



U.S. Language Services L.L.C.
info@uslanguageservices.com | +1-240-673-2933
3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 700
Bethesda, Maryland, 20814 - USA



Statement of Purpose Sample

Cornell Master of Management in Hospitality

My grandfather started a basic lodging inn in the lobstering town of Bar Harbor back in the '50s. It was a modest wooden two-story where sailors and lobstermen could get a clean room and supper on the Maine coast. I never got to meet my grandfather, but I feel like I've gotten to know him because I basically grew up in that inn. My parents run what is now called the Bar Harbor Hotel, and we have modernized a bit, added a restaurant, and want to someday open additional locations. At the moment, things are going okay. We want them to be going better. I think attending the Cornell School of Hotel Administration could make that happen.

Save for my four years at the University of Maine, I have worked at the hotel in some capacity since I was a boy, but ironically, it was never assumed that I would take over operations. My parents never forced the idea on me, and though I liked to help, I never felt like I understood the details as well as my dad did. I didn't want to do a poor job. When I went off to college, I hoped that my experiences working at the hotel might somehow help me in my classes. I thought I'd eventually work in another field of business, just not hotels.

That changed while I was at UMaine. Other students labored through our Finance and Business Administration courses, but I was fascinated. Despite my experience working in basically every area of the hotel, I couldn't believe how much I didn't know when it came to basics like employee retention, pricing models, and accounting. There was so much to learn, and it could transfer over into the real world, my family's world in Bar Harbor.

The culmination of this experience was a guest lecture by Cornell professor Timothy Hinkin. He was gracious enough to speak to the school's Business majors for nearly two hours, and not only did he present his material in an engaging and interesting way, but he talked specifically about hospitality management and the hotel industry. Despite being in an audience of well over 100 students, I felt like he was speaking directly to me.

After that day, my studies took on a new focus. I started researching post-graduate programs, namely the Cornell Master of Management in Hospitality. Though I had two more years before earning my Bachelor's Degree, I now had a longer-term goal. I still worked summers at the hotel, but things were different. I was invigorated.



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I first floated the idea of attending the Cornell program to my parents last year, and they were of course supportive, if not a bit surprised. “Where was all this ambition when you were supposed to order the produce for the restaurant last week?” my mom joked. I had always wanted to do a good job at the hotel, but just wasn’t sure how to best accomplish that. Now I see the route forward.

I am proud of my University of Maine GPA, especially my grades in the business classes, but I believe that I can do even better. Our hotel went through some difficult years following the Great Financial Crisis and more recently during the pandemic. The hotel’s business model eventually adapted and found direction. I am seeking to do the same at Cornell.

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