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Meaghan Flores

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Alumna Discusses Role with Kansas City Chiefs

Hospitality management program's spring industry speaker series continues on Zoom

APRIL 15, 2021 BY MEAGHAN FLORES

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UM alumna Nicole Johnson shows off her Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl ring. The graduate of the university's hospitality management program recently returned to campus to share reflections and advice with students as part of the program's spring industry speaker series. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – The hospitality management program at the **University of Mississippi** prepared Nicole Johnson so well for her professional career that she even has a Super Bowl ring to show for it.

The suite services coordinator for the NFL Kansas City Chiefs, Johnson recently returned to campus as a featured speaker in the **Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management's** spring industry speaker series. The 2018 graduate talked with students about her time at UM, the transition from college student to working professional and her position with the Chiefs.

"I love this job because there is never a dull moment," said Johnson, a Rockwall, Texas, native. "From the excitement on the field with Patrick Mahomes or just a slow day in the office with my coworkers, we operate like a family, and it's always a good time."

The speaker series continues later this week with alumni and industry friends working with the Graduate Hotels chain.

Johnson is beginning her fourth season with the Chiefs. She was working for the team during its 2020 Super Bowl run and has a ring to prove it.

In her role, Johnson manages suite accounts and hospitality partnerships, and is the main point of contact between clients and the Chiefs while also handling day-to-day needs such as invoicing and game day experiences. She is also responsible for developing, maintaining and growing clients and internal relationships through a series of VIP events, partnerships and gifting strategies.

While attending UM, Johnson was able to apply what she was learning in the classroom to an internship with Ole Miss Premium Services.

"My courses through the NHM program taught me how hospitality industries function, and my internship with Ole Miss Premium Services helped me apply this education to real-life situations that would mirror exactly what I ended up doing my first year with the Kansas City Chiefs," she said. "Being able to work on all sports and expand my knowledge with premium game day experiences gave me the necessary resume to enter the NFL as a seasonal assistant."

A part of the **School of Applied Sciences**, the hospitality management program's curriculum is designed to enhance and strengthen students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills so they can meet and adapt to the various needs of the hospitality industry.

Students gain knowledge of the industry through diverse educational opportunities, including study abroad, educational field trips to surrounding businesses and 600-hours of pre-internship and internship work experiences in the hospitality industry. Hospitality management students also operate **Lenoir Dining**, a student-run restaurant in Lenoir Hall.

"Nicole is a great success story, and she shows how the strong education and experience components of Ole Miss' hospitality management program, along with her personal goals, passion and drive, have led to her success," said Mary Roseman, director of the program and professor of nutrition and hospitality management.

"Nicole is using her critical thinking, management, operations, interpersonal and communication skills she developed and expanded while in the HM program. Her role with the Kansas City Chiefs is amazing, and I am so proud of what she has accomplished since graduating."

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Ole Miss In the News

Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

Johnson's advice for students in the program is to get involved during college and make the most of their time at Ole Miss.

"Don't wait; whatever career you are interested in, you need to start getting your foot in that door now with internships, informational interviews and LinkedIn connections," she said. "Utilize the free time you have in college to set yourself up for a better career path.

"Ole Miss is one of the best-known schools in the SEC, so take advantage of the connections and opportunities given to you."

The spring speaker series features alumni and industry friends of the hospitality management program. The next series event on Zoom will be at 3 p.m. Friday (April 16), with Jen Davis, director of global accounts and business development with Graduate Hotels; Kevin Klein, general manager of the Graduate Oxford; and Mandy Wells, associate director of sales at the Graduate Oxford.



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