

TOURISM NEWS

'The Uncharted Waters Ahead in the Hospitality Industry' Taylors University, Malaysia, Concludes Webinar Series

By *TN Bureau* November 4, 2020  0



Academic Webinar Hospitality Series Organised by TAYLOR'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND EVENTS

RESOURCE SPEAKERS 5 COUNTRIES

OPENING REMARKS

MODERATORS

“The Uncharted Waters ahead in the Hospitality Industry”

SCAN ME TO REGISTER

Dr. Michael Cheng
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Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Florida International University USA

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Executive Director - Linkages and Standards
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Prof. Dr. Neethiahnanthan Ari Ragavan
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Logos: FIU, LPU, SWISS EDUCATION GROUP, THE EMIRATES ACADEMY OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT, TAYLOR'S UNIVERSITY

November 2020, Malaysia: “Never let a good crisis go to waste,” said Winston Churchill. At a time when there are more questions than answers, The school of Hospitality, Tourism and Events at Taylor’s University, Malaysia fulfilled an unmet need in the hospitality industry by organising a hospitality academic webinar series titled “The Uncharted Waters Ahead in The Hospitality Industry”. The school of Hospitality, Tourism and Events at Taylor’s University conducted a series of webinars during the pandemic that provided insights into the hospitality and tourism industry and into what higher education institutions should be doing to forecast these changes.

The webinar helped participants look at the future of the hospitality industry through the eyes of experts from the US, Europe and Asia.

Distinguished speakers from five prominent hospitality educational institutions from across the globe, including the US, Switzerland, Dubai, Malaysia and Philippines, shared their wisdom on the path ahead for the industry, which has been severely impacted by the spread of COVID-19 across the globe. The digitalisation of education was accelerated and forced by this pandemic which, somehow, forced us to think differently and adapt to the situation as the show should go on.

Hence, the webinar looked at five main areas of focus to support this educational transformation: **Curriculum, Collaboration, Community, Career and Classroom.**

In his opening remarks, **Prof. Dr** Neethiahnanthan Ari Ragavan, Executive Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Leisure Management, Taylor’s University, Malaysia, said that the hospitality industry was the first to be hit by COVID-19 and is likely to be the last to recover from the after-effects of the virus. He highlighted that the pandemic has shown us the fragility in many areas of our life: in geopolitics, the economy, social security and technology.

“This is an unprecedented time in our lives. The impact of the pandemic is worse than the Asian financial crisis in 1998 and 2008 or the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is the mother of all crisis.”

He also pointed out the change in consumer patterns because of the loss of jobs, giving rise to new trends which reflect the opposite of the word ‘premium’. Calling it ‘de-premiumisation’, he said, “Many people who used to purchase premium items are looking to buy to common items today. Will this impact the higher education sector if you are a premium brand?”

Prof Ari Ragavan added, “We need to ask ourselves the impact of these changes on business models, on digital transformation, how we think of innovative partnerships as we can all work with each other only through a virtual platform, what about regulatory frameworks, and what about the future of jobs?”

The webinar featured academics from educational institutions across the globe. All the speakers shared their thoughts on how the hospitality industry could navigate these times.

The speakers were :

- **Dr. Michael Cheng**, Dean, Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Florida International University in **USA**.
- **Prof. Maria Christina G Aquino**, Executive Director, Linkages and Standards, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Manila, **Philippines**.
- **Dr. Scott Richardson**, Executive Dean, Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, **Dubai**
- **Mr. John Daly**, Director of Quality, Swiss Education Group, **Switzerland**.
- **Dr Joaquim Dias Soeiro**, Head of School, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events, Taylor’s University, **Malaysia**.

The speakers answered questions on how the current hospitality and tourism curriculum may be redesigned to develop the skills and capabilities of future-proof graduates.

Prof Maria Christina, said, “Though we cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all concept when it comes to curriculum, there are common underlying concepts and opportunities to modify the curriculum through the course outline and these can be done right away.” She suggested revisions to the course outline to accommodate the changing trends when it comes to health and hygiene, entrepreneurship, and inclusive learning to accommodate non-online options for those who need it.

On the topic of collaboration, they discussed what kind of collaboration could be extended between the academia and the hospitality industry with layoffs being a huge current impact of COVID-19.

The speakers also discussed the needs of the student and academic community and how to support them with foresight into the distant future digital environment rather than suggesting a quick fix.

They also talked about online internships and how this may impact human touch values and whether it is suitable to help students develop the core skills of the hospitality industry.

The webinar was moderated by Dr Kandappan Balasubramanian from Taylor's University, Malaysia and Dr Lilibeth Aragon from Lyceum of the Philippines University, Manila, Philippines.

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