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Assessing career value of hospitality management curriculum from program alumni

James Reid

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ASSESSING CAREER VALUE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM FROM PROGRAM ALUMNI

by

James R. Reid

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Food, Hotel and Travel Management at Rochester Institute of Technology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment of hospitality management baccalaureate program alumni from New York Technical College (NYCTC) as being a valuable resource to the Hospitality Management curriculum assessment effort.

Through the development of an alumni questionnaire, participants in this study were asked to rate individual courses of their curriculum (both core and elective) by the degree of value each course had been in terms of usefulness to their career development and/or relevance to meeting the demands of their current positions.

Although the questionnaire response rate was less than desirable, it is stressed that survey instrument results are most valuable when they inspire those responsible for curriculum assessment to engage in dynamic dialog and on-going reevaluation. This is especially of interest and of potential value when program alumni -- who can offer dual perspectives on industry trends (patterns of change) and who are experientially familiar with program curriculum content -- are incorporated into this process. This dynamic
viewpoint may offer unique perspectives to consider in the curriculum planning and assessment processes.
To Jim.

To my ohana.

To MICRONY and to all of the seed planters who have come before and to those who continue to encourage growth.

Thank you all for your gifts. I have been blessed.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Assessing Career Value of Hospitality Management Curriculum from Program Alumni

Step One: The Introduction

"All graduates of the baccalaureate degree program will have developed a depth of understanding of hospitality management and will have been afforded the opportunity to prepare for a career. To fulfill its mission, the Hospitality Management Department will offer a comprehensive curriculum which provides students with practical, marketable and technical skills . . . ." 

(From New York City Technical College, Hospitality Management Program Departmental Mission Statement).

There exists a vast assortment of hospitality management associate degree and baccalaureate programs throughout the United States. Although many curricula have
specific course and program requirements in common, each program strives to attract new students each semester by promoting the school’s attractive and unique attributes. These variants can include offering “hands-on” culinary skill building, industry internships or specialized courses in operations management such as “Housekeeping and Facilities Management” or “Hospitality Human Resources Management” to name a few.

One of the objectives and subsequent challenges which is shared by all of us offering programs designed to facilitate the development of a successful career in the hospitality industry is the ongoing quality assessment of hospitality curriculum. One question that arises is does our curriculum provide the information and skills necessary to be successful in hospitality management today?

Although a variety of methods continue to be exercised in determining value and relevance in hospitality management program curriculum and course content, this study will examine the elicitation and utilization of alumni feedback as one of the tools available in the program assessment process. These individuals not only have fresh experiential
understanding of the curriculum they received as associate
degree and baccalaureate students at New York City Technical
College, they are now functioning in a full spectrum of
guest contact, operational support, supervisory and
managerial capacities in the hospitality industry today.

**Step Two: The Problem**

For the past few decades, hospitality management
students have held high expectations of their college
education. They expect and increasingly demand their
education be valuable and relevant to them and provide a
vehicle for developing a career in the hospitality industry.

This project will address the problem of gaining timely
information on the value and relevancy of hospitality
management programs through obtaining feedback from
graduates gainfully employed in the hospitality industry.

This project will identify the program characteristics
of course content perceived to be the most valuable and
relevant to alumni engaged in hospitality careers.
Through the process of soliciting feedback from the target group, findings may reinforce or encourage reprioritization of program course offerings as reflected through indications of possible trends. Additionally, findings may suggest amending or substituting specific courses as well. The overriding focus will be to evaluate current curriculum and specifically, course content of the Hospitality Management Program of New York City Technical College and to capture potential indications of industry needs from the baccalaureate program alumni to facilitate our curriculum assessment processes.

Step Three: Background

New York City Technical College is located at the base of the Brooklyn Bridge in what is commonly referred to as “Downtown” Brooklyn, New York. The College started in 1946 as a public technical institute designed to educate and train high school graduates in two-year technical, industrial and related occupations -- as well as -- provide programs of general education including instruction in oral and written English and social sciences.
It was understood that young people would be challenged by the many new inventions and technical processes of the postwar period and therefore institutions would be faced with the multiple task of combining technical training and general education. Responding to this need, the legislature appropriated $3 million for new institutions designed to be tuition-free for New York State residents with preferred admission reserved for veterans.

The original programs offered were Commercial Art and Industrial Design, Retail Distribution (which would become Marketing) and Dental Laboratory Technology. However, in the fall of 1947, the new Hotel Technology Department enrolled 162 students. This unique department offered three primary areas of focus: Catering and Food Preparation, Housekeeping and Front Office Operations. Program and curriculum development and instructional support were initially provided in conjunction with The Restaurant Association of New York and several of the larger well-known hotels such as The Waldorf-Astoria and The Statler.

Throughout the fifty-plus years, the College and what is now the Hospitality Management Department have expanded
and evolved tremendously. The HM Department currently offers two options to individuals interested in a career in the hospitality industry: a two-year Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree and a four-year Bachelor of Technology (BT) degree which, since 1982, is the only degree of its kind in the greater New York area.

Built into the college-wide accreditation membership process in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, is a ten-year review process. Every area of the college is examined. Although there is no formal obligation for any department to modify its curricula, there is an obligation to explain and defend its value and relevance.

Historically, the HM Department has made modifications to both core curriculum and elective offerings several times in addition to the institution of the baccalaureate degree in 1982. Now, every seven years, in conjunction with the application for accreditation to the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) the HM Department Chair coordinates several activities for faculty and staff to focus on program assessment. A Curriculum Committee has been developed to ensure that the outlined ACPHA guidelines are followed as
on-going assessment and "intensive self-evaluations" are key components in the accreditation process. Curriculum Committee activities have included faculty evaluations and course offering discussions, focus groups with hospitality industry Human Resources professionals and reviewing comments from current student populations. The next ACPHA accreditation process is scheduled to commence in fall of 1999.

As a part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, the standard academic plan model serves as a vehicle to yearly review and appraise the HM program. These plans provide the structure for faculty and administration to review the curriculum each year. However, once curricula have been approved there is currently no systematic tool in place on the HM departmental level to determine the value and relevance of specific individual course offerings.

Step Four: Purpose

The purpose of this study is to utilize alumni feedback in assessing the on the value and relevance of a hospitality curriculum. Further, the intent is to integrate the evaluations of alumni into the current curriculum assessment
process should the findings indicate change is needed and if there is a gap between hospitality curriculum and the emerging needs of the workplace.

The intention is further identified through incorporating the specialized knowledge which alumni possess regarding both program content and their understanding of the present demands of the hospitality industry so that we may be better equipped to offer an education more finely tuned to the needs of the marketplace.

In turn, utilizing this dynamic resource to fine-hone curriculum and course content may allow NYC Tech to compete more effectively with other hospitality college programs.

Step Five: Significance

Although the activity of program evaluation has been used in the educational system since inception, the impact of utilizing alumni as an on-going assessment tool may provide rich evaluative data and a dynamic perspective that makes this exercise and study distinct.
Step Six: Nature of Study (Methodology)

This evaluational study will elicit feedback from hospitality management program alumni regarding current curriculum by way of mail questionnaires. Recipients will be asked to provide demographic data regarding level of degree earned and length of post graduation employment. In addition, research participants will be asked if their current occupation is in either the area of the food and beverage professions, in lodging operations or in an area outside the hospitality industry.

The focus of the questionnaire will be to rate specific current course offerings in terms of value and relevance to the individual’s current hospitality position. Participants will be asked to provide feedback based on the course subject matter alone in an attempt to minimize the influence of individual experiences of a particular classroom environment. In addition, there will be an elicitation of suggestions for any course subject area not reflected in present hospitality management program curriculum.
Step Seven: Literature Review

A review of literature will include case studies and dissertation abstracts on college level curriculum development. The intention will be to identify the variety of tools utilized in curriculum and course development. More specifically, the evolution of hospitality management programs will be examined with the use of historical data from colleges and university informational catalogs which offer programs with a hospitality management and/or culinary skills focus.

College and university alumni relationships will be reviewed through alumni periodicals and published research and case studies on college and university fundraising activities.

Various aspects of career development research will be reviewed in this study. The areas of focus may include the relationship between educational level and job satisfaction, the development of vocational objectives and the relationship between educational levels and job satisfaction.
Step Eight: Hypothesis

It is expected that this study will demonstrate that alumni can be a valuable resource in providing data, which can be useful in assessing hospitality management program curriculums. From the data collected, information may provide validation of current direction and focus and/or potential opportunities to enhance or revise future curriculum content.

Step Nine: Definition of Terms

**Chef/Culinary Positions:** Those positions existing in operations such as restaurants, cafeterias and catering enterprises where food and beverage products are prepared and/or delivered however, the primary responsibilities of the position are of a product preparation or production nature.

**Food and Beverage Operations Positions:** Those positions existing in operations such as restaurants, cafeterias and catering enterprises where food and beverage products are prepared and/or delivered however the primary responsibility
of the position are of a service supervision or management nature.

*Hospitality Industry:* The umbrella of enterprises that include lodging operations and food and beverage establishments as stated in this study.

*Lodging Operations Positions:* Those positions existing in hotel, motel and resort environments other than those with a primary food and beverage focus.

*Supervisory Positions:* Those positions having performance and or production responsibility over at least one other individual in the workplace environment.

*Value:* Worth as measured in terms of usefulness and contributions to career development and/or relevance identified in meeting demands of current position in the hospitality industry.
Step Ten: Assumptions

**Ideological:**

I assume that some percentage of the respondents in this study will encompass those alumni members with varying degrees of allegiance to New York City Technical College and the Hospitality Management Department as demonstrated through the acts of reading, responding and submitting their feedback for this study.

I also assume that the respondents of this study may also include—albeit to a lesser extent—those alumni who may perceive the process of responding and submitting their feedback as an opportunity to express residual disappointment with some component of their past experience.

**Procedural:**

Questionnaires will be mailed to Hospitality Management Program alumni whose addresses will be obtained from the Alumni Relations Department of New York City Technical College.

The questionnaire will be accompanied by a cover letter which will communicate intent and request cooperation of the
alumni member, a listing of current course offerings as described in the current college catalog and a stamped addressed return envelope to the researcher.

**Step Eleven: Scope and Limitations**

The focus of this study will be to obtain and review feedback from Hospitality Management Baccalaureate Program Alumni currently employed in the hospitality industry. The data collected will reflect their perceptions of value and relevance of current Hospitality Management Program course offerings. For this study, the alumni will be limited to individuals completed their degree requirements in the years 1994 through 1998.

This study will demonstrate the process of utilizing alumni feedback as an additional assessment resource tool in the curriculum evaluation process. This potential resource will have completed the Hospitality Management Baccalaureate Program curriculum from New York City Technical College and may be currently employed in the hospitality industry, therefore, offering a dynamic dual perspective.
Step Twelve: Procedures

The subjects will be program alumni who will be divided into a variety of subgroups including those working in food and beverage operations, those with a culinary/chef focus and those in hospitality operations with services and/or products not primarily of a food and beverage nature.

Respondents will be given the opportunity to identify their area of focus, which may not fit into the aforementioned three categories. Respondents will additionally identify themselves by gender and specify the year that degree requirements were attained.

All participants will be asked to evaluate course offerings in terms of high and low career value. The data will be analyzed to identify significant findings reflecting shared perceptions of the career value of current curriculum and specific course offerings.

In addition, respondents will be asked to identify any area of study or interest not currently addressed in current curriculum offerings. This information may provide insights into potential trends.
Step Thirteen: *Long Range Consequences*

Should the findings of this study be in accordance with the hypothesis, the data will suggest that alumni share similar perceptions of value and relevancy of program course offerings and therefore, a potential additional resource in the curriculum assessment process.

Additionally, alumni may provide indications of potential industry trends and concerns, which can be useful in curriculum assessment and revision processes.

Results contrary to the hypothesis would warrant further study. If the study results in the inability to provide shared evaluational data, the study should be repeated assessing factors affecting perceived curriculum value and relevancy other than the course content descriptions.

There may also be a low response rate to the questionnaire, which would suggest a revised instrument and distribution strategy and deployment design, to increase response volume in the future.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Curriculum Development and Assessment

All organizations are challenged to evolve in order to adapt to ever-changing conditions. Educational institutions of higher learner, especially over the last ten to fifteen years (Gray, 1997) have been pressured to periodically assess their ability to meet the expectations for effective student learning. Whether referred to as academic planning, program evaluation, or curriculum assessment, the underlying goal of the diagnostic process is to facilitate continuous improvement in meeting post secondary educational missions.

In constructing initial curricula Stark (1997) suggests that there are eight distinguishable elements of the academic planning process:

1. Purpose: Setting educational goals and objectives
2. Content: Selecting subject matter
3. Sequence: Organizing content appropriately
4. Learners: Considering characteristics, goals, and abilities of learners
5. Instructional Resources: Selecting learning materials
6. **Instructional Processes**: Selecting learning and teaching activities

7. **Evaluation**: Assessing student outcomes, and appraising learner and teacher satisfaction with the plan

8. **Adjustment**: Making improvements in both the plan and the planning process

The reasoning behind the identification of these separate areas of the planning process is to facilitate decision making about each element and to identify the stakeholders as well as the internal, external and organizational influences which may be involved (Stark, Lowthwer, Hagerty & Orczyk, 1986).

The curriculum literature reviewed for this study centers on specifically, the Evaluation and Adjustment components of the planning process aforementioned. Regardless of how the initial academic program process is established and discussed, these two steps are vital in responding to new needs and new information. When at one time program evaluation was limited to the domain of the church and private sponsors (Stark, 1997), there are now
ample strategies and tools available to assist educators in curriculum assessment modification efforts.

Typically, faculty and program administrators are responsible for conducting program and course evaluations whether or not initially driven by governmental mandates or other external influences. Faculty members may have profound perceptions regarding their individual course value and relevance simply by using their own feelings as indicators. Additionally, they may even develop their own student assessment tools to get indications of perceived course value or merely utilize examination results as indicators – assuming that because students have met stated course objectives, the student perception of course value therefore, exists on some level.

Although there may be genuine merit in a variety of instructor designed and executed course evaluation strategies, other colleagues (through conducting the commonplace peer reviews) and administration and academic committees tend to offer more objective and less insular perspectives in striving to meet the goals of accreditation, institutional and departmental missions. Much of these undertakings however, are designed to report on perceived
instructor effectiveness more than the value and/or relevance of each course itself.

**Hospitality Management Education**

For over seventy-five years, hospitality management has been taught at the university level in the United States. What started out as curricula designed primarily to develop “hands-on” skills, hospitality management programs today are far more theoretical in nature. There are now approximately 200 established four-year degree programs throughout the nation.

There is not complete consensus in what precisely defines the parameters of the “hospitality industry” or even “hospitality management education.” However, as suggested by Barrows (1999) the majority of educators seem to share the understanding as stated by the Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (CHRIE) which encompasses the areas, of lodging, food and beverage preparation and delivery systems, recreation and other travel related services.

Formal education in hospitality management can be observed through numerous and diverse venues. Several
certificate, two-year programs can offer many career ports of entry into the vast industry as previously described. Today, two-year programs outnumber four-year programs by approximately four to one. There seems to be an understanding that although the two-year programs tend to be more limited with a more technical "hand-on" focus, they can be effective in providing the business community with a skilled and marketable labor pool.

In 1922, the Hotel School at Cornell University offered the first four-year program in hospitality management. Today, Cornell continues to serve as a model for post-secondary education and offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees in hotel administration. Through the years to follow the inauguration of the Cornell program, other prominent institutions began to offer four-year hospitality degree options.

The vast majority in growth for hospitality programs in higher education however, has occurred during the past twenty-five years. During the sixties, seventies and eighties, the industry has seen unprecedented growth and a thriving business environment that needed to seek and acquire trained and knowledgeable hospitality managers.
The proposal for a Bachelor of Technology Degree Program in Hotel and Restaurant Management with submitted by The Hotel and Restaurant Management Department Chairman, Professor Donald McHugh in September of 1981. As stated in the proposal, the intention was to:

- Provide upward mobility opportunity for our graduates.
- Provide well-trained graduates to meet the needs of the hospitality industry.
- Meet an educational void in the City of New York.

The development of the initial baccalaureate curriculum was based on an in-depth analysis of nine colleges with a four-year program in hotel and restaurant management. The nine institutions reviewed for the program development and proposal were:

- Cornell University
- Johnson and Wales
- Florida International University
- Michigan State University
- Purdue University
- University of Denver
In addition to the extensive comparative analysis of these educational institutions, nationwide trends regarding industry growth and needs were closely reviewed. According to the original proposal, it became evident that high technology and service industries would be the dominant factors in the development of the gross national product replacing those revenues which were dropping from the manufacturing areas.

Specifically, the hospitality industry -- including information obtained from both hotel and restaurant industry forecasts -- was clearly viewed to be on a growth path for the 1980s. At the time of the proposal, Bob Richards, Executive Director of the American Hotel and Motel Association stated, "If the present industry trend continues, the hospitality industry will be the number one industry in the United States by the year 2000."

Part of the research for the proposed program development, included an "Employers Survey" which was mailed
to prospective employers of New York City Technical College graduates. Through professional organizations and established affiliations such as the Hotel Executives Association, City Club Managers Association, and the Hotel Food and Beverage Managers Association, these organizations were assessed of their current and projected recruitment needs. Nearly half of the 132 responses (at a rate of 13.5%) expressed a definite need for college educated personnel with baccalaureate degrees. And 63% indicated the "desirability" of hiring New York City Technical College graduates specifically (McHugh, 1981).

Another piece of the proposal process was regarding an "Alumni Survey" which was sent out to 1121 A.A.S. Degree graduates with 148 (13.2%) responding. The respondents were primarily asked if they would be interested in a Baccalaureate Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management technology. Overall 56% of the alumni indicated interest in the B.T. Degree, however most of this interest (84%) came from the most recent post 1970 alumni at the time. In addition, the last request made of the alumni was to list any comments they might have regarding the proposed B.T. program. The most recurring response was "long overdue."
The proposal for the Bachelor of Technology Degree Program in Hotel and Restaurant Management was approved and passed by a unanimous vote of the Curriculum Committee of the College Council on June 11, 1981. For two years the proposal went through minor modifications but suffered a major delay due to the death of the program's primary supporter and connection to the Governor, Chancellor Kibbie.

On June 13, 1983, at the 43rd Commencement at Avery Fisher Hall, College President Schwerin announces that Governor Cuomo had authorized the first four-year Bachelor of Technology degree (Hotel and Restaurant Management) and on January 29, 1986 the first Bachelor of Technology degrees were awarded to four graduates.

Curriculum Revision

As stated in the most recent Self Study Report, presented by Chairperson Bartholomew (1995) it is assumed the minor curricular changes may be needed as adjustments become evident. However significant curriculum modification proposals are developed by the Hospitality Management department faculty through a series of discussions assessing the relevance of curriculum course offerings. Feedback is obtained from industry leaders, the division dean and
current Hospitality Management students. Although there has been no formal on-going system in place, feedback from alumni has been sought and incorporated into the discussion process.

Once the discussions are formalized, the curriculum revision process has several systematic components. The HM department first submits a proposal to the division dean. Upon approval, the proposal is forwarded to the Curriculum Committee of the College Council, the governing body of New York City Technical College. Upon acceptance, it is sent to the Office of Academic Affairs for approval by the Chancellor, Board of Trustees and ultimately by The State Education Department/The University of the State of New York.

Alumni Research

Colleges and universities for a variety of purposes have used alumni surveys for many years. Pace (1979) was one of the first investigators to review fifty years of applying alumni research to academic planning and decision making. His findings indicated that most alumni surveys addressed and attempted to assess similar issues – for example, occupation, job satisfaction, salary levels, fund-raising
interest, the relationship with one’s job to major program of study to name a few.

Ewell (1983) suggested that alumni research along with other outcomes measures could be useful and have a variety of applications including reviewing academic planning, accreditation self-studies, marketing and even public relations efforts. Although some institutions survey their alumni on a regular basis, most have done so sporadically and often in response to an accreditation process requirement.

An assessment tool, the Academic Program Level Effects Assessment Model (APLEAM) was introduced in 1992 (Hale, Travis). It was suggested in the Post-Graduation Outcomes Assessment Component that alumni could provide rich data regarding how well their program’s course work prepared them for their professional pursuits. This component of the APLEAM asked alumni to rate the programs utility to them professionally and suggest what content and skills should be included or deleted in the program.

There are several other standardized alumni surveys available. The American College Testing Service (ACT), The
National Center for Higher Education Systems (NCHEMS) both provide instruments which focus on general goals that have been realized since college as well as capture basic demographic data. Another assessment tool model has been demonstrated as a four-year follow up to a freshman survey of the Higher Education Research Institute of the University of California, Los Angeles. Although this instrument provides a comparative framework within which to review responses, the response rates to this survey have not been high (e.g., only 24% of the 16,095 freshmen enrolling in the fall of 1983 returned the follow-up questionnaire when it was mailed to them in 1987).

Some of the published models of alumni assessment tools are highly detailed and elaborate. One for example, from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, was developed in conjunction with meeting the accreditation criteria in 1991 for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). This instrument contained 147 individual questions. Many of the questions focused on the mission statement of the institution, college activities, extra-curricular programs and other general areas of consideration. Other questions were highly specific - even including assessment of the quality of the duplicating services available on
campus. None of these 147 questions however, focused on specific curriculum or course content.

In reviewing literature on assessment, there appears to be agreement that alumni can be a valuable and dynamic resource in the curriculum assessment process, however, the program plan review tools rarely address individual course value rating. In addition, although there appears to be a shared understanding of the value of alumni feedback, one of the most challenging problems in conducting and validating alumni research is non-response which has confronted researchers in all fields for years.
Target Sample

The most recent significant curriculum redesign for the Hospitality Management Baccalaureate Degree Program at New York City Technical College prior to the commencement of this study occurred in 1994 when the baccalaureate program began offering various elective options to the HMB (Hospitality Management Baccalaureate) student population.

The rationale supporting this study is that evaluative data have not been collected and/or analyzed from this select group of HMB graduates since the curriculum change occurred.

The sampling for this study represents all HMB baccalaureate graduates for each year beginning in 1994 through 1998. Although there were three separate graduating periods (spring, summer and winter) within each academic year, for the purpose of this study, graduates have been identified and clustered by their year of graduation regardless of which season the actual degree requirements were attained.
For the five-year sampling identified, the following depicts the HMB graduate totals for each year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Graduation</th>
<th>Number of Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SAMPLING</strong></td>
<td><strong>277</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methodology

A four-part questionnaire was designed to elicit evaluative data from the target sampling of program alumni. Parts One and Two were designed around specific course offerings in the HMB curriculum. The respondents were asked to rate courses indicating the degree of value ascribed to each specific course in terms of career development usefulness and/or relevance to meeting current position demands.
A five point likert scale was used as the guideline and direction for the value rating process as follows:

VALUE RATING
1. None
2. Low
3. Medium
4. High
5. Very High

Respondents were asked to circle the most appropriate number indicating the degree of value each course had to their career development process and/or in meeting the demands of their current position.

Part One of the questionnaire focused on Upper Division Required Courses exclusively. Individual courses were listed in their numeric (and generally prescribed) order.

Part Two addressed and listed the Upper Division Electives Advanced Topics offerings and using the same Value Rating scale, asked each respondent to rate only those specific courses completed by the respondent.
Part Three of the questionnaire was designed in open-ended form in an attempt to elicit information that may be indicative of trends or perceived industry needs not currently addressed by curriculum offerings.

In conjunction with the initial hypothesis of this study, it is expected that alumni can be a valuable resource in providing data, which can be useful in assessing hospitality management program curricula. It is through this open-ended piece that useful information - indications of potential industry trends -- may be provided.

Part four was designed to gather basic demographic information. For the purpose of this study and as aforementioned, respondents were asked to specify the year of their graduation. In addition, alumni were asked to specify their gender and indicate one of four areas that would best reflect their current position or industry involvement as follows:

- Lodging Operations
- Food and Beverage Operations
- Culinary/Chef
- Other
The forth area, "Other" offered the respondent the opportunity to indicate their current position or industry involvement not reflected in the other three options. The instructions also requested the respondent to indicate the nature of the "Other" response. (The assumption was made that this "Other" open-ended portion could also be a catchall for a variety of responses including "unemployed" or "homemaker" for example).

Specific Course Offerings Assessed

On the baccalaureate (BT) level, the HM program offers a broad-based, sequential course of study which continues to be built on the foundation established at the associate AAS) level.

On the BT level the sequence is as follows:
HM 500 level courses expose students to management theory, computer applications, and advanced food preparation techniques.

HM 600 level courses are of a legal and financial industry-specific nature.
HM 700 level courses explore marketing and human resource management issues.

HM 800 level course is focused on analyzing current industry issues and trends using research, literature review, class analysis and discussion.

HM 900 level courses, with the exception of 911.2 hospitality internship, are electives offering a range of advanced topics from convention and banquet management to travel and tourism.

In Part One of the questionnaire, "Core Curriculum Upper Division Required Courses" listed below are summaries of the individual course descriptions that were provided in a separate three page document to each respondent to use as reference for specific course titles and code numbers indicated on the questionnaire.

HM 501 Hospitality Management Process
This course examines the role of management in the hospitality industry to include the investigation of the basic managerial functions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling.
HM 502 Hospitality Management Computer Applications

This course explores the personal computer as a managerial tool in the hospitality industry. Discussion of the use of spreadsheet modeling techniques, recipe development and nutritional analysis is included.

HM 503 Advanced Culinary Arts

Continued development of the skills and concepts in previous courses in culinary arts is offered – giving the students the opportunity to plan and execute basic techniques appropriate to each station in the kitchen. Students develop a menu with an emphasis on balance, texture, color, aroma, flavor and presentation.

HM 601 Hospitality Management of Legal Environment

This course explores the legal implications of acts by hotelkeeper, employees, guests and visitors. Discussion will include the development of legal rights of persons to travel and have access to public accommodations.

HM 602 Hospitality Management of Accounting and Finance

The needs of management and the application of accounting concepts to managerial and financial decision making,
methods and planning, analysis of financial statements, and other management issues.

HM 701 Hospitality Management of Human Resources
This course gives the student a conceptual background for dealing with human resources in the hospitality industry. It presents a historical review of the concept of management of human resources and discusses the major factors that managers need to understand and use when dealing with the workforce.

HM 702 Hospitality Management Marketing Strategies
This course examines the relationships among the various components of the hospitality industry and the markets it serves. Study of corporate mission, corporate goals and objectives, techniques of analyzing business, strategy formulation and implementation are addressed.

HM 801 Hospitality Management Research Seminar
This course focuses on hospitality management concepts, theory, and procedures needed to develop information and make decisions relevant to current industry problems incorporating research, review of literature, class analysis and discussion.
HM 911.2 Hospitality Internship

Each student is responsible for getting and keeping an appropriate job for the required period -- a minimum of eight weeks of experience in the hospitality field. This experience is defined as full-time, supervised paid employment and mandates that students attend two seminars and submit summary and evaluation reports as required.

In Part Two of the questionnaire, Electives listed below are summaries of the course descriptions provided regarding the HM 900 series, Electives Advanced Topics where respondents were asked to perform Value Ratings for only those courses they had completed.

HM 901 Advanced Topics in Pastry Arts: Deluxe Desserts

This course offers the students to develop skills in contemporary desserts such as zuppa inglese, tira mi su, gateau St. Honore, hot soufflés, sorbets, mousses to name a few. Proper emphasis is given to safety and sanitation.

HM 902 Advanced Topics in Pastry Arts: Patissiere/Confectionery Arts

This is an advanced course based on practical application of techniques for production of nougat, pastillage, caramel,
chocolate and various other confectionery products. Some of this work may be used for the International Hotel/Motel and Restaurant Show if approved by the instructor.

HM 903 Advanced Topics in Culinary Arts: Garde Manager

For advanced culinary students, this course provides a focus on cold buffet taught in conjunction with classical menu terminology. Included is a study of the techniques and demonstrations of classical hot and cold hors d’oeuvre and canapés, galatines, pates, timbales and smoked items in the development of buffet presentation.

HM 904 Advanced Topics in Culinary Arts: Culinary Nutrition for Food Service Professionals

This course explores the relationship of food to health from the perspective of the culinary professional. Discussions include the basics of nutrition and involve a survey of food in different cultures and the impact on American gastronomy.

HM 905 Advanced Topics in Travel and Tourism

This course provides an introduction to the structure and supply of domestic and foreign tourism, including transportation, accommodations, and entertainment. An examination of consumer demand for tourism-related products
and services and analysis of the effects of tourism in social and economic terms is included.

HM 906 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Property and Equipment Management

Maintenance and engineering requirements of hotels and restaurants are explored which includes the analysis of building energy conservation and utilities, building environment and rehabilitation, electrical and mechanical problems.

HM 907 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Operations

Current topics in facilities development and operations are discussed. Issues may include union-management relations, budgeting, forecasting trends, managerial considerations facing small business and entrepreneurs, franchising as well as methods of problem solving and strategies for producing organizational change.

HM 908 Advanced Topics in the Hospitality Industry:

Hospitality and Food Service Facilities Design

This course provides the analysis of the planning, design and layout of facilities including economic, aesthetic, and marketing factors as they relate to project development of
hotels and food service facilities. Research methodology, trend analysis, feasibility and other measurement tools are addressed.

HM 909 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry:
Convention and Banquet Management

The focus of this course is to study the organizing, arranging and operating of conventions and banquets. Discussion of client relations and professional demeanor of employees as key elements of securing and satisfying customers is included.

HM 910 Advanced Topics in Hospitality Management: Operations Analysis

This course targets practical problem-solving approaches for adapting to various operational and markets place changes in hotels and restaurants today. A variety of management tools including quantitative methodology will be addressed.

Mailing Piece Presentation

The questionnaires were accompanied by a cover letter written on New York City Technical College letterhead and signed by the evaluator. The cover letter provided each
respondent with information regarding the purpose of the study and the perceived relevance of the requested feedback.

Each questionnaire was mailed in a New York City Technical College envelope and addressed with a mailing label generated by the Faculty Computer Assistance Center. The questionnaires were collated with the cover letters, self-addressed stamped envelopes and a three-page description of the curriculum course offerings. The envelopes were sealed and automated postage was processed through the New York City Technical College Mailroom Services Center.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

On June 2, 1999, 277 questionnaires were sent to Hospitality Management alumni. Of the 277 sent, 43 (a less than desirable 15.5%) completed questionnaires were returned by July 2, 1999. In addition, 38 were returned unopened and stamped “attempted not known” by the postal service.

The demographic breakdown of the responding population is identified below.

YEAR OF GRADUATION:

1994  17%
1995  10%
1996  7%
1997  37%
1998  29%

100%

SEX:

Male    46%
Female  54%

100%
CURRENT POSITION OR INDUSTRY:

Lodging Operations 34%
Food and Beverage Operations 37%
Culinary/Chef 12%
Other 17%
100%

The individual "value rating" of each course was established on a likert scale (1 = value "none" and 5 = value "very high"). The Core Curriculum Upper Division Required course receiving the highest value rating (mean score of 4.6) was HM 911 “Hospitality Internship” followed by HM 702 “Hospitality Marketing Strategies” (mean score of 4.4)

The results for the Electives portion of the questionnaire may suggest that HM 907 “Advanced topics in the Lodging Industry: Operations” (mean score of 3.82) and HM 906 “Advanced Topics in Hospitality Management: Property and Equipment Management (mean score of 3.8) were the most valuable in terms of usefulness to career development and/or relevance to the respondent’s current position.
The third portion of the questionnaire was designed to solicit recommendations for suggested subject matter that was not a part of the curriculum content completed by the respondent. Approximately half of all questionnaires provided subject or course recommendations. The suggestions fell into two general areas: the first being technical or industry-specific skills, and secondly, interpersonal communication skills. The most prominent suggestion regarding technical or industry specific skills indicated the desire for "more advanced" and "industry-specific computer" courses and in reference to interpersonal skills, "public speaking skills" was recommended on several survey forms.

More than half of the respondents (66%) were graduates from the last two years (1997 and 1998) and the majority (83%) were employed in one of the three divisions identified on the questionnaire of the hospitality industry. Of the 17% the respondents who indicated their employment affiliation as "Other" only one offered elaboration and identified himself as "Police Officer."
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Continuous surveying of alumni is worthwhile as a part of the complete tool kit used to assess the value and relevancy of curriculum content. Careful planning, including methodology, instrument design, response enhancement strategies, effective data recording and analysis are essential to successful alumni surveys. The data received from alumni assessments must be carefully analyzed so that future tools may be designed to capture the most relevant and useful information possible.

Although there appears to be a significant opportunity for improved research methodology in future studies of alumni and curriculum assessment, this study has been of value through demonstrating as suggested by Pettit (1991) that “rarely will responses point to incontestable conclusions or specific directions for actions. Survey results are most effective when they prompt and inform decision makers, either by confirming or challenging previously held opinions of assessment results.” In addition, as suggested by Sengue (1995) feedback may provide
indications of trends or "patterns of change" which when captured and identified, may be instrumental to facilitating dynamic curriculum assessment discussion.

In her final version of the college's Strategic Plan that was transmitted to the City University of New York on September 16, 1998, then Acting President, Dr. Emilie Cozzi shared her vision of New York City Technical College in its second half-century. As the senior technical college of the City University of New York, she asserted that the New York City Technical College graduates "will be among the leaders" for the 21st century. The keys to accomplishing this mission included the continued offering of a "dynamic mix of programs" and in order to guarantee professional preparation, college curricula would be "constructed around career competencies, and carefully assessed to guarantee professional preparation."

As the new millennium is swiftly approaching, one strategy to facilitate achieving this goal is to incorporate effective methodology designed for Hospitality Management Program Alumni to participate in the curriculum assessment process.
Recommendations

From this study, it may be indicated that the most valuable offering in the New York City Technical College hospitality management curricula is with the required internship component. It is recommended for future study to attempt to validate this perception and to investigate and identify specifically, the attributes of what encompasses a valuable internship experience. Further, it is suggested for future study to investigate how educators can identify and then incorporate these attributes of value into the classroom environment.

Another primary recommendation gained from this study is regarding the research methodology process. Four key points to consider for future alumni and curriculum assessment research might include the following:

1. Conduct focus group sessions with alumni selected with specific demographic profiles.
2. Employ the Delphi technique to capture potential indications of trends - patterns of change -- with select alumni members who have key roles in the hospitality industry.
3. When using mailed survey instruments, incorporate a variety of tactics to enhance response. Some examples include: providing incentives (enclosing one dollar, a coupon, a token gift, etc.) making introductory telephone calls prior and as follow up reinforcement, sending postcards and second mailings of complete instrument package as reminders and to stress the importance of the study.

4. Capitalize on alumni events (reunion dinners, association meetings, etc.) as captive target market groups for the employment of assessment tools.
REFERENCES


Ewell, P. T. (1987) Assessment: Where are we? Change, Volume 19, Number 1, January/February


Iverson, K. (1989) Bringing guest service into the classroom. Hospitality and Tourism Educator


Pettit, J. (1991, summer) Listening to your alumni: One way to assess academic outcomes. *Association for Institutional Research* (AIR Report-41-91)


Umbriet, W.T. (1992, June) In search of hospitality Management curriculum relevance for the 1990’s *Hospitality & Tourism Educator*

May 27, 1999

Dear Hospitality Management Program Graduate:

I am seeking your assistance in providing feedback regarding the value of the hospitality management curriculum you have successfully completed.

As stated in the Hospitality Management Department’s Mission Statement, we “offer a comprehensive curriculum, which provides students with practical, marketable and technical skills.” Your perspective as a program alumnus is most desirable in assessing the value of the specific courses offered to our hospitality management students today.

It is vital that our curriculum continues to reflect the ever-changing needs and demands of the hospitality industry. Therefore, your viewpoint as an industry professional that has completed the Hospitality Management baccalaureate curriculum can provide us with a dynamic dual perspective, which I believe to be significant to effective curriculum assessment.

I would greatly appreciate your taking the time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to me in the postage pre-paid envelope I have provided for you.

In closing, I would like to once again stress how very important your input is; you are in a unique position because of your education and professional experience to directly affect the value of the curriculum we offer.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this assessment, please feel free to call me at 718-260-5642.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

James R. Reid
Instructor, Hospitality Management Department

PLEASE NOTE: THE QUESTIONNAIRE HAS TWO SIDES.
PART ONE: CORE CURRICULUM

UPPER DIVISION REQUIRED COURSES

DIRECTIONS: On a scale of 1 through 5 (1 = no value and 5 = very high value) indicate the degree of value each course has been in terms of usefulness to your career development and/or relevance to meeting the demands of your current position. A current description of each course has been provided.

The courses below were a part of your upper division required curriculum:

VALUE RATING (circle appropriate number)
None Low Medium High Very High
1 2 3 4 5

HM 501 Hospitality Management Process
1 2 3 4 5

HM 502 Hospitality Management Computer Applications
1 2 3 4 5

HM 503 Advanced Culinary Arts
1 2 3 4 5

HM 601 Hospitality Management of Legal Environment
1 2 3 4 5

HM 602 Hospitality Management of Accounting and Finance
1 2 3 4 5

HM 701 Hospitality Management of Human Resources
1 2 3 4 5

HM 702 Hospitality Marketing Strategies
1 2 3 4 5

HM 801 Hospitality Management Research Seminar
1 2 3 4 5

HM 911.2 Hospitality Internship
1 2 3 4 5

PART TWO: ELECTIVES

DIRECTIONS: Using the same VALUE RATING SCALE as above, indicate the degree of value each course from the HM 900 series “Electives Advanced Topics” has been to you in terms of usefulness to your career development and/or relevance to meeting the demands of your current position. A current description of each course has been provided. Please rate only those courses you completed.

HM 901 Advanced Topics in Pastry Arts: Deluxe Desserts
1 2 3 4 5

HM 902 Advanced Topics in Pastry Arts: Patisserie/Confectionery Arts
1 2 3 4 5

HM 903 Advanced Topics in Culinary Arts: Garde Manger
1 2 3 4 5

HM 904 Advanced Topics in Culinary Arts: Culinary Nutrition for Food Service Professionals
1 2 3 4 5

HM 905 Advanced Topics in Travel and Tourism
1 2 3 4 5

HM 906 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Property and Equipment Management
1 2 3 4 5

HM 907 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Operations
1 2 3 4 5

HM 908 Advanced Topics in the Hospitality Industry: Hospitality and Foodservice Facilities Design
1 2 3 4 5

HM 909 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Convention and Banquet Management
1 2 3 4 5

HM 910 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Operations Analysis
1 2 3 4 5

PART THREE: Recommendations

DIRECTIONS: In the space provided, please indicate any subject matter that was NOT a part of either your required curriculum or the elective choices that were available to you that you would recommend to the hospitality department for future consideration of curriculum and specific course offerings:

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

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PART FOUR: DEMOGRAPHICS

DIRECTIONS: Please provide the following demographic information:

Year of graduation: 199

Sex: 

Please select one choice ("X") which best reflects your current position or industry:

Lodging Operations: 

Food and Beverage Operations: 

Culinary/Chef: 

OTHER (Please indicate below):

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND FEEDBACK!
Hospitality Management Upper Level Required Course Descriptions

HM 501 Hospitality Management Process

This course examines the role of management in the hospitality industry. Investigation of the basic managerial functions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Exploration of formal organizations and their nature, internal structure, goals and relationships to the environment as well as policy formulation, productivity analysis and scheduling.

HM 502 Hospitality Management Computer Applications

This course explores the personal computer as a managerial and productivity tool in the hospitality industry. A review of concepts of integrated data management, while giving the students the opportunity to practice and strengthen previously acquired skills by completing projects of their own design. Students create customer databases, use word processing skills to create market instruments, and mail merge them. Discussion of the use of spreadsheet modeling techniques, recipe development and nutritional analysis tools. A variety of commercial software available for student use.

HM 503 Advanced Culinary Arts

Continued development of the skills and concepts in previous courses in culinary arts, giving students the opportunity to plan and execute basic techniques appropriate to each station of the kitchen. The students rotate through the complete menu preparations for dining room service. Students develop a menu with emphasis on balance, texture, color, aroma, flavor and presentation. Emphasis on cost factors as students research, plan, produce and evaluate the menu under the guidance of the instructor. Professional uniform, texts and culinary tools are required as prescribed by the Department of Hospitality Management.

HM 601 Hospitality Management of Legal Environment

This course explores the legal implications of acts by hotel keeper, employees, guests and visitors. Review of the development of legal rights of persons to travel and have access to public accommodations. The course acquaints the students with the rights and duties of the hotel keeper and restaurateur so that they may act with confidence in common, everyday situations that may arise and avoid situations that may give rise to liability.

HM 602 Hospitality Management of Accounting and Finance

The needs of management and the application of accounting concepts to managerial and financial decision making, methods and planning, analysis of financial statements, preparing operating and capital budget analysis, principles and techniques for managing cash reserves and other current management accounting and financial management issues.

HM 701 Hospitality Management of Human Resources

This course gives students a conceptual background for dealing with human resources in the hospitality industry. It presents an historical review of the concept of management of human resources and discusses the major factors that managers need to understand and use when dealing with the workforce. These major areas of interest include: motivation, communication, goal setting, leadership, training, fair employment practices, union relations.
HM 702 Hospitality Management Marketing Strategies

Examines the relationships among the various components of the hospitality industry and the markets it serves. Study of corporate mission, corporate goals and objectives, techniques of analyzing businesses, strategy formulation and implementation. Explores segmentation and competition from the perspectives of psychological motives and sociological trends.

HM 801 Hospitality Research Seminar

Discussion of the hospitality management concepts, theory and procedures needed to develop information and make decisions relevant to current industry problems, using research and review of literature with class analysis and discussion. Review of computer searching with data bases. The seminar stresses an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving and policy development for issues facing hospitality managers. Students research and write an investigative report on a current industry problem.

Hospitality Management Upper Level Elective Course Descriptions

HM 901 Advanced Topics in Pastry Arts: Deluxe Desserts

Contemporary desserts include zuppa inglese, tira mi su, gateau St. Honore, hot soufflés, sorbets and granites, mousses, floating islands, sauces, cheese cakes, dacquoise, fruit bands, meringue desserts, dobos torte, biscuit glacé and other a la carte desserts. This course serves a dining room when appropriate. Proper emphasis is given to safety and sanitation. Professional uniform, texts and culinary tools are required as prescribed by the Department of Hospitality Management.

HM 902 Advanced Topics in Pastry Arts: Patissière/Confectionery Arts

This is an advanced course based on practical application of techniques for production of nougat, pastillage, caramel, chocolate work, including truffles, chocolate covered fruit, molds, marzipan, candied fruit, glace, spun sugar, Easter eggs, royal icing, peppermints, and a variety of birthday, wedding and specialty cakes, cocoa and food color paintings for students who have artistic abilities. Some of this work may be used for the International Hotel/Motel and Restaurant Show if approved by the instructor. Permission of the instructor is required. Professional uniform, texts and culinary tools are required as prescribed by the Department of Hospitality Management.

HM 903 Advanced Topics in Culinary Arts: Garde Manger

A course offered in the art of Garde Manger for advanced culinary students. Cold buffet taught in conjunction with classical menu terminology. A study of the techniques include aspic, chaud-froid, en croute and various garnitures. Demonstration of hot and cold classical hors d’oeuvre and canapés, galantines, patés, timbales and smoked items in the development of buffet presentation. Consideration of design, color and style as factors in the final presentations. Permission of the instructor is required. Professional uniform, texts and culinary tools are required as prescribed by the Department of Hospitality Management.

HM 904 Advanced Topics in Culinary Arts: Culinary Nutrition for Food Service Professionals

Explores the relationship of food to health from the perspective of the culinary professional. Discussion of the basics of nutrition, including reference to carbohydrates, proteins, fats and oils, vitamins and minerals with the focus on developing skills necessary to the professional chef. Includes a survey of food in different cultures and their impact on American gastronomy.
HM 905 Advanced Topics in Travel and Tourism

This course provides an introduction to the structure and supply of domestic and foreign tourism, including transportation, accommodations, entertainment. An examination of consumer demand for tourism-related products and services and analysis of the effects of tourism in social and economic terms.

HM 906 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Property and Equipment Management

Maintenance and engineering requirements of hotels and restaurants. Analysis of building energy conservation and utilities, building environment and rehabilitation, electrical and mechanical problems.

HM 907 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Operations

Discussion of current topics in facilities development and operations. These may include union-management relations, budgeting and forecasting trends, managerial considerations facing small business and entrepreneurs; franchising in the lodging industry, analysis of the effects of tourism in social economic terms, as well as methods for problem solving and strategies for producing organizational change.

HM 908 Advanced Topics in the Hospitality Industry: Hospitality and Food Service Facilities Design

An analysis of the planning, design and layout of facilities, including economic, aesthetic and marketing factors as they relate to project development of hotels and food service facilities. Focus on site analysis, conceptual and space planning, design principles, and the interpretation of architectural drawings. This course addresses the nature of markets, research methodology, trend projection, feasibility, supply and demand evaluation and financing for project development.

HM 909 Advanced Topics in the Lodging Industry: Convention and Banquet Management

A study of organizing, arranging and operating conventions and banquets. Discussion of client relations and professional demeanor of employees as key elements of securing and satisfying customers. On-site visitations and participation in conventions or other special functions are included, as appropriate.

HM 910 Advanced Topics in Hospitality Management: Operations Analysis

A practical problem-solving approach to the ongoing and various changes occurring in an operating restaurant and/or hotel, using the tools of management, marketing, accounting and quantitative methods.

HM 911 Hospitality Internship

Work experience in the hospitality field, defined as full-time, supervised paid employment. Each student is responsible for getting and keeping an appropriate job for the required period: a minimum of eight weeks. Students must attend two seminars - one before starting the job and one at the end of the term. Summary and evaluation reports are required.