

Tourism Education Circle

June 7, 2004

Overview and Purpose

The Tourism Education Circle Group intends to illustrate a practical yet innovative academic model for tourism education at UBC-Okanagan. For the purpose of this report, tourism encompasses in-bound and out-bound tourism, hospitality sectors, recreation and parks, wineries, and leisure-time industries. In addition to providing a cost-effective educational service for a leading industry in the Okanagan valley, the proposed model supports the University of British Columbia (UBC) vision to become the “University of Choice” for the entire province of British Columbia (B.C.). It is important to note that, while tourism is arguably the second largest industry in B.C., UBC does not currently offer organized programming or research in this area.

Key Issues

- ***Tourism is a multi-faceted industry***
Because of the multi-faceted nature of tourism, educational programming and research studies should promote an inter-disciplinary model or approach. A single discipline, such as Business or Geography, cannot claim exclusivity over this topic area; nor can a single discipline provide students with the best possible educational experience. Our model proposes a cross-discipline strategy that utilizes resources from various schools, faculties, departments, and divisions.
- ***Tourism is a significant industry for B.C.***
Tourism is one of the leading industries in the province, spreading millions of dollars (and, thus, employment) throughout various regions. Logically, the health of any province is directly linked to the relative well-being of its top industries. As such, there is a real need in B.C. for local, regional, and provincial research to be conducted at the university level.
- ***Tourism is a driver of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural change***
The tourism industry is a dynamic driver of political, regulatory, economic, social, cultural, and technological change. Research can help academic, professional, and government stakeholders understand the effects that their policies and decisions will have on the economic and natural environments.
- ***Tourism education and research has a low profile in Canadian universities***
UBC-Okanagan has an opportunity to utilize the beautiful surroundings, accessible location, and resources of Okanagan University College (OUC) in order to provide a “Center of Excellence” for tourism education and research.

- *The need for tourism education and research presents a world-wide market opportunity*

UBC-Okanagan has an opportunity to utilize the Okanagan valley as a Field School for international scholars in tourism education and research.

Proposal for a Faculty of Tourism

Our vision calls for the formation of a new Faculty of Tourism, which is deliberately distinct from and independent of traditional undergraduate faculties. Rather than operating as a “silo,” the Faculty of Tourism is cross-discipline and, therefore, relies upon a high-level of integration and co-operation amongst faculties and departments. Similar to the typical mandate of a Graduate School, the Faculty of Tourism will be responsible for establishing, maintaining, and ensuring the highest educational standards, coordinating research and publishing projects, approving instructional memberships, and facilitating the cross-pollination of thought, pedagogy, and best-practices amongst participating faculties and departments.

Roles and Functions of the Faculty of Tourism

The Faculty of Tourism will conduct itself in the traditions of academic, research, and service excellence demonstrated by both OUC and UBC. Specifically, the following roles and functions have been adopted from *Graduate Studies at OUC, Dr. Peter Ricketts, May 2003*.

The Faculty of Tourism will strive to do the following:

- Define what constitutes tourism, hospitality, recreation, and leisure-time studies
- Articulate a vision of excellence for tourism education
- Provide an inter-university perspective on tourism education
- Oversee the creation and use of tourism knowledge in applied, professional, and academic and theoretical media
- Oversee, direct, and co-ordinate the administration of tourism education, including providing quality control checks and balances
- Establish criteria for inviting and reviewing faculty for membership in the Faculty of Tourism
- Maintain equity in program and degree standards across all academic disciplines
- Maintain equity and fairness in the treatment of tourism students
- Administer tourism-specific scholarships and awards
- Serve as an advocate for tourism education and tourism students
- Liaise and collaborate with other institutional academic and non-academic units
- Enhance the intellectual knowledgebase and research community of scholars in the study of tourism worldwide
- Become the centre for tourism education and research in Canada
- Prepare, distribute, and/or contribute to a “Journal of Tourism Research” publication

Form and Structure of the Faculty of Tourism

The Faculty of Tourism is not an “exclusive club,” but an attempt to manage and mediate contributions from all disciplines toward the advancement of tourism studies at UBC – Okanagan.

Specifically, the Faculty of Tourism will...

- mirror, in structure, a School of Graduate Studies by encompassing both undergraduate and graduate programming; in addition, it will incorporate credit from trades, continuing education, certificate, and diploma programs
- encourage any faculty or department at UBC-Okanagan to participate in tourism programming by proposing course offerings and designations (subject to approval), including majors, minors, options, concentrations, or graduate degrees
- advise students, who desire to attain an academic tourism designation, on the courses that they will be required to complete across tourism disciplines. For example, a business student desiring a tourism major may be required to take, as their electives in the Faculty of Tourism, courses from Anthropology, Geography, Agriculture, Culinary Arts, Earth and Environmental Science, or Recreation
- approve undergraduate and graduate courses that will be open to students, regardless of discipline, who have been accepted into the Faculty of Tourism

Existing Tourism Programming and Infrastructure at OUC

The following faculties, departments, and/or divisions are currently offering or supporting tourism and hospitality programming at Okanagan University College:

- Culinary Arts – *programming*
- Department of Anthropology – *research*
- Department of Biology – *research*
- Department of Business Administration – *programming and research*
- Department of Economics – *research*
- Department of Geography – *programming and research*
- Department of Mathematics and Statistics – *research*
- Department of Sociology – *research*
- Earth and Environmental – *research*
- Faculty of Adult & Continuing Education – *programming (Oenology & wine)*

Proposed Tourism Programming and Infrastructure at UBC-O

Besides existing programming and research resources, the Faculty of Tourism will require support from the following areas:

- Agriculture – *for proposed programming*
- Community Planning – *some programming available*
- Department of English – *for proposed programming, such as travel writing*

- Department of Political Science – *for proposed programming*
- Forestry Resource Management – *some programming available*
- Health Sciences – *for proposed programming*
- Indigenous Studies – *some programming available*
- Information Systems and Technology – *some available; proposed programming*
- Recreation and Parks – *some programming available*

Other topical issues include:

- Administrative support and physical plant/space
- Dedicated Dean to oversee the Faculty and executive staff
- Dedicated faculty members for core stability
- Library resources for information collection
- On-site research labs for gathering primary data
- On-site computer and multimedia labs
- Marketing and promotions budget
- Field schools for research expertise
- Potential for full-year (12 months) programming
- Multi-tiered outcomes, including executive courses, on-line and short-term certificates, diplomas, undergraduate degrees, and graduate degrees

Rationale for a Faculty of Tourism

The Faculty of Tourism will provide a unique environment for high quality, multi-disciplinary education and research that encourages the effective and sustained use of tourism resources for the benefit of local and global communities. The programming and research opportunities are relevant, attractive, and sensitive to the needs of residents and resources in the Okanagan valley. Furthermore, tourism at the local, regional, and provincial levels is growing at a healthy pace. Okanagan's wine industry is an excellent example of the need for academic research related to managing growth and expansion with respect to tourism, hospitality, agriculture, planning and policy formation, and environmental impacts. There is no other region in Canada that can provide a better concentration of tourism interest, expertise, and natural resources at one institution.

The tourism industry is ready for an innovative model of educational programming, academic research, and multi-disciplinary delivery. The flexibility of such a model would be, in our opinion, very attractive to scholars and researchers world-wide. Furthermore, UBC-Okanagan would be credited with sending first-class researchers and practitioners into the labor market and to other institutions around the world.

Summary and Conclusions

The Tourism Education Circle Group recommends the formation of an innovative, new Faculty of Tourism at UBC – Okanagan. Designed using a cross-disciplinary, collaborative model, the Faculty of Tourism will work closely with existing faculties and departments that have a common interest in furthering tourism education and research. Besides hiring a new Dean and, perhaps, specialized faculty researchers, we propose that existing resources and faculty members be retained and utilized. This approach allows the Faculty of Tourism to build efficiently upon its current strengths in personnel and programming, and will promote intra-faculty cooperation and communication.

The key advantages of the proposed model include:

1. A unique and differentiated model and approach from all other tourism education and research institutions across Canada
2. A multi- and cross-disciplinary approach that capitalizes on the strengths and efficiencies derived from existing faculties and their programs
3. A competitive edge that UBC-Okanagan can use to attract world-class educators, researchers, and students
4. A cost-effective and easy-to-implement model that minimizes capital outlays
5. A distinct identity for tourism education and research at UBC-Okanagan that will help build trust and confidence within B.C.'s and Canada's tourism industries

Acting upon the recommendations outlined in this report will enable UBC-Okanagan to respond to the needs of this important industry and will assuredly create unique advantages for tourism education, research, and service to the community.

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