

New Program Proposal
Associate Degree in Computer Technology
Major in Telecommunications Systems Management
Florence-Darlington Technical College

Summary

Florence-Darlington Technical College requests approval to offer a program leading to an Associate Degree in Computer Technology with a major in Telecommunications Systems Management, to be implemented in Spring 2007.

The State Technical College System Board approved the new program on July 25, 2006, and the proposal was received by the Commission on August 14, 2006. The proposal was reviewed, and approved, by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) at its meeting on October 11, 2006.

The purpose of the proposed program is to prepare students for entry-level positions focused on network system administration, management, design, and operation. The proposed Telecommunications Systems Management program will assist local businesses and industry by providing qualified computer telecommunications systems and networking technicians.

The proposal states that the need for telecommunications systems technicians has increased in Florence-Darlington Technical College's service area in response to economic growth, particularly in Florence and Darlington counties. This increased demand is due to the increasing complexity and integration of telecommunication systems into daily business processes.

Florence-Darlington Technical College conducted a survey of 36 employers from which it was determined that about 67 full-time and 34 part-time new and replacement telecommunications systems technician positions will be available in 2007; 89 full-time positions and 54 part-time positions in 2008; and 108 full-time and 70 part-time positions in 2009. The proposal states that the average entry-level salary will range from \$27,000 up to \$54,000 for full-time technicians and from \$8.41 up to \$25.00 per hour for part-time technicians.

Florence-Darlington Technical College currently offers the Associate Degree in Computer Technology with a major in Computer Programming, a Certificate in Cisco Wide Area Networking, and a Certificate in Introductory Web Page Design. The proposed new program is designed to replace the current Associate Degree in Computer Technology (with a major in Computer Programming) with a new major in Telecommunications Systems Management. Some of the programming courses in the

new proposed program—as well as some of the courses in the Cisco Wide Area Networking certificate and the Introductory Web Page Design certificate—will complement the proposed program. The College will be able to benefit from the economies of scale in offering those courses that are applicable to multiple computer technology programs.

All of the general education courses required for the proposed program currently exist within the College’s course offerings. According to the proposal, the proposed program will require 66 credit hours of academic coursework, six less than the existing degree program. The program will require the addition of six new courses to Florence-Darlington Technical College’s 2007-2008 course catalog, all of which are in the Technical College Systems’ Catalog of Approved Courses.

Two other technical colleges in the South Carolina Technical College System currently offer an Associate Degree in Computer Technology. However, their distance from Florence-Darlington Technical College assures that this program is not unnecessarily duplicative.

To gain admission into this program, the proposal states that students must have satisfactory ACT, COMPASS, or SAT Test Scores which must be no more than five years old. In the case where minimum placement test scores are not achieved, students are required to complete a developmental studies course sequence. Minimum test scores for admission to the program are as follows:

Test Score: Mathematics	Test Score: English/Verbal
ACT 20	ACT 20
Compass Pre-Algebra N/A	Compass Reading 81
Compass Algebra 60	Compass Writing 78
SAT 480	SAT 480

Total headcount enrollment in Fall 2007 is estimated to be 66 (66 FTE) increasing to 136 (136 FTE) in Fall 2009. New enrollment is estimated to be 10 (10 FTE) in the fall 2007 and a total of 38 (38 FTE) by fall 2009. The headcount calculations are based on an anticipated annual 10% increase in enrollment and a freshman to sophomore retention rate of 25%.

The current Associate in Computer Technology major in Computer Programming curriculum is accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). During spring 2006, the program was reaffirmed with this accreditation which will transfer to the proposed program. No state licensure is required for this program.

No new faculty will be required to deliver the program, nor will any existing faculty need to be reassigned. Three full-time faculty will devote 100% of their time to teaching and advising students. Currently, total faculty dedicated to teaching will be four (3.85 FTE) of instructor rank, one (0.15 FTE) administrator, and one (0.2 FTE) staff member will provide clerical support.

No new additional physical plant support will be needed for this program. Florence-Darlington Technical College will use existing equipment from the computer technology networking classes, but the program will require purchase of approximately \$47,500 in additional equipment and supplies for the first three years of the program. No unique cost will be required or requested from the State.

No additional library materials will be required to implement this program. According to the proposal, the library at the main campus will house the periodicals and books required for this program. The Florence-Darlington Technical College library collection contains approximately 32,000 books and audiovisual titles, 300 periodical titles, and access to 59 online databases, most of which are supplied through PASCAL.. Currently, the library contains five curriculum-specific periodicals and approximately 350 books on the shelves in addition to electronic access to 2,661 electronic books that would support the new program. Most technical periodicals are available solely through the online databases. The library also has cooperative borrowing privileges with Francis Marion University, Coker College, and all technical colleges in the state.

In the first year, estimated costs will be \$97,604 rising to \$338,743 in the third year. New costs during the first three years of the program are estimated to total \$53,500 including \$40,000 in equipment needs, \$7,500 for supplies and \$6,000 for replacement parts.

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 three years. Also shown are the estimated revenues projected under the MRR and the Resource Allocation Plan as well as student tuition.

These data demonstrate that if Florence-Darlington Technical College meets the projected student enrollments shown in the proposal, the new program will not cover costs by the third year (2009-10) of the program. Nevertheless, the College has provided assurances that it will deliver the program with quality.

Year	Estimated MRR Cost for Proposed Program	Extraordinary (Non-MRR) Costs for Proposed Program	Total Costs	State Appropriation	Tuition	Total Revenue
2007-08	\$97,604	\$0	\$97,604	N/A	\$36,790	\$36,790
2008-09	\$213,799	\$0	\$213,799	\$37,785	\$80,860	\$118,645
2009-10	\$338,743	\$0	\$338,743	\$82,727	\$128,004	\$210,731

In summary, Florence-Darlington Technical College proposes to offer a new program leading to an Associate Degree in Computer Technology, to be implemented in Spring 2007. The program will prepare students for entry-level positions in the College's service area focused on network system administration, management, design, and operation.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee commend favorably to the Commission Florence-Darlington Technical College's proposed program leading to the Associate Degree in Computer Technology, with a major in Telecommunications Systems Management to be implemented in Spring 2007, provided that no additional "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested, and provided that the current Associate Degree in Computer Programming is simultaneously closed to new enrollment.