

International School of Hospitality Helps Students Find Jobs

Robert Horne



For 10 years, the International School of Hospitality in Las Vegas has helped students land lucrative careers in the hospitality industry.

“We set out to provide an alternative route for career advancement among people in the hospitality industry,” Executive Director Timothy M. Lam said. “We have since seen our alumni attain positions of authority and make great contributions to the hospitality industry, helping us make our mark as a cutting-edge institution for hospitality education worldwide.”

The school helps students enter the hospitality industry as well as assisting current employees advance their careers. The school was founded in 2004 by professors at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. Courses integrate theory, practice and on-site learning. It features small classes with personalized guidance, short, intensified programs; and online learning options. Internships, networking opportunities and career counseling are integral components of the programs, according to the school’s website.

More than 1,500 students have graduated from the school during its 10 years, with diploma graduates enjoying an 85 percent job placement rate. For this year, four Las Vegas hospitality associations count graduates as their presidents.

Additionally, many graduates are now in leadership positions throughout the industry, including top resorts on the Las Vegas Strip. A few of those graduates are Angela Cooper, chef concierge at the Cosmopolitan; Shannon Stringert,

spa, salon and fitness director at the Cosmopolitan; and Chris Walker, director of hotel operations at the Luxor.

Cooper attended the school from 2008-09 and received diplomas in the art of concierge and leadership in hospitality and supervision. She holds a bachelor's of science degree in computer and information sciences and public relations from William Woods University in Fulton, Mo.

She moved to Las Vegas after graduating from college in 2004. She started working as an event planner at the Venetian in November 2004. She then became assistant manager of wedding services at Caesars Palace before taking the chef concierge position at Caesars Palace in October 2007.

While in that position, Cooper started taking classes at the International School of Hospitality.

"I had gotten to know the people at (The International School of Hospitality), and I appreciated the knowledge they brought to the table," Cooper said. "So, I figured I'd go ahead and take the art of the concierge course. ... It was very eye opening to me. I was able to learn the history of how the position came to be and learn from industry professionals. I was directly connecting with pros in the industry.

"It was not just a professor teaching a class who doesn't have real-world experience. The professors were able to give real-world knowledge."

Cooper eventually moved to the Cosmopolitan when it opened in 2011 as small groups and celebrations manager. After serving as quality assurance manager for three months in 2012, she moved into her current position in September 2012.

Students in the April graduating class received 56 certificates and diplomas. Six received executive diplomas in hospitality operations, and 50 certificates were awarded for completing courses in the art of concierge: conference management and event planning, event design and production; hospitality human resources, hospitality leadership and supervision, meeting and event catering, and wedding coordination and design.

Cooper said she would hire a graduate of the program and has hired quite a few over her two-and-a-half years in her current position. Some were good fits, while others she helped find the right position.

Cooper did have one piece of advice for graduates of the International School of Hospitality – stay involved.

"This is not just a school," she said. "It is more along the lines of an extended family that can help you find the right position or help you get ahold of someone who can help you find the right position. It is an organization that can really benefit you moving forward, no matter what level you are at."

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