

WE DEFINE THE *Future*



PRESS RELEASE

5-30-24

Contact: Mike Singer

(760) 341-2883, ext. 78107

msinger@csusb.edu



From left, David Pacheco, Cristian Cabrera, General Manager Shannon Gilbert, Sofia Torres-Crespo, Baldomero Felix and Joseph Tormey at The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage.

CSUSB alumni shine at The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage

PALM DESERT, Calif. – In the picturesque Coachella Valley, The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage has become a beacon of opportunity for graduates from Cal State San Bernardino and its Palm Desert Campus.

Four recent alumni — David Pacheco, Baldomero Felix, Cristian Cabrera and Sofia Torres-Crespo — have discovered their calling at this luxury resort, bringing with them a blend of education, passion and the drive to excel.

Pacheco, who graduated in 2023 with a degree in business administration, quickly found his place at The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage as a human resources clerk.

“At The Ritz-Carlton, I’ve learned a lot and met great people,” Pacheco said. His role includes assisting with onboarding new employees and making sure they feel welcomed and comfortable.

“The Ritz is a luxury property, so I had a bit of learning to do when I first started. However, after being here for three months, I feel right at home,” said Pacheco.

For those aspiring to work at a luxury resort like The Ritz-Carlton, Pacheco stressed the importance of acquiring experience in the hotel industry.

“We have a saying here: We get the top 1% of ladies and gentlemen at The Ritz-Carlton,” he said.

Felix, who graduated in 2022 with a degree in business administration and a minor in hospitality management, has been a manager-in-training for nearly a year and a half. His training has allowed him to work in various departments, providing a comprehensive understanding of the workings of The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage.

“I got this amazing opportunity to be a manager-in-training here at The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage for the last 17 months. I graduate next month. It’s phenomenal to be here,” Felix said.

A first-generation college student, Felix credits Joseph Tormey, director of the hospitality management program at PDC, for his guidance.

“He helped me plan out what I wanted to do with my life,” Felix said.

Cabrera, a 2022 graduate with a degree in business management and a minor in hospitality management, started his journey at The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage a year and a half ago. His role as a general accountant involves meticulous work with billing and guest inquiries.

Reflecting on his time there, Cabrera shared, “My experience has been really amazing here at The Ritz-Carlton. It’s an outstanding resort. I never thought I would be here at such a luxury property.”

Cabrera, a first-generation college student, overcame many challenges to achieve his degree.

“My parents are farm workers, so I didn’t have a lot of help in knowing where to go for resources,” he explained.

Cabrera also highlighted the influence of Tormey on his academic and career journey.

“For me, Dr. Tormey had the biggest impact. He really helped me open my mind since I didn’t know what to expect of college,” he said.

Torres-Crespo, who graduated in 2021 with degrees in psychology and business administration, is pursuing her master's in industrial organizational psychology at CSUSB. Her role at The Ritz-Carlton as a learning and quality analyst aligns perfectly with her educational background.

Torres-Crespo's work focuses on training and quality improvement within the organization.

"The Ritz-Carlton as a brand aligns with the values of industrial organizational psychology by recognizing and investing in their employees," she said. "We empower our employees through learning and development."

Torres-Crespo also highlighted the influence of Avisinia "Avi" Rodríguez, the executive director of student engagement and completion at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus.

"When I first went to PDC, I was a first-generation college student, and I was eager to learn. It was difficult for me to make connections at first," said Torres-Crespo. "Dr. Avi welcomed me with open arms and introduced me to new experiences. She saw my potential and my growth. Because of her, I was involved in our ambassador program, which is connecting with nonprofit organizations by volunteering. I was an orientation leader. I became president of the psychology club. I was in a lot of leadership positions and earned the Outstanding Undergraduate Award when I graduated. Dr. Avi saw my potential and encouraged me every step of the way. She led with grace which encouraged me to embody that, as well. I'm honored to have been guided and led by her."

The success of these graduates is supported by the leadership at The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage.

Shannon Gilbert, general manager, expressed her pride, saying, "It's been so fun to see all the ladies and gentlemen from CSUSB who've joined us and seen them on their journey in their Ritz-Carlton experience."

Matthew Payne, senior marketing manager, added, "My experience working with graduates of Cal State San Bernardino has been extremely pleasant. They are well-seasoned, well-mannered, very respectful, very caring and endearing ladies and gentlemen. They're wonderful people."

As these CSUSB graduates continue to grow and thrive at The Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage, their stories serve as an inspiration to future students. Their achievements highlight the value of education, hard work and the support of a community that believes in their potential.

About PDC: The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor's and master's degrees, teaching credentials and certificates, and plays a vital role in educating the region's growing population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Strategic Communication at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.