Elderhostel Assessment of Learning Outcomes
2009-2010

Learning (Program Administration) Outcome Goals:

- Increase participants’ knowledge of Savannah’s unique, extensive history as well as enhance their understanding of how the city’s past has sculpted its present identity.

- Enable participants to gain an appreciation for Savannah’s rich, diverse culture by exposing them to the area’s people, music, cuisine, art, and architecture.

- Ensure that participants are satisfied with all staff involved in the program, the overall program content (educational content, interesting material, variety, etc.) and overall value of the program, as well as the quality of the accommodations, meeting space, materials, transportation, and meals included with the program.

Evaluation Method:

The AASU Elderhostel office offers programs at two sites/locations in Savannah. Each program is one week long (Sunday evening to Friday morning) and attendees travel from all over the country as well as from international locations in order to participate. The method for assessing the outcome goals is a standardized evaluation form.

Elderhostel evaluations are administered through the national headquarters of Elderhostel, Inc. located in Boston, MA. These evaluations are sent via postal mail and electronic mail to each participant shortly after a program week is completed. The participants will complete and return the forms. Once the evaluations are compiled, the results are published on the Elderhostel website for its local providers to examine.

Data is updated nightly and is current as of the previous 12 months. If the national office deems some type of action is necessary to address or correct an issue, the provider is notified and steps are taken to initiate positive results from future programs. Furthermore, the onsite provider (AASU Elderhostel office) utilizes the feedback as a guide for taking proactive steps to ensure its programs are optimally meeting the outcome goals.

These assessments began the week of September 27, 2009 and ended the week of May 26, 2010.
Results:

On a scale from 1-5 with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest:

Site: Historic District – Courtyard Marriott – A total of 20 weeks and 317 respondents:

- Overall Program Educational Content: 4.88
- Overall Value of Program: 4.91
- Overall Accommodations Quality: 4.91
- Overall Meals Quality: 4.83
- Overall Satisfaction: 4.97

Site: Midtown: Oglethorpe Inn & Suites – A total of 12 weeks with 154 respondents:

- Overall Program Educational Content: 4.94
- Overall Value of Program: 4.85
- Overall Accommodations Quality: 4.62
- Overall Meals Quality: 4.57
- Overall Satisfaction: 4.95

Changes as a Result of Assessment:

Evaluations can be monitored on a weekly (individual program) basis very shortly after a program concludes: repeated responses below 4.00 or consistently negative written comments (which occasionally accompany the online surveys) in any targeted aspect of the program week will result in those components being reevaluated & modified if deemed appropriate. Such modifications may include but are not limited to changing restaurant options, using new/different instructors, or revising field trip itineraries to better suit the participants’ expectations.

In the 2009-10 year, modifications to the Historic District Site have included discontinuing visiting a local museum and changing one restaurant location to another as a result of consistently negative responses by participants. The changes resulted in consistently better responses by subsequent participants.
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The main concerns for the Midtown Site included limitations of menu selections at breakfast and other catered meals. Consequently, these issues were addressed with both the hotel (which is responsible for breakfast) and the contracted caterer; as a result, better and healthier options as well as more variety have been added to both menus throughout the week. Additionally, after hearing numerous requests for a free evening dining option at a local restaurant, the participants now have the choice to stay at the hotel and dine with the caterer or go out on their own to a local, near-by restaurant.

For the 2009-10 year, the Historic District Site respondents/participants were 98% satisfied overall with the programs they attended. The Midtown Site respondents’ results revealed a 95% satisfaction rate overall.