



MGM COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

PROGRAM EVALUATION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

This report reviews the implementation and initial outcomes, to date, of the MGM Resorts International (MGM) partnership with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to create an employer provided Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) called the College Opportunity Program (COP). The program was approved in 2018 and the initial group of students started coursework in the Fall 2019 semester.

The COP has several unique features:

- It is a TAP program across an entire state system rather than one institution.
- Certificates, Associate, Bachelor, and Masters' degree programs are offered.
- Students are not required to expend any dollars (i.e., all tuition, fees, and other ancillary expenses are paid for by MGM).
- Employees can enroll in a program of their interest (i.e., the degree program does not have to be work related).

The COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant role in shaping the implementation of the COP:

- Planned recruitment fairs were eliminated.
- The pool of new students for any semester was limited to those who expressed an interest in the program prior to the COVID-19 announcement (this changed in Fall 2021).
- Enrollment was impacted by MGM employees becoming ineligible because of layoffs.

Participants have included a wide range of employees across the organization:

- Females have availed themselves of the program more than males.
- Almost one in four have been employees who work at non-Nevada MGM properties.
- Compared to other programs, the COP has a larger percentage of participants over the age of 50 than other programs.
- Hispanic women are the least likely to be participants.

There are a variety of reasons offered by participants as to why they decided to enroll:

- Advancement in their current career field was the most cited reason followed by not wanting to miss out on a free education.

Reasons for individuals not enrolling or for dropping out of a program of study were:

- Being laid-off by MGM (i.e., became ineligible)
- Lack of some educational programs
- Work-Life balance

MGM employees who participated in the COP gave high marks for:

- The enrollment processes
- The Concierge - the institutional liaisons that works with students across a wide range of issues
- Faculty knowledge and responsiveness to their needs

As of Fall 2021 there have been 53 graduates, with the largest share of individuals being awarded a Master's degree.

Graduates have found the degree useful.

There are net gains for MGM with COP graduates feeling more confident in their job and having stronger ties to MGM than before entering the COP.

From NSHE's perspective:

- The COP has not directly resulted in an increase in online degree programs.
- The COP has resulted in only a marginal increase in student enrollment but has a positive financial benefit.

The COP has played a positive role in building a solid working relationship between MGM and NSHE.

Recommendations

1. Improve marketing and recruitment of employees into the COP:
 - a. Create an expanded system to provide information to employees (i.e., utilizing multiple platforms for marketing and recruitment).
 - b. Encourage supervisors to play a more active role in encouraging employees to participate.
 - c. Develop and monitor a plan to actively encourage a diversity of applicants (both with regard to demographic and job characteristics).
2. MGM should develop a strategic plan for the COP.
3. Manage educational program offerings:
 - a. Analyze the program offerings at all levels:
 1. Revisit the Certificate programs and encourage the development of new programs that may help individuals transition into new jobs.
 2. Clarify differences in Associate degrees and determine if additional degrees are needed.
 - b. There are a number of programs that appear redundant. Reduce the listing of programs that are essentially the same.
4. NSHE should develop a dedicated, centralized data management system for the COP:
 - a. Ease administrative burdens.
 - b. Improve reporting and accountability.
5. NSHE institutions should create a position dedicated to the COP:
 - a. The liaisons play an essential role in the COP's success. As the program grows, at least one single point of contact at each institution is essential. Currently, liaisons often have responsibilities in other educational areas which can lead to turnover.

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