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Bowling Green State University

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Delegation offers tips on hospitality management

On trip to U.S.S.R., Bandy sees a country ready for Western influence

After she returned from her trip to the Soviet Union, Melissa Bandy, director of the hospitality management program, couldn't wait to go grocery shopping.

That may sound funny to some people, but Bandy had good reason for her desire to wander the aisles of an all-American Kroger or Foodtown store: she was anxious to see the well-stocked shelves and variety of goods again. In the Soviet Union, she saw many bare shelves or stores with only a few items.

"The Soviets do not understand the concept of supply and demand," Bandy said. "They stockpile all the time. They are afraid the next day there won’t be anything so they buy everything at once. While I was there I bought a sweatshirt in one of the stores that had dozens in stock. I went back the next day to get another one and they were all gone. That’s not unusual. In fact, nothing stays in stock for more than a day there."

Bandy was one of 15 people from around the world who were invited to travel on a 15-day trip to Czechoslovakia with a program sponsored by the Council on Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Education. All of the members of the delegation were involved in the hotel, restaurant or tourism industries and during their two-week stay from Feb. 22 through March 9 they visited their Soviet counterparts to teach Western-style hospitality programs.

Bandy was the only Olekhan in the delegation, coming from the Universities of Denver, Georgia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Great Britain, Finland and Switzerland. "Both personally and professionally, the trip was a fantastic opportunity and I think a lot of good things are going to come from it," she said.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain, tourism has become a new industry in both the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. But while they might be off to a slow start, Bandy said the people are eager to learn.

During the trip, she presented a paper entitled "Aggressive Hospitality: Combining Employment and Empowerment" on three separate occasions. The paper discusses a style of management that allows employees to make their own decisions and to be rewarded for them.

Bandy said she thought the areas where the Soviets were the weakest were in strategic planning and in human resource management. "They know that is where they need help and they are willing to learn," Bandy said. "But the funny part is that under Communist thinking, they are used to 20-year plans. So it was hard to get them to think in terms of three- to five-year plans in the hospitality area. Also, programs on motivation, reward systems, hiring and firing practices and leadership were all new to them."

In the Soviet Union, the delegation visited Moscow and Leningrad where they met with members of the city council and some travel agencies. Bandy said she preferred Leningrad over Moscow.

Even though the delegation stayed at one of the nicer hotels in Moscow its standards were lower than most basic hotels in the U.S., she said. There were cockroaches, but no room service or any telephones, radios or newspapers.

However, the group visited some joint venture hotels, operated in conjunction with another country, such as Finland, Switzerland or France, that were more modern. They also observed the country's only training program for waiters. It is prestigious to participate in the program because it could eventually earn the person more money.

While tourism is down 70 percent from last year in Moscow, it is up in Leningrad, Bandy said. "Leningrad seems to be a little better off and the people there have great pride in their work ethic," she said.

"The hotels had almost 100 percent occupancy and rooms were approximately $75 to $125 per night."

While visiting the McDonald's Processing Plant, it supplies all the food at the Moscow McDonald's which seats 500 people and feeds approximately 50,000 each day, Bandy said the Soviets do not pasteurize milk or cut meat to McDonald's standards so it is all done at the plant. When the group went to the fast food chain itself, the line was 300 yards long and it took them about 18 minutes until they could order their food.

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Training course teaches staff of supervisory role

What does it take to be a supervisor? More than 100 classified employees have taken a course during the past five years to learn the qualities that make a person most effective in this role.

The Pre-Supervisory Development Program is a 13-week evening course offered once a year through the training and development area of personnel services.

"The program is designed for people interested in becoming a supervisor," said Ruth Million, manager of training and development. "It is an excellent employee benefit. The course is free to the participants and their only investment is in their own time, energy and commitment." The University covers the cost of the textbook and instruction.

To date, 15 employees out of a total of 83 who have completed the course have received a promotion. Participants who attend 10 out of the 13 classes receive a certificate.

Currently 26 classified employees are enrolled in the class being offered through May 20.

The sessions are taught by Dr. Ron Hunady, management, who covers such topics as the role of a supervisor, developing administrative, leadership and communication skills and managing change.

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As computer needs grow, center now offers much-needed training

The Eight Center for Computing, which was created to teach 10,000 employed people a computer program called Advanced Office Writing, is closing.

Although the courses covered a variety of computer applications and the goal was to increase the computer literacy of the center's employees, the program failed.

The center, which was created by the University and the University of Michigan, was designed to provide training in the use of computer systems and technologies.

The center was closed last December, and the training program was discontinued.

The center's closure was announced in the University's newsletter, The Michigan Daily, on February 10.

The newsletter said that the center had been closed because of "financial difficulties." The newsletter did not specify what those difficulties were.

The newsletter also said that the center's closure would have a "minimal impact on the University's ability to provide computer training to its employees."
How about your benefits?

Unbundling of physician's charges increases costs

(Taken in the interest of reasonable actions exploring specific aspects about employee benefits.)

Denton and Associates, the firm which provides health care plans to the city government and their defined benefits the city government has been attacked when reviewing charges for surgical procedures. "Unbundling" in the unbundling of payments, Tuscaloosa, allows for the separate billing of each individual procedure and is otherwise known as "the unbundling of their charges." James Morris, managing partner of the Benefits Office, suggests that employees who understand what is being billed to them have a much better idea of the actual cost of their care. "In numerous cases, the bill is off by thousands of dollars." unless a pension can support the bill by showing that there were charges for unseen procedures or that this charge billing is done off the records, he said.

Employees with questions about their benefits should contact the Benefits Office at 372-2112.

Datebook

Monday, April 1

10:00-Film series - Screening of "Grandview," a 1944 film
1:00-Open House for the University's Sociology Department
6:00-Computer science forum on "The Future of Computing"

Tuesday, April 2

8:00-Philosophy Colloquium - "The Existence of God"
10:00-Mathematics Colloquium - "The History of Mathematics"
11:00-Physics Colloquium - "The Nature of Matter"
1:00-Special Education Colloquium - "The Importance of Special Education"