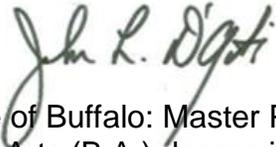
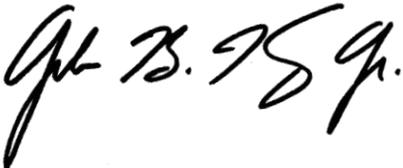




TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents
FROM: John L. D'Agati 
SUBJECT: Villa Maria College of Buffalo: Master Plan Amendment to offer a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Psychology
DATE: September 8, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment for Villa Maria College of Buffalo to offer a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) 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 2014 meeting where it will be voted on and action taken.

Procedural History

Villa Maria College of Buffalo submitted a proposal for a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree program in Psychology in January 2014.

Master plan amendment is required because this will be the institution's first baccalaureate degree in the disciplinary area of the Social Sciences.

Background Information

Villa Maria College is an independent degree-granting institution located in Buffalo, New York, offering associate degree programs in the areas of business, the fine arts, education, health, humanities, and the physical sciences; and baccalaureate degree programs in business, the fine arts, humanities, and interior design.

Purpose and Goals: The Bachelor of Arts degree program in Psychology is designed to integrate a background in liberal arts and sciences with intensive study of psychology, and also to offer current majors in the Arts, Music, and Business the opportunity to add breadth to their curriculum. The program will allow students to expand their current understanding of the field; to develop the ability to think critically; to apply theory to practical, professional and personal situations; and to understand human cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning. The current proposal is consistent with the College's mission of creating opportunities in the liberal arts for a diverse student body to meet unique needs for psychology education and lifelong intellectual and professional growth.

Curriculum: The program consists of a 32-credit core of courses in clinical psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and biopsychology; this is followed by 18 credits of electives that allow students to further explore these areas and topics relevant to their particular learning and career objectives. During their senior year, students will have a choice of capstone experiences - either an internship or thesis. The purpose of the internship is to provide an opportunity for supervised application of theory to practice in an approved setting, limited to carrying out those activities that do not require licensure. The thesis will give students an opportunity to focus on an intensive piece of independent work, culminating in an empirical or theoretical thesis.

Faculty: There is currently one full-time professor with a Psychology Ph.D. and one qualified adjunct faculty at the College. In the fall of 2015 another full-time Psychology professor with a Ph.D. in Psychology will be added as well as four additional qualified adjunct faculty.

Admissions: Admission requirements to the proposed program are the same as those for admission to the College, i.e., a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma.

Students: The student body of the proposed program is expected to grow from an initial number of 15 to about 75 within 5 years of the program's start. The characteristics of the student body are expected to mirror that of the College's as a whole: 82% from Erie County and 11% from the rest of the Western New York Region; 65% women and 24% minority.

Resources: The College's current facilities and equipment are adequate to support the needs of the program. Library long-range planning for the next five years includes increased funding for collection development in the psychology area. Expanded monograph, periodical and electronic database holdings in this field will remain a priority for the College over this time period.

Employment prospects: Graduates are expected to be well equipped for public and private sector careers that require knowledge of human behavior, development, and motivation. This may be especially useful to students pursuing careers in the provision of human services, law enforcement, community mental health, research, education, and management. Moreover, this program will prepare students for graduate studies in many areas including psychology, art therapy, music therapy, counseling, business, human services, law, and mental health.

Finances: The Department's Office of Audit Services conducted a review of the College's audited financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2013, and indicated that over the past decade, the College's federal composite score has shown the institution to be financially healthy.

Need: It is expected that the B.A. degree program in Psychology will add to the robustness of baccalaureate-level offerings at the College. Baccalaureate degree students in Arts, Music, Health Sciences, and Business will have the opportunity to double major in Psychology, minor in Psychology, or minor in Arts Therapy and Music Therapy. (The Art Therapy and Music Therapy minors are introductory in nature and will not lead to licensure.) In addition, the B.A. program in Psychology will significantly improve the College's retention efforts. Villa Maria has many students who enter into an art or music program, but realize that they also have an interest in the psychological and therapeutic aspects of their respective fields. Traditionally, the College has lost these students because it does not have alternative options to offer them. Thus, students may elect for psychology to be their primary course of study while continuing to pursue their interest in art, music, health sciences, or business.

Planning Review: The Department conducted a canvass of all colleges and universities in the Western Regents region. There were no responses.

Department Review: The Department has determined that the program, if approved, would meet registration standards.

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves a master plan amendment to authorize Villa Maria College of Buffalo to offer its first baccalaureate degree in the discipline of the Social Sciences. This amendment will be effective until September 30, 2015, 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 the master plan amendment, the Department will register the program and the College will proceed to recruit and enroll students.