

DATE: May 5, 2005

TO: Eleanor Abrams, Ph.D.
Office of Outreach Scholarship

FROM: Rob Robertson, Associate Professor and Coordinator
Tourism Planning and Development Program

SUBJECT: UNH Outreach Scholars Program: Project Proposal

PROJECT TITLE:

An Assessment of Outcomes of a Business/University Partnership: The Case of the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company and UNH's Tourism Planning and Development Program

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This Outreach Scholarship Project is focused on the preparation of 2000-4000 word manuscript for submission to the peer reviewed publication *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. The manuscript will focus on the outcomes associated with a business/education partnership. More specifically, the assessment targets the subjective and objective outcomes associated with a three-way partnership between the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company (ISSCO), UNH's Tourism Planning and Development Program (TPD), and students enrolled in the Introduction to Tourism Planning and Development course offered at the University of New Hampshire. The paper will document and communicate the outcomes of the partnership for the perspective of the participants.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/STATEMENT OF ISSUES/PROBLEM:

Throughout the public, private and non-profit sectors, there is increasing experimentation with the use of partnerships, alliances, and networks to design and deliver goods and services (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Partnerships between institutions of higher education and business, non-profit and public sectors with a focus on experiential and/or cooperative education have been around since the early 1900s (Wilson, 1971). Many hospitality and tourism programs require some type of experiential or cooperative learning (Downey, 1979). This type of learning has various names, such as internships, externships, field work, independent study project, class projects, applied research activities, and cooperative education. These types of programs offer a unique opportunity to forge partnerships for the mutual benefit of all parties. A majority of the top hospitality management and tourism programs in the United States have experiential education components as a part of their education curriculum and a number have formal cooperative education requirements (Archer, 1991). Limited research has documented the value and outcomes of applied research projects initiated cooperatively between the private sector, university faculty and students. These activities are highly valued by UNH students who have informally articulated a wide range of benefits (i.e., applied research skills, enhanced resume', reinforced classroom education outcomes, post

graduation employment, etc.). This paper will be focused on the development of formal outcome measures for these type of projects and learning opportunities. The paper will serves to illustrate UNH's commitment to being an "engaged" university, to the state's tourism industry, and producing "industry ready graduates".

PROJECT DETAILS:

Goals and Objectives. This paper provides an overview of the applied research/education partnership between the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company of Portsmouth, New Hampshire and the University of New Hampshire's Tourism Planning and Development Program. More specifically, this paper utilizes a case study approach to provide (1) a brief description of the each of the partners; (2) an overview of project and methods; (3) the motivations/benefits of the partnership; and (4) a discussion of the applied research partnership related outcomes and future directions of the initiative.

Target Population/Audience. The audience for this paper is the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. Once published, this paper will be shared with the NH's tourism industry, university faculty and students.

Methods/Evidence of External Collaboration and Partnership. This paper uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to prepare this case study of the partnership activities between the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company (ISSCO) and the University of New Hampshire's Tourism Planning and Development Program. The formal and comprehensive assessment of the learning outcomes associated with this business/education applied research partnership will include both formative and summative evaluations from the perspectives of a variety of stakeholder groups (i.e., students, UNH faculty, UNH administrators, business cooperators, event attendees, cruise event partners, etc.). Again, the overriding goal of this paper/project is to provide a venue for the understanding the value of business/education applied research partnerships for each of the partners. This project will also evaluate the utility of a variety of quantitative and qualitative tools in measuring and estimates "outcomes" associated with this type of initiative.

The primary source of information and insights for this paper are derived from the direct experiences of the co-authors of the paper. The co-authors are the President of Isles of Shoals Steamship Company (and owner of the M/V Thomas Leighton), Robin Whittaker and Coordinator of the Tourism Planning and Development Program, Rob Robertson. Ms. Whittaker has a Bachelors Degree in Marketing from The Pennsylvania State University. She has worked for the ISSCO for the past 20 years and she has been the President/Owner for the past 10 years. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce and was elected chair the Chamber in 2004. She was a founding member and chair of the Tourism Committee of the Portsmouth Chamber. She also serves on the Boards of a number of non-profit organizations with a focus community and environmental resources. She is a governor appointed member of the NH Workforce Opportunity Council Board Rob Robertson is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Tourism Planning and Development Program at the University of New Hampshire. He has interdisciplinary degrees that blend the social science with natural and cultural resource management from Western Illinois University, Oregon State University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has been at UNH for

the past ten years prior to that he was an assistant professor at Iowa State University. He is responsible for the instruction of graduate and undergraduate courses entitled; Introduction to Tourism Planning and Development, Tourism and Global Understanding, Coastal Tourism Development, Communication for Natural Resources and Community decision makers, Nature-based tourism development and Social Impact Assessment. He serves on a variety of technical boards and advisory committees.

This paper reports a case study of an assessment project completed by 85 undergraduate students in an Introduction to Tourism Planning and Development (TOUR 400) course at the University of New Hampshire during the Fall of 2004. More specifically, the paper is focused on the outcomes associated with an optional (one choice among two options) assessment of a local tourist attraction. Its focus is on the learning outcomes associated with a specific class assignment at the University of New Hampshire. This presentation will report results from both quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the students experience from the students who completed the assessment (n=85), students enrolled in the course who did not complete the assessment (n=35), the owner and professional staff of the tourism business (n=4), UNH faculty member responsible for the course (n=1), and other members of the faculty and staff in the administrative unit offering TOUR 400 (n=13).

Expected Impacts. This paper will have an impact on both the internal and external partners through the development and documentation of the value of the partnership. It will also benefit the tourism industry through increased awareness of the value of these types of activities.

Scholarly Connection. Production of peer-review publication will enhance my professional vita'. It will also assist in the development of future applied research partnerships with the tourism industry.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM:

The necessary resources to complete this paper/project are available at UNH. These resources include computing services, the library and potential peer reviewers.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

An outline of the paper has been prepared. A presentation has been delivered at professional conference (see attached Power Point). Dr. Robertson will prepare an initial draft of the paper with the papers co-author in mid July. Revisions will be made based on the comments and insights of the co-authors. Following an internal review (as required by the NH AES the paper will be submitted to the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*.

EVALUATION PLAN:

This project will be deemed a success if the paper is accepted for publication and if additional applied research partnerships are initiated.