

FIU hospitality school seeks partners to serve Asia's booming hotels

By MARILYN BOWDEN

As Asia's hospitality industry takes great leaps forward, FIU's Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management is looking into partnerships with Asian institutions that can lead to expanded opportunities for its students.

"We look for partnerships with other institutions that can facilitate exchange programs," said Mike Hampton, Chaplin's dean. "We want our students to get an appreciation for what is happening around the world and at the same time create opportunities for students from other parts of the world to see how the hospitality industry is managed here."

One strategic move, he said, was to become part of Hotel Schools of Distinction, a global alliance providing partnerships in Europe and Latin America.

"We want to get some in Asia as well," he said, "so our students will have a greater variety of options."

The rapid growth of the Asian hospitality sector suffers from a severe talent shortage, Dr. Hampton said. "More than 2,000 hotels are in development across the Southeast Asian region. Each will need a team of perhaps 300 people. Cruise lines are relocating ships there – and thousands of workers per ship will have to be trained. Then there will have to be shoreside operations to manage what happens when they come into port.

"India is another area just going crazy with development. So there is more and more demand for talent at all levels."

To assist with this crisis, Chaplin's Institute for Hospitality and Tourism Education and Research recently hosted Visionary Leadership Forums in Singapore and Shanghai, Dr. Hampton said, with speakers from across the industry spectrum addressing key issues.

Chaplin's involvement with Asia goes back a decade. Since 2006, the school has run a hospitality program in the port city of Tianjin in northeastern China. In 2014, Dr. Jinlin Zhao, Chaplin's director of graduate programs, spent six months in Macau, a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China often called the Las Vegas of Asia.

In addition to collecting information for further collaborative opportunities, Dr. Zhao taught three classes of Ph.D. students at City University of Macau and since his return to Miami continues to oversee doctoral students there.

"Danqing Liu, one of our faculty members on our China campus, was accepted into their doctoral program," Dr. Hampton said. "Dr. Enju Suh – an expert in gaming who is on our faculty here – is going to the University of Macau and other stops in Asia to gather data."

In 2013, Chaplin arranged internships in Macau for a group of US hospitality students. Dr. Hampton said the school plans to repeat that with another group of eight to 10 students in the summer of 2017. The program will be open to both undergraduates and graduate students.

"FIU internships are somewhat different from many," he said. "They involve taking a responsible assignment to solve a problem. We want them be able to demonstrate problem-solving and communications skills, the ability to think at a higher level to assess a situation and come up with potential solutions."

"An FIU internship is not just a job. It's an academic experience supervised by a faculty member who holds them accountable."



Photo by Maxine Usdan

FIU seeks to ally with Asian hotels, said Dean Mike Hampton, "so our students will have a greater variety of options." Rapid growth of Asia's hospitality sector, he said, has created a severe shortage of talent.

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