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ACADEMIC PAPER

Making the Case for Entrepreneurship: A Survey of Small Business Management Courses within Hospitality and Tourism Programmes

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Abstract

Should there be an emphasis on disciplined-based entrepreneurial education in the hospitality schools? Are small business management and entrepreneurship courses with a hospitality focus in demand by students in hospitality and tourism programmes? This paper explores which hospitality and tourism programmes in the United States are currently offering hospitality-specific courses in small business management and entrepreneurship. In addition, the opinions of a large group of undergraduate hospitality students in the Mid-Atlantic region were analysed to assess the level of demand for such courses in hospitality and tourism programmes and variables that might influence their interest. The findings indicate that only twelve out of the top 25 hospitality programmes offered related courses, while there is a relatively high demand among students surveyed for including such courses in their curriculum.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Small Business Management, Hospitality Curriculum

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Introduction

Should there be an emphasis on discipline-based entrepreneurial education in the hospitality schools and programmes? Are hospitality programmes meeting the needs and desires of students in entrepreneurship education? Investigations by Johnson *et al* (2006) recommend two categories of entrepreneurial teaching in higher education: industry-based and invention-based. A review of literature in entrepreneurial education and the experiences of many higher education institutions in the United States, Europe, and beyond, further support the importance of disciplined-based or a multidisciplinary approach for entrepreneurial education. Meanwhile, a number of studies, as expressed in the literature review, highlight the gap between students' needs and desires regarding course offering in entrepreneurship and small business management in higher education.

This paper examines three research questions dealing with entrepreneurship and small business management courses in hospitality and tourism. First, the study reviewed the top 25 undergraduate programmes in hospitality and tourism in the United States to identify the extent to which these programmes currently offered discipline-based courses in entrepreneurship or small business management. Second, a survey was conducted to assess the overall demand of two-year and four-year hospitality and tourism students in the United States to enrol in courses on this topic. Third, the study explored a number of variables that might influence student interest in enrolling in such courses. The overall objective was to gain an insight into whether hospitality programmes are adequately serving the needs of hospitality students.

Literature Review – The Importance of Entrepreneurship Education

The field of entrepreneurship education has reached its maturity in the business schools, and its future growth is expected to continue within related business disciplines outside of business schools and the United States (Katz, 2002). Many schools have already embarked on a multidisciplinary approach to teaching entrepreneurship in higher education. Such interdisciplinary programmes lead students to adopt an integrative and holistic view for business venture creation (Schieb-Beintait, 2004). Mangan (2004) writes that the image of entrepreneurship programmes with MBA students huddling around the cubicles and working on a business plan that will produce the next Google is over. She adds that eight universities in the United States are now investing over \$100 million to create entrepreneurship programmes beyond business schools and into music schools, nursing programmes, and history departments. This trend has mainly grown out of the student requests for courses outside the business schools, on the premise that you can be an entrepreneur in any field that you end up working in.

This development is not limited to the teaching entrepreneurship courses in the United States. At the Heriot-Watt University, Scotland, entrepreneurship education is embedded in vocational disciplines of science, engineering, and technology to prepare students for post-graduate practice of entrepreneurship in their prospective fields (Keogh and Galloway, 2004). In the Venture Management programme at the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship (the University of Strathclyde, Scotland), students from a broad spectrum of disciplines work with an entrepreneur on a business development project (Cooper *et al.*, 2006). The Chalmers University of Technology hallmarks the implementation of entrepreneurial transformation in the Swedish University system, turning them into entrepreneurial institutions (Jacob *et al.*, 2003). Carlo Cattaneo University (Italy) implemented an entrepreneurship course to support entrepreneurial attitudes and skills of its students (Moro *et al.*, 2004).

Teaching in entrepreneurship is no longer an American phenomenon. Hisrich and Drnovsek (2002) reported that interest in the field of entrepreneurship has significantly increased among academics, practitioners and government officials in the past decade, both in the United States and in Europe, as evident in an increased number of courses, majors and minors, publications, media coverage, and government support. Between the years 2000 and 2006, there has been a range of collaborative programmes developed between University College, London (UCL) and London Business School (LBS) to promote entrepreneurship within the fields of science and technology (Chapman and

Skinner, 2006). Across the European Union there has also been an increase in the number of programmes and initiatives aiming to promote small business and entrepreneurship. An investigation at a Grande École in France, recommended that student attitudes towards entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, as well as the creation of an entrepreneurial environment at the management schools, are key to promoting an entrepreneurial student population (Klapper, 2004). Research in The Northern Ireland Centre for Entrepreneurship (NICENT) found an increased interest and positive attitudes among higher education towards entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland (Hegarty, 2006).

Growth of entrepreneurship education expands beyond the boundaries of the United States and Europe. For example, in recent years, students in the bachelor of Biotechnology Innovation course at Queensland University where combined hard science subjects with business subjects on entrepreneurship. The goal was to embed innovation and entrepreneurship behaviours in the fabric of their specialisation (Collet and Wyatt, 2005). Entrepreneurship education is also in a state of evolution and development in South Africa, where there is increased commitment from the institutions in higher education to partner with local communities for teaching and research in this field (Co and Mitchell, 2006).

According to Riegel (1995: 6), hospitality education is, “a field of multidisciplinary study which brings the perspectives of many disciplines, especially those found in the social sciences, to bear on particular areas of application and practices in the hospitality and tourism industry.” With small business activity being the driving force in the hospitality and tourism industry, there is a greater importance and need for increased focus and emphasis on small business management and entrepreneurship courses within the hospitality and tourism management realm.

Data drawing on multiple surveys from universities in Leicestershire provides a review of the gap between students' entrepreneurial needs and aspirations, and entrepreneurship education offerings within higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United Kingdom (Collins et al., 2004). Within the context of hospitality research in the United States, there is minimal research that explores current practices, and defence of teaching entrepreneurship and small business management within the hospitality programmes. Given that, in the United States, 80 percent of all businesses are classified as being owned and operated by small business organisations or individuals (Stevenson, 1998) and that the small businesses in the food service industry are the driving force in growth and menu diversity in the United States, the need for entrepreneurship and small business education becomes paramount. Are the hospitality programmes in the United States teaching discipline-based entrepreneurship courses? Are they meeting the needs and desires of hospitality students in regards to entrepreneurship education?

Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study was to:

- 1) review the extent of course offering of the top 25 hospitality and tourism programmes in the United States as related to entrepreneurship and small business management;
- 2) survey and measure hospitality students' perceptions and overall demand for education dealing with entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism management, as well as the types of courses they prefer; and
- 3) measure factors that might influence student interest in enrolling in such courses namely, age, sex, type of the programme (2-year vis-à-vis 4-year programmes), class rank and career aspirations.

The overall objective of this preliminary survey was to increase awareness and promote a healthy discussion, within the hospitality education programmes, around entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism education, based on the perceived needs and interests of hospitality students.

Identification of Current Course Offerings

The first section of this study reviewed the electronic course catalogues of the top 25 hospitality and tourism programmes in order to identify the extent to which these programmes currently offer courses involving entrepreneurship within their curriculum. These programmes were incorporated in the study based on the ranking of the top hospitality and tourism programmes in academia within the United States by Brizek and Khan (2002). Consequently, hospitality schools that had not participated in that study were not represented in the sample. Each programme or school was then evaluated by scanning their undergraduate and graduate college catalogues to evaluate current course listings and course descriptions within their hospitality and tourism programmes. When a course containing entrepreneurship or small business management techniques was listed or discussed within the body of the course description, that programme was noted as offering a course (either required or elective) within this subject. Programmes were then listed with the documented course offerings and description. This listing was used as the basis to evaluate the overall supply of courses involving entrepreneurship and small business management within the hospitality and tourism programmes.

Discussion of Current Course Offerings

Out of the top 25 hospitality and tourism programmes that were reviewed, 12 were found to have at least one course that contained entrepreneurship and small business management theory within their hospitality and tourism curricula. The institutions documented in this study included: California Polytechnic University (Pomona), University of Houston, Michigan State University, Florida International University, University of Delaware, Oklahoma State University, Washington State University, Georgia State University, Texas Tech University, Metropolitan State College of Denver, University of Central Florida, and Johnson and Wales University.

College / University	Department or School	Course Offered	Graduate or Undergraduate
California Polytechnic University - Pomona	The Collins School of Hospitality Management	Entrepreneur and Business Growth	Undergraduate
University of Houston	The Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management	HRMA 3275 Entrepreneurial Approach to Lodging	Undergraduate
Michigan State University	The School of Hospitality Business Management	Hospitality Small Business Management	Graduate
Florida International University	School of Hospitality Management	HFT 6446 Hospitality Enterprise Techniques	Graduate
University of Delaware	Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management	HRIM 458 Entrepreneurship in Hospitality	Undergraduate
Oklahoma State University	School of Hotel and Restaurant Management	HRAD 4293 Hospitality Small Business Development	Undergraduate
Washington State University	Department of Hotel and Restaurant Administration	MGT 489 Entrepreneurship	Undergraduate
Georgia State University	Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality	MGT 4500 Entrepreneurship and New Venture Management	Undergraduate
Texas Tech University	Department of Restaurant Hotel and Institutional Management	RHIM 4320 Hospitality Entrepreneurship	Undergraduate
Metropolitan State College of Denver	Department of Hospitality Meeting and Travel Administration	MGT 3020 Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship	Undergraduate
University of Central	Rosen School of	HRI 474 Entrepreneurship	Undergraduate

Florida	Hospitality Management	in Family and Consumer Science	
Johnson and Wales University	School of Hospitality Management	EP 4020 Global Entrepreneurship	Undergraduate
		And EP 4089 Entrepreneurship Practicum	Undergraduate

Table 1: Hospitality and Tourism Programmes offering Entrepreneurship Related or Small Business Management Courses

Table 1 highlights the list of courses, their respective departments or schools, and their designations as graduate or undergraduate courses. Of the twelve programmes only one, Johnson and Wales University, offered more than one entrepreneurship related course within its programme. Thirteen out of the 25 programmes did not award any entrepreneurship or small business management courses specifically within their curricula, but did offer derivatives of an entrepreneurship programme within another school or college (such as a business programme). However, these courses were not content specific about the hospitality or tourism industries. Only 2 out of 13 courses were listed as graduate courses – the rest had undergraduate designation.

Survey Instrument

Survey of students' perceptions

To measure hospitality students' perceptions and their overall demand or need for education dealing with entrepreneurship in hospitality, a convenience sample of students from eight two-year and four-year hospitality and tourism management programmes within the Mid-Atlantic United States were surveyed. Although this sample was somewhat limited in scope, it was adequate to serve the purpose of the study as a starting point for promoting awareness and initiating a healthy discussion on the topic. The sample for the study consisted of 389 undergraduate students. The survey instrument was designed after an extensive literature review encompassing both theory and research involving small business management and entrepreneurship. Survey questions were structured on the basis of current and potential courses on the topics of entrepreneurship, such as entrepreneurship theory, small business management, small business finance, real estate and site selection, and small business law. The survey was also intended to assess the hospitality students' overall demand for entrepreneurship type courses offered by hospitality and tourism programmes, either as an elective or a required topic. The second section of the survey was aimed at measuring the effects of other variables, such as age, sex, class ranks, part time or full time status of students, and whether the courses were elective or required. More importantly, the likelihood of differences or relationships of the responses given by two or four-year students were sought to assess whether one particular group favoured entrepreneurship curriculum more than another. This section is pivotal for educators in order to evaluate what entrepreneurship courses to develop and where to position these courses.

Results of the survey

Out of the 550 questionnaires that were issued to two and four-year hospitality and tourism management students, 389 were returned with a response rate of 71%. All of the 389 returned surveys were usable for evaluation of results. All of the questions posed to the students were used by the entire sample size. Demographics of the respondents (see Table 2) consisted of 59% female and 41% male students.

The majority of the respondents (68%) were students attending two-year hospitality, culinary arts, and/or tourism programmes. The remaining 32% were students attending four-year institutions in hospitality and tourism management. Career aspirations of students were solicited to estimate the extent to which the sample students were planning an employment primarily in small business. Over 67% indicated the desire to pursue entry-level management or supervisory positions. Others desired

positions in the culinary arts and kitchen management professions (18%). The remainder of the respondents indicated their desire to develop their own business or form a partnership with others in developing a small business (15%).

Variables	Characteristics	% (n=389)
<i>Gender</i>		
	Male	41
	Female	59
<i>Age</i>		
	< 21	57
	22-30	31
	30-35	7
	35-40	3
	> 40	2
<i>Type of hospitality programme attended</i>		
	Two-Year Programme	68
	Four-Year Programme	32
<i>Class rank</i>		
	Freshman	11
	Sophomore	52
	Junior	16
	Senior	21
<i>Career aspirations</i>		
	Entry-level Management	67
	Culinary Arts / Kitchen Mgt.	18
	Small Business Owner / Operator	10
	Other Management Positions	5

Table 2: Demographics of Survey Respondents

What type of entrepreneurship or small business related courses are students interested in enrolling? As highlighted in Table 3, the majority of respondents (74.5%) revealed a strong desire for enrolling in a hospitality small business type course, followed by (69.4%) interested in taking entrepreneurship theory based courses. Interestingly, student interest in more specific topics, such as hospitality real estate management, hospitality real estate finance, and legal issues in hospitality small business management, were not as strong.

A number of participants felt: unprepared to develop a business plan (8.1%), unprepared in financing procedures or requirements for small business (3.2%), ill-equipped for knowledge of small business law and litigation (1.9%), and lacking an understanding of real estate and site development (0.1%).

Students' Responses to the Question: What type/form of entrepreneurship/small business management courses would you most be interested in enrolling? (n=389)		
<i>Type of Course</i>	<i>Number responding interest</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Overall entrepreneurship theory based course	269	69.4
Hospitality small business management	289	74.5
Hospitality real estate management	126	32.3
Hospitality small business finance	43	11.1
Legal issues in hospitality small business management	52	13.4

Students' Responses to the Question: What type/form of entrepreneurship/small business management courses would you most be interested in enrolling? (n=389)		
<i>Type of Task</i>	<i>Number responding "yes"</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Developing a business plan	31	8.1
Financing small businesses	12	3.2
Understanding small business law	7	1.9
Real estate / site development	3	0.1

Table 3: Students Desires to Enrol in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management Courses

To measure the level of interest and propensity of students to take courses in hospitality entrepreneurship and small business management, a five-point scale was utilised with 5 indicating a strong desire and 1 indicating either a weak or no desire for taking such courses. As shown in Table 4, the high mean values support the respondents' inclinations to enrol in entrepreneurship based courses in hospitality (3.41), to enrol in entrepreneurship courses as programme electives (4.20), to apply entrepreneurship theory to industry (3.01), and the interest to participate in a practicum or cooperative education dealing with small business management (2.89), so long as they would not be required to pay higher tuition fees or face a rise in the number of credit hours.

Question	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
If offered as a requirement, would you enrol in a course related to hospitality/small business management in hospitality?	3.41	0.81	.0009*
If offered as an elective, would you enrol in a course related to hospitality/small business management in hospitality?	4.20	0.82	.0007*
If a course(s) are offered, do you feel that you could apply course theory to everyday management events?	3.01	0.77	0.227
Would you be willing to participate in an entrepreneurship/small business management practicum/co-op course?	2.89	0.68	.0118
Would you accept a rise in tuition payments in order to offer additional courses in entrepreneurship/small business management?	.01		.00001*
Would you be willing to accept an increase in credit hours required by programme major in order to offer additional courses in entrepreneurship / small business management?	.04		.00001*

Calculations based on a five-point scale (1=low desire, 5=high desire). *p<.05

Table 4: Students' Responses to Enrolling in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management Courses in Hospitality and Tourism Management

The third objective of the study involved a two-fold scheme. Firstly, we explored a number of demographic factors that might have influenced students' choice to enrol in an entrepreneurship-based course. Secondly, it was important to analyse whether there was a difference between 2-year and 4-

year college students with regards to their levels of interest in enrolling in an entrepreneurship based course. To answer the first scheme, we used a factorial ANOVA through a general linear model (Table 5). Results indicated that only the level of a student (i.e. 2-year or 4-year student) had the most significant effect on the level of ‘desire to enrol in such courses’.

Source	DF	SeqSS	AdjSS	AdjMS	F	P
Age	4	383.1	342.1	38.5	0.45	0.351
Gender	1	1.99	52.11	52.11	0.88	0.210
2 or 4-Year Programme Enrolment	5	1439.1	1549.8	312.55	4.45	0.001
Class Rank	3	189.7	166.8	83.25	3.89	0.554
Course as Elective	2	11.4	9.9	0.66	2.22	0.659
Course as Requirement	3	66.5	47.8	1.22	0.14	0.098
PT or FT Status	2	289.11	222.11	22.40	3.63	0.020
Error	369	46078.9	4678.9	77.9		
Total	389					

Table 5: Factorial ANOVA: Choice of Entrepreneurship Based Courses Versus Demographic Variables

Table 6 shows Tukey’s Pairwise Comparison of Means, which revealed significant differences between the 2-year and 4-year groups.

Level	N	Mean	St Dev
2-year student	289	4.281	1.094
4-year student	100	3.681	1.441

Table 6: Least Square Means and Standard Deviations for What Level of Students Favour Entrepreneurship Based Courses

A one-way ANOVA was conducted on each demographic variable 2 year-level students (F =14.53 p=0.000) and four-year level students (F = 6.77 p= 0.009) to indicate the significant effects on each level (Tables 7 and 8).

Level	DF	SS	MS	F	P
2-year student	1	6.9	166.9	14.53	0.000
Error	288	433.89	12.6		
Total	289	550.07			

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA: Level of 2-Year Students Favouring Entrepreneurship Based Courses*

Level	DF	SS	MS	F	P
4-year student	1	5.9	5.89	6.77	0.009
Error	99	228.79	1.01		
Total	100	234.68			

Table 8: One-Way ANOVA: Level of 4-Year Students Favouring Entrepreneurship Based Courses*

* Factorial ANOVA used to determine difference between groups

$Y (ijklmnop) + \text{student level } (i) + \text{class rank}(j) + \text{choice of entrepreneurship-based courses as an elective } (k) + \text{choice of entrepreneurship based courses as a requirement } (l) + \text{age}(m) + \text{gender } (n) + \text{part-time or full time status}(o) + E$

μ = overall mean

Research Implications

Hospitality programmes should closely examine their course offerings in entrepreneurship or small business management. As shown by the research results, many hospitality programmes currently do not offer such courses in their curriculum, while there exists a demand on the part of students for such courses. Recognising that an overwhelming number felt inadequately prepared in entrepreneurial skills, training and educating students on the subject demand some urgency. A relatively modest number of hospitality students directly seek entrepreneurial positions upon graduation. It is imperative that these groups are provided with the opportunity to learn these concepts and skills while studying in a hospitality school.

Entrepreneurship, innovation and small business management are also applicable to those hospitality graduates entering other segments, such as large corporations. Today, many large hospitality corporations insist that their management staff operate their units as small businesses. Furthermore, new hospitality and tourism ventures can spring from the existing firms of any size. It is in this context that well designed entrepreneurship and small business management courses can offer hospitality students opportunities to gain a full appreciation for much desired entrepreneurial know-how and skills by employers.

Tuition and the number of credits factor heavily into student demand. Ideally, these courses would be offered as an elective or as a part of programme requirements without an increase in the existing number of credit hours, therefore not requiring students to pay additional fees. Considerations should be given to both the 2-year and 4-year programmes with an emphasis on providing this experience, predominantly, to 4-year colleges.

Notwithstanding the overall purpose of this study to undertake an exploratory analysis of course offerings in entrepreneurship and small business management with a hospitality focus, the study serves to reinforce the importance of entrepreneurship to the hospitality field. As stated earlier, with the ever-increasing role of small business in the US economy, particularly in the restaurant business, entrepreneurial skills play a significant part in preparing students to enter the job market. It is evident from the study that students in general are aware of the topic of entrepreneurship and want such courses in their curriculum. This supports the need for hospitality programmes to further update their current offerings to reflect the noted demand for entrepreneurship in their curriculum.

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations may be made regarding incorporation of hospitality small business management and entrepreneurship courses in hospitality and tourism programmes:

- Individual programmes must assess their own situations. In particular, those programmes that are not offering such courses must decide if theory and practice of entrepreneurship is important. If it is important it must be taught. Worldwide, entrepreneurship education is in the state of evolution and growth.
- In the short term, if a restructuring is stipulated and realistic conditions exist for a change, the course must be designated as a required one. This eliminates additional costs which students are reluctant to pay. Furthermore, if it is a required course it sends a message to the students that it is an important one.
- In the long run, the unit's strategic plan should incorporate the need for change and therefore direct resources and faculty credentials to accommodate this change. Hospitality and tourism programmes (staff) must take a position if they feel this is a significant demand.
- The final issue involves deciding on whether these types of courses are to be taught in the department's focused area, which raises the question of whether teaching entrepreneurship is more effective if incorporated into the discipline. As stated early in the paper, the experiences of a number of higher education institutions in a variety of

fields, in the US, Europe and other regions, support a discipline-specific approach for teaching entrepreneurship.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was designed as an exploratory investigation of course offerings in hospitality entrepreneurship and small business management. Limitations of the study include the convenience sample of students within the hospitality programmes in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. It could be expanded to include other regions in the country, particularly large metropolitan schools. In addition, the opinions and the satisfaction levels of students in hospitality programmes that currently enrol in such courses could be investigated. Furthermore, this study is limited to current students. More important is to explore the opinions of graduates currently working in various hospitality segments, faculty teaching in this field, and hospitality institutions in higher education. Their input would certainly underline the significance of these courses to the work environment and the challenge facing hospitality schools in higher education with respect to the demands of the discipline. Future research might also explore the specific competencies required in order to be successful in small business and entrepreneurial settings, the nature and methods of delivery of courses in entrepreneurship, and the role of policy makers to facilitate growth of entrepreneurship education.

Our study revealed that the hospitality programmes' current course offerings in hospitality entrepreneurship and small business management are fragmented. A follow up study could investigate why such divergence exists among various hospitality programmes. Since a potential demand appears to exist among students, why is supply incongruent with the existing demand levels? What are the underlying factors attributable to this difference? What would restructuring existing courses mean to hospitality programmes in terms of faculty and other resources? What added value would availability of such courses afford the programmes from the perspective of students and their parents, recruiters, and hospitality leaders? This would allow for further discussions from both academics and the industry in determining the overall worth or value of such curriculum within the current plan of study of each hospitality and tourism programme.

Summary

Research in entrepreneurship in the United States, Europe, and beyond underscores the importance of discipline-based entrepreneurial know-how and skills. The authors were interested to examine hospitality and tourism management programmes in order to explore whether these programmes offer hospitality-specific entrepreneurship courses, and if there is demand among hospitality students to enrol in these courses. Although there were a number of studies supporting entrepreneurial course offerings in other disciplines, there is little research to address this issue in the context of hospitality literature. In this review it appears that of the top twenty-five hospitality and tourism programmes studied about half offered courses in hospitality entrepreneurship and small business management. Others provided courses with a non-hospitality focus or some derivatives of such courses in different places. Although the sample was somewhat limited in scope, it provided some valuable information. First, there exist strong demands for courses in hospitality small business management and hospitality entrepreneurship theory based courses, respectively. The aforementioned demand is highly price sensitive, meaning that students would most likely take these courses if they did not add to current tuition levels. Second, these courses are best suited for the 4-year programmes since the demands for such courses were substantially higher among the 4-year college students as compared to students in the 2-year programmes.

Notwithstanding the value of entrepreneurship studies to small or large business, an overwhelming number of students in the survey rated their competencies and skills as inadequate to successfully perform in such environments. Their concerns add a heavy burden on hospitality programmes to fulfil this gap. Our study did not directly ask what specific competencies should be included in such courses. However, respondents overwhelmingly reported that they were generally unfamiliar with such topics as developing business plan, financing small businesses, understanding small business

law, and real estate and site development. Hospitality and tourism students should be better prepared to meet the entrepreneurial challenges they will encounter in their careers.

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