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lifechanging



University of
Sunderland

T.H.E. ORACLE

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & EVENTS

WELCOME!

This is the summer 2016 edition of our Newsletter. In this edition we would like to share with you our most recent activities and successes as they relate to the student experience, teaching and research both at Sunderland and our London Campus. We also have some staff and PhD student success stories to share. It has been an exciting and rewarding few months for us in the T.H.E. Department and as usual, we hope you enjoy reading this edition!

STAFF NEWS



The T.H.E. Department is pleased to welcome Nikolaos (Nicholas) Pappas (pictured above) as our newly appointed Reader in Tourism, Hospitality and

Events. Nicholas started his career in the tourism and hospitality industries in 1990, and for 10 years (2001-2010) was also engaged in enterprising consultancy. He has been an academic in higher education since 2001 and has continuously participated in nationally and internationally funded research projects since 1998.

Nicholas has more than forty publications in international scientific refereed journals and conferences and he is a reviewer for academic journals including *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Current Issues in Tourism*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, and *Tourism Management*, and book reviewer for Pearson Education.

His academic interests include risk and crisis management communications, tourism planning & development, e-marketing and e-tourism, destination marketing, tourism and hospitality marketing and management, and tourism sustainability.



Congratulations to Leanne Young, T.H.E. Liaison librarian (pictured above) for winning the 2016 annual travelling librarian award from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the English Speaking Union. Leanne is also the university's dedicated distance learning librarian and this fully funded award will enable her to learn from international institutions and counterparts.

Leanne will travel to America in November to explore innovative distance learning initiatives and practices at six higher education libraries, from Arizona to San Francisco. The T.H.E. Department wishes Leanne a very informative and enjoyable journey!

T.H.E. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

'An Enchanted evening'- T.H.E./Industry Collaboration

On Thursday 17th March a group of stage two International Tourism and Hospitality Management and Tourism Management students, despite being very busy with their university studies, voluntarily gave up their free time to plan and host a themed networking event in partnership with Marriott Hotels. The event was themed around an enchanted evening and a large range of Marriott's corporate clients were invited to the event. Students worked particularly hard on this event from sourcing decorations to designing the carefully themed food and beverages, which were served on the evening

Stephanie Preston, T.H.E. Lecturer commented: "the evening was a huge success, careful preparation had been considered and all students should be proud of their achievements. The event provided students with the opportunity to showcase their skills and gain real world working experience whilst also being supported by a leading hospitality expert. Special thanks must be given to the students for giving up their time, to the Marriott Hotel in Seaburn for providing guidance and an insight into work in the hospitality sector and also to Sophie Mae Johnson for her fantastic photography skills, which can be witnessed in the accompanying photos." Stephanie urged students to remember to "document the experience on your CV as well as reflecting on the experience!"



Photo shows students at Enchanted evening event

Guest Lecture - MICE

Our stage 2 MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions) students welcomed Lisa Jones-Taylor, Director of Nu-Tech Associates Ltd on Thursday 10th March. Ms Jones-Taylor spoke to the students about her career in industry exhibitions and the bidding process for commercial events. Students were able to hear firsthand about the nature and complexity of managing exhibitions and conferences, with some challenging stories along the way.



Photo above shows Guest Lecturer Lisa Jones-Taylor with students

Guest Lecture – CHIC Festivals

On Tuesday, 19 April 2016, T.H.E. Department had the pleasure of welcoming back John Davis, CEO of EMC3I and CHIC Festivals. CHIC Festivals has been up and running since 2008 and are the undisputed European market leader in "boutique residential festivals" in the UK and Europe. In 2014, they staged 13 festivals throughout the UK & Ibiza, with some other European and transatlantic activity.

On this occasion, John came to the university to talk to our final year students about his inspiring career and how he engages with his festival-goers. He also offered some advice to our students who will be completing their degrees in this academic year. Stage 3 student Helen Willis said: "I found his talk very insightful and empowering; whilst we are getting ready to graduate this year, his talk came at a perfect time as he made me believe that we have so

much potential within us to do anything we want if we work hard enough for it. He gave me hope and motivation for my future in this industry". Another final year student Laura Shaw added: "He was really inspiring, he gave me a total new way of thinking and made me pretty much re-evaluate my values when going into/ looking for a job".

John Davis commented: "In a world where many businesses suffer from poor service delivery or lack of innovation, it makes these sorts of chats with the next generation at Sunderland University, even more important. Not only will they realise how to fix most areas, they hopefully will see the countless opportunities within the market space to apply their skill base and make the impact we all know they can achieve. Always worth the trip from Ibiza, same time next year?"



Photo above shows Guest Lecturer John Davis with students

New module focus: exploring HR in Hospitality Environments

As part of the introduction of the new module – 'Exploring HR in Hospitality Environments' students were given the opportunity to plan and host some training sessions fit for purpose in corporate settings as a component of the module assessment. This assessment was a fun, creative and dynamic experience for students. It shaped many of their skills sets including their ability to work in a team and to reflect on their learning experiences.

Module Leader Stephanie Preston commented that: "the students have

worked particularly well on this task and there has been an array of fun, interactive sessions which have helped shape students' personalities as well as the skills set they need for embarking on future careers in the corporate world. Special thanks must be given to Justine Gillespie, Natalie Bell and Susan Wynn for their contributions to some of the guest lectures provided as part of this module"



Above Photo - Students on new HR module

New module focus: Leadership and Management in Hospitality

Another new module was introduced in the current academic year adding to the range of modules on the programmes in the T.H.E. Department. The module titled 'Leadership and Management in Hospitality' is undertaken in final year and is intended to prepare students for future careers in industry as leaders and managers. Students are encouraged to use varied self-assessment tools to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and consider what kind of team player they are.

Other areas of concentration focus on how leaders and managers are defined, equality and diversity issues in relation to leaders/managers including race, sex etc. Another interesting area of discussion focuses around green managers and the virtual manager – are these things of the future?

Students also benefit from an interactive session with Principal Lecturer for External Engagement, Ian Carr and Marion Wilkes from the Careers and Employability Services which focuses on

developing future graduate careers and which considers the skills and qualities needed to be future leaders and managers.



Photo shows students on new Leadership module

London Campus Students in Barcelona

From 30th June – 4th July 2016, BSc Stage 3 and MSc Tourism and Hospitality Management students from the University of Sunderland in London visited Barcelona along with their lecturers Dr Dirisa Mulindwa and Ms Franziska Vogt. The field trip encouraged students to understand the Olympic Legacy of Barcelona 1992, gastronomic experiences as well as facilitating students to examine contemporary tourism aspects in a European capital city. For the 3rd year students, the trip also provided an opportunity to practice their research skills and collect data for their urban tourism project.

On the first day, the group visited Botafumeiro one of the best seafood restaurant and had a first-hand experience of high end dining. On the following day, the students' starting point was to explore Barcelona's heritage which included Gaudi architecture (La Sagrada Familia, Casa Milà and Casa Batlló) and The Gothic Quarter. On the third day, the focus of the visit moved to the Olympic Legacy, the students visited some of the venues of the 1992 Olympics including Port Olympic, the Olympic Stadium and La Barceloneta. From a gastronomic

perspective, the students experienced slow food and localisation, they explored and ate their way around the local restaurants, and had a taste of the local tapas as well as seafood.



Photo shows students in Barcelona

London Campus Students in Edinburgh

In the second semester, for the Urban Tourism assignment, students carried out 4 days of data collection in Edinburgh. Each day provided a new experience and for the module specifically in terms of skills and knowledge. According to student Leteetchia Vythilingum Rungasamy: "our lecturer, Franziska Vogt who had a good knowledge of the place already, guided us. The first day was spent in the Royal Mile, where we had a walking tour. Then the second and third day we did the iconic attractions of Edinburgh. This made the trip fun, because it almost felt like we were on holiday. However, during those visits, we carried out our data collection, as some of us needed tourists as respondents. Therefore, we had the opportunity to interact with them and understand the concept of urban tourism in a different perspective, which helped us in presenting good research."



A Report on the work of the Travel and Tourism Society at London Campus by student Letechia Vythilingum Rungasamy, BSc Tourism & Hospitality (Top up)

Founded in November 2015, the Travel and Tourism Society turned out to be one of most active and successful societies at the University of Sunderland, London Campus. Encompassing over 60 members, this student-led society was founded with the objective to encourage networking among students and enhance our university experience. However, we managed to win the title "Society of the Year" along the way!

The Society had two key aims – making new friends and travelling the world. Today, we are a group of individuals with over 20 different nationalities, studying different subjects, mobilized with the urge to visit new places, experience diverse cultures and making our time at the London Campus an unforgettable one. But as you know there are always challenges in establishing a new Society. Our diversity sometimes generates differences in our perspectives and in our way of doing things. Further, we have had difficulties to team up students in organizing activities or even getting them to attend the events. However, instead of giving up, we found solutions to keep the society alive. The secret was sticking to our values; Teamwork, Integrity and Creativity, but also the support of the university played a significant role. We've leveraged on it to create a beautifully woven society that seeks to imprint on our memories beautiful moments to be forever cherished in our hearts, years after we graduate.

We have organized several events on campus and we travelled to a few local and international destinations. The best part is that, our trips are subsidized by the university, meaning we can benefit from cheaper travel! We kick started our series of events with the Christmas Bash in 2015, alongside the Business Society. It was a good opportunity to work as a

team and we have eventually built a lasting relationship with the members of the Business Society. It was also overwhelming to see the number of students who wanted to be part of the event. We kept it going strong with the partnership of the Business Society to organize a few more events on campus such as the Chinese New Year Celebration, Valentine's Day and the end of term ball. Further to those exciting events on campus, we also travelled far and wide. After all, the main reason that brought us together, was our passion for travel. Organizing trips is probably one of the most challenging tasks in the society. With more than 60 members, consisting of different types of travelers, different levels of financial status and different passports, we've had to find a balance to make everyone happy. Therefore, we organized local trips, which could be fully subsidized by the University and allowed everybody to participate.

Bitten by the travel bug, our members wanted to live the American dream. However, without the US visa, it wouldn't have been possible. Thus, the society organized a US visa application session, where the students were guided through the application process. The University also supported us with an official letter to be produced to the US embassy. Nine applicants out of 12 were successful among which, five students had the funds to travel to New York City. It was a beautiful and unforgettable experience. Following those fun-filled activities, we have some more special and constructive events coming up in collaboration with the Nursing Society, namely "The Global Citizens". This is planned as a cultural day involving foods and cultures, whereby students will prepare dishes originating from their home country. We believe that being in a multicultural environment can boost our knowledge and academic success. It makes us better citizens.

Regardless of our achievements, all we want is to leave behind a legacy that will survive forever at University of Sunderland, London Campus. We are pleased to share photos from some of our activities below:



Above: Society of the Year Trophy



Above: Students in Bath



Above: Students in New York



Above: Chinese New Year Event

Congratulations to the T.H.E Graduating Class of 2016!



Photo above: Class of 2016

On 7 July 2016 the T.H.E. Department was pleased to celebrate the success of its undergraduates from Sunderland and Postgraduates from London Campus at the graduation ceremony held at the Stadium of Light. It was a very joyous occasion and we are very proud of what our students have achieved. Helen Willis, who achieved a Distinction for the BA Events Management and who will be moving on to accept a graduate placement as a supervisor at a Marriott Hotel in Austin, Texas said of her time at Sunderland "I cannot express enough my gratitude to the University. I've been challenged, changed, and ultimately, I've grown as a person." Well done Helen and well done to all our graduating class of 2016!

T.H.E. PhD Student Success

Athanasios Rodakoploulos (Thanos), PhD student successfully completed his thesis examination and graduated in July 2016. The title of his thesis was 'A Critical Investigation of Mass Tourism Engagement with Place: The Case of Halkidiki, Greece'. In this research he used an ethnographic method to argue for a deeper understanding of the way in which mass tourists' experiences with place is embodied. Thanos was supervised by former T.H.E. team member – Dr Pau Obrador. We wish to congratulate Dr Rodakoploulos on this great achievement and wish him all the best with his future career!

More news on PhD student success...

T.H.E. PhD student Claudia Melis (in photo below) successfully achieved accreditation as an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. This is a great achievement for Claudia as this indicates that she has met the appropriate standards in teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education befitting of an Associate Fellow. Well done Claudia!



T.H.E Conference News

Between 6-9 April, Senior Lecturer in Tourism and Events, Sharon Wilson attended the ISA RC50 conference at the Empress Hotel in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The conference was organised against the background of the significant practical and conceptual benchmarks that have occurred in the field of tourism over the past four decades and recognises that international tourism is entering something of a 'new era', with scholarship in tourism now at a philosophical and ethical crossroads.

The "International Tourism" Research Committee (RC50) of the International Sociological Association thus proposed an opportunity to re-engage with salient issues in tourism studies and thereby develop possible pathways for its future. Keynote speakers included Dr Vincent Platenkamp (NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences), Dr Ana María Munar (Copenhagen Business School) and

Professor Erik Cohen (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

At this conference Sharon Wilson presented ideas around 'The 'aesthetic' turn in new mobilities research – a deconstruction of post-disciplinary creative methods in tourism studies.'

The conference was a good opportunity for Sharon to present her PhD research as a work in progress and to gain further insights and connections with the international community of tourism researchers who are also dealing with the question of travel and flow using qualitative methods.

Sharon commented that: "as a member of staff, not only is this a CPD opportunity which will be shared with colleagues on my return, it will also strengthen my own research as a PhD student at Sunderland"



Photo above shows Sharon presenting her paper at the Conference

T.H.E Conference News

On 19th April, T.H.E. PhD student Claudia Melis had the opportunity to attend the Symposium organised by the Tourism Research Network (TourNet) at the University of Sheffield. The Symposium theme was "Empowering the next generation of tourism scholars" and gathered together PhD students and early career researchers in tourism, leisure and hospitality from across the UK. The aim of the symposium was to offer opportunities to discuss and reflect on future professional development through a series of workshops, to present research, and to meet and network with other PhD students, early career researchers and established academics.

The workshop themes were designed to address different stages of a PhD student's/ ECR's career development and included discussions on how to get published in academic journals and how to negotiate the Research Excellence Framework (REF). It also included advice on how to plan the academic career and how to prepare for an academic job interview.

Reader in Tourism, Donna Chambers was one of the invited keynote speakers and presented a workshop entitled "Planning for an academic career". The Symposium also included presentations from other established academics such as Professor Marina Novelli from Brighton University and Professor Chris Cooper from Oxford Brookes University and they all shared their personal experiences. At the end, tips on preparing for academic job interviews were given by early career researcher Claudia Dolezal from Westminster University.

Between the different workshops doctoral students and early career researchers had the possibility to present their research in a friendly and supportive environment. Claudia presented the work completed so far for her PhD and received useful feedback and advice for the future.



Top Photo: Claudia Melis presenting her paper: Bottom Photo: Donna Chambers presenting her Keynote

Postgraduate Conference on Critical Approaches to Research

On 21st June, staff and PhD students attended the Critical Approaches to Research conference held at the University of Sunderland. This conference was organised primarily for PhD students who have adopted a critical approach to their research and provided them with an environment within which they could present their research to a receptive audience.

Presentations were delivered on a range of topics by PhD researchers across the University of Sunderland and also from Northumbria University. Sharon Wilson, PhD student and member of staff in T.H.E Department presented her research on VW Campervan Mobilities while Claudia Melis, T.H.E. PhD student, presented her research on intangible cultural heritage.

Reader in Tourism, Dr Donna Chambers was invited to present a Keynote at this conference and her presentation was entitled 'What does it mean to be a critical researcher?' In this presentation

Dr Chambers explored the methodological and philosophical underpinnings of critical research.



Photo above shows Dr Chambers presenting her Keynote

T.H.E. Lecturer goes Toxic

Senior Lecturer, Sharon Wilson has published a chapter titled 'The art of touring the toxic' in an art book emerging from a wider community project on the nuclear family. Sharon's chapter focuses on toxic tourism, a topic which she also discusses in her second year module on current issues in tourism. Sharon's contribution demonstrates the continued link between the T.H.E. Department and the community.



New T.H.E Reader publishes in 4* Journal



Our new Reader, Dr Nicholas Pappas, has successfully published a paper in 4* journal – Journal of Travel Research. The title of the paper is '**Economic Recession, job vulnerability and tourism decision making: a qualitative comparative analysis**'.

In the paper it is contended that occupational uncertainty has a

considerable effect upon consumer decisions during a recession, especially with respect to discretionary products and services such as tourism. The study uses Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), to examine the complex relations among job vulnerability, disposable income for tourism, marketing activities, and price and quality issues for Greek holiday makers returning from their vacations.

The article also compares QCA with the two dominant linear methods of analysis (i.e. correlation and regression) and highlights the suitability of QCA when dealing with complexity in tourism. The results reveal four configurations explaining the attributes of Greek residents' tourism decisions, characterized by value-for-money orientation, achievement of best available purchase, psychological strengthening, and price sensitivity. The study also employs predictive validity for the presented models. The findings are valid from both a methodological and

managerial perspective suggesting new research insights.

The article is now available online before the print edition at doi: 10.1177/0047287516651334

More T.H.E. Research Publications...

Mulindwa, D. and Ulu, V. (2016) Hotel Affiliation Evaluation: Remaining, Leaving, or Rebranding? In S. Ivanov, M. Ivanova and V. Magnini (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Hotel Chain Management*. London Routledge

Ulu, V., and **Mulindwa, D.** (2016) Legal aspects of Hotel Chains Management and Operations. In S. Ivanov, M. Ivanova and V. Magnini (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Hotel Chain Management*. London Routledge

OUR PROGRAMMES

BSc (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management

BSc (Hons) Tourism Management

BSc (Hons) Events Management

MSc Tourism and Hospitality

MSc Tourism and Events

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