Agenda Item 2b

Program Proposal
Associate Degree in Health Science
Major in Physical Therapy Assistant
Piedmont Technical College

Summary

Piedmont Technical College requests approval to offer a program leading to the Associate in Health Sciences degree with a major in Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA), to be implemented in Fall 2008.

The proposal was approved by the State Technical College System's Board on January 22, 2008, and submitted to the Commission for review on February 11, 2008. The proposal was reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs on March 20, 2008, and approved unanimously without substantive comment.

The purpose of the program is to address the growing need for qualified Physical Therapy Assistants in Piedmont Technical College's service area. The proposal notes that health service providers in the Piedmont area have requested that a Physical Therapy Assistant program be developed to help fill the need for more skilled Physical Therapy Assistants. Physical Therapy Assistants are important in the delivery of therapeutic, cardiovascular and physical rehabilitative healthcare in a timely manner.

According to the proposal, the need for Physical Therapist Assistants has increased rapidly in Piedmont Technical College's service area in response to the growing elderly population, a group particularly vulnerable to chronic and debilitating conditions requiring therapeutic services and qualified health care professionals. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that by 2014, there will be an increased need for cardiovascular and physical rehabilitation because of the large baby-boom generation entering the prime age for strokes and heart attacks. Based upon a recent needs assessment survey conducted by the institution, in the first three years of the program's operation, an estimated total of 60 full-time and 33 part-time Physical Therapist Assistant positions will need to be filled from 2008-2011 in the College's service area.

Currently, Piedmont Technical College has an articulation agreement through a one-plus-one Physical Therapy Assistant program with Greenville Technical College. Greenville Technical College offers the Physical Therapy Assistant program for its students and provides limited student enrollment, for

students at Aiken Technical College and Florence–Darlington Technical College through a one-plus-one articulation agreement. The institution notes that because of the influx of retirees in the College's service area, the current articulation agreement that Piedmont Technical College has with Greenville Technical College is no longer meeting the needs of the local service area. Piedmont Technical College will terminate its one-plus-one agreement with Greenville Technical College once the Physical Therapy program is implemented. Four other technical colleges across the state (Midlands Technical College, Trident Technical College, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, and Technical College of the Low Country) currently offer an Associate degree in Health Science with a major in Physical Therapy Assistant. All of these programs are in good standing and are designed to prepare graduates for the national licensure exam.

Enrollment in the proposed program is estimated to begin at 24 students (18.1 FTE) in 2008-2009, the first year of the program's implementation, increasing to 38 (43.5 FTE) in 2009-2010, and to 41 (46.3 FTE) in 2010-2011. If enrollment projections are met, the program will meet the current CHE program productivity standards for enrollment.

The proposed program will require 78 credit hours of academic coursework, including the addition of 17 new courses to the academic catalog of Piedmont Technical College. Implementation of the program will not require the addition of any new courses to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education's (SBTCE) catalog of approved courses.

The College will seek candidacy status through the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) for the proposed Physical Therapist Assistant program prior to program implementation. It is expected that CAPTE accreditation will be awarded following the second year of the program implementation, based upon CAPTE candidacy and accreditation guidelines. Licensure of Physical Therapist Assistants is required in order to practice this occupation in South Carolina. The program will seek approval of the South Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners since only graduates of a program approved by the Board may take the licensure examination.

Two (2.0 FTE) new faculty members will be hired to deliver the program. There will be no new administrative or support staff required.

Piedmont Technical College anticipates spending a total of $2,100 within the first three years of the program's implementation to purchase books, serials and audio-visual materials to support this program in Physical Therapy Assistant. The proposal states that library and learning resources services are currently able to provide a variety of materials for this program because of the significant

numbers of sophisticated electronic databases which are available to students and faculty members through PASCAL.

The "D" Building on the Lex Walters campus will be renovated for use by the program prior to acceptance of the first class. The area will include classroom space, a laboratory, storage, offices, and dressing/locker rooms. The estimated cost for the renovation of this facility is $26,220.

New operational costs are estimated by the institution to total $618,859 in the first three years of the program's implementation. The categories for these operational costs include faculty salaries ($434,271), supplies and materials ($166,993), library resources ($2,100), equipment ($16,095), facilities (funded through the Allied Health Initiative) ($26,000), and accreditation ($23,400).

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the State and new costs not funded by the MRR associated with the implementation of the proposed program for its first three years. Also shown are the estimated revenue 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
Year 1	$343,173	$0	**$343,173**	N/A	$56,741	**$56,741**
Year 2	$822,607	$0	**$822,607**	$138,066	$136,151	**$274,217**
Year 3	$876,858	$0	**$876,858**	$330,795	$145,690	**$476,485**

These data demonstrate that if Piedmont Technical College can meet the projected student enrollments and contain costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will not be able to cover new costs with revenues it generates by the third year of its implementation. Nevertheless, the institution has provided assurances that it has the resources necessary to implement the program appropriately.

In summary, Piedmont Technical College proposes to offer a new program leading to an Associate in Health Science degree with a major in Physical Therapy Assistant. The program will prepare students in the service area to meet the growing demand for entry-level Physical Therapy Assistants in the College's service area.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission the program leading to the Associate in Health Science degree with a major in Physical Therapy Assistant at Piedmont Technical College, to be implemented in Fall 2008, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested, and provided further that prior to implementation of the program the institution terminate the one-plus-one articulation agreement with Greenville Technical College.