



College of Management and Economics
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management

January 13, 2009

c/o Kathleen C. Quinn
Associate
Isaacson, Miller
649 Mission Street, Suite 500
San Francisco, CA 94129

Re: Letter of Interest

Dean, School of Travel Industry Management at the University of Hawaii/Manoa

To the Search Committee,

I would hereby like to express my interest in the advertised position for Dean, School of Travel Industry Management. In reading the *Opportunity and Challenge Profile*, I was struck by the similarities in the challenges faced by your School with those that brought me to Guelph in 2003.

Although well known and respected for its Hotel and Food Administration program, the School decided to expand its programming into tourism management in 2000, changing its name to "School of Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM)". However, there was no faculty directly associated with tourism, and the remaining faculty – many of whom had been at the School for the bulk of their careers – felt unappreciated and disoriented. Also, HTM was primarily a teaching institution with little research conducted, although several faculty were well published authors of textbooks and conceptual articles.

As part of the hiring process, I was asked to provide a vision for the School. While I addressed a number of opportunities and possible strategies for returning the School to its preeminence, I refused to describe this in terms of "vision": I firmly believe that a vision must be developed collectively among all the stakeholders – faculty, staff, students, alumni and industry partners – if it is to have any meaning beyond words on a piece of paper. Hence, this became almost the first task I undertook upon joining HTM. The document we developed set forth the School's vision, mission, and operating philosophy that are sustained through the collaborative efforts of faculty and staff for the long term. It became an integral part of the School's recruitment, retention and operating style. While the vision, mission and strategic goals were aimed at the 10 year horizon, the

operational goals guided the School over the first five years. Since I believe that the document has great resonance with the opportunities and challenges faced by TIM, I have taken the liberty to extract the vision, mission and strategic goals:

Vision Statement:

To be internationally recognized by the hospitality and tourism industry as Canada's premier teaching and research institution in this management field.

Mission Statement:

To empower individuals and organizations with the applied research, professional skills and management education necessary for exceptional performance.

To achieve the above through fostering a School culture based on innovation, strong service, and qualified, dedicated people.

Strategic Goal 1. Teaching: To develop excellence in teaching as a competitive differentiator. Firmly grounded in experiential and participatory learning, we continue to ensure the relevancy and currency of courses for the hospitality and tourism industry in the management context of a rapidly changing global environment.

Strategic Goal 2. Scholarly Activity: To be seen as a research centre that is recognized by the hospitality and tourism field as well as industry as their academic partner for applied research.

Research ensures a vibrant academic environment that helps us attract and retain good faculty, build our academic reputation, supports student learning and positions them as forward thinking and entrepreneurial.

Strategic Goal 3. Positioning: To position ourselves in the market as an institution that produces future manager-leaders that are operationally qualified

We produce ambitious, highly motivated and engaged potential manager-leaders for a global hospitality and tourism industry.

Strategic Goal 4. Our people: To mobilize our faculty and staff with a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the vision and the mission

We foster a supportive culture and climate founded on trust, integrity, and self-renewal.

Strategic Goal 5. Revenue Development: To provide the resources required to become a premier teaching and research institution

We pursue (entrepreneurial) opportunities that strengthen our teaching, research, positioning and people.

The process of developing the strategic plan not only created a strong sense of "team", especially among faculty, but also fostered an ambience of open communication where everyone's opinion was valued. As a result, people were very willing to take on tasks agreed to as part of the operational year-to-year goals.

HTM had an industry advisory group for its executive development programs that met once a year informally, largely to “recruit” participants. I expanded this group to include tourism professionals (e.g., the CEO of the Canadian Tourism Commission, Presidents of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, Deputy Minister of Ontario Tourism, President of Tourism Toronto, etc.), and raised its status to a Policy Advisory Board for all of the School’s initiatives and responsibilities. At its first meeting, I presented the draft Strategic Plan for input. As a result, its members requested biannual meetings to be more effective and engaged, and have helped to shape a curriculum review of the undergraduate and MBA programs, strengthened the co-op program, restructured and refocused the management development programs, provided scholarships and financial support for capital and operating funds, and were instrumental in allowing the School to host a very successful crisis management conference, amongst other initiatives.

Capitalizing on its strength in operational management, HTM offers an MBA with a specialization in Hospitality and Tourism Management in both a residential (1 year, 3 semesters) and distance format (over 3 years). However, with the increasing strength in research – all new tenure-track hires had strong research backgrounds –, it became evident that the School needed to expand its graduate programs. We are just awaiting approval to launch an MSc in Hospitality and Tourism and have received approval for a PhD in Management, offered in collaboration with two of the other departments in the College, that will take in its first candidates this fall. I was lead for the School on both of these initiatives. These new programs were possible, in part, through the strengthened faculty of the School, especially with respect to their research output. I am very pleased to have been able to see four faculty receive tenure, five promotion to Associate Professor and two to full Professor.

2003 saw a significant expansion of the kitchen and restaurant facilities of the School, a multi-million dollar project. Although provincial and some industry funding had been secured, the construction project was seriously short of budget. Therefore, I engaged industry, in collaboration with the Dean of the College and the College’s lead fundraiser, and secured the shortfall, including the restaurant “naming” gift. Several of these gifts required great creativity in “packaging” the opportunity as not all companies were interested in donating to a construction project. Other fundraising initiatives included providing dedicated access to graduating students for recruitment purposes in exchange for significant funding for scholarships and student learning opportunities, e.g., conference attendance. With regards to research funding, I tend to build partnerships among researchers within the School, the College and with other universities and industry or government organizations, who often have limited financial and human resources, and need research partners that will complement their own expertise rather than just act as “consultants”. The benefit to academic researchers and students is funding for projects that are well grounded, while the “clients” gain substantially from the knowledge transfer.

One such example is the creation of a Tourism HR Centre of Excellence for which I am currently laying the foundation. Faculty includes members of the School, the Departments of Economics and Business, and the first industry partner is the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council. However, the province of Ontario is also being lobbied by some of the major industry groups on the School's behalf. The first project is looking at productivity measures in the hospitality and tourism sector, a project that will also reach out to experts from other institutions such as Statistics Canada, the Conference Board of Canada, the Centre for Studies in Living Standards, as well as other Canadian and international academics.

These are but some of the more recent analogous experiences that I believe should make my candidacy of interest to you. I look forward to an opportunity to explore my qualifications and experiences further with your Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Joppe', written in a cursive style.