



ACOM awards third annual conference scholarship

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Association for Convention Operations Management (ACOM), an organization dedicated to advancing the practice of convention services management in the meetings industry, recently awarded University of Alabama student, Jennifer Matthews with a scholarship to attend ACOM's 22nd Annual Conference, Jan. 8-10 at the Westin City Center in Dallas, Texas.

Designed to support continued excellence in convention services, the scholarship program is sponsored by Freeman. The annual scholarship is named for Donald S. Freeman, Jr., Chairman of Freeman, which is headquartered in Dallas, Texas. The winner was selected by a panel of ACOM members based on their academic accomplishments, work experience that demonstrates a strong interest in convention services/meeting planning as a career path and an insightful essay. Matthews will participate in the inner workings of the conference including room and audio-visual set up and hotel communications. A representative from Freeman also will mentor Matthews before, during and after the conference.

"Programs like the Freeman Scholarship enable students such as Jennifer to immerse themselves in the industry," said Lyan Tassler, president of ACOM. "They are able to learn about current industry trends, connect with meetings professionals from across the U.S. and Canada and participate in sessions, providing them with tools that will help them succeed in their future careers."

A senior at the University of Alabama, Matthews is majoring in hospitality management with a concentration in event coordination. Matthews has obtained experience in the meetings industry through her work with The University of Alabama College of Business Events Department and The American Hospitality Academy/Sea Glass Towers Hotel. She also recently passed the AH&LA Certification Test and is now certified as a Hospitality Supervisor. Her passion for the meetings industry started at the age of 14 and she plans to begin her career upon graduation in August.

"Jennifer's wealth of experience in the meetings industry and drive to succeed were evident in her application and essay," said Eric Blanc, CMP, senior sales manager at Freeman and first vice president of ACOM. "We look forward to providing her with a unique experience that she will take with her as she embarks on her career."

ACOM will honor Matthews during the Conference at the Saturday luncheon on Jan. 9. ACOM works to advance the practice of convention services managers (CSMs) through its annual conference which this year, will feature general sessions to help attendees maintain good service despite industry changes as well as learn how they can help meeting planners effectively execute successful meetings and overcome challenges.

Those interested in ACOM and its 2010 Annual Conference, contact Lynn McCullough at (609) 799-3712 or e-mail info@acomonline.org.

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