Sullivan students cruise into learning in Virgin Islands

In Fall 2013, a group of Sullivan students from the Hotel-Restaurant Management and Event Management programs in Louisville and Lexington campuses cruised into learning aboard the Royal Caribbean cruise liner Oasis of the Seas. The cruise served as the classroom for experiential learning in both fields with stops in the Bahamas, St. Thomas and St. Martin. However, this was not purely a pleasure cruise - the students spent time in the classroom aboard the ship - interviewing crew members, performing team building exercises, and touring the ship. At their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of the cruise liner Oasis of the Seas. The cruise also included visits to the Bahamas, St. Martin and St. Thomas and St. Martin. However, this was not purely a pleasure cruise - the students spent time in the classroom aboard the ship - interviewing crew members, performing team building exercises, and touring the ship. At their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of the cruise liner Oasis of the Seas. The cruise also included visits to the Bahamas, St. Martin and St. Thomas and St. Martin. However, this was not purely a pleasure cruise - the students spent time in the classroom aboard the ship - interviewing crew members, performing team building exercises, and touring the ship. At their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of the cruise liner Oasis of the Seas. The cruise also included visits to the Bahamas, St. Martin and St. Thomas and St. Martin. However, this was not purely a pleasure cruise - the students spent time in the classroom aboard the ship - interviewing crew members, performing team building exercises, and touring the ship. At their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of the cruise liner Oasis of the Seas. The cruise also included visits to the Bahamas, St. Martin and St. Thomas and St. Martin. However, this was not purely a pleasure cruise - the students spent time in the classroom aboard the ship - interviewing crew members, performing team building exercises, and touring the ship. At their stop in Nassau, students took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of the cruise liner Oasis of the Seas. The cruise also included visits to the Bahamas, St. Martin and St. Thomas.

Plenty of time for fun, too
The students were allowed some time to play on each of the islands as if they were tourists. On St. John, the students took some time to snorkel in Trunk Bay which is known for its underwater park. “The tours are an important part of the student’s learning journey,” said Chef Kim Jones, “many of the students have never done anything like this before so they are able to take this experience with them into their careers.” During the team building day, students climbed a rock wall, crossed a zip line, did a scavenger hunt and surfed - all without stepping foot off the ship.

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The voyage ended where it began, in Ft. Lauderdale, however the week at sea changed the way the students look at travel, lodging, food and event planning. Some of the students saw their future on the trip. Returning to Louisville, more than one student completed applications to return to St. Thomas in a professional capacity. Sullivan students will soon be packing their suitcases for the Spring learning journey in Chicago, where they will attend the popular National Restaurant Association trade show. Check out the next Herald for highlights of the trip.

“Students learned team building and increased their individual self-confidence,” said Professor Albert Schmidt, chair of Sullivan’s Hotel-Restaurant Management Department, adding, “many of the student surprised themselves on what they were able to do.” On St. Martin, the group drove past the airport, internationally famous for its proximity to the beach. Large planes fly a few feet off the deck over sun-bathers. The students also had a chance to interact with Iguanas. The students also enjoyed the salty water of St. Martin, spending several hours on the beach. Students were also able to take in the local cuisine at their ports of call and with the food aboard the ship.

Career prospects limitless for Sullivan hospitality student
People like to be in a career that they feel is their “calling.” A career that most utilizes their strengths, skills, passions and knowledge. There are many different ways students find their true career calling. For example, students experienced their love of cooking or baking from a family member, or from helping in the kitchen. For Hospitality Management student Adam Emig, travel convinced him that hospitality was the right career path.

One trip was all it took
“We always enjoyed the hospitality industry, it wasn’t until the first school trip to the Virgin Islands that I went on where I really fell in love with this industry, and knew this is where I wanted to spend my future. The behind-the-scenes aspects of the industry is really where it began to fascinate me, and also make me realize all the unique opportunities that can come with working in the hospitality industry.”

Enjoyed being a Sullivan student
Adam said the small class sizes, and great professors made Sullivan’s National Center for Hospitality Studies a welcoming place to learn. He enjoyed discussing industry details with them as well as with his classmates.

Will continue his education
Currently, Adam is completing his internship with Disney where he has been at the Grand Floridian Resort & Spa working in their quick service food and beverage department. In June, he hopes to begin a management internship there. Adam recently re-enrolled at Sullivan to earn his Bachelor’s in Hospitality Management. Since he plans to stay in Florida, the entirely online degree is a perfect fit.

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