

## Dean's Update



Dr. Charles Calvert

I am pleased to announce that three USCB Hospitality Management Seniors have been awarded academic scholarships from the Savannah Tourism Leadership Council.

Calli Evans, Jennifer Edwards and Karns Hazlett are the USCB recipients of scholarships at this year's annual dinner. The scholarships will be presented to the students at the December 14, 2021 Awards Dinner.

Karns is a Lead Research Assistant for the Center for Event Management and Hospitality training. She is graduating in the Spring of 2022 and is evaluating graduate school and career opportunities.

Calli is currently a server at Long Cove Club on HHI. She is also graduating in May 2022 and plans to stay at Long Cove and explore the possibility of starting her own hotel.

Jennifer has participated in the Hilton Head Island Wine and Food Festival and the Concours d'Elegance Motoring Festival. She hopes to begin a career in hospitality in Savannah, Georgia after her graduation, scheduled for May 2022.

The TLC states, "Every year, our tourism community comes together to honor some of the exceptional standouts in hospitality and tourism and support the students who are studying to join this dynamic field that employs more than 27,000 people in our area. To date, the Tourism Leadership Council has awarded more than \$100,000 in scholarships to students who are studying to pursue careers in tourism and hospitality. Scholarships have ranged from \$500 - \$3,000, and have gone to students from Savannah Technical College, University of South Carolina-Beaufort, Ogeechee Technical College, Georgia Southern University, and other area universities."

*Congratulations to our winners!*

## Guest Speakers Breathe Life Into Course Concepts

Faculty in the Hospitality Management department seek out opportunities to bring local industry leaders into the classroom to share their knowledge, expertise and insights of current market conditions with students. Guest speakers illustrate course concepts by providing a glimpse of how management theory is applied in real-world settings. Luckily, the South Carolina Lowcountry is rich with industry experts who enjoy interacting with our students and the university.

As part of the speaker series in Kelly McCombs' Introduction to the Hospitality Industry course this semester, April Ford, Cast Support Manager at Disney's Hilton Head Resort, talked with students about the resort's history and culture. Ms. Ford introduced the class to the resort's new General Manager, Grace Stepp. Ms. Stepp discussed her



25-year employment history with Disney and how Disney's Hilton Head Resort is known as the "gem" of all Disney Resorts. Several students present for the session were interested in jobs and internships with Disney's Hilton Head Resort and intend to contact Ms. Ford to discuss opportunities.

Other speakers scheduled to talk with students in Professor McCombs' class this semester work at Montage Palmetto Bluff, Marriott Vacations Worldwide, Waffle House, The Cypress of Hilton Head, and the Low Country Food Bank.

## Golf Tournament and Scholarship to Honor GM



*A golf tournament was held this November in honor of Marriott Vacations Worldwide General Manager, Michael Best, who unexpectedly passed away last year. Proceeds from the tournament will go to a USCB Scholarship in Michael's name. The total amount raised is still being tallied. Thank you so much to Cory Cotrell and the USCB Golf Team for having a presence at the tournament this year.*



# Alumna Spotlight: Maxi-Taylor McDaniel

**Maxi-Taylor McDaniel** graduated from USCB's Hospitality Management program in May 2020. Earlier that year, she had begun to evaluate several management training programs, but by graduation, they had all been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Luckily, Marriott's Barony Beach Club convinced her to return with a raise and promotion to Activities Lead. She has been with the company for three years and manages the property's social media. Last month, she joined a company task force to enhance the activities department in one of Marriott's properties in Williams, VA. "Marriott has been an amazing company to work for and I'm so thankful for the opportunities they have given me," says Maxi. After a bumpy start, it looks like it's now full steam ahead for our fantastic alumna. Congratulations and safe travels to all of our alumni who are navigating their way through this period of transformation in the hospitality and tourism industries.

## Wine and Food Festival Scholarship Winners

The Department of Hospitality Management at the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) and the Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training (CEMHT) are pleased to announce the winners of the 2021 Hilton Head Island Wine and Food Festival scholarship: Bethany McDonald, Elizabeth Carey and Jennifer Edwards. This scholarship was created by the Hilton Head Island Wine and Food Festival organizers, who believe tourism is vital to the local community and give back to the area by assisting USCB students.

Scholarship applicants were evaluated based on their previous academic accomplishments and their potential to make a positive contribution to the hospitality and tourism industry. The scholarship recipients volunteered at the Hilton Head Island Wine and Food festival, held in September this year.

**Bethany McDonald** plans to graduate in May 2022. When asked about the scholarship opportunity, she said, "I'm so thankful for both the scholarship and the experience that came with working this festival." Creator of the innovative conservation program, "Finnegan's Sharing Shack," which launched over the summer, Bethany is happy she came to USCB for her degree. "USCB was the only school I applied to because on their Hospitality Management program. As a senior, I could not be happier with my decision to come here. I love everything about this program and recommend it to anyone looking to attend college. From the variety of fun, interactive classes to the most caring professors you'll ever meet, I will always be thankful for my time here and the countless opportunities I've been given here at USCB."

**Jennifer Edwards** applied for the scholarship to offset some of the costs of attending college as a single mom returning to school after some time. When asked about volunteering at the festival, she said, "Working at the festival was a wonderful experience!



*Bethany McDonald*



*Jennifer Edwards*



*Elizabeth Carey*

It was a lot of fun to interact with the guests attending the event as well as the board members and staff for the Wine and Food Festival. It was a great way to network in the hospitality field."

Jennifer also plans to graduate in May 2022 and is enthusiastic about her time at USCB, "The program has been an answered prayer, as completing classes with good grades while working and caring for my child and daily life routine has made me stronger and more self-confident. I love that my instructors care about me, not just as a student, but as an individual and help me to succeed. I also am thankful that they have a great relationship with individuals in the different areas of hospitality in and around Hilton Head and are willing to assist me in reaching out to potential employers in the hospitality field."

**Elizabeth "Libby" Carey** applied to the Wine and Food Festival scholarship because she loves getting involved in community events. She plans to graduate in 2024, and when asked about her experience with the festival, she said, "I really enjoyed seeing how the festival was put together from start to finish and engaging with people from all over." She hasn't yet decided what career path to take, but her passions include event planning, travel and giving back to the community. She is enthusiastic about USCB and the hospitality management program, and says, "I really love the family aspect of the program. The professors really care for every student and want to see every student succeed in the best way they can."

We are so proud of our shining stars, like these three scholarship winners, and we look forward to observing their impact on our local tourism and hospitality industry as they continue to engage in community events like the Hilton Head Wine and Food Festival in the future.

# Karns Hazlett Presents at ICHRIE

As the only undergraduate researcher to present at the regional and international CHRIE (Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education) conferences this year, our student, Karns Hazlett, shone. She presented research related to gathering data at festivals during a pandemic and some of the lifestyle and behavioral attributes exhibited by festival-goers.



ence, but the International CHRIE Conference as well. In February, I presented the research our team had conducted to industry leaders across the Southeast region. Being able to receive their feedback and discuss the research was very educational. Later in July, I was able to see my report and research displayed at the International Conference. Both conferences were extremely rewarding and something I would not have been able to experience without the Hospitality Department faculty. I have enjoyed every moment of my time here at USCB, and I will be soaking up every second until I graduate in the Spring. There are so many important roles in the industry, I'm not exactly sure yet what I want to do after graduation. However, I hope to work in event coordinating and one day earn my master's degree."

From Karns, "I have known I wanted to major in Hospitality since I was a senior in high school, but USCB and the Hospitality program has surpassed anything I could have dreamed of. I am very grateful for the people I met, the opportunities I had, the things I experienced, and what I have learned. Joining the research center and being the Lead Student Researcher has allowed me to present at not only the SECSA-CHRIE confer-

Congratulations to Karns for her excellent work and bright future as a tourism scholar!

## New Event Management Concentration and Minor

The Hospitality Management Department continues to evolve and innovate its degree program. This Spring, a new concentration for Hospitality Management majors and a new minor for students in other fields will be launched in Event Management. The concentration and minor capitalize on the area's strength as a leisure travel destination and the corresponding need for high quality professional education for related careers in event management. The new programs include foundation courses in hospitality, service management and event management. Students further tailor their studies with electives in advanced topics like sporting event management, festivals and

wedding planning. Included courses will prepare graduates to contribute to the thriving local tourism industry while enjoying satisfying professional careers in their area of interest. The need for well-educated hospitality professionals in the area is currently great, with a booming post-pandemic rebound of tourism in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Students will interact with event organizers and hospitality professionals in enriching experiential learning opportunities and hear from knowledgeable, experienced leaders about current market conditions and challenges. A common component of all included courses will be integration of course concepts with fieldwork.

## RECRUITER SHOWCASE VIDEOS

Part of USCB's Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training's mission is to respond to the needs of our local industry partners utilizing the skills and expertise found within the Hospitality Management department. Last year, the Center distributed information and links to Covid-19-related resources that would be helpful to those in various settings within hospitality and tourism and provided online video lectures on topics such as legal considerations of operating during pandemic conditions, self-care for stress management, and pandemic-related spa trends. Now, severe staffing shortages are plaguing the Lowcountry. In an effort to draw excellent candidates into the area and highlight career opportunities with our student body, the Center and Hospitality Management department are partnering to produce a series of recruiter showcase videos. The Sea Pines Resort, the SERG Restaurant Group and the Disney Vacation Club's Hilton Head Island Resort have already participated. More are scheduled to be released within the coming months. If you would like your local business to be highlighted through this program, please contact Su Gibson at [gibsonsl@uscb.edu](mailto:gibsonsl@uscb.edu).

# Festival Research Resumes

With local festivals now back in full swing, our student researchers are out gathering data. Now housed within the USCB's Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training, our tourism research division collects and analyzes data about festival-goer demographics, visitor statistics and more. Recent festivals have included the Hilton Head Island Food and Wine Festival, the 5th Annual Gullah Food Festival, the Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival, Concours d'Elegance Motoring Festival and the Hilton Head Oyster Festival. Results are analyzed by students in their class projects and shared with festival organizers and the Chamber of Commerce. If you ever see our students collecting data while you're out and about, please stop by to take a survey! Past reports can be found on USCB's Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training's website at [www.uscb.edu/hhicenter](http://www.uscb.edu/hhicenter).



# Faculty Spotlight: Publications Pour In

Our Hospitality Management faculty have been writing their fingers to the bone as they type out contributions to a variety of publications.

**Dr. Nancy Hritz** co-authored a paper in *Tourism Planning & Development* that examined visitor intent to travel to US South Atlantic destinations that were in the path of Hurricane Matthew just two weeks after it made landfall.

Salazar, J., & Hritz, N. (2021). Measuring the Impacts of a Natural Disaster on Visitor Confidence. *Tourism Planning & Development*. Webpage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21568316.2021.1953120>

She also co-authored and presented at the Southeast Travel and Tourism Research Association conference this Fall with a description of South Carolina African American and Hispanic leisure travelers.

Hritz, N. M., Salazar, J., & Ramos, W. D. (2021). A preliminary look at the African American and Hispanic leisure traveler: A description of South Carolina travelers. Published abstract and presentation at the Southeast Travel and Tourism Research Association (SETTRA) conference, September 27-30.

**Tom Henz** launched USCB's Center for Strategic Planning, which is a division of USCB's Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training with an article in the Bluffton Sun about the importance of mission and vision statements.

Henz, T. (2021, Oct. 18). Mission, Vision Statements: Alpha and Omega of Strategic Plan. The Bluffton Sun. Retrieved from <https://www.blufftonsun.com/mission-vision-statements-alpha-and-omega-of-strategic-plan/>

A team of faculty members, including **Dean Charlie Calvert**, **Su Gibson** and **Keri Olivetti** presented with undergraduate student and lead researcher, **Karns Hazlett**, at two conferences about collecting festival data during the pandemic and festivalgoer behavioral attributes.

Gibson, S., Calvert, C., Olivetti, K., Hazlett, K., & Denny, S. (2021, February 26). Festival Research in a Pandemic: A Pilot Study [Poster presentation]. SECSA-CHRIE, Virtual Conference, United States. [https://d61ece16-8a87-4918-bf79-b5251642ed8d.filesusr.com/ugd/20abba\\_d3eab04f4caa467cb4d44afd90738dc6.pdf](https://d61ece16-8a87-4918-bf79-b5251642ed8d.filesusr.com/ugd/20abba_d3eab04f4caa467cb4d44afd90738dc6.pdf)

Hazlett, K., Gibson, S., Calvert, C., & Olivetti, K. (2021, July 26). Behavioral Attributes of Festivalgoers During a Pandemic [Poster presentation]. ICHRIE, Virtual Conference, United States.

States. <https://ichrie2021.ipostersessions.com/Default.aspx?s=1F-13-AE-ED-EC-20-C5-31-A6-E2-E8-94-FB-C4-08-55>

**Su Gibson** wrote a chapter in an open-source textbook about technology in the hospitality industry.

Gibson, S. (2021). Technology for spas, salons, and wellness centers. In C. Cobanoglu, S. Dogan, K. Berezina, & G. Collins (Eds.), *Hospitality & tourism information technology* (pp. 1–20). USF M3 Publishing. <https://www.doi.org/10.5038/9781732127593>

She also co-authored a marketing case study that highlights hospital-ity staffing issues in the area. The book of cases should come out early next year.

Gibson, S. and Martin, D. (2022) in press. Marketing Wellness in Paradise – What's Hard About That? In *The Routledge International Case Studies in Tourism Series: Tourism Marketing*. Routledge.

Su finished her fourth half marathon this Fall while completing a two-course challenge at runDisney's Wickedly Delicious 2021 Wine and Dine race weekend (pictured). The challenge included a 10K race one day and a half marathon the next. "Running is not one of my strengths. I'm not good at it and mostly just shuffle along, but I'll take pretty much any excuse to go play in Disney World in my spare time."



## You Can Help Us!

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

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

## Engage with Us

USCB's Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training works in partnership with USCB's Hospitality Management Department to provide students with experiential learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom and to offer beneficial services to local industry partners.

From secret shopping and quality management program development to volunteer management, data collection, case studies and strategic planning, there are many ways to get involved. We are grant-funded, so most services are offered at no cost. Learn more at [hhicenter.com/engagement](https://hhicenter.com/engagement) and let's see what we can do to help your business thrive.