

March 7, 2002

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Dalton B. Floyd, Jr., Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

From: Ms. Dianne Chinnes, Chairman, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Follow-Up Report to Consultants' Evaluations of Existing Programs: Removal of Provisional Approval Status for PhD in Business at USC-Columbia

At its meeting on February 1, 2001, the Commission approved a recommendation from its external consultant for the review of business programs at USC-Columbia that the degree program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration at USC be granted provisional approval status. The Commission consultant, Dr. John Kraft, Dean of Business at the University of Florida, based his recommendation on three main findings: 1) the need to reduce the size of the program, thereby making it more competitive and better able to attract top students; 2) the need to increase the amount of funding for doctoral students (i.e., stipends, assistantships, etc.); and, 3) the need to enhance placement of graduates, especially in research universities and AAU (Association of American Universities) institutions.

As part of the Commission's approval of provisional status, the agency required USC-Columbia to provide the agency staff with a follow-up report detailing measures taken to ameliorate the concerns lodged by Dr. Kraft. The Commission received this report on October 1, 2001.

After reviewing the follow-up document, the staff agrees that USC has made important strides to improve the quality of the PhD in Business Administration and that the program should now be awarded full approval status. For example, the number of slots in the program has been reduced from 54 to 48, and total funding per student has increased by 50% for accounting students and by

30% for students in other concentrations. (Please see **Attachment 1**, letter from Dr. Gordon Smith.)

Additionally, the leadership in the Moore School of Business has indicated its willingness to allocate doctoral slots to concentration areas that show the best ability to place graduates in research universities. While this is indeed a laudable decision, USC does not provide any concrete evidence to suggest that placements have actually improved since the February 2000 visit by the Commission consultant. (Given the relatively short period from the review date, this is understandable). For this reason, the Commission staff recommends that the University provide a short follow-up report detailing the placement rates of graduates in the PhD in Business at research universities no later than June 1, 2005. This report will enable the Commission to monitor the University's progress in meeting one of the seminal recommendations made by the program review consultant.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that the Commission grant full approval to the degree program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration degree at USC-Columbia, provided that the University agree to provide the Commission with a report on the placement of graduates at research universities no later than June 1, 2005.

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cc: Attachment ¹

¹ Attachment 1 is not included in the electronic mail out