



To: Higher Education Committee
From: Valerie Grey *Valerie Grey*
Subject: Fei Tian College: Establishment, B.F.A., Classical Chinese Dance, and Mus.B., Music (Performance)
Date: June 20, 2011

Authorizations:

Carol J. Tatar *John J. [Signature]*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents authorize Fei Tian College, Cuddebackville (Orange County) to offer programs in Music (Performance) and Classical Chinese Dance leading, respectively, to the degrees of Bachelor of Music (Mus.B.) and Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.)?

Reason for Consideration

Required by State regulation.

Proposed Handling

The question will come before the Higher Education Committee at its June 2011 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken. It will then come before the full Board at its June 2011 meeting for final action.

Background Information

The Department has received a petition for a provisional charter incorporating Fei Tian College, with authorization to award the Mus.B. and B.F.A. degrees.

The application process began with the submission of a self-study on June 14, 2010. On December 9, 2010, the Department conducted an on-site peer review to assess physical resources, interview the trustees, faculty, staff, and prospective students, and confirm the accuracy of information provided in the self-study. The self-study, with several addendums, was exceptionally complete and responsive to

Department standards. The review team confirmed that Fei Tian is in compliance with the standards for registration of baccalaureate programs in Music (Performance) and Classical Chinese Dance.

The proposed college is located in Cuddebackville, Orange County, on a campus housing a Buddhist Temple and a registered high school (grades 6-12). The high school, Fei Tian Academy of the Arts, was first approved by the Department in March 2007 and received an absolute charter as a secondary school from the Regents in July 2009. The Academy conducts academic programs leading to a Regents diploma and also offers AP courses and provides a solid foundation for the proposed college. Enrollment is about 200.

A canvass of all degree granting institutions in the Mid-Hudson region resulted in no objection to the proposed Fei Tian College or its programs.

The Department has determined that the proposed program would meet registration standards. A summary of major components of the institution and the review team's assessments of these components is attached. A recommendation regarding the provisional charter appears separately on the Board's agenda.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize Fei Tian College, Cuddebackville, to offer B.F.A. and Mus.B. programs, respectively, in Classical Chinese Dance and Music (Performance) as its first baccalaureate programs in the disciplinary area of fine arts. The amendment will be effective until June 30, 2012, unless the programs are registered prior to that date, in which case master plan amendment shall be without term.

Attachment

Information in Support of Recommendation

Academic Review

Mission. The stated mission of the proposed Fei Tian College is to preserve the artistic and cultural traditions of China and provide a solid liberal arts foundation for its students. To this end, it would offer dual language education (English/Chinese) and specialized training at the baccalaureate level in the fields of Classical Chinese Dance and Music (Performance). The proposed college would also seek to nurture in its students the intellectual and moral virtues that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, compassion, and forbearance in the context of the teachings of Falun Dafa (also known as Falun Gong). Possessed of cross-cultural artistic skills, proficient in two critical world-languages, and with the knowledge and perspective imparted by a solid liberal arts education, graduates are expected to be attractive to a wide variety of employers in the global community.

The review team found all aspects of the proposed organization practices to be consistent with the stated mission.

Curriculum.

- Classical Chinese Dance (HEGIS: 1008.00) leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) degree
- Music Performance (HEGIS: 1004.00) leading to the Bachelor of Music (Mus.B.) degree

The 140-credit B.F.A. program is designed to provide systemic college-level training in classical Chinese dance. The 88-credit major will include progressive study in Classical Chinese Dance Techniques and the History of Chinese Dance. The program will prepare students for professional dance companies specializing in Classical Chinese dance but also for graduate study and for professional work other than dancing in fields related to the Chinese performing arts.

The 143-credit Mus. B. program will offer professional training in both classical Western instruments and traditional Chinese instruments. It will also provide students with the cultural and linguistic foundations to become multicultural communicators. It will include 80 credits in the major.

Graduates of each of the proposed programs will be prepared for participation in one of the several companies of Shen Yun Performing Arts as musicians, dancers or non-performing professional staff. Performances of Shen Yun are sponsored world-wide by local Falun Dafa groups. At present there are three Shen Yun companies.

In addition to their study of the performing arts, all students will take liberal arts courses, including the study of both Western Civilization and Chinese Civilization and the English and Chinese languages, quantitative reasoning (math), computing, and information literacy. Students will learn to think and write critically and will be exposed to major works of both Western and Chinese cultures. The emphasis on liberal arts coursework sets Fei Tian apart from more narrowly focused professional dance and music

performance schools in China and Taiwan. The B.F.A. program will include 46 credits in the liberal arts; the Mus. B. program will include 50 credits in the liberal arts.

The review team concluded that the proposed baccalaureate curricula are satisfactory in depth and breadth, rigorous, and consistent with the institution's mission.

Faculty. The proposed college will have 19 full-time faculty and a small number of part-time faculty. The full-time music faculty are well qualified by virtue of professional experiences and recognitions, and include one person with a Ph.D. in Music from the University of Chicago and one with a Master's degree in Music Performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University. The full-time faculty for the Classical Chinese Dance program have strong records of professional experience and recognitions in the field which more than compensate for the absence of an earned doctorate in this group. The faculty for liberal arts courses includes one person in computer science with an earned doctorate from Princeton and another in Chinese Civilization and language about to receive a doctorate in East Asian Languages from Columbia University.

The review team concluded that the faculty are well qualified and highly competent.

Facilities. The Fei Tian campus is located in a pastoral site off Route 209 near the New York/New Jersey border, in Cuddebackville, (Orange County). The buildings on the institution's campus feature traditional Chinese Tang Dynasty temples as well as modern Western style instructional buildings. The campus currently houses a registered high school, Fei Tian Academy of Arts. Facilities directly supporting the instruction of Fei Tian Academy of the Arts have a total gross area of 93,600 square feet. An additional 80,700 square feet are being constructed for the proposed college. The proposed Fei Tian College will have separately dedicated faculty and administrative office spaces and a separate library. Currently available classrooms, dance studios, and music practice rooms will accommodate the proposed courses and students. The library has a collection of about 30,000 items based on the proposed curricula.

The review team concluded that academic resources and facilities are excellent in scope and condition.

Finances. Fei Tian College will be privately funded, principally through the contributions of the sponsoring religious organization, Dragon Springs Buddhist Temple, Inc., which is located on the same grounds. Dragon Springs is a recognized 501(c)(3) entity. The proposed college currently has on hand a \$3 million endowment (or about \$50,000 per student, using the projected enrollment in four years). It expects to fund fully all students in its startup phase.

The review team concluded that the proposed college has more than adequate financial resources to conduct its programs at a high qualitative level.

Governance. Fei Tian College will have a separate Board of Trustees operating under a conventional set of college by-laws. The by-laws and the contract for use of facilities and support indicate an arms-length relationship in both governance structure and finances between the proposed Fei Tian College and the sponsoring religious entity,

Dragon Springs Buddhist, Inc. The faculty are organized in committees charged with designing and assessing the curriculum and academic standards.

The review team concluded that the Board of Trustees is well informed of the range of trustee responsibilities, experienced in higher education, and competent. The team concluded that faculty were deeply engaged in the development of the curriculum, and are responsible for its conduct and ongoing evaluation.

Students. The proposed college plans to admit a small number of students based on assessment of academic preparation and potential character. The estimated initial enrollment is 15, rising to 60 by the fourth year of operations. It is expected that prospective students will come from other countries as well as the United States to pursue studies in cross-cultural and traditional arts in a unique learning environment. Successful applicants must have a U.S. high school diploma, GED, or the equivalent from another country. In general, an admitted student must have a high school grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and/or an SAT combined score of at least 1,000 (or 19 on the ACT). An applicant essay is required. Admitted students are expected to have a passion for traditional Chinese culture and for cross cultural communication. Because students from Asian countries will be expected to achieve a higher level of proficiency in the English language than is usually the case in their home countries, the proposed college anticipates attracting some students who aspire to the world stage.

The review team concluded that, based on interviews with prospective students, observation of their performance skills in dance and music, and perusal of their scores in academic fields, the proposed college is likely to enroll and retain well qualified students.

Planning Review

Need. Careers in dance and music depend heavily on both talent and training. The Occupational Outlook Handbook (2010-11 edition) states that dancers “face intense competition, only the most talented find regular work,” and that the number of jobs is projected to grow by only seven percent between 2008 and 2018. It describes competition among musicians for jobs as “keen,” with the number of jobs projected to grow by only eight percent between 2008 and 2018. In New York, the State Labor Department projects only a 4.3 percent growth in jobs for dancers between 2008 and 2018 and only a four percent growth in jobs for musicians, statewide.

However, the programs Fei Tian would offer would be unique in many ways, giving their graduates both breadth of cultural understanding and training in highly specialized fields that could serve them well in careers as professional dancers and musicians. They would study both Western and Chinese civilization and become bilingual in English and Chinese. Their professional training would encompass both classical Chinese and other forms of dance or music.

Effect on Other Institutions. The focus of the proposed programs may make them unique in the State. In the Hudson Valley, only five institutions offer baccalaureate programs in music performance and only three of them – SUC Purchase,

Manhattanville College, and Nyack College – offer professional programs leading to Mus.B. degrees. Three institutions in the region offer baccalaureate programs in dance, and only one of them – SUNY Purchase – offers a professional program culminating in a B.F.A. degree.

The Department canvassed all higher education institutions in the Mid-Hudson region. No concerns or objections were received.



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PETITION FOR ACTION BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS

To the Counsel and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs:

Name of Institution: Fei Tian College

Purpose of the Petition: To secure a provisional charter with authority to award the earned degrees of Bachelor of Music (Mus. B.) and Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.).

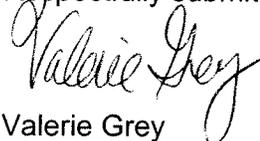
Institutional Information: The petitioners seek to establish Fei Tian College. The administrative and academic offices of the College are to be located at 140 Galley Hill Road, Cuddebackville (Orange County), New York, on a campus that includes a Buddhist Temple and a registered secondary school.

The proposed purposes of the institution are to offer baccalaureate programs in Classical Chinese Dance and Music (Performance) and to promote the development of values of integrity, compassion and forbearance in accordance with the principles of Buddhism.

The Department has determined that the proposed programs, if authorized, would meet the standards for registration set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. A recommendation for approval of a master plan amendment for this new degree-granting institution appears separately on the Regents agenda.

Recommendation: I recommend that the Board of Regents grant a provisional charter for a period of five years to Fei Tian College, Cuddebackville, NY, with authority to award the earned degrees of Bachelor of Music (Mus.B.) and Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.).

Respectfully submitted,


Valerie Grey