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Scottsdale Salon CEO Announces First-Ever Higher Education Degree Pathway for Beauty Professionals

ROLFS Global

ROLFS Global CEO, Francis Tesmer, in collaboration with Mesa Community College (MCC) and Arizona State University (ASU), has pioneered the creation and development of a revolutionary higher-education program for beauty professionals that is the first of its kind worldwide.

In partnership with MCC, students around the globe can now earn the first ever Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Beauty and Wellness and then apply to Arizona State University (ASU) for a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree program in Health, Entrepreneurship and Innovation with an emphasis on personal care. This is an education transformation within the beauty industry that has never happened before.

This pioneering degree progression, available online and/or on campus, is designed to create an elevated future filled with prestige and financial stability for the 1.7 million beauty professionals, preparing them for a wide range of career opportunities that meet, and exceed, the ever-evolving expectations of 21st century customers and markets. Courses will teach students skills in finance, marketing leadership, ethics, communication and evidence-based decision-making.

In collaboration with a team of academics and higher education specialists, Francis Tesmer, CEO and partner of ROLFS Global, has spent the past 11 years conceptualizing and developing the program from ROLFS headquarters in Scottsdale, Arizona, where the brand operates leading salons in the Phoenix-metro area. ROLFS Global awarded the program's first full-ride scholarships for students to complete their associate and bachelor's degrees, which totals a more than \$516,000 investment.

"This is the time for beauty to meet humanity," said Francis Tesmer. "Our over \$500 billion dollar essential and powerful industry has the highest obligation to positively impact the world and humanity collectively in a time when we need it the most. We are responding to this historic calling by empowering our workforce through higher education, which will enable them to embrace a much bigger and more transformative role in the world. We have developed an accelerated program in which students can earn their degrees in half the time, with an AAS taking one year and a BAS taking two years. This is the fastest, most cost-effective and transformational degree ever offered."

Immediately following cosmetology school, a licensed cosmetologist can enroll at MCC for an AAS in Beauty and Wellness, which can be completed in an accelerated timeline over the course of two semesters. A cosmetologist will be awarded 30 credit hours towards his or her AAS degree at no cost, resulting in a remarkably affordable college degree. After earning the AAS, the student then has access to a continued pathway at Arizona State University (ASU) where he or she can transfer 100% of the 60 AAS credit hours earned. The student will then fulfill an additional 60 credit hours, typically accomplished in four semesters, to earn a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS).

This program is offered online as well as on campus, or a hybrid of the two. The online platform helps the student to take classes around their work and family schedules. The online option allows this degree to be offered without any concerns for difference in time zones. It is a very attractive option for students who are balancing a work schedule that may vary, family, kids, etc. The online tuition is the same for in-state, out-of-state and international students.

The recent impact of COVID-19 on the beauty industry shows how essential an understanding of business, finance and beyond is for stylists in times of crisis. According to a recent study from Lending Tree, nearly one out of every two entrepreneurs (many of whom are in the cosmetology/beauty industry) said they've taken on debt to survive, while 34% say they have tried to get aid but were not approved, and 69% say they do not have enough money to keep operating for another 90 days.

Tesmer enlisted the support of L'Oréal USA's Professional Products Division (PPD) to provide additional opportunities for the students enrolled in this program. By leveraging the company's vast salon, artist, educator and vendor networks, L'Oréal USA PPD has committed to providing industry-oriented curriculum support and education content, experts for guest lecturers and speaking engagements, as well as mentorship, apprenticeship and other education and career advancement opportunities.

"I applaud Francis Tesmer and ROLFS Global for their vision and commitment to make this higher education pathway a reality for the next generation of beauty professionals," said David Greenberg, Group President of L'Oréal USA's Professional Products Division. "This is the right time for this program, and I hope that other institutions of higher learning across the United States will embrace this pioneering model which will create new opportunities for professionals within this critically important sector of the economy. Supporting a collegiate degree that enables individuals with a passion for beauty to pursue a career within and beyond the salon – studying business management, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, wellness, ethics and more – symbolizes L'Oréal's long-standing commitment to the industry, helping to pave the way for the next generation of beauty innovators and hairdressing talents."

Along with its academic partners, ROLFS Global is currently working to scale this program nationally.

When visionary Rolf Lohse created ROLFS Global more than 30 years ago, the progressive and forward-thinking brand emerged as a venerable beauty house that revolutionized the industry though education, beyond just beauty. Headquartered in Scottsdale, Ariz., ROLFS operates leading salons in the Phoenix-metro area, and has evolved into the "ROLFS Salon of the Future" in Scottsdale, manufacturing, Third Space Institute, and a sponsor of over 3,000 charities. ROLFS Salon of the Future, the first of its kind worldwide, combines state-of-the-art global design, innovation, technology, nature and sustainability featuring custom flooring made from paper and recycled woods made from around the world.

The mission of L'Oréal's Professional Products Division (PPD) is to support hairdressers and develop the hair industry sustainably, while benefiting all. Through its portfolio of brands – Baxter of California, Biolage, Kerastase, L'Oréal Professionnel, Matrix, Mizani, Redken, Pulp Riot, Pureology, Shu Uemura and SalonCentric, distributor of salon professional products – L'Oréal USA PPD distributes a full range of hair care products and education programs to salons nationwide. In January 2020, the L'Oréal Group inaugurated "Real Campus, by L'Oréal" in Paris, the first school to award a Bachelor's degree in Hairdressing and Entrepreneurship to meet the needs of an industry undergoing major changes. A pilot class of 20 students joined the campus in January and the first official class of 50 students began in October 2020. Students will have an apprenticeship contract, combining coursework with practical in-salon training.

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