MASTER’S DEGREE IN
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE
PLANNING AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT

Prepared and Presented to the University Program Review Committee
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by
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M.S. Hospitality & Program Status 2007

Since the 2003 PRC report, the Hospitality & Tourism graduate program recorded a number of successes yet faced a number of administrative pressures that ultimately led to the program being placed on inactive status.

Since January 2003, seventy-one students have graduated from the online and campus degree options. The attached list of graduates underscores the unique diversity of the program and students served. Since 1997 the program has graduated 20 students per year and enrollment continued to increase with the program revision of 2003 allowing for a more flexible degree options for students. The program offered campus, online and certificate programming with two thesis completion options as well as the non thesis and certificate degree option. During this period students increasingly favored the non-thesis option over Plan A-6 credit and Plan B-3 credit thesis.

Following the recommendations of the 2003 PRC review, online information and response time to students improved with the introduction to D2L. The elimination of the three online delivery systems used by the program into one standardized online system improved information transfer and response to each student. The results were noted in the program assessment for 2004 and 2005.

Between 2003 and 2005, the program continued to grow but experienced issues regarding available staff to deliver the content required to maintain and sustain a quality graduate program. Four tenured staff retired or separated from the department during this time, while enrollment in the Undergraduate Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism program continued to grow. Accelerated enrollments in the Service Management program, Property Management and Gaming Minors also created an instructional vacuum that transferred faculty to emerging undergraduate programming. One new fulltime FTE was hired fall 2004 and assumed Undergraduate Program Administration for Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management.

Another issue that led to the current inactive status of the online program option was the withdrawal of UW Eau Claire MBA program as an instructional partner. It was found that all online instructors needed to maintain a DBA or MBA to instruct courses for the partnership. Current Hospitality and Tourism staffing did not have that key educational requirement to meet this need. Online courses returned to the department of Hospitality & Tourism. Few on the UW Stout campus were experienced in the content area to step in to fulfill the requirement outlined by UW Eau Claire MBA program administrators. Our students could no longer enroll in their courses and they would not allow their MBA students to enroll in program courses as MBA electives.

The pressures identified above did not allow for the flexibility to offer an online degree option. Campus Hospitality and Tourism graduate students were increasingly forced to enroll in online courses to meet degree requirements as the department of Hospitality & Tourism struggled to meet the growing undergraduate program demands. The Department could not assure a long term schedule for the graduate program knowing the rapid changes within undergraduate programming. Hospitality and Tourism faculty that were once available to deliver unique graduate courses were asked to teach them as overloads.
The difficult decision was made to place the online program and later the campus program on inactive status awaiting a staffing renewal in the Department of Hospitality & Tourism to reactivate the graduate program. Discussions have been held since 2005 regarding the status of the program, and in January 2006 the campus program accepted its last new students and was then placed on inactive status.

In early 2006, research was conducted to learn if the program still meets the need of the industry and identified markets. The research found that the existing course array would need to be modified to meet industry needs and that online programming was favored over campus programming. The known exception to online is that international students seek campus programming as part of their educational experience and have little interest in the online programming.

During summer 2007, discussions were held with the Department, College and university administration on the restart of the program with an updated-modified course array addressing staff requirements. The current online program option or a modified program could be offered as early as 2008 staffed with a campus program director, available campus instructional staff complemented by adjunct instructors.
2003 Review

Purpose of the Review for 2003
The review was conducted to assess the quality of the M.S. Hospitality and Tourism degree program as part of the ongoing seven-year review cycle of every UW-Stout program.

Degree

M.S. Hospitality and Tourism
Program Director
Dr. Bob Davies

PRC Consultants 2003
Annette Taylor and William Murphy
Date of Review
December 5, 2003

Abstract December 5th 2003
The M.S. Hospitality and Tourism degree is designed to provide students with a curriculum that enhances theoretical and research skills that can be utilized in a variety of hospitality and tourism management and planning settings. The program has gone through several major revisions since its inception in 1982 and it continues to change drastically in response to the industry. This was one of Stout’s first programs offered by distance education. The enrollment in 2002-03 was 52, up from 31 students in 1996-97 when the last review was done. Since the program offers four certificate options, most of the students are certificate students and only eight graduated in the program in 2001-02. A recent change was made in response to feedback from the industry; a thesis is no longer required and it is believed that this change will result in more M.S. graduates in the program.

Process Followed for Current Review
The PRC Chair met with the program director to discuss the review process. Data regarding several aspects of the program were collected from students, key instructors within and outside the department, program advisory committee members and program graduates through surveys. The data was analyzed and returned to the program director and PRC members. The program director then completed the self-study, presented the report to the PRC, and responded to questions. The PRC discussed the program report and the consultants met with the program director for clarification of some questions. Consultants wrote the report and the recommendations in the report. This report was reviewed and endorsed by the PRC and forwarded to the dean and the department chair.

Program Review 2003
Program Strengths

Faculty
All data suggest that, for the most part, faculty are knowledgeable, bring experience to the classroom, are available and approachable, and are up-to-date. SOURCE: student, faculty, advisory committee surveys and program director report.

Relevance of program

M.S. Hospitality and Tourism: 2007 Status Report
The program offers four 12-credit certificates and three research options leading to an M.S. Thus programs can be tailored to an individual student’s need. SOURCE: program director report.

**Availability and flexibility of coursework**

The on-line program provides the necessary flexibility. SOURCE: program director report.

**Strong curriculum**

The curriculum has been revised several times to meet student and career needs. SOURCE: program director report.

**Reputation**

The program enjoys a reputation as one of only six graduate programs in the United States. SOURCE: program director report.

**Students**

The large number of applicants allows faculty to admit students with outstanding credentials. SOURCE: program director report.

**Issues of Concern**

1. Some students have not had timely responses from faculty in the program. SOURCE: student surveys.
2. Because careers in this field are sometimes in flux, the students tend to move into and out of the program in large numbers. Also, while the number of students receiving certificates has increased, the number of graduate degrees conferred has declined. At this time, it is unknown if the non-thesis option will be effective in attracting more students to the M.S. program. SOURCE: Program Director
3. The role of advisory committee is extremely important to this program and yet it appears that it is not operating effectively. SOURCE: Advisory Committee survey.
4. Faculty may not have all of the expertise needed. SOURCE: Student survey and Program Director

**Recommendations for the Program Director**

1. Establish a reasonable target and expectation for time in which faculty will respond to students e-mails and assignments and let students know what they can expect. Set up a system of automatic reply for e-mails received and notification when faculty members are out of the office.
2. Monitor the number of students receiving the different types of certificates and degrees.

**Recommendation for the Department Chair**

Provide the resources necessary to enable an effective advisory group to function.

**Recommendation for the Dean**

Review positions to determine if adequate support exists to continue this program. Encourage and support faculty development within the department to provide the expertise required.