October 24, 2026

SKÅL INTERNATIONAL PHILADELPHIA

2027 SKÅL USA EXECUTIVE BOARD | DIRECTOR CANDIDACY



GREGORY L. DESHIELDS, CDE, CHE
Active Member Nº363326755159Q
Skål International USA Nominating Committee
skalusadmin@skalusa.org

RE: Candidacy for Director — 2027 Skål USA Executive Board

Dear Members of the Nominating Committee:

I am proud to present my candidacy for Director of Skål International USA. I offer a proven record of club leadership, strong relationships across hospitality and tourism, and a clear commitment to expanding Skål's influence, relevance, and impact in the United States.

I served as President of Skål International Philadelphia in 2019 and again in 2026. Our club was recognized as Club of the Year in 2019. In 2026, I worked with our Board to establish a strategic agenda for membership growth, member value, meaningful programming, and financial sustainability. In the first six months, we welcomed five new members and delivered five member programs. These results reflect a leadership approach combining strategic direction with accountable execution.

THE STRENGTHS I WILL BRING TO SKÅL USA

My strengths include strategic leadership, relationship building, organizational growth, and advancing hospitality and tourism. As a two-term Skål Philadelphia President, I champion industry partnerships, emerging leaders, sustainability, and human trafficking awareness. I excel at connecting people, academia, and industry to create meaningful opportunities, strengthen organizations, and deliver lasting impact.

- **Purpose-driven industry advocacy.** I have advanced human trafficking awareness and prevention programming in hospitality and serve in Skål International sustainability initiatives, linking responsible tourism to practical action by clubs and industry partners.
- **National industry and academic connections.** Relationships spanning meetings and conventions, destination marketing, hospitality education, workforce development, and inclusive tourism.
- **Investment in future hospitality leaders.** I developed the Delores W. DeShields Endowed Scholarship at Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management, creating a lasting investment in student opportunity and the next generation of tourism and hospitality professionals. This complements my work through Skål Philadelphia to connect students with industry leaders, mentorship, and meaningful professional pathways.

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Through Greg DeShields Consulting LLC, I lead work connecting academia and industry. The "Bridging Academia and Industry" curriculum, designed for junior and senior college students, provides an innovative learning experience for those aspiring to build careers in meetings and conventions. This blend of practical and academic education lets students apply theory to real-world scenarios, strengthening critical thinking, creativity, and career readiness.

My collaborations include the National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals and its Bridging Academia and Industry initiative; curriculum development with Howard University's Marriott-Sorenson Center for Hospitality Leadership; and partnerships advancing LGBTQ+ tourism and community engagement in the Sonoma/North Bay region. My work with Hospitality Tech Show supports education, strategic partnerships, and access to innovation and career opportunities.

I also bring board and advisory engagement with Cheyney University's hospitality program, the Community College of Philadelphia's hospitality education community, WeDiasporan's Global Advisory Council, and other tourism and community organizations. These roles have strengthened my ability to convene diverse stakeholders and build productive partnerships around shared goals.

As Director, I will translate this record into national impact: stronger cross-club collaboration, membership growth and retention, greater Young Skål participation, responsible tourism leadership, and partnerships that make Skål membership more valuable. My engagement at the 2026 North American Skål Conference and visits with clubs in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore have strengthened my understanding of shared priorities and local needs. I also bring the judgment to protect organizational resources, including making difficult programming decisions when financial and attendance realities require it.

Skål's principle of "Doing Business Among Friends" is both a tradition worth protecting and a platform for future growth. I am ready to serve, ready to contribute, and confident that my experience and commitment will strengthen the Skål USA Executive Board. I respectfully request your consideration and support for my nomination.

SELECTED LEADERSHIP WRITING

- Six Months of Leadership: Reflections as President of Skål International Philadelphia (July 10, 2026) — https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/six-months-leadership-reflections-president-sk%C3%A5l-deshields-che-cde-hlwrc
- My First 90 Days (Again) as President of Skål Philadelphia (March 20, 2026) — https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/my-first-90-days-again-president-sk%C3%A5l-philadelphia-greg-uqkwe

In Friendship and Skål,

Gregory L. DeShields, CDE, CHE

President, Skål International Philadelphia (2019 and 2026)
Founder & Principal, Greg DeShields Consulting LLC