

Tourism Education Futures Initiative

Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) is a three year initiative to re-conceptualize university level tourism education. TEFI is comprised of tourism educators from a range of backgrounds including both academics and professionals. Numerous Academy fellows and nominees are involved in this initiative: Pauline Sheldon, Rick Perdue, Daniel Fesenmaier, Gianna Moscardo, Chris Cooper, and John Tribe. The basic premise of this initiative is that few undergraduate and graduate tourism programs are preparing students for this rapidly changing world. Following from Tribe and others, it appears that tourism education is task-oriented with a focus on “the skills of today” with little consideration of the tremendous change likely to occur over the next twenty years; indeed, it has been widely reported that most graduates will take a number of positions throughout their professional life. Therefore, we need to prepare students for a different world requiring a quantum shift in our approach to educating students for the tourism world of the future.

Over the past two years members of TEFI have examined the values upon which tourism education is based and redefined them so as to match the future environments that students will enter. These International summits have resulted in five sets of values that we believe will be crucial for our graduates’ success and for the stewardship of the industry and the world. They are in brief: ethics, stewardship, mutuality, knowledge and professionalism. Ethics, stewardship and mutuality focus on the nature and responsibilities of industry professional within the broad setting of society whereas knowledge and professionalism focus particularly on leadership and team building skills, critical thinking and creativity. Importantly, the results of the TEFI meets indicate that these values cannot be taught independently, but rather should be incorporated within each course.

A third Summit will be held in Lugano Switzerland April 2009 and will focus on developing curriculum structures that ground these values within the learning process. Outcomes for the coursework with respect to each of the five values will be developed as case examples.

It is hoped that over the next 3 years TEFI will develop a comprehensive curriculum for undergraduate and graduate tourism education that is valued based and recognizes the need to develop both the skills and understanding (knowledge and wisdom) necessary to provide real leadership within the tourism industry in an ever changing world.