

New Program Proposal
Ph.D. in Library and Information Science
USC-Columbia

Summary

USC-Columbia requests approval to offer a program leading to the Ph.D. degree in Library and Information Science to be implemented in Fall 2006. If approval is granted by the Commission on Higher Education, this will be the only doctoral degree in Library and Information Science in the state of South Carolina.

The Board of Trustees of the University of South Carolina approved the proposal on June 23, 2005. The proposal was submitted for Commission review on July 21, 2005. The proposal was reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs at its meeting on September 29, 2005. Comments at the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs' meeting in September 29, 2005, were favorable in terms of the need for the program and the institution's capacity to implement a program of quality.

The purpose of the program is to develop a doctoral program focused on research designed to prepare graduates for careers principally in universities, research centers, and the public sector of libraries. The academic content of the program is grounded in a core of courses in Library and Information Science, but significantly looks to and incorporates coursework from the social and behavioral sciences and computer science. As required by CHE policy, the program proposal was reviewed comprehensively by an external evaluator, Dr. David Carr, Associate Professor at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. As he expressed his professional opinion in the review of the proposal, Dr. Carr considers that this proposed program would be an important resource for filling a growing regional and national need for doctorally-prepared researchers and higher education faculty members in the field of library and information sciences.

The need for the program is rooted in the increased market demand for professionals trained at the doctoral level. In part, this increased demand for doctorally-prepared individuals in library and information science is a result of the aging of the current specialists in this field. The critical functions that persons in these positions will perform include teaching and research in academic institutions and working in for-profit and eleemosynary, public and private organizations, in the organization, storage, and location, and retrieval of information and databases. In addition, the program will be important for facilitating applied research in

fostering reading, the acquisition of second language development, and technological literacy.

A total of seven new courses will be required. The curriculum will consist of a core of five courses (15 semester hours); two research methods courses (6 semester hours); four courses (12 semester hours) as electives from the School of Library and Information Science; three courses (9 semester hours) in a cognate area, and at least 12 semester hours of doctoral dissertation research. As is typical, a dissertation and an oral defense are required by the degree program. A minimum of 54 semester hours of coursework, including dissertation hours, will be required for completion of the program.

In the Southern region there are three existing Ph.D. programs in this field. These other programs are found at Florida State University, the University of Alabama, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. This program, however, will be distinguished from the existing programs in its emphasis on services in schools, services in public libraries, and children's services. No other doctoral program in this field will have the intensity of focus in these areas.

Two new faculty members (1.5 FTE) and a new student services professional (1.0 FTE) will be required to implement the program. A total of 12 faculty (3.0 FTE) will begin to teach in the program in Fall 2006. This faculty commitment will be maintained for the program throughout the first five years of its implementation.

The institution has purposefully constructed the program to be both academically rigorous and interdisciplinary. This design is anticipated to expand research grant funding for the program from a variety of governmental, private sector, and non-profit sources. Only the U.S. Institute for Museum and Library Service, a group which has already disbursed approximately \$25 million to several institutional programs of this type, is listed in the proposal by name as one possible source for this kind of grant funding.

Enrollment in the proposed program is intentionally to be kept small throughout the first five years of the program's implementation. Student enrollment is estimated to begin at five students (6.67 FTE) in FY 2006-2007 and increase to fifteen students (18.33 FTE) in FY 2010-2011. If enrollment projections are realized, the program will meet the current CHE program productivity standards.

The American Library Association (ALA) does not accredit programs of study in the field of Library and Information Sciences beyond the master's degree level. Therefore, the program will not be required to seek accreditation through

any national professional accrediting association. However, the Master of Library and Information Sciences (M.L.I.S.) degree, upon which degree program the proposed Ph.D. program will be built, is fully accredited by the ALA. The most recent ALA accreditation of the M.L.I.S. program occurred in January 2003. The ALA has long cited the M.L.I.S. as an exemplary program by distance education. Within the past ten years, active cohorts in the states of West Virginia, Virginia, and Maine, as well as significant numbers of students from Georgia, have received their M.L.I.S. degrees through this distance education program offering. The most recent *U.S. News and World Report* ranking of graduate programs in library science ranks the masters-level program at USC-Columbia #15, the highest ranking of any similar program in the country at an institution not offering a doctoral program in field. That same report ranked the M.L.I.S. as #3 in school library media; #5 for youth and children's services, and #8 in health sciences librarianship.

The physical plant is adequate, according to the proposal, for the first five years of the program's implementation. Additional equipment costs are estimated at \$10,000 prior to the beginning of the first year of the program. Thereafter, in each of the first five years, \$1,000 in equipment maintenance is projected. According to the proposal, the library will require no additional expenditure of funds for new materials in order to accommodate the proposed Ph.D. program.

New costs for the program are estimated by the institution to begin at \$267,000 in year one and include program administration, faculty salaries, graduate assistants, supplies and materials, equipment and equipment maintenance. Estimated costs are to increase to \$ 408,000 by the fifth year of the program and include the same categories of expenditures as found in the first year. The total estimate for new costs is \$1,824,000 for the first five years of the program's operations. A grant application to help finance this program is planned for the 2006 funding cycle by USC-Columbia, to be directed to the U.S. Institute for Museum and Library Service, a group which has already disbursed \$25 million to strengthen direct support of similar programs at several research institutions.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the state associated with implementation of the proposed program for its first five years. Also shown are the estimated revenues projected under the Mission Resource Requirement 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 |
|---------|---|--|------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 2006-07 | \$146,527 | 0 | \$146,527 | 0 | \$68,953 | \$68,953 |
| 2007-08 | \$256,422 | 0 | \$256,422 | \$73,937 | \$120,465 | \$194,402 |
| 2008-09 | \$402,948 | 0 | \$402,948 | \$129,072 | \$189,418 | \$318,940 |
| 2009-10 | \$402,948 | 0 | \$402,948 | \$203,009 | \$189,418 | \$392,427 |
| 2010-11 | \$402,948 | 0 | \$402,948 | \$203,009 | \$189,418 | \$392,427 |

These data demonstrate that if the new program meets its enrollment projections and contains costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will not be able to cover new costs with revenues it generates by the fifth year of its implementation. Nevertheless, the institution is committed to offering this program and takes the position that the necessary funds to offer it are available. The proposal cites the internal reallocation of resources at the University itself and the potential for a \$900,000 grant in the program's first five years from the U.S. Institute for Museum and Library Service as two likely sources of additional funding. If these two additional sources of funding were to be realized, the program's costs would be balanced by revenues.

In summary, the proposed program will add an unduplicated Ph.D. program in the state. The program has received high affirmation from the external expert who did an analysis of the proposal. A growing need appears to be occurring for persons with this kind of professional background.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends the Commission approve the program leading to the Ph.D. in Library and Information Sciences at USC-Columbia, to be implemented in Fall 2006, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested.