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The value of Higher Education to Global Tourism

Between February 5-8 over 200 tourism academics and higher degree research students will gather in the NSW city of Newcastle for the 28th annual **CAUTHE** Conference. **CAUTHE** (Council of Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Educators) represents all Australian and New Zealand based institutions offering degree courses in tourism and hospitality. These include universities, TAFE and private degree granting colleges. There are over 40 such institutions in Australia and New Zealand alone. The **CAUTHE** Conference attracts academics from well over 20 countries and is the largest annual gathering of tourism academics in the world. This year over 130 academics and higher degree students (including this author)will present papers on their various areas of research.



Tourism teaching traditional lecture

Much of this research contributes to the industry's understanding of the industry's big issues.

Globally, over 5 million students are studying tourism at tertiary level. The growth of tourism as a focal point of tertiary study has taken off strongly



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David Beirman is a Senior Lecturer in Tourism in the Management Discipline Group, University of Technology Sydney. He completed undergraduate and postgraduate degrees majoring in Sociology at the University of NSW. David 's 30 year career in the Australian travel industry encompassed work with retail travel agencies, wholesale tour operators, consolidation and air fares, destination marketing and management, human resource management and in-service travel industry training. Prior to joining UTS as a full-time lecturer in November, 2009 David had developed tourism courses and lectured part-time at UTS, Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School, University of Sydney and University of NSW in market research, Middle East Studies and Sociology. David's research specializes in

in Asia and in many developing countries where tourism is now recognized as a key sector in economic growth.

Historically, the global tourism industry was slow to recognize the value of tourism degrees. Not so many years ago, many employers regarded job candidates with degrees as nerds who had acquired a body of knowledge useless and irrelevant to jobs. In the past, the only training which was valued by employers were those skills to do their job. **Times have changed and many employers now see the value of hiring graduates with a broad understanding of the tourism industry, an ability to think strategically, laterally, critically and creatively. These qualities are effectively addressed by most degree granting institutions.** My own university, University of Technology-Sydney, in common with most good tertiary institutions is committed to extensive industry engagement with students. All UTS tourism students undertake an internship to apply what they learn to working with a tourism and hospitality enterprise. Many other reputable institutions offer similar programs.

Universities and colleges encourage their students to undertake original research individually and in teams which is valuable preparation for management. Universities also focus extensively on presentation and communications skills which is valuable for many tourism and hospitality jobs. As the tourism industry becomes increasingly, competitive professional, tech savvy and reliant on strong strategic skills, employers with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees will be increasingly valued. Generally candidates with a degree in tourism can contribute a great deal to any tourism and hospitality enterprise.

Most tertiary institutions which teach tourism are committed to enhancing their links with industry. Unfortunately, some barriers between town and gown remain. It is vital for both educators and industry that this barrier is broken down. Both the tourism industry and tertiary tourism educators have a lot to contribute to each other.



Tourism graduates UK

Source = Dr David Beirman Ph.D



Tourism teaching outside

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