

University Guest House and Conferences Annual Report 2021-2022

The Guest House and Conferences provides lodging and meeting venues for the University of Utah faculty, staff, partners, guests and visitors. In doing so we attempt to create loyalty to the university, recruit new students via on campus visits and summer conferences, increase exposure to the University, support university programs, provide a supportive working environment for students, provide excellent customer service and create memorable guest experiences.

In FY22 we continue to partner with the campus community to support events, programs and housing. We worked closely with the hospital during covid to ensure that guests had a safe place to stay.

We are a safe space on campus. The Guest House provides services to all guests, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, gender, race, religion, age or sexual orientation. We do not discriminate against any groups and welcome all who come to visit the University, the hospitals and other campus entities. We provide safe accommodations to students at risk.

COVID-19 has had an effect on the Guest House. University departments are still hesitant to have in person meeting and are not bringing as many speakers and guests to campus. The hospital has picked up and we are seeing hospital patient reservations continue to grow. Conference inquiries and bookings are also growing as fears of COVID subside.

Replacing staff has been a struggle. We were able to find student applicants for desk positions but consistent reliability is an issue. Housekeeping applicants are nearly impossible to find. Many hotels/hospitals are paying much more than we are offering. We expect this to be an ongoing problem

We are continuing our high level of customer service and cleanliness, however, we have had to pull room inventory from availability to stay on top of current occupancy levels and to prepare for parent/student move in week and HRE Fall Community room modifications. We no longer provide daily maid service. All housekeeping is upon request.

We are still working on a skeleton staff in our conference department. With very little hourly staff, our professional staff has been doing everything. Taking sales calls, detailing meetings, setting up spaces, etc. We are hoping to be able to add staff in the next fiscal year as things start to pick up.

Primary Purpose:

In support of the mission of the University we focus on providing excellent lodging and meeting space to all who come to our campus. Our business mix is primarily hospital patients and visitors and campus

departments. Student parents and hosted public events round out our occupancy. By providing these accommodations we create an outstanding guest experience that shows off what the University of Utah can do, thus creating a sense of familiarity and loyalty to the U.

Student Support:

Students are a big focus of employment for us. We provide a flexible on campus location for students to interact with visitors from throughout the world and become intimately involved in many of the programs held on the University campus. We provide a safe environment, which is convenient and close to classes. We immerse them in the University of Utah culture in hopes to make their education experience richer and more immersive.

Our summer programs focus on student recruitment. We house approximately 9000 students in a two-month period. Most of these youth are high school age. We expose them to the University campus and give them a taste of what it is like to live and learn on a University campus. We hope that through these experiences they will choose the University of Utah when making higher education choices. FY2022 was hugely successful, mostly due to meeting demand after Covid. Research shows that students who have not made a decision on a college or university, and attend a summer program, are more likely to choose that University all other things being equal. The experience familiarizes them with the campus and creates a loyalty to the institution that was not there before. That is our mission with summer conferences.

By holding public events in our facilities, we increase the University of Utah's exposure to the community and nationally. We hope that this exposure ultimately leads to larger enrollment and recognition for the work done at the U.

Goals and outcomes:

Maintain occupancy: Pre-COVID our occupancy levels were rising, our service continues to be top notch with a continued #1 rating on Trip Advisor and positive guest feedback. We continue to support the University of Utah community through hosting events, donating time and space. We continue to employ students in all areas of the Guest House operation. Adapting to COVID restrictions has been tricky, however, we have been able to provide contactless check in, physical distancing in our lobby, approved cleaning and sanitation procedures, PPE for staff as well as convert our buffet breakfast to a deluxe grab and go.

Keeping students engaged: on campus is another goal of the University Guest House. We hire approximately 60 students throughout our operations. We create flexible schedules to work around their school schedules. We understand the needs of the student and our goal is to allow work to fit seamlessly with education. While we don't collect data regarding graduation, we know through

anecdotal evidence that our employees graduate successfully and go on to have careers at the Guest House, the University or with other companies. Feedback from employees is overwhelmingly positive and many talk about their experience at the Guest House as critical to their success at the U. We continue with our revamped training and development program to ensure that students are taking away business and life skills that are useful in their major pursuits.

Utilization Data:

We strive to create parent and student loyalty to the University. We measure this through feedback and data collected from our property management system. We also can mine this data from Trip Advisor where public feedback ranks us against our peer hotels. We were #1 of all hotels in Salt Lake City for the FY 2021/2022. This is our 7th year in this spot. We have been able to take advantage of this and, again, adjust our room rates to better align with the market. We continue to use yield management to adjust rates based on demand and occupancy. This has allowed us to increase overall room revenue while maintaining occupancy levels. We have celebrated many campus events through branding. Game Days, Homecoming, Red White and U, Graduation, etc. Creating a unique University of Utah feel which develops loyalty. We continued to maintain our partnerships with, Keep it on Campus, U Health and the Foothill Cultural District. COVID unfortunately has sidelined many of our efforts, however, we are optimistic for the future once in person events return.

We served approximately 44,200 guests and visitors in FY22, consisting primarily of student parents, hospital patients, and isolation/quarantine students. We had 29,000 occupied room nights. Our meeting occupancy consisted of 39 individual bookings, primarily consisting of University meetings and trainings.

We are still running on a significantly reduced staff of 21 part time and 16 full time. This is down over 50% from previous years.

Plan for the future:

Our future is uncertain now. In early 2022 we were informed that the Guest House main building (176 guest rooms and lobby) would be converted to Residence Halls for the next two years in order to meet student demand. This leaves us with only 30 rooms and the lower level which dramatically changes the nature of our operations. We have had to cancel many groups and will see a drop in group business.

Our 30 rooms are already filling up fast as campus demand is growing and we no longer have the space they are used to. We will provide modified breakfast service and reduce other amenities.

When the main rooms are returned, they will most likely need renovation again, which will prolong our full opening another year. We hope to be in full operation again in 2025.

We continue to focus on technology, service and creating unique guest experiences.

We have been successful in increasing revenue through rate adjustments again this year. We will monitor this for next year to see if this strategy will be as feasible.

We are still focusing on green initiatives. Reducing single use bottles and disposable products is our goal for the next FY. We are working on new recycling programs and other ways to reduce consumption of single use products as well as electricity and water.

With covid restrictions lifting we are focusing on safe in person meetings as well as virtual and hybrid meetings.

ADDENDUM A:

How The University Guest House and Conference Center enhances the Student Experience:

The Guest House offers on campus employment opportunities. Flexible hours to work around school schedule. We also provide 24/7 support for any issues at work or in their personal lives.

The Guest house is a Living laboratory for students in hospitality, tourism management, and business. We provide internships and mentoring programs in PRT, marketing, accounting, conference operations and hotel management.

We hire students in each area of our department - front desk, housekeeping, maintenance, conference services and summer conferencing. Nearly half of our staff are students. Because we are on campus it is convenient for students to work at the University Guest House & Conference Center which makes for a positive student experience. We support their education and provide flexible scheduling and quiet places for them to take care of schoolwork. We follow up to make sure our students are successful in their studies and offer solutions to challenges they may have.

Our diverse work environment and daily challenges give students the opportunities they need to gain confidence with communication skills by interacting with campus departments, international conference attendees and a wide range of hospital guests. We empower our students to make decisions, solve problems, learn from their success and mistakes.

Students are exposed to a professional setting. They also have the opportunity to meet a diverse group of people, both co-workers as well as guests. This includes different cultures, genders and ages. They also meet and assist people who are staying here and having hospital procedures/treatments. They often help with large conferences and meetings that focus on training, education and research and interact with professors and researchers from all over the world.

Students also become ambassadors to new and prospective students and their parents. The Guest House is often the first point of contact for people visiting for the first time. This sets the expectation for prospective students and their parents and gives insight to into the culture of campus.

The Guest House gives students the opportunities they need to gain confidence with communication skills by interacting with campus departments, international conference attendees and a wide range

of hospital guests. They learn empathy and acceptance along with critical thinking skills. They learn the ins and out of the University system which not only helps them during their time at the U, but helps to prepare students for life after college.

The Guest House also offers students a place where they can feel safe as well as learn life & job skills. We have had students who have worked for our department that have stayed for years until graduation. Some stay after graduation and continue to build their skills while others take what they have learned and move on. Most of our students are grateful for the experience and the many different people they have met.

Enhancing the Student Experience - Summer Housing and Conferences

We employ an average of 20 students every summer with a 50% return rate of staff

- Offer housing, meal plan, and an hourly wage.
- Give them a platform to be heard, inviting recommendations and a supportive, safe environment.
- Mentoring the students doesn't end when their employment does. Many of them continue to reach out during and after their undergraduate experience at the U.
- When a student mentions they want to go in the conference field, as an organization we invest in assisting them in that journey. We have been lucky to hire many students once they have completed their degree.
- We invite and welcome letters of recommendation for graduate school and employment, as well as assisting students with building their resume.
- Residency is a key component of recruitment.
- Training approach teaching them professional development in the business realm
 - Email etiquette
 - Phone etiquette
 - Meeting etiquette
 - Business model from beginning to end
 - Provide them with Emergency Training and On-call training
- We have offered internships to the School of Business, PRT, and Commuter Services
- Build our program based on the student experience by allowing them to give feedback and offer suggestions to make the experience better for future student employees and future Summer Conference guests.
- The summer student staff's hard work and enthusiasm has helped the University of Utah Summer Conferences flourish.
 - Our students welcomed and hosted over 10,000 potential U of U students
 - Our student staff are trained Ambassadors for the U
- Quite often we house various University students from around the world and other campuses to showcase who we are at the U.
- Several departments bring University students to stay on campus each summer. Their students enjoy interacting with our student staff and are pleased with their stay.

Additionally, we provide an on-campus housing and conference experience for up to 10,000 potential students per summer. This is an incredible recruiting tool. Potential students get a

glimpse of the college experience here at the U. Programs last 5 days to several months. These students walk away with a positive outlook on the University of Utah and it plants the seed in their mind about attending the U in the future.