

Jennifer's job affords her the opportunity to visit many beautiful countries, but she does so much more than collect stamps on her passport. Passionate about helping our students broaden their horizons by experiencing different cultures and ways of life,

she's responsible for managing all things international, including the College's study abroad program. Jennifer encourages undergraduates and grad students alike to leave their comfort zones and embrace an international experience that can open countless doors. Because she's so meticulous and knowledgeable about the process, she is the *perfect* resource to guide students through the myriad logistics, including travel and housing arrangements, as well as immigration requirements. Having worked for both the College and the University for more than 20 years as an undergraduate advisor, helping students has always been close to Jennifer's heart. And since our master's in global hospitality degree was established in 2015 with partner schools Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne and the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, she's had ample opportunities to do just that. For example, she's become a field trip coordinator, advisor and "mom" to 41 international students currently pursuing this degree. To grow our international internship programs, Jen also works with our career development staff to identify companies abroad that offer visa processing assistance for students. With many opportunities on the horizon, Jennifer is excited to develop future partnerships that will allow our students to study in even more parts of the world!



FIELD TRIPS



STUDY ABROAD



ADVISING



ADMISSIONS



RECRUITING



MARKETING



Colleen Gleeson

Director of Career Development

During graduate school, Colleen fell in love with a practicum course in career counseling. She found an affinity for helping ease the concerns of those especially anxious about the future. Today, Colleen empowers our students to learn the skills necessary for landing their dream jobs – as students, and after graduation. She connects them with professional opportunities that allow them the experience needed for managerial and supervisory positions right out of college. Those who are unsure about which career path to take can also depend on Colleen to help draw out their passions and areas of interest. Colleen also works with the many alumni who come back to support the College as mentors, guest speakers or as recruiters during our bi-annual career fairs. Many of these alums have reached top executive positions in the industry, and she is thankful for their continued vested interest in the success of our students. The most rewarding part of her job is watching our students mature and become leaders. She's continually "blown away" by what they can accomplish, and it inspires her to come to work every day.



RESUME WRITING



CAREER COACHING



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHTS



HIRE HILTON COLLEGE



CAREER FAIRS



DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Gloria Ratliff

Career Counselor
& Internship
Coordinator



For Gloria, success means helping *all* our students find their dream jobs upon graduation. In fact, she would love to report 100 percent placement each year. With 93 percent of our students now securing positions by graduation, her goal shouldn't take too much longer to achieve! To that end, Gloria tries to reach as many students as possible through our career fairs and a variety of workshops in everything from resume writing and dressing for success to internship preparation and career goal setting. To foster an environment where students can feel comfortable speaking with the career development team, Gloria has introduced events like "Coffee with Counselors." In a casual setting, students don't have to be shy about getting extra help with resumes or LinkedIn profiles, or about asking for tips about interviewing and networking. By getting to know our students, Gloria can help match them with employers and internships that can help build their resumes and further their careers. No matter where our students go next, Gloria says her goal is to empower them to be their very best. She loves watching our students blossom into confident hospitality professionals, and being a part of their growth process is her greatest reward.

INTERNSHIPS

JOB SEARCH
TECHNIQUES

INTERNSHIP PREP

COFFEE WITH
COUNSELORS

HIRE HILTON COLLEGE

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Veronica Vazquez

Alumni/Development
Coordinator



ALUMNI BOARD

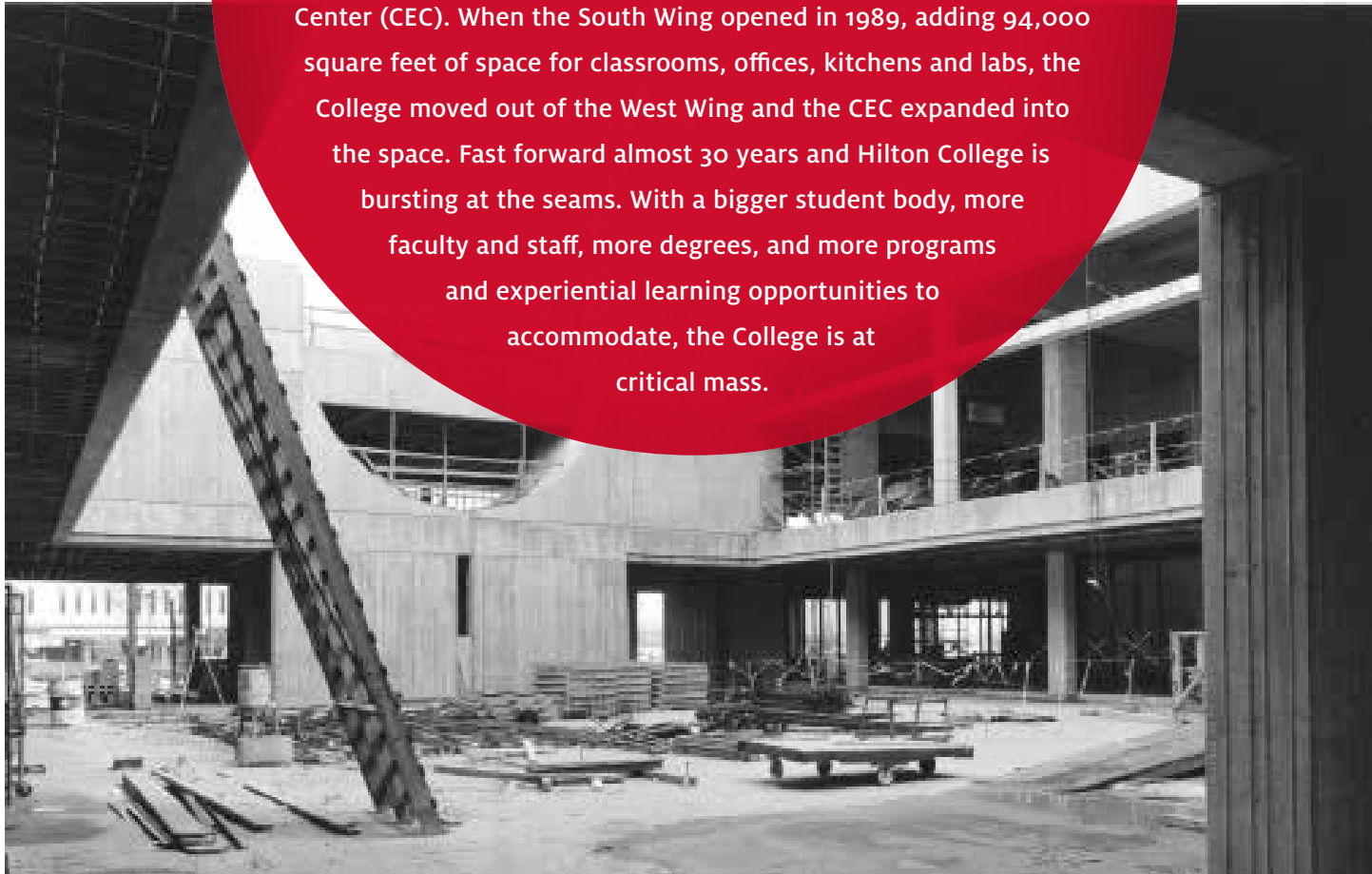
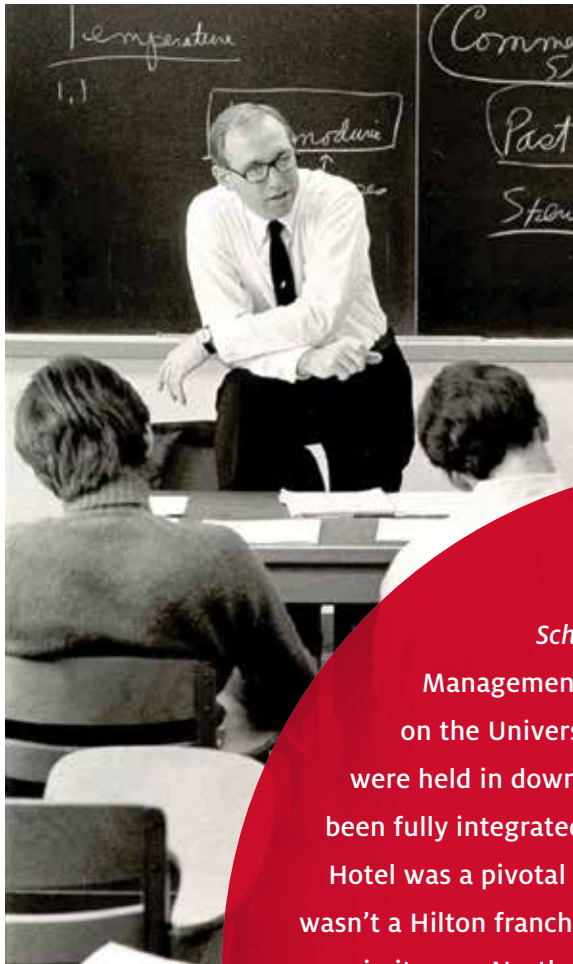
FOOTBALL
TAILGATING

GUEST SPEAKING

SOCIALS

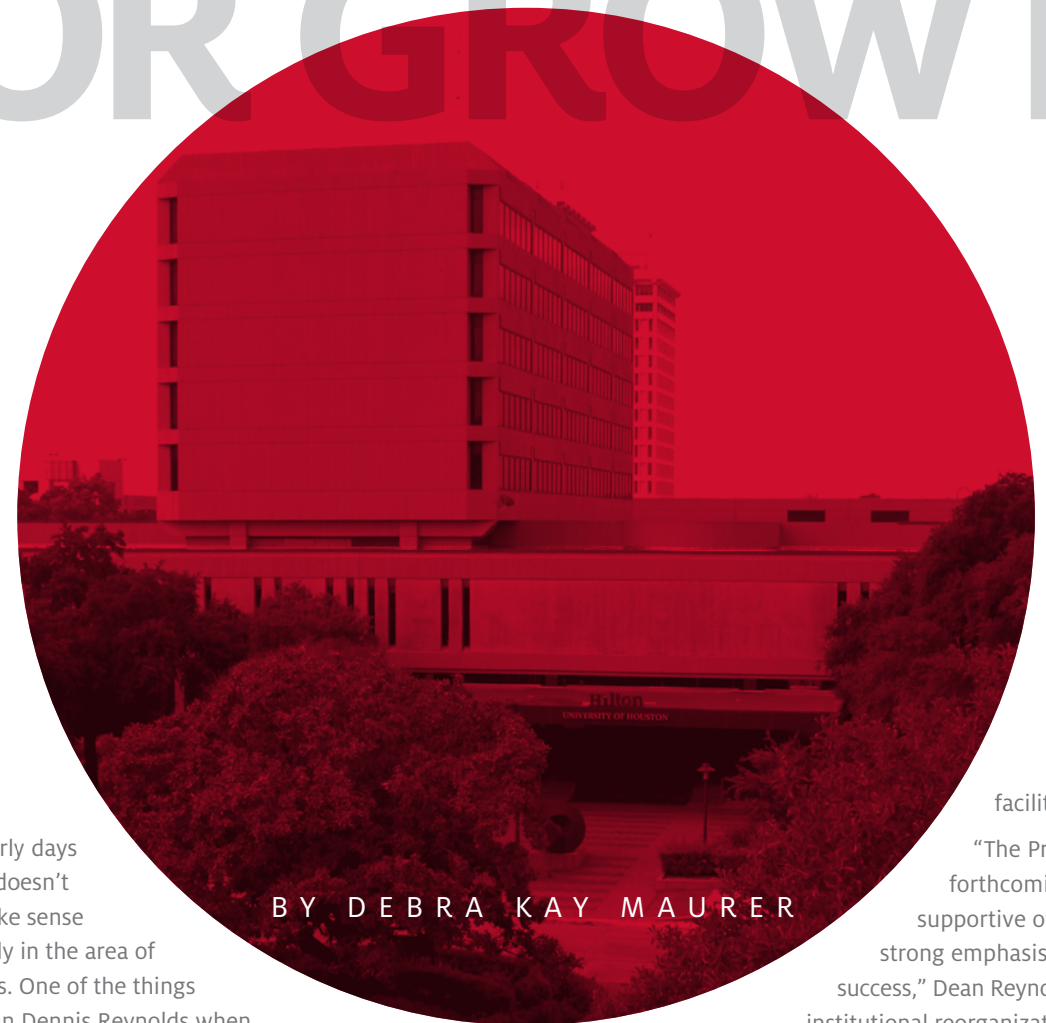
NETWORKING

She bleeds Cougar Red, she loves meeting new people, and she believes that even the briefest interactions can spark lifelong connections. A recent UH Bauer College grad who joined Hilton College this past summer, Veronica has been busy networking with alumni to show them the many ways to give back to their alma mater. If you're a recent or older graduate looking to reconnect through volunteering at high school college fairs, guest lecturing in classrooms, serving on boards or spearheading fundraising initiatives, Veronica is your "go-to" person. She's also revamping our mentorship program, which will pair current students and alums with similar professional interests. You'll also see Veronica at our alumni mixers... she appreciates that everyone has something valuable to offer, and she's excited to learn and engage by getting to know their stories. With her fresh outlook and positive energy – and her enthusiasm to build meaningful networks with proud *Forever Coogs* just like her – Veronica is opening doors of opportunity while helping alums remember their way back home.



Before the Conrad N. Hilton School of Hotel and Restaurant Management opened the doors of its new facility on the University of Houston campus in 1975, classes were held in downtown Houston. The College and hotel have been fully integrated since day one, so the University of Houston Hotel was a pivotal part of this new facility. Back then, the hotel wasn't a Hilton franchise and the College shared classroom and office space in its new North and West Wings with UH's Continuing Education Center (CEC). When the South Wing opened in 1989, adding 94,000 square feet of space for classrooms, offices, kitchens and labs, the College moved out of the West Wing and the CEC expanded into the space. Fast forward almost 30 years and Hilton College is bursting at the seams. With a bigger student body, more faculty and staff, more degrees, and more programs and experiential learning opportunities to accommodate, the College is at critical mass.

A THREE-PHASE PLAN OUR VISION FOR GROWTH



BY DEBRA KAY MAURER

What made sense in the early days of the College doesn't necessarily make sense today, especially in the area of student success. One of the things that struck Dean Dennis Reynolds when he first arrived was how confusing it was to find enrollment services and from there, go to advising to placement to alumni engagement.

"Because of the geographical separation of these functions, the student experience has not been as easy to facilitate as we'd like," Dean Reynolds said. "Each area was operating in a silo, not in a negative way because our staff was killing it, but there just wasn't that uniformity and flow of services that was needed. If you look at

navigating these functions through the eyes of an 18-year-old freshman who is at a brand new school, we were actually putting up physical barriers to their success."

To optimize the delivery of these essential student services, earlier this year Dean Reynolds presented a plan to Provost Paula Myrick Short to create a true integrated student success center – a "one-stop shop" where every student need is addressed. The caveat being, there just wasn't physical space to execute the plan given our current

facility design. "The Provost was very forthcoming and incredibly supportive of our renewed strong emphasis on student success," Dean Reynolds said. "Through institutional reorganization, she made it possible for us to reclaim the West Wing and occupy space we haven't used since 1989."

History does have a way of repeating itself, and today the College is expanding within the same footprint where students took classes in the '70s. The doors once used by another generation of HRM majors are now side entrances to the new Center for Student Success (CSS). This time though, there is an entirely new focus with exciting plans for renovation. "We've come full circle, and that's cool," he said. >>>

PHASE 1: CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The new Center for Student Success is a must have. With recruiting and enrollment, undergraduate academic services, career development and, eventually, alumni engagement all in one place, there will be no question



as to where students need to go for anything from applications to graduations.

“The best part about this center is that it puts everything together logically in a student’s mind – it’s completely focused on providing the services our students need to be successful,” said Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Mary Dawson. “If you have a question, you know someone there will have an answer.”

The CSS will be designed around a student concierge desk, and staffed by the advising assistant in academic services. Manning the desk will also be a learning and employment opportunity for students who know better than anyone what’s happening at the College. Students will give their peers directions to classes, make appointments with advisors and career counselors, schedule tours, and share information about events, student organizations, volunteer opportunities and the like. The buzz for this concierge service has been so amazing that there were applications turned in before the College even took possession of the building!

“Student interaction leads to increased student satisfaction, which leads to more student success,” said Dean Reynolds. “It’s a win-win for both the users and the providers.”

In addition to the concierge desk, a second “point of arrival” of the CSS will be the College’s student-run Cougar Grounds. This popular coffee shop, established in 2008, will relocate from the South Wing and have a much larger footprint, allowing for better student barista and customer interaction, as well as creating a platform for coffee education.

“We want to create a ‘third place’ that brings that open, interactive, creative, hipster vibe to fantastic coffee without the pretentiousness or intimidation served at some artisan coffee shops,” said Cougar Grounds Manager Sean Lawless. “Most young people have come to expect sugary, milky coffees – it’s all they know. We have the opportunity to educate ‘new adults’ who are just being introduced to coffee and show them that there is *so much* more to the world of coffee than just a hot candy bar in a cup. We’ll continue to give our customers what they want, but our focus will be to showcase third-wave handcrafted coffees.”

The new open concept, where baristas are in the center of a big square serving counter, will give Lawless and his students the time and space they need to build relationships above and beyond just consumer and product. This kind of interaction just isn’t feasible given our current space constraints.

“Coffee is one of the most routine aspects of life for many,” Lawless said. “We plan for the new Cougar Grounds to be at the center of student life *and* at the forefront of what a coffee shop can be.”

To make sure the West Wing space is being utilized to its fullest extent, Gloria Tong, a consultant with 30 years of experience in advising and student success functions, generously donated her time to meet with the College’s space planning committee chaired by Facilities Director Michael Scott.

“Her report was extremely helpful and provided the foundation – and validation – that we were doing the right thing at the right time,” Scott said.

Staff started moving into their new offices in June and, while the building renovation will be ongoing, all of the student success functions were set up and ready to go by the start of the fall 2017 semester.

As of press time for this *Dean’s Report*, an architect had not yet been hired for the renovation. But the College is moving forward to try to secure the talents of Fernando Brave, who designed its Massad Family Library Research Center and Hospitality Industry Archives, the Spec’s Beverage & Food Appreciation Lab, and Alumni Hall.

Office space already exists and there is a rough concept for the new Cougar Grounds. Highlights of the CSS renovation include creating a new entryway that will face the hotel’s courtyard, and the concierge desk that will anchor the student success offices. Currently within this 5,000-square-foot wing, there are also three fully equipped classrooms and study carrels for the incoming cohort of doctoral students.

When alumni come back to visit, the CSS will serve as a showcase that underscores the progress the College has made since they were students, and the alumni engagement office will be there to help them get reconnected.

“We want alums to come and have a cup of coffee at Cougar Grounds, mingle with our students and be inspired to get engaged with their school,” Dean Reynolds said. “We want them to say, ‘Wow! I wish we would have had this!’”

Dean Reynolds is most excited about the difference the center will make in our students’ lives.

“Not only is it a manifestation of the importance we place on student success, but it also provides a physical foundation to nurture and strengthen the sense of community that has always been a differentiating factor of this program,” he said. “No doubt, this will set us apart from other top hospitality programs. It’s a game-changer.”

Time and funding permitting, the expected completion of this estimated \$1.2 million renovation is sometime in 2019. >>>



PHASE 2: BETTER UTILIZATION OF EXISTING SPACE

More classroom space is needed. More faculty space is needed. And with several offices now vacated in the North and South Wings, this space is finally available. Now the challenge is to reorganize this space for better functionality, which is easier said than done! Looking at the big picture, there are so many moving and interconnected parts.

“When one piece moves, another has to take its place,” Scott said. “We have to be holistic and strategic in how we approach phase two of our plan because we’re not just looking at the West Wing – we’re looking at how to make the entire College more efficient and student centric.”

Scott and Dean Reynolds agree that this phase of the plan has to be approached by looking down from a 30,000-foot elevation.

“It’s kind of like playing Tetris on an uber scale,” Dean Reynolds said. “We have to step back and look not just at who goes where, but what goes where and why. The low hanging fruit is easy, but we also need to look at our space five years out. If we expect that we’re going to need another advisor, then we better make sure that we have an office for that person today. Being able to manage that is a huge task.”

Renovation of the CSS and phase two are happening concurrently as time and funds become available. In addition to routine office moves, converting the hotel’s purchasing storage area to an employee lounge and replacing the facility’s roof, a few of the projects currently completed or slated to begin in the near future include:

- Updating the Graduate Program suite in the North Wing to include a common area and cubicles for doctoral and master’s students
- Converting the student lounge in the South Wing into a work and gathering place for officers of the College’s student organizations
- Renovating the quantity foods kitchen labs in the South Wing. Work is slated to begin May 1, 2018 for completion by the start of the fall 2018 semester.

Another opportunity being pursued is a state-of-the-art fermentation lab and full-service, student-run brewpub. With the relocation of Cougar Grounds and the closing of Barron’s Restaurant earlier this year because of the need for extensive

kitchen upgrades, the combined space is ideal to house what will be a great addition to the College’s beverage program.

“We’re laying the groundwork for the curriculum and working with Aramark on the logistics, complicated details and bureaucracies of what *could* be an incredible differentiator for our program,” Dean Reynolds said. “But back to my Tetris analogy... the brewpub can’t happen until we move Cougar Grounds, and we can’t move Cougar Grounds until we secure funding for the build-out.”

If all goes as anticipated, a brewpub is 18 months to two years out.

PHASE 3: HOTEL EXPANSION

The Hilton University of Houston currently has 80 rooms in its guest tower and six suites on the second floor of the South Wing. The plan is to take out the suites and expand into the adjacent Conrad Hilton Grand Ballroom, add much needed restrooms, and build four additional floors with 70 guest rooms atop the two-story West Wing for a second guest tower.

The pièce de résistance? A skybridge to connect the two guest towers at the fourth-floor level. The elevator shaft for the second hotel tower will be situated across from Cougar Grounds in the Center for Student Success. The new entrance to the CSS – to face the hotel’s courtyard – will allow students and hotel guests alike to walk in through the main door and either go straight into Cougar Grounds, left to the concierge desk and student success offices, or right to take the elevator up to the guest rooms.

This expansion will create a vibrant mixed-use space and give the College more of *everything* – from more seats at Gourmet Night to bigger weddings, dinners and conferences.

“The addition of these 70 rooms will have exponential benefits,” Dean Reynolds said. “To start, it will allow us to provide much better service to the University and to our external customers. With more rooms, we can book more overnight stays for conferences and other events that we simply couldn’t accommodate before.”

The revenue through this addition will also help to better fund future hotel upgrades. Because the hotel is a self-sustaining

entity, its net profit can be put back to make ongoing soft renovations as well as to fund major renovations that are typically needed every 10 years.

“Because profits will be greater, we’ll have more latitude to continually provide a better product,” he said.

And the more rooms, the more opportunity for our students – from learning how to clean guest rooms to managing room service requests. The constraint of 86 rooms has made Hilton College an anomaly in the marketplace; it’s very unusual to find a full-service hotel with this few rooms.

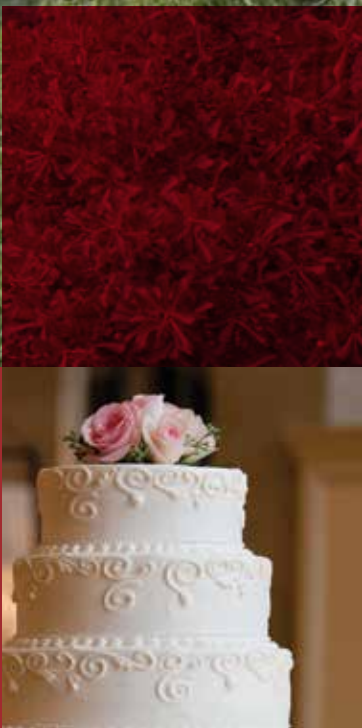
“Structurally, this is a big as we can go. But in my experience, 150 rooms is the ‘sweet spot’ for a college campus hotel in an urban setting,” Dean Reynolds said. “With this expansion, we’ll be able to compare ‘apples to apples’ and provide a much more realistic experience for our students because we’ll be operating in a manner more typical of a full-service non-teaching hotel. It’s a game-changer. This expansion *is* our future.”

Ideally, construction should begin in 2019. But first, funding needs to be secured for this estimated \$25 million project.

“With our 50th anniversary year just around the corner in 2019, I can’t think of a better way to kick off this celebration,” he said.

“... With this expansion, we’ll be able to compare ‘apples to apples’ and provide a much more realistic experience for our students because we’ll be operating in a manner more typical of a full-service non-teaching hotel. It’s a game-changer. This expansion is our future.”

– DEAN DENNIS REYNOLDS

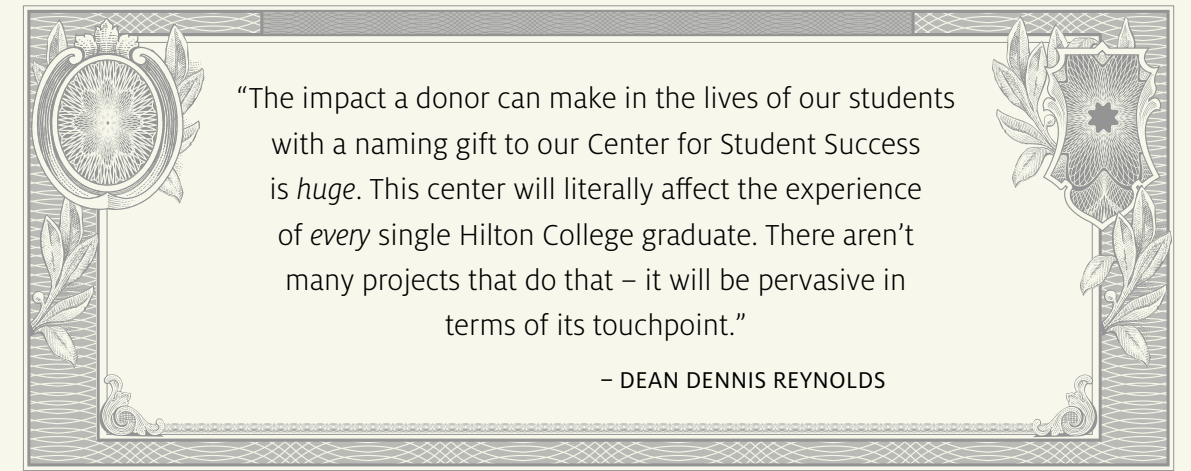


IT'S TIME

BY DEBRA KAY MAURER

CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

YOUR NAME GOES HERE



“The impact a donor can make in the lives of our students with a naming gift to our Center for Student Success is *huge*. This center will literally affect the experience of every single Hilton College graduate. There aren’t many projects that do that – it will be pervasive in terms of its touchpoint.”

– DEAN DENNIS REYNOLDS

For those in the know about the College’s three-phase plan to achieve its vision (before reading about it on page 20), the consensus has been unanimous. “Fantastic!” “Incredible! “It’s about time!” “Let’s do this!” “How can I help?” – all positive affirmations that these facility projects are the right thing to do at the right time.

“From my advisory board members and faculty and staff to student leadership groups and others, everyone has been *super* excited,” Dean Dennis Reynolds said. “We’re at a time in our history where this growth is essential. Everyone gets it. Not one person has said, ‘That doesn’t make sense.’”

Enriching student lives with state-of-the-art facilities is also one of the priorities of the University of Houston’s HERE, WE GO \$1 billion capital campaign.

“The money we raise toward our facility improvements will go toward this campaign total and keep us at the forefront of hospitality education,” said Assistant Dean for Business Development Joel Jaffe. “It will provide our students with an experiential learning environment that is conducive to the changing needs of the industry.”

Big dreams require big dollars and additional funding is needed to bring this vision to fruition. The funding priorities listed here, when completed, will set Hilton College apart from other top hospitality programs around the globe. As the Dean says, “It will be a game-changer!”

NAMING AND OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Our most immediate need is to fund the renovation of the Center for Student Success (CSS). Our staff is in place, but realizing the rest of this plan is predicated on raising funds. A naming opportunity for the CSS is available.

“Right now, we are looking at a price tag of **\$1.2 million** for the complete renovation. This estimate is based on \$250 per square foot for roughly 5,000 square feet of air-conditioned space,” Jaffe said. “This is an all-in number, but the big money is for the addition of a main entrance, repositioning walls, and for the new plumbing and build-out of our Cougar Grounds coffee shop.”

Your support will also help fund:

QUANTITY FOODS KITCHEN LABS (\$114). Thanks to the generosity of the *Fred and Mabel R. Parks Foundation* under the leadership of Jim McClellan, this **\$1.3 million** project is almost fully funded. We are currently just **\$375,000** shy of having the needed funds to begin renovations in May 2018.

BREW PUB AND FERMENTATION LAB. As mentioned in the preceding article, this project is far from a done deal but we’re getting closer! An estimated **\$1 million** is needed to build-out the space and another **\$500,000** is required for equipment and furnishings. Naming opportunities are available for this project as well.

HOTEL EXPANSION. An estimated **\$25 million** is needed to add a second guest tower with 70 rooms atop the West Wing. For an additional **\$1.5 million**, we’ll be able to add a skybridge to connect the towers and enhance the courtyard.

“Your contributions, no matter the size, are critical to securing our future,” Jaffe said. “We look forward to speaking with you about these exciting funding opportunities.”

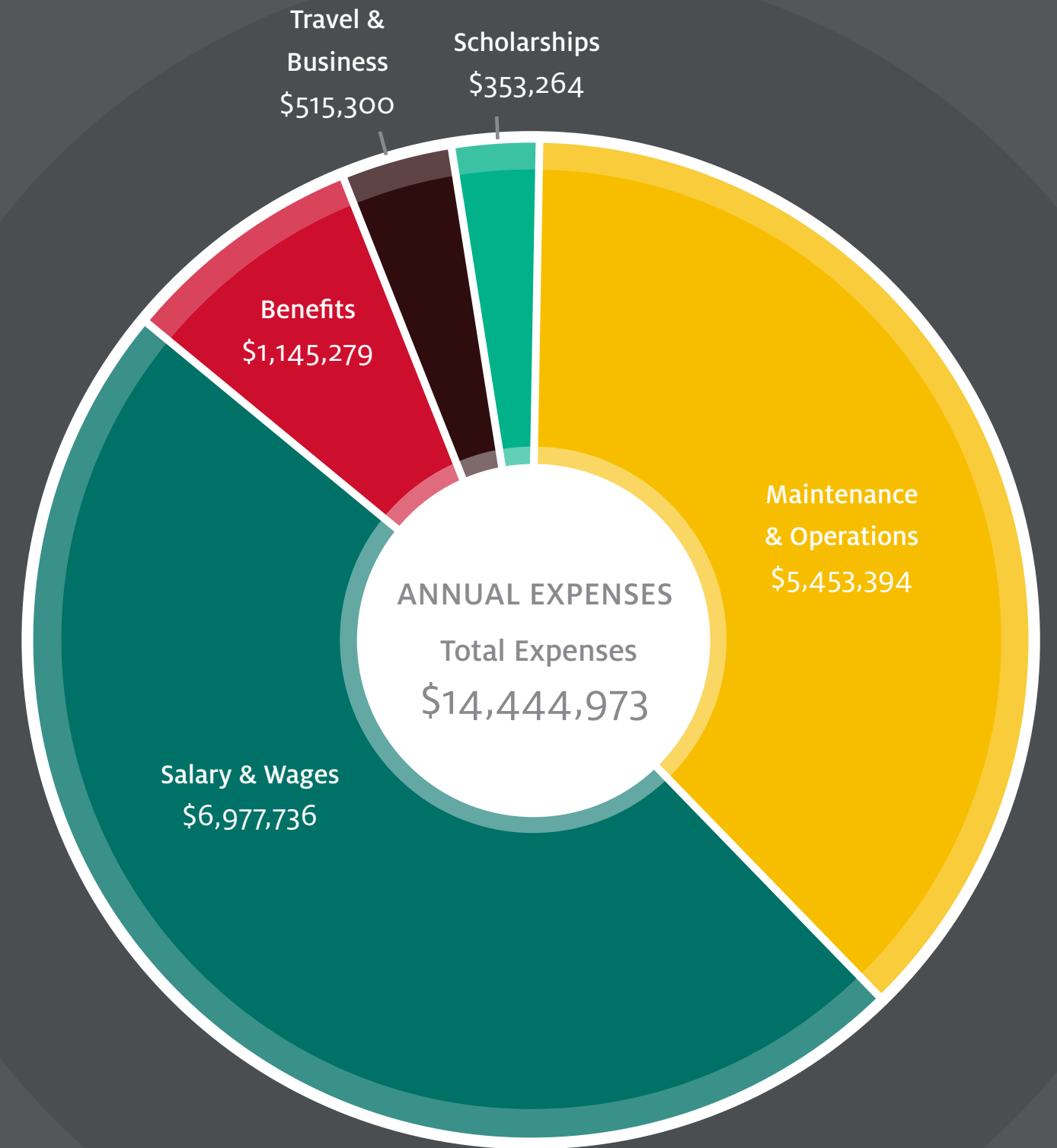
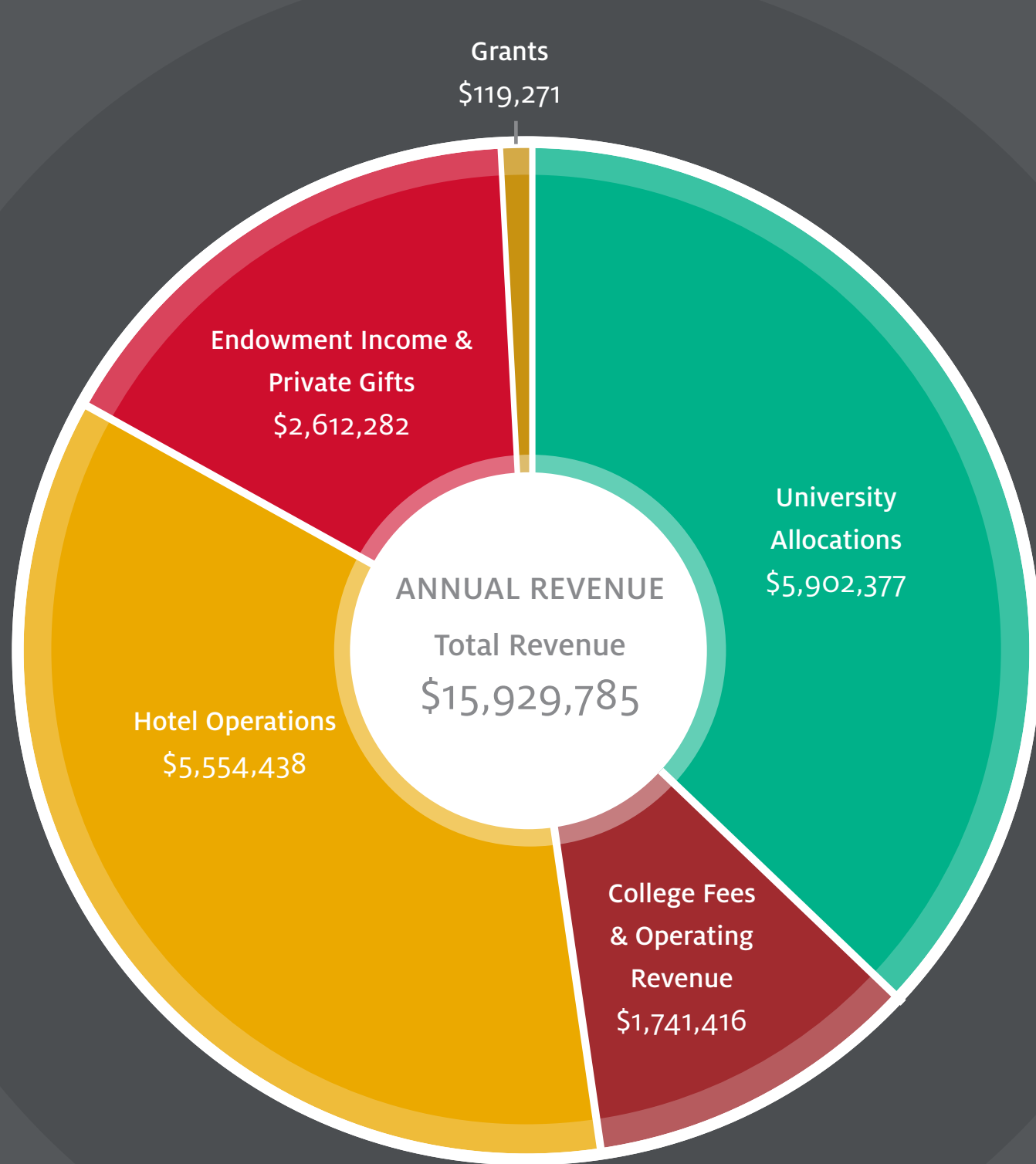
Be inspired. Get excited. Give. Thank you!

TO LEARN MORE OR TO CONTRIBUTE, PLEASE CONTACT

Dean Dennis Reynolds at 713-743-2607 or der@uh.edu
Joel Jaffe at 713-743-3658 or jajaffe@uh.edu

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We regret any errors or omissions and would appreciate notifications of corrections.

If you would like to make a donation to invest in the future of Hilton College and our students, please contact Miguel Cabrera, director of development and alumni engagement, at 713-743-1523 or mcabrera3@uh.edu, to learn how your gift can make a difference.



WE – THE **STUDENTS OF HILTON COLLEGE** – are a community of passionate and engaged leaders.

WE REPRESENT **THE BEST** in hospitality education and strive for excellence in our academics, professional endeavors and industry associations.

WE EMBRACE the spirit of hospitality through service and involvement. In our culture, respect is essential.

WE ARE MINDFUL AND CONSIDERATE of our hotel, its guests, operations and events.

AS EMERGING LEADERS, we hold ourselves to a higher standard.

WE ARE AN OPEN AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT that values **Academic Integrity... Compliance... Professionalism... Punctuality... Commitment.**

WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE in being an integral part of the Hilton College and University of Houston community.

THIS IS OUR CULTURE.

— Written and adopted this 14th day of April, 2017, by the Dean's Undergraduate Advisory Council

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Fifty years ago on September 16, 1969, classes began at the Conrad N. Hilton "School" of Hotel and Restaurant Management with 39 students and three professors. As we look forward to celebrating our golden anniversary, much has happened since those fledgling days of our College! To commemorate this milestone in our collective history, we will be hosting a number of anniversary-themed events throughout the year at the Hilton University of Houston. Many more details to come!

Alumni Awards Reception featuring "50 in 50" **April 12, 2019**

Gourmet Night **April 13, 2019**

A Golden Celebration Commemorative Event **September 16, 2019**

Hospitality Industry Hall of Honor **November 13, 2019**

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