

An analysis of leading hospitality programs located outside the College of Business

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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate hospitality management programs throughout the United States take on a variety of forms based upon university structure, curriculum, location, and specialization. Hospitality programs located outside of AACSB accreditation are very different from those in AACSB schools in curriculum, extra-curricular activities and accreditation. Data collected for the 2009-10 academic year show the similarities in curriculum, extra-curricular activities and accreditation in the leading programs outside of AACSB requirements. Established hospitality programs that are not constrained by AACSB requirements will now have a benchmark for comparing their program and colleges that are starting a hospitality program will have a starting point for their program development.

Keywords: *Undergraduate Curriculum, AACSB, Non-Business Programs, Hospitality Curriculum, Student Organizations.*

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality programs are structured as an independent hospitality college/school or are combined with other programs of study. When combined with other programs, they are often found with or within the college of business, human science, nutrition, sports management and recreation. Hospitality programs that are found as a major within colleges of business are typically accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). AACSB curriculum requirements restrict the number of credits a hospitality student can take within the business college as well as within the major while hospitality programs outside of the college of business have a lot more flexibility in their major. The curriculum and skills taught by hospitality programs have been studied in detail while additional studies separate out AACSB hospitality programs for their similarities, however there is no research that separates and studies only non-AACSB schools.

Industry needs have also been instrumental in the development of hospitality curriculums and have inspired hospitality programs to develop affiliations with hotel and restaurant companies and professional organizations such as the PGA (Professional Golf Association) and the CMAA (Club Managers Association of America). These affiliations resulted in the development of concentrations and specialized majors within the curriculums of the various programs. Geographical factors, in particular in the casino, resort, and tourism areas have influenced the establishments of related specializations in hospitality management, in various

regions due to the needs of the local economy. Additionally, minors and certificate programs were developed to further satisfy industry demands

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to identify commonalities in leading hospitality programs not located in AACSB colleges of business. In particular the study will determine if a common core curriculum of hospitality courses is required and if a common set of extracurricular opportunities are available. A further objective is to identify if traditional business courses in Marketing, Management and Finance are offered through the college of business or if they are offered with industry specific examples by the hospitality program as Hospitality Marketing, Hospitality Management and Hospitality Finance. This research adds to the existing literature because existing studies have examined similarities in AACSB schools however there has not been a study of non-AACSB schools. Newly created hospitality programs and established hospitality programs can use these results as a benchmark for curriculum and extracurricular activities offered by their program.

Literature Review

Most of the literature involving hospitality curriculum focuses on the skills that need to be taught rather than the individual courses that will fulfill the needs of the industry. The effectiveness of hospitality-education curricula was surveyed by Lefever and Withiam (1998) while Nelson and Dopson (2001) determined that leadership and controlling costs were the most important skills and abilities for graduates entering hotel management positions. Writing was identified as an essential skill to be stressed in hospitality and tourism classes (O'Halloran & Deale, 2004) and interpersonal skills, problem-solving and self-management were identified as the most important skill groups for graduates entering the hospitality industry by Raybould and Wilkins (2006).

Other literature looks at hospitality curriculums and focuses on courses and concentrations rather than skills that should be taught. Casada (2003) suggests that foreign languages should be included in hospitality program curriculum to meet the needs of the industry while Yuan (2006) adds that students need to learn foreign languages in order to remain competitive in a global environment. Deale, Nichols and Jacquez (2009) state that sustainability should be incorporated into hospitality curriculum if hospitality education is to remain current with industry trends.

A large body of research on Hospitality and Tourism program curriculum examines schools and programs housed within Colleges of Business accredited by the AACSB. Ittig (1989) stated that hospitality programs in AACSB colleges have coursework that is "management/academic" in nature rather than hands-on while Gursoy and Swanger (2004) argued that AACSB restrictions limit course offerings and the numbers of credits these schools are able to offer in the hospitality disciplines. The AACSB requires that 50% of the course work must be outside of the college of business, which then limits the number of credits that are necessary to fulfill the core "management/academic" requirements and hospitality major requirements. In other research, Chathoth & Sharma, 2007 analyzed the core curricula of hospitality programs without concern for AACSB requirements. There is no research on the

curriculum at non-AACSB schools even though most hospitality programs do not have the AACSB restricting their curriculum. No study has previously looked at this segment of schools to see if there are similarities in the required courses or if a common core of courses exists.

Method

Undergraduate hospitality programs have been ranked by many authors (Kent, Lian, Khan, & Anene, 1993, Gould, & Bojanic 2002, Brizek, & Khan, 2002, Severt, Tesone, Bottroff, & Carpenter, 2009) and have provided a background for leading programs. All of the programs that appeared in Kent, et al. (1993), Gould and Bojanic (2002), Brizek and Khan (2002) and Severt, et al. (2009) were combined to create a list of the top 32 undergraduate hospitality programs. The list was then analyzed and the 6 schools that appeared in only one ranking were eliminated from the study to bring the total to 26 schools. A school that appeared in only one ranking may have been included in an author's ranking because of an affiliation with that school or members of that school's faculty. This bias was eliminated and only schools appearing in multiple rankings were included. Of the remaining 26 schools, 6 more schools (Florida State, Massachusetts, Denver, New Hampshire, Virginia Tech and Washington State) were eliminated as they were categorized as AACSB business programs. Eliminating the AACSB schools brings the total number of Non-AACSB schools in the study down to 20.

The remaining 20 non-AACSB schools were examined and evaluated based upon the information available for the 2009-10 academic year on the institution's website. Course offerings were reviewed and analyzed for subject matter relevance. Courses were coded according to similarity of subject matter, introductory or advanced, hospitality or "business", and required or elective. Courses offered and listed as hospitality classes were coded and listed separately from similar content classes offered by other departments.

Demographic information for the hospitality programs was also collected and examined for similarities among the leading programs. The information collected included where the program resided within the university structure, and the highest degree offered. Information concerning involvement with the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) and the Professional Golf Management (PGA) Golf Management University Program was collected from the websites of these two organizations. ACPHA reviews education standards, curriculum, and goals of two year and four year schools and is the sole accreditation body for hospitality programs. The PGA Golf Management University Program offers future PGA Professionals a college curriculum at 20 accredited universities. Although curriculum has been the focus of comparing hospitality programs, extra-curricular activities have been known to increase student learning and personal development (Astin, 1984). Information for 2 student organizations, the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) and Eta Sigma Delta (ESD), were also collected from the websites of these organizations.

Results

The findings indicate that an independent structure and programs housed within Human Science academic units are the most prevalent method for housing the Non-AACSB programs. Of the top 20 ranked hospitality programs 8 are independent colleges or schools 7 are in a department that has Human Science components or programs and 3 of the ranked programs are

housed in a College of Business but are not required to take the classes in the business core. There is one program in a College of Family and Consumer Sciences, and one program is combined with Sports Management. It appears that the leading programs offer bachelor's level courses while also offering masters and doctoral programs. Of the 20 Non-AACSB programs 9 offer a Doctorate in Hospitality, 9 offer a Master's as the highest degree and 2 schools offer only an undergraduate degree.

The authors categorized degree credit requirements at non-AACSB schools by General Education, Hospitality Major, Hospitality Concentration, Hospitality Electives, Degree, General Electives and Total Credit Hours. On average, 122.8 credit hours are required in the Non-AACSB curriculums with 39.9 credits of general education, 79.5 credit hours for the major and 3.4 hours of electives. Of the courses offered in the major, a total of 35 courses were required. Although many similarities existed, 7 were found in fewer than three programs

In the area of accreditations and extracurricular student organizations, 54 schools are accredited by ACPHA with both two year and four year institutions in this total, however only 8 of the 20 leading schools analyzed in this study were accredited by ACPHA. ("All ACPHA Accredited Schools," 2010). There are 20 universities currently accredited by The PGA of America for their PGA Golf Management University Program, however only 3 of the 20 Non-AACSB programs in this study offer the PGA/PGM program ("Accredited PGM Universities," 2010). Student organizations a school might consider include the Eta Sigma Delta (ESD) fraternity and the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA). Of the 20 non-AACSB schools analyzed, 16 have ESD chapters ("ESD Active Chapters," 2010) and 17 have CMAA chapters ("CMAA Student Links," 2010).

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