Growing Concerns - Dealing with Reduced Professional Resources

KW Ker\textsuperscript{1,2} and M Kompf\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} KCMS Applied Research and Consulting, 1215 Maple Street, Fenwick, ON Canada L0S 1C0, \textsuperscript{2} Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, Brock University, 500 Glenridge Ave., St. Catharines, ON Canada L2S 3A1, \textsuperscript{3} Faculty of Education, Brock University, 500 Glenridge Ave., St. Catharines, ON Canada L2S 3A1

Corresponding author: kker@kcms.ca

Poster Abstract

Professional support for the grape and wine industries locally and internationally is being reduced as budgets for extension or outreach programs are being cut. A qualitative study was undertaken to look at the needs and options for members of three sectors of the grape and wine industry - \textbf{Viticulture} (growers, owners, workers), \textbf{Processing} (owners, winemakers, winery workers), and \textbf{Marketing} (on-site retail, supervisors, marketing staff) to identify key areas of need for initial and ongoing training and preferred methods of technology transfer in non-traditional or non-academic settings. Using direct member interviews and focus groups, many common topic areas were identified across the viticulture, oenology and marketing sectors. Lack of cross sector knowledge and access to training programs were identified as constraints to future growth and expansion of the industry as a whole. Recurring themes of preferred sources of information, methods of information transfer and the need for specific programming led to the development of a model \textbf{Grape and Wine Learning Network (GWLN)}. The GWLN shows interrelationships of industry, research institutes, academic institutions and members of the industry at large where a cohesive and responsive non academic program for training and professional development could function and support research and technology transfer. An example of a component of the GWLN could be the formation of an Equipment Repair Group or a New Winemakers Forum where members can share expertise, lead discussions, and include members of industry and academe to facilitate and ensure information is valid and proven. As financial and human resources for outreach and extension decline, this research illustrates how the GWLN model would utilize all mechanisms of technology and educational processes and use member knowledge to ensure that personal and collective knowledge gained through experience is retained and transferred to subsequent generations of industry.