

**Program Planning Summary**

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY**

**REQUESTING TO MODIFY AN EXISTING PROGRAM**

**MASTERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Submitted to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education**

Strom Thurmond Institute  
Clemson University

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## **Program Planning Summary**

### **I. Graduate Program Modification**

This proposal advances a request for a program modification of the Joint Master of Public Administration Program delivered by the University of South Carolina and Clemson University.

The modifications include an end to the University of South Carolina's participation in the program and expansion of the sites for delivery to Clemson University's campus locations and throughout the state using a blended technology. No curriculum changes are associated with this modification proposal. Students in the program would continue to be required to complete a total of between 39 and 45 hours of graduate credit.

**II. Undergraduate Designation:** Not Applicable

**III. Specialized Designations:** Not Applicable

**IV. Date of Implementation:** January 2009

### **V. Justification**

The rationale for the proposed modification is to allow the Clemson MPA program to move beyond its current market in the Upstate region of South Carolina and to offer a professional degree responsive to the demands of the nonprofit and public sectors across the State, region, nation and in international venues. The MPA offers specialized focus areas (consisting of 15 graduate credit hours) developed during student advising and planning of the student's degree program. The faculty would like to expand and formalize the focus areas in:

- Local Government Management
- Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management
- Hospital Services Administration
- Nonprofit Management
- Planning

These focus areas build on Clemson's strengths in other departments and centers across the campus and are proposed in addition to traditional MPA areas of local, state and federal administration. Additional focus areas will be considered for individual students and as opportunities develop. In addition, the program will deliver all of its courses through broadcast, real time courses at various locations across the State and beyond. This modification will position the MPA as a national leader in delivery of the MPA in this format.

**VI. Anticipated Demand and Productivity**

Segments of statewide constituencies for the degree have lobbied or approached the program for more flexibility in the delivery of courses to their constituents. These segments include local government, nonprofits, parks and recreation, and health services administration and a variety of other groups who have expressed interest in how Clemson University might offer an MPA graduate degree responsive to the needs of their members and organizations. The need will be met by the development and packaging of existing core courses in areas like budgeting, leadership, personnel and policy that form the foundation of the knowledge base and skills sets that are required for career development and success in public and nonprofit sectors (21 graduate hours). However, the courses are balanced by other specialized courses that are organized into substantive focus areas (15 graduate hours). All of these courses are available to develop the requisite skills needed by graduates. The demand will see the program move beyond its current core of approximately 40 graduate students to double the size of the program within one academic year and triple its size within the next five-year time frame. The productivity issue is manifest in the delivery of courses using existing faculty and resources. This leverages the facilities across the state (part of the Clemson PSA network and other facility use as negotiated), minimizes travel and other costs associated with delivery of on-site courses and more significantly offers courses that are real time, broadcast classes within no more than one-hour travel time for students across the state. Eventually plans include markets outside South Carolina (e.g., a Washington, DC based Clemson MPA).

## **VII. Assessment of Duplication**

Duplication will be minimized. We recognize that general MPA degrees are offered at USC and through the joint USC and the College of Charleston program. We would like to work with them as well. The Clemson MPA will be unique because of its ability to offer real time, broadcast classes that will be delivered to working professionals and other students at regional sites no greater than one hour from their homes or work sites in South Carolina. Clemson MPA will offer specialized focus areas in a format not currently offered to MPA students. These program focus areas offer the breadth and formality of specialty areas under the umbrella of the MPA and builds on Clemson's strengths in its land grant mission. Its status as a land grant institution allows the department to make use of the existing infrastructure of the PSA components of the University to offer courses in a true statewide fashion that is responsive to the needs of the constituencies identified in Item VI above. Lastly, the program envisions working closely through cooperative agreements for the delivery of courses that will greatly enhance the State's other two MPA programs (and other institutions), which only offer courses primarily to the traditional base of MPA students concentrated in the Columbia and Charleston areas. Clemson opens up the MPA to students in all parts of the State.

## **VIII. Relationship to Existing University Programs**

The MPA anticipates working closely with any number of existing academic programs to provide either core courses or focus area courses. Examples of programs already interested include Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Public Health, and the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life (nonprofit focus). The delivery of courses in the focus

areas would be offered from existing courses in the various departments and provide the synergy of a true interdisciplinary curriculum that provides the foundation in training and education in public administration, balanced by education and knowledge from the various disciplines participating as partners.

#### **IX. Relationship to Existing External Programs**

The program modification proposed for the MPA program would complement the State's other two MPA programs (USC and a joint program between USC and the College of Charleston). The modified Clemson MPA will be unique from each of the programs currently offered at these two institutions. It is envisioned that these programs will continue to draw their primary enrollments from their geographic bases in Columbia and Charleston. Clemson's MPA enrollment will be drawn from other areas of the State and beyond. The modified Clemson MPA will fill the demand in three distinct areas not being served by the existing MPA programs in the state: 1) The need for broader coverage of specialized focus areas to fill market and student needs; 2) To provide broader and more convenient access to the MPA for working professionals statewide; and 3) Offer a broadcast, real time delivery distinct from either state institution or any institution nationwide.

Moreover, the Clemson MPA anticipates pursuing cooperative relationships with both USC and the College of Charleston in the delivery of courses statewide but also in the enhancement of a true statewide delivery system of a public administration curriculum facilitated by the vast Clemson PSA network. The blended delivery approach affords great opportunity for shared intellectual resources among existing programs. The economic modeling capacity of the Thurmond Institute can be easily integrated into the programs delivered by the College of Charleston and USC. Similarly, Clemson students wishing exposure to urban policy expertise and courseware could take courses at the College of Charleston for transfer into their program. The technology also creates opportunity for shared course delivery. A course streamed out of Columbia could be received at sites in Clemson, Charleston and beyond. Thus, faculty expertise can be easily shared within similar programs but across institutional lines. This flexibility afforded by the available technologies should reduce redundancies and transaction costs for program delivery. This program modification positions the University to fully embrace the concept and mission of its public service responsibilities as a Land Grant University serving all the citizens of South Carolina.

#### **X. Total New Costs**

The program will be entirely self-sufficient and will be fully funded by revenues generated by off campus enrollments in the program.