

Teachers learn about the tourism industry hands-on

Faculty from Simon Sanchez High School and Guam Community College got hands-on experience yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Guam during a one-day internship with Simon Sanchez's Tourism Academy.

The internship was intended to provide teachers in the program with real experience in the tourism industry so they can draw parallels to the industry in lesson plans, according to Vicky Schrage, lead teacher for Tourism Academy at Simon Sanchez High School.

"Teachers should see connections in the hospitality industry and translate them in the classroom," said Schrage.

The teachers each were placed in sectors of the hotel that were most relevant to their subject area. For example, math instructors were placed in the accounting office to get a better idea of the math skills needed in the hospitality industry.

Naomi Uy, a language arts teacher at Sanchez's Tourism Academy, said she hopes to learn how to best make the connection between academics and the hotel industry.

"Most of our students are in tourism," said Uy. "I want to be able to connect so I can

teach my students and learn how to connect tourism to their writing."

She said the major difference between teaching English in the Tourism Academy and more traditional English classes is the emphasis on technical writing.

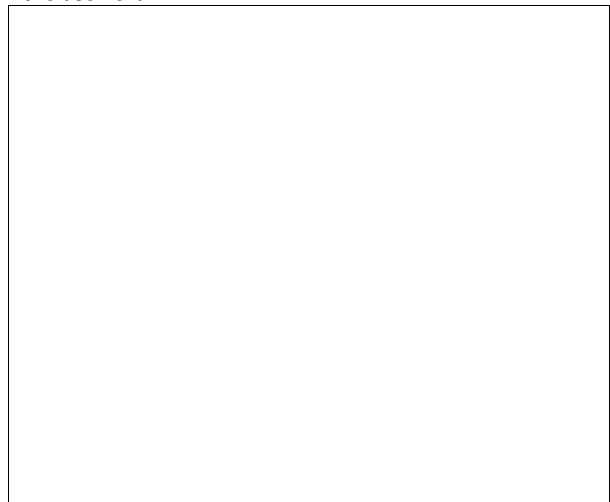
However, core teachers weren't the only ones spending the day learning the ins and outs of hotels. Veterans of the industry also were participating in the program.

Eric Chong, a professor at GCC and one of the Tourism Academy instructors, worked at hotels long before he started teaching. In the 18 years he's been out of hotels, he said the change in how technology is used was the most fascinating thing he'd learned yesterday.

"Students today are tech-driven," said Chong. "These are the tools that they're going to use."

However, he said technology shouldn't be the only priority, saying that guests "still

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want that same smile and that same service."

"If you don't provide good service, it doesn't matter how good your technology is," said Chong.

Chong said he wanted students to learn about what tools are being used in the workplace along with being career ready and having all the skills they needed to be ready to enter the industry.

That's the goal of Tourism Academy, said Schrage.

Students who complete the program will be college-and-career ready, according to Schrage. This means that students who complete the three-year curriculum will be ready to either join the workforce in the hotel industry or continue on to Guam Community College or the University of Guam.

Upon completing Tourism Academy, students receive a high school diploma, as well as a Certificate of Mastery from GCC. Those who continue with schooling also receive 12 hours of GCC credit.

The program is an entire curriculum within each public school on Guam that is under the authority of Guam Community College. Within each program, there are both core subject teachers -- math, science and English language arts -- and career and technical educators.

Students can start the program during their

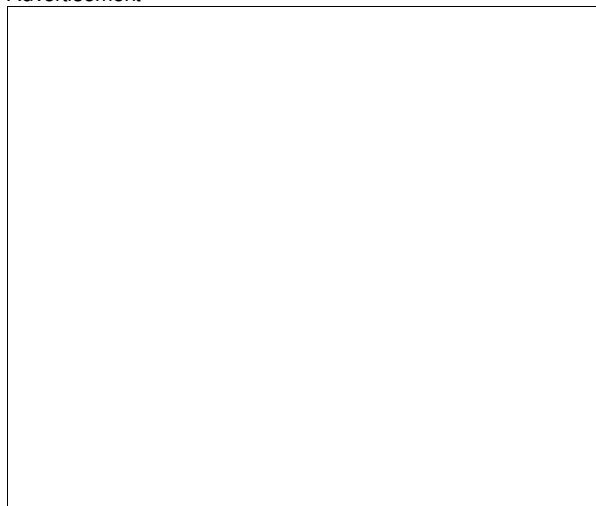
sophomore year of high school. Students should demonstrate an interest in the tourism industry, good grades and a good attendance record.



Zoom

Lifeguard Ambrose Andres, left, explains to Simon Sanchez High School science teacher Crystal Bunoan, center, and English teacher Naomi Uy how to use a water test kit at the Hyatt Regency Guam yesterday. The core academic teachers, along with the Yigo school's Career and Technical Education teachers spent the day interning at the hotel. / Rick Cruz/Pacific Daily News/rmcruz@guampdn.com

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AT A GLANCE

- According to Schrage, all four public schools have a Tourism Academy program.
- Although interested students are encouraged to begin the program in 10th grade, Schrage said they accept students at all grade levels.
- Students should talk to counselors or instructors within the program for more information.

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