PSLO Assessment Report 2016-2017 for Travel Marketing Program

Introduction to Travel Marketing Program and AS Degree/ Certificates

The Travel Program offers a wide range of programs, degrees, and certificates. These programs lead to career opportunities in a variety of travel related fields. Coursework in the travel program prepares students for baccalaureate transfer, career entry, and growth into positions in the travel industry. In addition, students can select from an array of courses that will provide an entrepreneurial foundation to help them start their own business. Many of the degrees and certificates build upon each other, so that students can complete multiple certificates by taking a few additional courses, as well as enrich their professional portfolio.

 The Travel Marketing program is designed to provide a specialized education through coursework and research to master a broad and sophisticated set of interdisciplinary skills and knowledge. Students develop analytical abilities and the critical thinking skills necessary for careers in the travel and tourism industry. Travel 77, Customized Vacation Planning is one of our capstone courses. This course encompasses destinations, communication, transportation, budgeting, various types of accommodations, and other skills necessary for creating independent travel arrangements. Travel 95 is the other capstone course. The emphasis on this course is based on practical knowledge and skills, emphasizing in-depth travel research, marketing methods, and tours. The capstone project is an individual project designed to further the student's career goals.

The most comprehensive programs are the AS in Travel Marketing and the Certificate of Achievement in Travel Marketing (state approved certificate). Skills certificates include: Skills Certificate in Travel Marketing, Cruise Specialist Certificate, and Home Based Specialist Certificate, which are basically subsets of the more comprehensive state-approved certificate.

We chose to assess the most comprehensive Certificate of Achievement in Travel Marketing, a 21-unit certificate.

Part 1: Assessment Goals

We wanted to know if our advanced students had gained the knowledge and skills required for success in the travel industry. We chose separate assignments from the aforementioned capstone courses to assess the three individual PSLOs for our most comprehensive certificate, the Certificate of Achievement in Travel Marketing. In addition, we also created a survey for advanced students and graduates to get their input on whether they felt they had achieved the PSLOs.

Part 2: Assessment Plan

PSLO #1:
Apply critical thinking to research, evaluate, analyze and synthesize travel related information.

Method of Assessment and Student population:
The final project in Travel 77. This assignment required students to research evaluate, compare information and create a customized tour. Students composed a business letter to include pricing, recommendations and required documentation, all of which the student researched. Students created a cost summary sheet, including service fees, commissions and prices for each portion of the tour. Finally, students created a day-to-day itinerary including sightseeing options, accommodations, and transportation.

Total number of students assessed: 23

Proficiency Criteria:
"Exceeds Proficiency" was a score of 90% or higher. "Meets Proficiency" was a score of 70%-89%, while "Needs Improvement" included scores below 70%.

Part 3: Assessment Findings

Exceeds Proficiency (90% or higher) 14/20 =70%
Meets Proficiency (70-89%) 6/20 – 30%
Needs Improvement (below 70%) 0

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the student project from Travel 77, areas of strength in the following categories were identified:
1. Most students (86%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of content by adequately supporting their work with attributed sources.
2. Most students (87%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of organization by using appropriate format, including a good introduction, main points and conclusions.
3. Most students 87% demonstrated proficiency in the area of research by suggesting appropriate recommendations.
4. Most students 86% demonstrated proficiency in the area of evaluating travel regulations of governments (including passport and visa laws and tariffs).
5. Most students 93% demonstrated proficiency in evaluating and applying information to a given situation.

Over 86% of the students had the ability to understand the travel information and not only restate the information, but add clarity and perspective to the information. The majority of the students were able to describe an issue in an objective and critical way. Students were able to create, analyze, and interpret written information.   it appears that Travel students are doing well with recognizing. researching and understanding travel concepts, and applying course content in a real-world situation.

Part 4: Next Steps

After analysis of the student responses, we identified next steps: Continue the current class structure to retain the level of comprehension and offer students additional opportunities to practice the application of ideas that are most frequently used in a travel business.

PSLO #2:
Demonstrate excellent communication skills as well as soft skills in a sales and business environment.

Method of Assessment and Student population:

We chose two similar assignments from TRAVL 95, Advanced Travel Concepts, to assess PSLO #2. These two assignments both involved writing emails based on customer scenarios. Effectively communicating via email is an integral part of the skill set for contemporary travel professionals. The students in TRAVL 95 are typically students who are in their last semester of the Travel Marketing Program. Twenty students completed each assignment.

Email Assignment #1 was an opportunity to practice writing an email based on a client scenario that had been previously discussed and brainstormed in a small group setting. The email itself was an individual assignment (the grading rubric is included as an attachment). It was hoped that individual feedback for this email assignment would lead to improved success for the second email assignment, which was part of the final exam. In addition to the individual feedback, examples of exemplary assignments were posted after this email assignment was graded. Email Assignment #1 was worth a total of 15 points.

Email Assignment #2 was included as part of the final exam. It was also based on a client scenario. Students were asked to write an email to the client providing specific recommendations based on client needs and interests. Email Assignment #2 was worth a total of 20 points.

Proficiency Criteria:
Criteria was the same for both assignments. "Exceeds Proficiency" was a score of 90% or higher. "Meets Proficiency" was a score of 70%-89%, while "Needs Improvement" included scores below 70%.

Part 3: Assessment Findings

Email Assignment #1 results: (3 students did not submit the assignment and not counted in total)
- Exceeds Proficiency: (90% or higher) 9/20 students = 45%
- Meets Proficiency: (70%-89%) 8/20 students = 40%
- Needs Improvement: (Below 70%) 3 students = 15%

Email Assignment #2 results: (3 students did not take the final and not counted in total)
- Exceeds Proficiency: (90% or higher) 12/20 students = 60%
- Meets Proficiency: (70%-89%) 8/20 students = 40%
- Needs improvement: (Below 70%) 0 students

Improved results for Email Assignment #2 indicate that the "practice" email assignment (midterm), along with individual feedback, did result in improved performance. There was a marked increase in the number of students that exceeded proficiency, and no students were in the "needs improvement" category. These results indicate that formative assessments are beneficial for student success. In addition, posting exemplary work from the first email assignment as well as providing individual feedback may have resulted in improved scores for the subsequent assignment.

Part 4: Next Steps

The results are positive and do not indicate that any specific changes are needed. The "practice" assignment seems to be an effective learning experience for the students.

PSLO #3:
Demonstrate knowledge of current technologies and apply technological skills necessary to succeed in the travel industry.

Method of Assessment and Student population:

Travel 77 writing assignments associated with creating word documents, data worksheets and internet research were used as the basis of demonstrating PSLO 3. Students used computer skills to produce word documents, data worksheets, perform internet searches, write professional e-mails and prepare professional documents.

In the series of writing assignments, students illustrated their ability to research travel options, analyzing current events worldwide as it impacts tourism and recognize social media as a means of marketing.

Assignment #1 Creating a Tour. Students created a customized tour. With limited information, students were required to research, price, and create a custom 3- day tour. This exercise included internet research, writing a professional business letter,

preparing professional documents and discussing how the three -day tour could be marketed using social media.

Assignment #2 gave the students the chance to evaluate (comparing and contrasting) two tours based on the pace, routing, interests and details of each tour. The students were required to evaluate the websites of the two tour companies. The students then created an e-mail to be sent to a 'client' explaining the difference between the two tours and explain their reasons for choosing a tour they thought would appeal to the client.

Total number of students assessed: 23

Proficiency Criteria:
"Exceeds Proficiency" was a score of 90% or higher. "Meets Proficiency" was a score of 70%-89%, while "Needs Improvement" included scores below 70%.

Part 3: Assessment Findings

All students understood what was expected of them to plan, prepare and deliver travel recommendations. Students were able to organize their thoughts and communicate those thoughts satisfactorily. Students were tasked with completing many basic and advanced assignments in a word document, internet searches and professional e-mails.

Assignment #1 Creating Tour Results

Exceeds Proficiency: (90% or higher) 12/23 students = 52%

Meets Proficiency: (70%-89% (11/23) students = 47%

Needs Improvement: (Below 70%) (0)

Assignment #2 Comparing two Tours

Exceeds Proficiency (90%) or higher 12/23 = 52%

Meets Proficiency (70-89%) 8/23 =34%

Needs Improvement (Below 70%) 3/23 – 13%

Part 4: Next Steps

Encourage students to participate in activities that will enhance their skills.

Bonus: Travel Student/ Graduate Survey

Description of survey:

A survey was sent to 29 advanced travel students and recent graduates of the program. There were 15 responses. Each of the three PSLOs was printed on the survey, and students/grads were asked whether they felt they had achieved each of the three outcomes. They were also asked to describe their most significant part of the experience as a student in the Travel Marketing Program.

Results of survey:

Responses to Main Question: Do you feel you achieved the PSLOs (1,2, and 3)?

PSLO #1: All respondents felt they had achieved PSLO #1.

PSLO #2: 14 respondents felt they had achieved PSLO #2. One person said "yes" with reservations, adding the following comment: This one was definitely hard to do in our completely online environment. I believe we learned how to effectively communicate electronically, but the phone and in person communication is again something you learn as you actually DO it. It might be helpful in the travel classes to actually have some sort of class time where everyone would be required to sign on so there is some live interaction. Or within smaller groups, to have students actually role play on the phone.

PSLO #3: 14 respondents felt they had achieved PSLO #3. One person said "yes" with reservations, adding the following comment: Again this one is hard because we didn't have access to actual booking engines that we could learn to use. However, we did learn the vocabulary and basic research skills. This is another instance where it might be helpful to have some live or webinar type discussion that would show real life booking engines and how they work. But when I started with CruiseOne I did have to go through all of their training which taught me how to use their systems. And every cruise line's reservation and booking systems are different too, so it's really difficult to be able to teach this to newbies effectively. I'm learning them as I use them. But I would have loved to be able to see what some of the more basic ones looked like through a webinar type presentation.

Responses to the question, ***"What was the most significant part of your experience as a student in the Travel Marketing Program?"***

1. Travel 95 (Advanced Travel)

2. I have learnt so much from this program as I have mentioned above that my big achievement on the last semester was that I was able to build my own Travel Website.
3. Communication between students and Internet research.
4. Dedicated teachers, and colleagues which gave me the confidence to pursue my education in travel industry.
5. The most significant part was the opportunity to attend a travel forum.
6. The program allowed me to reinforce the skills I've developed over many years of work in other areas of the travel industry. The curriculum was appropriate to give me the confidence to expand my thinking, branch out of my comfort zone and into the unfamiliar area of retail travel consulting. I never imagined that I would be a small business owner! Equally important to me are the friendships and networking that developed with instructors and fellow students. As I was an LMC Travel Marketing student living out-of-country and then out-of-state, these connections remain extremely important to me.
7. Learning terminology and resources.
8. The whole program was amazing. Once I completed the program to starting in an agency was 3 weeks and I felt right at home.
9. The online classes helped me to really focus and be organized for the most part. The Travel Market(ing) group help(ed) a lot with that.
10. Each class's Discussion Board helped me understand how networking with peers is a crucial part of the travel industry.   Of all the skills I learned, I think this is most important.   Listening to and understanding the perspective of a classmate, and then using that information to either build upon or make an alternative point, falls right in line with the networking I do with my colleagues.   We are all different, but we can all help each other by sharing ideas!
11. The program gave me the confidence and base skills to launch my business.
12. I loved the online interaction with the instructors and other students combined with the practical experience in researching and developing suggestions for clients.
13. The networking with other students has been the most significant experience. The online format of the class allowed me to read posts and "get to know" people that had the same goals as I did. I am still in touch with at least six of my classmates. Three of them provide that "go to" person when I get stumped or frustrated. We all have different levels of success and it helps to draw from each other's experiences. We have the alumni group that tries to meet at the Home -Based Travel Show too. The job of a Home -Based Travel Consultant can be very isolating and it's important to be able to talk to people who understand the frustrations and joys this career has.
14. I'd have to say the Vacation Planning class was invaluable. The Group travel class has also been a great motivator for me, as I have a great interest in planning group travel (particularly cruises and Hawaii group travel). I also felt very prepared to enter into the CruiseOne training, and it was a lot of review for me as far as basic information and travel terms.
15. The assignments dealing with travel scenarios for specific clients were most helpful. The most valuable parts of the LMC Travel Marketing Program dealt with where to look for timely and authoritative travel information.

16. The most significant thing that I learned is that I can have a 2nd rewarding career and I can turn my passion for travel and cruising from a hobby to a business.

Part 5: Report Summary

Overall, the travel program was satisfied with the findings of the PSLO assessments. While the faculty would like to see a 100% success rate for each PSLO assessed, the faculty was satisfied to learn that so many of the students were successful. The survey of our graduates indicated that 100% of the alumni were favorable on the PSLOs assessed.

We will continue to assess our alumni in the future to make decisions that may improve our program.

Appendix (Assignment Instructions and Rubrics)

Rubric for TRAVL 77 Customized Vacation Planning Project:

	0 POINTS	4 POINTS	6 POINTS	10 POINTS
IDENTIFIED DESTINATION	The destination was not written on itinerary.	Destination information was poorly described on itinerary	Mostly all destinations were described	All destinations were described.
TRANSPORTATION	Prices were not computed time zones were not stated. Transportation to hotels was not included. Information was not included in the costing sheet	Prices were not computed; time zones were not calculated correctly. Transportation to hotels was included. Information was not documented on the costing sheet correctly.	Prices were computed, time zones were not calculated correctly. Transportation to hotels was included. Transportation prices and information were documented on the itinerary and costing sheet and calculated correctly per person	Prices were computed, time zones were calculated correctly. Transportation to hotels was included. Transportation prices and information were documented on the itinerary and costing sheet and calculated correctly per person
HOTELS	Tour itinerary did not offer hotel accommodations	Tour itinerary did include hotel accommodation information, but not documented on costing worksheet	Tour itinerary did include hotel accommodations, costs were on the costing sheet, but not calculated based on per person	Tour itinerary did include hotel accommodations. Hotel costs were accurately documented on the itinerary and costing spreadsheet and calculated per person
BUSINESS LETTER	Several noticeable errors in use of correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction, body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy).	A few noticeable errors in use of correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction, body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy).	Mostly uses correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy).	Accurately uses correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction, body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy(.
COSTING SHEET	Costing sheet had several errors or missing information	Costing sheet had a few errors or missing information	Mostly everything was included in the cost and calculations were mostly correct.	Accurately created costing sheet free of errors and all calculations were correct.
ITINERARY	Purpose of itinerary is unclear. Hard to follow. Missing information. Sightseeing and activities were lacking.	More information and facts need to be used to support the information. Hard to follow. Sightseeing and activities not explained.	Itinerary clearly states purpose. Mostly all information is complete. Sightseeing and activities explained thoroughly	Itinerary clearly states purpose. Easy to follow. All information is accurate. Sightseeing and activities explained thoroughly

Grading Rubric for Client Email Assignment
TRAVL 95

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Mechanics Application of effective email practices	Includes all of the following: Strong subject line, placement of most important statements first, short paragraphs, clear call to action, grammatically	Missing or deficient in one of the elements listed under "excellent".	Missing or deficient in two of the elements listed under "excellent".	Missing or deficient in at least three elements listed under "excellent".

	correct with no spelling errors.			
		4 points	3 points	0-2 points
	5 points			
Content Communication style and effectiveness.	Appropriate and accurate recommendation based on solid research. Recommendations related specifically to client needs (strong benefit statements included).	Missing or deficient in one of the elements listed under "excellent".	Missing or deficient in two of the elements listed under "excellent".	Missing or deficient in at least three elements listed under "excellent".
	Recommendations communicated clearly and understandably in writer's own words (no cutting and pasting from websites). All pertinent information included, and all of client's needs addressed. 7 points	5-6 points	3-4 points	0-2 points
Added Value	Includes information that adds value for the client; e.g., link to video clip, link to relevant reviews (or summary), insider tips, or other useful information that enhances recommendation. Helpful comments	Additional information is included, but explanation or comments are not specifically geared to the client's needs. 2 points	Some information or link is included, but there is no explanation or direction that links to client needs. 1 point	No particular "added value" included. 0 points

	and/or explanations are included to make the added information meaningful to the client. 3 points			

Section I: Client Email

You are encouraged to review the Weekly Planner for Feb 14-Feb 27), "Crafting Effective Emails" before completing this section. You will be assessed on how well you apply what you have learned about effective email messages. I will also look at the information you give to your client (which will demonstrate your research skills) – is it complete, accurate, and is it presented in a professional manner? Don't forget the call to action. ***Do not copy and paste information from any hotel website.*** This section is worth 20 points.

> **Scenario:** Your clients, Steve and Karen Frasier, are taking a cruise on the Star Princess that sails from Whittier, Alaska, on August 19, 2017, and finishes the cruise in Vancouver on Saturday morning, August 26, 2017. They would like to spend the weekend in Vancouver after their cruise and would like some help with the arrangements.
>
> They would like a hotel for two nights in downtown Vancouver, beginning on that Saturday, August 26. They would like to stay within a budget of $300 (USD) per night, before taxes (for the hotel). Convenience is most important, as they don't want to rent a car. Ideally, they would like to have complimentary Internet access and breakfast included. Since this is their first trip to Vancouver, they also need basic information regarding getting around the city, as well as sightseeing tips. They would prefer a hotel that allows them to walk to popular downtown Vancouver restaurants, shopping, and other attractions. They are interested in seeing some of the most popular sights, enjoying the beauty of the area, explore the city, and sampling some good restaurants.

Write an email to the Frasiers with your recommendations, including the following information:
Which hotel will you recommend and why? How does it fit their stated needs? What is the price of the hotel (in CAD and in USD)? Make sure you specify the currency and if taxes are included or not. Explain the cancellation policy. Since they won't have a car, how will you advise them to get from the port to the hotel, to the airport on Monday, and approximately how much will it cost? How far is it from Canada Place to their hotel? What are two or three sightseeing options you would recommend for their short stay in Vancouver, and how will you advise them to get

around? Are there any other handy tips you can offer them, given their interests and the fact that this is their first trip to Vancouver?

Rubric for TRAVL 77 Customized Vacation Planning 3 Day Tour

	0 POINTS	4 POINTS	6 POINTS	10 POINTS
IDENTIFIED DESTINATION	The destination was not written on itinerary.	Destination information was poorly described on itinerary	Mostly all destinations were described	All destinations were described.
TRANSPORTATION	Prices were not computed time zones were not stated. Transportation to hotels was not included. Information was not included in the costing sheet	Prices were not computed; time zones were not calculated correctly. Transportation to hotels was included. Information was not documented on the costing sheet correctly.	Prices were computed, time zones were not calculated correctly. Transportation to hotels was included. Transportation prices and information were documented on the itinerary and costing sheet and calculated correctly per person	Prices were computed, time zones were calculated correctly. Transportation to hotels was included. Transportation prices and information were documented on the itinerary and costing sheet and calculated correctly per person
HOTELS	Tour itinerary did not offer hotel accommodations	Tour itinerary did include hotel accommodation information, but not documented on costing worksheet	Tour itinerary did include hotel accommodations, costs were on the costing sheet, but not calculated based on per person	Tour itinerary did include hotel accommodations. Hotel costs were accurately documented on the itinerary and costing spreadsheet and calculated per person
Business Letter	Several noticeable errors in use of correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction, body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy).	A few noticeable errors in use of correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction, body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy).	Mostly uses correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy).	Accurately uses correct business letter format (heading, greeting, introduction, body, closure, signature, enclosure and copy(.
Social Media	Information was missing. Student has included three or fewer concepts from two or fewer different mediums, but has not referenced these concepts from their selected digital resources.	Less than three social media ideas were presented from two or fewer different mediums and has referenced these concepts from their selected digital resources	Student included at least 4 good concepts from at least 3 different mediums and has referenced these concepts from their selected digital resources.	Accurately created costing sheet free of errors and all calculations were correct. Student included at least five good concepts from at least three different mediums and has referenced these concepts from their selected digital resources.
ITINERARY	Purpose of itinerary is unclear. Hard to follow. Missing information. Sightseeing and activities were lacking.	More information and facts need to be used to support the information. Hard to follow. Sightseeing and activities not explained.	Itinerary clearly states purpose. Mostly all information is complete. Sightseeing and activities explained thoroughly	Itinerary clearly states purpose. Easy to follow. All information is accurate. Sightseeing and activities explained thoroughly

TRAVL 77 Rubric Comparing Tours
COMPARING TWO TOURS FROM TWO DIFFERENT TOUR COMPANIES
 Each question will be assessed using the following rubric

OUTSTANDING 10
Questions are answered fully – clearly defines topic for comparison and goes on to give specific details. Gives a great deal of interesting and unique information. Shows many ways that the two tours are similar. Every section begins with a clearly stated topic sentence and the sections follow a logical sequence. Each question is answered

fully with serious thought and explanations. Easy to read and follow the information. All grammar and spelling are correct

GOOD 9
Describes the topic for comparing the two tours and gives several examples for each. Gives some information that is unique to each tour. Points out several ways that the tours are similar. Each question is answered, but not as detailed as 'outstanding. ' Mostly easy to understand.   Only one or two errors in spelling/grammar.

ADEQUATE 8-7
Briefly mentions the tours for comparison, but gives a few details. Gives very little unique information. Only points out one or two ways in which the tours are similar. Lacks details or information is vague. Most questions are answered but not detailed enough. Mostly difficult to follow and understand. A few grammar /spelling errors

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 0-6
The article's information rambles and does not pinpoint one particular aspect for comparison. Never mentions any unique information. Does not compare the similarities of the two tours. Details and information is vague or incomplete. Has no logical sequence. Very difficult to follow. Questions may or have missing points. Many grammar and or spelling errors.