Agenda Item 2e

Program Proposal
Associate in Health Science
Major in Occupational Therapy Assistant
Horry-Georgetown Technical College
Grand Strand Campus

Summary

Horry-Georgetown Technical College requests approval to offer an Associate in Health Science degree with a major in Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA), to be implemented in Fall 2008 at the Grand Strand campus of the College.

The proposal was approved by the State Technical College Board on January 22, 2008. It was received at the Commission on January 30, 2008. The proposal was reviewed without substantive comment by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs on March 20, 2008, and was approved unanimously.

The purpose of the program is to address the growing need for persons with skills in the field of occupational therapy prepared to work as licensed Occupational Therapist Assistants under the direction of licensed Occupational Therapists. The program will focus on providing care in two distinctly different areas: 1) geriatrics and rehabilitation from strokes/heart attacks and 2) developmental disabilities in youth.

The institution reports that the role of Occupational Therapist Assistant is listed among the occupations which are and will continue to be in greatest demand both in the state and in the country in the next several decades. The United States Department of Labor estimates that demand for graduates of the Occupational Therapy Assistant programs will grow by 34 % in the country as a whole and by 31% in South Carolina in the decade between 2004 and 2014. Because the Grand Strand area is so attractive to the retired population in the country, the demand for the Occupational Therapy Assistant role can be expected to be even higher in the College's service area than in the state as a whole. *Money Magazine* has cited the role of Occupational Therapy Assistant as one of the top ten fastest growing occupations in the country.

Horry-Georgetown Technical College seeks to become the third technical college in South Carolina to offer the A.H.S. in Occupational Therapy Assistant. The other two institutions offering the program are Greenville Technical College in Greenville and Trident Technical College in Charleston. The program at Greenville Technical College has been ranked "good" in productivity for the entire time it has been implemented. Although the program at Trident Technical College has been listed as on "probation" for

several years owing to low productivity, it has had excellent placement rates for its graduates.

The proposed program must be accredited by the Accreditation Council on Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) and must also receive approval from the South Carolina Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners. A student graduating from a program of study accredited by ACOTE is permitted to sit for the examination to become eligible for licensure as a certified Occupational Therapist Assistant by the South Carolina Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners. The institution will initiate the accreditation process prior to the program's implementation and anticipates that ACOTE accreditation will be received prior to the first class' graduation from the program.

The institution has a strong, established record of conducting successful health care programs of study. The proposal states that the OTA program will enhance and complement the four established associate degree allied health programs already implemented and a new one (i.e., the A.H.S. in Physical Therapy Assistant) which will begin in Fall 2008. The College administration has confirmed that although the A.H.S. in OTA is designed as a "terminal degree," the College is working to establish an articulation agreement of the OTA program with Coastal Carolina University's program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies.

The curriculum for the proposed program will be 73 credit hours. All courses in the program are already included in the State Technical College System's Catalogue of Approved Courses, but all 15 of the professional courses in the OTA program of study will be new to the College's catalogue.

The program will require the hiring of two faculty members (2 FTE). There are currently no faculty members teaching at the College in this field.

The proposal states that the College anticipates that the program will enroll 24 new students (31.8 F.T.E) in the first year, rising to 42 (50.4 F.T.E.) in the second and third years of the program's implementation. If the estimated student enrollments are met, the program will meet the statewide program productivity requirements.

The College is in the process currently of renovating the Robert E. Speir building on the Grand Strand Campus. The Campus had formerly been the U.S. Air Force's Myrtle Beach base and the Speir Building had been the military hospital. The purpose of this renovation project is to accommodate at that site all the College's nursing and allied health programs of study, including the proposed new program. Although the proposal contains no cost figure for the redesign work at this facility for the program, College administrators have estimated that total costs for the redesign of the Robert E. Speir Building will be $9.6 million, of which a total of $248,000 are attributable to the Associate in Health Science degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant. No new physical

plant requirements will be needed for the implementation of this program beyond the redesigned building. However, significant new equipment will need to be purchased for the Occupational Therapy Assistant program. This equipment will total approximately $44,375 for the first three years of the implementation of the program.

The proposal states that library and learning resource services are currently able to provide a variety of materials for this program because of the electronic databases to which the program's students will gravitate. Many of these databases are made available solely through the Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries (PASCAL.) In addition, the program will require an increase of $2,750 for the library for the first year, $2,450 for the second year, and $1,650 for the third year of the program's implementation.

Professional accreditation for this program is required to be eligible to sit for the licensure examination, which itself is prerequisite to becoming a licensed, certified Occupational Therapy Assistant in South Carolina. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) will conduct this specialized, national professional accreditation of the program. A total of $11,550 has been budgeted for the accreditation process in the first three years of the program.

New costs of all types for the new program (exclusive of the building costs mentioned above) will occur in five different categories, including $402,678 for faculty salaries; $16,000 for supplies and materials; $6,850 for library acquisitions; $44,375 for equipment; and $11,550 for accreditation processes. These costs total $481,453 in the first three years of the program, exclusive of a proportion of costs for the building re-design being assigned to the proposed program.

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 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**
Year 1	$601,815		**$601,815**	N/A	$104,065	**$104,065**
Year 2	$953,820		**$953,829**	$231,091	$164,866	**$395,957**
Year 3	$953,820		**$953,829**	$366,420	$164,866	**$531,286**

These data demonstrate that if Horry-Georgetown 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. In addition, the figures presented here do not include the estimated costs of redesign of the Grand Strand Campus facility attributable to this proposed program. The addition of these costs would widen further the difference between costs and revenues. Nevertheless, the College is committed to offering the programs and has indicated it has the revenue available to implement it with quality.

In summary, the proposal demonstrates that there is a growing need in the College's service area and throughout the state for the proposed new program. The College has a newly redesigned, state-of-the-art facility in which the program can reside for on-campus learning experiences. The College has a long history of success in the marketing of and student learning outcomes in allied health programs and is committed to offering the program with adequate resources.

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 Occupational Therapy Assistant at the Grand Strand

campus of Horry-Georgetown Technical College, to be implemented in Fall 2008, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested.