

AN ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS OF THE
HOSPITALITY PROGRAM AT
NICOLET AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

By
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ABSTRACT

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HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT AT NICOLET
AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

(Title)

Vocational Technical and Adult Education Dr. Joe Benkowski March, 2001
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(Name of Style of Manual Used in this Study)

The purpose of this study was to conduct a needs assessment for a hospitality and tourism program at Nicolet Area Technical College. The study was performed to assist the college in assessing the future of an entire program.

The literature review looked at hospitality and tourism in the economy, a variety of other hospitality and tourism program offerings, changing curriculum within other programs and the former program offered at Nicolet Area Technical College. This literature assisted in the development of the survey questionnaire and focus group session.

The data collected points to several ways that NATC could offer a hospitality program in their programming lineup. As noted in the methodology, fifty questionnaires were sent to business owners in NATC's district. A total of thirty-three questionnaires (66%) were returned to the researcher.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Hospitality and tourism is an industry that is vital to the economy of the United States. It is also increasing in importance because of “the growth of tourism is a phenomenon, the development of the tourism industry, and the emergence of tourism as a profession” (Schulman 1994). These factors show the importance of tourism to the economy. Many components make up the hospitality and tourism industry. The industry includes lodging, foodservice, institutional facilities, travel, and recreation (Campbell 1999). According to the American Hotel and Motel Association, the United States boasts a \$80 billion lodging industry. The U.S. Travel Data Center reports that \$519 billion was generated by domestic travel and tourism in 1999. They also reported that travel and tourism generated an estimated 7.8 million jobs for Americans. Hospitality is an important component of our National economy.

Hospitality and tourism are also important to the State of Wisconsin. According to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism (Wisconsin Department of Tourism Newsletter, 1997) “Travel and Tourism was a big player in the state’s economy last year”. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism estimated total annual tourism expenditures for the 1998 period at \$7,654,496,000. That is an increase of 12.6% over the 1997 period. The total impact on full-time employment was 229,510 jobs.

Tourism is a top employer as an industry in Northern Wisconsin. According to the State of Wisconsin, in Lincoln, Forrest, Vilas, Oneida and Iron counties, there were 8013 employed and \$1,019,901,875 in expenditures attributed to tourism. Hospitality is critical to the economy of this area and supplies various employment opportunities. One

reason the hospitality industry is a great place to plan a career as pointed out by Solomon (1993), "Hospitality comes about as close to being recession-proof as any industry you can possibly imagine. Unlike practically every other industry, the whole hospitality/tourism/travel arena has continued to grow and prosper through both good and bad times." Hospitality produces great economic impacts in the State of Wisconsin.

There are many hospitality programs offered at technical colleges and universities across the country. The number of four-year hospitality programs has grown significantly from the mid-seventies, increasing from 40 to 170 programs according to Neis (1992). There are six hospitality-related programs currently being offered throughout Wisconsin Technical College System. This increase of possible schools to attend may create a decline in students attending any particular institution and also increases the need for attracting students. According to Phil McGuirk, the Hospitality and Tourism Program at UW-Stout has decreased in enrollment over past years. The researcher must look at other programs to see how enrollments in hospitality programs have been affected. There is an indication that the increase in number of available hospitality programs leads to decrease of enrollments in particular programs. Nationally, "The 1990s have not been the best of times for HRI programs, as the escalating enrollments and fat budgets of the 1980s came to an abrupt halt. This occurred for several reasons: a drop in traditional college-age students, a poor economic climate, and severe cutbacks in the lodging industry, and the effect on hospitality programs was dramatic." (Riegel and Umbreit, 1995).

According to Barrett, Groves and Shanklin (1995), there are many factors that are attributed to the success of a program. They have also reported that "Academic advising

is critical to the success of a hospitality management program.” There are many benefits to successful academic advising. One great benefit is a more successful academic program. While there has been an increase in hospitality programs, enrollments have been mixed.

Another factor created by the dramatic increase in the number of schools is a need to reformat the curriculum to better meet the needs of students and businesses. As pointed out by Sakiey (1995), “hospitality programs must refocus and reorient their curricula or face the fate of such specialized programs as those in insurance, banking, and transportation, which have been absorbed into general business curricula”. This fate is shown to be a positive focus for some hospitality programs. A recent study shows (Ashley, et al.) that across the country hospitality programs are reassessing what they are doing, why they are doing what they are doing, and how they should go about doing it. This shows the diversity many programs need to properly prepare students for a career in this industry. Hospitality programs must keep current to survive and to keep attracting students. Riegal and Umbreit (1995) report that "it's evident that many programs will have to regroup or go out of business altogether". According to a quote from Zuber (1997) “hospitality programs focus their business courses...on restaurant operations” which may be highly beneficial to graduates of the program. The Hospitality and tourism programs must be looked at to make sure they are current enough to meet the needs of the students and businesses.

Nicolet Area Technical College (NATC) serves Oneida, Vilas, Forrest, and parts of both Iron and Lincoln counties in Northern Wisconsin. The campus is located on Lake Julia in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Nicolet Area Technical College currently has

approximately 1200 students enrolled in 30 programs, community interest and personal enrichment courses, and also offers a university transfer program. Programs offered include associate degree programs, technical diplomas, technical certificates and apprenticeship programs.

Between 1973 and 1996, there was a Hospitality Management Program offered at Nicolet Area Technical College. There were no new students allowed to enroll in the program after 1996, although students already enrolled were allowed to continue in the program. The final student enrolled in the program graduated in May 2000. The Vice President of Instruction and the Program Coordinator made the final decision to suspend the program in 1996. Up until this time, enrollment in the program was declining. In the 1988-1989 school year there were 16.02 Full Time Equivalent's (FTE's); in the 1989-1990 school year there were 12.70 FTE's; in the 1990-1991 school year there were 10.10 FTE's; in the 1991-1992 there were 10.2 FTE's and in the 1992-1993 school year there were 9.6 FTE's in the hospitality management program. All of the reasons for dropping this program were not disclosed. It currently is not being offered as a program and will be discontinued after three years from the date that the state was notified of its suspension. Once it is discontinued, it is extremely difficult to offer the classes in the future. Nicolet Area Technical College would have to go through the state and have the courses and associate degree approved, which is a time-consuming and costly process. With the favorable economic impact of hospitality and tourism in the Nicolet district, a justification of a hospitality program is needed.

Problem Statement

During the years of 1973 until 1997 there was an associate degree program in Hospitality Management offered at Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhineland, Wisconsin. There is reason to assess the need for a Hospitality Management Program at Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhineland, Wisconsin. The entire program was put on hold in 1997, but was not officially put on suspension until the year 2000. It can remain suspended for a time period of three years before it would be permanently dropped. To better understand future needs of the program, the deactivation process must be looked at. Additionally, the needs will be assessed by determining market potential, obtaining alumni feedback, which represents potential employers and identifying student interest in the program. This research can be used by administration at Nicolet Area Technical College to assist in the decision making process that will need to take place regarding the future of this program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the need for a Hospitality Program at Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhineland, Wisconsin. The research should add to the data collected by Nicolet Area Technical College when the decision was made to cut the Hospitality Program. This study may demonstrate the need for reinstatement of the hospitality program in some format.

Research Questions

This study will answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of interest in a hospitality management program in the NATC region?

2. What are the benefits of the hospitality management program to businesses in the area?
3. Is there interest in a hospitality management program being offered at NATC?
4. Is there a difference in perception of need according to industry segments?
5. Should the discontinued program take on a new focus?

Justification for the Study

The significance of this study is that it will help to decide the future of an entire program at Nicolet Area Technical College. Kyle Gruening, former Hospitality Coordinator, feels the program is very valuable to the Northwoods and would like to see the needs assessed before it is permanently discontinued at NATC. Data from the research may assist the administration to make a decision regarding how the program may serve the public and businesses in Northern Wisconsin. The research will assess the need for the hospitality management program to best serve the students and businesses. The research will also help determine the direction the hospitality program might focus on if reinstated. Needs for hospitality management program will be identified. Data from this study may also contribute to the general body of hospitality knowledge. This study can be used by other two-year colleges for their program justification.

Limitations of the Study

1. The survey instrument was designed by the researcher.
2. Past surveys have not had a high response rate.
3. Time is a factor because the study must be completed by 2003 or the program will automatically be deactivated.

4. Surveys are not of a truly random nature.

Definition of Terms

Suspend. When a program decides to no longer accept students into a program. The District will maintain an approved program curriculum and course files and allow enrolled

students to complete the program (WTCSB Educational Services Manual 1/95).

Program Discontinuance. A district with an approved program that is ready to formally discontinue the program. (WTCSB Educational Services Manual 1/95).

Community interest and personal enrichment courses. Courses, seminars, workshops, lectures and discussion groups in non-vocational subjects available to meet the needs of life long learners. (NATC)

University transfer studies. Courses equal to those found in the first two years of programs offered by four-year colleges and universities. (NATC)

Associate degree. Prepare people to enter or advance in a technical or mid-management level occupation. Require between 64 and 72 semester credits (NATC.)

Technical certificate. Provide training and skills updating in specialized fields. (NATC)

Technical diploma. Preparation for entering, remaining, or advancing in a skilled craft or semi-skilled job. Range in length from one semester to two years. (NATC)

Apprenticeship. Related training for apprentices indentured through the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations. (NATC)

Methodology

This study will use exploratory and interpretive research. This study will involve research using a survey of employers within the Nicolet Area Technical College District. Research will also involve a focus group with business owners to look at the need for graduates of a hospitality management program.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Overview

This chapter will examine relevant literature concerning the need for hospitality programs. The chapter will investigate hospitality programs and how they are serving the needs of its students and employers. It will also look at literature pertaining to the Wisconsin Technical College System. This chapter will also look at literature showing economic impacts of hospitality and tourism to the United States, Wisconsin and the district that Nicolet Area Technical College serves. Finally, literature of past studies on hospitality programs will be reviewed. This literature will help determine needs of a hospitality management program at Nicolet Area Technical College (NATC).

Hospitality Program Literature

Data shows that the number of hospitality programs offered at campuses across the country has increased. The number of four-year hospitality administration programs has grown significantly since the mid-seventies, increasing from 40 to 170 programs (Nies & Tarlton, 1992). As of 1992, there were over 700 two-year programs being offered nationwide. The explosion in numbers of programs creates an increasingly competitive market to attract students. This may require administration to look closely at their programs to decide if they are current enough to meet the needs of students and businesses. With the proliferation of U.S. hospitality education programs, dwindling institutional resources to support these programs, and decreasing enrollments of traditional students, it's evident

that many programs will have to regroup or go out of business altogether (Riegal & Umbreit, 1995). Research shows that the 1990s have been very difficult for success in hospitality programs. Many programs were discontinued, such as the program at NATC, Oregon State, and Ohio State University. Ohio State was able to reopen their hospitality program due to restructuring and changing their emphasis within the program. With the growth of tourism worldwide, there is an increasing need for education (Gunn, 1997).

It is debated where the focus of hospitality programs should be, but a goal for any program is to create more educated employees for businesses. Ashley & Bach, (1995) found that industry leaders are looking for graduates with general management skills and that is a reason for many curricula changes. The University of Central Florida's hospitality management program is now part of their business administration department, a trend emerging for many hospitality programs. Many restaurant owners are reported to be looking at business school graduates because they obtain skills required to run a business (Zuber, 1997).

Sakiey, (1995) reports that in two-year degree programs, "A review of recent hospitality management literature on the subject of curriculum development revealed that the majority of studies deal with establishing competencies needed by graduates who are perceived to be well qualified in the area of hospitality management."

Wisconsin Technical System

A 1998-99 study conducted by the Wisconsin Technical College System Board surveyed graduates about their reasons for attending a technical college. Results showed that 46 percent said it was to prepare to obtain employment, while twenty percent said it was to make a career change, thirteen percent said it was to improve existing job skills

and eight percent are preparing to continue their education. Remaining five percent attended for personal interest and eight percent cited other or miscellaneous reasons. This survey also showed that statewide, graduates from two-year associate degree hospitality and tourism management programs reported a 100% employment level. This data may be used for recruitment to a hospitality program.

The Wisconsin Technical College System Board is responsible for policy and procedure making decisions effecting programs offered at Nicolet Area Technical College. According to the Educational Services Manual (1/95) there are procedures for suspending a program. “Districts shall suspend an approved program when it decides to no longer accept students into the program. The district will maintain an approved program curriculum and course files and allow enrolled students to complete the program. The manual also says that the district must notify the state of their intent to suspend and notify them also of the intent to reactivate,” according to WTCSB. Programs may be suspended for a maximum of three years before being automatically discontinued. Once a program has been discontinued, it must go through State Board actions to be activated. According to Ann Tegan, the Director of Academic Advising, Records and Registration at Nicolet Area Technical College, “ To reactivate a program is a lot of paperwork, studies, time, and cost. If a program is going to be brought out of suspension, it is well worth it to do so before it becomes a discontinued program, because at that time it only takes one form, to reactivate.”

This is what was officially done to the Hospitality Program at Nicolet Area Technical College in 2000, when the paperwork was officially filed to suspend the program. The official paperwork was not completed until this time, although students were no longer

allowed to enroll in the program since 1996. The last student graduated from the program in December 1999. The program may stay in suspension until 2003, before it is removed from Nicolet Area Technical Colleges' available program offerings.

Economic Impact of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

The hospitality and tourism are major contributors to the economy of the United States. "The multi-billion dollar plus a year hospitality industry includes lodging, food service, institutional facilities and travel and recreation (Campbell, 1999). According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), the economic impact of travel in the U.S. in 1999 is \$539.6 Billion. It also reports generating an estimated 7.8 million jobs for Americans, which is the second largest private employer. Another positive factor for the industry is the increase in hourly earnings. Hourly wages have grown faster than most other industries in the past 10 years, according to TIA. The outlook for the future of tourism is very favorable. "Unlike practically every other industry, the whole hospitality/tourism/travel arena has continued to grow and prosper through both good and bad times"(Solomon, 1993). It is assumed that where there is business, there are jobs created.

Wisconsin also has a great economic impact from travel and tourism. It is one of the top employers in the state. There were 229,510 jobs attributed to tourism in the State of Wisconsin in 1998 and an estimated 285,000-fulltime jobs generated from tourism spending in 2001. Total estimated total annual tourism expenditures for the 1998 period are \$7,654,496,000, according to Wisconsin Department of Tourism. This is an increase of 12.6% from 1997. Research shows that there is a great economic impact to the area

served by NATC's district, as well. There were 8013 jobs created in the tourism industry and \$1,019,901,875 in expenditures reported (Wisconsin Department of Tourism).

Past Hospitality Program Studies

There have been many studies of hospitality education in recent years (1992). Topics looked at include standards and criteria for employment and also faculty requirements. Research reflects the emergence of tourism as a major sector of the global economy (Faulkner & Goeldner, 1998). A study of Seattle's program learned that instructional technology could boost faculty productivity and enhances effectiveness (Riegel & Unbreit, 1995). It also showed that continued-education offerings of the programs helped to boost it financially. With the great growth of tourism worldwide, educational and training programs have expanded to some extent, but there are many voids in the curricula that do not meet the needs of the comprehensive scope of tourism (Gunn, 1998). One study shows the need for tourism curricula in high schools is increasing, and it is rare to find in high schools at this point. Research shows a dire need for expanding the scope of programs and curricula in the field of tourism (Gunn, 1998). Gunn's study concluded that each institution should tailor their own program to their needs. It is assumed that those needs are of the businesses that will be employing those students.

Another study focuses on academic advising and how it is a critical factor in the success of a hospitality management program. It shows that successful academic advising will increase results in student retention and satisfaction of their college experience, improve grades, and help students to make better career, and educational decisions (Barrett, Groves & Shanklin, 1995). These are factors that will improve retention and recruitment of students to a hospitality management program. One-on-one student

advising is shown to have positive effects on students. It is assumed that positive effects for students will increase success to the program in which they are enrolled.

One trait required for employment success in the hospitality industry, is to develop and reinforce the skills necessary to maintain suitable employment for all employees recognized by Campbell (2000). One study reports that many people entering the workforce do not have the skills needed by industry. It may be assumed that they could gain these skills in a hospitality management program. Zuber (1997) shows that “many hospitality programs say they have experienced over the last several years an increase in recruiting efforts from foodservice companies.”

Research also shows that a contributing factor to the success of hospitality programs is the use of advisory committees. Bloom(1997) showed that advisory committee members perform better when their advice is implemented and they received credit for their contributions. Members must be chosen wisely so that their contributions can be the greatest.

Chapter Three

Research Design

Research reflects the emergence of tourism as a major sector of the global economy (Faulkner & Goeldner, 1998). Research also shows a dire need for expanding the scope of programs and curricula in the field of tourism (Gunn, 1998). This research has been done to help determine if there is a need to continue the hospitality program at Nicolet Area Technical College in any form.

The researcher will look to the employers to try to understand how a hospitality and tourism program can benefit them. The researcher will also look at how employees can be trained to better fill the gap in skills that are needed by these organizations. A study of Seattle's program learned that instructional technology could boost faculty productivity and enhances effectiveness (Riegel & Unbreit, 1995). It also showed that continued-education offerings of the programs helped to boost it financially. The researcher will try to understand how to meet the needs of the employers within the district in hospitality and tourism related organizations.

The methods and procedures used in this needs assessment of a hospitality program at Nicolet Area Technical College (NATC) are explained in this chapter. This chapter will discuss the research design, sample selection, instrumentation, procedures followed, and method of analysis.

Research Design

This study will use exploratory and interpretive research. This study will involve research using a survey of prospective employers.

The researcher will explore the opinions of hospitality business owners and managers about the hospitality program. A written survey with a cover letter (Appendix A) was developed to contact business operators and question them regarding how they perceive needs for the program.

Complete interviews with business owners or managers in a focus group to assess their needs of a hospitality program and its graduates will be done. This focus group comprised of business owners and managers in the hospitality industry will look at the need for graduates of a hospitality management program. This focus group (Appendix D) will look at desired skills of a graduate for different business types and job opportunities available within the NATC district.

The survey will be analyzed, and the findings will be reported to NATC staff in charge of programs. The results will also be available to employers in the district. Sixty-six percent of the surveys were returned.

Sample Selection

The survey (Appendix B) was taken by hospitality businesses within the NATC district. A list of businesses was developed from the area chamber of commerce listings, phone books and the Internet. Each business on the list will be surveyed using U.S. mail for distribution.

A focus group (Appendix D) was constructed of business owners and managers from the hospitality industry. This will be non-random, as only those willing to come to a meeting of the focus group will be represented. Members of the area business community will make up this focus group. This convenience sample would allow only attendees to be part of the focus group.

The results from the focus group and mailed surveys will be analyzed and shared with NATC administration.

Population

The population of the focus group consists of those business members willing to come to a meeting. There were fifteen area people invited, with five showing up.

The population of the survey consists of hospitality businesses in the district. The researcher picked fifty of the larger employers in the district.

Instrumentation

. A second mailing was not needed as the response rate was high. The survey questions assessed the importance of the degree alumni to the and covered the following topics:

- Employer provided professional development;
- Approximate annual earnings of hospitality employees;
- Skills found to be valued by employers in a hospitality management employee;
- Employers that have hired a graduate of NATC's hospitality program;
- Skill level of graduates of the hospitality program at NATC;
- Reputation of NATC's hospitality program;
- Needs being met at hospitality organizations in the area by the program graduates;
- Curriculum needs of employers;
- Benefits of hiring a graduate from NATC's program;
- Size of area employers;
- Current skill levels of employees in hospitality operations;
- Perception of need for the program at NATC;

- Use of a hospitality program offerings by employers; and
- Business volume change in past three years

Second, a questionnaire was developed to help facilitate the focus group. The questions were developed prior to the meeting to help focus on the following areas:

- Degrees required from job candidates;
- Hiring preferences given to candidates with degrees;
- Type of degree with the most importance to employers;
- Perception of past employees with a degree;
- Satisfaction level of current employees;
- Familiarity with the former Hospitality program at NATC;
- Recommendations for improvement in that hospitality program;
- Perceived need for a hospitality program at NATC;
- Level of continued education offered in businesses;
- Business expansion plans; and
- Type of training received by business people in area

Summary

This study may assist Nicolet Area Technical College Administration in decisions related to the former hospitality program on campus. It will assist in a decision about the future of a program that was offered on this campus.

Chapter Four

Results and Data Analysis

Introduction

This study focused on the need for a hospitality program in NATC's district. It looked at the employers and how they viewed the past program that was offered. A questionnaire and a focus group were used for the data collection.

In this chapter, the objectives will be addressed and compared with the outcome of the survey. The objectives include identifying the following:

1. Level of interest in a hospitality program in the NATC region;
2. Benefits to area businesses of the hospitality program;
3. Interest in the hospitality program being offered;
4. Perception of need according to industry segments; and
5. Focus a hospitality program should take;

As noted in the methodology, fifty questionnaires were sent to business owners in NATC's district. A total of thirty-three questionnaires (66%) were returned to the researcher. Surveys received were entered into an excel spreadsheet and analyzed through a statistical program by Dr. Joe Benkowski at University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The means and standard deviation were tabulated based upon the questions answered in Part I and II. They were determined using a 6-point Likert scale. The results were determined using the respondent profile.

Interpretation of Research

Respondent Profile

The total of respondents was 33; the data regarding the organizations primary business were presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Primary Business

Primary Business	Number	Percent
Restaurant	7	21.21
Resort	10	30.30
Hotel/Motel	11	33.33
Retirement Facility	0	0
Recreational Facility	0	0
Campground	1	3.03
Casino	2	6.06
Other	2	6.06

Table 2 presents the data of how many people are employed by the organization. The vast majority of respondents employed between 11 and 50 employees. The next range was between 1-10 employees at the organizations surveyed.

Table 2

Number Organization Employs

Number Employed	Number	Percent %
1-10	5	15.15
11-50	22	66.66
51-100	4	12.12
Over 100	2	6.06

Table 3 presents the job function of the respondent.

Table 3

Job Function

Job Function	Number	Percent %
Owner/Operator	15	45.45
General Manager	10	30.30
Department Manager	4	12.12
Supervisor	1	3.03
Other	3	9.09

Table 4 presents benefits offered to employees at the respondent's organizations.

Table 4
Benefits Offered

Benefit	Number	Percent %
Tuition Reimbursement	7	21.21
Educational Leave	6	18.18
Paid professional association fees	12	36.36
On-site training	27	81.81
Other	5	15.15

Table 5 indicated the approximate yearly earnings of hospitality/tourism employees:

Table 5

Approximate yearly earnings

Earnings	Number	Percent%
0-\$12,000 annually	7	21.21
\$12,001-\$19,999 annually	16	48.48
\$20,000-\$27,999 annually	4	12.12
\$28,000-\$34,999 annually	2	6.06
Over \$40,000 annually	3	9.09

Table 6 indicates skills that respondents feel are important in a hospitality program. Respondents were encouraged to choose as many skills that apply to their organization.

Table 6
Important Skills

Skill	Number	Percent %
General Management Skills	27	81.81
Accounting Skills	17	54.51
Guest service skills	33	100.0
Supervising employees	26	78.78
Cost control knowledge	24	72.72
Marketing skills	20	60.60
Purchasing skills	18	54.54
Other	5	15.15

Table 7 represents whether or not the organization has ever employed a graduate of the former hospitality program offered at NATC.

Table 7
Hired a Graduate

Hired a Graduate	Number	Percent %
Yes	6	18%
No	27	82%

Part I

Table eight represents how the respondent's agreed or disagreed with the statements in regards to their own organizations. The statements represent how well the graduates of the Hospitality Program at NATC met the needs of organizations in the district. A Likert Scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with the option to choose not applicable was used. The respondents were asked to select their agreement with seven statements. The results in the following table came from questions A-G in Part I of the questionnaire. Only respondents that have hired a graduate of the Hospitality Program at NATC were asked to complete this section. The numbers in the columns represent how the respondents' felt about the graduates of the hospitality program at NATC.

Table 8

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
A.	3	5	0	0	0	2
B.	5	3	2	0	0	0
C.	1	1	1	1	1	3
D.	0	1	6	1	0	2
E.	2	3	0	2	0	3
F.	6	2	0	0	0	2
G.	5	1	1	2	0	1

Part II.

Table nine represents how the respondent's agreed or disagreed with the statements in regards to their own organizations. The statements represent how well the Hospitality Program at NATC met the needs of organizations in the district. A Likert Scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with the option to choose not applicable was used. The respondents were asked to select their agreement with ten statements. The results in the following table came from questions A-J in Part II of the questionnaire. All respondents were asked to complete this section. The data was ranked by mean score and standard deviation and tabulated as shown in table nine.

Table 9

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
A.	2.6364	1.4322
B.	2.8788	1.4949
C.	2.9091	1.3314
D.	3.0909	1.0417
E.	3.2727	1.0687
F.	2.8182	1.3336
G.	1.8182	0.91701
H.	2.0303	0.91804
I.	2.0909	1.1282
J.	2.1212	1.2185

Most of the respondents' opinions of the Hospitality Program agree that they are happy with the current skill level of their employees (Mean score=3.09) (Table 8, page

25), have difficulty retaining qualified employees (Mean score=3.27), would like to see a hospitality program at NATC (mean score=1.81), and would use some services provided by a hospitality program (Mean score=2.03).

Most of the respondent's agree with the other statements but they each have a standard deviation of 1.12 or above which is a large variation in the population, which was sampled. If the standard deviation is too large, most respondents' disagree with each other or have very differing responses. Some of the respondents agreed and some disagreed, which means there is not a close grouping of answers.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter includes the major findings and conclusions of this study.

Recommendations to Nicolet Area Technical College regarding the need of a Hospitality Management program are made. The researcher also suggests recommendations for future study.

Employers are faced with the challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified employees for their organizations. Hospitality is critical to the economy of this area and supplies various employment opportunities. The focus of this study was assessing the needs of employers for a hospitality and tourism program at Nicolet Area Technical College.

Restatement of problem and research questions:

During the years of 1973 until 1997 there was an associate degree program in Hospitality Management offered at Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhineland, Wisconsin. There is reason to assess the need for a Hospitality Management Program at Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhineland, Wisconsin. The entire program was put on hold in 1997, but was not officially put on suspension until the year 2000. It can remain suspended for a time period of three years before it would be permanently dropped. To better understand future needs of the program, the deactivation process must be looked at. Additionally, needs will be assessed by determining market potential, obtaining alumni feedback, which represents potential employers and identifying student interest in the program. This research can be used by administration at Nicolet Area

Technical College to assist in the decision making process that will need to take place regarding the future of this program.

This study will answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of interest in a hospitality management program in the NATC region?
2. What are the benefits of the hospitality management program to businesses in the area?
3. Is there interest in a hospitality management program being offered at NATC?
4. Is there a difference in perception of need according to industry segments?
5. Should the discontinued program take on a new focus?

Summary of methodology:

A written survey (Appendix B) was developed with a cover letter (Appendix A) and sent to fifty businesses as the primary data-gathering instrument. The cover letter described the purpose of the study as well as the importance of returning the survey. The mailing included a questionnaire (Appendix A), pre-paid return envelope, and a cover letter. It was sent out on May 1, 2001 and the requested return date was May 1, 2001. The total number of respondents was 33 (66%).

Discussion of significant findings:

This section included a summary of the important findings of this study. The findings were discussed based on the research questions.

Question 1. What is the level of interest in a hospitality management program in the

NATC region?

The respondents' were asked to select their agreement regarding their level of interest in a hospitality program (Table 8, page 25). Most of the respondents agreed (Mean score=2.6363) that there is a need for hospitality graduates in their organizations. They also agreed they have difficulty finding (Mean score=2.8788) and attracting (Mean score=2.9091) qualified job applicants. Respondents agreed that their employees need additional training (Mean score=2.8182).

Question 2. *What are the benefits of the hospitality management program to businesses in the area?*

One study reports that many people entering the workforce do not have the skills needed by industry. It may be assumed that they could gain these skills in a hospitality management program. Zuber (1997) shows that "many hospitality programs say they have experienced over the last several years an increase in recruiting efforts from foodservice companies."

With the great growth of tourism worldwide, educational and training programs have expanded to some extent, but there are many voids in the curricula that do not meet the needs of the comprehensive scope of tourism (Gunn, 1998). A hospitality program at NATC would help to fill these voids.

Question 3. *Is there interest in a hospitality management program being offered at NATC?*

The highest agreement level was that respondents would like to see a hospitality and tourism program offered to students at NATC (Mean score=1.8182). Respondents also agreed that they would use some services from a hospitality program (Mean

score=2.1212). Campbell (2000) reports that one trait required for employment success in the hospitality industry is to develop and reinforce the skills necessary to maintain suitable employment. That is one area that could be addressed by offering a hospitality program at NATC.

Question 4. *Is there a difference in perception of need according to industry segments?*

According to the data that was analyzed, there is not any significant perception of need according to industry segments. Each industry that was represented had a wide variety of responses within each segment to each answer. While casinos that responded had the largest amount of employees, they had a standard deviation too large to say they agreed. The industries that responded included restaurants, resorts, hotel/motels, campgrounds, casinos and other. Two segments that were not represented by a respondent were retirement and recreational facilities.

Question 5. *Should the discontinued program take on a new focus?*

There were not enough respondents to answer this question sufficiently. Only ten respondents answered this section of questions. Most of these agreed that the students graduating from the hospitality program have the necessary skills for their operation. Most also agreed that the program at NATC has had a good reputation and that the program did meet its organizational needs. Some respondents commented that they did not know enough about the program to recommend changes to the program. Of the respondents that answered, 60% would hire another graduate of the program. Only 50% of respondents agreed that the hospitality program at NATC has benefited their organizations.

Research shows that the 1990s have been very difficult for success in hospitality programs. Many programs were discontinued, such as the program at NATC, Oregon State, and Ohio State University. Ohio State was able to reopen their hospitality program due to restructuring and changing their emphasis within the program. With the growth of tourism worldwide, there is an increasing need for education (Gunn, 1997).

The University of Central Florida's hospitality management program is now part of their business administration department, a trend emerging for many hospitality programs. Many restaurant owners are reported to be looking at business school graduates because they obtain skills required to run a business (Zuber, 1997). There is a trend to change the focus of programs such as the program at NATC to be more effective for the employers.

Conclusion:

The outlook for the future of tourism is very favorable. "Unlike practically every other industry, the whole hospitality/tourism/travel arena has continued to grow and prosper through both good and bad times"(Solomon, 1993). It is assumed that where there is business, there are jobs created. Tourism plays a vital role in the well being of the NATC district's economy. Wisconsin also has a great economic impact from travel and tourism. It is one of the top employers in the state. There were 229,510 jobs attributed to tourism in the State of Wisconsin in 1998. Without qualified and trained individuals, the area could suffer.

There was a low rate of respondents that have hired a graduate from the program. That leads into a question of why the graduates have not been hired. Data from this study does not show why the graduates have not been hired.

Recommendations:

The sample used was small, due to the limited number of large businesses in NATC's district. Since there have been few graduates of the former program hired by the respondents', there is little information about the satisfaction level of respondents' or the perceived quality of the program or the that was offered at NATC.

Recommendations for future study:

The findings of this study resulted in recommendations for NATC as follows:

1. In order to determine the satisfaction level of graduates, a survey of graduates of the program should be conducted.
2. To determine the satisfaction level of employers of graduates of the program, an effort to survey those that have hired graduates would be informative.
3. If employers of graduates were hired, they would be more educated in the program that was offered and the skills that were taught in the program. These employers may be more likely to make recommendations regarding the structure and focus the program should take.
4. If the hospitality program was re-introduced, there should be a study to better utilize the graduates of the program at businesses within the district.
5. A marketing study should be done to make businesses more aware of the services the program can provide.

6. A determination of why there is a low rate of graduates being hired by employers in the NATC district needs to be done.

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Exhibit A

March 10, 2001

Dear Hospitality Employer:

Please direct this letter and survey to the person in charge of human resources.

In order to better understand the workforce training and education needs of area employers,

I am conducting a survey. This study includes employers in the Nicolet Area Technical College district and surrounding areas.

Please take approximately 10 minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed postage paid envelope by April 1, 2001. All of the responses will be kept confidential and will be reported only in summary form for all respondents.

The results of this survey will be available to surveyed employers. I believe the findings of this survey will benefit the surrounding communities as I work to better meet the area education and training needs. If you have any questions about this survey, please call me at the above number.

Sincerely,

**Vicki Mendham-Whitehead
Instructor, Nicolet Area Technical College**

Enclosure

P.S. It is crucial that I get enough responses to make this study valid—please take time to fill out the questionnaire.

Exhibit B

Evaluation of Workforce Education and Training Needs Needs Assessment for Hospitality/Tourism Program Nicolet Area Technical College

I value your opinion and appreciate your input. Your answers will be treated confidentially and will be used to gain a better awareness of workforce education and training needs. Your answers will assist in guiding future programming at Nicolet Area Technical College.

INSTRUCTIONS: Listed below are questions pertaining to your organization. Please circle only one answer in the right hand column for each question.

1. What is your organizations primary business?

Restaurant	1
Resort	2
Hotel/Motel	3
Retirement Facility	4
Recreational Facility	5
Campground	6
Casino	7
Other	8

2. How many people does your organization employ?

1-10	1
11-50	2
51-100	3
Over 100	4

3. What is your job function?

Owner/Operator	1
General Manager	2
Department Manager	3
Supervisor	4
Other	5

4. Please indicate all of the following your organization provides to employees:

Tuition reimbursement	1
Educational leave	2
Paid professional association fees	3
On-site training	4
Other	5

5. Please indicate the approximate yearly earnings of hospitality/tourism employees:

0- \$12,000 annually	1
\$12,001-\$19,999 annually	2
\$20,000-\$27,999 annually	3
\$28,000-\$34,999 annually	4
\$35,000-\$39,999 annually	5
Over \$40,000 annually	6

6. Indicate which skills you feel are important in a hospitality management program:

General Management skills	1
Accounting skills	2
Guest service skills	3
Supervising employees	4
Cost control knowledge	5
Marketing skills	6
Purchasing skills	7
Other	8

7. Has your organization ever employed a graduate of the Hospitality and Tourism Program that *was* offered at Nicolet Area Technical College?

Yes (If Yes, please complete Part I and Part II)	1
No (If No, please complete Part II only)	2

PART I.

- For each question listed in the left column below, please circle a response code to the right indicating if you agree or disagree with regards to your organization.
- Use the following scale
 1=Strongly Agree
 2=Agree
 3=No Opinion
 4=Disagree
 5=Strongly Disagree
 6=Not applicable to my organization

		To what degree to you agree or disagree with this statement in your organization?					
		Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree			N/A
A	Students graduating from the Hospitality program have the necessary skills for my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	The Hospitality Program at Nicolet Area Technical College has a good reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6
C	The Hospitality Program at Nicolet Area Technical College did not meet my organizational needs	1	2	3	4	5	6
D	The hospitality program needs to update its curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	The hospitality program at Nicolet Area Technical College has benefited my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
F	I would hire another graduate from the hospitality program that was offered at Nicolet Area Technical College	1	2	3	4	5	6
G	I would give preference to a qualified job candidate with a hospitality management degree from Nicolet Area Technical College over someone with a hospitality degree from somewhere else	1	2	3	4	5	6

Comments:

PART II.

- For each question listed in the left column below, please circle a response code to the right indicating if you agree or disagree with regards to your organization.
- Use the following scale
 1=Strongly Agree
 2=Agree
 3=No Opinion
 4=Disagree
 5=Strongly Disagree
 6=Not applicable to my organization

		To what degree to you agree or disagree with this statement in your organization?					
		Strongly <u>Agree</u> Strongly <u>Disagree</u> N/A					
<u>A</u>	There is a need for graduates of a hospitality program at my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>B</u>	I currently cannot find qualified job applicants	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>C</u>	I have difficulty attracting qualified employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>D</u>	I am happy with the current skill level of my employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>E</u>	I have difficulty retaining qualified employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>F</u>	My current employees need additional training	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>G</u>	I would like to see a hospitality and tourism program offered to students at Nicolet Area Technical College	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>H</u>	I would use some the services provided from a hospitality program	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>I</u>	Over the past three years my business has increased	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>J</u>	Over the past three years my business has increased	1	2	3	4	5	6

Comments:

EXHIBIT C

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The following comments were made by respondents in the additional comments section of the mailed survey.

- We can train until we are blue in the face but if they do not use the skills it is time wasted.
- A larger area is in the Culinary area. Finding qualified and trainable people to run a kitchen is difficult.
- We have hired students but not graduates.
- In general we have trouble finding employees with a good work ethic. Small hospitality businesses cannot offer benefits so attracting good workers is difficult.
- I believe that Vilas and Oneida county area will continue to grow as a tourism/recreation area and associated new and old businesses will require more hospitality trained employees.
- I do have a need for employees that would attend college at the same time. I would be able to offer work experience for them while paying them.
- I did not know of the program at Nicolet. If I had I probably would have used it. May I suggest that, just like you sent this survey, that you might send a letter describing the curriculum and services this program provides to all the hospitality based businesses in the area.
- If I can be of further help, let me know.
- I do have a few employees that could increase their skill level.

EXHIBIT D

The following questions and responses are from the focus group
Focus Group Questions:

1. Do you require a degree of any sort from your prospective employees?
 - Most of the time, but depends on job being filled
 - No, but would be very delighted if candidate had it.
 - No.
 - Some.
 - No
 - 1A. If you do, why is this important to you?
 - Management positions a degree is preferred—front desk, kitchen, catering, and general manager.
 - Basic math fundamentals
 - Food costing knowledge, safety, sanitation and communication skills.
 - 1B. If you answered no, why don't you?
 - Applicants with degrees expect higher wages than motel operations can afford.
 - Most positions are semi-skilled such as dishwashing, serving, and housekeeping.
 - Most positions are entry level and applicants can be trained to do these jobs.
2. If you do require a degree for any position, what would the degree have to be in?
 - BA of Business
 - Chef
 - Culinary Arts or Hospitality Management
 - None
 - Marketing or Hospitality
 - Culinary Arts
3. Would you give any preference to a candidate who has a degree, over one that does not?
 - Depends on knowledge of one with compared to one without degree and their common sense and communication skills
 - Somewhat, but we hire based on personality and common sense.
 - Not necessarily
 - Always in management positions
 - No.

4. What type of degree would be important to you in a job candidate?

- Business and hospitality
- Culinary Arts or Hospitality Management
- B.A, BS and Associates degrees
- Vocational in food preparation areas
- Hospitality
- Foodservice
- Personnel

5. Have you ever employed a graduate of any Hospitality related program?

- No.
- Culinary Arts
- Yes.
- Yes
- Yes.
- Yes

Why or why not?

- So far none have applied
- Culinary Arts
- Thought it would be positive
- Both interns and graduates, to make use of their training
- Bring new method and methods of operation with them
- We have employed some, but once they graduate they usually want management positions that are not available

6. If so, how did you perceive their training?

- Excellent basis to perform many tasks
- In the hospitality business, so much depends on personality—ability can be taught
- Overall strong.
- Good understanding of current state of industry
- Good skills, but poor work ethics (late a lot, don't want to work very hard, etc.)

6A. Did you recognize any strengths?

- All positive
- Upbeat attitudes and very professional

- Strong in food preparation
- 6B. Did you recognize any need for improvement?
- Possibly need more depth in certain areas, but would be very difficult in the short time spent in school.
 - Training and understanding in the business side—especially accounting and marketing
 - Need more skills in general business
 - Work ethics, which is difficult to teach to people
7. Would you consider hiring another graduate of that program?
- Yes
 - Maybe
 - Yes—provided they would relocate to this remote area and work for less than national average wages.
 - Possibly; depends on all qualifications
8. How satisfied are you with your current level of work performance by employees?
- Not very
 - Most are great
 - Good
 - Very satisfied with the degree holding employees
 - High at the moment—about 90%, but it is generally much lower than that.
9. Were you familiar with Nicolet Area Technical Colleges' (NATC) Hospitality program?
- Yes
 - Yes
 - Yes
 - Fairly well
 - Yes

10. Do you see a need for a program of this type at NATC?

- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes—hospitality is a major economic player in this college district
- Yes

10A. If no, why not?

11. Can you recommend any changes to the program?

- Looks like a good balance
- More accounting and general business
- Would like to see Nicolet calendars reflect our tourism business with an after Sept. 1 start date.
- Not familiar enough for any specifics
- No sure enough to recommend anything.

12. Do you currently offer employees any support for continued education, such as tuition reimbursement?

13. Do you plan to expand your business in the future?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No
- No
- Slowly or gradually only

14. How did you get your training to own/operate your business?

- Hospitality degree from Michigan State University and MBA also attend many short courses and training sessions by U.W. extension, Division of Health and Wisconsin Department of Labor.
- Worked closely with U.W. Extension agents and Nicolet College
- U.W. Stout Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree; worked in the field for 18 years.
- Work experience in hospitality and related areas
- Seminars, conferences, networking, plus degree in Personnel related area plus tons of hard work and dedication to an end good.
- Business Associates degree; on the job experience and operating own business.

