GEMS Hospitality Undergraduate Mentoring Scheme

Crispin Farbrother, Bournemouth University, has been representing HEIs offering Hospitality degree programmes, for a number of years on the GEMS Steering Group and before that as a member of the Savoy Society Mentoring Scheme’s Advisory Board. Crispin has played an active role in supporting CHME and its members and below he gives a summary of the exciting opportunities open to hospitality students and the faculty teams.

**The Scheme**

In its present format the Springboard Charity’s GEMS programme is continuing to grow and has plans to be bigger than ever! Whilst the scheme has historically been open only to hospitality management students as from the new academic year the scheme is to be extended to include students from both Tourism and Events courses. This widening of the scope of the scheme is down to the very generous funding and support of the Savoy Educational Trust and hopefully reflects some of the changes happening across the UK within departments offering hospitality and allied degree courses.

Now in its 10th year, the GEMS programme offers students studying Hospitality, Tourism or Events degree programmes the opportunity to have guidance from an industry mentor. Each mentoring relationship is to formally last for 3 years and students will feel the benefit of both the experience and network of their mentor and the long period will help ensure that they are supported in their transition from university to the world of work. Our experience at Bournemouth, and in other HEIs, is that some relationships continue way beyond the formal period. Some scheme alumni are now holding senior positions and are returning as mentors.

Accessing the scheme is a simple process with students applying and then attending a matching day. Earlier criticisms indicated that the scheme was too London centric but this has, I can assure you, changed with many HEIs in the North, the Midlands and now Scotland being actively involved. As of the summer of 2019 there are 26 UK HEIS involved in the scheme across England and Scotland with 239 mentors recruited. Is is not for only one or two students and many HEIS have a dozen or more students applying each year.

**Speakers**

As well as mentoring for our students, GEMS are also able to bring a bit of life into the curriculum by providing expert speakers to educate on technical topics or even just to share their career stories to inspire your students. At Bournemouth university we have taken advantage of this to add to our present listing of speakers and an informative and engaging session on the role of the night manager in relation to Revenue Management.

It is easy to book. Just let them know what topics you would like, when and where on the link (https://form.jotform.com/80294216699972) and they will organise the rest!

**INSPIRE**

In addition, many of you may know that Springboard also offer a bespoke placement bank for organizations who have passed their INSPIRE accreditation for offering quality work experience. These organisations range from small chain hotels to bars, restaurants and even serviced apartments.

If you would like to get involved for this year in any of the above contact Michael Hanton. He will arrange for one of their team to speak to your students and introduce the GEMS is programme and discuss the other opportunities with you.

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