



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY,  
NY 12234

To: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

From: James N. Baldwin

Subject: Master Plan Amendment: Medaille College, Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.), Clinical Psychology, at its Amherst campus

Date: April 21, 2011

Authorizations:

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)**

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment for Medaille College to authorize the College to offer its first doctoral program, a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology, at its Amherst campus? A related charter amendment to authorize the College to award the Doctor of Psychology degree (Psy.D.) is on the Board's agenda this month.

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State regulation.

#### **Proposed Handling**

The question will come before the full Board for consideration at its May 2011 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

#### **Background Information**

Medaille College (Buffalo) seeks Regents approval of a master plan amendment to authorize it to offer a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D) in Clinical Psychology at its Amherst campus. Master plan amendment is needed because the proposed program would be the institution's first at the doctoral level. The program would be registered to prepare candidates for psychology licensure; it was reviewed by both the Office of Higher Education and Office of the Professions. The College offers master's degree programs in the following disciplinary areas: business (all campuses), social sciences (Amherst and Rochester campuses), and education (main and Amherst campuses). These include licensure-qualifying mental health counseling programs at Amherst and Rochester.

**Purpose:** The proposed program's primary goal is to prepare students for careers as licensed psychologists. Objectives include training to established competency benchmarks in diagnostic and therapeutic services, working with a diverse population, and the application of the biological, psychological, and sociological bases of human functioning to the provision of empirically supported psychological and health care services. The proposed program would complement the College's undergraduate and graduate programs in psychology and the graduate program in mental health counseling. It would not prepare School Psychologists.

**Curriculum and Academic Resources:** The proposed program's content is informed by the curriculum of the National Council of Schools and Programs in Professional Psychology. It is designed to fulfill New York educational requirements for Psychology licensure as well as accreditation standards of the American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation as a Clinical Psychology program. Students would complete 99 semester hours, including 69 credits of core courses, 12 credits of proseminar and practicum, 3 credits of Clinical Dissertation, and 15 credits of electives. Additionally, students must complete the Clinical Competence Examination and a one-year, 1,800-hour pre-doctoral internship. Optional concentrations would be offered in Child and Family Psychology and General Adult Clinical Psychology.

A Program Director, a Director of Clinical Training, a full-time faculty member, and adjunct faculty members are in place to initiate the program. In addition, the College intends to hire a full-time core faculty of six faculty and two faculty administrators over the first five years of the program's operation, in addition to adjunct faculty and clerical, academic, and technical support personnel. The student:faculty ratio will be 13:1, in keeping with APA accreditation requirements.

**Students:** The student body would include those with appropriate undergraduate training in psychology and who seek the advanced training required to pursue careers as practicing clinical psychologists. The program's student body is projected to be 30 percent non-resident alien (Canadian students) and at least 30 percent minority students, based on the current graduate student body at the College. Enrollment is projected at 18 each year with total enrollment of 87 by the fifth year of the program. Last fall, Medaille had 891 graduate students across all its campuses.

**Need:** According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of psychologists in the U.S. is expected to increase by 12 percent through 2018, at the average for all occupations. "Employment will grow because of increased demand for psychological services in schools, hospitals, social service agencies, mental health centers, substance abuse treatment clinics, consulting firms, and private companies." (BLS, 2010). Those with doctoral degrees in applied specialties, such as clinical psychology, should have a competitive edge in the job market. An eight percent increase in clinical, counseling, and school psychology positions is projected for New York, with 330 openings annually. In the College's needs assessment, students expressed a desire for a doctoral program in clinical psychology.

**Canvass Results:** The Department canvassed degree-granting institutions in the Western region as well as all doctoral-granting institutions statewide. Two institutions objected to the proposed program: Alfred University and St. John's University. Alfred University maintains that the proposed program "will have a direct detrimental effect and may pose a serious risk to our future enrollments and training opportunities." It argues that the programs are similar, that Medaille would draw from Alfred's pool of prospective students, and that practicum and internships placements can be scarce. St. John's noted that the proposed program "would not conflict directly" with its programs, but it asked Medaille to address how it

would provide internships for its students without harm to existing programs. Eight New York institutions offer Psy.D. programs; seven of the registered Psy.D. programs prepare candidates for School Psychologist certification, whereas Medaille's proposed program would not.

Medaille College responded to all concerns. It provided a side-by-side comparison of the Alfred and Medaille programs to highlight differences among them. While Alfred stated that the "Child and Family Concentration" in the proposed program made that option similar to its own, Medaille noted that its program is not designed to prepare candidates for School Psychology certification (unlike Alfred's program). According to Medaille, the proposed program would focus "much more heavily on psychopathology, personality assessment, and theories and interventions of psychotherapy, as would be expected of a clinical program." The Alfred and Medaille campuses are 90 miles apart, and Medaille states that it has "consistently served the educational needs of nontraditional and minority students from the Western and Genesee regions," as well as students from southern Ontario, Canada.

The College is developing a variety of new placement opportunities. Letters from Buffalo Psychiatric Center, the Western New York Developmental Disabilities Service Office, and Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center suggest those entities are willing to work with Medaille students and that they have not been approached by Alfred in the past. In addition, Medaille states that while many students may choose to remain in the Buffalo area the College will advise them of the advantages of competing on a national level for internships and post-doctoral fellowships.

***Department Review:*** 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 for Medaille College, Buffalo, to authorize the College to offer its first doctoral program, a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology, at its Amherst campus. The amendment will be effective until May 31, 2012, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case master plan amendment shall be without term.