



TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents
FROM: John L. D'Agati *John L. D'Agati*
SUBJECT: Maria College: Master plan amendment to authorize a Bachelor of Science program in Psychology

DATE: September 9, 2013

AUTHORIZATION(S):

John B. P. G.
SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize Maria College to offer its first bachelor's program in the social sciences discipline, a Bachelor of Science degree program in Psychology?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State regulation.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the full Board at its September 2013 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

Procedural History

Maria College submitted a proposal in February 2013 to register a program in Psychology leading to the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree. Master plan amendment is required because the proposed program will be the College's first bachelor's degree program in the social sciences.

Background Information

Maria College, located in Albany, seeks Regents approval of a master plan amendment to offer a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree program in Psychology. The College offers certificate and associate programs in the biological sciences, business,

education, health professions, social sciences, and physical sciences disciplines. In addition, it offers a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in nursing.

Purpose: The proposed program was designed to provide a contemporary, relevant curriculum that culminates in a co-operative experience. The goal is to prepare graduates for employment (business, government, health and non-profit organizations) and/or for graduate school.

Curriculum: The College has traditionally offered courses in psychology as part of its allied health programs, including courses in developmental psychology, abnormal behavior, psychology of aging, and more. Forty-five of 120 total credits would be in the field of psychology. A core of seven required courses (24 credits) would include a co-operative experience and capstone. An additional 21 credits of electives in psychology would be required and give students an opportunity to customize the focus of their studies.

The proposed program would provide multiple integrative experiences in the senior year to mesh academic research, theory, and work experiences in a collaborative and team-focused milieu. The Capital Region provides extensive opportunities for co-operative experiences in human service, community, and similar organizations.

Students and Faculty: The College projects an enrollment of 10 students in the first year and 70 students in the fifth year of the proposed program. Since the program would be offered in day, evening, and weekend formats, it would be accessible to both traditional students and returning adult learners.

Two full-time and two part-time faculty with degrees in psychology teaching at the College now would be assigned to teach in the proposed program. An additional full-time Ph.D.-prepared faculty member would be hired during the first year of the program.

Resources: Available library resources include online databases such as EbscoHOST and PsycArticle. In addition, students would conduct research through computer simulations such as MyPsychLab, CobLab and Google Analytics. The current Director of Career Services will administer the program's co-operative experience.

Need: Projections for professional education indicate that employment opportunities for those with only an associate's degree are becoming limited. Discussions with high school counselors and employers suggest that the work-readiness aspect of the curriculum will support students' employability in the field. According to a 2011 American Psychological Association (APA) report, "[t]he U.S. Department of Labor predicts that jobs in the field of psychology will grow about 12 percent over the next 10 years."

Canvass Results: The Department canvassed degree-granting institutions in the Capital Region. Two institutions responded in support of the program and two institutions responded with no objections.

Department Review: In December 2012 and February 2013, a readiness review was conducted. The review team commented that the proposed program “is perfectly aligned with American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines for undergraduate psychology programs” and “fills a very important need in the Greater Albany market as it will provide a personal, private, low-cost bachelor’s degree program.” The Department has determined that the proposed program meets the standards for registration set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment authorizing Maria College to offer its first bachelor’s program in the social sciences discipline, a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree program in Psychology. This amendment would be effective until September 30, 2014, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case, master plan amendment shall be without term.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board approves this master plan amendment, the Department will register the program and the College will proceed to recruit and enroll students.