

Florida Atlantic University

**Hospitality Management Program
February 2014**

Program Review Committee Report

Committee Members:

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External Review of the Hospitality Management Program at FAU February 2014

Introduction: The Hospitality Management program, housed within the Department of Marketing within the FAU College of Business (CoB) is located on the Boca Raton campus. The program is focused on being the most rigorous among hospitality management programs in the state university system (SUS) of Florida, and is the only one with a BBA degree accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The program is designed to produce the highest-quality graduates prepared for future managerial roles in the hospitality and tourism industry. To date, the program offers one degree – a bachelor of business administration (BBA) in Hospitality Management.

The program is the fastest-grown program within the College of Business: 30 majors were enrolled in 2007; this number jumped to over 135 majors in 2014. The number of minors has grown to over 100 students who come from over 30 different majors on campus. According to the program self-study report, “**the overall growth in numbers of students taking hospitality classes as either majors or minors had a combined growth of over 525%.**” This growth is all the more remarkable considering the fact that it occurred during a period of intense financial pressure for both the college and university.

The potential for further growth is more than promising as more and more students have come to realize that a major or minor in hospitality management is useful in the Florida marketplace. Dr. Ricci’s self-study report notes, “Indeed, hospitality is the state of Florida’s number one private employer and it has been for many decades. Further, in Palm Beach County and all surrounding counties for hundreds of miles in any direction, hospitality and tourism is the number one employer.”

This growth in numbers of majors and minors, was not, however, accompanied by the addition of faculty lines. As of 2014, full-time faculty members include only one untenured program director, Dr. Peter Ricci, one instructor, one associate professor and one recently hired assistant professor. The program also relies upon credentialed part-time (adjunct) faculty members numbering between one and three per semester. The large majority of courses are offered via face-to-face (F2F) format with a small minority offered via mixed mode/hybrid format. Increased number of majors and minors since 2007 has meant that class sizes have doubled, leaving the program director and faculty members overtaxed. In reference to the average class size, the 2006-2007 academic year showed 8 per class which increased to 45 in 2012-2013.

On February 11, 2014, the program was reviewed by an external review committee that included two external reviewers, Dr. Randall Upchurch, Associate Dean of the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at Florida International University and Dr. Colin Johnson, Professor & Chair, Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management, College of Business, San Francisco State University. Dr. Patricia Kollander, Professor of History at FAU, served as committee chair. The purpose of the review was to address challenges facing the program as it moves forward.

The committee studied the program self-study report compiled by Dr. Ricci and met with the following: Dr. Michelle Hawkins, associate provost for assessment and programs; Dr. Ed Pratt, dean of undergraduate studies; Dr. Dan Groper, dean of the College of Business, Dr. Paul Hart, associate dean, College of Business; a group of students and alumni of the program, faculty members in the program; with the program director, Dr. Peter Ricci, and chair of the Marketing department, Dr. Jim Gray.

This report attempts to do the following: it addresses questions raised at the end of the Hospitality Program Self Study; it assesses areas addressed in the self-study that external reviewers believe are the most salient for the purposes of improvement, and, finally, it provides a list of

recommendations in the form of action plans that should be considered to take the program to the next level of standing.

1. **Program status, overall impressions, strengths and weaknesses:** Program growth – especially with regard to the very impressive growth in numbers of Hospitality Management majors and minors between 2007 to the present--is remarkable given that it has occurred during a time of severe financial crisis.

Students are quite satisfied with the program; they are proud of how it has grown over the years, and they credit this growth to Dr. Ricci's tireless efforts– he's helped students land jobs that they are in, and in all respects he goes above and beyond the call of duty. He goes to high schools to recruit students and meets with industry folks 10 times a month to secure internships and jobs for undergraduates in the program. One student observed: "Someone like Peter is going to lose sleep trying to get you hired. He is a leader who passionately cares about students and their education and their hiring. He cares even beyond graduation—he helps us continue to grow."

That said, the program is at a crossroads, as growth most likely cannot be sustained, much less increase by any measure, unless the Program Director is relieved of some of his responsibilities. While he has done a remarkable job as caretaker of the program, he is hopelessly overextended. There was consensus that Dr. Ricci is at present both a strength and a weakness of the program; while he is at once the heart and the soul of the program, without him it would fall apart.

2. **Changes needed in next 3-5 years:**

- a. **Committee unanimously recommends that program become a free standing department** in the College of Business. This change was endorsed by all parties interviewed during the review process.

This would mean that a department chair would be requested while Dr. Ricci would retain director duties that would be externally focused on relationship building, along with donor cultivation, industry relations, and partnership development.

It was also mentioned that a practical stepping stone may be through the renaming of the marketing department as "Marketing, Hospitality and Consumer Studies"

- b. The **department should be chaired by a tenured track faculty member** who would serve as the voice of the department in the College of Business, the University, the community, and the profession

- c. **Status of the program director:**

The program director plays a critical role in an academic program. This person provides program leadership, course and program development, industry relation cultivation, recruiting, and coordination with the department chair concerning resource needs related to the program.

This position should be a tenured position. However, the position could be filled by a faculty member holding a multiyear, renewable contract. If FAU has this type of

classification, this person can progress through FAU's promotion ranks in a similar fashion as a tenure-earning faculty member.

- d. **The department needs to find a niche among the Hospitality Management programs in the SUS system.** Reviewers believe that a program based on or that stresses skill building in the area of financial yield management and data-based analytics would not only be feasible, but also train students in an area of great demand in the job market. Students registered enthusiasm for this idea – they believed that having a good business background would set them apart from other Hospitality Program graduates. Students agreed that they would be more saleable if they have stronger focus in math and finance. Department faculty members noted that a recent hire is trained in this area and could lay the groundwork for a course offerings in financial analytics.

- e. **The new department needs more lines:**

Given the budget numbers that are coming from the state relative to 2014-2015, any kind of 'ask' at this point is going to be highly scrutinized. That fact--in combination to the key performance indicators forwarded by the state--means that Dr. Peter Ricci's role is very critical to the success of this program. A few of those metrics focus on student retention rates, graduation rates, continuation rates, and academic progress rate. Various documents are attached for your review on those points.

In short, the time is of essence to split out department chair duties from those of a program director given that program support will be based on those 10 key metrics.

This unit should continue onward with tenure earning positions with a specific focus on applied research. A 'heavy hitter' researcher would be brought in to guide this research process. Both new hires would therefore be tenure earning faculty members.

The general funding model from previous universities is that each faculty member was expected to handle a maximum course load of 30 students with the average load being 3 to 4 courses during the fall and spring terms.

It is imperative to grow the department through tenure track faculty. Initially recruit one per year for the next 4- 5 years. The new hire(s) would help Dr. Ricci in the teaching of the overall curriculum and so may be a hospitality generalist. Thereafter, subject specialists should be hired in areas of revenue management and finance to augment the existing faculty and research base.

- f. **New department should be launched by signature event to publicize the new department and provide fundraising:**

At FIU—50 people at a department-sponsored wine and cheese event morphed into working with an industry partners-this can yield to big donations that can also fund positions. This FIU event, called the South Beach Wine & Food festival, yields on average \$2 million per year.

On this note, it is imperative that the College of Business consider establishing a research center or institute for the purpose of soliciting external funding through grant work, contracts, and professional development activities. The primary purpose would be to generate funded research that would be STEM-related...which wouldn't be a big stretch if this 'center' would focus on consumer behavior and/or cognitive decision making research...which is a great fit for marketing and hospitality.

The program could host at least two industry-related events per year. Perhaps in the fall semester some type of student-led food and beverage event could serve as culmination of event management class that could eventually raise as much as \$150,000 for the department. In the spring an industry employment symposium/career fair may be held.

3. *Changes needed in next 3-7 years*

- a. **Additional degrees:** in addition to becoming a free standing department in the College of Business, the new department may offer the BS degree in addition to the BBA degree. But this should only happen after the current BBA program has been stabilized. The same is true with regard to the proposed idea of developing an MBA with a specialization in hospitality management, or an MS degree in Hospitality Management, or a doctoral degree. New degrees can be part of a strategic plan going forward.

This definitely is a futuristic look at the potential that Hospitality can contribute to the College of Business. The development of the new degree offerings is dependent, to a large part on the resources and support being made available by the University. The post-graduate course may prove quite attractive to the College in terms of revenue streams.

The proposed idea of developing a predictive data analytics fits nicely with the concept of a graduate program that would specifically focus on mining of multiple data sets from a variety of sources to best predict consumer trends in the future (5 to 10 years at best). This would propel FAU as the data mining center for a variety of business and service providers

- b. **Internship experience:** - Current program (1000 hours with no credit) – needs to be redefined and made more structured. At FIU, it's a capstone experience where students learn basics of management; it takes specialized skills to do this. FIU has 3 faculty members overseeing internships

There may be a case for making this a credit course and placing it under the direction of a new administrative person. In addition, this gives an excellent bridge with the industry in developing connections and also in providing careers paths if students take the internship towards the end of their studies.

- c. **Curriculum expansion:** the student group recommended that courses be added in the following areas: travel and tourism and resort and casinos management course should be added. Most classes are taught with PowerPoint presentations and guest speakers; perhaps hands-on practical classes would be preferable. SFS has a small training restaurant and kitchen where students can gain hands-on experience

External referees agree curriculum should be expanded. The idea of curriculum expansion may be connected to a request to develop a graduate program with an emphasis in predictive analytics. The undergraduate student would come out of the undergraduate with a SixSigma designation in business analytics which would then lead into a graduate degree that would drill down into large dataset analytics.

There may be a case for some limited food service facilities. These could serve as a bridge with the industry (especially when looking for donations) and could also act as a "shop window" for the department if serving functions for the College, Provost and President etc.

- d. Students also registered enthusiasm for the idea of building a **hotel on campus**—would make a huge difference—having first hand close by experience would be great. However, one reviewer commented that while this could prove to be a great asset to the program, it could also prove to be an extremely time-consuming experience

Other Questions from self -study for Drs. Johnson and Upchurch:

1. **How to confront the unique challenges facing a hospitality management program within an AACSB-accredited college of business (these include a tendency toward considering hospitality “professional” or “vocational” in nature as well as a fairly new academic discipline without reputable peer reviewed journals (PRJs). Best methods to deal with this situation:**

Dr. Upchurch: The implication behind this question is that the top-tier journals in hospitality are not of the same caliber as top journals in business. In my analysis of top journals within each field, the research design, rigor, and theoretical modeling are similar in nature, scope and impact. This however will not change the AACSB’s stance on hospitality journals.

The challenge of the faculty therefore becomes one of designing studies whereby study findings can be positioned for both AACSB journals and for hospitality journals. This is in the best interest of the faculty member and the institution because of one common denominator. This denominator is SSCI ratings as tracked by Scopus and by Thomson-Reuters. This assumes that FAU is also being held accountable for citation ratings commanded by faculty. If so, the shift in emphasis upon citation index ratings regardless of being a business or hospitality journal will drive output metrics for all institutions in the State of Florida.

What this means is that I am proposing a balance of scholarly productivity in business journals that satisfy T&P requirements within the department and within the College of Business. However for hospitality program to be highly recognized among other hospitality programs a balance must be struck with publishing in hospitality journals as well.

Of course, if this program decides to position itself into the area of consumer behavior research as well as within operational efficiency research then journal outlets in consumer psychology, organizational behavior, cognitive psychology, and marketing intelligence will

be needed. If so, and in my estimation, these still will satisfy AACSB business journal requirements.

Dr. Johnson : The HTM department is well positioned as one of ten departments in an AACSB accredited institution. All full time tenure track faculty are expected to publish in high-quality journals. Synergies are also exploited between departments, with HTM faculty publishing with colleagues from related departments within the College (management, decision sciences) and from departments within other Colleges (psychology etc.).

2. How have your programs become recognized among more traditional college of business programs?

Dr. Johnson---The SFS program has developed a good reputation in the College through **fundraising**- The Taste of the Bay event raises over 150K. Dr. Johnson believes that could be done here. Donors could sponsor a mainline event- put food and wine out at a gala where tickets would sell for over \$100.00 apiece. Fundraising has led to establishment of a career development center at SFSU

-- The SFS program 550 majors has **7 full time tenure** track faculty who teach core courses (and general education courses) and a handful of adjuncts (4) who teach specialty courses

I believe there are similarities between SF State and FAU, due to the importance of travel and tourism to the state economy in Florida. In California, tourism is a major income generating industry. Due to this at San Francisco State's College of Business, hospitality and tourism management is regarded as an important local and national player. This has led to the growth of the department over the past 10 years... In dealing with the colleagues who may be more skeptical of the rigors of the program care has been taken to recruit tenure track faculty members who have strong industry and research credentials.

Dr. Upchurch--FIU has a large program: 2100 hospitality majors--1000 in China, along with MA students. Program has 27 full time members – 7 are tenure track (holding PhD's from Cornell and UNLV), 25 adjuncts. 14 in China (9 are Chinese nationals; tuition split in China supports their positions on a 4-4 load)

--in recent years, the program has become more science oriented; FIU has hired a chemist and microbiologist to look at impact of climate change on yeast production. Program will add beverage science piece that will be more interdisciplinary, and journal list will be tweaked to reflect new interests. There is also an initiative in place with FIU College of Business whereby students can get a joint degree in International Real Estate. This is the result of significant input from major hotel companies that are embarking on data analytics to better understand consumer behavior, product design, and marketing program development.

3. What are the best practices to move the program forward amidst the controversy of a vocational degree housed in a business college?

Dr. Upchurch: Based on three years of focus groups and discussions with major hospitality industry companies, we are firmly convinced that national and international expansion of those companies is mandating that hospitality program move beyond operations management. In doing so, the role of analyzing multiple sources of information are needed to effectively design, deploy and monitor business development in a global marketplace. This type of critical analysis requires a focus on continuous process improvement which must incorporate elements of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Basically these major international companies are seeking college graduates who can properly analyze trends from a variety of sources/databases and engage in predictive analytics in terms of management, marketing, finance, accounting, and human resource trends...all which a basic foundations of a college of business program. Therefore, the best practice would be to hire in faculty who are experts in data analytics. This also implies that someone will hired to manage the grant and funding process as well as steer this initiative.

Dr. Johnson: respect will be according to the program if it:

- 1 ensures that the program is as rigorous as possible, especially in terms of the quality of student recruitment;
- 2 continues to recruit and retain the highest quality faculty, who are capable of both publishing in top tier journals and also retain relevance for the industry

4. How did you develop an accurate journals list permitting hospitality faculty member to publish in hospitality journals without feeling “lesser” than traditional business publications?

Dr. Upchurch: We view the hospitality industry as being a subset of the broader business umbrella as based on CIP classifications. What this means is that we actively promote our faculty to publish in business as well as hospitality journals. This requires active collaboration between our College of Business faculty and out faculty to develop a list of acceptable business journals. A list of business journals is provided by our College of Business and then our hospitality tenured faculty review and vote on incorporating business journals into our T&P guidelines. At present this list is being modified but the general understanding is that AACBS journal ranking and SSCI journal citation rankings are to be honored by our program.

Dr. Johnson: As mentioned previously, faculty from the HTM Department publishes in both leading hospitality journals and also in high-quality generic business and management journals.

5. Do you feel the program should move outside AACSB-accreditation but remain *within* the college of business as many of our peers?

Dr. Upchurch: It may sound odd seeing that FIU is an independent school within our system, but I firmly believe that remaining associated with the College of Business is an asset to this program. Being outside of the AACSB oversight would allow this program to focus on program development as appropriate for hospitality operations, allow faculty to be recognized as top scholars within the hospitality field, and would carve out a unique niche for this program within data analytics.

FAU has a small but very prolific group of researchers who, and with the addition of other researchers, can position FAU in the broader arena of business database analytics. This program would therefore become known for students, both undergraduate and graduate, who can fully leverage the continuous improvement process by reflecting upon travel, tourism, economic, technology, consumer and other macro databases so that businesses can be effective and efficient with their product development strategies.

Dr. Johnson: I believe strongly that the program should stay as a full partner within the college. I do not believe that having some kind of special or "step-child" status would be advantageous to the long-term development of the program/Department. Given the research strengths of the recent new tenure track hires, there is no reason to suppose that the program/Department could not produce sufficient quality and quantity of appropriate level research to justify staying within the College of business as a regular Department.

6. Please provide input specifically about professionals/staff you employ in your institutions to handle student recruitment and industry relations/placement. We desperately need to develop this area and would like to follow "best practices"

Dr. Upchurch: FIU's Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management has nine individuals who are assigned to student advising, career advisement, and recruitment. These individuals are assigned as follows:

Dr. Dianne Newman, Assistant Dean – Student Services

Academic Advisors:

Delia Mora to, Assistant Director
Ken Ruthowski, Advisor
Aarti Mehta Kroll, Advisor
Danna Mix, Advisor
Jeanine Menolascino, Advisor
Gabriela Fillespie, Advisor
Amanda Scouten, Advisor

Recruitment:

Dawn Fagnan, Assistant Director
Brandon Appel, Recruitment coordinator
Fabi Ferrer, Recruitment
Fang Shu, International Recruitment

Career Counseling:

Shivani Joshi, Director
Lourdes Gomez, Employer relations
Yana San Luis, Career advisor

Dr. Johnson: This is an area that is being developed within the college and within the Department. The College of Business at San Francisco State has a professional student advising Centre, that comprises four full-time staff. In addition the HTM Department has one full-time student career development director. This is due in large part to a recent grant from the Marriott foundation of \$250,000.

7. Please provide three action plan items based on our existing program that we may implement during the next 7-year period.

Reviewers agree that this program is one that one that wants to go “from promise to prominence” but it needs proper institutional support to get there as it lacks resources to maintain, much less increase, its growth.

The first step in developing an action plan is to develop a strategic plan which centers around two concepts. The first is to become an independent and autonomous unit; and the second, and in alignment with the first step, is to devise a scholarship plan which accentuates the existing faculty output in journals. This is perhaps the bigger step because this requires a phased in process of adding at least two tenure earning lines who have proven skills in scholarship and who can significantly contribute the construction of a predictive analytics program as proposed by Peter.

The third step, which is extremely critical, is for Dr. Peter Ricci to be granted tenure or be moved to a multiple year contract which also leads to tenure. Embedded within this recognition of the critical nature of his position is dividing of his responsibilities whereby he would focus on program issues, recruitment and development of industry relations while another faculty member would focus on faculty development, annual evaluations, scheduling, and student relations. This also means the eventual addition of a co-chair to the hospitality program.

- 1) There is a broad consensus along the review panel that the program should be transitioned into a Department (with the idea that this may be initially through co- branding with the Department of Marketing);
- 2) Develop a strategic plan for the Department;
- 3) Establish an effective industry advisory board for the Department