

## University Guest House and Conferences Annual Report 2019-2020

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, 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 FY20 we completed our expansion to include a new lobby and 30 new suites. We continue to partner with the campus community to support events, programs and housing.

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.

Covid-19 had had a huge impact on the Guest House and Conferences. Our business has completely disappeared. All of our conferences have canceled and we are currently under restrictions where we cannot book or hold any new events. Our hotel occupancy consists of a small amount of hospital patients and COVID-19 quarantined students. We either laid off or furloughed 60% of our staff. We are currently open and following COVID-19 state guidelines for cleanliness and food service. Needless to say, this has impacted our services levels tremendously. Despite this, we are still receiving positive feedback from our guests.

### Core Objectives:

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.

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.

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 student employees 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 30 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 2019/2020. This is our 6<sup>th</sup> 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 Utah Presents, Keep it on Campus, U Health and the Foothill Cultural District. This year we added a new marketing partnership with athletics.

COVID unfortunately has sidelined this effort, however, we are optimistic for the future once in person sport viewing returns.

We serve an average of 5000 guests and visitors each month, consisting of student parents, hospital patients, meeting attendees, department invitees, campus visitors, faculty and staff among others. In total we served 50,000 guests in 31,000 room nights.

We saved University guests, hospital patients and U families who stayed with us \$1.25 million dollars in 2019/2020 based on rate discount extended to the University community.

We provided 102 jobs to the University community, 44 full time staff and 58 part time staff.

Plan for the future:

Pre COVID: Our main challenge each year is increase in lodging and meeting opportunities on campus and in the surrounding area. We continue to be competitive and work to provide a better experience for our guests. We can capitalize on our campus connections and our ability to understand the campus needs. We have developed strong relationships with most campus entities, which is a big help. We constantly adapt to our environment with technology and amenities that make us stand out above the rest.

Our hotel expansion is complete. We now have 30 additional rooms with kitchenettes and amenities for hospital guests and visiting staff who have families and who are here for long periods, a large meeting room with capacity of 250 and an outdoor plaza for events. This expansion included a remodel to our lobby providing more space for guests to meet and created a larger area for breakfast.

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

Continuous improvement is vital to our success. We continue our hotel wide soft goods upgrade project. All rooms, meeting rooms and common spaces have been re-carpeted.

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 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.

We moved away from single use products in our breakfast service, however with COVID, we are now back to grab and go disposable until restrictions are lifted.

COVID Anticipated Challenges: The Guest House is facing some significant challenges financially. With current restriction in place both locally, University and nationally, we have seen travel severely decreased. This impacts our budget dramatically. We are working on alternative ways to bring in funds but at this point there is not much else we can do as we wait out the COVID-19 impact. Since occupancy is very low, we are looking at ways to partner with other entities on campus and in the community in ways that can fill rooms and meeting space as well as bring in additional revenue. COVID rates are a huge moving target currently and stabilization is essential before we can see progress in this area.

Keeping staff is also challenging. We have seen increased turnover this past 6 months due to fears of COVID infection, students returning home, changes in work environment and other factors.

B. Anticipated opportunities: We are looking at ways to utilize our space for hospital housing, potential classrooms space and student housing. We are transitioning our events to virtual and certifying staff in this new industry. Once restrictions are loosened, we can start hybrid meetings with both on-line and in person learning. Adaptation is the key. Finding ways to serve the community in a more distanced way while waiting for more normalcy.