Mission:
The Office of Tourism Analysis is one of the Centers of Excellence in the School of Business at the College of Charleston. The Office is counseled and advised by industry and community leaders charged with proposing the office's research priorities. The Office collaborates mainly with the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau to implement a series of competitiveness research and monitoring programs and disseminates such information to decision-makers and stakeholders in the Lowcountry's hospitality and tourism industry.

Grants Totaling Over $173,000:
1. Charleston Hospitality Performance Tracking Project
2. Inntopia/CACVB Grant
3. Geyer Morris Hotel Impact Project
4. Summerville YMCA Flowertown Festival Project
Wayne Smith, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Dr. Smith worked with the OTA on surveying Charleston residents' attitude toward tourism, funded by the Center for Public Choice & Market Process.

Robert Frash, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Dr. Frash works with the OTA on his research of the impact of the Taste of Charleston and the Lowcountry Oyster Festival events.

John Crotts, Ph.D.
Professor

Dr. Crotts has worked with the OTA on surveying Charleston residents' attitude toward tourism development.

Steve Litvin, Ph.D.
Professor

Dr. Litvin works with the OTA on allocating Charleston accommodation taxes for the Charleston County Council.

Brumby McLeod, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Dr. McLeod works with the OTA on benchmarking vacation rental market performance and the impact of 2nd home and AirBnB.

Frank Hefner, Ph.D.
Professor

Dr. Hefner works with the OTA on forecasting hospitality performance and various other economic impact studies.
Student Researchers

Hunter Gaffney
'18 Hospitality & Tourism Management and Business Administration

Abbey Ucci
'20 Hospitality & Tourism Management

Patrick Crotty
'20 Economics and Political Science

Honors Thesis Students
Reagan Sobel & Laura McIlvain

High School Volunteer
Anthony Leadem
Public Talks

Daniel Guttentag
Social Media and Sales. Presented to SMG K'nekt Consummate Sales Training Class.
August 22, 2017

Hospitality and tourism at the College of Charleston. Presented to the Espírito Santo Brazilian Delegation.
November 3, 2017

Studying hospitality and tourism at the College of Charleston. Presented to Multicultural Overnight Visit Experience Students.
February 2, 2018

May 8, 2018

Melinda Patience
February 27, 2017

Academic Exchanges

Melinda Patience
Attended the Qualtrics Insight Summit and Certification Training in Salt Lake City, UT, Mar. 6–8, 2018.
Charleston Hotel Inventory Tracking: We continually keep track of hotel room inventory in the Charleston area.

Quarterly Barometer Report of Charleston Area's Hospitality Performance: We produced a quarterly report of Charleston’s hospitality performance compared to that of the nation and competing cities.

Charleston County accommodation tax distribution, FY 2019: Working with CACVB and Dr. Steve Litvin, we completed Charleston County accommodation tax distribution evaluation in June 2018.

Historic Weekly and Monthly Hotel Performance Benchmarking: We created a calendar comparing hotel performance in the Charleston area with events in Charleston.


Charleston Area Visitor Inquiry Study: We completed the 2017 Charleston Area Visitor Inquiry Study in May 2018.

Charleston tourism impact study of 2017: We completed the Charleston tourism impact study of 2017 in March 2018.


Hospitality Workforce Benefits Study: We performed an online survey of hospitality HR professionals in Charleston to gather feedback about the benefits to Charleston hospitality workers in December 2017.

Lowcountry Jazz Festival Impact Study: We performed an online survey of attendees of the 2018 Lowcountry Jazz Festival and calculated the economic impact of the event.

Economic Impact of the 2018 Charleston Wine+Food Festival: We performed an online survey of attendees of the 2018 Charleston Wine+Food Festival and calculated the economic impact of the event.

Quarterly Monitoring of Airbnb Growth: We compiled data for quarterly reports of Airbnb inventory and performance.

Lowcountry Oyster Festival Attendee Experience Survey: We used a team of students to survey attendees of the 2018 Lowcountry Oyster Festival in January 2018.

Economic Impact of the Eclipse: We completed an economic impact analysis of the Eclipse event in August 2017.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort Economic Impact: We completed an economic impact analysis of the Kiawah Island Golf Resort in March 2018.

Hospitality Workforce Wage Study: We created a dashboard comparing the wages of over 200 hospitality hourly positions in Charleston to 15 competitive cities across the United States.

Hospitality Program Curriculum Analysis: We completed a comparative analysis of university hospitality programs across the United States.

Short-term Rental Inventory Tracking & Compliance: We completed a pilot study of short-term rental inventory and compliance tracking using STR Helper for Folly Beach, SC in conjunction with the Riley Center for Livable Communities.

Geyer Morris Hotel Impact Project: To be completed in June 2018 – an economic impact analysis of a new hotel project in Charleston, SC.

Summerville YMCA Flowertown Festival Impact Project: To be completed June 2018 – an economic impact analysis of the 2018 Flowertown Festival.
**2016 Charleston Area Visitor Intercept Survey Report**

A survey of visitors to the Charleston tri-county area revealed important demographic and behavioral patterns. More than 300 survey responses revealed that the visitors are mainly 50 years or older with the “Baby Boomer” age group dominating. There is also a peak in the early 40+ group, indicating business travelers. The respondents are most likely to be college educated, married or living with a partner, and have upper-middle income; they are mainly from adjacent states. Ethnically, Caucasians dominate the visitor population with very few other ethnicities. More than half of Charleston visitors are repeat guests. They spent an average of $799 per adult per trip, with $227 per adult per day locally. Most of them are extremely satisfied with their visits. They enjoyed the history of Charleston and food, and disliked humidity and parking. Most likely they will visit the Charleston City Market, historic houses, waterfront parks, beaches, and historic plantations. Most importantly, we also learned that most Charleston visitors also visited Mt. Pleasant, West of the Ashley, North Charleston, Isle of Palms, Kiawah Island, and Folly Beach. The average number of cities/areas visited is about 3. The average traveling party sizes of 2–3 adults without kids remained consistent year-over-year. The adoption of mobile technology and social media was increasing significantly among Charleston visitors. These results show that Charleston continues to attract an affluent visitor group. The CACVB continues to play a significant role in attracting visitors and helping them plan their trip.

**Charleston Area Beach Communities Vacation Rental Reporting**

In 2016, the Charleston Area Beach Communities Vacation Rental Reporting project continued to document the changes and growth in the vacation rental market. The annual average total occupancy for 2016 was 57.0% (a decrease of 2.6% over 2015) and the average sold occupancy was 42.8% (up 6.7% over 2015). In terms of rates and revenue, the average daily rate was $330.05 (up 1.0% over 2015) which brought in $141.17 in revenue per available unit.

**Charleston County Accommodation Tax Distribution, Fiscal Year 2016–2017**

Thirty-five applications for accommodation tax grants were submitted to Charleston County for fiscal year 2015–2016. These applications were evaluated based on economic impact (50%), community impact (10%), media impact (20%), and an overall panel judgment (20%). The scores from each of these categories were combined for an overall score. These scores were then used to determine our recommendation to Charleston County as to what percentage of the available $300,000 in accommodation tax grant money the applicant would receive.

**Estimation of Tourism Economic Impacts in the Charleston Area, 2016**

In 2016, the Charleston area welcomed an estimated 5.44 million visitors. These visitors attributed to an estimated $1.8 billion in labor earnings. Visitors spent an average of $227 per visitor per day and generated $8.7 million in lodging sales. Just under 10% of Tri-County sales can be attributed to tourism. Overall, Charleston area visitors generated a total economic impact of over $4.2 billion.
Charleston Area Ranked No. 1 City in the U.S. and Canada
WCBD News 2 7/11/17
The No. 1 rankings continue to positively impact tourism, the number one economic driver to the Charleston area. Since 2012, the first year Charleston was awarded the No. 1 City in the U.S. and Canada ranking in the Travel + Leisure World’s Best Awards, the total economic impact of tourism is $4.2 billion according to a study in 2016 by the Office of Tourism Analysis at the College of Charleston.

Latest Charleston County Hotel Report Shows Continued Strength
Post and Courier 7/24/17
Charleston's hotel industry remains strong amid continued growth, according to the latest report from the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis. In May and June, 186 more rooms were on the market in Charleston County than a year earlier, bringing the total number to 16,177. But the number of nights sold was up 3.6 percent in May, 0.5 percent in June and 2.3 percent for the year.

Charleston's Tourism Amenities Also Attract Industry, According to Panelists
Post and Courier 7/25/17
... hotel occupancy in Charleston County rose from 71 percent in 2012 to 76 percent in 2016, according to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis.

Study Finds Charleston's Hospitality Workers Are Overburdened by High Cost of Parking Downtown
Post and Courier 7/30/17
A recent survey conducted by the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis indicates that about 60 percent of downtown Charleston's restaurant and hotel workers live outside the peninsula, and regardless of where they live, 80 percent drive their cars to work alone.

As Sea Levels Rise, Changes to the Low Battery Will Likely Reverberate Across the City
Charleston City Paper 7/31/17
The Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce and the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis keep track of the economic impact of tourism, but none of them had any figures on the impact of weddings when contacted last week. To put 5,000 weddings in context, though, tourism officials estimated 5.1 million visitors to Charleston in 2015, for an economic impact of $3.7 billion and 41,000 jobs.

Date changes For 2021 PGA Championship at Kiawah Island
Post and Courier 8/8/17
Dye-designed Ocean Course had an estimated economic impact of $193 million, according to the PGA and College of Charleston Office of Tourism Analysis.

Restaurant Workers Unsatisfied With Charleston's Temporary Solution for High Parking Costs Downtown
Post and Courier 8/14/17
About 7,700 hotel and restaurant employees work downtown, according to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis. Its recent survey found that about 80 percent of those workers drive to their jobs.

Open House For Renovated Charleston Waterfront Hotel Includes Donation For Cancer Patients
Post and Courier 8/14/17
County hotel occupancy and room rates continued to surpass the previous year in July, according to the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis.
Media Coverage

Lawsuit Against Charleston's Tour Guide License Rule Proceeds After Judge Refuses to Settle It
Post and Courier 9/25/17
He cites a 2016 study by the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis that "the Charleston area's history and historic attractions have remained and will presumably continue to be the most important factor in visitors' decision to visit Charleston." 5 million last year, a 22 percent jump, according to the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis.

The race to find equity and accountability for short-term rentals
Charleston City Paper 9/27/17
According to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis, visitors to the Charleston tri-county area are most likely to be white, college graduates earning an upper-middle income. On average, tourists in Charleston spent $944 per adult per trip in 2015.

Coast is Clear: South Carolina's Tourism Industry Working to Make Up Losses After Storm Scares
Post and Courier 9/30/17
At least partly as a result of the publicity, the number of visitors to Charleston swelled from 4.22 million in 2010 to 5.15 million last year, a 22 percent jump, according to the College of Charleston Office of Tourism Analysis. Charleston has also gained a reputation as an international food destination.

Charleston Tourism Hit Hard by Scare from Tropical Storm Irma
Post and Courier 10/25/17
Hurricane Irma’s cone of uncertainty last month took a hefty chunk out of the local tourism business, according to figures from the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis.

Is a Park and Ride The Answer to Hospitality Workers' Parking Woes?
Charleston City Paper 11/3/17
Seekings' early guess is that the area allotted for the park and ride will likely max out at 250 spaces. Of course, according to College of Charleston's July Office of Tourism Analysis, roughly 7,700 are employed by the city's 345 food and beverage establishments and 45 hotels. And Seekings is realistic that this one lot won't be able to cover them all. But this is a start that he hopes will lead to a push for more park and rides.

Hotels Offer Perks if You Book Direct. But Should You?
USA Today 12/3/17
"We've certainly seen a trend of hotels increasingly using perks, guarantees, and advertising to encourage more direct booking and wrestle business back from the online travel agencies," says Daniel Guttentag, the director of the Office of Tourism Analysis at the College of Charleston. The reason is simple. Direct bookings allow a hotel to keep more money because it doesn't have to pay commissions to an agent.

The Perks of Booking Direct With Hotels vs Using a Discount Middleman
Born2Invest 12/24/17
"We've certainly seen a trend of hotels increasingly using perks, guarantees, and advertising to encourage more direct booking and wrestle business back from the online travel agencies," says Daniel Guttentag, the director of the Office of Tourism Analysis at the College of Charleston. The reason is simple. Direct bookings allow a hotel to keep more money because it doesn't have to pay commissions to an agent.
Media Coverage

Grapevine: Santee Cooper Doubles Down on Lobbyists to Tell its Side of The Nuke Story  
*Post and Courier 2/5/18*  
In Charleston County, for instance, the market grew 284 guest rooms at the end of 2017 compared to a year earlier, according to the College of Charleston Office of Tourism Analysis.

The F&BUS is Glenn Morehead's Answer to The Service Industry's Parking Woes.  
*Charleston City Paper 2/12/18*  
According to a College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis study, 60 percent of downtown restaurant and hotel employees live outside the peninsula, and they pay greatly for it. Many fork over between $25 to $100 a month for parking.

Charleston Hospitality Leaders Announce New Plans to Recruit Workers  
*Post and Courier 2/28/18*  
The college's Office of Tourism Analysis recently completed a wage study of 200 hospitality positions in 18 cities. For instance, Charleston is No. 8 in terms of pay for a hotel desk clerk, at $11.37 an hour for someone with a year’s experience.

Downtown Charleston Workers Dread Higher Parking Fees, But New Bus Service Could Offer Solution  
*Post and Courier 3/7/18*  
About 7,700 hotel and restaurant employees work downtown, according to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis. Its survey last year found that about 80 percent of those workers drive to their jobs, and most end up paying for parking.

Charleston Workers Planning Action as Parking Meter Rates are Set to Double and Enforcement Expands  
*Charleston City Paper 3/8/18*  
According to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis, roughly 7,700 people are employed by the city’s 345 food and beverage establishments and 45 hotels. A hospitality workforce parking survey by the College found that 38.2 percent of the 503 respondents had gotten at least one parking citation in the past year.

Charleston Visitor Count Up Sharply as Short-Term Renters are Added to Mix  
*Post and Courier 3/14/18*  
The estimate from the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis is a 27 percent increase from the 2016 estimate of 5.44 million visitors. In addition to short-term rentals, the report includes a better count of beach rentals.

City Defends Parking Meter Increase as Downtown Employees Turn Out in Protest  
*Charleston City Paper 3/14/18*  
According to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis, roughly 7,700 people are employed by the city’s 345 food and beverage establishments and 45 hotels.

No Parking Downtown? No problem, North Charleston Mayor Says in Video  
*Post and Courier 3/15/18*  
About 7,700 hotel and restaurant employees work downtown, according to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis. Its survey last year found that...
Media Coverage

Kiawah Resort unveils 'Kiawah 2.0'
*Charleston Regional Business 3/21/18*

According to a study by the College of Charleston Office of Tourism Analysis, Kiawah Island Golf Resort currently makes a $202 million economic impact on the region. Warren said he predicts that when the new projects are complete, the resort could have an economic impact up to $500 million.

Editorial: Putting Numbers on Charleston's Short-Term Rental Problem
*Post and Courier 3/24/18*

About 6.9 million people visited Charleston last year, according to the College of Charleston Office of Tourism Analysis. That's a 27 percent increase over the

Faculty Member Uses Data to Help Inform Tourism Decisions, Improve Local Economy
*Penn State News 4/9/18*

Pan conducted extensive consulting work with the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau in his previous position as director of the Office of Tourism Analysis at the College of Charleston. The Charleston Area Tourism Bureau requested the study as the agency is researching ways to increase the presence of low-budget airlines in Charleston. Officials believe such an approach could increase tourism and boost the economy. In a separate study, Pan worked with Yang Yang at Temple University to determine the best modeling technique for forecasting weekly hotel occupancy combined with big data sources and validated the most accurate time series model. "Big data can help the hospitality industry predict the future more accurately and thus allocate resources or hire part-time employees accordingly. This leads to saved cost and increased profit for hotels," Pan said.

Charleston Wine + Food Festival Celebrates Record-Setting Attendance
*Post and Courier 4/12/18*

Record-setting attendance at this year's Charleston Wine + Food Festival translated to more than $15 million in economic impact for the Charleston area, according to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis.

The Past Week in the Charleston Economy
*Post and Courier 4/15/18*

Charleston County's Hotel Occupancy Rebounds After January Snowstorm Closed Airport
*Post and Courier 4/22/18*

Charleston County's hotel occupancy took a slight hit from the January snowstorm but recovered quickly, according to a report from the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis.
Questions or Comments?

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