Sabbatical Request

The major goals of my sabbatical were to learn about and gain skills in the use of social media to 1) incorporate these skills into my service class and 2) develop a means to provide program supporters and the community with consistent information about the program. I believed that this opportunity would further my professional growth and development in a field that restaurants are utilizing in order to promote their business.

Activities
At the start of my sabbatical I spoke with numerous restaurant and food operators to learn how they use social media. I learned that many operations rely so much on social media that many have “social media teams” and employ full-time positions such as Social Media Managers or Directors. These positions are largely responsible for overseeing the company’s social media strategy and social media team across all internal brands and platforms. Along with strong management and organizational skills people in these positions must possess advanced knowledge and understanding of social media and networking platforms.

Considering their business objectives, restaurants are considering social media marketing that may give them a business advantage. Many operators I spoke with use social networking sites such as Facebook and Google Plus, blogging sites such as Twitter and Tumblr, Photo sharing sites such as Flikr, Instagram, and Pinterest, and group buying strategies such as Groupon and Living Social to promote business and communicate with patrons.

I did a lot of on-line research, subscribed to free trails, and participated in webinars and was able to learn about the latest social media marketing tactics and what the professionals are doing. I continue to incorporate as many of these strategies into the marketing of The Pearl restaurant and Culinary Arts Program. Additionally, I have incorporated a lesson on the subject into my lectures
in the Dining Room Operations class. I continue to subscribe to on-line issues of the Social Media Examiner that offer information and techniques for social media marketers. The site also allows access to articles, reports, and videos on a myriad of topics about multiple social channels, effective Facebook and Instagram ads, principles to improve social media marketing, and tools to record and edit video for social media marketing and campaigns.

http://www.gcflearnfree.org/socialmedia

http://www.lynda.com/Social-Media-Marketing-training-tutorials/1366-0.html

http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/16-social-media-marketing-tips-from-the-pros/

http://mashable.com/category/social-media-marketing/

http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2014/01/09/social-media-marketing-strategies

http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/228324

http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5782-social-media-marketing.html

**Outcome**

As discussed in my proposal one objective was to develop a process to distribute an electronic newsletter. I actually ended up starting an email marketing campaign. First, I gathered and input hundreds of names and email addresses into a database. Through the Leeward Media Center I was introduced to the Educational Media Center Blogs. I create the content for the newsletter on the blog and distribute the newsletter via Mail Chimp. The first post for fall 2015:

http://blogs.leeward.hawaii.edu/culinaryarts/

**Ongoing**

I believe this project has helped me gain valuable skills in the area of social media to assist the program in its efforts to communicate to the community. I intend to continue to build the email list and post program information, events and activities as often as needed. I will also invite students to expand the types of social media sites used and assist in the management of the sites. Currently, students manage The Pearl restaurant’s Facebook page.