

**New Program Proposal
M.A. in Communication
College of Charleston**

Summary

The College of Charleston requests approval to offer a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Communication, to be implemented in Fall 2006 at the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) and possibly on the main campus.

The proposal was approved by the College of Charleston Board of Trustees on January 20, 2006, and submitted for Commission review on February 8, 2006. The proposal was reviewed with substantive discussion regarding the focus of the proposed program upon speech communication and organizational communication studies in the corporate sector. The proposal was voted upon favorably by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs at its meeting on March 14, 2006.

The purpose of the program is to meet the growing regional demand for opportunities to pursue graduate study in communication, and to provide local communication professionals with an extended path for career development. In the 2004-05 academic year the College of Charleston began offering, in conjunction with the LGC, a 12 hour graduate certificate program in Organizational and Corporate Communication. The proposed program represents an expansion of that program and will be offered initially at the LGC but perhaps eventually on the main campus. The proposal notes LGC's participation in the development of the proposed program, and emphasizes that the proposed program has the full support of the LGC Executive Committee and Board.

Need for the program has been documented through surveys of both currently enrolled undergraduate students and program graduates majoring in communication at the College of Charleston. The proposal notes that no similar programs are offered within 100 miles of Charleston, and a Master of Mass Communication degree offered by USC-Columbia distinguishes itself from the proposed program in its emphasis on journalism and mass communication. Also, a M.A. degree in Professional Communications is offered by Clemson University. The proposal notes that conversations with senior administrators at The Citadel confirm that it does not offer an undergraduate program in communication and has no interest in graduate curricular development in this area.

Projected enrollment for the proposed program is 20 students in the first year, increasing to 25 students in the second year, increasing to 30 students in the third year, increasing to 35 students in the fourth year, and increasing to 40

students in the fifth year. At its full operational capacity, enrollment is projected at 40 students per year. If enrollment and program completion projections are met, the program will meet the Commission's productivity standards.

The proposed program will consist of a minimum of 33 semester hours, including: 15 semester hours in core courses, 12 semester hours of electives, and six semester hours of Master's Thesis for those selecting the thesis option, or additional electives and an Internship for those selecting the non-thesis option. An Internship waiver is available for students demonstrating appropriate professional experience in a communications career, but qualifying students still must meet the minimum requirement of 33 semester hours to complete the course of study.

There are no new courses associated with the proposed program.

The proposal notes that no national or regional accreditation option currently exists for this type of graduate program in communication. However, the Department of Communication at the College of Charleston is a member of the National Communication Association, which is a learned society providing guidance on best practices in the field of study. The proposal also notes that internal assessment and period external reviews of all graduate programs are ongoing processes at the College of Charleston.

Faculty for the proposed programs will be drawn from several fields of study across the institution. The proposal notes that 17 tenured or tenure-track faculty are qualified to teach in the program. Each faculty member holds the terminal degree in their respective fields of study. No new faculty funding lines will be needed for the program during the first year of operation. One new faculty member will be added in the second year through a reallocation of faculty resources within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

In addition to the 17 faculty noted above, there is also a visiting faculty member and a new hire who is currently completing the terminal degree at another institution and is expected to join the faculty upon program completion. One faculty member will be given a reduced course load to serve as Graduate Director of the program.

There are no new physical plant or equipment requirements associated with the proposed program.

The proposal also notes that current library holdings to meet program needs are supported by an existing annual allocation of \$18,053 from the current annual library budget. These include access to the Communication and Mass Media Complete index, as well as six other databases relevant to research in

communication studies. The proposal requests \$1,000 annually through the program’s first five years to support and maintain these library resources.

New costs for the program are estimated to begin at \$36,500 in the first year, increasing to \$84,580 in the second year, increasing to \$84,780 in the third year, increasing to \$89,596 in the fourth year, and remaining at \$89,596 in the fifth year. Categories of costs over the first five years of the program’s implementation include faculty salaries (\$272,832); graduate assistants (\$52,520); program administration (\$51,800); supplies and materials (\$2,000); and library resources (\$5,000). Total estimated new costs for the program during the first five years will be \$384,152.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the state and new costs not funded by the MRR associated with implementation of the proposed program for its first five years. 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	\$103,259	\$0	\$103,259	\$0	\$57,909	\$57,909
Year 2	\$134,797	\$0	\$134,797	52,802	\$75,815	\$128,617
Year 3	\$193,293	\$0	\$193,293	69,154	\$109,898	\$179,052
Year 4	\$224,322	\$0	\$224,322	99,794	\$127,228	\$227,022
Year 5	\$270,611	\$0	\$270,611	115,458	\$153,511	\$268,969

These data demonstrate that if the institution meets the projected student enrollments and contains costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will not be able to cover costs in its first three years, will be able to cover costs in year four, and will almost be able to cover costs in year five.

In summary, the College of Charleston will offer a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Communication. The proposed program responds to the growing regional demand for graduate study and career path enhancement for aspiring and currently-employed communication professionals, and reflects the coordinated efforts of the College of Charleston and the Lowcountry Graduate Center in maximizing the use of facilities and faculty to provide learning opportunities for Charleston area residents.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve the College of Charleston's proposed program leading to the M.A. degree in Communication, to be implemented in Fall 2006, at the Lowcountry Graduate Center, and possibly, at some future time, on the main campus, provided that no additional "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested.