GRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW
THE DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION, HOSPITALITY & RETAILING

Submitted to

THE TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Introduction
The committee examined the Program Review Document prepared by the Chair and faculty of the NHR Department, met with the Department Chair, Dr. Lynn Huffman, graduate faculty members of Nutrition Sciences (NS) and Restaurant, Hotel and Institutional Management (RHIM), and 40 to 50 graduate students of the department in the week of April 9th 2007. External reviewers, Dr. Nancy Betts, Head of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University and Dr. Brian Mihalik, Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Tech University, each provided a separate report. The internal committee prepared the current report, which only briefly alludes to comments and recommendations made by the external reviewers.

Program Overview and Vision
The Department has graduate programs that lead to the following degrees: Ph.D. in NS, Ph.D. in RHIM, MS in NS, MS in RHIM, and a graduate-level professional certification degree (Dietetic Internship) that can be combined with a graduate degree. Each program functions largely independent of each other. From 2000 to 2006, the Department had 124 graduate students who successfully completed their degree program, with 4 Ph.D. and 45 Masters of NS (the majority of the Masters were in the non-thesis Dietetic Internship program), 9 Ph.D. from the new RHIM doctoral program which was approved in 2002, and 66 Master of RHIM.

The number of doctoral degrees awarded by the new RHIM doctoral program is commendable. On the other hand, the consistently low enrollment of the NS doctoral program is a serious concern. With one exception, faculty involvement in recruiting Ph.D. students is not evident. Due to the low enrollment, there are no courses of Ph.D. level offered within the NS program. There is no viable NS Ph.D. degree plan in place. The NS master’s program has a healthy enrollment with its dietetic internship program. Almost all graduates are non-thesis masters.

The current faculty include 5 graduate faculty members in NS, and 13 in RHIM. Recruiting faculty is a concern in the RHIM program. As pointed out by one of the external reviewers, faculty salary is not nationally competitive.

Graduate student support is primarily from teaching assistantship. TA salaries range from $11,000 to $15,000 (nine month base) with an average of $11,808. The salary range is comparable with other units on campus.

Rating:
- Hospitality Administration Ph.D. – Excellent
- RHIM Masters - Very Good
- Nutrition Sciences Dietetic Internship and Masters – Good
- Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. - Unsatisfactory

Recommendation: Give due diligence to the recommendations of the committee.

Faculty Productivity-
There appears to be understaffing of faculty in both the Nutrition Science and Hospitality programs. However, the programs are productive and recognized in their respective professions by the qualifications of their faculty. It is noted that many faculty hold terminal degrees from Texas Tech University.

All faculty are carrying a significant workload, which has a negative effect on their abilities to conduct research. In order for all faculty to receive an annual 2-2 teaching load, all graduate faculty need to be involved in the direction of doctoral students. Instructors who have no lab responsibilities and are not supervising doctoral students and have no publishing expectations should be assigned a heavier annual
teaching load. With a large undergraduate enrollment, some graduate faculty members have large undergraduate classes. Even though they may have graduate teaching assistants, the members are at a possible disadvantage for balancing graduate education with undergraduate education. Major professors need to develop a culture in graduate education to have Ph.D. students submit and publish refereed journal articles prior to completion of the degree.

All faculty are involved in college and university service work, with some serving on outside commissions, committees and performing volunteerism. The faculty in Nutrition Science have been productive in obtaining contracts and grants, but it is evident that the research grant support for research assistants is minimal. Most of the grants and contracts of Nutrition Science faculty have been conducted outside of the university.

All graduate, tenured, and tenure-track faculty have acceptable teaching loads. The faculty, however, do need to devote more energies to developing and publishing articles in refereed journals as opposed to submissions in conference proceedings to enhance balance of research outlets.

**Rating:**

*Nutrition Science:* Very good in productivity, but unsatisfactory in support of graduate program.

*Hospitality and Retailing:* Very Good

**Recommendation:** Increase the number of instructors with a 4-4 load for undergraduate classes, or perhaps non-graduate faculty assistant professors with a 3-3 load would balance the faculty load in the graduate program. Secure funding for these increases in faculty numbers.

**Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates**

Overall, the quality of the students in the Graduate Program of the NHR department seems high. The Ph.D. students in the Hospitality Administration Program are enthusiastic, articulate, and very positive. The RHIM masters students also seem to be very talented. It is difficult to assess the quality of the on-line masters students, as there are very few and they only sporadically participate. We were only able to speak to one of the two students in the Nutrition Science Ph.D. program. It is evident that this program is drastically undersubscribed. The Nutrition Science masters students, three quarters of which are composed of Dietetic Intern students, appear to be of high quality. One possible concern is that GRE scores for NHR students are somewhat low, although students appear to be doing well in their courses.

Student recruitment and retention is excellent for the Hospitality Administration Ph.D. program and for the RHIM masters program, especially in light of the market being very good for undergraduates completing their RHIM degrees. The exception is for the on-line RHIM masters program, as recruitment and retention do not appear to have been successful for this program. Recruitment and retention have also been good for the Dietetic Internship in Nutrition Sciences. However, if students were not coming for the Dietetic Internship, the Nutrition Science masters program would be very small. Recruitment and retention for the Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. appear to be non-existent.

The applicant pool is sufficient for the Ph.D. in Hospitality Administration, although it was expressed that the department would like to increase the number of domestic students in the program. However, as this program is likely near capacity, this does not seem to be a serious concern. The pool for RHIM masters students is also good, with a reasonable mix of students who have completed their bachelors’ degrees at TTU and those who come from other universities. It is difficult to tell if there is a sufficient pool for the on-line program. Is the low enrollment and poor completion rate due to a small potential market, or to lack of publicity and targeted recruiting? The pool for the Dietetic Internship is very good; demand from industry is high. However, there is not a good pool of applicants for the Nutrition Sciences masters
degree itself (without the Dietetic Interns), especially for a research based degree. The applicant pool for the Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. is unknown, as there is no recruitment for this program.

Career success is evident for the Dietetic Interns in the Nutrition Sciences masters program, as well as for the RHIM masters students. The recent establishment of the recruitment and placement office for the College of Human Sciences should enhance the already well-developed career path for these students. It may be too early to assess career success for the Hospitality Administration Ph.D. students, as this is a relatively new program, but students and faculty both seem confident. The Ph.D. program in Nutrition Sciences is so small that it is difficult to discern the level of success.

Student productivity in the Department of NHR appears to be reasonable. Average GPA’s are good, although there was a large drop in GPA (under 3.0) for the masters students in Nutrition Sciences in 2005 (the last year of the data given). This is low for graduate students and should be monitored and action taken if necessary. Both the RHIM and Nutrition Sciences programs, masters student research productivity is low, but these are professional degrees, which lead the graduates to clinical and/or industry jobs. It is unclear if the Ph.D. students are productive in research. It is recommended that all Ph.D. students (for both Hospitality Administration and Nutrition Sciences students) be actively involved in research for conference presentations and proceedings, and later in their programs, refereed journal articles.

Graduate student support appears to be very good, with the exception of the uncertainty about assistantships—students not knowing whether their assistantships will continue semester by semester. This is especially troubling for Ph.D. students. The level of pay for the assistantships is comparable to other TTU departments. For masters level students, a two semester commitment would be desirable; for Ph.D. students, a commitment should be made for their entire program of study, contingent upon satisfactory progress (both in quality and timeliness). Office accommodations are excellent for both Ph.D. students and masters students, especially if they are teaching. There are good laboratory facilities for the Hospitality Administration and RHIM students, but there are no lab facilities for the Nutrition Sciences students. The few Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. students seem to be using lab space at TTUHSC, but on an ad-hoc basis. It would be beneficial to formalize some agreement with either TTUHSC or the TTU Experimental Sciences facility if the Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. program continues, or if there will be any commitment for masters students to do laboratory research. However, these formal arrangements may not be necessary if the focus of the Nutrition Sciences programs continues to evolve and crystallize into the professional/industry arena, where the research, if any, is community based. Faculty relationships with, and support of, the NHR students seems excellent for the most part; however, several students in Nutrition Sciences expressed discomfort with the state of some inter-faculty relationships within the NHR department and were worried that these conflicts would affect them. In the student survey, the issue of departmental decision making was brought up, and students appeared to want more direct input. One of strengths of the NHR department is the support of the various Centers associated with the department (e.g., Texas Wine Marketing Research Institute, and the International Center for Food Industry Excellence). Both of these Centers provide financial and research support to both Hospitality Ph.D. and RHIM masters students.

The Hospitality Administration Ph.D. program may be at capacity, due to the number of faculty. There may be room to grow the professional masters programs in RHIM and Nutrition Sciences, with the Dietetic Internship. However, larger graduate class sizes, and teaching load, could be a problem, due to the number of faculty.

**Rating:**
- **Hospitality Administration Ph.D.** – Excellent
- **RHIM Masters** - Very Good
Nutrition Sciences Dietetic Internship and Masters – Good
Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. - Unsatisfactory

Curriculum and Programs of Study
The degree requirements for the Ph.D. in Hospitality Administration, the masters in RHIM, and the Dietetic Internship plus the masters in Nutrition Sciences are very clearly defined and appear to be consistent with other programs and industry standards. However, the degree requirements for the Ph.D. in Nutrition Sciences appear to be unknown and completely unpopulated with courses at the Ph.D. level.

Course frequency and sequencing are limited by the number of faculty in the department. Some students commented that they had to take whatever was available, rather than what they preferred, especially in Nutrition Sciences. However, timely graduation does not seem to be impeded (with the exception of the Nutrition Sciences Ph.D.).

Areas of specialization were not explicitly covered during this review. There could some interesting possibilities for Service Learning, particularly in the Dietetic Internship and the Nutrition Science masters program, given the focus on community issues. It may be also possible to foster community engagement in the RHIM masters professional program.

The nature and type of qualifying exams were not apparent during this review, although they are mentioned on the Ph.D. degree plans.

The curriculum and programs of study for the Hospitality Administration Ph.D. and the RHIM masters degree appear to be very strong vis-à-vis comparable institutions. The Dietetic Internship also seems comparable to other institutions, but the Nutrition Science masters program is overwhelmingly industry based and professional, rather than research based. The NHR department should consider enhancing the professional program to become an area of excellence and differentiation. The Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. program is not comparable to peer institutions, due to its persistent moribund state.

Rating:
Hospitality Administration Ph.D. – Excellent
RHIM Masters - Very Good
Nutrition Sciences Dietetic Internship and Masters – Good
Nutrition Sciences Ph.D. – Unsatisfactory

Recommendation: Given the moribund state of the doctoral program in NS, it is recommended that it develop a viable Ph.D. degree plans, as well as recruitment strategies, instead of continuing its current situation. In light of the current faculty interest and limited success in attracting Ph.D. students in NS, a different approach may be helpful. Since nutrition problems in today’s world require interdisciplinary solutions, in order to build on the current situation of Ph.D. students taking classes outside the department/college, an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program could be developed.

Facilities and Resources
Nutrition Science. The facilities are very limited and laboratory space is non-existent. The resources are very limited. The Nutrition Science labs had been closed because of inadequate maintenance. Perhaps space for laboratories for research assistants could be made available in the Experimental Sciences Building if external grants and contracts support such a move.

Hospitality and Retailing. The Hospitality program has very good food and beverage facilities.
The Skyviews Restaurant is a great asset to the program. Information technology appears to be available in the College, but the classrooms and laboratories are lacking in availability and access to adequate connections. The College Recruiting Center is a great asset to the programs.

Rating:
Nutrition Sciences: Unsatisfactory. Unless efforts are made to recruit students into the program, and bringing contracts and grants into the department to support it, no effort needs to be made to improve the facilities.
Hospitality and Retailing: Very good

Recommendations:
Seek to secure laboratory accommodations for the Hospitality Lodging program to complement the Restaurant laboratory (Skyviews).