

UC IRVINE EXTENSION DEBUTS ITS RENOWNED “SPA AND HOSPITALITY OPERATIONS” COURSE IN A FREE, ONLINE FORMAT

No-Cost Course Meets Increased Demand for Open Educational Resources Benefiting the Booming Spa Industry and Today’s Busy Professionals

IRVINE, Calif. (November 12, 2007) – The University of California, Irvine Extension, the pioneer of the first “Spa and Hospitality Management” certificate program on the West Coast, has broken new ground, yet again, by offering its “Introduction to Spa and Hospitality Operations” course at no cost, online via the University’s OpenCourseWare (OCW) Web site. In keeping with the altruistic spirit of education, OCW courses allow self-learners to view and utilize materials and resources, through the Web and free of charge. The newest course in UC Irvine Extension’s OCW course repository was designed within a comprehensive certificate program to meet the increasing national and international demands of the burgeoning spa market, while providing more options to busy professionals, and catering to the needs of a broader global audience.

According to the International Spa Association (ISPA), the industry is booming. ISPA estimates that a total of 13,757 U.S.-based spas generated as much as \$9.7 billion in 2005 alone. The organization forecasts the industry’s annual growth at 18 percent. This exponential growth has created a need for business-minded, management-savvy spa operators.

“The spa industry is seeing an influx of interest from professionals who hail from diverse academic and professional disciplines; yet there is an ongoing void in the availability of resources that cater to both management education needs plus the industry body of knowledge that spa professionals require,” says Peter Anderson, B.A., M.P.S. HAd, UC Irvine Extension Spa and Hospitality Management certificate program instructor, advisory board member, and OCW content developer. “Since this curriculum is available globally, free of charge, on the Web, it has the potential to have a profound impact on the international spa community, and to effectively erase some of the polarization created by financial and geographic barriers.”

The course is available at <http://ocw.uci.edu/courses/> and was created to provide would-be spa owners and managers with an operational blueprint for running a successful spa business – all from the privacy of their own homes or offices, at no cost, and at times convenient to their busy schedules. Designed to equip students with an understanding of the unique sensitivities required to manage and operate within the increasingly competitive spa management market, the course is complete with useful information about general and administrative procedures for spas, private clubs and the hospitality industry.

Students can explore how spa operations professionals interface within the spa environment, including topics such as business planning, marketing, licensures, compensation models, billing, inventory control, client file management, privacy issues and the development of standard operating procedures, as well as legal, ethical, technical and insurance issues. Students can also learn the guidelines for optimizing energy efficiency in facility operations including design, energy, and water and waste management issues.

In addition to the free online OpenCourseWare course offering, “Introduction to Spa and Hospitality Operations” is also available through UC Irvine Extension via campus and online instructor-facilitated courses, as part of the University’s esteemed Spa and Hospitality Management certificate program. The full program features in-depth studies taught by esteemed industry professionals from throughout the United States, covering everything from business planning and processes to opening a spa, to managing day-to-day operations and positioning for managed future growth. For more information about the Spa and Hospitality Management certificate program at UC Irvine Extension, please visit unex.uci.edu/spa or call (949) 824-5414.

About UC Irvine’s OpenCourseWare Initiative: The University of California, Irvine is the first University of California campus—as well as the only West Coast University—to join the OCW Consortium. UC Irvine’s membership in the OCW Consortium is consistent with its public and land-grant missions and its desire to play a significant role in contributing to the social welfare of the state, the nation and the world. Open Educational Resources (OER) showcase the University’s high quality education and makes courses and course materials free for everyone in the world. UC Irvine’s OCW is a large-scale, Web-based resource that houses educational assets that are discoverable, searchable, modifiable, and, best of all, free and easily available. Through the OCW Movement, UC Irvine provides university-quality courses and learning assets to populations of self learners that are underserved and in many cases, unable to participate in formal education at a university. This site also offers access to UC Irvine’s online continuing education offerings. For more information about UC Irvine’s OCW initiative, visit <http://ocw.uci.edu/> or email ocw@unx.uci.edu.

About UC Irvine Extension: As the continuing education arm of UCI, UC Irvine Extension is dedicated to providing a university-level learning experience for students, offering thousands of exciting courses and programs to local, regional, and global constituencies. UC Irvine Extension offers a rich array of academic and community programs to support a diverse audience, from a wide selection of academic programs to numerous campus activities. For more information, please visit www.extension.uci.edu <<http://www.extension.uci.edu/>> .

About the University of California, Irvine: The University of California, Irvine is a top-ranked university dedicated to research, scholarship and community service. Founded in 1965, UCI is among the fastest-growing University of California campuses, with more than 27,000 undergraduate and graduate students and about 1,400 faculty members. The second-largest employer in dynamic Orange County, UCI contributes an annual economic impact of \$3.3 billion. For more UCI news, visit www.today.uci.edu <<http://www.today.uci.edu/>> .