

A Positive Outlook

UNLV's Hotel College Poised for the Future



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**APPLIED
ANALYSIS**

ripple effects of indirect and induced impacts are included, the southern Nevada tourism industry generates nearly \$60 billion in total economic output.

The close ties between the tourism industry and the regional economy are as evident today as they were five decades ago when the Harrah Hotel College was founded with funding from the Nevada Resort Association. Back then, Las Vegas hosted fewer than 7 million annual visitors, Nevada was the only state with legalized gambling, and the hotel college had only 16 students. The community and industry have grown tremendously since then; so too has the college, which today has 2,500 students.

The ability to tap into the world-class hospitality expertise of the local resort community has been a major contributor to the growth and success of the college, which consistently ranks among the top hotel and hospitality colleges on Earth. The college's world renown is evident in its students. Only about one in four students is from Nevada, while half hail from other states. The remaining quarter are students from international destinations, particularly Asia, ensuring that the college's influence extends not only across the country, but around the globe.

As the Harrah Hotel College celebrates its 50th year, it will soon move into a new home. The \$56 million Hospitality Hall is scheduled to open in October with classes starting in January. Located in the heart of the UNLV campus, the 93,500-square-foot building will feature multi-purpose meeting spaces, convertible classrooms, a student-run café, beverage and PGA Management laboratories and a fully equipped executive kitchen. As it has throughout the college's history, the relationship with the resort industry played an instrumental role in the new facility becoming a reality. Industry stalwarts including MGM Resorts International, Caesars Entertainment, Las Vegas Sands, Boyd Gaming, Station Casinos, and Konami Corporation, among others, gave more than \$20 million in private donations toward building construction. Governor Brian Sandoval and the Nevada State Legislature approved the remaining funding for the new building.

The state-of-the-art building will go hand-in-hand with an updated curriculum that is being reshaped under the Hospitality 2025 initiative. The program brought in dozens of hospitality companies to help evaluate the knowledge and skills that will be needed in the future. The faculty is using the program to design and develop a curriculum to ensure that students will be prepared for the tourism industry well into the next decade.

Through 50 years, the resort industry and the Harrah Hotel College have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship that has helped Las Vegas evolve and adapt to maintain its status as a world-class hospitality destination. With a new home and a new curriculum, the college is poised for another half century of collaboration and innovation that will make Las Vegas a premier entertainment and hospitality destination for decades to come.

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