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A Comparative Study of External Practical Education Requirements of Major Hospitality Programs in the US

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teaching:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EXTERNAL PRACTICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS OF MAJOR HOSPITALITY PROGRAMS IN THE US

DESCRIPTION OF SCHOLARLY INQUIRY

Practical experiences emphasizing technical skills and work place behaviors have long been part of hospitality curricula (Min et al, 2016). However, in recent years, hospitality programs have moved away from directly providing students with operational skills but now focus more on the integration of management and operational skills accomplished in a classroom setting (Gursoy et al., 2012). In order to accomplish this, hospitality programs are encouraging students to obtain practical skills through on-going employment (Ligosi & Jameson, 2017) or are requiring work experience prior to enrolling in certain courses (Gursoy et al., 2012).

This study focuses on the 25 top ranked hospitality programs in the US according to The Best Schools to identify how industry work experience is incorporated into their programs in terms of hours required and the number of academic credits associated with these experiences through a review of their online academic catalogs. Special note is made if these experiences are based on cumulative hours or if multiple experiences are required at different points in a student's academic program. The results of this study will be used to inform curriculum design decisions in the College of Hospitality Management.

OUTCOME

Internship and work experiences required by the top schools varied widely. Required internship/work experience hours ranged from 250 to 1200 hours, with an average of 761 hours. Thirteen schools did not provide any academic credit for internship/work experience, while twelve did, with the majority providing between 1 to 3 credits. Of particular note, some of the programs required multiple experiences, either requiring increased supervisory responsibility or allowing for work experience to become a pre-requisite for classes. By comparison, JWU is somewhat unique in that it requires 540 hours of internship for 12 credits during the student's junior or senior year.

Practical experience is an essential part of graduation requirements for hospitality programs and one that is highly valued by employers. This study examines the external work experience requirements of major hospitality programs and focuses specifically on the number of hours required and the academic credit awarded these experiences. A comparison of requirements, along with their rankings according to the The Best Schools is provided. Discussion centers on these findings and how they may reflect trends in hospitality program design.

SIGNIFICANCE OF OUTCOME

The College of Hospitality Management is about to embark on a significant curriculum re-write with a goal of better preparing students for their initial job in the industry as well as future positions and promotions. JWU provides itself on being an innovator and leader in experiential education. The information in this study will provide significant discussion points in terms of the role that work experience/internship plays in preparing students for their future pursuits and the inclusion of operationally based management courses in upper level courses.

References:

Gursoy, D., Rhaman, I., & Swanger, N. (2012). Industry's expectations from hospitality schools: What has changed?, *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 24(4). DOI: 10.1080/10963758.2012.10696679

Lugosi, P. & Jameson, S. (2017). Challenges in hospitality management education: Perspectives from the United Kingdom. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management* 31.

Min, H., Swanger, N., & Gursoy, D. (2016). A longitudinal investigation of the importance of course subjects in the hospitality curriculum: An industry perspective. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 28(1). DOI: 10.1080/10963758.2015.1127168

Table 1: Practical and/or Work Experience Requirements for Top Hospitality Programs in the US*

Ranking	Program	Location	Practical/Work Experience Requirement		
			No Credit	For Credit	# of Hours Required
1	Cornell University	New York	X		800
2	Michigan State University	Michigan	X		800
3	UNLV	Nevada	X		1000
4	Virginia Polytechnical Institute	Virginia		3 credits	700
5	U of Central Florida	Florida		3 credits	750
6	Fairleigh Dickenson	New Jersey		3 credits	1200
7	Pennsylvania State University	Pennsylvania	X		1000
8	Washington State University	Washington	X		1000
9	University of Houston	Texas		2 credits	600
10	Iowa State University	Iowa	X		800
11	Purdue University	Indiana		1 credit	320
12	Northern Arizona University	Arizona	X		1200
13	University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts		1 credit	400
14	Temple University	Pennsylvania	X		250
15	Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma		4 credits	480
16	University of Delaware	Delaware	X		300
17	New York University	New York		2 credits	N/A
18	Drexel University	Pennsylvania		3 credits	N/A
19	Cal. State Tech. - Pomona	California	X		800
20	University of Denver	Colorado	X		1000
21	Florida International University	Florida		1 credit	1000
22	Georgia State University	Georgia	X		400
23	University of South Carolina	South Carolina		12 credits	800
24	Florida State University	Florida	X		1000
25	Kansas State University	Kansas		5 credits	900

*The best hospitality programs in the US. (2020, November 3). The Best Schools. <https://thebestschools.org/rankings/best-hospitality-degree-programs/>