

COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON
FOUNDED 1770

P. George Benson, President

November 1, 2011

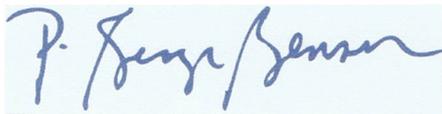
Dr. T. Michael Raley, Director
Academic Affairs and Licensing Division
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
1122 Lady Street, Suite 300
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Dr. Raley,

Enclosed you will find a program planning summary for the proposed Bachelor of Professional Studies degree and the Adult Degree Completion program at the College of Charleston. It is designed for adult learners with prior college experience but lack a four-year degree. The development of the Bachelor of Professional Studies is intended to increase the number of college graduates in South Carolina and in the Lowcountry. Two strategies will be especially critical to the program: increasing the rate at which students complete college and providing ways for adults in the workforce to return to college to complete degrees.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. George Benson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

PGB/ch

Name of Institution: College of Charleston

Designation: Program Planning Summary

Name of Degree: Bachelor of Professional Studies

Name of Program: Adult Degree Completion

Number of credit hours in program: 62

Program qualifies for supplemental Palmetto Fellows Scholarship/LIFE Scholarship awards: No

CIP Code: 30.9999

Proposed Date of Implementation: Fall 2013

Justification of need for the proposed program:

The Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS) is designed for adult learners with prior college experience but who lack a four-year degree. Individuals who have completed an AA or AS degree, or who have 60 or more transferable college credits with a 2.6 cumulative GPA and are at least 24 years of age, are eligible for admission. The program of study includes five common 4-credit seminars emphasizing critical competencies, entry and capstone transitions, and the College of Charleston's tradition and commitment to the liberal arts, as well as two course clusters that provide focused study in "Organizational Leadership and Management" or "Communication and Information Systems." The Bachelor of Professional Studies degree requires 122 credits; the degree completion program requires 62 credits with a minimum of 35 credits must be completed in residence.

The development of the BPS is intended to increase the number of college graduates in South Carolina, and specifically in the Lowcountry. This goal is consistent with the Lumina Foundation's "Big Goal" to increase the proportion of the U.S. population that holds a high-quality post-secondary degree or credential to 60 percent by 2025.¹ Only 34.4 percent of South Carolinians between the ages of 25 and 64 hold a two- or four-year college degree (compared to 37.9% nationally in 2008). South Carolina will need to award 4,553 additional degrees each year beyond the current rate of attainment to reach the Big Goal (a 7.3 percent annual increase). To do this, "two strategies will be especially critical: increasing the rate at which students complete college and providing ways for adults in the workforce to return to college to complete degrees."² The proposed Bachelor of Professional Studies embraces both strategies by providing improved access to the College of Charleston and a highly flexible schedule with multiple modes of delivery.

The Bachelor of Professional Studies degree emphasizes five critical competencies identified by employers as essential: Numeracy, Scientific Analysis, Communication, Problem-solving, and Ethical Decision-making. Proficiency in these five critical competencies, emphasized heavily in the five common seminars as well as throughout the program of study, will equip graduates with the skills and dispositions required to be successful in a variety of employment sectors. Educational attainment drives job creation: "Analyses of economic growth show that the vitality of economies—either local or national—depends less on 'home runs' (such as securing a new manufacturing plant) than on the skills and knowledge of the workforce. Talent is the key, and higher education is the lever for developing it."³ Sixty percent of all jobs in the U.S. will require postsecondary education by 2018.⁴

The Bachelor of Professional Studies will be based at the College of Charleston's North Campus facility (located near the Charleston International Airport and adjacent to Boeing) to provide easy access to adult students living and working throughout the tri-county area. Degree completion rates vary considerably by county. While 46.5 percent of the residents in Charleston county hold a college degree, only 35% of adults in Dorchester County and 28.3% of adults in Berkley County possess either a two-year or four-year degree. Residents in other counties in South Carolina may also be served by this program through weekend, hybrid, and online course schedules. In

¹ Lumina Foundation for Education, *A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education*, September 2010. Available at http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A_stronger_nation_through_higher_education.pdf.

² Lumina Foundation for Education, p. 3.

³ Lumina Foundation for Education, p. 5.

⁴ Georgetown University Center on Education, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*, June 2010. Available at <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018/>

addition, this program will specifically seek to close the racial and ethnic completion gap by aggressively recruiting adult students from underserved populations.⁵ A longstanding partnership with Trident Technical College provides the foundation to jointly recruit and coordinate advising for adult students interested in degree completion through the Bachelor of Professional Studies program.

Anticipated Program Demand and Productivity:

The statistics provided above demonstrate the critical *need* for a high quality public degree completion option in the Charleston region, but *demand* is more difficult to predict. In some respects, building this program to meet the need will produce the demand by offering adult students a more affordable, accessible, academically rigorous program of study than is currently provided by the growing number of for-profit institutions in the Charleston market. Focus groups with prospective students and with area employers demonstrated the appeal of the program of study and the flexibility and accessibility of the degree. Prospective students interested in a promotion within their current workplace, in returning to the workforce, or in a career-change all reported that the Bachelor of Professional Studies program would meet their needs. Students were particularly attracted by the reputation of quality associated with a degree from the College of Charleston. The first four-credit seminar, a transition course emphasizing ethical decision-making, is designed to allow each student to work directly with an academic advisor and the faculty member to assess their existing academic skills, articulate their academic and career goals, and plan a highly individualized program of study.

Workforce development is a critical need for new industries locating in South Carolina as well as industries founded in South Carolina but growing in complexity and size. One home-grown industry employer participating in the focus group reported that the local Charleston-area workforce got the company started, but as the business has grown in complexity and size, they require a more educated employee and have been forced to hire from outside the area. This program will provide a way for employers to invest in local employees through education and degree completion. We anticipate modest beginning enrollment that may grow rapidly as the program is marketed. The proportion of students who are enrolled full-time versus part-time will influence degree productivity. A student enrolled full-time, year around could reasonably complete the program in two years.

Assessment of extent to which the program duplicates existing programs in the state:

No other four-year public institution in South Carolina offers a similar program with a *primary* focus on degree completion. The University of South Carolina's Extended University focuses on making undergraduate courses accessible to students "who vary in some way from the traditional profile." The Palmetto Program, for example, allows adult students who are place-bound due to family or employment circumstances to complete a four-year degree at a regional campus by accessing baccalaureate-level courses via distance education. A Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BLS) has been offered since 2007 and a Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership (BOL) has been available since 2009. The BLS and BOL are designed as full degree programs whereas the proposed Bachelor of Professional Studies at the College of Charleston is intentionally designed as a degree completion option for adult students in Charleston and the surrounding area.

Clemson University's Professional Advancement and Continuing Education (PACE) Center has been in existence for fifty years and offers a wide array of executive and professional development opportunities for organizations as well as individuals in South Carolina. PACE does not offer undergraduate degree or degree completion programs. The Citadel offers four undergraduate programs in the evening for civilians. Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Civil Engineering and Electrical Engineering are offered as 2+2 programs in collaboration with Trident Technical College. Courses fulfilling the degree requirements in this program are only offered in the evenings and limited to these four traditional academic majors. Coastal Carolina's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) provides non-credit courses designed to meet the needs of local and regional residents. No degree program is offered by OLLI. Lander University and Francis Marion University offer continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities for area residents, but do not offer adult students courses designed for academic credit leading to a degree.

⁵ In 2008, 39.6 percent of white SC residents held a postsecondary degree compared to 20.5% of African Americans, 16.8% of Hispanics, 55% of Asians, and 24.7% of Native Americans. Data from Lumina Foundation for Education, p. 94.

Relationship of the proposed program to existing programs at the institution:

The Bachelor of Professional Studies is a fourth degree for the College of Charleston (in addition to the AB, BA, BS) and represents a new form of community outreach consistent with our public mission. The core campus of the College of Charleston primarily serves a traditional-age population and the downtown location presents problems for adults working full-time to access courses and programs. The academic course clusters in the BPS are created primarily from existing courses at the College of Charleston, but represent multiple disciplines organized thematically to advance employment and promotion goals rather than in traditional academic majors. The common seminars were designed by College of Charleston faculty and we anticipate that some core campus faculty will choose to teach in the Bachelor of Professional Studies program as it is implemented and grows.

Relationship of the proposed program to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation:

The College of Charleston worked closely with Trident Technical College in designing the Bachelor of Professional Studies degree and we anticipate continuing to work directly with academic advisors, faculty and academic administrative leaders at Trident Technical College in aligning the delivery of the BPS to meet the diverse needs of Lowcountry students. Similarly, the Citadel has developed a graduate program in Project Management that would likely appeal to some BPS graduates. The College of Charleston is committed to collaborating with other colleges and universities to meet the rapidly expanding workforce development needs of the area and to increasing the rate at which students’ complete college and providing ways for adults in the workforce to return to college to complete degrees.

Outline of the Curriculum:

Credits Required for Admission:

AA or AS degree ~or~

60 transferable college credits including General Education Distribution (36-37 credits), 24 years old

Common Transition Seminar “Ethics in 21 st Century Living”	4 credits
Common Core Liberal Arts Seminars (3 @ 4 credits) “Advances in Science and Technology” “Diversity in the Workplace” “Understanding Global Issues”	12 credits
Course Track (choose one) Organizational Leadership and Management Communication and Information Systems	30 credits (18 from same track; 12 related electives)
Degree Electives (completed within the program or transferred)	12 credits
Common Capstone Seminar	<u>4 credits</u>
	62 credits
Total Required for Bachelor of Professional Studies	122 credits

Total costs associated with implementing the proposed program (general estimates):

The degree will be offered at the College of Charleston North Campus so no additional facilities, technology, or physical infrastructure will be required. The Dean of the North Campus will direct and lead the program. This position, although currently vacant, is already in place. A number of academic support and facilities staff are also in place at the North Campus. Courses offered at the North Campus are currently taught by roster and adjunct College of Charleston faculty. Anecdotal evidence from prospective student focus groups and Adult Student Open House sessions held at the North Campus indicates that this will be a popular program. As enrollments grow, the College will direct more faculty and resources toward the program. The Bachelor of Professional Studies is expected to be self-sustaining within three years and ultimately revenue-generating. Until such time, the College will invest the required resources to support (and establish when necessary) admissions, advising, financial aid counseling, technology and library access, and high quality instruction.