

Hilton College Students Win Coveted ISES Award for 'Best Themed Event'

Written by Australian Business

HOUSTON, Sept. 20, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Hospitality students at the University of Houston's

Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management may not be in the "real" world yet, but their work is attracting some very real attention from events-industry professionals.

Gourmet Night 2013—an elegant, Wizard-of-Oz-themed evening of food and wine planned and executed entirely by Hilton College students and attended by 360 guests—recently won the Crystal ICON Award for Best Themed Event from the Houston chapter of the International Special Events Society. The Crystal ICON awards are given annually by ISES to acknowledge extraordinary efforts, performance and contributions to the Houston events industry.

The students' work went up against at least eight other themed events, all of which were produced by professionals. ISES members outside of Houston anonymously judged and selected the winners in each of the award categories.

The significance of the Crystal ICON award—the first ever won by Hilton College students—was not lost on Erin Oeser, Gourmet Night's faculty advisor and executive director.

"This is just further proof of what Hilton College students can accomplish. The fact that they can put on an event that's so impressive and compete with professionally produced events is remarkable. I couldn't be more proud," Oeser said.

Many members of the 13-student Gourmet Night team are working toward an emphasis in events while they pursue their BS in Hotel and Restaurant Management. The events track is one of eight options for undergraduate students at Hilton College.

Students pursuing the events track are encouraged to become members of professional organizations like ISES and the National Association for Catering and Events. In fact, Hilton College is home to the country's largest student chapter of NACE. In July, when NACE held its annual conference in Chicago, Curtis Bell won the national Student Member of the Year

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award—the third consecutive time the award has been given to a member of the UH Chapter.

"When students win awards from ISES and NACE, professionals take notice. The professionals know our students are the future of the events industry," Oeser said. "They're making a name for themselves and making connections that will help them get jobs."

For more information on the Conrad N. Hilton College, visit <http://www.hrm.uh.edu> .

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