

## **Leading Hotels Offer USF Students Out-of-the-Classroom Management Training Through Innovative Partnership with McKibbon Hospitality**

McKibbon Hospitality and the University of South Florida (USF) Muma College of Business have teamed up to create a training program that offers students opportunities to extend their educations beyond the classroom and earn real world hotel management experience.

“We want to inspire another generation of hospitality workers by building meaningful relationships that will drive people to say that they want to work in hospitality. It may start with a front desk position, it may start in the back of the house but it can now be developed over a long term range towards a future in hospitality,” said Ben Hom, Vice President of Human Resources for McKibbon Hospitality. Hom outlined the recently launched partnership and its goals at the February membership meeting and luncheon of the Hillsborough County Hotel Motel Association (HCHMA).

“We are going to put these students into a hotel and allow them to experience what it means be in hospitality as an intro class. We hope this partnership will lend itself to allow us to develop relationships, whether it is with a freshman at USF to that PhD candidate at USF, to get them to develop an interest in hospitality and build out their careers,” he added.

What has been described as an “innovative hospitality teaching lab program,” enables students from USF’s School of Hospitality and Tourism Management to train at leading, global hotel brands such as Marriott and Hilton.

“We want to be at the forefront of helping you react and respond to what clearly is a need, not just within the hospitality industry, but within all businesses in our community,” said Bob Morrison, HCHMA Executive Director. “This partnership between McKibbon and USF has a unique structure and framework that is, quite frankly, out of the box.”

Combining college studies with on-site training will cultivate and attract new people to the industry as well as introduce them to great career opportunities available within the hospitality industry, Morrison said.

McKibbon will oversee the hospitality management program at participating hotels located throughout the U.S. where students will learn management skills while working on-site at select- to full-service properties.

Headquartered in Tampa, McKibbon Hospitality manages nearly 100 hotels and over 10,000 guest rooms in over 40 markets for some of the world’s largest hotel brands, according to a USF press release. Within the West Coast area of Central Florida, McKibbon Hospitality operates hotels in Tampa, Clearwater, Sarasota, Fort Myers and Lakeland.

Link to USF press release: <https://www.usf.edu/news/2021/partnership-between-usf-and-mckibbon-hospitality-creates-hospitality-teaching-lab.aspx>