



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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CHE
Agenda Item 8.02.B
10/8/10

October 8, 2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Ken Wingate, Chair, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

From: *BRH/STP*
Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chair, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Francis Marion University Mission Statement Revision

Background

Francis Marion University has requested that the Commission approve changes to its mission statement. Changes were submitted to Commission staff who determined that the requested changes were substantive and did not fall under the Commission guidelines for staff approval. A summary explanation follows with a staff analysis and recommendation for the requested changes. Francis Marion's current mission statement, revised mission statement, and markup copy with changes shown are attached as **Appendix I**.

The revised mission statement was approved by the Francis Marion Board of Trustees on June 18, 2010, and transmitted to the Commission on Higher Education on the same day. Commission staff has reviewed the revised statement and found that changes requested are to:

- Add the "specialist degree in school psychology" to the list of degree levels offered by the institution; and
- Make minor editorial changes to reflect the addition of the specialist degree level.

Discussion

Since the late 1970's, Francis Marion University has offered the Master of Science in Applied Psychology degree. In the late 1980's, the program was divided into two options, School Psychology and Clinical/Counseling Psychology, to address more clearly and specifically the training requirements inherent in each specialty area.

In the early 1990's, adhering to national training standards, the Francis Marion Department of Psychology proposed and was granted permission to offer a 64 credit-hour program leading to the M.S. in Applied Science with a School Psychology option (Master's plus 30, or Specialist Level) leading to Level II certification in School Psychology. The School Psychology option was accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and recognized by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) as an accredited specialist-level training program in 2001. However, the degree granted at the completion of training remains the Master of Science in Applied Psychology.

The other two non-doctoral school psychology training programs in the state (Winthrop University and The Citadel) grant specialist degrees for levels of training equivalent to that offered at Francis Marion. Nationally, nearly 70% of similar training programs offer the specialist degree or master's degree plus specialist for equivalent levels of training. According to Francis Marion staff, this situation has often created misunderstandings for Francis Marion graduates seeking certification or employment out of state. Even for program graduates seeking in-state certification and employment, the South Carolina State Department of Education (SCDOE) must be reminded periodically that Francis Marion is a specialist level program and that SCDOE has granted a waiver permitting specialist level certification for its graduates.

Accordingly, since the M.S. in Applied Science with the School Psychology option is recognized by NCATE and NASP as the equivalent of a Specialist degree, Francis Marion submitted to the Commission a program modification of the M.S. in Applied Science with the School Psychology option to authorize a program leading to the Specialist in School Psychology degree (Ed.S. in School Psychology). The proposed modification was considered by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) at its meeting on January 14, 2010, and voted on favorably. However, the approval explicitly states that it is contingent upon the Commission's decision to approve changes in Francis Marion University's mission statement to reflect the offering of the Specialist degree in School Psychology.

Commission staff has examined the curricula of programs leading to the Specialist degree in School Psychology at The Citadel and Winthrop University and found that the curriculum of the Francis Marion program is similar in content and rigor. NCATE and NASP recognition of the program as a specialist-level program reinforces the argument that graduates from the program should be awarded the Specialist in School Psychology degree both as recognition of their academic accomplishment and to allow them to compete equally on the job market with graduates from similar programs.

Staff Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission approval of the revised mission statement for Francis Marion University.

APPENDIX I

- A) Francis Marion University Current Mission Statement
- B) Francis Marion University Revised Mission Statement
- C) Markup Copy with Changes Shown

Francis Marion University Current Mission Statement

Francis Marion University is a four-year public institution established by the state of South Carolina. It is located in the northeastern part of the state near the city of Florence and has approximately 4,000 students. Its purpose is threefold: to provide students with an excellent education, stimulate inquiry and research, and serve the Pee Dee region of South Carolina.

Francis Marion University adheres to the primary purpose of its establishment as a college in 1970: to make available excellent undergraduate education in the liberal arts and selected professional programs. The University now offers bachelors degrees in liberal arts disciplines, business, education, and nursing, as well as masters degrees in professional programs in business, education, and psychology. While maintaining high standards, we serve students with a broad range of preparation and ability. We seek a wide variety of students, primarily from the Pee Dee region, but also from the entire state, other states, and foreign countries. We believe that a student body diverse in age, racial and ethnic background, and country of origin enriches the education of our students. To achieve its educational goals, the University has outstanding faculty members distinguished by high achievement and diverse academic background. We provide traditional and when appropriate, non-traditional in-struction, access to an excellent library as well as electronic resources, and staff members committed to the success of the individual student. A low student-faculty ratio and faculty concern for the individual student help us to achieve our goal. In addition, the University provides students with special learning opportunities, such as an honors program, internships, study abroad, and cooperative degree programs.

Since our highest priority is excellence in teaching and learning, we believe that intellectual inquiry and analysis by students and faculty members is essential. We encourage all scholarly pursuits, including student research for courses and faculty research for presentation and publication as well as the class-room. The University provides faculty members with support for academic development, such as research funds. Our goal of an academic experience built on inquiry and research as well as the transmission of information allows students to develop their ability to think and communicate, to gain the knowledge and skills to pursue a career or further study, to appreciate the creativeness of the human mind, to be aware of the human and natural environment of the world, and to have the capacity to pursue a life of learning and understanding.

The University also attempts to serve the needs of Florence and the surrounding area in ways beyond formal education. Our numerous cultural activities and athletic programs benefit not only students, but also the community. To foster the economic development of the region, we offer consulting services to business, industry, and government. Academic and practical assistance to area schools is basic to our endeavors. Faculty and staff members participate in and contribute to a great variety of community activities.

Francis Marion is a unique University. It focuses on traditional liberal arts education but provides new technology and new academic programs. It is small enough to provide individualized attention to each student, but large enough to offer much variety in academic and cultural resources. It thus combines the advantages of a small liberal arts college with the resources of a public university.

Francis Marion University Revised Mission Statement

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Francis Marion University adheres to the primary purpose of its establishment as a college in 1970: to make available excellent undergraduate education in the liberal arts and selected professional programs. The University now offers bachelor's degrees in liberal arts disciplines, business, education, and nursing; master's degrees in business, education, and psychology; and a specialist degree in school psychology. While maintaining high standards, we serve students with a broad range of preparation and ability. We seek a wide variety of students, primarily from the Pee Dee region, but also from the entire state, other states, and foreign countries. We believe that a student body diverse in age, racial and ethnic background, and country of origin enriches the education of our students. To achieve its educational goals, the University has outstanding faculty members distinguished by high achievement and diverse academic background. We provide traditional and when appropriate, non-traditional instruction, access to an excellent library as well as electronic resources, and staff members committed to the success of the individual student. A low student-faculty ratio and faculty concern for the individual student help us to achieve our goal. In addition, the University provides students with special learning opportunities, such as an honors program, internships, study abroad, and cooperative degree programs.

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