

**New Program Proposal
Bachelor of Arts in Individualized Studies
Winthrop University**

Summary

Winthrop University requests approval to offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Individualized Studies to be implemented in August 2013. The proposed program is to be offered through traditional instruction on campus.

The Program Planning Summary was submitted to the Commission on August 1, 2011, and reviewed and voted upon favorably by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) at its meeting on October 13, 2011. The Winthrop University Board of Trustees approved the proposal on June 8, 2012. The Commission received the program proposal on August 15, 2012.

According to the proposal, the program is designed for students whose academic interests reach across or beyond programs currently offered by the University. With the proposed program, students will be able to collaborate with a faculty advisor to develop an innovative, creative, integrative, and flexible plan of study not defined by a single discipline. As such, the proposed program will produce graduates who possess well-developed skills in written and oral communication, analytical and critical thinking, and team work.

The proposal states that students are interested in such a program and cites an institutional survey of students taking capstone courses within their majors during spring semester 2012 as well as selected groups of students taking general education courses. Forty-seven and a half percent of 438 students who responded indicated a strong interest in the proposed program in Individualized Studies. Thirty percent of respondents had a strong interest in considering the program and would meet the GPA requirement for admission to the program. The proposal also cites a survey of selected program directors at schools throughout the nation such as James Madison University, Miami University, and the Universities of Maryland and Vermont that offer individualized studies programs. The responses indicated that students will be prepared for employment and for admission to graduate programs.

In response to staff inquiry, University representatives acknowledged that the nature of the proposed program in Individualized Studies is such that predicting post-graduation outcomes is very difficult. Students will develop their academic programs to meet their specific educational goals; some will pursue graduate study and others may design their program to prepare them for employment in specific environments as specialized laboratories, government agencies, or non-profit organizations. University representatives provided data from Winthrop University alumni surveys conducted between December 2008 and June 2012, illustrating employment patterns over time that demonstrate that graduates find jobs and are well prepared for employment. According to these surveys, 60-76% of alumni survey respondents found employment in education and for-profit organizations and 22-40% found employment in health-related organizations, government agencies, and other non-profit organizations. In addition, University representatives also stated that approximately 30% of Winthrop alumni pursue graduate studies and successfully compete for graduate admissions at colleges and universities in South Carolina, the United States, and globally. For example, Winthrop alumni have been admitted to graduate programs at Harvard, Johns Hopkins University, the National

Institutes of Health, Duke University, Wake Forest University, and UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as MUSC, USC-Columbia, and Clemson University.

Degree programs in Individual/Interdisciplinary Studies are offered by Coastal Carolina University, USC Aiken, USC Columbia, and USC Upstate as well as by Benedict College, Columbia College, Converse College, Furman University, Newberry College, and North Greenville University. According to the proposal, the program is most similar to that offered by Furman University.

The proposal states that the institution anticipates enrolling four new students in the proposed program the first year, and increasing enrollment to approximately 20 students by the fifth year. If enrollment and program completion projections are met, the proposed program will meet the Commission's productivity standards.

Admission to the proposed program will require that candidates complete 30 credit-hours of college-level work and have a GPA of 3.0 or better. Students must also submit a program application that describes their academic and career goals and explains why a traditional major does not fit these goals, and prepare a plan of study that must be approved by the Individualized Studies Coordinating Committee. The seven-member Committee is comprised of the Program Director of Individualized Studies, faculty members from the College of Arts and Sciences, and faculty members from the other degree-granting colleges of Winthrop University.

The curriculum for the proposed program consists of 124 credit hours, including 59 credit hours of general education, 36 credits hours of courses in the major, and the remaining 29 credits hours in minor, foreign language, or elective coursework. The institution will add five new courses to its catalog including Individualized Studies Project: Research and Design; Internship in Individualized Studies I, II, and III; and Individualized Studies Project: Capstone.

The proposed program's assessment plan includes evaluating students' work in the research design and capstone courses as well as a self-assessment administered to students in the capstone course. University representatives described the methods of program assessment in response to staff inquiry. These methods include an annual review of all individual programs of study for level of academic challenge and incorporation of experiential learning opportunities; an evaluation of student and faculty satisfaction with advising and coordination of individualized programs (semester survey); monitoring the number of student inquiries and advising appointments related to the program as well as the general topics of inquiry; and a survey of graduates and their employers. University representatives also stated that the University established a regular rotation of program review and the proposed program would be included in that rotation.

There is no specialized accreditation for the proposed program and licensure is not required for employment. Also, while there are no formal articulation agreements, the proposal states that transfer students may apply to the program because courses that transfer into the University's general education program and many prerequisites to upper-level courses can easily be taken at two-year institutions.

The proposal states that faculty for the program will be drawn from existing faculty teaching at the University. The Individualized Studies Program Director has been identified and will have a one-quarter time reassignment for program administration which will increase to

half-time as enrollment increases. Courses previously taught by this individual will be reassigned to existing faculty and staff.

The proposal also states that no new space, facilities, or equipment will be needed. In addition, the program will not require additional library resources. The University has long offered a broad mix of library resources for scholarly enlightenment, the long-standing Master of Liberal Arts degree program is designed around highly individualized coursework, and the holdings of the library compared well against several benchmark collections. In addition, students have access to materials through the Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries (PASCAL).

Costs and sources of financing identified by the institution for the proposed program are shown in the following tables.

ESTIMATED COSTS BY YEAR						
CATEGORY	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	TOTALS
Program Administration	\$ 29,870	\$ 29,870	\$ 42,230	\$ 42,230	\$ 42,230	\$186,430
Faculty Salaries	\$ 89,032	\$128,212	\$ 168,592	\$174,275	\$ 191,323	\$751,434
Graduate Assistants						
Clerical/Support Personnel	\$ 7,210	\$ 7,210	\$ 7,210	\$ 7,210	\$ 7,210	\$ 36,050
Supplies and Materials	\$ 200	\$ 300	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 1,700
Library Resources						
Equipment						
Facilities						
Other (Identify)						
TOTALS	\$126,312	\$165,592	\$ 218,432	\$224,115	\$ 241,163	\$975,614

SOURCES OF FINANCING BY YEAR						
Tuition Funding	\$ 149,265	\$364,180	\$378,210	\$395,385	\$444,255	\$1,731,295
Program-Specific Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0
State Funding*	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reallocation of Existing Funds**	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funding (Specify)	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	\$149,265	\$364,180	\$378,210	\$395,385	\$444,255	\$1,731,295

These data show that if the institution meets the projected student enrollments and contains costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will be able to cover costs in the first year and thereafter.

In summary, Winthrop University requests approval to offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Individualized Studies. The proposed program will prepare students who can use their critical thinking, problem solving, and inquiry skills to propose solutions to problems within the theme of their major; consider multiple perspectives as they examine ideas related to the theme of their program of study; and understand the interconnected, interdisciplinary nature of their program of study.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission the program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Individualized Studies at Winthrop University, to be implemented in August 2013, provided that no additional “unique cost” or other special state funding be required or requested.