

Tourism Student Association Members Learn About Viral Tourism in Page, Arizona



Awe-inspiring view of Upper Antelope Canyon

On Nov 1-3, 2019, 25 members of the Tourism Student Association (TSA) at Arizona State University traveled to Page, Arizona to learn about the impact of social media-driven, viral tourism to iconic places such as Antelope Canyon and Horseshoe Bend. Antelope Navajo Tours' guides provided students with a chance to see Upper Antelope Canyon and spoke to the environmental, cultural, and practical value of these structures--and the challenges of adapting to tourism flows that have grown exponentially over the past several years.

(Tina Mountain, Jazzlyn Begay, Richardson Etsitty) shared their perspectives about how their communities are impacted by tourism and barriers to equitable access to resources like water, electricity, funding and permitting.

Students also toured the Antelope Hogan Bed & Breakfast, built and owned by Mr. Etsitty, and learned about his approach to offering traditional hogan [hoh-gawn, -guh n] lodging, which looks out onto a stunning vista, and his mission to provide his guests with access to authentic storytelling, foods, and harmony with the land.

A panel including Navajo tribal members and business owners



Richard Etsitty gives TSA members tours of his handcrafted hogans.



TSA members post with Panelists Tina Mountain, Richard Etsitty, and Jazzlyn Begay

ASU Tourism Development & Management major and TSA member Raquel Bigman, a Page resident, assisted the club in creating a learning-intensive itinerary and connecting with key community members.

Mark Roseland, Director of the School of Community Resources & Development, attended and spoke to students about the importance of big-picture community development as they build their future careers, and how tourism should fit into the overall plan for raising the quality of life for those who are impacted by tourism.



TSA member & Page resident Raquel Bigman



TSA President Brooks Reece lends a hand

Students also enjoyed Page's annual Balloon Regatta and even helped a balloon crew prepare for launch and enjoyed a sense of community with one another that results from having these experiences beyond the walls of a classroom.

"I am so grateful for our [TSA] Fireside chats, community service projects, and 'tourism talks' at our meetings. They help us learn and meet new people, but traveling to Page has been the highlight of it all! Learning about the Navajo presented us with the reality that their resources and culture are the central draw to the area, and a challenge--How can tourism models be developed that more equitably and positively impact quality of life for ALL involved?" (Brooks Reece, President, TSA)



TSA members braved a crisp pre-dawn wakeup time to see balloons launch at Lake Powell National Golf Course.



Jing 'Viona' Fang in Antelope Canyon

"Antelope Canyon really hit me! All I could was surrender to its beauty and touch every line with awe. The workmanship of nature is far beyond human reach. This trip is also the first time I saw stars all over the sky. In my urban city, the sky above is divided by tall buildings. I was so grateful to see the stars shining all over sky— far away from urban areas." (Jing 'Viona' Fang, Hainan University–Arizona State University Joint International Tourism College)

"What I found of value on this trip was that when a community is involved in tourism there can be heartbreak and pain AND joy and pride all at once. It made me acknowledge the access to resources that I have taken for granted. I also see that through my career and how I travel I can help people in places just like this to enjoy more of the benefits of tourism and less of the problematic aspects. I learned you can never truly know until you learn the story of someone who is living it every day." (Genna Oppasser, TSA Member)



Genna Oppasser [safely] poses at Horseshoe Bend



Jade Gray strikes a pose during the tour

"I think that this trip was important for us [students] to learn about tourism from a completely different perspective. The Navajo, the native people of this land, are trying to develop their own communities while at the same time welcoming more and more outsiders into their land. It was very humbling." (Jade Gray, TSA Member)

"What I learned is from our trip to Page was the word 'connection.' I really liked what Jazzlyn on our panel said, "Culture...home...we are tethered to them. When you far away, their tendrils will pull you back." I am from China, and I feel the same way when I am in Unites States sometimes.



Shiyu 'Joe' Qiao and wife Chuqing 'May' Zhu wait for tour time at Antelope Canyon Navajo Tours

Connection exists

between Navajo and nature. Navajo children have nature as their playground. They follow the sunlight as they enter the hogan. There is connection between Navajo and their ancestors all around them. I learned that sustainable tourism development is really important to preserve this." (Shiyu Qiao, TSA Secretary)



Savannah Stratman, TSA Member, captured this photo of a tourist who risked it all for a perfect photo.

"I really enjoyed people-watching at Horseshoe Bend from a tourism perspective. It was fascinating (and alarming!) to see how tourists pushed boundaries to take an epic photo. It was also fun to interact with local vendors at the Balloon Regatta--about how many people come into town just for this one event and how much economic impact can result from having the event in their town. One of my favorite moments from this trip was hearing from our SCR D Director, Dr.

Mark Roseland. He opened up a discussion for innovation in SCR D and I found it really inspiring and encouraging as a student who wants to get involved more in the school overall!" (Savannah Stratman, TSA Member)



Paige Corbin inside of upper Antelope Canyon

"From the Page, Arizona trip I was able to see such a clear illustration of everything I have been learning about in the Tourism Development and Management program. It was such an amazing opportunity to see how the concepts I learn about in my classes translate into real life. The lessons that I learned on the trip were so powerful and I look forward to being able to share my experiences with others about how to be a conscientious tourist." (Paige Corbin, TSA Member)

For more information on the Tourism Student Association, go to <https://asu.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/tourism-student-association>, tsa.asu. on Instagram or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tourismstudentassociation/>