

President's Review and Vision

Macao's tourism industry is deemed to progress rapidly in the years to come. A huge amount of investment has been channeled to hospitality and gaming infrastructure development that is of international scale, and thereby fast tracking the development of the local tourism industry as a whole. Under such favourable conditions, Macao, as a tourism destination, has improved in competitive advantages and become a centre of global attention. This is in concurrence with new regional travel opportunities and innovative tourism products.

However, rapid economic development brings about issues with the supply of human resources. It has caused great concern among the industry and the community at large. To rightly position the local tourism industry and enhance the quality of service, it is necessary to build a good foundation for the development of professional and managerial talents. Tourism education and training should keep abreast of new development while practitioners should never cease upgrading skills and knowledge in order to be on a par with international standards.

Being the only public higher education institution in Macao specialising in tourism and hospitality education and training, IFT realises that high caliber human resources are the most significant assets to our community. We also recognise that tourism is the world's largest industry that breaks down national boundaries. Hence, the Institute has been striving to internationalise our programmes. We profit from strong ties with global tourism and travel associations and are able to benchmark our curricula against the rigorous standards of prestigious institutions.

In May 2005, the Institute signed a protocol of cooperation with two well known institutions of hospitality education in Switzerland - Glion Institute of Higher Education and Les Roches School of Hotel Management. Through academic and cultural exchanges, both parties hope to reap significant benefits from further development of higher education in the tourism and hospitality area, as well as opportunities for research and resource sharing. Such cooperation could also help to promote Macao as well as Asian cultures in Switzerland and enable students and academic staff to improve through cross learning.

In December 2005, the Institute organised a 3-day International Conference on Destination Branding and Marketing for Regional Tourism Development, in collaboration with the College of Consumer and Family Sciences of Purdue University, USA. Speakers included tourism and hospitality professionals and scholars from the United Kingdom, the United States, South Korea, Beijing, and Macao. Participants were industry practitioners, executives, researchers, academics and graduate students from Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong, India, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The conference created a forum to share and discuss recent developments, trends, and researches emerging in the area of destination branding and marketing through presentations of papers and debates.

Moreover, in order to nurture professionals in the fields of conservation and management of cultural heritage and tourism event management, the Institute has begun to offer two new Bachelor Degree Programmes in Heritage Management and Tourism Event Management since 2005. In addition, UNESCO and IFT are co-developing the Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Training and Certification Programme for Asia Pacific. Most significantly, IFT has been appointed to be the regional training and assessment centre responsible to offer a series of relevant training courses. Students who complete the programme and pass the examination will be granted a UNESCO Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide certificate. Not only could such courses enhance the quality of tour guides and their identification with their profession, but they also promote cultural tourism in the region.

To keep pace with the development of our community, IFT has been diversifying its programmes while at the same time expanding its training capacity. With the support of the Government and the industry, we hope that the quality and quantity of tourism professionals in Macao will be enhanced to meet future challenges.



Fanny Vong
President