

I. Candidate Overview

A) Professional Overview

I have loved challenging myself since I was a child. Growing up in a small town in Taiwan, one of my challenges was I always took my two brothers to adventures in new places. During junior and senior high school, I had poor academic performance because I loved reading but not text books and also had an unfavorable learning attitude. Fortunately, I was accepted by a college in a so-called “unpopular” major (Tourism Management). I fell in love with the major of Tourism Management and knew what future career I wanted to pursue. Then one of my professors offered me a great opportunity to work in a travel agency when I was a senior student. I had a wonderful and extraordinary job experience because that was during that time when Taiwanese were permitted to travel to Mainland China after more than 35 years of being banned. In the beginning of the cross-strait relation, there were over 1.5 million Taiwanese who visited undeveloped Mainland China. During that time, some of my challenges were scheduling over 100 group tours per month with the problems of lack of transportation.

After working in the travel industry for several years, I applied to the department of Food and Beverage Management in the National Kaohsiung Hospitality College where I met professors who inspired me to pursue a future as a hospitality educator. Professors encouraged me to obtain the qualifications needed to teach at the university-level.

In 2004, I then began my academic journey at the University of North Texas (UNT) in Denton, Texas. During my undergraduate and graduate programs in the department of Hospitality Management at UNT, I participated in student activities, experienced new cultures and cooperated with classmates to complete projects. Not only was I able to work as a student assistant in the International department, but I also worked as a supervisor at the UNT dining service for my Optional Practice Training (OPT).

In order to improve my academic ability, I chose the thesis option to obtain my M.S. degree. With the guidance of Hospitality professors and their assistance through the process, I was able to have one paper published in refereed journals, presented at my first international conference, and had three papers in accepted to refereed conference proceedings. Becoming a scholar-practitioner has always been my goal and my desire. To teach students and balance “performing” and “knowing” in the hospitality and tourism field made me decide to apply to the department of Applied Technology and Performance Improvement (ATPI) for a doctoral degree at UNT.

As a doctoral student, my research interests focus on performance improvement, knowledge management, talent management, and e-learning in the hospitality and tourism field. During my doctoral program, I have engaged and participated in:

- Court Works at ATPI, the Department of Hospitality Management and the Department of Educational Psychology: leveled up my academic abilities, provided theory and research, and networked with different majors’ doctoral students.
- Workshops: Engaged in and conducted latest research and ideas.
- Professional Activities: Attended and presented in several international conferences, taught at the university-level courses, conducted editorial review and published.
- Professors and Classmates: Learned from and mentored by professionals, found long-term research partners and explored different fields.
- Life: learned how to balance between academic and family time, managed stress, and looked at situations from different angles.

It has been a wonderful experience studying in the ATPI doctoral program. In the early stages of my doctoral program, I was panicked, stressed, confused and doubtful doctoral student. I had difficulties understanding classmates’ presentations, professionals’ speeches and expressing my own

thoughts. I have now attended many academic activities and pursued continuous improvements. Not only did I attend my departments' events, but I have also attended other professional workshops, such as Graduate Student Workshops and UNT teaching seminars. Moreover, I have gone back to Taiwan to attend various professional activities every summer, for example, *the Cross-Strait Tourism Seminar and International Conference on Gastro-tourism Sustainable Challenges or Opportunities*. After presenting my first paper in an international conference by myself, I gained confidence to share my research topics and communicate with audiences. I benefited greatly by participating in professional conferences and getting to know other scholars.

Currently, I am working on my dissertation and I am an instructor in the Department of Learning Technologies at UNT, and also co-teach a class at the National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism (NKUHT) in Taiwan. I have the opportunity to work with university-level students and professors in two countries. Teaching is a great learning process, especially when I find differences between the two cultures. In addition, I help UNT's and NKUHT's students explore their career goals in the hospitality and tourism field. As a founding member of the UNT Graduate Student Library Advisory Board (GSLAB), I have helped contribute to improving UNT's library services for graduate students, such as website page services and resources for graduate students. I have volunteered at UNT-International since 2005, and I have had the opportunity to improve my service and specialty from corporations to the education field, for example, marketing UNT to Taiwan and providing hospitality services to international students.

My professional goal is to teach at the university-level and continue researching performance improvement in the hospitality and tourism field. My research interests are using technologies to improve students' and employees' performances in the hospitality and tourism field. To be a scholar-practitioner in the hospitality and tourism field is my ultimate goal.