

Results of Survey of Hotel Demand Generated by University of Maryland

I. Overview

The University seeks to facilitate the development of a full-service hotel near the campus, preferably near the Main Gate. To help gauge area demand for this type of property, it is important to understand the University's contribution to area hotel demand. For this purpose, a survey was distributed to all academic and administrative units of the University. Of interest was usage of both meeting space and hotel rooms. For each, the survey asked for estimates of current usage and latent demand (how much additional usage would occur if the kind of hotel sought by the University were built).

The following description was used to indicate the kind of hotel envisioned: "A full-service hotel is generally considered to offer amenities such as a white tablecloth restaurant, a fitness center, a media center/services, and large meeting rooms as well as cable television, voicemail, and Internet access." Additionally, it was indicated that this hotel would be "located within walking distance of campus".

The primary survey recipients were the Deans of each school and college and the Vice Presidents of each division. They were asked to forward it internally to all units (academic departments and administrative offices) that report to them, so that responses at each level were complete. Completed surveys were sent or forwarded to the Real Estate office for collection and analysis.

II. Quantitative Analysis

The following table shows current usage levels and latent demand for meeting space and hotel rooms. Meeting space usage is expressed as attendees * days. Hotel room usage is expressed as rooms * nights.

	Mtg Space – Current	Mtg Space – Latent	Hotel Rms – Current	Hotel Rms – Latent
Actual Response				
Academic Units	33,817	8,885	10,460	1,887
Administrative Units	1,343	550	35,502	50
Total, Actual Response	35,159	9,435	45,962	1,937
Extrapolation				
Academic Units	60,103	15,791	18,590	3,353
Administrative Units	4,028	1,650	53,253	150
Total for UM	64,130	17,441	71,843	3,503

These numbers were arrived at through a series of calculations, including estimations, based on the raw data. The process is described in the last section of this document.

III. Qualitative Analysis

The following is a summary of key comments that were included with completed surveys. For A. and B., responses are listed roughly in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

A. Facilities currently used for meetings and lodging include:

- University of Maryland University College Inn and Conference Center
- Marriott in Greenbelt
- Quality Inn in College Park (for lodging only)
- Holiday Inn in College Park
- Hyatt in Greenbelt
- Sheraton in Columbia (for meetings only)
- Renaissance in Baltimore
- Marriott in Bethesda
- Other hotels in DC, Maryland and Virginia
- Rossborough Inn (for meetings only)
- University of Maryland Golf Course Clubhouse (for meetings only)
- Other campus facilities; for example, classrooms and meeting rooms (for meetings only)
- Sites farther away [Some of these events could not be held near campus.]

B. Criteria mentioned as important for determining whether a respondent would or could use the kind of hotel described in the survey:

- Cost [Several respondents said they could not afford a high-end facility.]
- Quality [Some responses listed this as the most important factor – units with more financial resources are less concerned with cost and more in need of high quality facilities, and vice versa for units with fewer resources.]
- Parking (plentiful, convenient and affordable)
- Shuttle service to airports
- Catering (high-quality and affordable)
- Nice restaurants nearby
- Amount and type of meeting space (a large dividable ballroom; additional smaller rooms; a banquet room)
- Location [For instance, some parts of campus are not near Route 1 or East Campus.]
- Accessibility (close to the Metro station, taxi service)
- Attractive neighborhood

C. Some responses supported two of UM's central beliefs related to demand for the kind of hotel described in the survey: that it would be used instead of current facilities for some events hosted by UM, and that it would attract events that are currently hosted by other universities or organizations because of the current lack of a suitable facility here.

D. The Office of Conference and Visitor Services strongly feels that there is significant latent demand that the envisioned hotel could take advantage of. They offered the following support for this contention: "our location in a major metro area within 400 miles of ¾ of the population of the US", and "We have the capacity to quadruple what we presently do and, with a full-service facility, we would aggressively market our services to ensure that occurs." They mentioned the following sources of latent demand: events associated with UM faculty and staff that are currently held elsewhere, and events hosted by other Maryland agencies.

- E. The Office of Parent and Family Affairs asserted that for one segment of demand in particular – campus visits involving parents/families – the current offerings in the area are not of the quality they require. Events such as prospective student visits, orientation, move in, Family Weekend, commencement, and individual parent visits throughout the year, make up a significant portion of total hotel room demand.
- F. There is also some demand for an affordable, extended-stay hotel, for academic visitors. Facilities mentioned as currently used for this purpose include Seven Springs Village in College Park (expensive and often booked) and University Square Apartments in Greenbelt (expensive and not furnished).
- G. Reasons UMUC Inn and Conference Center is sometimes not used include:
- Cost
 - Quality (many employees are trainees; there are limited food facilities)
 - Already booked (with alumni events, for instance)
- H. The School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation is an example of a unit that prefers UMUC Inn and Conference Center because of its facilities and proximity to the School (not near Route 1), but did say that its prices often put it out of reach.
- I. The Office of Professional Studies mentioned a potential use not mentioned elsewhere: as a place to hold the classes associated with their office.

IV. Quantitative Analysis – Process

1. Data for each of the four questions was entered for each response unit (e.g. academic department). This required the first of estimation stage: many responses used wide ranges of numbers (e.g. “25-500 participants”); in these cases mid-points were used. Another problem was responses that were incomplete or not in the form required. Best guesses were used to address these issues.
2. Responses were summed at the level of college/school and division, then at the level of all academic units and all administrative units, then (the highest level) at the level of the whole University. The figures in the first row in the table above represent the data collected at this highest level.
3. As not all units completed surveys, the next step was to extrapolate from the response to figures for the University as a whole. In order to extrapolate, the sample had to be compared to the population in order to calculate response rates. Various measures could be used to compare the sample and population; three – the number of students, the number of employees and the number of units – were chosen and response rates were calculated, then an average of the three rates was calculated. To extrapolate, the total response for each field was multiplied by (1 divided by the response rate).
4. A different response rate was calculated for all academic units and all administrative units, due to the large difference in the level of response between these two categories. For academic units, the three response rates were close, around 55%. The average of the three rates was used to do the extrapolation for academic units.
5. For administrative units, it was decided that this process would lead to inaccurate extrapolations, for two reasons: 1) the response rate was very low (around 12%, so the extrapolation factor would have been around 8.3), which would make an extrapolation based on this sample more subject to error, and 2) it is likely that most administrative units that did not respond have minimal use for off-campus meeting space and hotel rooms. Therefore, the extrapolation for administrative units used a factor of 3 (for current hotel room use, the factor used was 1.5, as it was even more likely for this field that the sample captured most of the demand).