



# South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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5/1/2014  
Agenda Item 5

May 1, 2014

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chair, and Members,  
Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

FROM: Dr. MaryAnn Janosik, Director of Academic Affairs and Licensing

### Consideration of Request for Initial License to Establish a Clinical Site in Woodruff, SC: M.A. in Applied Behavior Analysis Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL

#### Summary

Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech) ([www.FL Tech.edu](http://www.FL Tech.edu)) requests approval for an initial license to establish a clinical site in Woodruff, SC, as part of its program leading to the M.A. in Professional Behavior Analysis, to be implemented in August 2014. The first year didactic portion of the program is offered online through the Melbourne campus. The second year consists of in-residence clinical training and classroom hours to be held on-site at Hope Reach in Woodruff, SC.

Founded in 1958, Florida Tech was originally established as Brevard Engineering College to offer continuing education to scientists, engineers, and technicians working at NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center. In 1966, the college changed its name to Florida Institute of Technology to acknowledge its growing identity as a scientific and technological university. Florida Tech is a private, independent, not-for-profit institution with its main campus in Melbourne, FL, and is a member of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Florida Tech to offer associate's, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, and doctoral degrees. The Institute enrolls approximately 3,900 students at its main campus, 1,270 students at off-campus locations (primarily military branches), and 3,790 students in its online programs.

The following information from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) shows student loan default rates at Florida Tech.

Florida Institute of Technology			
<b>Cohort Default Rates</b>	2011	2010	2009
<b>Default Rate %</b>	10.7%	7.4%	5%
<b>No. in Default</b>	339%	146	48
<b>No. in Repay</b>	3,160	1,964	952

The USDE sanctions a school when the school's three most recent cohort default rates are 25 percent or higher or if a school's current default rate is greater than 40 percent. Except in the event of a successful adjustment or appeal, such a school will lose Federal Family Education Loan, Direct Loan, and Federal Pell Grant program eligibility for the remainder of the fiscal year in which the school is notified of its sanction and for the following two fiscal years. According to Florida Tech officials, an estimate of the Title IV student loan debt for graduates of graduate degree programs is \$58,901.

The first year of the program leading to the M.A. in Professional Behavior Analysis consists of 24 semester-credit-hours taken online. The second in-residence year of the program will take place at Hope Reach, a program of the non-profit Project Hope Foundation, Inc., whose purpose is to provide services and support to children with autism and their families. This in-residence portion of the curriculum consists of 21 semester-credit-hours of classroom instruction, practicum experience, and a capstone project. Hope Reach holds a 25-year lease from Spartanburg County School District 4 for a facility for which it pays one dollar per year. Hope Reach provides clinical services to autistic children through intensive Applied Behavior Analysis therapy. Hope Reach holds the required approval from the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs in order to operate an Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention (EIBI) clinical site.

Florida Tech will employ a full-time faculty member to serve as program director on site at the Hope Reach facility and will also hire a part-time administrative staff member. Instructors providing didactic instruction will hold a doctorate in behavior analysis or a closely related field. Instructors providing practicum supervision will hold a master's degree or above in behavior analysis or a closely related field.

Students enrolled in online programs at Florida Tech have access through the Institute's Evans Library ([www.lib.FL.Tech.edu](http://www.lib.FL.Tech.edu)) to the institution's online catalog as well as numerous electronic journals, full-text databases, e-books, and scholarly journals.

Applicants to the program must hold a bachelor's degree, with a B average or higher, from an institution holding regional accreditation. Applicants must submit for consideration of admission a statement of career objectives, a résumé, and three letters of reference. Students will initially enroll in the program as professional development students, and then apply for full acceptance into the program.

Florida Tech officials anticipate enrolling seventeen students into the program during the first year. Total tuition for the 45 semester-credit-hour program is \$26,865. Employees of Hope Reach have the option to participate in paycheck deduction for tuition.

## **M.A. in Applied Behavior Analysis**

The program leading to the M.A. degree in Professional Behavior Analysis prepares students to earn certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). Applied behavior analysts design, implement, and evaluate environmental modifications to produce improvements in social behavior, particularly with children with autism. Analysts may specialize in clinical applications, educational applications, health and wellness, or other areas. A master's degree is required in order for an applicant to be eligible for BCBA certification.

The BACB is the sole credentialing organization for applied behavior analysts. The BACB has approved the program's core course sequence as meeting course requirements for eligibility to sit for the BCBA exam. In addition, the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) provides industry-recognized accreditation for the program. Florida Tech will apply for accreditation with the ABAI after the fifth year of operation of the program, as required by the accreditor.

The curriculum for the program leading to the M.A. in Professional Behavior Analysis is shown below:

<b>M.A. in Professional Behavior Analysis</b>		
<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Online Courses</b>		
5011	Foundations, Concepts and Principles of Behavior Analysis	3
5012	Basic Elements of Applied Behavior Analysis	3
5013	Developing, Strengthening and Maintaining Behavior	3
5014	Introduction to Ethical & Professional Conduct of Behavior Analysts	1
5015	Decreasing, Eliminating and Replacing Problem Behavior	2
5016	Ethical & Professional Conduct of Behavior Analysis	2
5017	Targeted Topics in Behavior Analysis	1
5018	Advanced Topics in Behavior Analysis	3
5020	Current Topics in Behavior Analysis	1-5*
<b>In-Residence Courses</b>		
5021	Using Measurement, Graphs and Single Case Designs in Behavior Analysis Practice	3
5022	Introduction to the Experimental Analysis of Behavior	3
5023	Conceptual Analysis of Behavior	3
5024	Coordinating Behavior Analysis with Psychiatric and Other Medical Services	1
5025	Seminar in Current Applications of Behavior Analysis	1-5*
5026	Practicum in Professional Behavior Analysis	9
5027	Capstone Project in Professional Behavior Analysis	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>

\* These courses may be repeated for a total of 5 credits, provided topics change.

According to the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, in SC there is currently a waiting list of 1,500 children with autism who need services. This number has increased by nearly 500 children over the past two years, while the number of children being serviced stands at about 900. These services can only be overseen by supervisors who are qualified individuals or Board Certified Behavior Analysts. Graduates of the program proposed by Florida Tech would be qualified to provide these services as well as supervise others who could provide these services, immediately reducing the waiting list.

At this time, Florida Tech has no immediate plans to establish additional clinical sites in the state. However, the need for additional clinical sites will be determined based upon the number and location of qualified students in South Carolina applying for the program or the expansion of Hope Reach to additional sites.

The Clemson Center for Behavior Analysis, housed at Clemson University, offers continuing education courses that prepare students for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst or Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCABA) exams offered through the BACB. USC offers courses within the program leading to M.A.T. in Special Education that are BACB-approved course sequences for the BCBA designation. There is no state regulatory oversight for applied behavior analysts.

No institution in the state offers a graduate degree program in Professional or Applied Behavior Analysis.

### **Recommendation**

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission initial licensure to Florida Institute of Technology, to offer a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Professional Behavior Analysis at a clinical site in Woodruff, SC, to be implemented in August 2014. The staff further recommends that the Committee designate to staff authority to approve additional second-year clinical sites as requested by the Institute, contingent upon presentation of workforce need and compliance with other relevant site application criteria.