

**For Immediate Release
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Tourism Toronto announces scholarships at 10 Ontario colleges and universities

TORONTO, ON – Tourism Toronto announced a new series of academic awards today to help develop the next generation of leaders in tourism and hospitality.

Representing the tourism industry across Greater Toronto, Tourism Toronto is providing \$30,000 in awards across 10 schools of tourism and hospitality in southern Ontario. At the organization's annual meeting today, the first recipients were announced to more than 700 members of Toronto's tourism industry.

"We have an opportunity to connect today's tourism leaders with some of the most promising students who will help make Toronto an even more exciting place to visit," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto.

The awards are administered by each school, targeting exceptional students who plan to work in the Toronto region to enhance Toronto's appeal as a travel destination. The awards span a range of tourism businesses including hotel management, culinary management and chefs, event planning, tourism business management and cultural heritage.

"Each award potentially represents another top student who can continue to pursue tourism as a career," said Shyam Ranganathan, Dean, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culture at Centennial College and Chair of the Heads of Hospitality and Tourism in Ontario Colleges. "This kind of strong partnership between tourism schools and tourism businesses is essential for the tourism sector to develop the talent it will need to grow and thrive."

According to the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, Ontario will face a labour shortage of 40,000 workers in the tourism sector by the year 2015.

"Working closely with highly regarded schools in our region is one way to help ensure more top students build their careers right here in Toronto and Ontario," said Mr. Whitaker.

The scholarships form a key pillar of Tourism Toronto's corporate social responsibility program, along with environmental initiatives and programs to support local families in need.

"Our commitment to training and development doesn't stop when students graduate. To help graduates enter the tourism business we provide internships across a wide range of disciplines including public relations, sales, marketing and human resources," said Mr. Whitaker.

Tourism Toronto, Toronto's Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,200 members established to sell and market the Greater Toronto Region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travelers around the globe. For more information please visit www.torontotourism.com.

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