



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: John L. D'Agati *John L. D'Agati*

SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment: American Museum of Natural History, M.A.T. in Earth Science 7-12

DATE: June 8, 2015

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Elizabeth P Berlin*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment for the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) to authorize its first master's level program, a Master of Arts in Teaching?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the full Board at its June 2015 meeting for action.

Procedural History

A master plan amendment is required because this would be AMNH's first master's level program. A related petition for a charter amendment to add authority to grant the M.A.T. degree will also be before the Board at the June meeting.

Background Information

The American Museum of Natural History (Central Park West at 79th, New York City) seeks authority to award a Master of Arts in Teaching degree (M.A.T.) in Earth Science 7-12. AMNH has offered an Earth Science Teaching Residency 7-12 program since 2012 through funding from NYSED's Race to the Top (RTTT) Graduate Level Clinically Rich Teacher Preparation Pilot Program. In 2013 and 2014, AMNH graduated two cohorts of 20 and 16 students, respectively, with M.A.T. degrees that were conferred by the Board of Regents pursuant to Commissioner's Regulations §52.21(b)(5)(iv)(d)(2). The RTTT Graduate Level Clinically Rich Teacher Preparation Pilot Program is now coming to an end and AMNH seeks to amend its charter and master plan to permit it to register and offer a 36-credit, 15-month residency program and to award the M.A.T. in Earth Science 7-12 degree to graduates of that program. The AMNH M.A.T. program seeks to prepare certified Earth Science teachers to teach in high need schools and high need areas of the state, New York City in particular.

In 2006, AMNH was granted authority to offer its first Ph.D. degree in Comparative Biology, offered through the Graduate School. AMNH has also provided graduate-level courses to students in programs leading to teacher certification at other institutions and to many certified teachers. Hundreds of candidates from alternative and traditional programs have taken on-site and online courses from AMNH, and thousands of currently certified teachers have completed AMNH-offered teacher professional development programs such as Seminars on Science and Teacher Renewal for Urban Science Teachers (TRUST). AMNH plans to continue these programs.

The Department has determined that the proposed M.A.T. Earth Science 7-12 program meets the standards for registration set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. Pursuant to the process concerning actions requiring master plan amendments, the Department canvassed all degree-granting institutions in the New York City Region for comments concerning the proposed program. Five institutions responded to the canvass by indicating that they had no objections and/or no comments to submit concerning the proposal. One additional institution expressed strong support for the proposal, stating, "[T]his program will provide graduates with accountability to ensure future student achievement and academic gains are made in the field of science, specifically within the high school population."

Recommendation

VOTED, that the Board of Regents approve the amendment to the master plan of the American Museum of Natural History and authorize AMNH to offer its first masters level degree, the Master of Arts in Teaching.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment at its June 2015 meeting, the Department will register the program effective June 30, 2015.