Agenda Item 2.a

New Program Proposal
Associate Degree in Public Service
Major in Fire Science Technology
Greenville Technical College
Brashier Campus

Summary

Greenville Technical College requests approval to offer a program leading to the Associate in Public Service degree with a major in Fire Science Technology (FST) to be implemented in Summer 2009.

The proposal was submitted to the Commission for review on November 3, 2008, and approved by the State Technical College System's Board on February 20, 2008. The proposal was reviewed without substantive comment by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs on July 17, 2008, and was approved unanimously.

The purpose of the program is to prepare graduates either as entry-level fire service personnel or to advance the careers of those already in the field who have only received non-credit training and/or non-degree educational preparation thus far. The need for the program is based on the demand by employers and on the increased level of education and training required for entering or career progression in the field. Results of an informal survey in 2007 conducted by the Greenville Technical College faculty at the South Carolina Firefighters Conference revealed an interest expressed by firefighters and fire chiefs in an associate degree program in Fire Science Technology. Many of the responding departments indicated they would be willing to provide tuition assistance to employees enrolled in this program. Based on a needs analysis survey conducted by the institution for the years 2008, 2009, 2010, there is a need for 444 full-time (new and replacement) and 69 part-time (new and replacement) positions in the fire service personnel in South Carolina.

Presently, there are no college-level Fire Science Technology programs in South Carolina's two-year or four-year colleges. Often fire service personnel find difficulty obtaining college degrees because of their demanding and fluctuating work schedules. All of the courses comprising the proposed program will be available online or at the Greenville Technical College - Brashier campus.

The College will seek one-plus-one articulation agreements with each of the state's fifteen other technical colleges. After completing the general education requirements at one of the other technical colleges' students can then transfer to

Greenville Technical College to complete the fire science courses. No "2 + 2" articulation has been sought for articulating this program to a four-year public institution.

The Fire Science Technology Program curriculum consists of 67 credit hours. The curriculum has been designed to meet the National Fire Academy's recommendation for associate degree programs. Implementation of the program will require seven new courses to be added to Greenville Technical College's catalog and the State Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education's (SBTCE) statewide catalog of approved courses.

The proposed program notes that one additional full-time faculty member will be hired during the first year and two additional adjunct faculty will be hired the second and third years. In addition, two of the current adjunct faculty members will teach in the degree program. The College will employ the current department head for the certificate program, who will also serve as department head of the Fire Safety Technology associate degree program. The Dean of Industrial Technology will dedicate 25% of his time to the program. The program will share an administrative assistant with the other Industrial Technology programs to assist with the programmatic administrative and clerical duties.

Enrollment in the proposed program is estimated to begin at 35 headcount (39.5 FTE) in 2009-2010, the first full year of the program, increasing to 60 headcount (67.3 FTE) by FY 2010-2011, and to 76 (82.9 FTE) in 2011-2012. If enrollment projections are met, the program will meet the current CHE program productivity standards for enrollment.

There will be no additional physical plant requirements for classrooms and office space required for the program. The program will be utilizing the same space currently being used for the Fire Science Technology certificate program. Also, there will be no additional equipment needs to be purchased to implement the proposed program. The proposed program also notes a future anticipated need of $23,000 for three years for replacement/annual testing of safety equipment and expendable supplies and materials necessary to support the program.

The proposal indicates that at this time South Carolina does not require certification or licensure to be employed in the fire service industry. Although there are no nationally recognized accreditation entities for fire service programs, the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) is generally regarded as a bona fide fire service certification body. The IFSAC accreditation is expected to be awarded following the third year of program implementation, based on IFSAC candidacy and accreditation guidelines.

The College anticipates spending a total of $1,500 within the first three years of the program's implementation to purchase books and serials to support the program.

Since the college currently has two Fire Science certificates, the main library on the Barton campus has several essential print and electronic periodicals, reference materials, and a small collection of printed books available on fire science. The proposal states that the library and learning resources are currently able to provide a variety of materials for this program because of the electronic databases which are available to students and faculty members. All campuses have open computer labs which allow students access all electronic library resources and the free web-based Interlibrary Loan service.

Total new costs are estimated by the institution at $207,540 for the first three years of the program. The categories for these operational costs include faculty salaries ($183,000), supplies and materials ($23,000), and library resources ($1,540).

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.

Estimated Program Costs and Revenue

	Estimated Program Costs		**Estimated Program Revenue**				
	(A) MRR Cost	**(B) Other Costs***	**(C) Actual State Funding**	**(D) Tuition**	**(E) Additional Revenue**	**(F) Total Revenue (C+D+E)**	**(G) Total Revenue - Total Costs (F-(A+B))**
Year 1	$183,655	$0	N/A	$146,096	$0	$146,096	-$37,558
Year 2	$313,330	$0	$95,249	$248,944	$0	$344,193	$30,863
Year 3	$385,923	$0	$162,267	$307,183	$0	$469,450	$83,527

*Includes costs of an extraordinary nature not otherwise included in the MRR cost calculation (e.g., costs for a new building required to support a program).

These data demonstrate that if Greenville Technical College 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 by the second and third year of its implementation. The institution has provided assurances that it has the resources necessary to operate the program appropriately in the first year.

In summary, Greenville Technical College proposes to offer a new program leading to an Associate degree in Public Service with a major in Fire Science Technology. The program will meet the growing demand by employers and will address the need for increased level of education and training required for entrance and career progression in the field.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission the program leading to the Associate in Public Service degree with a major in Fire Science Technology at Greenville Technical College at the Brashier Campus, to be implemented in Summer 2009, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested.