Internationalizing Academic Training in Parks and Protected Area Management through the EU’s ERASMUS Programme

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Presentation Overview

1. Introduction and Background
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5. Output, Evaluation and Outlook
1. Introduction and Background

✓ management of natural resources and recreational activities in protected areas faces global challenges and requires complex strategies
✓ land use conflicts occur whenever stakeholder interests are involved
✓ planners and managers need to acquire interdisciplinary skills in order to address these conflicts properly
✓ best practice exchanges enhance knowledge
✓ internationalization of teaching (and research) is desired among partners
2. Summer School Course Objectives

✓ to help **students** develop an understanding for the complexity of protected area management and for other disciplines than their own required to develop solutions in the field of park and protected area management

✓ management subjects covered: natural resources (biotope, habitat and ecosystem levels), wildlife, recreation, tourism, land use changes, human dimensions, environmental interpretation, planning and capacity building

✓ methods addressed: ecological (e.g. habitat and species mapping and monitoring), geographical/digital (e.g. application of GIS, applied design) and sociological (e.g. visitor counts and surveys, conflict management) techniques and skills

✓ for the involved **lecturers**, the objective is to develop and enhance teaching methods in a European and transatlantic context and to disseminate and publish the findings from the course
3. Participants and Funding – The Beginning

- Core partners: Arne Arnberger (Universität für Bodenkultur Vienna), Robert Burns (West Virginia University)
- Development of a ten day pilot course with 16 students in 2011
- Funding from Leibniz Universität Hannover’s International Office and USDA Forest Service grant (U.S. students)
3. Participants and Funding – The Formalization

- Proposal for ERASMUS Intensive Programme (IP) scheme for 2012
- Network extension to four EU partners (Brno (CZ), Vienna (AT), Wageningen (NL) and Hannover (D)) and one U.S. partner (WVU)
- Funding for six students and up to two faculty members for European universities, U.S. funding again through USDA grant
- Summer school formally named “ERASMUS Intensive Programme on the Management of Natural Resources and Recreation in Parks and Protected Areas”
- EU funding covers travel, accommodation and meals for the complete duration of the course on a per diem / flat rate basis (€ 100 course fee per student)
- no financial rewards for hosting institution, overall budget for European universities € 35,000
4. Curriculum Development

- general course framework:
- 14 days of which the first and the last day are travel days
- the remainder of the days split between Hannover and Harz National Park
- minimum requirement is six hours of teaching or study time each day
- combination of classroom and hands-on activities
Source: Europarc / Harz National Park
4. Curriculum Development

✓ days 1-4: acclimatization phase:
  ✓ getting to know fellow students, the university and the city
  ✓ seminar with input from lecturers and also from students presenting on parks and protected areas in their home countries (2012: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Tanzania and the United States)
  ✓ field trip to local nature park Steinhuder Meer (lake and wetlands)
4. Curriculum Development

✓ days 5-11: field study phase
✓ field trip to Harz National Park
✓ each day under specific theme: park ecology, visitor management, wildlife management, conflict resolution and capacity building, environmental interpretation
✓ day split between morning session (9:00 – 11:00) and field study, service projects, data collection (11:00 – 17:00)
✓ leisure and study time in the evenings
4. Curriculum Development

✓ days 12-14: report phase
✓ data entry and analysis, preparation of final reports
✓ focus areas 2012: visitors’ perceptions of wildlife (lynx), visitor motivations at hot spot areas, exhibit use in visitor center, redesign of visitor center welcome and parking area
✓ final reports as oral and poster presentations to the whole group
✓ course evaluation
✓ cultural program & farewell
5. Output, Evaluation and Outlook

Output

✓ data collection valuable to Harz National Park management
✓ some data will be published
5. Output, Evaluation and Outlook

Evaluation

✓ students enjoyed hands-on activities and broad scope of program
✓ more field work and more intensive small sessions with lecturers/faculty members desired
✓ format of theme days reviewed positively
5. Output, Evaluation and Outlook

Outlook

✓ successful ERASMUS renewal for 2013
✓ new partner: University of Catania, Sicily (Italy), potential interested by additional U.S. partners
✓ USDA grant finished, current ERASMUS regulations require annual renewal with change of venue after three years
✓ students’ feedback motivation to continue
Discussion

Thank you very much for your attention!

Feedback is welcomed and appreciated:

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