

**New Program Proposal
Bachelor of Arts in Middle Level Education
University of South Carolina - Aiken**

Summary

USC-Aiken requests approval to offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Middle Level Education to be implemented in January 2007.

The Board of Trustees approved the proposal on February 6, 2006. It was submitted to the Commission on May 1, 2006, and reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs without substantive comment and voted upon favorable on July 31, 2006.

According to the proposal, the purpose of the program is to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Middle Level Education to students seeking initial teacher certification. The B. A. in Middle Level Education will prepare middle school teachers specifically for working with young adolescents in grades 5-8 through a curriculum that blends theory and relevant practice with the appropriate content knowledge for the middle grades. The need for the program, according to the institution is based on the approval of middle grades certification for South Carolina Schools in July, 1999, by the South Carolina State Legislature. In order to be certified to teach in the middle grades (5-8), the South Carolina State Department of Education requires that students graduating from a teacher preparation program and seeking initial certification after July 1, 2008 must hold a degree from an approved middle level teacher training program. The Middle Level Education Program supports the mission of USC-Aiken, as well as the philosophy and mission of the School of Education.

Special interest in the development of a Middle Level Education program is associated with the re-authorized federal No Child Left Behind Act which requires all teachers to achieve "highly qualified" status by 2006. The NCLB Act allows states to determine a definition of "highly qualified" for grade levels and the grades included in middle level education. The South Carolina state description of "highly qualified" middle school teachers includes 1) a candidate focus on two academic areas of concentration and 2) an institutional focus on the achievement of National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. Implementing a program in Middle Level Education at an NCATE accredited university such as USC-Aiken and specifically focusing on two academic areas of concentration will prepare teachers to become "highly qualified."

Employment opportunities, in the USCA region, consist of 25 middle schools located school districts in Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell 29, Colleton, Edgefield, Hampton 1, Hampton 2, Lexington 1, and Lexington 3. For the 2004 – 2005 academic year, Aiken County hired 53 teachers in the 11 middle school: 14 in language arts, 9 in mathematics, 5 in science, 5 in social studies, 8 in special education, and 12 in other categories such as art and guidance.

The curriculum of the proposed program consists of 124 - 132 credits hours of undergraduate coursework in general education, professional education and two content areas including social studies, English/Language Arts, mathematics, and science. There are no new courses to be added at the institution. Admission standards require that students interested in pursuing the B.A. degree in Middle Level education must meet the same criteria required for all initial teacher certification programs at USC-Aiken. Students are admitted to the proposed program and gain candidate status upon completion of 60 hours of undergraduate study, a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 in all undergraduate course work and have a grade of C or better in English and Communications. In addition, students in the proposed middle level program must have a C or better and a 2.75 in their subject area coursework. Additional requirements are that students must have passing scores on all three sections of the Praxis I exam, submit a disposition statement to be reviewed by the Professional Education Committee, interview with the School of Education Professional Education Interview Committee and be approved by the USCA Professional Education Committee.

The proposal was sent to South Carolina State Department of Education/Office of Teacher Quality, for review. The feedback from SDE was positive, with a recommendation that the institution include the new admission standards for professional programs in education in their guidelines.

Similar programs include the Bachelor of Arts in Middle Level Education (or Junior High/Intermediate/Middle School Teacher Education) degree program offered at USC-Columbia, USC-Upstate, Coastal Carolina University, Claflin University, Presbyterian College, and Bob Jones University. A Bachelor of Science in Middle Level Education (or Junior High/Intermediate/Middle School Teacher Education) is offered at College of Charleston, South Carolina State University, and Winthrop University. A Masters of Arts in Teaching degree in Middle Level Education is offered at Clemson University.

Enrollment in the proposed degree program is estimated to begin at 16 headcount students (16 FTE) in Spring 2007 and increase to 40 headcount students (32 FTE) in the fourth and fifth year of the program. In the first year of the program, it is anticipated that eight of the 16 students will be new to USC-Aiken and eight will be current elementary and/or secondary education majors who will change their major to

middle level education. If the enrollment projections are met, the program will meet the current CHE program productivity standards.

Consistent with National Middle School Association Standards, institutions preparing middle level teachers employ faculty members who have middle level experience and expertise. The School of Education at USCA currently has approximately 15 faculty with both expertise and teaching experience in the middle grades. There will be one headcount administrator (one FTE), 11 headcount faculty (3 FTE), and 2 headcount staff (2 FTE) serving the new program. Because a majority of the middle level professional program classes will be taught as joint classes with the secondary program classes, no additional full time faculty will be required for at least three years. Field experiences and student teaching will be supervised by USCA and qualified middle school faculty members. As with current programs, adjuncts, where appropriate, will be used on occasions when full time faculty may not be available.

The proposed program is subject to review under USC-Aiken accreditation by professional organizations including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and its affiliated specialty associations including the National Middle School Association (NMSA), National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). Additionally, the program will demonstrate discipline-specific objectives as articulated in the South Carolina Curriculum Standards and South Carolina's ADEPT program. All students completing the middle level program must be certified by the South Carolina State Department of Education, pass the Praxis II middle level examinations in two content areas and undergo an FBI fingerprint review.

There are no additional physical plant or equipment requirements for the proposed program. The USCA Gregg-Graniteville Library provides print and electronic resources. The USCA Library provides access to DISCUS (Infotrak Search bank) that contains over 1000 full-text journal titles. Other library resources that complement instruction are Interlibrary Loan, Internet access, instruction, and a variety of class-specific user education programs. Internet-based curricular resources are provided by electronic link. Currently, approximately 52% of the publications and books dealing with "middle schools" are dated no earlier than 1995. The Library currently has hardcopy subscriptions to three middle schools journals and the School of Education is recommending that the library purchase an additional middle school journal (*Middle Ground*) that is available through the National Middle School Association. Additionally, indexing and abstracting services available to support the Middle Level Education program and the new electronic databases are available through the South Carolina Virtual Library.

New costs for the program are estimated to begin at \$700 in year one and include library resources (\$500) and travel to clinical experiences (\$200). Estimated new costs increase to \$900 in the second year and by the third/fifth year; costs are projected at \$1,300. Revenues will be generated through tuition funding. The total estimated new costs for the program for its first five years will total \$5,300. No “unique costs” or other special state appropriations will be required or requested. The School of Education currently has sufficient, qualified faculty on staff to meet the anticipated program needs for at least the next three years.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the State and new costs not funded by the MRR associated with implementation of the proposed program for its first five years. Also shown are estimated revenues projected under the MRR and the Resource Allocation Plan as well as student tuition.

Year	Estimated MRR Cost for Proposed Program	Extraordinary (Non-MRR) Costs for Proposed Program	Total Costs	State Appropriation	Tuition	Total Revenue
2006-07	\$166,336		\$166,336	\$0	\$95,597	\$95,597
2007-08	\$249,504		\$249,504	80,030	\$142,782	\$222,813
2008-09	\$332,672		\$332,672	119,760	\$190,581	\$310,341
2009-10	\$332,672		\$332,672	159,776	\$190,581	\$350,356
2010-11	\$332,672		\$332,672	159,776	\$190,581	\$350,356

These data demonstrate that if USC-Aiken can meet the projected student enrollments and contain costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will be able to cover new costs with revenues it generates by the fourth year of its implementation.

In summary, USC-Aiken will offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Middle Level Education. This program is needed in South Carolina and will allow students to obtain the special skill set required of Middle Level teachers. The proposed program at USC-Aiken will contribute to the placement of “highly qualified” middle level teachers and contribute to increased effectiveness of South Carolina schools.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission approval of USC-Aiken’s proposed program

leading to a Bachelor's degree in Middle Level Education to be implemented in Spring 2007 providing that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested and provided further that the program be approved by the State Board of Education.