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## Editorial

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Maturity is the issue that David Airey discusses in his perspective paper in this issue of JOHLSTE and, for tourism, Airey finds much evidence for signs of maturity. Prominent amongst these are the number of courses and students, a supporting infrastructure of textbooks and a rich stock of research articles and journals. In addition there are signs that the field has become more reflexive of late. It has turned some research attention towards itself and studied the very process of knowledge creation, as well as pedagogical matters. Indeed this journal has been at the forefront of the developing critical pedagogy of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism.

There are also other signs of the maturity of the subject. In the UK, the subjects of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism have been recognised as worthy of their own dedicated subject network by the Higher Education Academy. In Australia, the value of tourism research to the wider economy and society has been strongly underlined by the funding of the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC). Also in Australia the government has funded and encouraged the International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE). But the very identification of these last three structures demonstrates some unevenness in global development and across the four subject areas of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism. A key question for the global health and sustainability of these subjects is the extent to which each of them can demonstrate mainstream, core interest and funding (and therefore almost by default the appropriate organising structures) in the two areas of research and pedagogy in their main geographical centres of delivery. This should be a major objective for these subjects in their mature years and one that should be strongly pursued by individual and networked academics, subject associations and learned societies.

Of course whilst hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism are each showing signs of maturity, new, related subjects are developing alongside. Here 'Events Management' is of particular interest. This is a subject that has exhibited startling growth in student numbers and which is beginning to support this by developments in its academic infrastructure. JOHLSTE wishes to play an important role in this and encourages academics in that area to submit articles about teaching and learning 'Events'. (One of the educational resource reviews in this edition does just that). Indeed many of the debates that have flared up in the areas of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism will inevitably find their way into 'Events' not least perhaps the possible distinction between 'Events Management' and 'Events Studies'.

For hospitality this debate was a hot issue in the first few editions of JOHLSTE and it is an issue which is revisited in the first of five academic papers in which Mike Turner investigates *Using Mode 2 soft systems methodology (SSM) in the teaching and assessment of the 'practical' content in undergraduate hospitality degrees*. In his paper Turner argues the case for the hospitality systems school of thought and urges that a predominant feature of this school should be action-learning. Turner sets out a case for students to be actively involved through, for example, the operation of a simple food service system that deals with 'real world' hospitality issues.

Subject areas need to be sustained through research and scholarship and a subject area that does not (1) constantly develop and refresh its knowledge base and (2) ensure that its academic practitioners are up to date will not flourish. There are many challenges to the maintaining of research and scholarship including unbalanced workloads and lack of opportunity. Indeed smaller national research communities (such as Ireland) face additional potential issues of critical mass and peripherality. In the light of this, Noëlle O'Connor and Tom Baum undertake *An investigation into the tourism and hospitality scholarly activity currently been undertaken in Irish higher education institutions*. The authors find that tourism and hospitality scholarly activity in Ireland is being carried out in many ways, including through joint research projects between Irish HE institutions and industry. Indeed perhaps better links with industry and government are more easily achieved in small nation states. The authors also point to importance of developing dedicated research centres within higher education institutions in Ireland to promote tourism and hospitality research activities and attract funding.

Equality issues are central to two other academic papers. In the first, Tara Perry and colleagues focus their research on *Recreation student attitudes towards persons with disabilities: considerations for future service delivery*. The aim of this research was to examine the attitudes of undergraduate students enrolled in recreation and leisure service degree programmes towards persons with disabilities. Perry's team of authors represents a very interesting amalgam and demonstrates the power and potential of bringing together different perspectives. It comprises of academics with different interests as well as a practitioner. Perry herself specialises in recreation therapy. Mark Ivy's research interests include the facilitation of active lifestyles. Dawn Shelar's research interests revolve around technology and its potential to positively influence our lives. Finally Allyson Conner is employed as an outdoor recreation planner.

Seema Patel's field of expertise is discrimination in sport, an interest which has led her to consider *Creating a level playing field: A study of the admission and experiences of different groups on a university sport management course*. Patel's paper explores the admissions process and experiences of students enrolled on sport science courses at a UK university. Her findings are that whilst a large number of women and ethnic minorities initially apply to sport courses, few attend open days and even fewer eventually enrol compared to males and individuals of white ethnicity.

The final academic paper in this issue is titled *Perceptions of hospitality and tourism students towards study motivations and preferences: a study of Hong Kong students*. Again, an interesting team of researchers have worked together on this theme. Myong Jae Lee is at Cal Poly, Pomona, USA. Samuel Seongseop Kim is at Sejong University in Seoul, Korea and received his PhD from Texas A&M University. Ada Lo is at Hong Kong Polytechnic University and previously was managing the Frequent Guest Programme for the Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts. Their study identifies the reasons why students in Hong Kong want to study hospitality and tourism management (HTM), why they want to pursue HTM degrees abroad and their preferred HTM study areas. Their results point to five major motivational factors. These are self-actualisation, job opportunity, field attractiveness, ease of study, and scholastic achievement.

There are four practice papers in this edition of JoHLSTE. They all offer reflection on the professional practice of academics. The first, *Tourism education: a strategic analysis model* by Amparo Cervera-Taulet and María-Eugenia Ruiz-Molina, provides a strategic analysis of tourism degrees in order to determine inherent strengths and areas for improvement in the context of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In *Learning to be a sport and exercise 'scientist': evaluations and reflections on laboratory-based learning and assessment*, James Morton provides a critical review of the rationale for employing an activity-based laboratory report to assess and enhance student learning within the sport and exercise sciences. Morton argues that the experience of active laboratory research and related written reports are fundamental to the training of future sport and exercise scientists.

The final two practice papers reflect on aspects of ICT. Amy Newman and Judi Brownell's article is titled *Applying communication technology: introducing email and instant messaging in the hospitality curriculum*. Here the authors recommend a way to prepare students for effective use of email and instant messaging by using a portable course unit. Finally Mehmet Kasli and Cevdet Avcikurt provide *An investigation to evaluate the websites of tourism departments of universities in Turkey* using a content analysis of the websites of schools of higher education that play a role in supplying tourism enterprises with staff.

The last section of the journal, Educational Resource Reviews is focused on the Olympics and has three contributions. Two of these offer reviews of internet resources and the third is a book review.