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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY AN ACADEMIC TOURISM DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

The importance of community engagement is debated by academics at universities and stakeholders in the higher education sector. Ideas from the EU-project Tailored Applied Research System Implementation are analysed to see how they can be implemented in an academic tourism department, and a community engagement model developed. Exploratory research is conducted using a qualitative method approach with case studies. Conclusions: 1. focused objectives for each stakeholder group which will be influenced by the tourism academy's community engagement, 2. important prerequisites for the tourism academy engagement in the community and 3. potential co-creative actions, which the Tourism Department has possibilities to conduct.

Key Words: University community engagement; Tourism Department prerequisites; Tourism Department actions; University stakeholder objectives; Tourism academy; Tailored applied research

INTRODUCTION

Problem background and discussion

The tourism department at Södertörn University has participated in the EU-financed Leonardo da Vinci project "TARSI" during the project period October 2009 – September 2011. TARSI stands for development and implementation of the system of tailored applied research. Two research papers have been written and presented during the final conference of the TARSI-project. Finally they have been published in the Lithuanian research journal INSIGHT.

The importance of community engagement is debated by academics at universities and stakeholder groups in the higher education sector. However, every stakeholder has their own objectives, which must be understood by all the actors in the network. One could also ask if there are any sort of preconditions (necessary, but not mandatory), for a well-functioning interaction with the community network from a university perspective – we call them prerequisites. In this research paper we have investigated how important is it that the whole academic discipline is organised in one department, e.g. the Tourism Department at Södertörn University, having a total network strategy and continuously work with prioritised actions. In this paper we also investigate what prerequisites are important when choosing and planning certain Tourism Department actions in order to reach the Tourism department's own objectives. In this context when choosing Tourism Department actions one can also ask if the Tourism Department should consider other stakeholders' objectives in the selection process.

An inspiring approach to community engagement is the so called “Bologna Process”. The overarching aim of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area based on international cooperation and academic exchange. In the main documents of the Bologna Process employability has been one of the main goals to be achieved. The role of higher education in this context is to equip students with skills and attributes (knowledge, attitudes and behaviour) that individuals need in the workplace and that employers require, and to ensure that people have the opportunities to maintain or renew those skills and attributes throughout their working lives. At the end of a course, students should therefore have an in-depth knowledge of their subject as well as generic skills which would result in improved employability. In this research article, we consider employability as the furthering of students future careers. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (2008) claimed that community engagement is now more integrated into the organisation relative to the situation at the time of the previous study in 2004. However, in the future the Agency has several recommendations for improvement, e.g. Higher Education Institutions (HEI) should have a common strategy for community engagement and these HEI will require direct funding for community engagement.

Community engagement is an ongoing process at a Tourism Department. Therefore there have been community engagement activities during all the years that our Department has existed and the intention is to continue the development of the tourism academy at Södertörn University using experiences from the TARSI-project.

Purpose of the research article

The purpose of this research article is to analyse ideas and guidelines from the EU-project TARSI (Tailored Applied Research System Implementation) and analyse how it can be implemented in an Swedish academic tourism department, and also to develop a community engagement model of how such a tourism department can identify and plan Tourism Department actions, taking into consideration firstly that there are strong and

subsidiary prerequisites from the Swedish department's own context and secondly, that all stakeholders in the surrounding world also have their own objectives.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article has been written during the TARSI-project process and its main process steps: 1. Sharing experience and situation analysis related to tailored applied research, 2. Information analysis and adoption, 3. Designing the system, 4. Training, 5. Pilot testing of the system, 6. Publishing, 7. Dissemination and exploitation of the results and 8. Project management.

We have an exploratory research purpose where the focus is more on knowledge generation than knowledge verification. In the research a qualitative approach is used where both primary and secondary data as well as knowledge are used. For us understanding the studied phenomenon is important, and to obtain this understanding, we use an inductive approach with several investigation steps. Between these investigation steps we conduct a sub analysis, which gives us an increased level of understanding. Because we are actively participating in the studied phenomena, i.e. with our own tourism department as an object of study, we consider that we are interpreters of a complex studied reality. It is thus a kind of action science. Gummesson (1991) claims that on the basis of the action scientist paradigms and pre-understanding and given access to empirical data via their role as change agent, he/she develops an understanding in the cases in which they are involved. However, we try in an honest and trustworthy way to report the results from the empirical study. The main research methods for this article in chronological order have been: 1. Literature survey, 2. Conducting nine case studies, 3. Analysis of the TARSI results combined with own empirical and literature survey results, 4. Developing our own models and final conclusions in relation to the Swedish context.

A case study involves the study of an example or in other words the phenomenon being researched and the aim is to seek to understand this phenomenon (Veal, 2011). In this research project there is a supra case defined as “Community engagement by the Tourism Studies Department” containing a collection of embedded cases. After a pilot study in the project we choose nine sub cases using the selection criteria ‘how illustrative is the case for a community engagement strategy in one tourism department’.

As data and knowledge gathering techniques during the case studies we choose a) analysis of university internal document, b) secondary data analysis, c) in-depth interviews and web site analysis about our university, d) formal network meetings every semester at Södertörn University and e) action research. Concerning the universities internal documents, we studied important documents written by our tourism department and the management of the university since 1999, when the Tourism Bachelor's Programme started. As secondary data we have analysed important data such as number of students at our Bachelor's program and statistics from the labour market in the Stockholm region. For every sub case study we have conducted approximately 6-8 qualitative interviews, even though the interviews were

conducted in an informal way and every sub case had its own interview design. The basic themes in these interviews are: Prerequisites, Tourism Department actions and Stakeholder objectives. These basic themes have also been the main structure for the report of a case study. In order to obtain a better understanding of the information from community engagement we analysed the content of our universities website. Every semester during the TARSI-project we have planned and conducted a formal seminar with business representatives, students, alumni and academic staff discussion on the possibilities and problems associated with community engagement. Considering the action research technique: The Södertörn University TARSI-group consisting of Göran Andersson (head of the Tourism Department and project leader for the Södertörn TARSI-group), Gustaf Onn (department director of studies) and Dennis Zalamans (teacher/researcher at the department) are all working with community engagement in daily operations at Södertörn University. About every third month we have analysed our own work from the research project perspective.

During the final analysis and drawing of conclusions, we conducted a joint analysis using the theoretical framework, empirical findings and our own motivated conclusions as knowledge sources. Especially we have interpreted the sources to try and find emergent themes and motivated relationships between these themes, and finally create an overall community engagement model. This final analysis and the drawing of conclusions was conducted in four steps: 1) Identify the main stakeholder groups in the academic-based network, 2) Analyse the most important objectives for each stakeholder group which will be influenced by the tourism academy's community engagement, 3) Using a strengths and weakness-analysis from the tourism academy's point of view we have analysed an important starting point in community engagement for the tourism academy, 4) When understanding all relevant stakeholder groups objectives, attitudes and expectations and using the important prerequisites for the tourism academy we have found potential co-creative Tourism Department actions and 5) Develop the overall community engagement model.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A literature survey has given this theoretical framework. However, we have not found specific literature covering all the thematic areas for this research article. The theoretical framework is structured directly on the main themes in the research articles purpose: a) Stakeholder groups (to a tourism academy) and their objectives, attitudes and expectations, b) Tourism Department actions and c) The tourism academy's situation-specific prerequisites. In this chapter the perspective used is the tourism academy in general and not only at Södertörn University. In the empirical study chapter we will use this framework to study the tourism academy at Södertörn University.

Stakeholder groups objectives, attitudes and expectations

In 1999 there was a joint declaration of ministers of education in Europe concerning the so called Bologna Process, where they particularly focused the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education (The Bologna

Process, 1999). There was an agreement of ministers at the Bologna Process conference in London 2007 over the next two years to concentrate on completing agreed action lines, including the ongoing priorities of the three-cycle degree system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods. The focus were planned to be on the following areas for action: Mobility, Social Dimension, Data collection, Employability, The European Higher Education Area in a global context and Stocktaking. From the very start employability has been one of the main goals to be achieved with the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), but many concerns still exist - among employers, students, academics, higher education institutions and governments. There are many definitions of employability. For the purpose of the Bologna Follow-up Group, employability is defined as the ability to gain initial employment, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market. (The Bologna Process, 2007)

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (2004) reported that their assessment panel ascertained that community engagement had three components: development of democracy, i.e. dissemination of research findings for the benefit of the general public, knowledge transfer and growth, i.e. participation in knowledge and innovation systems, together with improved study programmes, e.g. the content and scope of study programmes as well as students' contacts with the wider community. Lu Ying & Adler (2009) have investigated how tourism students perceive the value of their education in four Guangdong Universities. Management, marketing, and economics were the highest rated, but this may be due to the Chinese education system, where the majority (64%) of the tourism students did not choose this discipline, but were allocated to it, lacking sufficient qualifications for their desired education. Perhaps they wanted a business education.

Inui, Wheeler & Lankford, (2006) argue for an academic tuition that does not follow industry's request for well vocationed jig-saw puzzle pieces to be immediately employable in predetermined action, but rather more philosophically equipped handlers of tomorrows problems within the tourism sector. They argue, with reference to Tribe, (2002); and Cooper, (2002) that there are conflicting interests between academia and the tourism sector. Moreover, with reference to Hjalager (2003), Master level students in Sweden are neither fit nor motivated to reflect on their knowledge, since they foresaw a specific career, by which they meant that the university was to prepare them for the vocational needs of that career. They go on to note, with reference to Ernawati (2003) that this kind of situation is indicative of too little involvement from industry in the specification of the curriculum.

Tan and Morgan (2001) note with reference to Ladkin (1999), that there is a tendency for course content to be disintegrated, trying myopically to cater to vocational and academic needs simultaneously, and that this leads to a decreasing demand for graduates from employers. This is not an insurmountable problem. They point to Cooper & Shepherd (1997) who state that the remedy lies in co-operation between educators and surrounding community. In their own investigation 25% of the professionals maintain that a major in tourism is of competitive advantage.

Breen (2002) has made a qualitative study in Australia, where she found that companies and tourism departments in an innovative partnership are developing contract courses, sharing resources and common ideas. The tourism industry has a clear motive of educating their employees further. For example, both at an organisation and individual level in companies it can be a catalyst for self-renewal and growth of confidence. For the university partner, professional development courses have grown to become a significant part of the university's activity. However, one practical implication is that thriving cooperative education partnerships depend heavily on effective communications, on acceptance of each other's culture and a commitment towards working together in producing sound education courses.

Tourism Department actions

Edwin & Cook (2010) argue for case studies as a pedagogical tool to bring students closer to the realities of practice. With reference to Kember, Ho & Hong, (2008) they argue that cases provide motivation through the learning environment. The application of problem solving, inherent in pedagogical case studies, emulates organisational life in a way that is more stimulating than text book reading. However, Simpson (2001) notes that the majority of texts in tourism seem to lack scientific rigor. Those who have scientific rigor argue "a posited relationship between various tourism industry actors and some form of staged development". He gives the Butler sequence (1980) as a prototypical example. He notes that in the 90s, there has been a shift away from mass market, 5S tourism, towards more specialised and fragmented tourism objects.

Dale & Robinson (2001) discuss the pros and cons of standardising and themetising academic tourism education, both from the perspective of student marketing and that of a recruiter. Sheldon, Fesenmaier & Tribe (2011) describes an educational initiative, The Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI), where abilities that are deemed requisite in tomorrow's tourism sector are discussed. They are ordered in five themes. The work of the TEFI is described in a special issue of *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*. The TEFI values of tourism education are stewardship, knowledge, professionalism, ethics and mutuality. The application of the TEFI framework is discussed by articles Paduran & Maggi (2011), Barber (2011), Moscardo & Murphy (2011), Gretzel, Isacsson, Matarrita & Wainio (2011), Liburd, Hjalager / Christensen (2011), and Isacsson (2011).

Simpson (2001) notes the pressure from vocationalist ideas on academic needs in New Zealand universities; "There is an arguably widening gulf between the two post-secondary sectors, with a common image perception that polytechnics exist to teach and train, universities to educate and research" (Simpson, 2001, p.8). Amoah & Baum (1997) discuss the status of the sector and the academic subject and the debates around these dimensions. In opposition to Dale & Robinson, they see the industry's perspective on the contents of education as indisputable. They give some examples of business councils to academia from Canada and Turkey, and some education models from Canada and Ireland. They synthesize their view in a model in figure 3.

Lee & Jennings (2010) state with reference to Airey (2005, p.15) that western higher education initially placed tourism within hotel and catering management. They maintain, still with reference to Airey (2005) that in the UK it is placed together with hospitality, leisure, recreation, and sports. In Germany they claim it may be found within geography, business studies, cultural studies, transportation economy, sociology, environmental sciences and education science based on Freyer, Hammer, & Piermeier, (2005). They mention the situation in the US, Africa and China as well and come to note “Globally, tourism and hospitality education has been and continues to be located in differing fields of study and disciplinary clusters”. (Lee & Jennings, 2010, p. 126)

Deale Elders, & Jacques (2010) describes how students collaborate with community partners in producing a festival. In this way they get concrete experience from the complete event process, and are thus subject to “place-based education” (Deal et al. 2010, p. 146) – a concept used both by Knapp (2005) and Smith (2002). The point about place-based education is that it engages in academically relevant learning activities that at the same time are of value to the community.

Knowles, Teixeira & Egan (2003) compare education in the UK and Brazil. They note that HEFCE (2001) suggests that, to the tourism sector, tourism students are preferred to students from other academic areas in the UK. They note that “It would seem that from the debate so far, the understanding and application of the three areas: vocational training, professional education, and entrepreneurial development are fundamental to the tourism/hospitality education in developed countries as well as the developing ones”.

Breaky, Robinson & Beesley (2008) have studied a regional initiative in Australia on how universities handle knowledge exchange through an internship concept. There were five objectives of this project: to foster partnerships, generate knowledge exchange, support workforce development, maximize marketing opportunities, and develop a research agenda. In general, the stakeholders had a positive attitude towards this university–industry collaborated by placing students in rotating internships, which also gave several other positive effects in the community and business. Cho & Kang (2005) state that students of higher education in South Korea are required to work in tourism related enterprises between semesters. To facilitate this, so called cooperative vocational education or occupational education has been formed in order to strengthen the links between educators and industry. These programmes encompass a number of different methods of linking tourism education to tourism practice, like internships, work experience, supervised occupational experience, field practice, and work based learning.

The tourism academy’s and its situation-specific prerequisites

Community engagement at large, is dependent on community actors having access to the competence that can make public services more efficient (Jürriado, 2008). Fundamental to the individual academy is having higher echelons that further community engagement. From the Swedish perspective, this is mandated by The Swedish National Agency for Higher

Education (2008). At Södertörn university, this is carried out through a whole department dealing only with community engagement. (Södertörn University, 2005)

Inui et al. (2006) note with reference to Ernawati (2003) that if industry is not guiding it there is risk that the academy loses focus on what their curriculum should focus. Further, building on Busby (2003), they note that placements, such as apprenticeships and internships, together with having practically applicable disciplines improve the competence and the development of students, and as a result there is a tendency for such academies to develop strong relations to the industry as a consequent of those placements. With reference to Churchward & Riley (2002) they consider that the majority of industry professionals indicated the relevance of academic subjects to their career. Inui et al. conclude that Tourism educators and industry professionals are aware of the interconnections between education and the tourism industry. Padurean & Maggi (2011) have found that studies concerned with the global expansion in tourism education identify three main responsible drivers of this phenomenon: a set of structural changes in higher education in general (Ayres, 2006), a perceived need of increasingly qualified human resources for the tourism industry (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004), and a common perception of tourism as a major source of jobs and careers (Cooper, 1993, Deery & Jago, 2009).

Lin, Martin & Cobanoglu (2002) note, based on Darrnitio & Schmidgall (1993), Dunfee & Donaldson (1999) and Snyder (2000), an increased academic interest in ethics in education to match the last decades' interest in business ethics. Lin et al. (2002) investigate how educators perceive the preparation of hospitality students in this matter. They note that female educators have a higher level of agreement around statements of business ethics than male ones. Also doctors have less concern in these matters, than do educators with a lower level of qualification, as were educators working in institutions that offered graduate degrees. In addition to these significant findings, they also note that educators have the attitude that ethics should not only be practiced towards third parties, but also towards employees. They are also concerned about students' ethical abilities within MNCs and of how business ethical practice is affected by the organisational leadership and management. Other fields that are important prerequisites are the orientation towards working life and actual and potential strategic contacts of the academy. In the Korean context, the work of Cho & Kang (2005) implies that, for their approach to work, the department must be working life oriented and for this orientation to be successful there must be an affiliation with strategic partners in the business world.

Tribe (2010) discusses the tourism academy in terms of the categories territories, tribes and networks. "The territory of tourism studies ... remains a largely multidisciplinary endeavour with little reported use of post-disciplinarity, or even nomadology." (Tribe, 2010, pp. 29-30). He divides the area into two fields, The Business of Tourism and Tourism Social Science. Evidence suggests a balance between the fields: "the social science network remains strong and other networks based around interpretative methods, sustainability and critical theory have established a footing." (Tribe, 2010, p. 30) The reason for this is the non dominance of a single paradigm in Tourism studies. "Rather it is a soft, permeable field able

to support different traditions which can coexist and which are susceptible to new schools of thought” (Tribe, 2010, p. 30) even though he points towards some areas where pre-states of paradigmatic rule may be identified.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

The first section is a presentation of the Tourism Department at Södertörn University. After that the nine case studies are presented in the chronological order in which they were conducted in the whole TARSI-project. 1. Case “the business interaction approach during regular courses”, 2. Case “Student essays and assignments from the tourism industry/community”, 3. Case “Former student contact and the alumni group”, 4. Case “Business contact”, 5. Case “The Meeting point”, 6. Case “Development of special courses”, 7. Case “Internship”, 8. Case “Master 2 years plan” and 9. Case “Organisational development of a research institute”.

In general about the tourism department at Södertörn University

The Tourism Bachelor's Programme was founded in 1999 at Södertörn University. Since then we have become the biggest educational institution on university level in Sweden in the tourism field. We have about 180 full-time equivalent students a year, and 6 academic employees and 10-12 guest lecturers from the tourism industry. We are also located in a big city region, Stockholm, with a lot of tourist companies, potential students and incoming tourists. In 2004 we founded the formal discipline Tourism Studies. Since then we have developed the tourism academy in several ways, e.g. we have developed a Master's programme, several international Erasmus agreements with other universities, tourism courses in English which are given throughout the whole academic year, an annual international tourism conference, participation in EU-projects and conducted several contract courses. The main theme at our Tourism Studies curriculum is “city region tourism” and the relating sub themes are tourism companies and entrepreneurship, destination development, experience tourism, tourism communication and meetings industry. The Tourism Studies Department and the Business Administration Department are academic units in the School of Business Studies at Södertörn University. (Tourism Studies, 2011)

Case study “the business interaction approach during regular courses”

Prerequisites: This is the first contact for the students with respect to the development of tourism from a societal view with both a private and public dimension. During this course we invite several guest lecturers from outside the Academy who are engaged in such issues in Sweden and abroad.

Tourism Department actions: To fulfil this course, the students have to participate in two examinations. Firstly they have to write an examination based on a number of books and articles. Secondly they have to prepare and write a paper or report on a subject related to the course theme. The topic can be chosen by the students themselves, or it can be

suggested from one of our collaborating partners for the course. In relation to the TARSI project the second alternative is interesting as it gives communities, tourist companies and tourist organisations a possibility to obtain some basic work and information from the student reports. Private companies are of course also welcome to participate, but at this student level and with this course content we believe their interest might be poor.

Objectives: There are many objectives with such mutual tasks and we will try to list some of them: That the students will bring useful information to the ‘clients’. Contacts with the real life outside the academia for the students. Important contacts for the Tourism department, so that we can for example invite interesting persons for lectures. Further co-operation for students later in their academic career. As potential partners in various networks which we cultivate. As potential clients for the department in other kinds of assignments.

Case study “Student essay and assignments from the tourism industry/community”

Prerequisites: Students write their Bachelor essays in groups of two or three students. The essays are written in a 15 ECTS course which is conducted the whole 20-weeks of the spring semester. During the first 10 weeks, students also take two other 7.5 ECTS courses. Companies, organisations and agencies, henceforth referred to as business representatives, were, in 2010, welcomed to formulate assignments in co-operation with the students’ tutor, so that it would fulfil the needs of assignors as well as fulfil the academy’s requirements on research quality. In the whole thesis course one of six seminar groups were formed around the assignment based theses. No special recruitment activities or prerequisites were applied, so students were free to enter the assignment group.

Tourism Department actions: The essay study inspired by the Tailored Applied Research-concept was conducted in two of the seminar groups headed by the same tutor and assessed by a different examiner. One group was given the TARSI structure and the other one had the ordinary essay course structure, in order to enable comparison. Both groups were required to be examined on the normal Bachelor essay requirements. The purpose of the study was to gain experience, and specifically see if the quality of theses was affected by adding the TARSI content. Contacts with business representatives were taken to gather assignments. Seven assignment drafts were filed from three business representatives, where one functioned as an intermediary to several other partners. Out of these, five got students to work on them. In one case, students had to take on only one out of the several questions the assignor wanted investigated. In another case, students chose to write one consultancy report to the assignor and a separate academic thesis based on the material. The other three groups progressed as expected. At the final seminar at the end of the semester, of the TARSI groups three had to make slight amendments in order to get a passing grade, which were completed during the autumn semester, whereas two groups had to make substantial amendments in order to meet academic requirements and they are still working on their completion.

Objectives: There are multiple objectives of undertaking the assignment based Bachelor essays. For one, it is of importance to the students to get a grip on what the industry

deems as important in skills and topics. It may also be a door opener to employment. It is also important from a marketing point of view to show industry that there is a considerable resource pool from which they may take a sample in the form of a small project. From the academy's point of view, it may be a bridge not only to more complex research projects engaging our researchers, but also to other forms of cooperation, such as internships, community engagement projects, and joint development projects.

Case study "Formers student contact and the alumni group"

Prerequisites: We started the Tourism Bachelor's Programme in 1999, since then 400 students have gone through the educational system. This renders the *critical mass of old students* to have an effective alumni group. Since 1999 we have had six thematic subjects for tourism specialisation for individual students: Business, Destination, Experience tourism, Tourism communication, Meetings industry and Advanced tourism knowledge. We have conducted an investigation with the help of about 60 of our own former students. They can be categorised to the following tourism thematic subjects: Hospitality management (18 %), Sustainable destination (20 %), Experience tourism (11 %), Tourism information (16 %), Meetings industry (16 %), Cruise tourism (5 %), ICT in tourism (2 %) and Advanced tourism knowledge (12 %). One important precondition is that the academic department is *working life oriented* which implies that it is important to have a community engagement coordinator.

Tourism Department actions: In order to obtain its objectives, the Tourism Department is to start a Tourism Alumni Group (titled TA-group) and contact our own former students who are working in the tourism industry and who have interests of interaction with our tourism department and current tourism students. Our intention is to expand the number of alumni every year. This expansion will be carried out with care so that in the alumni association there will be people with the Bachelor's degree who are working with tourism in some way and are interested to help current and former tourism students. In the future there will be more alumni meetings and to a certain extent more formal organisation.

Objectives: We have identified following objectives: career opportunities for current students and alumni, further education for alumni and employees in tourist companies and organisations, to socialize with former and current students and finally guidance of current students into working life.

Case study "Business contact"

Prerequisites: One important condition of the project is, of course, to improve our ability to attract companies and organisations to take part in the project and also to interest, involve and engage the staff and students from the Tourism Department. The Tourism Bachelor's Programme has existed for 12 years and it is now well-known in the Stockholm region, including its academic staff and has a good contact network. About 2003 we founded the Tourism Business Council at our Tourism Department, which is an advisory group for the tourism academy at Södertörn University. However, we believe that we already have the

opportunity to improve our business contacts with companies and organisations that can cooperate with us in concrete activities.

Tourism Department actions: The set-up plan for 2011 is to conduct a pre-study to develop the structure and to establish a common organisation, preliminary titled the Tourism Organisations and companies Group – TO-group. The results of the pre-study will hopefully help us to elaborate on the work so that it can be continued. Initially we will contact companies & organisations from our existing network in the Stockholm region, but we will also create new contacts over time. In every participating company or organisation one contact-person should be appointed, and one person from the Tourism Department should be an equivalent contact-person to that company or organisation. We will not ask for any formal contracts to participate in the pre-study.

Objectives: The main objective with the TO-group project is that it should be a possible and concrete contact to companies & organisations for the students and the staff from the department, and of course the other way around. There are many feasible reasons to participate in the project and we have listed some of them: Staff recruitments for the companies & organisations, Job-seeking among the students, Trainee posts, Supplementary training for staff in companies & organisations, Consultancy work and/or research ordered by companies & organisations and Themes for student reports and examination papers.

Case study “The Meeting point Labour market day - TURNET”

Prerequisites: There is a need to have both good contacts with business and student representatives. Up to 2009 we had a “small day” just asking 2-3 former students talking about work experience and 4-5 representatives from the Tourism Business Council talking about the labour market situation. Therefore it has been a cornerstone in network building both to formalise the organisation structure at a Tourism Alumni Group (TA-group) and a Tourism Organisation and company group (TO-group).

Tourism Department actions: We have decided to plan and conduct a labour market day once a year arranged by the tourism academy at Södertörn University. The planned labour market day will consist of information about the future in the labour market by business representatives, career opportunities by the university career advisor, the Bachelor’s Programme by the Programme Director, the tourism studies themes in relations to the tourism industry and types of jobs by the Head of Tourism and experiences from different jobs by alumni. During the day there will also be a “job exhibition case” and a ‘get together’ where all stakeholder groups can have informal discussion with refreshments. There will also be entertainment and a bar at the end of the day.

Objectives: Identified objectives are: recruitment for business companies, job searching for present students who are soon leaving the university, further education for alumni and employees in tourism companies and organisations, to socialize with both former

and current students, guide present students into working life and how to plan their own studying and updating the knowledge labour market situation for the academic staff.

Case study “Development of special courses”

Prerequisites: The Tourism Bachelor's Programme at Södertörn University offers for the time being a rather fixed structure: A student first takes tourism studies courses for two semesters, then two semesters of a subsidiary subject, e.g. Business administration. After that the student has one semester of specialisation, where it is possible to take either the Bachelor level in the subsidiary or another tourism related subject or special courses in tourism. There are also 5 week special courses at intermediate level offered in the fifth semester and held in English. One other option is internship, which at present is for a whole semester; 4 weeks of theoretical work and 16 weeks of placement, which may be divided into two 8 week placements.

Tourism Department actions: A syllabus is being developed for two courses: a 10 week project work course at the Bachelor level and a 10 week internship at the Bachelor level. The project work course is aiming at doing a project assignment for a business representative. The reports have assignor usability as a major focus, in contrast to the assignment based Bachelor theses, that have to fulfil academic proficiency. The internship course is given as an option to those who do not wish to take a whole semester on internship and students will be encouraged but not forced to combine these two courses. In the near future, we will investigate if it is possible to add a mixed project work and internship course at the Master's (1-year) and the Master's (2-year) programme.

Objectives: The objective of both these courses is to increase the student's understanding of the practice of tourism, and also further improve employability. They offer the student increased options with respect to the content of education. They also function as a way to market academic ability and the university as such, in that it offers a kind of sales promotion towards the business representatives. As such it may be a bridge to research and other projects between the university and the community.

Case study “Internship”

Prerequisites: We started the Tourism Bachelor's Programme in 1999 and the tourism discipline was recognized as an academic discipline in 2004. All this time the department has been oriented towards community engagement. Nowadays therefore we have a rather extensive and wide contact network in the Stockholm region with companies and organisations. Together with the organisation Statistics Sweden we have estimated that approximately 40 thousand people are working in the tourism industry in the Stockholm region. If only 10 % of these can be temporarily supported it would result in about 4000 possible internship positions each year.

Tourism Department actions: We will give resources to almost double this internship course for Bachelor students. We will also develop a so called “student-company/organisation matching routine”. This matching routine consists of a needs analysis both for the student and the company, a data base of potential students and company/organisation internship positions, an information paper, a developed matching technique and creative instructions for the internship coordinator. Internship is also very much connected to different forms of project work in the tourism reality.

Objectives: Our opinion is that we have to increase the number of students taking this internship course from 10 to at least 20 (i.e. 20 % of the Bachelor students). This will help especially young inexperienced students in starting their tourism career. There are a lot of companies in the Stockholm region who need trainees for temporary jobs and for being potential permanent employees in the future. The demand for trainees from business is much bigger today than we have capacity to support at the tourism academy.

Case study “Master 2 year plan”

Prerequisites: About 50 students graduate from the Tourism Bachelor's Programme and 16 from the Master (1-year) every year. Our estimation is that about 8 student will graduate from the Master's (2 years) programme if we start this extra academic year. We will build the new programme structure and content using experience from the Tourism Bachelor's and tourism Master's (1 year) programme. We have been invited to a general discussion about a Master's (2 years) programmes at Södertörn University which would have some common courses with their Master's programmes. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education in Sweden stipulates that there has to be at least two associate professors employed in a department in order to teach and examine at the Master course level. According to our Tourism Department's strategic plan we have an intention to develop the tourism education on higher levels, i.e. Master (2-years) and in the long run doctoral studies.

Tourism Department actions: Since 2010 we have started to plan a Master (2 years). The first step was to investigate the advantages and problems of the idea, which produced information about what has to be developed in the organisation. A special project group with the head of tourism and the coordinator for the Master (1 year) has been organised. In this Master's programme we will especially analyse the possibility of developing a degree tourism project course using applied tourism knowledge and our strong connections to the tourism world.

Objectives: The following objectives are identified: Business recruitment of highly professional employees, Business need for advanced investigations (during degree project course) and skilful project workers (during internship courses). Student's will be more employable and make a better tourism career, especially compared with students without tourism education background. The tourism academy will get a more professional and regular contract with the business and the macro environment group.

Case study “Organisational development of a research institute”

Prerequisites: We will use the structure of the old research institute organisational platform even though we will have to reconsider how the present situation will force us to redevelop the organisation model. The focus in this new organisation will be on how to get research project ideas and assignments for the future. It will also be how to get help to arrange our research conference and how to disseminate information about our research to business. In this organisation we will also start joint research and development projects. We will only use academic staff and not students in this context. If necessary, skilled external consultants can be used if there is a project leader from the academic staff. Another possibility is to cooperate with other departments both at Södertörn University and other tourism oriented universities in Sweden and abroad.

Tourism Department actions: “The new academic institute” will be structured based on ten principles: assignment result quality, assignment delivery control, assignment university benefits, research centre economy, university image, university rules, research capacity, only using professional researchers/consultants, network strategy and research management resources. The institute will be led by an institute director. In autumn 2011 we will develop a plan for how to start the institute: we will use the annual research conference as an arena to start the new institute. The plan is to launch the institute at our research conference in Stockholm in December 2011.

Objectives: to stimulate tourism research in general in the Stockholm region, to support business with applied research, to give academics a better chance to qualify in the academic system.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is structured from the main research steps: 1) The most important objectives for each stakeholder group, provided that those objectives can be influenced in some important way by the tourism academy’s community engagement, 2) Important prerequisites for the Tourism Department in the community engagement, 3) Co-creative Tourism Department actions, which the tourism academy has the possibilities to conduct and 4) Development of a total community engagement model.

Stakeholder group objectives

In this academic network we have found it important for the academy to understand all stakeholder groups' own objectives and related expectations and attitudes. After analysing the empirical results and the theoretical framework we have found the following important stakeholder group objectives:

- *Tourism Academy's objective to be successful in educating employable students:* Guidelines from the Bologna Process and The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education have stressed the importance that graduating students from the higher education

sector must be employable to some extent. Therefore the Tourism Academy is analysing its students' labour market and how the programme structure and course content can support this. Cooper & Shepherd (1997) stress that educators and the surrounding community have to cooperate in order to get interesting academic programmes for employees. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 6 special courses and case study 8 Master 2-year plan.

- *The Tourism academy's objective real life tourism contact:* Tourism Studies is a discipline with lots of application oriented aspects. It is important that graduates are capable of solving problems from the tourism sector. Ernawati (2003) also points out that students are not motivated if there is too little involvement from industrial reality in the specification of the curriculum. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 1 regular courses and case study 6 special courses.
- *Students' and alumni's tourism employment objective:* When investigating graduating students and alumni there is a demand for labour market analysis and career guidance to be given by the Tourism Academy. When rather young people apply for jobs without practical experience there will be dangerous competition already working in the tourism labour market. Lu Ying & Alder (2009) also point out that students do not always have the possibility to choose all parts of their education. Therefore they need extra support on how to use their knowledge in the labour market. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 5 meeting points and case study 7 internship.
- *The tourism industry's and public organisations' objective recruitment:* At the meetings with the Tourism Business Council at Södertörn University very often the business members have noticed that they need to recruit several new employees with an advanced education the coming year. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 4 business contact, 5 meeting points and case study 7 internship.
- *Alumni's and the employees' further education:* There is a discussion in the academy in Sweden about lifelong learning, which also can be found in the European "Life Long Learning Programme". A person cannot rely on one educational programme for their whole life. After some years the employees have to update their knowledge and vocational skills. Breen (2002) means that the tourism industry has a clear motive to educate employees further. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 3 alumni.
- *Tourism industry's and public organisation's objective need for knowledge.* When planning joint tourism development projects with partners from the industry and public organisation there is a great need for advanced tourism knowledge, to which the Tourism Academy can contribute. However, Cooper & Shepherd (1997) have found that not all tourism professionals claim that a major in tourism is a competitive advantage. Therefore, the tourism academy has to inform and market this education. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 2 assignment, case study 6 special courses and 9 organisational development.
- *Alumni's and current students' objective of socializing with other students:* The student representatives from the Bachelor's and Master's programme gave information that they, in addition to normal studies, would welcome socialising with other students. The board of the Tourism student association conducts student travel, student pubs, introductory meetings for

new students etc. with great success. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 3 alumni and case study 5 meeting points.

- *The Tourism academy's staff's objective research opportunities and academic career:* In order to find new research questions and to obtain empirical grounded innovation ideas the tourism staff meets with business representatives regularly. Besides which, the staff can also get financing from business for research projects which promote their career. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 4 business contact and case study 9 organisational development.

- *The higher education sector's image as a part of society:* In general guidelines from the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (2004) and the Bologna Process (2007), one can read that community engagement is important for higher education institutions (HEI). In the Bologna Process document one can also find clear political statements that universities must practice community engagement. On a concrete level the management of Södertörn University (2005) have published instructions and guidelines how to manage contacts with the surrounding world. An argument which can be found in these documents is that the focus on the higher education sector must be an integrated with the rest of the society, where research and education will render a positive societal development. This stakeholder group objective has been found in case study 6 special courses and case study 9 organisational development.

Prerequisites for the tourism academy

We have conducted an opportunity and threat analysis in order to find important starting points in the Tourism Academy's surrounding world, for its Tourism Department actions. These starting points are important especially in comparison with competitive academies, but also in general for a well functioning network, and we call them prerequisites. In other words, they are some sort of preconditions (necessary, but not mandatory) which are stable over time, for a well functioning interaction with community networks from a university perspective. These are the especially important prerequisites:

- *Critical mass of potential alumni:* Since we started the Tourism Programme at Södertörn University about 400 students have taken the Bachelor's degree. About half of this group have senior positions in the tourism labour market today and are interested helping other students in their careers. In order to cover several tourism themes, e.g. destination development, and to have resources from several former students there must be a critical mass. During the last year we have been developing a net of interested former students which seems to be enough for starting these alumni activities. This prerequisite has been found in case study 3 alumni.

- *Working life oriented academic tourist department:* Depending on the Tourism Department personnel's and management's opinion about the importance of working life contact, there will be a certain level of community engagement at the Tourism academy. Lin et al (2002) points out that the academy has an increased interest in relating to the surrounding world, especially with respect to ethical questions. This prerequisite has been found in case study 1 regular courses, case study 2 assignments and case study 8 Master 2-year Programme.

- *Strategic contacts between the Tourism academy and tourist organisations/companies:* It is not enough to have an interested tourism staff with contacts with the surrounding world. At our Tourism Department we have employed persons who also have a huge contact network. This has been an important starting point when planning and marketing external projects, e.g. contract courses and contract research. Simpson (2001) also stress that it is important to use these contacts when writing academic tourism texts in connection with the reality of the tourism sector. This prerequisite has been found in case study 4 business contact and case study 7 internship.
- *Tourism academy located in a big tourist destination:* The Stockholm region is the biggest in Sweden concerning number of employees in the tourism labour market, potential tourism students, tourist companies and incoming tourists. This results in, amongst other things, a high number of applicants per place to our education establishments and a high number of work places in tourism companies in the region. Therefore the Tourism academy at our university has an advantage in comparison with other universities in Sweden. This prerequisite has been found in case study 6 business contact and case study 9 organisational development.
- *University management stimulating community engagement:* It is important that only one special department is dealing with community engagement in order to stimulate contacts with the surrounding world (Södertörn University, 2005). This prerequisite has been found in case study 5 meeting points.
- *Knowledge interested business:* Churchward & Riley (2002) have found that the majority of industry professionals indicated the relevance of academic subjects to their career. When in discussion with business representatives in the Stockholm region, we have found a genuine interest for knowledge, such as for contract courses, academic partners in industry association boards, partners in societal projects etc. This prerequisite has been found in case study 1 regular courses, case study 5 meeting points and case study 6 special courses.
- *Tourism Studies is multidisciplinary:* The discipline Tourism Studies is a social science. We have found that it is multidisciplinary, because of its character and has the possibilities to temporarily borrow and combine knowledge from other disciplines in specific research and educational situations. However, there is also a core of the discipline which is more stable and typically touristic, which probably will be even more developed in the future. Tribe (2010) argues that Tourism Studies is a soft, permeable field able to support different traditions which can coexist and which are susceptible to new schools of thought. This prerequisite has been found in case study 1 regular courses and case study 9 organisational development.

Tourism Department actions

When understanding all relevant stakeholder groups' objectives, attitudes and expectations and the important prerequisites for the tourism academy, we have analysed potential co-creative Tourism Department actions. These Tourism Department actions are:

- *Using an open academy philosophy:* We have found that it is of great importance, that the Tourism Academy's management has, primarily, a clear opinion that the academy both has to make its own contacts with the surrounding world and has to seriously consider contacts

made by any stakeholders. The management has to communicate this to the academic staff and to important stakeholders. Amoah & Baum (1997) argue that the academy has to listen to the tourism industry and be open to changes in the tourism programme structure. Lee & Jennings (2010) claim that Tourism studies has to fit in with other sub disciplines in the actual societal context. This action has been found in case study 1 regular courses, case 3 alumni and case 4 business contact.

- *Former student contact routines:* The contact with former students is important for the Tourism Academy for several reasons. Former students already have a personal network and working experiences which can support current students when entering the labour market. However, we have found it difficult to get in contact with former students for several reasons. During the last year therefore we have contacted 60 former tourism students and asked them to participate in a tourism alumni group. A list of these interested alumni has been compiled and distributed amongst them and within the academy. This list has been efficient in matters of career guidance, further education etc. This action has been found in case study 3 alumni.
- *Student assignment strategy:* For pedagogical reasons it is important that regular and structured influences come to students from the tourism real world within the tourism industry and the society. Combined with more academic courses studied at the own university, these influences can result in an increased employability and achievement of the more vocational learning objectives for the students. However, there has to be a basic strategy on how to deal with assignments during the tourism courses. Edwin & Cook (2010) argue that case studies provide motivation through the learning environment. This action has been found in case study 2 assignment and case study 4 business contact.
- *Planned contacts with chosen companies and organizations:* Contacts have to be taken regularly and structured with tourist companies and organisations using concrete objectives for collaboration. Important objectives are internship positions for current students, contract courses and research for the Tourism Academy, and educated employees to the companies and organisations. At our Tourism department we have identified 20-25 tourist companies and organisations, for which we have the resources to support usable levels of contacts for all parties. This usable level is based on a cooperation agreement with known contact persons both within the Academy and at the companies/organizations. We have a plan for how often and at what occasions we will contact them. This action has been found in case 2 assignment.
- *Master (1 and 2 year) with degree tourism project work:* Tourism companies and organisations often need students with some sort of basic academic degree, the Bachelor of Science for example, in assignment and internships. One way of solving this is to plan a Master's programme with a special course for assignments (and shorter internship) of external actors in order not to mix it with regular academic course objectives. This action has been found in case study 8 Master 2-year.
- *Matching internship:* We have identified a problem concerning students' internship at tourism companies and organisations. On the one hand, students complain that their internship position is not advanced enough and give too little to further career steps. On the other hand, companies and organisations complain that students are not interested and matured enough. Therefore it is important to match the right student to the right internship position. Breaky, N.,

Robinson, R. & Beesley, L. (2008) have launched a special internship concept which focused objectives. This action has been found in case 7 internship.

- *Bachelor project work with integrated internship:* There can be a conflict of interest when trying to conduct an assignment as requested by tourist companies or organisations in regular tourism courses. One way of solving this conflict is to offer special assignment courses for the tourism students. Besides, internship can be constructively integrated when conducting an assignment in the tourism industry and the community. Deale, Elders & Jacques (2010) describes how students collaborate with community partners and are thus subject to “place-based education”. Knowles, Teixeira & Egan (2003) focus the understanding of vocational training and professional education. This action has been found in case study 6 special courses.
- *Development of meeting points:* Even though one has an organisation able to cooperate with the surrounding world, one cannot rely on that stakeholders will have the time and interest to meet rather regularly. Therefore we have found it important to create and plan different meeting points which is scheduled early in the annual planning process. This action has been found in case study 5 meeting points.
- *Development and marketing of contract courses:* There is a demand for contract courses in tourism on a rather advanced level, which the tourism academy has competence to satisfy. E.g. we have planned and conducted several 5-weeks tourism courses for advanced vocational schools in the Stockholm region. Knowles, Teixeira & Egan (2003) argue that the understanding of the distinction between vocational training, professional education and entrepreneurial development is fundamental. This action has been found in case 4 business contact.
- *Scanning the market for contract research and assignment:* Society and the tourism industry are rapidly evolving processes and constantly in change. In this context new leaders and managers are involved in new decision-making situations and complex questions in their organisations. Therefore new research questions and new concrete needs for solving problems will arise. However, the academy does not automatically know about this. This action has been found in case study 4 business contact and case study 9 organisational dev.
- *Development of networks for all focused stakeholder groups:* In our Tourism academy we have found it important to create sub networks for each important stakeholder group to the Tourism academy. The argument for this is that there are different important questions to deal with depending on the actual stakeholder's objective. In South Korea so called cooperative vocational education has been formed in order to strengthen the links between tourism educators and the tourism industry Cho & Kang (2005). This action has been found in case study 3 alumni and case study 4 business contact.
- *Development of research institute:* The academic staff in the tourism academy has to work with the regular education & research and internal operational matters of the university at first hand. There is not time enough and not a professional organisation to work efficiently and continuously with external contract education and research and also work effectively in a network with important stakeholders. Besides this, there is a need for working with community engagement undisturbed and to develop special network competencies. Organising a special institute which is controlled by the tourism academy solves this

dilemma. There is not only one way of planning the structure for this sort of institute or group. However, it must be carefully planned and be accepted by the university management. This action has been found in case study 9 organisational development.

- *The mix of academic and vocational themes in higher education:* There is a debate amongst academics and business representatives about what type of education themes will be used, taken into consideration pedagogical issues, generic academic objectives and labour market demand. We claim that both academic and vocational themes are important to consider in a total tourism educational strategy in the higher education sector. Firstly we argue, when planning the Tourism Studies discipline's courses one has to use academic themes, which are built on value-based generic tourism themes (e.g. mutuality) and sub subject themes (e.g. experience tourism). Secondly, when planning the structure for a whole Bachelor's programme and a Master's programme one has to use sub academic programme themes (e.g. hospitality management), but also vocational themes based on the labour market demand (e.g. destination planning for incoming tourists). Themes for the discipline Tourism Studies and a programme can sometimes overlap. Thirdly, for pedagogical reasons case studies and similar methods in the tourism practice are important, because the tourism field is application oriented with practical and professional skills. Dale & Robinson (2001) discuss the pros and cons of standardising and thematising academic tourism education and the importance of using different perspectives such as student marketing and of a recruiter. Sheldon, Fesenmaier & Tribe (2011) describes an educational initiative, The Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI). They have identified some more academic generic values for tourism education such as ethics and stewardship. This action has been found in case study 1 regular courses.

Development of the model "Community engagement by the tourism academy"

First, we have defined which organisational unit is the central actor in the research and what is the main objective for this actor in this research. As mentioned before that actor is the Tourism Department at Södertörn University with its objective to work for community engagement. We have found it important to understand what important stakeholders one can find in the network from the central actor's perspective. During the pilot study we analysed what sort of community engagement one could find when analysing our own Tourism Department's activities over the last 10 years, reports from Södertörn University and reports from The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. When understanding that one has to investigate what objectives and related attitudes and expectations the stakeholders have, we have pointed out nine especially important objectives. The next question to answer is if there are any special prerequisites in order to be successful in community engagement for a tourism department. We have found seven especially important prerequisites. However, we have also found other prerequisites which can be important in some detailed situations, but which are not important enough in general for the academy. It is more a question of a total positive background situation concerning prerequisites than just some few not related narrow prerequisites. Therefore the tourism department can use the explicitly mentioned seven prerequisites as a starting point of analysis, but also add on context-related prerequisites to get a complete flora of prerequisites. When being aware of important stakeholder and their

objectives and the tourism academy's prerequisites, we have analysed important Tourism Department actions. In order to get main Tourism Department actions we have categorised sub themes to main themes. The conclusions are summarised in figure 1. "The community engagement by an academic tourism department".

Tourism academy prerequisites

- * Critical mass of former students
- * Working life oriented academic tourist department
- * Strategic contacts between tourist organisations/companies and tourism academy
- * Tourism academy located in a big tourist destination
- * University management stimulating community engagement
- * Knowledge interested business industry
- * Tourism Studies is multidisciplinary

Tourism Department actions

- * Using an open academy philosophy
- * Former student contact routines
- * Student assignment strategy
- * Planned contacts with chosen companies and organizations
- * Master (1 and 2 year) with degree tourism project work
- * Matching internship
- * Bachelor project work with integrated internship
- * Development of meeting points
- * Development and marketing of contract courses
- * Scanning the market for contract research and assignment
- * Development of networks for all focused stakeholder groups
- * Development of research institute
- * The mix of academic and vocational themes in higher education

Stakeholder group objectives

- * Academy is successful in educating employable students
- * Academy's real life tourism contact
- * Students' and alumni's tourism employment
- * Tourism industry's and public organization's recruitment
- * Alumni's and employee's further education
- * Tourism industry's and public organisation's need for knowledge
- * Alumni's and students' socializing with other students
- * Academic staff career and research opportunities
- * Higher education sector's image as a part of society

Figure 1. The community engagement by an academic tourism department

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