Georgia State University

The School of Hospitality Administration Program Review
External Reviewers’ Report
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The external review team very much appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Academic Program Review process at Georgia State University. As indicated in the 2017-2018 APR Self Study Report, The School of Hospitality Administration is in its 45th year, and is considered one of the top-ranked programs in the Southeast, nation and globally.

Through documentation and interviews with faculty, students, alumni, industry partners, and administrators, the team has reviewed the materials provided, and addressed the areas identified in the External Review Report Guide. Specifically, the reviewers have been asked to evaluate these specific elements:

1. The Contributions to the discipline
2. Quality of the Department’s Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
3. Quality of the Department’s Research Culture

Because of the limited amount of time the team had on site, the likelihood exists that some of the program’s efforts may have been overlooked or misjudged. The team has also identified perceived strengths and weaknesses, and provided some recommendations for the program as it moves forward to further enhance its programmatic offerings, recognition, and reputation.
1. Executive Summary
Located in the J. Mack Robinson College of Business, The Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality Administration offers a Bachelor of Business Administration, a Certificate in Hospitality, and a Masters in Global Hospitality Management. The Program is guided by the following mission: *Ensure a diverse student body emerges prepared to deliver value in business, government and non-profit organizations.*

The need/demand for the program is evident. The number of companies that support the program through internship, and employment opportunities is an indicator of this demand. Compared to other similar programs (in terms of enrollment), the size of the faculty (TT and NTT) appears small. It is commendable that the faculty maintain strong connections and relationships with industry, and use those networks to benefit both undergraduate and graduate students. Industry professionals guest lecture in courses, and mentor students. Students are encouraged to engage with the local hospitality industry through internships, and membership in professional associations. Such activities are appropriate and contribute to student engagement, while generating excitement about hospitality career opportunities.

The program’s location and reputation are competitive advantages for further expansion and increased enrollment. There are also a number of opportunities worth considering including: developing a stronger Food & Beverage track; offering a 4+1 option, where students can pursue a BBA and an MS. Having state-of-the-art culinary facilities would certainly resonate well with employers, and provide a clear opportunity to gain industry financial support for the program.

Clear work load assignments, expectations for promotion and tenure, and a larger number of TT (versus Clinical) faculty would likely increase research productivity. This is achievable with supportive leadership at the college and university levels.
2. Contributions to the Discipline

a. To which subfields of the discipline does the department make the most significant scholarly, creative, or clinical contribution (as appropriate)?

Many disciplines are included under the umbrella of *Hospitality and Tourism*. These include: hotel management; food service management, tourism, meeting and event planning; club management, etc. The fields of inquiry are similar to those that are found in the business school namely: accounting, finance, marketing, HR, management, etc. There are also discipline-specific research areas like food safety and sanitation.

As indicated in the Self-Study (p. 24), the School’s first endowed professorship was established in 2014: the Aziz Hashim Endowed Professorship in Franchising Entrepreneurship. Dr. Ben Lawrence is the first faculty member to hold that position, and this presents the opportunity to significantly contribute to the College’s focus on entrepreneurship. Moreover, there appears to be numerous industry partners willing to support the franchising & entrepreneurship focus through access and investment. This focus will also better integrate the School into the College.

In the past, the program has had close ties with the Club Managers Association of America (through Dr. Joe Purdue). Given the students’ desire to pursue this segment of the hospitality industry, and strong potential industry partners, perhaps the School could develop an emphasis in this area. Initially, this can be accomplished as a certification within the School.

b. To what extent are the faculty number and composition sufficient to support the research and educational missions of the department?

In addition to the Major Courses (21 hours), The School of Hospitality Administration offers a number of specialized electives including the following (BBA):

- HADM 3310 Hotel Management
- HADM 3350 Meeting & Tradeshow Management
- HADM 3410 Advanced Food Service Management and Production
- HADM 3420 Restaurant and Food Service Management
- HADM 3490 Private Club Management
- HADM 3500 Beverage Management
- HADM 3600 Event Management
- HADM 3770 Franchising
- HADM 3780 Revenue Management
- HADM 3800 Hospitality Quality Management
- HADM 4200 Venue and Facility Management
- HADM 4300 Aviation Management
The overall number of faculty has been approximately the same since 2014 (p. 23); however, the composition has changed considerably. There are twice as many part-time faculty in 2017, as there were in 2014. This means that there are more part-time faculty than full-time faculty. This composition does not align with other hospitality programs in universities. Yet, the School supports a number of specialized courses.

The Atlanta market is replete with hospitality expertise, and the School has done an excellent job enticing industry professionals to teach. Nonetheless, there is concern that the quality and consistency of the program may be negatively affected by the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty (currently greater than 2:1). Part-time instructors are not expected to engage in research, nor service activities (e.g. university, college, and departmental committees). Also, because they have full-time jobs in industry, part-time faculty are less likely to engage with students to the extent necessary.

The School’s faculty composition is not in alignment with other hospitality programs across the country, most especially those located in AACSB-accredited business colleges. If the goal is to enhance the prestige of the School, as desired by both the School Director, and faculty, the School will need more TT faculty lines. One approach to address this would be to create a pathway for scholarly-productive Clinical faculty to move to TT positions.

Given the current emphasis on the “digital revolution”, entrepreneurship, and innovation, the School is uniquely positioned to add value to the College’s strategic focus. Unfortunately, there currently appears to be little integration of the School into the overall strategic vision for the College, which could lead to lost synergies, and opportunities.

c. Based on your knowledge of similar departments in the discipline, evaluate the overall strength of the department.

The strength of the department depends upon its goals, and upper administration’s expectations. The goals of the BBA program (Part 1_Appendices, p. 10) are comparable to those at other institutions. There appears to be less flexibility in being able to offer discipline-specific coursework, due to Robinson’s AACSB curricular requirements. The Hospitality check-sheet indicates there are seven (7) required major courses, and three (3) discipline-specific electives.
The School’s primary strength lies in its ties to the industry, and the opportunity to secure external (i.e. industry) funding to support growth. The School’s location is ideal, and positions the School to be a primary feeder of talent to Atlanta’s hospitality and tourism organizations. Dr. Cannon is a clear strength of the School, and industry partners clearly see her leadership as instrumental in the evolution the School has experienced to date, as well as critical to the School continuing to move forward. External stakeholders are excited about the opportunities that exist with the acquisition of the stadium, and have creative and innovative ideas on how the School can have an enhanced impact on Atlanta (e.g. workforce development, establishing a 2+2 program with its community college acquisition - Perimeter College, etc.). Additionally, faculty are highly engaged with, and have the support of, industry. Faculty are also current in their disciplines.

Another key strength of the School is its global focus, and the diversity of its student body. The School is well-positioned to provide diverse management talent, which continues to be a strategic initiative for hospitality and tourism organizations across the country. Given Atlanta’s demographics, this is most likely essential to the City’s hospitality and tourism industry.

3. Quality of the Department’s Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
   a. For each of the department’s programs, evaluate the quality and currency of the curriculum in terms of disciplinary standards and trends.

There are three programs:
1. BBA in Hospitality Administration
2. Certificate in Hospitality

The School of Hospitality Administration is one of ten programs in the U.S. dually accredited by AACSB and ACPHA (Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration).

The hospitality curriculum consists of seven required courses and three hospitality electives; in total hospitality students take 10 (30 credit hours) discipline-specific courses. As previously indicated, this is fewer than the number taken by students in many other hospitality programs. In addition, hospitality majors are required to work at least 570 hours in industry-related positions. Students also complete a work portfolio. The undergraduate program produces industry-ready graduates. Each industry professional we met touted the quality of the graduates, and the quality of their
preparedness. Students have extensive engagement with industry through professional associations. The loss of the School’s club management faculty member has presented some challenges, given the number of high revenue/top-ranked clubs in Atlanta.

The graduate program seems solid and has a global focus. The one-year program is attractive, but may need to be revised to yield the number of students the School desires in each cohort. The School does a quality job of preparing graduate students for industry, and providing appropriate career development opportunities to enhance students' self-efficacy & self-esteem.

b. Evaluate the quality of both incoming and graduated students in the department’s programs, relative to discipline-specific norms.

In comparison to all GSU business majors entering as freshmen in 2014 – 2016, overall there is little variance. During this time frame, hospitality majors had a high school GPA average of 3.37. For all College of Business departments, the GPA average for entering freshmen was 3.39. The SAT composite scores for hospitality majors for this time averaged 1048.3. For all College of Business departments, the average for entering freshmen SAT composite score was slightly higher at 1083.7. (p. 2, self-study) Entering freshmen declaring hospitality averaged 528.3 on math, and 525.7 on verbal compared to 549 on math and 543 on verbal for the College as a whole. The “Indicators of Measures of Quality” (p.21, Appendix 1) suggest incremental improvement in this area from AY 2013 to AY 2015.

The “Area F” requirement can be viewed both positively and negatively. On the one hand, the quality of the student has increased to the extent that GPA reflects a higher caliber student. At the same time, it prevents students who may find success in this discipline from matriculating into the program.

The School appropriately develops industry-ready undergraduates, who are prepared for entry-level management roles. A large number of students are first generation, but the School does a good job of professionally preparing them for entry-level management positions. The graduates are eager, “hungry”, and have a high quality work ethic. This is a point of distinction for the School.

Similarly, the Master’s program graduates have been able to secure key positions in top hospitality organizations (e.g. IHG corporate, Starwood Corporate, Marriott International Corporate, Walt Disney Corporate, COEX, EXCO and Singapore Airlines.). The review team’s engagement with industry suggests that the hospitality industry is extremely happy with the quality of the School’s graduates.
c. Based on your professional experience, are the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates appropriate? If not, what changes might the department make to improve them?

The number of competitors offering hospitality-related degrees in the US has increased tremendously over the last 10-15 years. Enrollment in a number of US hospitality programs is flat, or declining.

In order for the School to grow, as desired by the Director & faculty, the School will need to focus on hiring tenure-track faculty, and securing funds to enhance its facilities (e.g. food lab). It’s clear there are significant opportunities for industry to invest in the School.

d. Are there appropriate resources and support structures for the department’s educational programs?

The review team has a significant concern about the composition of the School’s faculty, and the lack of a clear pathway for tenure. The College’s P&T criteria should include specific guidelines for how the School’s faculty might earn tenure, especially in terms of scholarly productivity. It is highly unusual to require hospitality faculty to publish exclusively in limited business journals, instead of top-ranked hospitality and tourism journals. See Gursoy & Sandstrom (2016). *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 40*(1), 3-18

e. Evaluate the potential for growth of the department’s graduate programs.

One of the goals of the School is to grow undergraduate enrollment to 500 by 2020, and to grow cohorts in the Master’s in Global Hospitality Management Program to 30 or more.

Given the global focus of the curriculum and its international alumni base, the School has the opportunity to grow its master’s program. The School needs to re-evaluate its position in the graduate education marketplace to confirm how it would like to move forward. There is significant infrastructure needed (e.g., additional staff and technology support, travel support to targeted countries from which to recruit), if the School desires to move its graduate program online.

4. Quality of the Department’s Research Culture
   a. Based on your knowledge of the discipline, what is your assessment of the quality of the department’s faculty?
Research-wise, every academic program wrestles with both research productivity and impact. This may be even more challenging for niche disciplines like *Hospitality & Tourism*.

The number of terminally-degreed faculty in the department remained constant between 2013 and 2015. The number of non-terminally degreed faculty, however; has decreased by 67%. To the faculty’s credit, the number of peer-reviewed publications/academic year has increased 3-fold. They are also engaged in professional/industry, and academic associations.

The School of Hospitality currently has a disproportionate number of part-time faculty to full-time faculty (5 full-time/12 part-time.) While GSU has done an excellent job of engaging industry professionals to teach elective classes, there is concern that the quality and consistency may be affected by the ratio of part-time instructors to full-time faculty. This likely adversely affects the productivity of the faculty as a whole.

b. From a disciplinary perspective, what is your assessment of the research areas in which the department is already strong, and areas with the potential for further growth?

There was a noticeable increase in the number of peer-reviewed publications for Academic Year 2015. It is incredibly difficult to establish significant scholarly areas of expertise with only clinical faculty. All things considered, the clinical faculty have very high scholarly productivity given their course loads, and no tenure opportunities.

c. What is your assessment of the support structures for faculty and student research (e.g., grant-writing support, travel grants, laboratories, student funding, administrative support, etc.)?

It appears the program has access to physical resources (e.g. classroom space, office support, instructional media) essential for the School to achieve its objectives. However, there could be more support for student recruitment for the master’s program, and travel support for such activities as well.

d. Do you have any recommendations for improvements in the department’s research culture, productivity, and results?

In recent years, the number of hospitality and tourism journals has increased exponentially. There has also been a number of quality online journals that have come into play the last few years. Because of this, it is important to identify suitable outlets

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1 Niche in this sense refers to the academic journals specific to the hospitality and tourism discipline.
for the dissemination of scholarly activities; it is also important to connect with the hospitality and tourism industry.

Tenure-track faculty drive the research culture and productivity in departments, and schools. Currently there are a greater number of part-time instructors than there are full-time faculty – which limits the productivity of the School as a whole. The fact that there is only one tenure-track faculty member in the School is quite troubling.

5. Goals

a. Are the goals the department has outlined in its self-study appropriate for the unit?

   (Part 1_Appendices, p. 10)

   The review team believes the School’s goals are appropriate, similar to other hospitality programs, and reflective of industry needs.

b. Are they in accord with disciplinary trends?

   The School’s goals are appropriately focused on industry preparedness. However, there is a noted limitation in terms of industry-specific courses, given the number of faculty, and the number of required business-core courses.

c. Are the priorities reasonable?

   Given the School’s focus on increasing enrollment, it will be essential to enhance its culinary facilities (i.e. food lab). If the School desires to enhance its reputation in the discipline, it will need to hire tenure-track faculty with clear expertise in specific hospitality and tourism disciplines.

d. Are the resource needs realistic?

   The needed resources identified in the self-study are realistic in the context of having a top-level hospitality program (p. 33, Self-study).
e. Are any changes or additions warranted?

It is critical the School update its foodservice lab facilities in order to deliver a quality learning experience for students, and to acquire tenure-track faculty to meet the expectations of a research-intensive institutions.

6. Summary and Recommendations
   a. Summarize the department’s major strengths and challenges.

Strengths
- GSU’s location in Atlanta is a major attractor for students and for faculty.
- Dr. Debby Cannon is a dedicated leader. She interacts well and has strong rapport with industry, faculty, students and alumni.
- Classroom space and technical infrastructure, instructional media, facilities, and equipment are available.
- Multiple student clubs/organizations provide student leadership and engagement opportunities.
- The School has cultivated extraordinary relationships with local, national, and international hospitality and tourism entities
- The School’s faculty are dedicated to student success, quality educational experiences, and a quality program.
- The lone tenure-track faculty holds a doctoral degree, and maintains an active research agenda, as appropriate. Clinical faculty have strong industry experience and teach areas germane to their specialization. The overwhelming majority of the clinical faculty are as scholarly productive as many tenure-track faculty at other research-intensive institutions.
- Networking is a key part of the School’s culture.
- Faculty scholarly productivity is commendable, especially given the teaching load and class size.
- The high-engagement of the faculty and the Senior Career Coach (Daena Spencer) are essential to the School’s educational mission.
- Students view the international experience opportunities as a value-adding element of the program.
- The faculty and alumni are dedicated to the program and the university. The alumni have been very generous in providing both time and support, as indicated by their financial support and willingness to participate as needed.
Many hospitality programs struggle as it relates to enticing industry financial support. The School has had some success in raising funds to support scholarship and programmatic needs.

Weaknesses
- There appears to be little integration of the School into the overall strategic vision for the College, and there are likely lost opportunities to collaborate across the College.
- Physical resources, including spaces dedicated to hospitality-specific activities essential for the achievement of the program’s objectives, are lacking.
- There is a significant lack of clarity in the promotion and tenure process for the School’s faculty. Work assignments and expectations for promotion and tenure are not clear.
- Not having a tenure option for clinical faculty will critically hinder faculty recruiting and retention.
- Student advising is inadequate to meet the needs of the School’s students. The College’s advisors are not familiar with the hospitality curriculum.

Recommendations

A. Curriculum

1. A stronger food and beverage track was suggested by alums and industry representatives because of the high demand for food and beverage managers in all facets of Atlanta’s hospitality industry.
2. A linked or 4+1 program, where students can pursue a BBA and MS at the same time, might attract students interested in pursuing an advanced degree. This could also help expand the enrollment in the MS program.
3. Hospitality programs in both business and non-business colleges have more flexibility with their curriculum. As a result they can offer more industry-specific coursework. For those in a business school, one approach to offering more industry-specific coursework is to be excluded from the AACSB accreditation process. Michigan State is a prime example of a school that has achieved considerable success.
4. Closely-related to number 3 above - the “Area F” requirement might have a negative impact on the School’s recruitment, and retention.

B. Faculty Research Productivity

A list of hospitality journals can be found at [http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jlresults.cgi?PC=SS&SC=MW](http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jlresults.cgi?PC=SS&SC=MW). Also, please see *An Updated Ranking of Hospitality*
and Tourism Journals  http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1096348014538054 for a peer-reviewed ranking of hospitality and tourism journals. Allowing the School’s faculty to publish in discipline-specific journals will enhance recognition and reputation.

Clear work load assignments and expectations for promotion and tenure are needed. Hospitality faculty should be evaluated on discipline-specific criteria. This is normal operating procedure for all academic disciplines.

For faculty to be able to generate more research, a master’s program can be beneficial; a PhD program would significantly enhance its position in the academic marketplace. Most top-rated hospitality programs offer a PhD degree. This may be an opportunity worth considering, given its location and the density of hospitality and tourism businesses in Atlanta.

C. Resources
More attention to advising is warranted for undergraduate hospitality students. There are limited graduate research assistantships available. Student recruitment could be enhanced by providing more resources for the graduate program, including marketing and recruitment.

Compared to other master’s level programs, the tuition appears high. Perhaps reducing the cost of the program, and/or providing financial incentives may help increase enrollment.

Having a state-of-the-art culinary facilities would certainly resonate well with employers, and create leverage to gain industry financial support for the program. Moreover, external stakeholders are excited about the opportunities that exist with the acquisition of the stadium.