

23 December 2008

## **PolyU hosted the Fifth China Tourism Forum**

Co-organised by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and Tourism College of Huangshan University, the *Fifth China Tourism Forum* took place in picturesque Huangshan, Anhui Province, China on 13 – 14 December 2008. The two-day forum drew together industry leaders, academics and students, taking nature-based tourism as its theme.

The forum focused on the impact of tourism in the less developed areas of China. This is particularly important in Huangshan, Anhui Province, with its rich cultural heritage, high potential for nature-based tourism and spectacular scenery balanced against high levels of poverty. In his opening remarks, Prof Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director of SHTM, noted that “while China has splendid nature-based attractions on offer across the country, it is vital for local communities, governments as well as tourism practitioners to work together to ensure their preservation and sustainability.”

In the keynote speeches that followed, Professor Bob McKercher of SHTM reflected on the past, present and future of ecotourism and called for the development of sustainability indicators, codes of practice and eco-labels. Professor Chris Ryan of the University of Waikato shared his views on corporate social responsibility and tourism in which he argued that tourism has to be proactive and think in new ways. While Professor Shanfeng Hu, Dean of Tourism College of Huangshan University, analysed the geomantic culture in the ancient architecture of Huizhou, Professor Bruce Prideaux of James Cook University discussed the critical issues in the long-term sustainability of mountain tourism, namely climate change factors, the role for science and sustainable planning. Other speakers included representatives from Huangshan Municipal Government and Peking University.

The forum was followed by panel discussions on Nature-based Tourism, Crisis Management and Post-disaster Recovery in Tourism, Tourism after the Olympic Games and Tourism Industry Careers in China: Let’s Hear from Employees, as well as a number of paper presentations.

The Fifth China Tourism Forum also conferred the “Lifetime Achievement Award in Tourism Education and Research in China” to the distinguished scholar Professor Zhang Guangrui in recognition of his significant contribution to tourism research and education in China.

At the closing ceremony, it was announced that the Sixth China Tourism Forum would be hosted jointly with UNWTO and Sichuan Tourism Administration (STA) and held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on 12 – 13 May 2009. The forum will take

the theme of “Shaping the Future of Tourism”. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Professor Kaye Chon of SHTM and Mr Miao Yuyan of STA.

PolyU’s School of Hotel and Tourism Management is a leading provider of hospitality education in the Asia-Pacific Region. It is ranked No. 4 among the world’s top hotel and tourism schools based on research and scholarship, according to a study published in the *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* in 2005.

With 60 academic staff drawn from 18 countries, the School offers programmes at levels ranging from Higher Diploma to PhD. It was awarded the “2003 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Institutional Award” in recognition of its significant contribution to tourism education, and is the only training centre in the Education and Training Network in Asia recognised by UNWTO.



Prof Kaye Chon of SHTM delivering his opening remarks at the Opening Ceremony.



Speakers sharing their views at the Panel Discussion "Crisis Management and Post-disaster Recovery in Tourism".



Prof Kaye Chon of SHTM and Mr Miao Yuyan of STA shook hands after signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

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