

CONCEPT NOTE

Planning and Management of Tourism Systems (PMTS) Speaker's Corner Series

Objective

The PMTS Speaker's Corner Series will highlight students' unique experiences and backgrounds to build deeper connections and mutual understanding within each PMTS cohort. In addition, pairing students with faculty and Bergamo community members who share their similar experiences will grow PMTS's connection to the community and students' professional network.

Background Context

The PMTS program is at the intersection of Bergamo's academic and tourism systems. PMTS students have a diverse range of nationalities and experiences, while faculty have wide-ranging expertise in tourism, both in Italy and abroad. In addition, the PMTS Steering Committee brings together public, private, and non-governmental stakeholders who implement many of the tourism strategies studied in the PMTS coursework and will also be potential employers of PMTS graduates.

In this context, the PMTS Speaker's Corner Series will be a meaningful way to connect students, faculty, UNIBG partners, and the Bergamo community to continue integrating the PMTS program into the surrounding community and introduce students to key partners in Bergamo's tourism industry. Through participating as speakers or audience members, students will have an opportunity to network with potential future employers. In addition, the Bergamo community will gain insight into UNIBG's important role in shaping future tourism professionals, both in the region and internationally.

The Concept of the PMTS Speaker's Corner Series

The PMTS Speaker's Corner Series will occur once per month starting in January 2024. Each event will feature a panel of 4-5 speakers consisting of PMTS students, Erasmus students, UNIBG faculty, partners from the PMTS Steering Committee, and/or members of the Bergamo community. Each Speaker's Corner will have a common theme that unites all the speakers' experience (initial panel ideas presented below). It is envisioned that each Speaker's Corner event will last approximately 1.5 hours.

Every speaker will have an opportunity to briefly introduce their perspective on the topic (including sharing prepared multimedia, like related photos or a short video), and then a facilitator will moderate a well-paced discussion among the panelists, inviting them to compare and contrast their experiences on the common topic. Audience members will also have an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the discussion.

Target Audience

- PMTS students (first-year and second year) and professors
- Erasmus students
- General UNIBG student community (particularly students who may be interested in PMTS or gaining more international experience)

- Members of the PMTS Steering Committee, which represent UNIBG/PMTS stakeholders from public institutions, non-governmental organizations, associations, and the private sector.
- Citizens of Bergamo, particularly Citta Alta

Initial Panel Ideas

Topics for each Speaker’s Corner will be developed based on the experience of first year and second year PMTS students and Erasmus students. Their experience will be complemented by UNIBG faculty, PMTS Steering Committee members, and Bergamo community members who share their expertise or experience but might also offer another lens through which to view this topic.

Using the first year PMTS students’ experience as an example, below are some illustrative topics that could be used to facilitate a Speaker’s Corner panel discussion:

- **Working in hotels around the world** (Panelists: PMTS students who have worked in hotels internationally, partners from hotels in Bergamo region, faculty member experienced in hotel industry)
- **Wine tourism in Franciacorta and beyond** (Panelists: PMTS student working in a Franciacorta winery, winery manager from Bergamo region, faculty member experienced in wine tourism)
- **Careers in international development** (Panelists: PMTS student with experience managing USAID programs across many countries, faculty member who was led community-based tourism with donor funding, partner in Bergamo who has used EU/donor funding for Capital of Culture efforts)
- **Perspectives from Iran** (Panelists: PMTS students from Iran, PMTS Iranian graduate who now runs her own bed and breakfast in Bergamo, faculty member who can speak to importance of engaging students from Iran in PMTS/UNIBG)
- **Tour operators across different countries** (Panelists: PMTS student who worked as tour operator in Jordan, faculty member specialized in tour operations, partner in Bergamo who organizes tours in the region)

Resources Required

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Proposal</i>
Space to host Series with required equipment, like microphone	Available rooms on UNIBG campus (i.e., Aula 3 in Via Salvecchio)
Speaker’s Corner organizer(s)	Lead organizer will be PMTS student Ania Skinner, supported by volunteers from first year and second year PMTS students. Organizers’ role includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize survey of first and second year PMTS students to identify additional topics for the Speaker’s Corner series. • Connecting with students and faculty to compose panels and prepare speakers for their participation. • Preparing questions for facilitator to use during Speaker’s Corner, and if needed, serve as a panel facilitator. • Initiate outreach to UNIBG community to maximize attendance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support UNIBG to document Speaker’s Corner on their communication networks.
Speaker’s Corner panel facilitator(s)	<p>The facilitator can be a PMTS professor, like Professor Burini, but this role can also be shared by multiple professors. Facilitators’ role includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the Speaker’s Corner panels, including asking pre-determined questions to speakers and managing the pace and flow of the discussion. • Connect the Organizer with other relevant faculty members and PMTS Steering Committee members who could serve as speakers. • Conduct outreach to the Bergamo community for their participation in the Speaker’s Corner series.
<i>(Optional)</i> Refreshments and beverages	Coffee and snacks may further incentivize attendance and also create a more informal and relaxed atmosphere to facilitate discussion and participation from the audience.

Timeline

December 2023	Present concept to PMTS Council
January 2024	Preparations of initial panels for Speaker Corners, including outreach to both speakers and audience
Late January – May 2024	One Speaker’s Corner held per month
September 2024	Speaker’s Corner continues in new academic year if there is continued interest