2022 • 2023
Office of Tourism Analysis
ANNUAL REPORT

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Mission Statement

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 & Fellowships (Totaling Over $175,000):

- Charleston Area Convention & Visitor Bureau
- Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce
- South Carolina Aquarium
- Charleston Wine+Food
- Patriots Point
- SC Department of Natural Resources
Staff

Daniel Guttentag, Ph.D.
Director and Assistant Professor

Melinda Patience
Research Coordinator & Analyst

Affiliated Faculty Members

Steve Litvin, D.B.A.
Professor
Dr. Litvin works with the OTA on allocating Charleston accommodation taxes for the Charleston County Council.

Robert Frash, Ph.D.
Professor
Dr. Frash works with the OTA on his research of the restaurant industry and motorcycle tourism.

Frank Hefner, Ph.D.
Professor
Dr. Hefner works with the OTA on forecasting hospitality performance and various other economic impact studies.

Brumby McLeod, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Dr. McLeod works with the OTA on short-term rental regulations and their impact on communities.

Mark Witte Ph.D.
Professor
Dr. Witte works with the OTA on forecasting hospitality performance and will serve as Interim Director in 2023-2024.

Blake Scott, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Dr. Scott works with the OTA on collecting oral histories related to Charleston’s tourism growth.
Student Staff

Marin Roberts
'26 BS in Hospitality & Tourism Management

Sara O'Brien
'25 BS in Hospitality & Tourism Management

Nick Matthews
'24 BS in Hospitality & Tourism Management
2022–2023 Project List & Descriptions

- **Weekly and monthly hospitality performance reports, 2022-2023**: We regularly reported weekly and monthly hospitality performance metrics.
- **Charleston Hotel Inventory Tracking**: We continually kept track of hotel room inventory in the Charleston area.
- **Charleston Area Visitor Inquiry Study**: We continuously ran the Charleston Area Visitor Inquiry survey throughout the year.
- **Charleston Tourism Impact Study of 2022**: We completed a Charleston tourism impact study of 2022.
- **Demand360 Committed Occupancy Analysis**: We used monthly data from Demand360 to generate committed occupancy reports for Charleston County.
- **Charleston County Hospitality Forecast 2023**: We completed a forecast of hotel performance for Charleston and the Peninsula for 2023.
- **Charleston County FY 2024 Accommodations Tax Grants Recommendations**: We analyzed and scored applications for FY 2024 Charleston County accommodations tax grants and made funding recommendations to the committee.
- **Taxes & Fees Paid by Land Use Study**: We completed an analysis of taxes and fees paid based on different types of land use.
- **Hilton Head Island Tourism Impact Study of 2022**: We completed a Hilton Head Island tourism impact study of 2022.
- **Bluffton Tourism Impact Study of 2022**: We completed a Bluffton tourism impact study of 2022.
- **Beaufort County tourism impact study of 2022**: We completed a Beaufort County tourism impact study of 2022.
- **Hospitality Workforce Wage Study**: We maintained a dashboard comparing the wages of over 200 hourly hospitality positions in Charleston to 15 comparable cities across the United States.
- **Short-term Rental Inventory & Performance Tracking**: We continually kept track of short-term rental inventory and performance in the Charleston area through various data sources.
- **Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum**: We began surveying visitors of Patriots Point.
- **South Carolina Aquarium**: We conducted an economic impact analysis of the South Carolina Aquarium.
- **Lowcountry Oyster Festival Survey**: We surveyed attendees of the 2023 Lowcountry Oyster Festival.
- **Southeastern Wildlife Expo Survey**: We surveyed attendees of the 2023 Southeastern Wildlife Expo.
- **Charleston Wine+Food Festival Survey**: We surveyed attendees, volunteers, partners, exhibitors, and talent of the 2023 Charleston Wine+Food Festival.
- **Credit One Charleston Open**: We surveyed attendees of the 2023 Credit One Charleston Open.
- **South Carolina Marina Study**: We began surveying transient boaters who had used South Carolina marinas that had been supported by the Boating Infrastructure Grant program.
Media Coverage

Charleston’s airport saw busy July 4 weekend
Counton2.com July 5, 2022

“Once we get those numbers and we look back at this weekend, we’re going to see numbers that really resemble pre-pandemic,” says Daniel Guttentag, Director of Tourism Analysis at the College of Charleston. “In other words, what we were experiencing in 2019 if not even a little bit higher.”

And while hotel and restaurant numbers are unofficial at this point, Charleston International Airport officially had a record-breaking 4th of July weekend. More than 43,000 passengers flew out of the airport, breaking the previous record set back in 2019.

“The airport’s numbers are up and so are we,” says Neal.

“Having the airport busier than ever before so the fly market is definitely back,” says Guttentag.

TEN, COUNT ‘EM, TEN! Magazine names Charleston No.1 city in the U.S. for the 10th consecutive year
Charleston City Paper July 12, 2022

The total economic impact of the tourism industry in the Charleston area grew to a record $10.6 billion in 2021, according to a recent report by College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis.

Charleston named No. 1 city in US for 10th straight year by Travel + Leisure magazine
The Post and Courier July 12, 2022

College of Charleston hospitality professor Daniel Guttentag said the consecutive string of accolades punctuates what the city has achieved as a visitor destination. “It’s something to get on the list one time, but to be on the list for a whole decade and be No. 1 each time and have a pandemic happen and still remain on top, it’s really an achievement to be proud of,” said Guttentag, director of the school’s Office of Tourism Analysis.

The impact of the streak is hard to quantify, but he said it certainly helps in raising the area’s profile among leisure travelers.

“We are no longer a regional destination that people drive to,” Guttentag said. “We are attracting people from all across the country and all over the world. The airport has more flights than ever from new places, and it’s busier than ever before. People who weren’t thinking about Charleston 15 years ago now are.”

Plans for a new bridge to Hilton Head create division
The Post and Courier August 26, 2022

In 2021, tourism had a $2.8 billion economic impact on Beaufort County, the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism analysis found.
Media Coverage

Charleston’s tourism machine: Lack of scrutiny, accountability keeps public in dark about millions of taxpayer dollars spent every year
The Post and Courier           September 24, 2022

Charleston now boasts of bringing in 7 million tourists a year, up by 2 million since 2015, according to statistics from the College of Charleston Office of Tourism analysis. That’s nine tourists for every resident in the metro area.

Tourism experts predict Charleston to see a strong year in 2023
The Post and Courier           December 30, 2022

Daniel Guttentag, who leads the Tourism Analysis Office at the College of Charleston, said “2023 is shaping up to be a strong year.” Guttentag’s office tracks metrics for visitation and travel spending and monitors the performance and growth of Charleston County’s lodging inventory.

“All indications point to trends returning to pre-pandemic levels,” Guttentag said. “We saw stabilization in hotel occupancy rates over the last year, and I expect 2023 to be on par with that.”

Commentary: Reimagine a Charleston tourism industry that benefits residents
The Post and Courier           January 5, 2023

When I moved to South Carolina to teach at the College of Charleston, I began to see some of the same social and environmental currents emerging here. According to the college’s Office of Tourism Analysis, more than 7 million tourists annually visit the city. Likewise, 28 people move to the tri-county area every day. Tourism, lifestyle migration and development are intimately entangled.

Charleston County opens applications process for local accommodations tax funding
Holy City Sinner              January 18, 2023

The applications are reviewed by the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis for the tourism impact (including economic, media, marketing, and community impacts). The allocations must be used by June 30, 2024.

SEWE impact on tourism reaches beyond peninsula
Post and Courier              February 15, 2023

Daniel Guttentag, director of the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis, said that SEWE’s impact is two-fold. There’s the actual dollars spent at SEWE, and there’s the dollars that will pour into the region from SEWE attendees dining at downtown restaurants, staying at area hotels, shopping in local stores and visiting other local attractions.

Guttentag said that previous studies have shown that SEWE attracts not only a lot of out-of-town visitors but also a lot of repeat visitors. The economic impact is more far-reaching than the peninsula where the event is held.
Another successful SEWE: signs point to strong kickoff to visitor season - Post and Courier
Post and Courier February 26, 2023

Daniel Guttentag, director of the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis, said what struck him as statistically significant is that occupancy was consistent across the county.

“While much of the festival is centered around the peninsula, we saw the same substantial spike and ripple effect county-wide,” Guttentag said. “The number of room nights and the average daily rate was also up, meaning not only were the hotels fuller but they were bringing in more per room sold. That’s a reflection of the demand we saw.”

Charleston ranked No. 1 in lifestyle magazine Southern Living’s annual awards
ABCNews4.com March 8, 2023

According to the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis, the total economic impact of the tourism industry in the Charleston area grew to $10.6 billion in 2021.

‘Southern Living’ names Charleston best city in the South
Charleston City Paper March 8, 2023

With tourism as one of Charleston’s most prominent economic drivers — contributing to over 23% of area sales in 2021, according to the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis — this year’s accolade further bolsters the city’s reputation as an ideal spot for travelers.

2 of Charleston’s biggest sporting events continue visitor momentum
Post and Courier March 31, 2023

What do you get when you combine spring break season with the week that hosts what Charleston tourism experts call “two of Charleston’s iconic spring events?” The answer is a spike in occupancy and hotel rates across the county, said Daniel Guttentag, from the College of Charleston’s Tourism Analysis Office.

“These next two weekends are typically at 90 percent occupancy across the county, which is a really strong demand,” he said. “We see that demand and secondary ripple effects continue after the events are over, meaning many may come specifically for the event, but they stay in hotels or short-term rentals and enjoy Charleston’s restaurants, shops and other tourism activities.”

Guttentag said that the exposure and publicity the city gets from these events are important in establishing the image of Charleston as a tourism destination to new potential visitors.

SC resort seeks more rooms at Patriots Point hotel
Post and Courier April 1, 2023

Mount Pleasant has experienced the fastest growth in hotel rooms over the last five years, according to Daniel Guttentag, director of the College of Charleston’s Tourism Analysis Office.
What role do European volunteers play in Africa?
DW.com April 18, 2023

Research by Daniel Guttentag, a tourism expert, reveals that volunteer tourism has a negative impact. Since many volunteer projects involve unskilled labor, unemployed locals could easily take these jobs.

As tourism impact hits record $12.8B, Charleston seeks to balance visitors, preservation
Post and Courier May 20, 2023

The hospitality trade had a record-breaking $12.8 billion economic impact on the region last year, a new College of Charleston study found — about $3.15 billion more than in 2019, the year before the onset of the global health crisis. The figure is up $2.2 billion from 2021.

The number of visitors also climbed to a new high, rising more than 6 percent to 7.7 million last year.

“All signs point to a healthy tourism economy,” said Daniel Guttentag, director of the college’s Office of Tourism Analysis, which compiles the annual data. “We’ve returned to where we were before the pandemic, along the trend line of where we should have been in 2021 had COVID never happened.”

SC Aquarium making a bigger economic splash, new study finds
Post and Courier May 24, 2023

The annual economic splash created by the S.C. Aquarium and the visitors it helps draw to Charleston and the state each year has climbed to nearly $414 million, a 46 percent increase compared to a decade ago, according to new study.

The “ripple effect” report by the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis was released May 24. It measured operations at the 23-year-old waterfront Concord Street attraction and spending by the estimated 500,000 guests who check out the centerpiece “Great Ocean Tank” and other exhibits each year.

The total statewide economic impact has grown by more than $130 million since the previous study was conducted in 2013.

Charleston area’s bus system hitting the beach again
Post and Courier May 28, 2023

Looking at hotel occupancy averages since 2019, the weekend before and after the holiday already set the bar high at its seasonal 90 percent occupancy, according to Daniel Guttentag, director of the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis.

“We see a slight uptick in occupancy Friday through Saturday during Memorial Day weekend, but the real spike is on Sunday because visitors extend their stay an extra day before heading home Monday,” Guttentag said. “Sunday’s occupancy rate jumps from its typical 63 percent to 90 percent.”
Charleston area sees record-breaking year for tourism in 2022
Live5 News May 30, 2023

The report “Estimation of Tourism’s Economic Impacts in the Greater Charleston Area, 2022” from the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis states 2022’s earnings were a 21% increase over 2021.

The report gets its findings by looking at visitor volume in Charleston County and by conducting an ongoing survey that asks visitors how much money they spend and how they’re spending it while they’re visiting.

“When we looked back at 2022, we saw some modest growth in terms of the number of visitors, so we were up about 6% from the year before 2021, and about 3% from where we’d been in 2019,” Daniel Guttentag, the director of College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis, said. “But then compounding this slow increase in visitors, we saw increases in the amount that these visitors are spending and then further compounding that we also see the secondary effects of all that economic activity as well.”

5/31 NEWSBREAK: Charleston Area has record-breaking tourism Year
Charleston City Paper May 31, 2023

The economic impact of tourism on the Charleston area hit a record high of $12.8 billion in 2022, nearly a quarter of the overall region’s economy and a 21% increase over 2021, according to a new College of Charleston (CofC) study.

“When we looked back at 2022, we saw some modest growth in terms of the number of visitors, so we were up about 6% from the year before 2021, and about 3% from where we’d been in 2019,” said Daniel Guttentag, director of CofC’s Office of Tourism Analysis in a WCSC TV story. “But then compounding this slow increase in visitors, we saw increases in the amount that these visitors are spending and then further compounding that we also see the secondary effects of all that economic activity as well.”

Hicks: Tourism has its good points — 12.8 billion of them, in fact
Post and Courier June 4, 2023

Daniel Guttentag, director of the College of Charleston’s Office of Tourism Analysis, says the most interesting fact from its report is how the economic benefit is growing more quickly than the number of visitors.

In 2022, the area hosted 7.68 million tourists — 250,000 more than the pre-pandemic record. But their annual economic impact has grown by more than $3 billion in four years.

“The number of visitors is increasing, but not at the same clip as economic impact,” Guttentag says.
Questions or Comments?

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