



CONRAD N. HILTON COLLEGE OF  
**GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP**

FROM STARSHIPS TO SUITES:

**MERGING  
HOSPITALITY  
WITH  
SPACE TRAVEL**

**DEAN'S REPORT 2024**

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The Sky Was  
Never the Limit

# LOOKING TO SPACE AND BEYOND!

## Friends,

It is hard to believe that the 2023-2024 academic year is already behind us. But I am happy to report that the amazing Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership is on course. As I reflect on the last 10 years, it is gratifying that we've achieved almost all of our arguably lofty goals. Our renovated and expanded hotel is operating at full capacity, setting new occupancy records and leading most other Hilton properties, in terms of rankings in North America. Our *Eric's Club Center for Student Success* is proving to be a wonderful asset for our students, serving as a fully integrated, comprehensive service center. The new *Cougar Grounds* is exceeding our expectations, in terms of sales and customer satisfaction. The *Hospitality Industry Archives* renovation is complete, making our archives the largest repository of any hospitality program on the planet. The new name of the College is now part of the common vernacular at the University. Our faculty are setting new records year after year, in terms of research productivity, while continuing to maintain exemplary teaching-evaluation scores. Enrollment this year is better than pre-pandemic days. Our classrooms feature the latest in technology and even include outlets on every table for students' increasing need to charge devices. Financially, our College is in the best shape in our history. And our students, of course, continue to set the bar as future leaders of the global hospitality industry.

But this is only the beginning of our journey! We now have our sights set on new, exciting goals. We just started our new online *Bachelor's in Global Hospitality Leadership*. Next fall, we will launch our new online *Doctorate in Global Hospitality Leadership*; the interest is already evident. We launched a completely new curriculum five years ago, corresponding to the four undergraduate areas of specialization, which include the following: *Foodservice Management, Lodging Management, Project Management & Analytics* and *Wine & Beverage Studies*. We are



**AN ECLIPSE INTO GREATNESS** | *Earlier this year, Hilton College staff and faculty gathered to watch the total solar eclipse, where the moon completely blocked the sun while passing between the sun and Earth. Dean Dennis Reynolds and his office provided viewing glasses, similar to the nostalgic 3D glasses one would wear to the movies in the early 2000s. And even though the lenses on our glasses were blacked-out, our smiles gleamed as bright as ever!*

now making revisions and adding a track titled *Events and Meeting Management*. As with most things we do, this is in line and in anticipation of our industry's ongoing evolution. Additionally, our new shiny thing, as expected, is the renovation and reconceptualization of *Eric's Restaurant*. It will always be "Eric's," but the



vision is for a hip restaurant and bar with a broader market reach and new products, including a student-made beer (as part of the minor in *Beverage Management and Marketing*).

Next time you're on campus, please visit the *Massad Family Library Research Center*. We've reorganized the layout to increase flow, painted the walls, removed the old shelving and are awaiting delivery of new carpet and furniture for the library's largest conference room. Depending on funding, we'll also convert some of the obsolete stacks into additional student-meeting rooms, which our students need. One floor below, you'll see the completely remodeled student area replete with state-of-the-art, movable Vari® furniture, which creates an innovative workspace. As one alumnus said, "This looks like décor from a science-fiction movie!"

In the coming months, you'll also see our new donor wall in the south wing. Gone is the very dated (and costly to update) vinyl signage acknowledging donors. Instead, you'll soon see some of the latest technology in a new LED wall. We can update it in a matter of seconds and truly acknowledge – in real-time – our alumni, industry partners and friends who financially support our great College.

From a much higher orbit (pardon the pun), our most exciting big goal includes our plans for *space tourism*. We may be slightly ahead of our time, but we see a future that has an expanded role for hospitality and tourism, one that goes beyond our planet. Our proximity to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), our experience in lodging and our expertise in tourism converge to form the perfect recipe for stewarding this emerging segment of the hospitality industry (Please see pages 6-13 for more specifics).

To answer the natural question, *yes*—we continue to think big and do what no one has done. But thanks to YOU, we are equipped to continue to be the leader in hospitality education and research. After all, we are the University of Houston Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership.

Yours in service,

Dr. Dennis Reynolds  
Dean and Barron Hilton Distinguished Chair

# ORBITING INNOVATION: THE INTERSECTION OF HOTELS, SPACE EXPLORATION, HOSPITALITY AND EDUCATION

Curiosity, fascination and opportunity have been some of the most influential building blocks of Hilton Hotels for as long as it's existed. It's what propelled Conrad N. Hilton to take a risk on buying the Mobley Hotel, way back in 1919, and what led him to establish Hilton as a corporation known for its welcoming atmosphere and innovative approach, in 1946.

Today, our Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership has earned the reputation as a disruptive leader within hospitality management programs. No matter the age, if you've ever set foot on our campus, you've been pushed to dream big.

While reading the 2024 Dean's Report, you'll likely notice a common theme that we've been fantasizing about: It's new, it's maybe a little scary, but most of all, it's astounding. We're talking about space tourism.

The concept of space tourism has many meanings, however, none of its definitions are fully agreed upon because space tourism doesn't truly exist yet. **So, for the purpose of this Dean's Report, we're defining space tourism as the experience a tourist has while they're either in space or involved in a space-related venture on Earth.**

## Earth from the Space Perspective

Until United States Astronaut Bill Anders photographed Earthrise

in 1968, many viewed planet Earth as segmented by states, continents, mountains, oceans, etc. Earthrise was the first time Americans saw what Earth looks like from the lunar orbit. Symbolizing Earth's beauty and fragility, the new worldview contributed to a cultural movement inspiring global environmental awareness, stewardship and societal unity.

"I think as humans, we want to look for meaning beyond ourselves... and that's what space tourism means to me," said Dr. Sujata Sirsat, associate professor at Hilton College.

Imagine looking at Earth while standing in space. Surely, your perspectives and what it means to be living will change. Humans crave distance beyond themselves to gain a new purpose.

This concept has been depicted in countless media, ever-growing in popularity since Neil Armstrong took that first step on the moon in 1969. Box office hits, like "Interstellar," "Apollo 13", "Martian" and "Gravity," popular video games, like Halo and Mass Effect, or even best-selling books, like "An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth" and "The Keeper of the Stars," share special tales of life outside planet Earth.

Humans are fascinated with space because curiosity craves exploration. Much like bringing the pages of a book to life inside your mind, everyone has a unique perception of space. Sure, there have been great strides in research, but many of us are still just in this imagination phase.



We're defining space tourism as the experience a tourist has while they're either in space or involved in a space-related venture on Earth!

## Barron Hilton's Hotel on Space concept

Because many are still in that imagination phase, industry thought leaders are allowed to dream.

In May 1967, during a conference on outer space tourism, Hilton Hotels Corporation President and CEO at the time, Barron Hilton gave a popular lecture to a room filled with space enthusiasts from around the world. He shared two astounding visions for the future of his company: A 14-story laboratory and hotel which can hold 24 people and move around freely in space, named the Orbiter Hilton and an underground hotel built within the moon, named the Lunar Hilton.

Barron's dream of the Lunar Hilton was a three-story masterpiece. The first level of the hotel would be entered through the surface of the moon. It would be used as public spaces, such as a hospital, dining room, entertainment area, galaxy lounge, kitchen, barber, beauty shop, drug store, giftshop, valet and even a room for aliens (yes – you read that right). Below it, the second level would be shaped like an "X," with a lobby and elevator uniting perpendicular rows of guest rooms. Finally, the third level would consist of mechanical equipment. Each of these sections would be separated by air locks and lined with plastic that expands under air pressure.

Additionally, the 100 massive guest rooms would be lined with carpets and drapes and plants and wall-to-wall televisions and tables suspended from the ceiling! One could even view surrounding planets from the seats of a massive observation dome. Delectable meals would be prepared in an automated kitchen powered by a nuclear reactor. Tablets would be dropped into a mixture of pure ethyl alcohol and water to form any kind of instant martinis imaginable – all served in a galaxy lounge that had Thermopane windows and robotic wait staff.

To give meeting attendees a visual frame of reference, Barron also presented mock keys to Lunar Hilton rooms, reservation cards for



any time after the year 1980 and even a brochure advertising a "smog-free atmosphere," "profound silence" and the option for the trip to include a "transfer to interplanetary express."

Maybe it was ambition from the Space Race, a competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union from 1955-1975 to achieve superior spaceflight capabilities, or maybe it was simply a public relations campaign, but Barron was adamant Hilton would be the first hotel to stand in space.

Just one year after his presentation at the conference, one of the most popular films, "2001: A Space Odyssey," hit theaters with a homage to Hilton Hotels. Stanley Kubrick's science fiction film shares the story of astronauts on a mission, forced to overcome conflict between themselves and their machines. The movie includes a scene set

within the rotating, futuristic space station's luxury lounging area, displaying a giant sign that reads "Hilton Space Station 5."

It is clear Barron wasn't the only one rooting for the Hilton name upon the twinkling stars.

## The History of Hilton College Space Tourism

You might be wondering how Hilton College is related to space tourism and what our specific goals are for the industry. To answer this question, we must do a little bit of backtracking.

In the spring of 1997, the College offered its first class related to space, named "Food Service Systems in Space: A Challenge for the 21st Century," taught by Clinton L. Rappole (Hon. '73), professor emeritus and former Hilton Distinguished Chair. The elective course enabled "students to learn about the past space-food program and the challenges ahead by offering first-hand experience," according to the syllabus.

During the course, students went on field trips to National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) food service laboratories, where leading scientists taught them all about nutrition, food engineering for space consumption, the evolution of food service systems, etc. They also saw the Saturn 5 Rocket before there was a building containing it, received a sneak peek of food being produced for astronauts in space and tested a menu based on plants that will be grown in space.

Speaking of food production, on Sept. 6, 1996, UH-Johnson Space Center Post-Doctoral Fellow Dr. Yael Vodovotz was selected for the project "A Food Service and Lodging System for Long Duration Missions in a Closed Environment," under Rappole's leadership. NASA provided a grant which allowed Vodovotz to work on campus 1.5 days each week, then at an

office in NASA for the remainder of the week. As part of the project, Vodovotz worked to develop an Advanced Life Support Food System (ALS) for a Lunar Base and the Mars Loop.

Alongside Rappole and Dr. Charles Bourland, the former director of the NASA Space Food Program, Vodovotz (pictured below) selected, tested and modified several food items, such as a dehydrated tortilla and soymilk made from raw Hoty soybeans. The trio was quite creative when determining



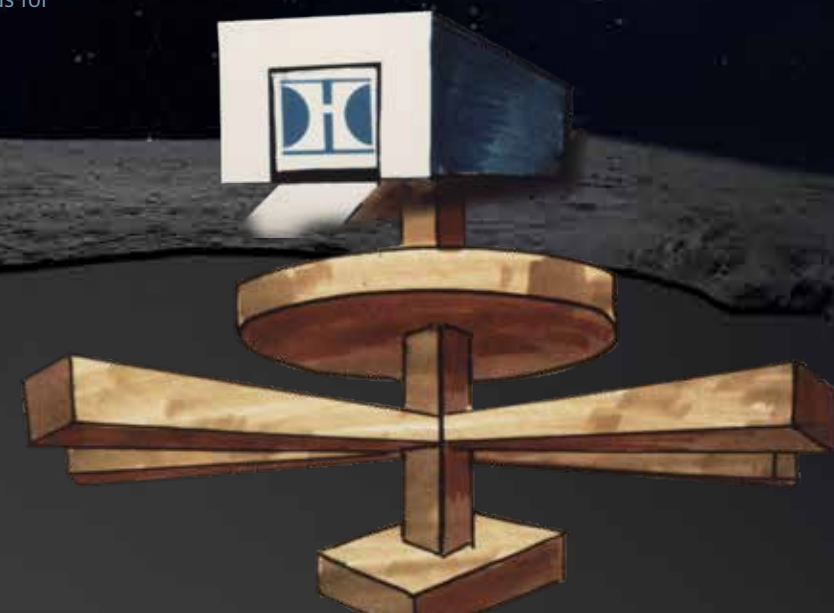
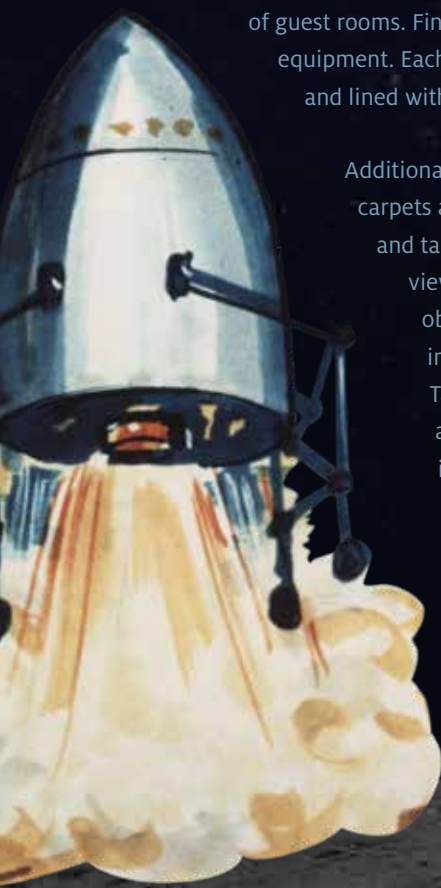
the foods they studied, as each menu item needed to be comprised of large amounts of nutritious carbohydrates, have a long enough shelf-life to be consumed after journeying to Mars and be easily stored without producing crumbs or spills.

25 years later, we're still working with NASA on similar topics. Sirsat frequently visits and even teaches a class there on the importance of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).

In the 1960s, Pillsbury and NASA collaborated to develop the HACCP process, which reduces risks of contaminants in food and ensures astronauts don't become sick with foodborne illnesses. HACCP was so effective that the food industry and food processing companies began to use it as a proactive toolkit and system to reduce risks. It's now integral to processing and serving food, as it eliminates extreme hazards.

In her teachings, Sirsat visited a food laboratory, where NASA scientists successfully grow crops. The team is currently developing how to grow healthier options, like fruits and vegetables, in clay versus soil. This significantly alters the microbiology of foods, and yet, if the code was cracked, astronauts might just be able to stay in space a lot longer, because the challenges of transporting foods and sustaining them for months would be eliminated.

Our collaboration with NASA thus far has certainly been centered around food, given the opportunities, but there are many other topics of which we see ourselves providing insightful perspectives.



Images that Barron presented at the conference on outer space tourism provided by Dr. Mark Young and the Conrad N. Hilton College Hospitality Industry Archives.

## Billionaire Space Race

As of March 2024, more than 280 astronauts have visited the International Space Station (ISS), a large spacecraft that orbits Earth and is home to astronauts and cosmonauts from several nations, according to NASA. This platform, built in 2000, has grown into a highly capable microgravity laboratory focused on research.

In September 2021, the first all-civilian crew went to space during the Inspiration4 mission. The crew, comprised of four private individuals, boarded the Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX) Crew Dragon capsule and orbited Earth at a higher altitude than the ISS for three days. Likewise, in April 2022, the SpaceX Crew Dragon housed four more private individuals who were the first to commercially step foot onto ISS and stay for eight days, as part of the Ax-1 mission.

These two missions would not have been possible without Elon Musk, the founder of SpaceX. Through the company, Musk has established himself as a key figure in commercial space travel and the space industry at large.

Musk and SpaceX have been coined an integral part of the Billionaire Space Race, the competition between wealthy individuals and their companies to advance space exploration, tourism and technology. Other key players include Jeff Bezos, Richard Branson and Jared Isaacman. Each has an individual reason for investing millions into exploration.

Dr. D. Christopher Taylor, professor and director of the Beverage Management Program and Fred Parks Wine Cellar at Hilton College, and Mark Ovesny (MS '20) predict in their research study, "Stars in the Rearview Mirror: The Grand Tour as a Guide to the Development of Space Tourism," that space tourism will roll out in three phases:

- The first phase will have very high costs, limiting participation to the ultra-wealthy. There will also be limited options for accommodations and activities (this is the current stage we are in).
- The second phase of tourism will have relatively high costs, but an increased participation to include the upper middle class. It will also have a slight increase in accommodations and activities.
- The third phase will be financially accessible to the widest audience with several accommodations and activities.

Photo credit: SpaceX

The goal of the travelers within each of these phases should also shift from research to leisure. Surprisingly, preparations for these shifts are already underway.

In spring 2025, NASA plans to have a four-person volunteer crew live and work "inside a 1,700-square-foot, 3-D printed habitat based in NASA's Johnson Space Center." The habitat, Mars Dune Alpha, "simulates the challenges of a mission on Mars... the crew tasks will include simulated spacewalks, robotic operations, habitat maintenance, exercise and crop growth," according to NASA.

The purpose of a study like this is to continue human exploration on the surface of Mars and provide solutions to future problems.

## How will Space Tourism Look on Earth?

When envisioning commercial space travel, there's so much to plan for pre-and post-launch. Depending on the length and purpose of the mission, it could take several weeks or months to train safely. When travelers finally do take off, their families, friends, colleagues and even the press want to witness the larger-than-life moments.

As of right now, there aren't many accommodations available to fulfill the needs of these individuals. Traveling to space recreationally and as a civilian is currently accessible to ultra-high-net-worth individuals. This demographic is often accustomed to luxurious dining and lodging accommodations, which could be built in the cities that are home to space training facilities and spaceship launch bases. Likewise, the tourists who support these travelers might be looking to understand or experience space themselves, but don't have the means to do so.

"My uncle lives in Florida, and I can remember as a kid it was a really big deal to go outside when they were launching the space shuttle because you could see it go into the sky," said Dr. Mary Dawson ('92, MHM '95), the associate dean for academic affairs at Hilton College and an Eric Hilton Distinguished Chair Professor.

"There's a whole tourism area centered around the spacecraft launching and landing; you can even stand on a viewing platform where food trucks are available during these peak times. There's an immediate need for more infrastructures like this on Earth and our students would be perfect to operate it."

The experience at Volusia County beaches near the Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station are the perfect models for space tourism on Earth, but there's also so much room for expansion. The tourism infrastructure could feature research laboratories, test kitchens, anti-gravity chambers, rooms that mimic space conditions, etc. These features would serve as a tourist attraction, research facility and training platform.

This type of space tourism doubles as destination tourism, in which our students are already training to be the leaders in.

## Why us and why now?

Hilton College has had a hand in astronomical advancements, even in small capacities, for over two decades. But, it seems that this year, there is a highly increased level of conversation surrounding the topic, not just internally, but campus wide.



## Did You Know...

As accessibility increases, so will the need for sustainability on Mars. The Department of Energy has already provided radioisotope power systems that have safely enabled deep space exploration. These convert heat from the radioactive isotope plutonium-238 into electricity capable of producing and maintaining heat and electricity sources within the hazardous conditions of space.

NASA is also undergoing the Cryogenic Propellant Storage & Transfer Technology Demonstration Mission, which provides the "capability to safely and efficiently store, transfer and measure cryogenic propellants on-orbit," according to their website. Essentially, this is like a gas station in space.

So, if electricity was able to be produced, supplies could be replenished and necessary equipment could be powered. If spacecrafts could be refueled, researchers and astronauts could prolong the length and effectiveness of their missions. And, if crops were grown rather than transported, habitants would be able to sustain nourishment.

"Each of these topics, and [many] other logistics that make mass tourism possible on Earth, will have to be redeveloped to accommodate that experience off-world," said Taylor and Ovesny.

While there are still miles ahead for humanity, these possibilities are in sight. It is proven that the first phase of Taylor and Ovesny's predictions of space tourism are already happening. So, if developments continue to be made, we don't see why tourism couldn't exist in space one day.

"And one of the exciting things about space tourism or a habitat in space is that it's another way to support life," said Rappole.

This is partially because of our proximity to NASA's Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center – we're a short 25 miles away. Since 1967, Houston has been named the "Space City" after the federal government selected it as the home of the astronauts – quite literally, as many astronauts live in Houston full-time to undergo year-round training. And while there are many areas around the world to launch into space, Houston's mission control manages the U.S. segments of the ISS. It's no surprise the city is filled with legacy, innovation and vitality.

It's also because the University of Houston (UH) chose "The New Space Race" as the theme of their Fall/Winter 2023 Magazine. The beautifully designed pages tell many tales, including Barron Hilton's plan to live beyond Earth in a Lunar Hilton; the billionaires who are taking space research into their own hands, or rather, their own wallets; and how "the more we know, the less we understand."

Likewise, UH's Cullen College of Engineering has a heavy hand in preparing students for careers related to space. In fact, they have their own Space Architecture master's program, which came into fruition 36 years ago, after industry leaders especially NASA, wanted engineers with applicable degrees.

Today, Cullen's program places graduates with some of the largest companies exploring space. Their "directors and professors are currently working on perfecting an augmented reality training room that provides students – through the power of green screens, props, harnesses and mixed reality goggles – an immersive and realistic training experience, complete with an upper-body suit that restricts movement, similar to a spacesuit," according to the Fall/Winter 2023 magazine.

Rappole collaborated with Cullen's Larry Bell, AIAA, ASCAE, a director emeritus, SICSA and space architecture endowed professor, on research about habitats for people in outer

space. Rappole often helped him brainstorm new solutions and gave feedback on food, water and waste elimination within one of these habitats.

Internally, astronomical ventures are also on the mind, especially during the 51st Annual Gourmet Night, as student managers chose Astro Renaissance as the theme. From the moment guests stepped foot in the hotel, they were transported to a different world. Ballrooms elegantly displayed decor of a deep, wondrous star-filled sky and extraterrestrial beings walked the halls, granting permission for all to dream bigger.

UH is filled with wonder, enchantment and excitement for the new possibilities space could bring.

## Let's Bring Space Tourism to Hilton College Permanently

It's Hilton College's goal to be a leader in the arena with the first designated space tourism track, but we've still got some work to do.

Student success has always been at the forefront of any decision we make. For students to be successful after they leave our College, we must set them up with the tools and knowledge to obtain a career in the field they're investing their time and money into pursuing.

We will continue to stand by this. Hilton College does not intend to be the leader in space tourism until it makes sense to do so. And while Rappole's "Food Service Systems in Space: A Challenge for the 21st Century," course might have been ahead of its time, it taught the College what is essential for a space tourism track or course to be successful today →

**1.** It must be led by a faculty member who is truly passionate about space and has connections to experts who share a similar affinity. For example, Rappole didn't have formal teachings related to space, but he was fascinated by the topic since a young boy. Upon moving to Houston, he networked with individuals who were the experts, many of whom worked at NASA, and combined their specialties with his knowledge of the classroom. His knack for research helped develop applicable teachings and advancements in the field that continue to be used today.

**2.** Collaboration is also crucial because, in space, everything is connected. For instance, food is essential for survival, but it can also impact an individual's psychological state. Food for astronauts must be creative and adaptable because their food influences the functionality of the long-term living habitat or even the functionality of the equipment used to gather and analyze research. Things that don't hold much significance on Earth, like a crumb, can make a huge difference when there's no gravity. We've used food as an example, but this is one incredibly small drop of water in the sea of space. Progression requires interdisciplinary studies.

**3.** For a course or track centered around space tourism to be beneficial for students, it must also provide tools to help them succeed post-graduation, such as a career path. We face barriers in meeting this goal, largely because the world is not yet ready for space tourism. Space exploration has been slow to progress and it's hard to imagine a hotel on the moon or Mars when tourists aren't able to travel there yet. But when we expand the concept of space tourism to include accommodations on Earth, our students do have the potential to lead the initiative.



Academics, like Sujata, can take space tourism to the next level through holistic research, meaningful student experiences and unwavering passion.



Astronaut Loren Shriver demonstrates how objects act in microgravity while enjoying a snack of candy coated peanuts. Photo courtesy of NASA.



Embracing the concept of space tourism, tasks as simple as handing out a room key could be revamped with fun decor to match the astronomical atmosphere.



**So, we ask you now...** What does your vision for the future of space tourism look like and what can you do to set these sights into reality? Our goals may be ambitious, but when leaders take educated risks, rewards are in sight.

As you may have found within these pages, space exploration is quite

complex, but this is exciting because the current momentum paves the path for opportunity. As our Gourmet Night 2024 managers said it best, the sky was never the limit.

**Humanity was always meant to explore** and so is the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership!





# SIPPING DOWN MEMORY LANE



“Drinking wine is almost like time travel... you’re tasting the history of the past,” said Dr. D. Christopher Taylor, professor and director of the Beverage Management Program and Fred Parks Wine Cellar.

During the 2024 Fred Parks Lecture Series, attendees did just that. Sweet rosé aromas, luscious bubbles and invigoratingly bold grape pallets captivated guests from not only from Hilton College, but the entire University of Houston. Over 150 attendees learned about Napa Valley, California while enjoying a crave-worthy personal charcuterie plate and six boldly luscious wines.

Taylor was inspired to present this experience after taking several students from the Master of Science in Global Hospitality Business program on a trip to Napa.

Here, they drove from winery to winery in a 15-seater van to learn about the operational side of owning or working within a winery. Of course, they also learned how to make the beloved beverage! The wineries they happily visited were Caymus-Suisun Vineyards,

Duckhorn Vineyards, Josh Phelps at Grounded Wine Co., Pine Ridge Vineyards, Silver Oak Cellars and Trinchero Napa Valley. The students were so impacted by the unique experiences at each of these locations that they wanted to bring the experience back to Houston.

For the 2024 Fred Parks Lecture Series presentation, guests indulged in the complex flavor profiles from many of those same wineries. They sampled the Chenin Blanc/Viognier sparkling wine from Pine Ridge Vineyards, the 2022 Sauvignon Blanc from Mason Cellars, the 2022 Chardonnay from Duckhorn Vineyards, the 2022 Walking Fool from Caymus-Suisun, the 2021 Merlot Napa Valley from Duckhorn Vineyards and finally, the 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon from Pine Ridge Vineyards.

**“One of the beautiful things about wine is that no one needs to experience the same things as others,” said Taylor. “Wine is an aesthetic because the smells and tastes are associated with personal experiences.”**

The event paved the path for future experiences as well. Taylor shared a number of Napa tips for those who want to try the wines straight from the source. Advice included booking wine tastings as far in advance as possible, planning to spend \$40+ per winery visit, doing research prior to the visit (since each winery has a specialty that may or may not compliment individual pallets), visiting Napa August through October or March through May for less traffic, going during the week for a more tranquil experience, avoiding San Francisco airports to minimize travel stress, etc.

The lecture ended with a collective comradery that filled the ballroom, each eagerly looking towards just two things: the next Fred Parks Lecture and a trip to Napa in the meantime!



# WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

## RETREAT ALLOWS FACULTY AND STAFF TO BEE CREATIVE!

The sweet aroma of orange blossom honey and the comforting sight of freshly sprouted okra filled the hearts of 58 staff and faculty on Aug. 15, 2024. The first-ever Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership Faculty and Staff Retreat invited laughs, conversations and philanthropic mindsets.

The group traveled to the Harvest for the Hungry farms, a non-profit organization that fights for those struggling with food insecurity by growing farm-to-table produce on 61 acres in Freeport, Texas. Dr. David Huang, president and founder of the organization, humbly shared the non-profit’s mission to provide healthy food items to those in need through production, education and research. He hopes that through aiding local communities in this initiative and by providing thousands of pounds of healthy eats to those struggling with hunger, he may also fuel them spiritually.

Huang generously gave our College a tour of the farm, which featured chickens, greenhouses, fishing ponds, bee boxes and even an enchanting garden for the youth they serve.

During the retreat, the team competed in a bee Kahoot game and tasted six varying types of honey, distinct with wildflower, oak acorn, orange blossom, vanilla, butter and lavender notes. They then ranked the honey based on its color, aroma, consistency and flavor notes before jarring up the personal favorites to take home.

Since one of the missions of this retreat was to give back, the Hilton College family decorated nine bee boxes, which will be used



to harvest honey produced by Harvest for the Hungry bees this year. All four edges of the white boxes were plain no more; the team boldly hand-drew food, UH logos, bee quotes, leafy gardens, honeycombs and Texas sunsets. And not to fret,

when these Sharpie icons fade because of the sunlight, the intricate stickers of mushrooms, fairies, flowers, rainbows, frogs, plants, honey and (of course) bees will be stuck on the boxes forever.

The day was capped by sharing some uplifting quotes intentionally displayed on the boxes, such as “You can learn a lot of things from the flowers,” “The hum of the bees are the voices of the garden,” “Every big thing starts small” and “Just bee yourself.”

It’s no doubt, those who attended the 2024 event left feeling the desire to fulfill insecurities and impact their communities in the semester to come.

**SCAN**  
to learn more about  
Harvest for the Hungry:







# IT'S AN ASTRO RENAISSANCE:

Many of us have big dreams of dining within the stars. While sitting down at the dinner table, you look to your left and see close friends, decked out in their astronaut gear and eating exquisite, mouthwatering dishes. Then, you look to your right to find something a bit extraordinary; an alien named Ross Well, jovially reading a Luxury Travel magazine and sipping on a cocktail known only as the Red Planet, a harmoniously peachy drink with undertones of crisp, lemon white wine.

This encounter may seem like it's straight out of a movie, but quite the contrary. Our 51st annual Gourmet Night set the scene for the new frontier. On April 13, 2024, part of Hilton College transformed

into an intergalactic cruise ship, with 350 guests onboard.

From the moment guests parked their cars, they were greeted by an extraterrestrial being who guided them towards a check-in station, paving the way to a whole new world.

"My vision for this year's Gourmet Night theme came from my love of science fiction and retro-futurism," said **Kellen Flannigan** ('24), Gourmet Night 2024 creative director.

"Like most children, space always fascinated me. I enjoyed how many television shows, movies and video games depicted the

# GOURMET NIGHT MESMERIZES

infinite emptiness of the cosmos in their own unique way... The idea that humanity took to the stars against the odds and still found a way to succeed always struck a chord with me."

This journey of hope and a wonderfully quirky vision for a new world was the event's centrality, embedded in the star-studded walls. Various ballrooms and hallways were reimagined to house a 360-degree photo booth, a surplus of auction items ranging from a galactic flower to opera tickets, planetary postcards, a wine station, a dessert bar and a grand dinner seating room.

Overall, the night was enchanting; 20 hard-working student

managers ensured hospitality in space looked no different than that on Earth. They planned every single detail of the night, from budget to décor to menu, everything was accounted for. Roughly 150 students, staff and faculty volunteers helped turn their dreams into a reality, proving that the sky was never the limit.

"It's like every year, there's a core memory that gets built," said **Reba Haskell** (Executive MHM '19), the Gourmet Night executive director and a lecturer at Hilton College.

SAVE THE DATE: The 52nd Annual Gourmet Night will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025. Tickets go on sale Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025.



As dusk descends and the moonlight dances,  
 join us for an enchanting evening  
 that will captivate your palate and delight your senses.



Indulge in 10 extraordinary wines, each with thier own tale to tell.  
 Savor hauntingly delicious culinary creations.

Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024

Hilton University of Houston  
 4450 University Drive, Houston, TX 77204

6 – 8 p.m.

Conrad Hilton Grand Ballroom

Tickets

\$125 (FMV \$99)

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Proceeds support Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership student scholarships.

100% ONLINE

# BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP



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This is the degree for hospitality leaders because our **individualized curriculum** is equally transforming as it is enriching. Our program is not only fully virtual, it's also at the forefront of innovation. Our classes spark conversations that fit effortlessly into your schedule and our professors forge connections, sure to make you *feel at home* in an incredibly dynamic industry. Here, **excellence meets affordability**, and they don't just coexist, they flourish.

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FOR THE FALL 2025 PROGRAM, REGISTER BY THE FOLLOWING DEADLINES:

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SCAN TO REGISTER!



YOUR KEY TO  
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# DOCTORATE IN GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

3-YEAR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE  
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CLASSES 100% ONLINE

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES  
AVAILABLE

FIRST COHORT STARTS IN  
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The **Doctorate in Global Hospitality Leadership (DGHL)** focuses on preparing executives and managers for applied research in hospitality businesses, leading to career growth and opportunities in teaching, consulting and senior leadership roles. It also prepares current educators and university administrators to advance in their higher education pursuit.

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The curriculum delves into industry trends, research methods and designs, data analytics, teaching, strategic decision making and leadership. The program will culminate with an impactful, independent dissertation.

## NEXT STEPS

Applications for fall 2025 will be accepted. The admissions process includes:

- Online Application
  - Resume
  - Statement of Intent
  - Official College Transcripts — Recommended Master's Degree Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is 3.0 or higher
  - Three Letters of Recommendation
- International applicants* will submit:
- Official TOEFL or IELTS Scores—must comply with the English proficiency requirements set by the University of Houston

Minimum of five years of management experience in the industry or three years of experience in academia (as an educator or administrator) are required.

After applicants pass the paper-review process, the admission committee will interview each candidate for admission decisions.

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Conrad N. Hilton College of  
Global Hospitality Leadership  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

# WAYS TO GIVE



Supporting the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership is a wonderful way to give back and make a positive impact on students and programs. Here are some ways you can contribute:



## CREDIT CARD

Make a single or recurring gift online by credit card at [giving.uh.edu/gift/](https://giving.uh.edu/gift/)



## CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

Often the most convenient way to give to Hilton College, these gifts may be unrestricted or designated for a specific purpose. Send your payment by check or money order, payable to the **Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership**, directly to the College. Kindly indicate in the memo the purpose you'd like the funds to be allocated.



## STOCKS & SECURITIES

Stocks, bonds and other publicly traded securities, which have increased in value and have been held for more than one year, are one of the most popular assets when making a gift to the College. A gift of securities offers you the chance to support our work while also realizing important benefits for you and your family, such as the following:

- Receive the full market value as an income tax deduction
- Eliminate capital gains taxes
- Receive full gift credit for the market value of the security, not your purchase price



## WIRE TRANSFER OR ACH PAYMENT

Wire transfer or ACH are also convenient ways to contribute, as they may be unrestricted and for the purpose of your choosing. Instructions on how to complete this can be obtained by calling our **Office of Gift Processing at 713-743-4708**



## GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK

Various financial arrangements, such as gift annuities, trusts, donor-advised funds, real estate, mineral rights and more, can be utilized to contribute to Hilton College. These options encompass our In Tempore Legacy Society, which recognizes alumni and friends of the University of Houston system who have made contributions through their estate plans.



## GIFTS-IN-KIND

Contributing tangible personal or work property presents an excellent opportunity to show your support for the Hilton College. If you intend to donate items such as artwork, antiques, collectibles, food and beverage, equipment, machinery or any other assets, the college would be honored to accept them as donations. You must assign a value to the items, in order to donate.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

Brandon Parrino, director of development, is your point-of-contact for all needs related to giving.

**Give him a call at 713-743-3843.**

If you are contributing in the form of check, please send your payment to the following address:

**Brandon Parrino**  
Director of Development  
Conrad N. Hilton College  
of Global Hospitality Leadership  
4450 University Drive, Room 227  
Houston, TX 77204-3028

# HILTON COLLEGE INTERNAL HAPPENINGS

You've probably noticed that we're quite busy on campus, year-round. The chaos never stops and we love this because it means we're positively impacting so many students and guests. Here's a glimpse into what we've been up to here in Houston, since September 2023. Keep in mind that our year is delightfully jam-packed, so this list certainly does not include all of our Hilton happenings, but pictured below are just a few of our favorites.

## TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE VIEWING



2024 was a big year for many reasons, but one reason in particular came to mind when working on this Dean's Report... The total solar eclipse! On April 8, the total solar eclipse moved across North America and wow, was it captivating.

For those unfamiliar, during this eclipse, the moon completely blocked the sun while it passed between the sun and Earth. Clouds gloomed darkly overhead, but there was the perfect glimmer of light to display the totality.

Hilton College faculty, staff and students gathered outside our building to see the sight. Some may have even witnessed the sun's outer atmosphere, the Corona. Don't worry though, we all made sure to keep our eyes protected with solar eclipse viewing glasses (similar to the 3D style of glasses used back in the early 2000s), provided by the Office of the Dean. And while the day may have been foggy, smiles shined bright among those gathered in the courtyard.



# HILTON COLLEGE: SHAPING GLOBAL EXCELLENCE

## MASTER'S STUDENTS IN LAS VEGAS AND NAPA VALLEY

When our master's students from the Global Hospitality Business Program were asked where they wanted to field trip in the United States, the unanimous vote was to experience iconic Las Vegas hotels and taste Napa Valley wine straight from the grapevine. In April, the crew went on a week-long immersive trip, where they toured infrastructural icons in Vegas and met with successful beverage creators/distributors in Napa. Behind-the-scenes conversations with hospitality executives and business owners were equally impactful as they were invigorating.



In Vegas, the crew visited Harrah's Las Vegas Hotel and Casino, Caesars Palace Las Vegas Hotel and Casino, Fontainebleau Las Vegas, Wynn Las Vegas, Red Rock Casino Resort & Spa and Resorts World Las Vegas. This portion of the trip was led by **Jennifer Glickman**, the director of international programs. Then, in Napa, the crew visited Trinchero Napa Valley, Silver Oak Cellars, Grounded Wine Co., Pine Ridge Vineyards and Duckhorn Vineyards. The Napa Valley portion was led by **Dr. D. Christopher Taylor**, professor and the director of the Beverage Management Program and Fred Parks Wine Cellar.



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## ALUMNI MEET UP IN LAS VEGAS, MIAMI, CHICAGO AND CANADA

For many years, our Alumni Office has bridged the gap between education and industry, reconnecting alumni with their first taste of hospitality. Our alumni are leaders spread worldwide and they're united by one thing – our global hospitality program. We continue to support all of our alumni, ensuring they always have a home in Houston to come back to. One of the ways this is made possible is through conversations initiated during alumni gatherings.

This academic year, we hosted several impactful meetups in Las Vegas, Nevada, Miami, Florida, Chicago, Illinois and Montreal, Canada. Often held after large-scale hospitality conferences, these events invite conversations about industry advancements, personal updates, experiences and even professional goals. We invite any alumni who are looking to reconnect to give us a shout! Email **Lauren Smith** ('15), program manager for development and alumni relations at [lesmith11@uh.edu](mailto:lesmith11@uh.edu).

## ALIS IN LOS ANGELES

Professor **Yoon Koh** and four brilliant students at the time, **Xavier Thierry**, **Reena Zou** (MS '24), **Quynh Le** ('24) and **Elise Kloster** ('23, MS '24), represented the College at the 2024 Americas Lodging Investment Summit (ALIS) from January 22 – 25 at the JW Marriott and The Ritz-Carlton in Los Angeles, California.

**Tanya Venegas** ('01, MHM '05), chief experience officer at HotStats, and **Laura Resco** (MS '19), director of hotel intelligence at Americas at HotStats, also joined us at this wonderful event.



## CMAA IN LAS VEGAS

The Club Management Association of America (CMAA) - Hilton College Student Chapter earned the Chapter of the Year award during the CMAA 2024 World Conference & Club Business Expo from March 4 – 8 in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Under the leadership of **Simone Doudna**, faculty advisor and instructional associate professor, our students had a fantastic experience. The Student Chapter of the Year award recognizes the outstanding work and successful accomplishments of all CMAA student chapters, and Hilton College is proud to take the recognition as the large chapter winner!

## CASINO RESORT MANAGEMENT CLASS IN LAS VEGAS

During the Casino Resort Management winter mini session, 15 students, accompanied by **Minjung Shin** (Ph.D. '20), assistant professor, and **Jaewook Kim** (MS '11), associate professor, got a behind-the-scenes look into the world of mainstream hospitality and casino resort operation and management.

From December 17 – 21, the crew visited Park MGM Las Vegas, Harrah's & The LINQ Monorail Station, The Palazzo at The Venetian Resort, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, Wynn Las Vegas and Caesars Palace. The session included in-depth career discussions and a career information session with key leaders of these properties.

They also experienced top-notch integrated casino resort operation and management practices across multiple divisions, including lodging, event and convention, food and beverage, retail, entertainment, human resources, VIP sales, marketing and the casino industry at large.



## HITEC IN CHARLOTTE

The Hospitality Industry Technology Exposition and Conference (HITEC), hosted by the Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals (HFTP), was the place to be from June 24 – 27. Hilton College representatives and alumni connected over our online Executive Master of Hospitality Management and Doctorate in Global Hospitality Leadership programs.

HITEC also provided a great opportunity to exchange information about student internships in the hospitality technology fields, as well as education advancement opportunities for professionals.



## GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS IN MIAMI

Some of our graduate students, faculty, associate deans and **Dean Dennis Reynolds** attended the Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism at the sunny Florida International University in Miami. Among the many outstanding stand-up presentations and posters, **Alberto Beiza** ('19, MS '21, Ph.D. '24), graduate research assistant and **Juan Madera**, professor and **Curtis L. Carlson** Endowed Professor, earned the Best Paper Award.



We're proud to have earned the reputation as an institution that "wins an award each year," and we look forward to setting the bar even higher next year. **Go, Coogs!**



### IMPACT CONFERENCE IN HONG KONG

Dr. Minwoo Lee, associate professor and director of the Hospitality Analytics and Innovation Lab, Dr. Agnes L. DeFranco ('83), professor and Conrad N. Hilton Distinguished Chair, and Yueming Guo ('21, MS '22) earned second place for the Best Paper award at the IMPACT 2023 conference.



250+ participants from 16 countries came together to celebrate and our representatives made a huge impact on the global stage. This conference was held from December 7 – 8 in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong.

### YHS IN SWITZERLAND

Students Gina Grenyo, Nguyen Bui ('24) and Maria Wedeking, accompanied by Instructional Associate Professor Tucker Johnson, attended the Young Hospitality Summit (YHS) from March 11 – 13 in Lausanne, Switzerland!

This is the largest student-led hospitality summit, serving as the platform for industry professionals, media members and student delegates to engage in insightful discussions on the industry's latest topics. Our Hilton College group in attendance loved this opportunity!

They interacted with leaders from CitizenM Hotels, NEOM, Global Branded Residences, Accor, etc., and learned about international hospitality leaders and the EHL Hospitality Business School. They also participated in a collaborative team challenge (against 14 other teams) with hospitality students from all over the world! The closing gala was a perfect picturesque evening cap too, at the Musée Olympique (Olympic Museum).



### BEST PAPER AWARDS EARNED DURING THE APACCHRIE CONFERENCE IN SOUTH KOREA

Hilton College representatives earned two Best Paper awards during the 2024 Asia-Pacific Council on Hospitality and Tourism Research and Education (APacCHRIE) Conference in Seoul, South Korea from May 24 – 26. Even though there were more than 550 delegates from countries across the world, our community earned the following recognitions:

- Lee, associate professor and the director of the Hospitality Analytics and Innovation Lab earned Best Youth Paper award, for his research entitled "Exploring the Asymmetric Impact and Relative Competitiveness of Service Attributes on Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction: Impact Asymmetry Competitor Analysis and Two-factor Theory." Nga Yin Xenia Wong (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University), Dr. Hyejo Hailey Shin ('14, MS '16) (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University) and Dr. Hyekyung Park (MS '20, Ph.D. '23) (Florida State University) also collaborated on this project.



- Lee also earned the Best Conference Paper award for his research entitled "Winning the Race for Competitive Advantages through Asymmetric Dynamics of Service Quality: Introducing Theory-driven Asymmetric Impact Competitor Analysis." Dr. Eunhye Park (Gachon University), Dr. Hyekyng Park (MS '20, Ph.D. '23) (Florida State University) and Dr. Tarik Dogru (Florida State University) also collaborated on this project.



### U.S. REPRESENTATION AT THE GESG CONFERENCE

The 2024 Global Environmental, Social and Governance (GESG) Conference in Jeju, Korea held a jam-packed itinerary. Many of our faculty

were among the 130 scholars and experts in attendance. They represented not only Hilton College, but the U.S. as a whole, as 12 countries participated in discussing the GESG management paradigm and presented research.

To no surprise, our students set the bar quite high. Simon Hahn ('23), Ph.D. student, earned first place in the Graduate Students ESG Research Proposal Competition. Likewise, Sungyeon "Valerie" Ryoo, MS student, earned second place in the Graduate Students GESG Research Proposal Competition.



### ICASM IN MONGOLIA

Dr. Ki-Joon Back, associate dean for research and graduate studies and a Moores Chair Professor, and Lee attended the International Conference on Applied Service Management (ICASM) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Back was featured as a keynote speaker, as he presented "ESG Strategies: Global Hospitality Leadership." Additionally, Lee earned the Best Paper Award for his paper entitled "Revisiting Passengers' Perceptions of Airline Service Quality: A Theory-driven machine Learning Approach using big data." Lee worked with Juhwan Lim and Dr. Jichul Jang from Kansas State University on these findings.



### ICHRIE IN CANADA

Many members of our Hilton College family had the opportunity to attend the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (ICHRIE) Global Conference in Montreal, Canada in July, 2024. Lee delivering numerous presentations and was formally inducted into the board of directors as the new ICHRIE Director of Research for 2024 – 2026.

It was no surprise that Graduate Students Araceli Hernandez, Mahima Hingoraney (MS '23), Won Jae Lee and Qi Silvia Su (MS '24) also represented our College eloquently. Hernandez earned recognition as the winner of the 2024 ICHRIE Dissertation Proposal Competition.



# GLOBAL MASTER'S STUDENTS EARN THEIR PLACE IN PROFESSIONAL COMPETITION

Traveling across the world to three unique universities is at the core of building relationships and representing hospitality globally. The Master of Science in Global Hospitality Business program enables students to do just this, as they pursue curriculum at the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne in Switzerland, the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and, of course, the Conrad N.



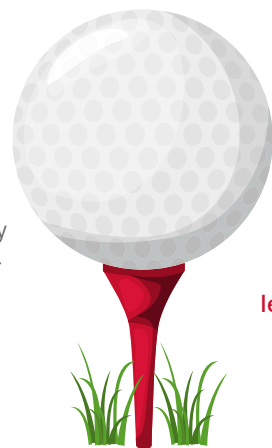
Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership in Houston, Texas.

During their time at Hilton College, the group participated in a hospitality problem-solving challenge, hosted by Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals. We're overjoyed to announce that four of our students earned winning titles:

- Adam Ben Hamidane won first place for "Smart Check-ins."
- Alicia Blomme tied with Hadeel Fkeeh for second place. Blomme wrote the paper entitled "Harnessing the Power of Olfactory Marketing in the Hospitality Industry." Fkeeh wrote the paper entitled "Alibaba's Futuristic Take on Hospitality Technology: Flyzoo as a Gamechanger."
- Magdalenda Rieder won third place for "Embracing Technology: Using AI-powered Travel Concierges in Hospitality Mobile Apps."

# VOLUNTEERS SWING FOR A GOOD TIME AT SPEC'S CHARITABLE GOLF TOURNAMENT

24 Hilton College alumni, students, faculty and staff volunteered at the Spec's Charitable Golf Tournament at The Clubs of Kingwood, on April 22, 2024. Here, they created unforgettable memories on the green and had a swinging good time supporting event attendees. The volunteers especially enjoyed organizing raffle giveaways and watching for hole-in-ones.



Each year, our Alumni Office is always looking for volunteers for this event, as Advisory Board Member **John Rydman** (Hon. '08) donates the tournament's proceeds to his Hilton College scholarship endowment. If you're interested in volunteering, please email **Lauren Smith** ('15), program manager for development and alumni relations at [lesmith11@uh.edu](mailto:lesmith11@uh.edu).

# STUDENT PROM BRINGS THE HOLLYWOOD GLAM

December 2023 marked our first-ever Hilton College Prom! Students were dressed in 1950s attire, that featured a timeless elegance beautifully brought out by the red carpet.

This new annual tradition brings joy, excitement and relief to students right before they start their finals and wrap up an often chaotic semester. The 2024 prom will be held on **Thursday, Nov. 21** from 6 – 9 p.m.



# AN OLYMPIC-LEVEL COLLEGE

Confetti cautiously swept, sheets quickly tucked, mocktails intentionally stirred, room prices accurately crunched and maid carts craftily navigated... our 2024 Hilton Olympics was a hit!

Five teams comprised of students and one team comprised of faculty competed for the gold! Several industry judges showed our students how fun hotel operations can be during this semi-

annual event. Judges included **Erin Kenyan** ('98), instructional associate professor at Hilton College, **Courtland Jackson**, Disney college & international programs recruiter at the Walt Disney Company, **Brandis Washington** ('18), human resources manager at Hilton Americas-Houston and **Tania Beauchamp** (MHM '98), market director of human resources at the St. Regis Houston and the Westin Houston, Memorial City at Marriott International.



## HFTP COUGAR CHAPTER CONTINUES TO SHINE



Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals — Cougar Chapter of the student organization earned the 2023 Chapter of the Year Award in October.

Quynh Le ('24), the Chapter's former president, and Anh Nguyen, Hilton College Student, accepted the award with faculty co-advisors, Dr. Agnes DeFranco ('83), professor and Conrad N. Hilton Distinguished Chair and Tucker Johnson, instructional associate professor.

This student organization aims to impact the industry through finance, accounting and technology, while simultaneously supporting their members in advancing their careers.



## ENRICHING LIVES WITH HOSPITALITY

As of May 2024, the Diageo Learning Skills for Life program officially has six new graduates! This is a free program for those seeking employment in the hospitality industry and it particularly aids those who may have previously faced barriers to education.

After the two-week program, participants earned certification in beverage and food handling and fine-tuned their resumes and job interview skills. Students were taught by Hilton College expert faculty, who set them up for success post-graduation.

The next free program will be held from Monday, Sept. 9 through Thursday, Sept. 20. Participants must be 21 years of age or older.



Scan for more information and to apply!

## EXTREME MAKEOVER: ERIC'S EDITION!

You may have heard a thing or two about some updates we've done to Eric's Restaurant recently! A world-class hotel and hospitality program deserves an equally world-class restaurant, which is why in March 2024, we launched a brand-new menu.

"Houston is known to be an incredibly diverse city and I wanted this to be reflected in the dishes," said Head Chef Curtis Taylor. "Indian food, Asian food, Italian food, American food, etc. I'm hoping that our clientele loves every bit of it."

Our new entrees and bar bites were exquisitely created by Taylor, with the assistance of Brandon (Reid) Presley, sous chef. Nine cocktails and mocktails, crafted to pair exquisitely with the meals, were designed by Patrick Henry Creative Promotions and Zhihong (Andrea) Lin ('21 and MS '23), a Hilton College graduate student and assistant restaurant manager.



## HILTON UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON EARNS AWARD FOR SHAPING THE LOOK OF HOUSTON

The Hilton University of Houston has earned the well-deserved reputation of significantly sculpting the look, feel and image of Houston! The renovation and expansion of our hotel won the Houston Business Journal 2024 Landmark Award in Hospitality.

We earned this recognition because, as many of you already know, the project included a 54,000-square-foot expansion with the addition of an eight-story tower, as well as a 64,000-square-foot renovation of the hotel. It also included a new coffee shop, Cougar Grounds, and new administration offices, Eric's Club Center for Student Success. The project nearly doubled the key count from 80 to 150 and our hotel's rooms, courtyard, lobby and public spaces were revamped.

We would especially like to recognize the following individuals for their vast influence on the renovation:

- General contractor: DPR Construction
- Architect: Kirksey Architecture
- Engineer: Martinez Moore
- MEP: Infrastructure Associates
- Interior designer: Looney & Associates





# STRESS DOWN, DRESS UP: OVERCOME FINALS!

In an effort to give students a bit of a break before the chaos of finals rolls around, Hilton College hosts an annual Stress Down Week each semester. For the spring 2024 tradition, students came to campus decked out in space gear, pajamas, as a twin, as a different decade and in their Cougar red!

Many also enjoyed the provided stress-relieving activities, which included coloring, friendship bracelet making, slime crafting and snack sampling.



# SUMMER CAMPS INTRODUCE FUTURE LEADERS

From June 17 – 20 and July 15 – 18, a total of 39 high school students experienced the Hilton College Summer Camp. During the four-day experience, campers toured the campus, as well as our college/hotel, had a dinner demo by Roostar, made boba drinks, tie-dyed shirts and went bowling!

They also had the unique opportunity to tour Pappasitos & Pappadeaux, Hilton Americas, the George R. Brown Convention Center, River Oaks Country Club, Bright Star Productions, the Houston Zoo Event Spaces and the Wortham Theater Center.



## PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS DINE THEIR WAY INTO ADMISSION

31 admitted students and their families visited the College for a night of dining while learning about our incredible programs. Students met with a number of faculty during a mocktail hour, enjoyed delicious conversations over dinner and even learned college tips and tricks from a panel of four current students!

Our student recruitment team did such a wonderful job creatively checking-in students with customized hotel room inspired keys. College swag was also given to those who were set to attend 2024 orientation.

Excitingly, 20 of the prospective students who attended also joined our new Class of 2028!

# STUDENTS CELEBRATE JOB OFFERS, INFLUENTIAL CAREER NETWORKING EVENTS

16 incredibly talented Hilton College students attended the Student Job Offer Celebration event this spring, hosted by the Career Development Office. The students were celebrated for securing full-time job offers and internship opportunities, after putting forth countless hours of hard work.

The Career Development Office provides career support for students by offering a Hire Hilton job board, career fair, counseling services, resume reviews, etc.

During the fall 2023 and spring 2024 career fairs, a combined total of 110 companies came to campus to engage with the next generation of emerging hospitality leaders. 456 total students from Hilton College networked with these professionals, in hopes of earning a career advancement opportunity. The next highly anticipated career fair will be held on Thursday, Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the College.



# DEAN DENNIS REYNOLDS RECOGNIZED AS A TOP 20 PRODUCTIVE AND INFLUENTIAL AUTHOR



Dean Dennis Reynolds (Hon. '18) has earned recognition as a top 20 productive and influential author, as recognized by the International Journal of Hospitality Management (IJHM). His acknowledgement was noted in the paper entitled "Twenty-Two Years of International Journal of Hospitality Management (IJHM): A Bibliometric Analysis 2000-2021."

According to IJHM, the analysis highlighted a number of facts, including (1) the impact of open-access papers not differing from regular papers, (2) sustainability and online reviews being amongst the most cited topics and (3) an increase in the diversity of topics published.

# WE'VE BEEN PROVEN TO MAKE IT RIGHT

In June 2024, Hilton University of Houston was recognized as a winner of the Make it Right brand award for quarter 1!

The Make it Right award is presented to the hotels that achieve the high stay score from the following combined metrics, within

the respective quarter and region: service quality, Hilton Honors appreciation, problem resolution and overall cleanliness.

Thank you to the Hilton team for all the amazing work you do each day to make our hotel the best it can possibly be!

# ALUMNI EARNS PRESTIGIOUS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Charles Dorn, CCM ('80) earned the UH Alumni Association's 2024 Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes individuals whose professional accomplishments bring immense credit to the University of Houston.

Dorn is the managing partner of The Dorn Group, Ltd. in Rye, New York. He has completed several consulting projects for clients around the world, including Madison Square Garden, Lantana Beach Club in Bermuda, Rolex Corporation and The Rockefeller Foundation. Dorn is also dedicated to the club management industry and has held leadership roles in various professional associations. Additionally, he is the chair of Eric's Club and serves on the Hilton College Alumni Board as the Eric's Club liaison.



# WELCOME TO COOGS' HOUSE!

Outdoor games, good eats and family bonding are what makes a picnic special. This too was true for the Hilton College Welcome Picnic on Saturday, Aug. 17. Over 100 attendees, 64 of which were incoming students, visited campus to celebrate the start of the new school year. The gathering kicked off with lawn games, like giant UH Jenga and Cougar branded bean bag toss, and then students and their families entered the beautifully decorated Conrad Hilton Ballroom. Tables were lined with red, gingham patterned cloths, floral arrangements in wonderfully unique vases and a classic-styled Hilton College newspaper spread, detailing the order of events, ways to get involved, meet



and greet challenges and crossword games.

Laughter filled the entire College, as groups of students paired with one of our 18 Hilton College ambassadors to do a scavenger hunt throughout the building. This was no ordinary hunt though; to obtain clues, the students needed to complete several stations of games. These games included mini bowling, paper airplanes, house of cards, beach ball name memorization, bucket and sponge relay, headbandz, bucket toss, etc. After the hunt, students rejoined their

families to eat a cozy meal, play a massive rock paper scissors game and watch a high-energy variation of musical chairs. Parents were overjoyed to see their students feel right at home before dropping them off and officially allowing them to join the Hilton College family.



# THIS IS US

In the 2024 Academic Year, we celebrated the promotions of 10 valued employees and extended a warm welcome to one new faculty member.

## FACULTY PROMOTIONS



**CATHY CHEATHAM**  
Instructional Associate Professor



**SIMONE DOUDNA**  
Instructional Associate Professor



**PRIYANKO GUCHAIT**  
Professor



**ERIN KENYAN**  
Instructional Associate Professor



**YOON KOH**  
Professor



**D. CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR**  
Professor

## NEW FACULTY

Dr. Hight joins us as an assistant professor in the area of restaurant operations. Dr. Hight earned his Ph.D. from the University of Central Florida and his research interests include restaurant substance use and abuse, restaurant entrepreneurship and restaurant operations. A Houston native, Dr. Hight recently moved back to the area with his wife and seven-month-old daughter. Fun fact: He's also a certified sommelier!



**KYLE HIGHT**  
Assistant Professor

## STAFF PROMOTIONS



**DANIEL CASANOVA**  
Instructional Designer 2



**KATIE GUIDROZ**  
Director of Communications



**BROOKE SANER**  
Director of Rooms and Guest Services



**JENUMON THOMAS**  
User Services Specialist 3

## NEW COLLEGE & HOTEL STAFF

We are excited to warmly welcome 15 of our newest team members to the college and hotel community. Their arrival marks a new chapter of growth and innovation. With a diverse range of expertise, they bring fresh perspectives and valuable skills that will undoubtedly elevate our academic programs and guest services. We are confident their contributions will significantly enhance the overall experience for our students, faculty, staff and visitors.



**ROSARIO ARMENTA**  
Financial Assistant 2



**VICTOR BARROS**  
Front Desk Supervisor



**KAITY CAMPBELL**  
College Recruitment Program Manager



**ALEXA CHIRINOS**  
Hotel Housekeeping Attendant 1



**SHARNYECE FLEMING**  
Front Desk Supervisor



**GWENDOLYN MEAUX**  
Undergraduate Academic Advisor



**HAIMANOT MIHIRETU**  
Post Doctoral Fellow



**KYRIE MUEHE**  
Communications Coordinator



**EMILY PHARR**  
Sales & Conference Services Manager



**BRANDON (REID) PRESLEY**  
Sous Chef



**ALMA RANGEL**  
Hotel Housekeeping Attendant 1



**MARIA TAPANES**  
Hotel Housekeeping Attendant 1



**CURTIS TAYLOR**  
Chef



**LIDICE VEGA**  
Hotel Housekeeping Attendant 2



**BRADI ZAPATA**  
Communications Coordinator

## Our Excellence Award Winners

During the College's spring rally, held May 8, 2024, faculty and staff came together to extend a warm welcome to new colleagues and honor collective accomplishments. The occasion provided an opportunity to acknowledge years of dedicated service, congratulate those who earned promotions and bid farewell to those on the verge of retirement. It was also the moment to unveil the recipients of our esteemed 2024 Excellence Awards.

Our award winners are...

<b>Teaching Excellence</b> <b>KATIE GINAPP</b> <i>Lecturer</i>	<b>Service Excellence</b> <b>JUAN MADERA</b> <i>Professor, Curtis L. Carlson Endowed Professor</i>	<b>Stephen Rushmore/HVS Faculty Research</b> <b>MINJUNG SHIN</b> <i>Assistant Professor</i>
<b>Donald Greenaway Excellence</b> <b>TIFFANY LEGENDRE</b> <i>Associate Professor</i>	<b>Hotel Staff Excellence</b> <b>SYLVIA MOLINA</b> <i>Sales &amp; Conference Services Manager</i>	<b>College Staff Excellence</b> <b>JEREMY DAFOE</b> <i>Director of the Eric's Club Center for Student Success</i>
<b>Mentorship</b> <b>TUCKER JOHNSON</b> <i>Instructional Associate Professor</i>	<b>Rising Star</b> <b>RAYMOND AREVELO</b> <i>Director of Student Recruitment</i>	

## Golden Fork Educator of the Year Award

Katie Ginapp accepted her 2024 Golden Fork Educator of the Year award! Thank you so much to Christina Garavaglia, executive director of the Restaurant Association Southeast Texas Region for visiting Hilton College in person to bestow Ginapp this honorable award. We are so grateful to have such outstanding faculty, who truly make a significant impact on student lives and their career trajectories.



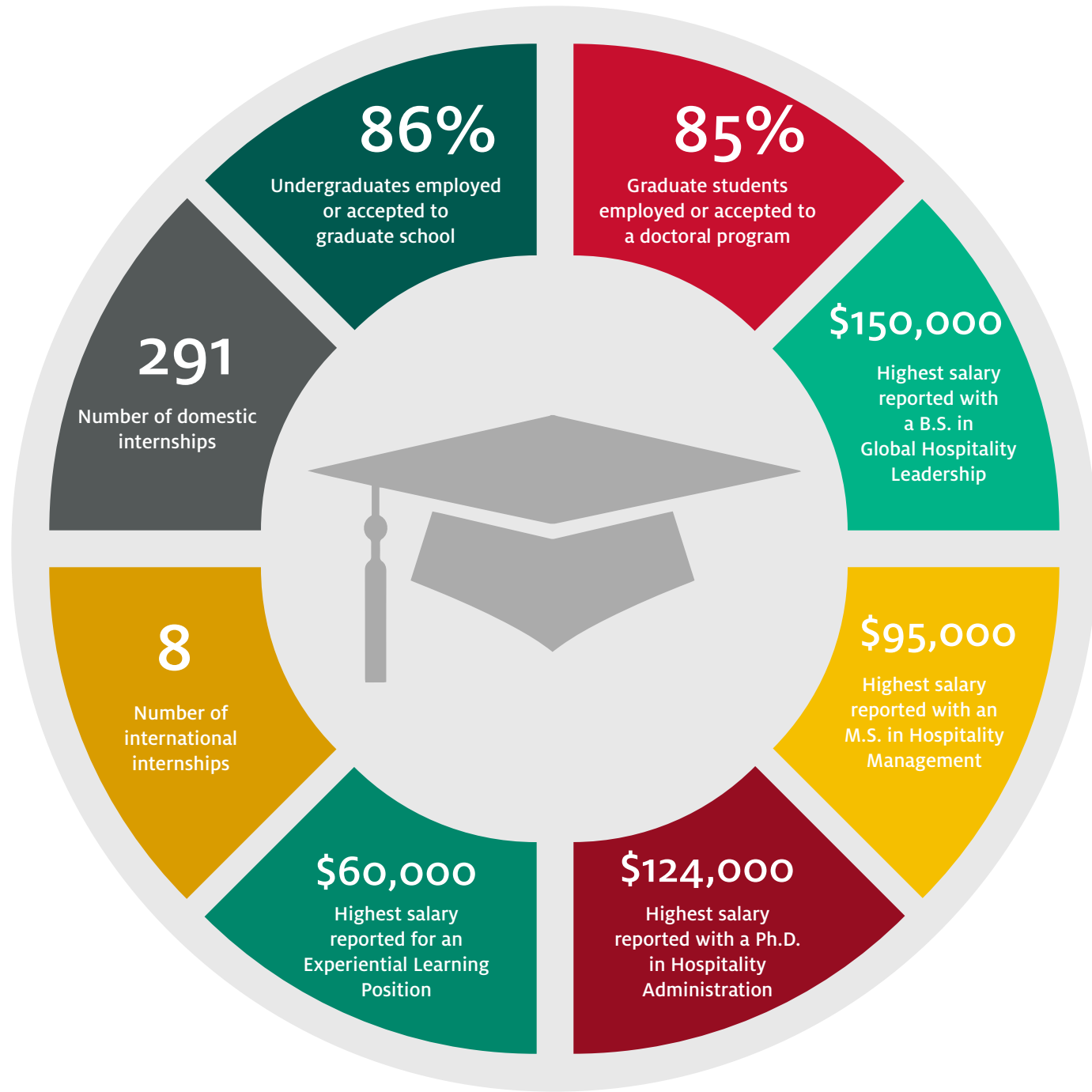
## Years of Service

We take immense pride in having these nine cherished members of our hospitality family earn Years of Service awards. Their invaluable contributions and years of dedicated service are truly appreciated.

<b>5 Years</b> <b>SHIBU GEORGE</b> <i>General Maintenance Technician II</i>	<b>10 Years</b> <b>CATHY CHEATHAM</b> <i>Instructional Associate Professor &amp; Hotel Manager</i>	<b>10 Years</b> <b>D. CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR</b> <i>Professor, Director of the Beverage Management Program &amp; Fred Parks Wine Cellar</i>
<b>15 Years</b> <b>AARON CORSI</b> <i>Lecturer</i>	<b>15 Years</b> <b>ROSA GIRON</b> <i>Hotel Housekeeping Attendant 1</i>	<b>15 Years</b> <b>SEAN LAWLESS</b> <i>Manager of Cougar Grounds</i>
<b>15 Years</b> <b>JUAN MADERA</b> <i>Professor, Curtis L. Carlson Endowed Professor</i>	<b>15 Years</b> <b>MARK YOUNG</b> <i>Archivist, Historian &amp; Professor of Practice</i>	<b>35 Years</b> <b>AGNES DEFRANCO</b> <i>Professor, Conrad N. Hilton Distinguished Chair</i>

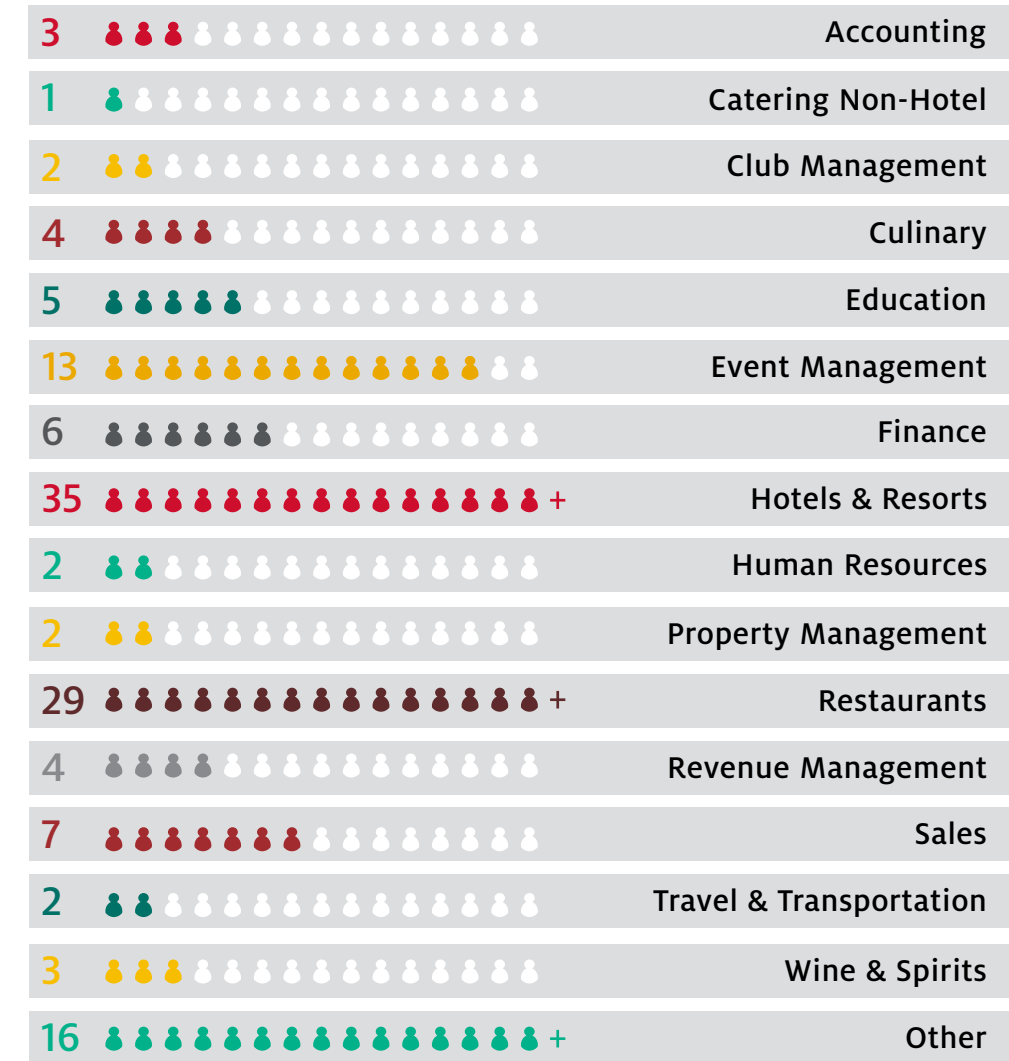


# ABOUT OUR GRADUATES



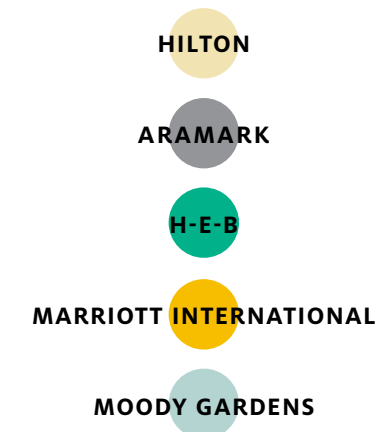
The salaries shown above are derived from data collected through a salary and job placement survey administered to graduating students at the end of each semester. The highest starting salary self-reported by recent undergraduates was \$90,000. In the hospitality industry, the starting salaries for these graduates can increase quickly. Within five years, a significant number of them ascend to well-paying managerial roles, with some attaining positions as directors and general managers, while others venture into entrepreneurship by launching their own restaurants and businesses. Graduates who aspire to join a specific company may also opt for entry-level roles with a base salary and commission structure, such as hotel sales or restaurant marketing. It's worth noting that many of our students receive multiple job offers upon graduation.

## SECTORS EMPLOYED



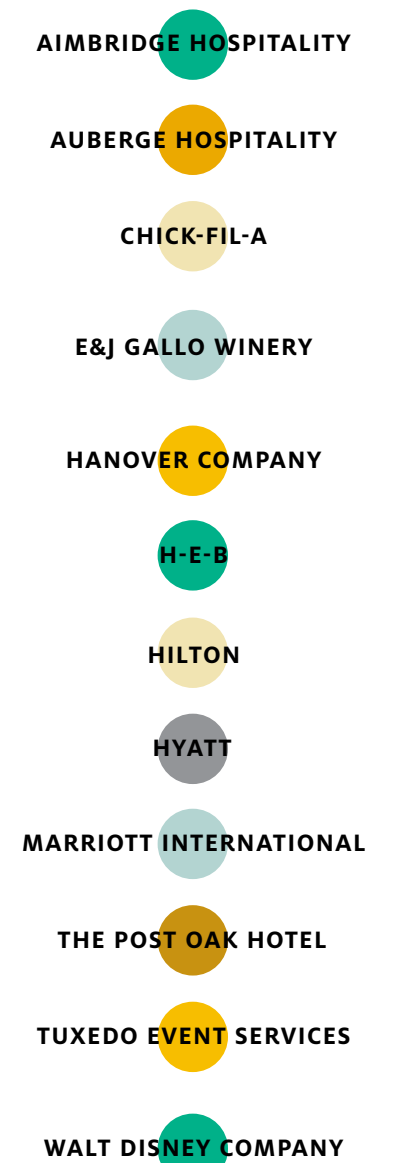
## OUR TOP COMPANIES HIRING FOR PART-TIME JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS

Through part-time jobs and internships, our students gain invaluable experience that prepares them to become leaders in the industry. These five employers have provided the most opportunities.



## OUR TOP HIRING COMPANIES

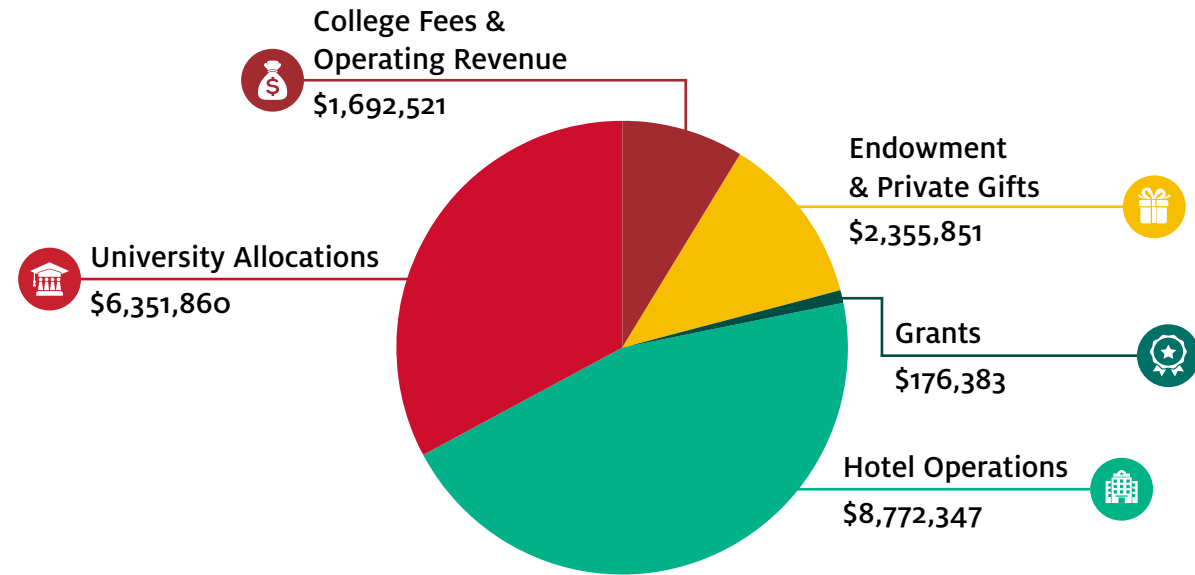
We have strong industry partnerships with the biggest names in hospitality. These companies represent employers who have hired three or more of our graduates for full-time positions.



# FINANCIAL HEALTH

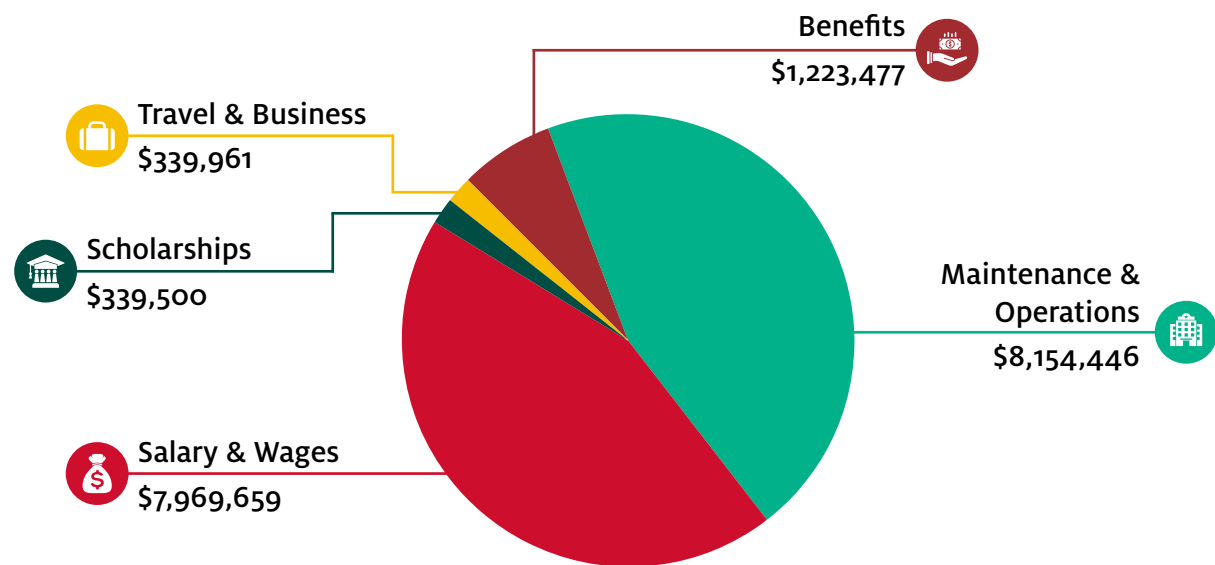
FISCAL YEAR 2024\* (Sept. 1, 2023 – Aug. 31, 2024)

## ANNUAL REVENUE



Total Revenue = \$19,348,962

## ANNUAL EXPENSES



Total Expenses = \$18,027,043

\* The data provided in this Dean's Report are for information only. The financials presented are preliminary, unaudited and subject to revision upon completion of the fiscal year closing and audit processes.

# Congratulations

## ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS



**MARIA GABRIELA MCCOLLUM**  
*Distinguished Alumni*



**SEANTE MONIQUE JOHNSON**  
*Distinguished Young Alumni*



**JENNIFER GLICKMAN, Ed.D.**  
*Distinguished Faculty/Staff*



**MICHAEL PRZESTRZELSKI**  
*Distinguished Service*



**MELANIE SMALLEY**  
*Honorary Alumni*

Nominations are accepted year-round. You can submit your nomination by scanning the QR code:



# Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership DONOR HONOR ROLL

GIFTS FROM JAN. 1 – DEC. 31, 2023

*In recognition of their commitment to excellence and in support of our mission, a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of the individuals, foundations and companies for these generous gifts.*

## **Gifts \$100,000 - \$25,000**

Arthur & Marie Godfrey Fund of Schwab Charitable Fund  
Aylwin Lewis ('76) Charitable Gift Fund of Fidelity Charitable  
Robert D. ('76) and Nancy Cowan  
Hospitality Financial & Technology Prof  
Hotel and Lodging Association of Greater Houston  
Hotel Association of Tarrant County  
Houston Hospitality Alliance  
Avi D. Katz ('97)  
David A. Lee  
Puente De Maravillas Foundation

## **Gifts \$24,999 - \$10,000**

The Honorable Douglas H. ('75) and Holly Brooks  
Brotherhood of the Knights of the Vine Houston  
Chapter Inc.  
Feed the Soul Foundation  
Fred and Mabel R. Parks Foundation  
Ron E. Jackson  
Ricki ('86) and Asra Oberoi  
Lawerance ('89) and Julie Perreau  
Lynne Parker (Hon. '22) and Francis Przestrzelski ('78)  
Rodney and Lucy Worrell

## **Gifts \$9,999 - \$5,000**

Crawfish Shack, LLC Dan and Jennifer Meaux  
Bill B. ('83) and Sherry Fortier  
Patrick Henry  
Allen C. Hermansen  
J. Keith and Sandy Hughey  
Hyatt Corporation  
Frederic L. Kapanka (MHM '01)  
Marriott International, Inc.  
Pappas Restaurants Inc.  
Raising Cane's  
David G. Schantz  
Brent and Kelley Southwell

## **Gifts \$4,999 - \$1,000**

ALH Hotel Management, LLC  
Astros Foundation  
Niraj R. Bhavsar ('15)  
Bloomin Brand Inc.  
David B. ('77) and Lucie Chag  
John M. ('80) and Agnes L. ('83) DeFranco  
Echo Energy, LLC  
Mike ('81) and Carolina Feild  
Earl Finley ('83)  
Patricia A. Fisher ('92)  
Flagship LLC  
Food Service Systems  
Kevin J. ('93) and Patty ('89) Godfrey  
Patty A. Godfrey ('89)  
Gregg and Anna Rockett of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund  
Alice Kang  
Ruth A. ('90) and Thomas Lattin  
Lynda Laubach ('85)  
Wendy Liu ('15)  
Carole Look  
Meadowbrook Golf Group Inc.  
Million Air Headquarters  
Linda N. Nguyen  
Nicholson Interests LLC  
Dorothy T. Nicholson ('77)  
Rema Foods, Inc.  
Clinton L. (Hon '73) and Leigh A. Rappole  
Truluck's Resturant Group

## **Gifts \$999 - \$500**

Mark Bado  
John R. ('76) and Joan Beers  
Rolando O. ('09) and Emma Cantu  
Dona H. and Terence Cornell  
Charles D. ('80) and Karen Dorn  
Bradley H. Dorsey ('91) and Claudia Farinola ('86)  
Helena ('89) and David Finley

Steven R. ('83) and Hilda Goodman  
Jeffery J. ('92) and Theoula Heaney  
Marsha Hendler ('73)  
William A. ('93) and Liz Hendrix  
Raymond James  
Cheryl ('84) and Marvin A. Jones ('85)  
John ('76) and Linda Klukan  
Randy (Hon. '07) and Nancy M. McCaslin  
Dan S. ('96) and Jennifer ('97) Meaux  
Nicholas and Company Salt Lake City  
Philip and Linda Wetz Fund of the FCGF  
Sharron B. Planck  
Darren H. and Kori Randle  
Sara R. Roberts ('14)  
Paula Seefeldt and Jeremy S. Wladis ('86)  
Gary Steffen  
Rusty ('82) and Estelia Wallace  
Westin Alumni Association  
ZT Systems

## **Gifts \$499 - \$100**

Steve and JéAnna L. Abbott (MHM '91)  
Carl G. and Dorothy Arp  
Pat ('02) and Joe Aviles  
Brooks E. and Maricela Bassler  
Gary P. Baumann  
Andres I. Bazan  
Vanderlei Bernardi  
John T. (Hon. '06) and Toni Bowen  
A. H. Brewer  
Michelle H. Cao ('19, MHM '20)  
CBRE  
Maria R. Corsi and Aaron J. Corsi ('09, MS'11)  
Dennis Doherty  
Kathleen Donovan  
William Ekholm  
Vanessa Flores  
Rick and Peggy Galyean  
Kimberly Y. and Michael Gapinski  
Ricky J. ('10) and Lauren Girardi  
Jason Grisham  
Heidi Hahn-Lee ('83)  
Jodie L. Haifley ('94)  
DeAnna M. Harner ('96)  
Kimberly A. Hermann ('89)  
Michael D. Hold

Holidan Holdings LLC  
Andrew R. Hutson ('23)  
Rebecca S. Jay  
Melanie J. Johnson (MHM '00)  
Shazia Khan  
Krewe Of Gambrinus  
Peggy E. Lambert  
Elizabeth A. Leaver (MHM '20)  
Edwin P. Lentz ('94)  
John Little  
Deb Loeblein  
Angela Lott  
Betty C. McCulloch  
Mission Constructors, Inc.  
Thomas B. Mohr ('11)  
Cristian Morosan  
Tracey D. Morris ('92)  
Jack Neal Jr. ('91, MHM '04) and  
Shaelyn Roche-Neal (MHM '04)  
New York Life Foundation  
Arthur F. Oppenheimer  
Dennis M. Pang  
Angela M. Parker ('08)  
Mike L. ('89) and Melanie A. Pede  
Luis J. ('95, MHM '02) and Amber Rabo  
Margie Ramirez  
Jillian Rangel  
Melissa A. Raymer-Lowe ('02)  
Audrey K. Russell ('15)  
Warren W. Shew ('77)  
Charles Silva  
Lauren E. Smith ('15)  
Noel W. ('75) and Shelley Stalnaker  
Monique Studak  
Sharmagne J. Taylor ('86)  
Bartt G. and Deborah Thompson  
Lawrence Thompson  
Miguel A. Turcios ('09)  
Tamsen V. Valoir  
Karen J. (MHM '95) and  
John W. Waddell (MHM '95)  
James C. ('91) and Mary Warren  
Richard F. ('78) and Maryann Weil  
Calvin ('74) and Jewelry L. Yep

## **Gifts up to \$100**

Kenneth Binns and  
Cecelia L. Sutawan-Binns ('94, MHM '98)  
Eloise D. and Stephen Brice  
Bette Brieger  
Gail B. Burns  
Yolanda V. Castro  
Joshua E. Chavez ('19)  
Jacqueline Y. Chee ('94)  
James Curtice  
Linda P. Debolt  
Barbara R. Hall  
Jennifer A. Knobloch ('96)  
Travis L. and Elisa McIntire  
Lisa J. and Gregory Minicone  
Mercedes I. Morones  
Jennifer C. Navarro ('19)  
Lewis J. ('96) and Janet Nuzzie  
Philip W. ('88) and Patricia Scott  
John Smith  
Brittany L. ('09) and Jeremy Stiborik  
Tanya L. Yeakley ('94)

# THANK YOU!

*If you would like to make a donation to invest in the future of Hilton College and our students, please contact Brandon Parrino, director of development, at 713-743-3843 or [baparrino@uh.edu](mailto:baparrino@uh.edu) to learn how your gift can make a difference.*

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

Chancellor, University of Houston System  
& President, University of Houston

Renu Khator

Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs,  
University of Houston System

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost,  
University of Houston

Diane Chase

Dean of Hilton College & Barron Hilton Distinguished Chair

Dennis Reynolds (Hon. '18)

## DEAN'S LEADERSHIP TEAM

Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies  
& Moores Chair Professor

Ki-Joon Back

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs  
& Eric Hilton Distinguished Chair Professor

Mary Dawson ('92, MHM '95)

Executive Director of Academic Affairs & Business Operations

Paul Roch

General Manager, Hilton University of Houston

Rick Galyean

Director of Information Technology & Information Security Officer

Freddy Aung

Director of Facilities

Akash Grover ('07)

Director of Development

Brandon Parrino

Director of Communications

Katie Guidroz

Executive Assistant to Dean Dennis Reynolds

Linda Hulett

## FACULTY

Dennis Reynolds (Hon. '18), Mary Dawson ('92, MHM '95), JéAnna Abbott (MHM '91), Ki-Joon Back, Stephen Barth, Carl A. Boger Jr., Cathy Cheatham ('89, MS '16), Aaron Corsi ('09, MS '11), Agnes L. DeFranco ('83), Simone P. Doudna, Jason Draper, Katie Ginapp, Priyanko Guhañ, Reba Haskell (Executive MHM '19), Kyle Hight, Tucker Johnson, Erin Kenyan ('98), Jaewook Kim (MS '11), Yoon Koh, Minwoo Lee, Tiffany Legendre, Ningqao Li, Juan M. Madera, Dustin Maneethai, Mohamed E. Mohamed, Cristian Morosan, Jay Neal ('91, MHM '04), Minjung Shin (Ph.D. '20'), Sujata Sirsat, D. Christopher Taylor & Mark E. Young

## FACULTY EMERITI

John T. Bowen (Hon. '06), William N. Chernish, Nancy S. Graves, Ronald A. Nykiel, Clinton L. Rappole (Hon. '73) & Karl Titz

## COLLEGE STAFF

Raymond Arevelo, Rosario Armenta, Freddy Aung, Katie Campbell, Daniel Casanova, Maria Corsi, Jeremy L. Dafoe, Dawn A. Deurell, Wendy E. Gary, Stephen Gentzel, Jennifer Glickman, Akash Grover ('07), Katie Guidroz, Tracy Guran Davis, Allison Hendricks, Connie Hines, Pei Hsieh, Linda Hulett, Sean Lawless, Kelly Le, Gwendolyn Meaux, Haimanot Mihiretu, Kyrie Muehe, Maggie Padilla, Brandon Parrino, Paul Roch, Cristal Rangel, Benjamin Scaggs, Carter Shelton, Ashley Shepherd, Lauren Smith, Jenumon Thomas, Karen Tran, Paul Wegner & Bradi Zapata

## HILTON UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON STAFF

Rick Galyean, Shinu Abraham, Jose Aguilar, Rene Aguilar, Freddy Aung, Victor Barros, Juiri Benjamin, Larry Brown, Yolanda Castro, Cathy Cheatham ('89, MS '16), Alexa Chirinos, Valerie Delgado ('13), Shibu George, Akash Grover ('07), Katie Highfield-Neeb ('15), Ashley Jasper, Farshid Khoshmood, Travis McIntire, Dayra Mendez, Sylvia Molina, Emily Pharr, Brandon (Reid) Presley, Paul Roch, Cristal Rangel, Brooke Saner, Marria Tapanes, Curtis Taylor, Lidice Vega & Marcus Young

## DEAN'S REPORT 2024

Produced by the  
Hilton College Office of Communications

Art Direction, Design & Photography: **Katie Guidroz**

Writer, Editor & Photography: **Bradi Zapata**

Design & Photography: **Kyrie Muehe**

Lunar Hilton images provided by the  
Hospitality Industry Archives

Archivist, Historian: **Dr. Mark Young**

Assistant Archivist: **Dr. Maria Corsi**

The University of Houston is an EEO/AA institution.  
9.2024/10.7M/UHCPP

## Hilton College Board Members

### DEAN'S ADVISORY BOARD

CHAIRMAN – **Doug Brooks** ('75) – Retired CEO, President & COB, Brinker International

**Thomas Atzenhofer**, CPA – Deputy CEO, Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals

**Rob DeMore** – President/Executive Vice President, Troon Privé

**Charles D. Dorn**, CCM ('80) – Managing Director, The Dorn Group, Ltd.

**Falayn Ferrell** – Managing Partner – Operations, Black Restaurant Week, LLC

**Jeffrey Heaney** ('92) – President, Mikasa Hospitality

**Patrick Henry** – Chairman & CEO, Patrick Henry Creative Promotions, Inc.

**Ron E. Jackson** – President & CEO, Meadowbrook Golf Group

**Rodrigo "Rod" Jimenez** – Co-founder & CEO, Sceptre Hospitality Resources, LLC (SHR)

**Larry Konecny** – CCO, Maggiano's Little Italy

**Warren Luckett** – Managing Partner – Founder, Black Restaurant Week, LLC

**Nick Massad Jr.** ('73) – President & CEO, America's Liberty Hospitality

**Randy McCaslin**, CRE (Hon. '07) – Founder & CEO, McCaslin Hotel Consulting, LLC

**Dorothy T. Nicholson**, CHA, CHSE ('77) – President, Nicholson Interests, LLC

**Chris Pappas** (Hon. '94) – CEO & Executive Vice President, Pappas Restaurants, Inc.

**Gregory W. "Gregg" Rockett** ('86) – Hospitality Thought Leader & Award-winning Academic Instructor

**John Rydman** (Hon. '08) – President & Owner, Spec's Wine, Spirits & Finer Foods

**Anna Schmid** ('95) – Vice President of Communications & CSR, The Venetian Resort

**Melanie Smalley** – President, Spectrum Catering, Concessions & Events

**Sharmagne Taylor**, CMP ('86) – President, On-Site Partners

**Robert Thrailkill** ('82) – Vice President of Operations, Zachry Hospitality, LLC

**Donna Vallone** – Owner, Tony's Restaurant and Catering

**Dianna Vaughan** – Senior Vice President Brand Management, Americas, Hilton Worldwide

**Patrick McCaslin** ('10) – President, Hilton College Alumni Board

**Gina Grenyo** ('25) – Chair, Dean's Undergraduate Student Advisory Council

### CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

**Charles D. Dorn**, CCM ('80) – Managing Director, The Dorn Group, Ltd.

### BOARD MEMBER EMERITUS

**Robert D. "Bob" Planck** ('71) (1948 – 2022) – President & CEO, Interconnect Enterprises, Inc.

**Tony Vallone** (1945 – 2020) – President & CEO, Vallone Restaurant Group

## ERIC'S CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Charles D. Dorn**, CCM ('80) – Chair

**Sharmagne Taylor** ('86) – Vice Chair

**Marsha B. Hendler** ('73) – Treasurer

**Robert Thrailkill** ('82) – Secretary

**Richard F. Weil**, MCFP, MCFE ('78) – Immediate Past Chair

**Robert D. Cowan** ('76) – Director

**Lily Ng** ('89) – Director

**Jeff Heaney**, CFSP ('92) – Director

**Dave Smalley** ('79) – Director

**Dr. Clinton L. Rappole** (Hon. '73) – Director Emeritus

**Dr. Mary Dawson** ('92, MHM '95) – Eric Hilton Distinguished Chair

## HILTON COLLEGE ALUMNI BOARD

**Patrick McCaslin** ('10) – President

**Taylor Brione Ballard** ('14) – Vice President & Board Member

**Anne Dillon** ('04) – Secretary

**Luis Rabo** ('95, MHM/MBA '02) – Treasurer

**Xiadoan Mao-Clark** ('06, MS '13, Ph.D. '23) – Immediate Past President

**Curtis Bell** ('13) – Board Member

**Wm Earl Finley** ('83, MS '95) – Board Member

**Aaron Corsi** ('09, MS '11) – Faculty Advisor

**Charles D. Dorn**, CCM ('80) – Eric's Club Liaison

**Gina Grenyo** ('25) – Undergraduate Student Liaison

**Araceli Hernandez** – Graduate Student Liaison

## DEAN'S UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Kaitlin Fear** ('16) – Inaugural Chair

**Gina Grenyo** ('25) – Chair

**Adrian Abbott** ('25)

**Michelle Deleon** ('26)

**Sara Jamieson** ('25)

**Taylor Koblenzer** ('26)

**Ben Kovach** ('25)

**Mary Martinez** ('25)

**Grace Will** ('26)

**Victoria Wooten** ('26)



# SAVE THESE DATES!

There's never been a better time to get connected and involved with Hilton College! Mark your calendars TODAY and join us for our upcoming celebrations and alumni, student events. We'd love to see you there!

## THURSDAY, OCT. 3, 2024

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Career Fair *Conrad Hilton Grand Ballroom*

## WEDNESDAY, OCT. 9, 2024

6 – 8 p.m.

Corks & Forks – Haunting the Hilton

*A wine-tasting event featuring food paired with red and white wines. Tickets are \$125 and benefit student scholarships. Scan this QR code now to purchase:*



## THURSDAY, OCT. 10, 2024

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Eric's Club Distinguished Chair Alumni Lecture Series

*Join us for Dr. Agnes DeFranco's insightful lecture. Learn about the latest insights from a panel discussion over "Game Changing Hospitality." We will also explore transformative ideas and innovations during the lecture.*

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Eric's Club Meet & Greet with Students

## FRIDAY, DEC. 13, 2024

9 a.m. to Noon

Fall Graduation

## SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2025

52nd Annual Gourmet Night *Tickets go on sale Jan. 14, 2025. Table sponsorships available.*

**2024 TAILGATE PARTY DATES:** *You are invited to join tailgating parties hosted by various colleges, so that you never miss a UH home game! Go Coogs!*

**SEPTEMBER 28**

*Houston vs. Iowa St.*

**OCTOBER 26**

*Houston vs. Utah*

*Homecoming – Hosted by the Hilton College Alumni Association*

**NOVEMBER 2**

*Houston vs. Kansas St.*

**NOVEMBER 23**

*Houston vs. Baylor*

0073035319



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Global Hospitality Leadership  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

4450 University Drive, Room #227

Houston, TX 77204-3028

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