New program focuses on driving success through consumer experiences

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Guest instructor James Geier of 555 Design briefs students about an assignment to create a business plan during the Entrepreneurial Hospitality January 2020 intensive.

The A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University, an internationally recognized business school, will launch its first online graduate degree program in January 2021. The Master of Management in Entrepreneurial Hospitality teaches students how to craft extraordinary customer experiences through the joint lenses of hospitality and entrepreneurship, fulfilling a need for companies in all industries to face challenges in the current business landscape.

Chief executives across industries have been adding a chief experience officer, or other related title, as companies and organizations continue to deepen their relationship with consumers and drive sales through experience. Developing an outstanding customer experience drives growth as consumers are more likely to feel loyalty and ultimately become brand advocates.

“While most traditional hospitality programs are rooted within the management discipline, our program is focused on entrepreneurship,” says A.J. Brooks, assistant director of the hospitality program at the Freeman School of Business. “Entrepreneurship is about innovation, and how to meet customer needs in new ways. This program is designed to facilitate and incubate the next generation of ideas and business models in relation to a customer’s interactions and experiences with an organization.”

The degree program will be offered in an innovative format that includes both virtual and on the ground elements. While the majority of the coursework for the 12-month program will be delivered remotely, two in-person intensives in New Orleans, where Tulane is located, at the beginning and conclusion of the program will provide immersion in the hands-on action learning experiences for which Freeman is known. Held at Freeman’s Stewart Center within the New Orleans Culinary & Hospitality Institute, the intensives allow students to conceptualize, plan and present a new and innovative hospitality venture to a panel of industry professionals.

The degree is designed to provide a master’s-level education to professionals looking to advance their career, as well as recent college graduates seeking to bolster their business credentials. Students will learn critical business skills and develop specialized knowledge in Entrepreneurial Hospitality through courses covering topics including new product development, new venture planning and hospitality real estate development.

“In our rapidly changing world, innovation in how organizations relate to customers is more critical than ever,” says Ira Solomon, dean of the Freeman School. “Right

now, all industries are ripe for disruption. This program takes customer-centric principles from the hospitality industry and teaches students how to apply them in innovative, entrepreneurial ways to new or existing ventures in any industry. It’s an unprecedented way of thinking about customer experience, and a truly first-of-its-kind program.”