



## **MPI and San Diego State University Partner to Develop Meeting and Event Management Graduate Degree, Certificate Programs**

DALLAS, December 5, 2017 — [Meeting Professionals International \(MPI\)](#) and the [L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at San Diego State University \(SDSU\)](#) announced today they will collaborate to create the first graduate-level degree program offered in the United States focused on meeting and event management for mid and senior-level professionals. In addition, they plan to develop a related academic certificate program for non-traditional students.

Scheduled to launch in 2019, the master's degree program will incorporate experiential learning, simulations, and industry partner mentoring, and will be delivered online with meet-ups on the SDSU campus to accommodate work schedules of students. It will be taught by faculty who have worked in the meeting and event industry, and feature guest lecturers from the industry as well. After successful completion of the program, students will be awarded a master of science degree in meeting and event management from SDSU.

"We are thrilled about this opportunity to co-create unique and rigorous educational programming with the globally-recognized L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at SDSU," said Paul Van Deventer, president and CEO of MPI. "MPI continuously strives to bring more visibility and credibility to the meeting and event industry, and the new master's degree and academic certificate programs are stellar examples of how we fulfill our mission."

The MPI/SDSU academic certificate program is slated to launch in 2019 as well. The program's curriculum will cover select core content from the master's degree program, and it will be administered online with meet-ups on SDSU's campus. The MPI/SDSU academic certificate will be presented to participants upon successful completion of the program. Participants will also earn college credits, which can be applied towards the master's degree program if students wish to pursue that path.

"We could not be more excited about co-creating this first of its kind master's degree in meeting and event management. It is about time that this profession is recognized as needing high-level knowledge, skills and abilities taught in an academically rigorous and relevant manner at the graduate level. This master's degree will assist mid- to senior-level professionals in developing their skills while still employed, benefitting both themselves and their organizations," said Carl Winston, Director, L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

"MPI has been an industry leader dedicated to enhancing the skills and career success of its core constituency, meeting professionals. MPI continues to facilitate the professionalization of the meeting and event industry. The leadership and faculty at the SDSU School of Hospitality and Tourism Management are equally committed to excellence and innovative approaches in delivering a graduate

level educational experience of the very highest caliber. This collaboration is the genesis of what could very well become a game changer in the meeting and event industry,” said Vince LaRuffa, senior vice president of Resort Sales and Marketing at Universal Orlando Resort, SDSU School of Hospitality and Tourism Management Master’s Program alumnus, and previous member of the MPI Foundation Global Board of Trustees and MPI Board of Directors.

Since 2015, MPI and SDSU have worked together in partnership with Event Model Generation to present the [Event Design Certificate \(EDC\) Program](#), an immersive three-day training course that teaches a systematic 10-step visual approach to event design. The next EDC Program course is scheduled for January 11 – 13, 2018, on the SDSU campus, and [registration](#) is open until January 1.

### **About MPI**

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. The organization provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry. MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals including more than 17,000 engaged members and its Plan Your Meetings audience. It has more than 90 chapters and clubs in 19 countries. “When we meet, we change the world.” [www.mpiweb.org](http://www.mpiweb.org)

### **About SDSU**

At San Diego State University, Leadership Starts Here is a bold statement of our ethos. It is a fundamental principle that guides our actions and an enduring promise fulfilled through the lives of our students, faculty, staff and alumni. Each year, SDSU provides 36,000 students with the opportunity to participate in an academic curriculum distinguished by direct contact with faculty and an increasing international emphasis that prepares them for a global future. The university is strong and getting stronger. United by pride in our Aztec roots, the SDSU community is committed to improving student success, advancing research and creative endeavors, contributing to the community and building our culture of philanthropy.

San Diego State University continues to gain recognition as a leader in higher education. It is currently ranked in the top 140 national universities and in the top 70 public universities in U.S. *News & World Report's* annual ranking of America's Best Colleges. San Diego State University will continue to focus on Student Success by emphasizing high-impact practices that produce transformational educational experiences and by fostering an institutional culture that recognizes and rewards student achievement. Student Success is at the heart of San Diego State University’s mission. Everything in which the university is engaged—research, teaching, internationalization, faculty and staff activities, diversity initiatives, campus life, facilities and outreach services—is intended to enable our diverse student population to achieve at the highest levels. Maintaining a university-wide commitment for our diverse community to ensure student academic achievement and personal well-being is highly valued and essential to student success.

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