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TEFI Brazil-Conference Summary

The Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) seeks to be increasingly globally relevant. Consequently, it has started supporting regional meetings around the world. TEFI Brazil was held for the first time at the University of São Paulo (USP), on September 6th 2012 in conjunction with the 6th Latin American Congress in Tourism Research (CLAIT). The research group on Tourism, Knowledge and Innovation from the University of São Paulo was the host for this meeting. TEFI Brazil was organized by Mariana Aldrigui (USP) and Roberta Sogayar (University Anhembi Morumbi). Participants from different parts of Brazil and other countries, ranging in organizational affiliation from private to public universities and to vocational programs were present at the conference and included: Professor Miguel Moital (Administration-Bournemouth University), Professor Danielle Fernandes Costa Machado (Tourism- Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul), Professor Celeste Navas (Tourism-Guanajuato University, Mexico), Professor Mariana Aldrigui and Professor Karina Solha (Tourism and Leisure-University of São Paulo), Professor Sérgio Leal (Tourism-Federal University of Pernambuco), Professor Lélío Galdino Rosa and Prof. Isabela de Fátima Fogaça (Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro), Professor Roberta Sogayar (Tourism and Hospitality- Anhembi Morumbi University- São Paulo), Prof. Lourdes D'orta (Tourism Programs Coordinator of Paula Souza Vocational School), Prof. Lourival Custódio (Brazilian Institute of Training and Employment- vocational school). One student, Leandro de Paula Neto, from the Federal University of Mato Grosso also contributed to the discussions.

This conference was particularly important to tourism higher education in Brazil since the area is showing signs of maturation and is in great need for strategic orientation to successfully advance in the future. Tourism Higher education in Brazil has its beginning in the 1970's with its first bachelors program. The first bachelor degree was conferred at the University Anhembi Morumbi, in São Paulo, in 1971. In the 1990's the growth of tourism higher education continued with graduate level programs that have since evolved in distinct manners depending on the specific focus on either tourism, hotel management, events, leisure, recreation, etc.. The tourism degree has evolved into segments such as tourism and hotel management, tourism and events, leisure, recreation and tourism, tourism and public policies, and tourism management. This trajectory is directly related to the organization of the industry, the public policies that underpin the sector, the need of the industry to find qualified professionals and also political agendas and changes in national and international tourism. From a national perspective there are very specialized needs due to Brazil's preparation for the megaevents that the country will be hosting in 2013 (Confederations Cup and World Youth's Meeting), 2014 (World Cup), 2015 (Rotary World Convention), 2016 (Olympic Games). International influences include increased numbers of corporate travelers and a changed image of the country due to its economic growth. Therefore, there is currently a great need to critically evaluate the structure of tourism higher education in Brazil and its ability to prepare its graduates to address these changes in the tourism system.

The conference was aimed at helping Brazilian educators think about the future of tourism higher education in their country by exposing them to ideas and initiatives developed as part of TEFI. The co founders of TEFI delivered presentations that were intertwined with questions and discussions about the distinct topics presented.

Prof. Pauline Sheldon was the first presenter and was responsible for telling the story of how TEFI has evolved over the past 6 years. She presented the TEFI mission and values and made a special invitation to the group to be part of the initiatives.

Prof. Karl Woeber chaired a session about the “Implementation of TEFI at the University Level”, describing how Modul University has been implementing the TEFI values in the management of Tourism Higher Education. His speech was particularly interesting but also challenging for the Brazilian sector due to the cultural and structural differences.

Prof. Daniel Fesenmaier discussed how values are being investigated by Gianna Moscardo as part of an ongoing TEFI initiative and used the opportunity to ask the group about what values were more important for the Brazilian context.

Prof. Elisabeth Barber described her process in the development and implementation of a TEFI based curriculum at Temple University. Her speech was especially important for those who were looking for practical experiences that they could take to their universities. The participants were very receptive to TEFI’s ideals and values. Most of the participants validated that TEFI-based frameworks were extremely useful at this specific moment in the development of Brazilian higher education.

This was a unique opportunity to engage TEFI with the Latin American community, sharing its ideas and finding partners that will be able to promote TEFI’s vision in different parts of Brazil and Latin America and implement TEFI principles according to the TEFI vision, which is to promote global citizenship and optimism in tourism higher education. o the benefits “below the water line”.