

**New Program Proposal
Associate in Agriculture,
Major in Horticulture
Piedmont Technical College**

Summary

Piedmont Technical College requests approval to offer a program leading to the Associate Degree in Agriculture with a major in Horticulture Technology, to be implemented in Fall 2006.

The program was approved by the South Carolina Technical College System Board at its meeting on January 24, 2006. It was submitted for Commission review on February 13, 2006, and reviewed and voted upon favorably by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) at its meeting on March 14, 2006. There were no substantive comments or questions about the program at the meeting.

The purpose of the program is to prepare students to meet the need for qualified horticulturists in the Piedmont Tech service area. The graduates of the program will be skilled in landscape design, implementation, and maintenance. The program will augment the existing Horticulture Certificate Program. According to the proposal, enrollment in this specialty has grown large enough to justify the new major. In addition, the growing number of residential/retirement communities, golf courses, and commercial horticulture nurseries in the area will lead to an increased demand for trained workers in this area with degrees that will allow them to move into middle management. An Employment Needs Survey indicates that there will be approximately 280 available positions by 2008, far more than the program can provide.

According to the proposal, the current catalog of courses will require the addition of five new courses in horticulture to support the program. The curriculum will consist of 19 courses for a total of 67 credit hours. Six courses (18 credit hours) are core courses for the Associate's degree and 13 courses (52 credit hours) support the major. The major courses include ten courses in horticulture (42 credit hours), two courses in turf management (six credit hours), and one course (1 credit hour) in cooperative work experience preparation.

Horry-Georgetown Tech, Spartanburg Tech, and Trident Tech all offer similar programs. Horry-Georgetown, as a new program, has no placement data. Spartanburg Tech, with 14 graduates in 2004, had a 100% placement rate. Trident Tech, with nine graduates in 2004, shows a 56% rate. Follow-up with Piedmont and Trident Tech showed

that this low rate is potentially misleading, however, as only five of the nine graduates returned their placement survey. 100% of those returning the survey were employed in the field.

The existing certificate program has one full-time faculty member and uses an adjunct faculty member to meet student demand. The proposed program will require one new adjunct faculty member to teach four courses per year. In addition, it will use the existing horticulture faculty and administrative structure.

Enrollment in the proposed program is estimated to begin at 24 headcount (24 FTE) in Fall 2006 and increase to 40 headcount (37.9 FTE) in Fall 2008. This estimate is based on current enrollment in the existing Horticulture certificate program and expanding program-related job opportunities in the area.

There is no accrediting body for Horticulture Technology programs, and licensure or certification is not required for employment.

An existing building on campus will be renovated to support the program. The renovation will include lab areas, work areas, and storage. The estimated cost is \$5,000.

The Piedmont Technical College Library currently contains 532 titles related to the Horticulture major, with another 557 available electronically. According to the proposal, the library plans to spend \$1,800 annually for the first three years of the program to increase holdings in the area.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the state. Also shown are the estimated revenues projected under the MRR and the Resource Allocation Plan as well as student tuition.

Year	Estimated MRR Cost for Proposed Program	Extraordinary (Non-MRR) Costs for Proposed Program	Total Costs	State Appropriation	Tuition	Total Revenue
Year 1	\$186,769		\$186,769	\$0	\$61,644	\$61,644
Year 2	\$287,725		\$287,725	71,401	\$95,014	\$166,414
Year 3	\$287,725		\$287,725	109,941	\$95,014	\$204,955

These data demonstrate that if Piedmont Technical College can meet the projected student enrollments and contain costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will not be able to cover costs with revenues it generates by the third year of its implementation.

In summary, Piedmont Technical College is proposing a program leading to the Associate Degree in Agriculture with a major in Horticulture Technology. The program will build on the existing Certificate in Horticulture Technology program to produce graduates to serve the growing need in the area for qualified horticulture technology workers in residential, horticulture production, and recreational employment.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve the proposed program at Piedmont Technical College leading to the Associate Degree in Agriculture with a major in Horticulture Technology, to be implemented in Fall 2006, provided that no “unique cost” or other special state funding be required or requested.