Program Review  
Planning and Review Committee 2004-05

I. Degree: B.S. in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

Program Director: Doug Kennedy

PRC Consultants: Anne Cross and Loretta Thielman

Purpose of the Review: The purpose of the review is to assess the quality of the B.S. in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management as part of a seven-year review cycle required of all degree programs at UW-Stout.

Committee Findings: The PRC recommends that this program continue to be one of UW-Stout's degree programs for the ongoing seven-year cycle, and recommendations made by the committee be implemented. This includes a follow-up student survey in the Fall of 2007 to monitor improvement of some courses regarding content or teaching.

II. Abstract:

The B.S. in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management program prepares students for entry level management positions in the hospitality industry. This program is well-known nationally and there is a continued strong demand for graduates, with over 96% of recent graduates placed in the field. Despite growth in the hospitality and tourism industry, enrollments in this program are declining (from 493 in 2000 to 440 in 2004).

The program requires 124 semester credits for graduation with 84 credits required in the major area including food service, lodging, convention/meeting planning and tourism coursework. Additionally, students are required to take 44 credits of general education. Students may select a minor in Gaming Management, Property Management, Lodging, Tourism, and concentrations in Lodging Management, Food Service Management, Tourism Planning and Development, International Hospitality Management and Property Management. A certificate is offered in Gaming Management.

Extensive laboratory experiences are an integral part of the program. Students manage and operate two fully functional restaurants on campus, Corner III and Rendezvous. Field visits and co-op experience provide additional hands-on learning experiences. Plans are underway to provide a better-rounded array of laboratory experiences. The goal is to provide at least one lab experience for hotel, restaurant, tourism and gaming management. There are no plans at this time for a laboratory experience in property management.

The program is particularly strong in the areas of restaurant management and food service management. The program director is working hard to improve the program’s other concentrations partly through the updated lodging and gaming labs. We highly recommend that these labs be funded as soon as possible.

The enrollment in this major has been declining even though there is a strong demand for people with the areas of expertise provided by this major. We encourage the program director with the program committee to find new ways to advertise the program.
Although most student evaluations were very positive, some students were unhappy with some of the courses and a few of the teachers. The program director and the department chair will be addressing these concerns and monitor improvements in a follow-up student survey for the Fall of 2007.

III. Process Followed for Current Review:

The PRC Chair and the consultants met with the program director to discuss the review process. The PRC consultants met subsequently with the program director to review the procedures and offer assistance. PRC consultants toured the hospitality and tourism facilities and observed lunch at Corner III and dinner at Rendezvous. Data regarding several aspects of the program were collected from students, key instructors within and outside the department, program committee members and program graduates through surveys. The data were analyzed and returned to the program directors and PRC members. The program director then completed the self-study report and presented the report to the PRC. The consultants then wrote the recommendation report. This report was forwarded to the dean for his response. The PRC reviewed the dean’s response, approved the recommendation report and forwarded the report to the Faculty Senate.


1. The program director and faculty should continue their commendable efforts to monitor courses for unnecessary overlap in content.

   This was accomplished as evidenced by the lack of comments on student surveys.

2. The program director should continue efforts to ensure student enrollment numbers be monitored and maintained.

   There has been slippage. A new program director was appointed in August of 2004. Enrollment numbers are up by about one-third and more students are transferring into the major than out of it. Program changes are being made to provide greater flexibility tied to career choices and less required courses outside of one’s career path. Visits are being made to two-year schools and new articulation agreements are being developed with these schools. It will take some time and a multi-pronged approach to stop the decline and even increase our numbers.

3. The program director and faculty should continue to explore opportunities for lodging/tourism course offerings. Although efforts to expand this area have been initiated, student surveys indicate that there is a need for further course offerings in this area.

   New program changes are being proposed that will offer both a lodging track and a tourism track. The current program, which took effect in 2003, does offer both a lodging and tourism concentration. The new changes will allow for the possibility of even more course offerings in these areas. However, it is critical to replace a current member of the faculty who recently retired and had a strong background in lodging.

V. Program Review:

Program Strengths:
Source: Data from surveys, facilities tours and meetings with the program director support the following observations:

1. The laboratory experiences (Quantitative Food Production and Restaurant Operations) offered by the program continue to be one of the major strengths of the department. Written comments in student surveys attest to a high degree of enthusiasm for those courses and their laboratory components (Source: Student surveys).
2. The placement rate continues to be high for graduates. In recent years, 96-98% of graduates have been placed (Source: Program director’s self-study report).
3. Satisfaction with the program remains high among graduates. After one year, 96% of graduates surveyed said that they would attend UW-Stout if they could “do it all over again.” The response after three years was 87% (Source: Surveys of recent graduates).
4. Graduates show improved competencies and are in all competency areas comparable or exceed graduates of the university as a whole. (Source: Institutional Research Office, Program director’s self-study report).
5. An internal advisory committee is charged with assessing the program and fostering needed changes to update the program (Source: Program director’s self-study report).

Issues of Concern:

1. While the hospitality and tourism industry is growing, enrollments in the program are declining. Enrollment has been declining since 1987. (Source: Program director’s self-study report).
2. Comprehensive laboratory experiences are limited to the restaurant track and two high-profile faculty members. The possibility of retirement or relocation of these faculty members makes the program vulnerable. Similar lab experiences are needed in the other tracks. The most immediate need is for laboratory experiences in lodging and gaming. (Source: Program director’s self-study report.)
3. There is dissatisfaction among some students with the quality of teaching, but it does not seem to be widespread. Student comments included criticisms of some individual faculty and staff members. Complaints included “being out of sync with the current trends;” using “old material;” “slacking;” along with complaints about the lack of emphasis on tourism or hotel management. While these comments are troubling, they are outweighed by a large number of positive student comments about teaching excellence in the program. We recommend that a follow-up student survey be conducted by the program in cooperation with the PRC in the Fall of 2007 to monitor progress toward improvements in course content and teaching.
4. Four of the 16 students who listed courses that felt had “unnecessary repetition or overlap in content” named Front Office and Housekeeping specifically. The results of the above mentioned survey will indicate progress in this area as well.

Recommendations for the Program Director:

1. Continue to explore and address enrollment issues through the assessment and recruitment process.
2. Continue work to create a laboratory experience outside the restaurant track and encourage professional development of staff and faculty in those areas. Specifically, develop gaming and lodging laboratories to provide students hands-on experiences in those areas.
3. In cooperation with the PRC, conduct an on-campus student survey in Fall, 2007 along with the review of the usual 1-year and 3-year follow-up alumni surveys at that time to monitor improvements to the program regarding the student concerns found in the Fall 2004 surveys. (The Fall 2004 survey results will be kept so that comparisons may be made.)
Recommendations for the Hospitality and Tourism Department Chair:

1. Continue to support the program revisions that will update the major and provide students with more flexibility.
2. Consult with instructors of selected courses regarding attention to diversity issues.

Recommendations for the Dean of the College of Human Development:

1. Replace retiring faculty with tenure track faculty.
2. Provide funding and support for the gaming and lodging labs.
3. Provide support for the program’s efforts to increase enrollment.