# New Program Proposal
## Bachelor of Arts major in Liberal Studies
## at the Regional Campuses
## University of South Carolina -Columbia

## Summary

University of South Carolina–Columbia requests approval to offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies at the Regional Campuses, to be implemented in Fall 2007.

The proposal was approved by the USC Board of Trustees on December 18, 2006, and submitted for Commission review on February 15, 2007. The proposal was reviewed with limited comment and was voted upon favorably by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) at its meeting on March 21, 2007.

Comments at the ACAP meeting focused on whether the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BLS) program will supplant the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (BAIS) degree program. The institutional representative stated that this program will replace the BAIS degree on the four two-year regional campuses; and current students enrolled in the BAIS at those two-year regional campuses will have the option of completing the BAIS degree or transferring into the BLS degree.

Comments were also made on the governance structure of the program. The institutional representative stated that the program will be governed by the Office of the Provost through the Office of the Regional Campuses at the Columbia campus and the day-to-day administration will be handled by the Office of Continuing Education Credit Programs.

According to the proposal, the purpose of the program is to provide a curriculum responsive to the educational needs of the state and a student population distributed in areas of South Carolina served by the University's system of two-year regional campuses. A large percentage of these students are place-bound, and educational opportunities accessible to them are limited. A blended delivery model, consisting of the traditional classroom, two-way video, and on-line courses, will serve students on USC's regional campuses particularly well. This degree will enable these students to complete baccalaureate-level study in the communities to which they are geographically and economically tied.

Typically, students enrolled on the regional campuses reside in the rural areas of the state and have few chances to take advantage of opportunities found in the more urban population centers.  None of the campuses is located in an area of thriving economy, and two of them are located in areas of economic deprivation. Less than 10% of the citizens in counties served by the USC regional campuses hold a four-year degree as compared to state and national levels of 21% and 25% respectively.  Graduates of the proposed BLS program are expected to make an impact on these statistics by improving the education level of areas in which they live, and, in turn, allow for economic development.  In addition to its broad-based curriculum requirements, the BLS degree will offer an opportunity to build a theoretical and practical bridge between the University and the community via an internship component.

The proposed program differs from the Interdisciplinary Studies and Liberal Arts majors at USC-Aiken, USC-Beaufort, and USC-Upstate in the specific requirements needed for graduation. Moreover, none of those campuses is able to make its degree accessible to populations outside its geographic area.  The proposed BLS degree is unlike any other currently in place at the University in that it will provide access to a baccalaureate degree for students enrolled on the regional campuses, enriching undergraduate offerings currently available.  It will allow students to build on the AA and AS degrees and the array of upper-level courses already available.

Nationally, comparable programs are said to be at Pennsylvania State University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Oklahoma, and Indiana University offer programs similar to the proposed BLS.   Regionally, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Georgia offer Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, but, according to the proposal, there are differences between the proposed BLS and those programs.  For example, many of the other programs do not offer an internship, a capstone course, or a blended instructional delivery method.

The proposal estimates that there will be no new students in the first year, 15 (16 FTE) in second year, 100 (32 FTE) in the third year, 100 (48 FTE) in the fourth year, and 100 (48 FTE) in the fifth year.  If the enrollment projections are met, the program will meet the Commission's program productivity standards for enrollment and degrees awarded.

The proposed B.L.S. program will consist of 120 semester hours, including: 41 general education requirements; 36 semester hours in major requirements; 12 semester hours of cognate courses; and 21 semester hours of approved electives. Two new courses will be added to the catalogue for this program: PALM 493 South Carolina Studies and PALM 494 Internship. BLS students will choose one

of three major options: social/behavioral sciences, arts/humanities, or science/mathematics.

Faculty for the proposed programs will in many instances be residents at the regional campuses, but all must be approved by the USC-Columbia's College of Arts and Sciences. The proposal notes the addition of one new faculty member (0.5 FTE) in the fourth year of the program and one (0.5 FTE) in the fifth year. Faculty on the regional campuses who are appropriately approved will continue to teach upper-level courses, many of which will still be offered through the traditional mode. According to the proposal, many faculty have participated in (or will participate in) workshops for training in technology used in delivery of two-way interactive video courses that reach students on multiple campuses simultaneously. Students also will have access to a small but growing number of Web-based courses, as well as courses offered through correspondence and telecommunications.

There are no new physical plant requirements associated with the proposed programs; the existing physical plant and equipment are adequate to support the program for at least the first five years. The Palmetto Program Room in the Hampton Street Annex on the USC Columbia campus has technical capabilities consistent with those available on each of the six receiving sites on the campuses, as well as plasma screen monitors.

In early 2007, a new phase of PASCAL's Academic Virtual Library called "PASCAL Delivers" will make over 12 million electronic research journal volumes available to students at the regional campuses and other SC academic libraries. The ACRL standards recommend that for an FTE student population of 1,000 to 2,999, a minimum collection of 40,000 volumes is required. All campuses are, therefore, within the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Standards. No significant increase in expenditures would be necessary to support this degree during the first five years of implementation.

New costs for the program are estimated to begin at $62,968 in the first year, decreasing to $56,230 in the second year, then increasing to $63,476 in the third year, decreasing to $44,692 in the fourth year, and decreasing to $34,492 in the fifth year. Categories of costs over the first five years of the program's implementation include faculty salaries ($50,400); faculty training ($156,658); and marketing/promotion ($55,000). Total estimated new costs for the program during the first five years will be $262,058.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the state associated with implementation of the proposed program during

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 | $0 | $0 | **$0** | N/A | $0 | **$0** |
| Year 2 | $25,476 | $0 | **$25,476** | $0 | $28,395 | **$28,395** |
| Year 3 | $50,952 | $0 | **$50,952** | $13,698 | $56,790 | **$70,488** |
| Year 4 | $76,428 | $0 | **$76,428** | $27,396 | $83,943 | **$111,339** |
| Year 5 | $76,428 | $0 | **$76,428** | $41,372 | $83,943 | **$125,315** |

These data demonstrate that if the institution meets the projected student enrollments and contains costs as they are shown in the proposal, the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program will be able to cover costs during each of its first five years.

In summary, the University of South Carolina-Columbia has proposed a program leading to the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies at the Regional Campuses.  The proposed program will provide a curriculum designed to be responsive to the educational needs of the student population in relatively rural areas served by the University's system of two-year regional campuses.  The program is also designed to provide quality by assuring that USC Columbia's College of Arts & Sciences must approve all faculty teaching in it and the Office of the Provost ultimately is the Office to which the program, its faculty and daily administrations are accountable.

**Recommendation**

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission the approve University of South Carolina-Columbia's proposed program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Liberal Studies to

be delivered at the four two-year regional campuses and to be implemented in Fall 2007, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested; and provided further that:

1. The Office of the Provost at USC-Columbia is ultimately accountable for all academic, auditing, and administrative processes for the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies at the two-year regional campuses and;

2. The BAIS be closed to all new enrollments at any of the two-year regional campuses immediately , that students  in the BAIS on those campuses be encouraged to consider completing the BLS, and that all files of the BAIS for students enrolled at any two year regional campuses be closed by Fall 2011.