

Flexible master's program helping graduate student pursue career goals

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Striving to become an upper-level or general manager, Ethan Schneider is currently pursuing his Master of Professional Studies of Hospitality Management at Penn State.

Through a combination of online and in-person classwork offered by the master's program, Schneider has been able to schedule courses around his full-time job at the Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia — something that has helped him go after his career and educational goals simultaneously.

"The flexibility of the degree has been very convenient and accommodating," Schneider said. "Since I am almost four hours away from State College, it can be difficult for me to find the time to travel for class. Only having to be on campus once a month has made it much easier to accommodate in-person classes into my schedule."

In his role at the Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Schneider is in a year-long manager-in-training program in the rooms division, which involves working with the front office and housekeeping departments.

The purpose of the manager-in-training program is to learn how departments operate and be familiar with a management job. After completing training, Schneider aims to obtain a managerial position in Philadelphia or another Four Seasons property.

"My favorite part of my job is interacting with all the different people at the Four Seasons and shadowing departments all around the hotel," Schneider said. "Seeing how every department is a piece of the puzzle that makes the entire operation function helped me gain a better perspective on everyone's role in a hotel, and it has broadened my horizons on what job I want someday."

Schneider said the inclusion of classes from Smeal College of Business in the master's program is helping him build a strong foundation in advanced hospitality management education, along with an understanding of the business world — something that he can leverage in his day-to-day job.

In the Master of Professional Studies of Hospitality Management program, students delve into profit maximization, data analytics, leading people and teams, and industry trends, all while

gaining access to the global hospitality community and learning alongside professionals from around the world.

“One of the topics that has stuck with me the most so far is the different types of leadership styles that are needed to effectively work in hospitality,” Schneider said. “I work with people of all ages and cultures, and each department has its own needs to operate effectively. I have learned that not one method will work for everyone, and a good leader must possess the ability to be flexible and know what is best for their team.”

For the Master of Professional Studies of Hospitality Management, applications to start the fall 2026 semester are due by April 2 for international students and by May 14 for domestic students. This master’s degree program is STEM designated for international students, who can receive up to three years of federally approved Occupational Practical Training (OPT) in the field upon graduation.

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