



TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

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

SUBJECT: Degree Authorization and Master Plan Amendment: The College of Westchester, B.S. in Interactive Digital Media

DATE: November 9, 2015

AUTHORIZATION(S): *MaryEllen Eina*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents authorize The College of Westchester to award the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree and approve a master plan amendment to authorize the College to offer its first program in the Fine Arts discipline?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State regulation.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the full Board at its November 2015 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

Procedural History

The College of Westchester has proposed a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) program in Interactive Digital Media. Degree authorization is needed because the College does not have authority to award the Bachelor of Science degree. A master plan amendment is required because the proposed program would be the College's first in the Fine Arts discipline.

Background Information

The intent of the Interactive Digital Media B.S. program is to prepare students in the entrepreneurial and strategic aspects of interactive digital and social media design, production, and utilization for business. Graduates would be equipped for entry into

Digital/Social Media positions such as content creator, manager, coordinator, strategist, planner, and/or designer. The proposed program aligns with the College's core mission - to provide career-based degree programs leading to gainful employment.

The program would build on the College's associate degree program in Digital Media. Upon exploring options with an external advisory committee and employers, the College designed an interdisciplinary course of study in digital and social media design and business topics that relates specifically to contemporary marketing techniques. An internship with a local employer would provide students the opportunity to apply their skills in the workplace.

Twenty courses in the 120-credit program comprise the interdisciplinary Business and Digital Media major, including Social Media Marketing and Advertising, Mobile Application Development, Publishing Design and Layout, HTML and JavaScript Programming, Foundations of Interactive Design and Digital FX and Motion Graphics. Business courses would include Principles of Marketing, Project Management Essentials, Marketing Management, and Media Traffic and Analysis. The program also incorporates the aforementioned internship and a senior capstone project.

The College has a history of providing postsecondary educational programs to a wide range of students, including traditional-aged, first-generation college students and adult learners. Overall, The College of Westchester student population is almost evenly divided among African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian students. The male-to-female student ratio is 2:3. The College expects the student demographics to remain stable. Initial program cohorts are anticipated to number about 35 students in total, with 20 anticipated at the freshman level and 15 transfer students primarily drawn from current College associate degree students. The College projects a total enrollment of 79 students by year five.

Classroom facilities are fully networked and contain appropriate business and instructional software, as well as presentation hardware. The College's library resources include 8,000 business, health care, and social science periodicals and access to electronic texts and databases. New acquisitions have expanded support for the proposed program, with related library budget increases planned going forward. A full array of academic support services, including advisors, success coaches, and counselors are available days, evenings, and weekends. In addition, the College's Learning Center offers students the opportunity to work with a full-time learning assistant or with peer or professional tutors.

Faculty members have experience in digital media, business, information technology, and general education instructors with at least a master's degree in their field. These instructors have advanced degrees, appropriate licenses and certifications, and track records in their respective careers. Two faculty members who will be scheduled to teach in the program hold earned doctorates in relevant disciplines. A planned new faculty member will bring specific background experience in digital media marketing applications.

The College states that the program will meet student, employer, and institution needs. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts a promising future for Social Media Strategists, with a +7 job growth between 2012 and 2022 in the State of New York. Likewise, Forrester Research suggests that by 2016 businesses will spend as much on social and digital media as they spend today on television marketing. As a result, the College believes the proposed program will strengthen its mission and enable the institution to meet the needs of students and employers in the tri-state area.

The Department determined that the program meets all standards for registration. As part of the master planning process, the Department canvassed institutions of higher education in the Hudson Valley region. One institution responded; no objections or statements of negative impact were received.

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents authorize The College of Westchester to award the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree and approve a master plan amendment to authorize the College to offer its first program in the Fine Arts discipline. The amendment will be effective until November 17, 2016, 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 of Regents approves the degree authorization and master plan amendment, the Department will register the program at the College.