



**L. Robert Payne School of HTM**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**IMEX America FACULTY ENGAGEMENT**  
**An IMEX / IAEE Partnership**  
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Submission request for a "stand-up" presentation at IMEX America

## Abstract

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) commissioned a year-long research-backed development process to learn more about not only what made college and university meeting/events programs successful, but also what presented as challenging or detrimental to the success of their program, and ultimately, their students.

Using this research MPI has identified three primary competency areas that compose a robust and meaningful educational experience:

- Quality of Instruction
- Academic Rigor
- Practicum Work Experience

The research resulted in the creation of two new initiatives. One is a college and university meeting/event certification program. The other is a much-needed certification for college students called the Emerging Meeting Professional (EMP).

## Background and Methodology

In the past decade, the largest growth segment for hospitality schools has been meeting/event management. Unlike traditional areas in hospitality (hotels, restaurants, etc.) the lack of uniformity of business structures, opaque operational approaches

and size and scope of the enterprises has made this a challenge for schools to teach and students to learn.

The impact of Covid-19 was devastating on the meeting/event profession with almost all face-to-face meetings cancelled, postponed, or changed to virtual. Industry and schools alike suffered and then had to reimagine the entire delivery of meetings. With this reimagining process came the question about the future of meeting talent and who the future profile of a "meeting professional" might "look like."

A series of some 50 interviews were conducted with meeting/event employers around the globe over a period of nearly one year. Employers ranged in size from large multinationals to local "mom & pop" businesses. The majority were based in the USA but there was representation from Europe and Asia. The interviews focused on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they were seeking from their "incoming talent" as Covid-19 began to fade, and the industry reactivated.

### Findings

The findings from this series of interviews were remarkably consistent. The most common "wish" from employers was that college graduates had more understanding of the realities of the meeting/events industry. This ranged from job realities to job

opportunities/possibilities to a more wholistic grasp of the entire profession.

What was consistently lacking from the interviews was a need for graduates to have so-called "technical knowledge" relating to meeting/events. Instead, there was a focus on problem solving, working in teams, written and verbal communication and project management.

From the interviews and analysis, three primary competency areas were identified that compose a robust and meaningful educational experience:

- Quality of Instruction
- Academic Rigor (and locality)
- Practicum Work Experience

In the proposed session, we would do a "deeper dive" into these findings.