

**Program Proposal Modification
 Master of Business Administration, add Lowcountry Graduate Center Location for the
 Healthcare Management Concentration
 South Carolina State University**

Summary

South Carolina State University requests approval to offer the Healthcare Management concentration of the program leading to the Master of Business Administration at the Lowcountry Graduate Center to be implemented in May 2016. Staff elevated the program modification proposal for consideration by the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL) while the University remains on probation with the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges. The following chart outlines the stages of approval for the proposal; the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL) voted to recommend approval of the proposal. The full program proposal and letter of support is attached.

Stages of Consideration	Date	Comments
Program Proposal Received	1/15/16	Not Applicable
ACAP Consideration	2/18/16	<p>South Carolina State University's representative discussed the need for the Healthcare Management concentration of the MBA program at the Lowcountry Graduate Center. He explained that the director of the Lowcountry Graduate Center, also in attendance, requested the program be offered at that site and that the proposed expansion to that site would not result in unnecessary duplication. ACAP members and CHE staff discussed the merits of the program in that service area as well as potential future growth of the MBA program.</p> <p>The University's representative also explained that the core courses would be taught by full-time faculty who will travel to Charleston, while some of the courses for the concentration would be taught by adjunct faculty.</p> <p>Staff stated that a request for revisions to the proposal would be forthcoming.</p> <p>ACAP members expressed support for and voted to approve the program proposal.</p>
Comments and suggestions from CHE staff sent to the institution	2/26/16	<p>Staff requested the following proposal revisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the reasons why the healthcare management concentration will be the only option offered at the new site as discussed at the ACAP meeting; and describe the process for deciding to offer the program at the new site. • Include information mentioned during the ACAP meeting and included in the support letter that addresses the appeal of the MBA to working healthcare professionals in the Charleston area.

Stages of Consideration	Date	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain whether there is a cost to deliver the program at the new site and if students will incur additional expenses as a result. • Provide additional information about the similarities and differences of the programs listed in the chart and explain why this expansion is not unnecessary duplication. • Explain why the new faculty will be hired in year 3 and not earlier in the program. • Clarify that the courses in the concentration will be delivered by adjunct faculty, but that core courses will be delivered by full-time faculty. • Identify specific library resources needed. • Include an amount for program administration in the cost chart, especially since the program is being offered at a new site. If there are no new costs for administration, explain why.
Revised Program Proposal Received	3/10/16	The revised proposal satisfactorily addressed the requested revisions.
CAAL Consideration	4/7/16	<p>Commissioners and the University's representative discussed the need for the program in the Lowcountry area.</p> <p>Commissioners asked for clarification about the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether faculty will commute to the site; • the cost to expand the program; and • whether the Board of Trustees approved the expansion. <p>The University's representative provided the following responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some faculty will travel to Charleston and that local adjuncts will be hired to support the program; • financial projections showed revenue will be generated by this expansion and that offering the program at the Lowcountry Graduate Center is an example of efficiency • the expansion was approved by the Board

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve the expansion of the Healthcare Management concentration of the program leading to the Master of Business Administration to the Lowcountry Graduate Center to be implemented in May 2016.

Background Information

Provide a detailed description of the proposed modification, including its nature and purpose and centrality to institutional mission. (1500 characters)

This is a modification to add the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) as a site to offer South Carolina State University's (SCSU) MBA program with a concentration in Healthcare Management (36 credit hours). Offering the MBA Healthcare Management concentration is supported by the Director of the LGC, Dr. Nancy Muller (see letter from Muller to Luke dated 1-14-16) and, indeed, was recommended by her. Offering the program at that site provides residents of the Charleston region access to this program in one of the nation's largest and fastest growing private industry sectors. It also expands the geographical reach of the SC State's MBA to the greater Charleston area with great enrollment potential because medical services represents the single largest employment sector in Metro Charleston, according to a 2014 study by Avalanche Consulting LLC. The 2014 study also forecasts that medical services will add the most new jobs of any sector in Metro Charleston over the next five years.

Charleston is home to many healthcare professionals associated with the Medical University of South Carolina and other healthcare facilities. Since healthcare related organizations need strategic thinking managers more than ever in order to successfully compete in this expanding market, demand for this MBA concentration will be strong.

Recognizing the demand for healthcare management in the Charleston market, Dr. Nancy Muller approached SC State in the spring of 2014 regarding the feasibility of offering some graduate programs, including an MBA with a concentration in health services management, at the LGC. Over the next several months, the SCSU team researched this proposal by reviewing healthcare management programs at other universities and consulting healthcare professionals. Based on that review, four new courses that now comprise the Healthcare Management concentration were developed.

SC State's MBA program has four options: General MBA, MBA with a concentration in Agribusiness, MBA with a concentration in Entrepreneurship, and MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Management. This proposal is to only offer the Healthcare Management concentration at the LGC site because other MBA programs already exist at the Citadel and College of Charleston but those do not focus on healthcare management. SC State's MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Management would be the only one of its kind in the Charleston market, and has been developed to serve the unique needs of healthcare professionals.

List the objectives of the modified program. (1500 characters)

This proposal seeks CHE approval to offer the MBA Healthcare Management concentration at the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC). While other institutions offer the MBA in the Charleston area, none of them has a Healthcare Management concentration, which is well suited to the many healthcare professionals who live and work in Charleston. The MBA Healthcare Management concentration will be offered in the traditional format as well as online to accommodate the schedules of the busy healthcare professionals who wish to move into administrative and leadership roles. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook for December 2015 noted that medical and health services managers held 333,000 jobs in 2014 with a median annual wage of \$92,810. Thus, the MBA Healthcare Management

concentration will provide residents of SC with both professional advancement potential and increased earnings potential.

The MBA Healthcare Management concentration will enable students to:

1. Understand the rapidly changing business and healthcare environments and the implications for individuals and organizations.
2. Develop specialized knowledge in healthcare management including healthcare policy, law and ethics, organizational behavior, human resource management, quality assessment, and healthcare delivery systems.
3. Develop critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills required for efficient healthcare management.
4. Develop leadership skills and specialized knowledge to successfully manage healthcare organizations and systems.
5. Develop analytical and strategic decision making skills to manage and control scarce resources.

Besides the core MBA courses (24 credit hours), the Healthcare Management concentration offers the following courses (12 credit hours):

HC 520 Healthcare Policy, Law and Ethics,
HC 521 Healthcare Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management
HC 522 Quality Management in the Healthcare Industry
HC 523 Healthcare System Delivery in America

Assessment of Need

Provide an assessment of the need for the program modification for the institution, the state, the region, and beyond, if applicable. (1500 characters)

Nancy Muller, Director of the LGC, cites strong data in support of offering the MBA Healthcare Management concentration in greater Charleston. "According to a June 2014 report by Avalanche Consulting LLC, the medical and healthcare sector is currently adding nearly 1,000 new jobs each year, 4 ½ times more than in manufacturing over the 2000 – 2014 period, in the Charleston Metro Area (Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester counties) alone." In 2014, one in ten (9.9%) employed persons in the area was employed in health services, representing 30,090 of the 302,630 comprising the total workforce across all industries and fields.

The health services workforce is also a highly educated sector, as 14,680 of the 30,090, or nearly half (48.8%) are working in professional ranks, such as physicians, nurses, and other medical specialties, nearly all of whom have earned at least a bachelor's degree. Based on the Avalanche data and analysis, this is projected to grow to 35,800 by 2018, or by 19.0%. Since 2000, this employment sector has grown 47.1% in the Charleston Metro Area, faster than the U.S. average and second only to the growth rate in professional and business services at 55.9% for the area over the period 2000 through 2014.

In the Charleston Metro Area, there are an estimated 1,700 firms in healthcare and social assistance, according to data supplied by the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

(Muller to Luke dated 1/14/16). These organizations need strategic thinking managers, and these statistics provide strong evidence of the ready market for the program.

SC State University's MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Management will be the only program with a focus on the management of healthcare services accessible to those in the Midlands and low country of South Carolina. Graduates of the program will have unique skill sets needed to fill existing and projected job opportunities in the health care services field in South Carolina. Nancy Muller states, "I consider this new MBA concentration from South Carolina State University to fill an unmet need and talent gap among the master's programs available in this field in the area."

Like other programs available at the LGC, this MBA, with its targeted curriculum, after-hours and weekend class scheduling, and convenient location, is expected to appeal to current healthcare workers seeking management knowledge and credentials. The generous service amenities at the LGC enable adult learners; most working full time and balancing family and workplace, to successfully navigate graduate study. If only a small fraction of the Charleston area's 14,000 college educated healthcare workers pursue this MBA, the program will be a great success.

Will the proposed modification impact any existing programs and services at the institution?

Yes

No

If yes, explain. (1000 characters)

The proposed program will not have a negative impact on existing programs and services. It is simply an extension of the reach of the current MBA program. While SC State will incur an administrative fee of 10% of tuition and fees to the LGC for students enrolled at the Charleston site, there are no additional costs for Charleston students. Students taking the same program on the main campus in Orangeburg and those completing the degree in Charleston will pay the same price. SC State will incur an additional \$600 per year in administrative costs for travel between Orangeburg and Charleston by the MBA Director. However, the revenue generated from tuition and fees will cover the cost of offering the concentration at the LGC.

List of Similar Programs in South Carolina

Program Name	Institution	Similarities	Differences
MBA with a Health Services Emphasis	Clemson University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both programs focus on management of healthcare services Both curricula include a Healthcare Delivery Systems course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clemson's MBA program does not require students to declare an emphasis. In addition to the core, students are required to take 3 electives, which may be in one or multiple areas. SC State students must declare an emphasis in Healthcare Management and take 4 electives in addition to the core courses. Both programs serve different geographical regions.
MBA with a Concentration in Healthcare Executive Management	Francis Marion University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both programs include a Health Policy course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Francis Marion's program is 30 credit hours; SC State's is 36 credit hours Francis Marion's healthcare focus is on preparing students for public health administration, while SC State's is on management of individual enterprises. Francis Marion's healthcare program is delivered through collaboration between the School of Business and the Department of Nursing. All healthcare courses are online and taught by faculty in the Department of Nursing. SC State's program is solely through the School of Business. Since the focus is different, the curricula are also different.
MHA – Master of Health Administration	MUSC (Medical University of South Carolina)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both programs are delivered in a blended format using internet based and face-to-face meetings. Both have healthcare law, human resource management, and policy courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MUSC's focus is on preparing healthcare professionals for leadership positions in health administration. MUSC's program offers two formats: The Executive format for working healthcare professionals, which includes 54 credit hrs. and no internship requirement. The Residential format for fulltime students with no healthcare experience, which includes 66 credit hours and an internship requirement. SC State's program only requires 36 credit hours and is geared toward students with healthcare work experience. MUSC's curriculum is more clinician-oriented; while SC State's curriculum has a managerial focus.
MHA – Master of Health Administration	USC (University of South Carolina)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some similarities in courses (both have healthcare law, organizational behavior, and quality management courses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USC's MHA program has a clinical focus that prepares students for a career with direct service providers and ancillary industries. SC State's program emphasizes the management of healthcare services and delivery systems and provides students with skills to manage a variety of health-related organizations. USC's program requires 58 credit hours; while SC State's requires 36 credit hours.

The MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Management at the LGC does not constitute duplication because it is a niche program. As the chart above indicates, this new MBA concentration is truly a unique offering for college educated healthcare workers living and working in Charleston or Orangeburg. No other MBA program exists with a concentration in healthcare management that is easily accessible to Charleston and the lower Midlands. Non-MBA programs with a healthcare focus exist in Columbia and Charleston, but they have more of a clinical emphasis, while SC State's program focuses on management of the healthcare enterprise. Healthcare Management MBA programs exist at Clemson and Francis Marion, but neither is easily accessible to Low Country residents of South Carolina.

Description of the Program

Projected New Enrollment						
Year	Fall		Spring		Summer	
	Headcount	Credit Hours	Headcount	Credit Hours	Headcount	Credit Hours
2015-2016					5	30
2016-2017	15	90	10	60	10	60
2017-2018	20	120	15	90	15	90
2018-2019	25	150	20	120	20	120
2019-2020	30	180	25	150	25	150

Curriculum

Attach a curriculum sheet identifying the courses required for the program (Attachment A).

Curriculum Changes

Note: Complete this table only if there are changes to the curriculum.

Courses Eliminated from Program	Courses Added to Program
N/A	N/A

Faculty

Provide a brief explanation of any additional institutional changes in faculty and/or administrative assignment that may result from implementing the proposed program modification. (1000 characters)

Adjuncts will be initially hired to teach the four healthcare management courses in the program, however, core courses will be taught by current full-time faculty. A full-time faculty position in healthcare management will be added in Year 3. SC State will use the first two years to recruit a critical mass of students for the program after which time the program will be able to fund its own full time faculty position.

Resources

Identify any new library/learning resources, new instructional equipment, and new facilities or modifications to existing facilities needed to support the modified program. (2000 characters)

\$10,000 per year will be spent on procuring library resources for the Healthcare Management concentration. After conferring with both academics and practitioners in healthcare management, a set of library resources was identified that would benefit students and professors in the new Healthcare Management concentration. While SCSU offers undergraduate programs in Health and Physical Education, it is best practice to augment library resources for any new graduate concentration or field. Each year the Miller F. Whittaker Library will purchase approximately \$1,200 in books and subscribe to journals (mostly renewals) costing approximately \$8,800 annually; for a total expenditure of \$10,000. Please see Attachment B for the specific resources planned for purchase during the first year.

Financial Support

Estimated New Costs by Year						
Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Program Administration	600	600	600	600	600	3,000
Faculty and Staff Salaries	7,000	21,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	298,000
Graduate Assistants						
Equipment						
Facilities: 10% Tuition	1,683	11,781	16,830	21,879	26,928	79,101
Supplies and Materials	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Library Resources	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
Other*						
Total	20,283	44,381	118,430	123,479	128,528	435,101
Sources of Financing						
Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Tuition Funding	16,830	117,810	168,300	218,790	269,280	791,010
Program-Specific Fees						
State Funding (i.e., Special State Appropriation)*						
Reallocation of Existing Funds*						
Federal Funding*						
Other Funding* Title III Grant	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
Total	26,830	127,810	178,300	228,790	279,280	841,010
Net Total (i.e., Sources of Financing Minus Estimated New Costs)	6,547	83,429	59,870	105,311	150,752	405,909

*Provide an explanation for these costs and sources of financing in the budget justification.

Budget Justification

Provide a brief explanation for the other new costs and any special sources of financing (state funding, reallocation of existing funds, federal funding, or other funding) identified in the Financial Support table. (1000 characters)

Note: Institutions need to complete this budget justification *only* if any other new costs, state funding, reallocation of existing funds, federal funding, or other funding are included in the Financial Support table.

Adjunct faculty will be paid \$3,500 per course. Two courses will be taught each semester and in the summer. The current MBA Director will oversee the management of the program at the LCG as well as on the main campus. An additional \$600 per year will be incurred for travel between Orangeburg and Charleston by the MBA Director.

The LCG assesses a facility charge of 10% of tuition and fees per student who take courses at the LGC.

Revenue for the program is based on SC State's assessment of \$561 per credit hour for tuition and fees.

\$10,000 will be used for Library resources each year paid by the Title III program.

Evaluation and Assessment

Will any of the proposed modification impact the way the program is evaluated and assessed?

Yes

No

If yes, explain. (1000 characters)

Will the proposed modification affect or result in program-specific accreditation?

Yes

No

If yes, explain; if the modification will result in the program seeking program-specific accreditation, provide the institution's plans to seek accreditation, including the expected timeline for accreditation. (500 characters)

Will the proposed modification affect or lead to licensure or certification?

Yes

No

If yes, explain how the program will prepare students for licensure or certification. (500 characters)

Teacher or School Professional Preparation Programs

Is the proposed modified program a teacher or school professional preparation program?

Yes

No

If yes, complete the following components.

Area of Certification

Attach a document addressing the South Carolina Department of Education Requirements and SPA or Other National Specialized and/or Professional Association Standards.

Attachment A: Curriculum Sheet for Proposed MBA Concentration in Healthcare Management

SC State University – School of Business

MBA Program Curriculum

MBA with a Concentration in Healthcare Management

Prefix & No.		Credit Hrs.
<i>Core Courses – 24 Credit Hours</i>		
ACCT 510	Accounting for Business Decisions	3
BA 519	Statistics for Business Decisions	3
BA 563	Global Business Perspectives	3
ECON 515	Managerial Economics	3
MKT 520	Marketing Management	3
MGT 520	Financial Management	3
MGT 575	Management Information Systems	3
MGT 580	Capstone: Integrated Business Analysis	3
<i>Healthcare Management Courses – 12 Credit Hours</i>		
HC 520	Healthcare Law, Policy and Ethics	3
HC 521	Healthcare Org. Behavior and HR Mgt.	3
HC 522	Quality Management in the Healthcare Industry	3
HC 523	Healthcare System Delivery in America	3

Attachment B

**SC State University
Library Resources Planned
For the MBA with a Concentration in Healthcare Management**

Textbooks and Books	Approx. Price
<i>Medical Laws and Ethics</i> 4th Ed., by B. Fremgen, Pearson 2011, ISBN: 978-01325-59225	92.00
<i>Understanding Health Policy</i> 6th Ed., by T. Bodenheimer and K. Grumbach, McGraw-Hill 2012, ISBN: 978-007170-70538	53.00
<i>Organizational Behavior, Theory and Design in Healthcare</i> by Nancy Borkowski, Bartlett Publishing 2009 ISBN: 978-07637-42850	113.00
<i>Human Resources in Healthcare: Managing for Success</i> 3rd Ed. by B.J. Fried and M.D. Fottler, Health Administration Press 2008 ISBN: 978-15679-32997	110.00
<i>Introduction to Quality Health Care Management</i> 2nd Ed., by Patrice Spath, AUPHA, Health Administration Press, Chicago, IL, 2013 ISBN: 978-15679-35936	99.00
<i>Continuous Quality Improvement in Healthcare</i> 4th Ed., by William A. Solecito & Julie K. Johnson, 2013 ISBN: 978-07637-81541	127.00
<i>Delivering Healthcare in America: A Systems Approach</i> 6th Ed. by Leiyu Shi and Douglas Singh, Jones and Bartlett Publishing 2015 ISBN: 978-07637-31994	128.00
<i>Critically Ill: A 5-point Plan to Cure Healthcare Delivery</i> by Frederick Southwick, MD ISBN-13: 978-1614660163 or ISBN-10: 1614660166	20.00
<i>Cases in Healthcare Finance</i> 5th Ed. by Louis Gapenski,, AUPHA Press/Health Administration Press, 2014 ISBN-13: 978-1567936117 ISBN-10: 1567936113	132.00
<i>Healthcare Finance: An Introduction to Accounting and Financial Management</i> , 5th Ed., by Louis Gapenski, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-1567934250 ISBN-10: 1567934250	128.00
<i>Health Law, Cases, Materials, and Problems</i> 6 th Ed. by Furrow, Barry et. al. St. Paul: West, 2001. ISBN: 0314-15154-0	225.00
<i>Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Bioethical Issues</i> by Carol Levine Dubuque, Iowa: McGraw-Hill. 2012 ISBN-13: 978-0078050121 ISBN-10: 007805012X	52.00
BOOKS TOTAL	\$ 1,279.00
Journals	
<i>Health Economics</i> , Wiley and Sons, ISSN: 1099-1050	2,888.00
<i>Journal of Healthcare Management</i> , American College of Healthcare Executives, ISSN: 1096-9012	135.00
<i>Milbank Quarterly</i> , Wiley-Blackwell ISSN: 0887-378X; 1468-0009	364.00
<i>International Journal of Healthcare Management</i> , Taylor and Francis, ISSN: 2047-9700; 2047-9719	545.00
<i>Health Care Management Science</i> , Springer-Verlag, ISSN: 1386-9620	94.00

<i>Health Affairs</i> , Project Hope, ISSN: 0278-2715; 1544-5208	185.00
<i>Health Services Research</i> , Health Research and Educational Trust, ISSN: 0017-9124; 1475-6773	1,286.00
<i>Health Care Management Review</i> , Rempfer, ISSN: 0361-6274;1550-5030	137.00
<i>Journal of Marketing</i> , American Marketing Association, ISSN: 0022-2429	460.00
<i>Marketing Health Services</i> , American Marketing Association, ISSN: 1094-1304	145.00
<i>Journal of Accountancy</i> , AICPA, ISSN:	75.00
<i>Journal of Management</i> , Sage Publications, ISSN: 0149-2063; 1557-1211	1,076.00
<i>Journal of Finance</i> , Wiley and Sons, ISSN: 1540-6261	537.00
<i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> , The Oxford Press, ISSN: 1531-4650; 0033-5533	738.00
JOURNALS TOTAL	\$ 8,665
TOTAL LIBRARY RESOURCES	\$ 9,944



Lowcountry Graduate Center

3800 Paramount Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405

January 14, 2016

Learie B. Luke, Ph.D.
Acting Provost
South Carolina State University
Donma Administration Building 202
300 College St. NE, P.O. Box 7307
Orangeburg, SC 29117

Dear Dr. Luke,

The healthcare industry is a collection of providers of goods and services to treat patients with preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative care. The healthcare industry in the U.S. is seeing dramatic growth, and now represents the nation's largest private industry sector. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that healthcare and medical organizations are projected to create nearly one-third of new jobs between 2012 and 2022. To keep pace with this growth and changes in the environment (such as the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act), healthcare organizations are seeking educated leaders who can integrate technology and business management practices into the traditional healthcare system. Jobs2Careers.com currently lists over 1,800 unfilled jobs in South Carolina for healthcare managers.

According to a June 2014 released report by Avalanche Consulting LLC, the medical and healthcare sector is currently adding nearly 1,000 new jobs each year, 4 ½ times more than in manufacturing over the 2000 – 2014 period, in the Charleston Metro Area (Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester counties) alone. In 2014, one in ten (9.9%) employed persons in the area was employed in health services, representing 30,090 of the 302,630 comprising the total workforce across all industries and fields. This is also a highly educated sector, as 14,680 of the 30,090, or nearly half (48.8%) are working in professional ranks, such as physicians, nurses, and other medical specialties, nearly all of whom have earned at least a bachelor's degree. Based on the Avalanche data and analysis, this is projected to grow to 35,800 by 2018, or by 19.0%. Since

2000, this employment sector has grown 47.1% in the Charleston Metro Area, faster than the U.S. average and second only to the growth rate in professional and business services at 55.9% for the area over the period 2000 through 2014. In the Charleston Metro Area, there are an estimated 1,700 firms in healthcare and social assistance, according to data supplied by the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce.

This healthcare services workforce serves not only the second largest population base in the state totaling 727,700 in 2014 across the tri-county area, but is also available to the 4.9 million visitors to the area in the case of accidents and sudden illness they experience. The area therefore has six acute care hospitals, including the prestigious Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) responsible for patient care, research, and teaching. Together, they generated \$2.2 billion in total revenue in 2013. The Affordable Care Act, expanding healthcare coverage for millions of uninsured lives across the nation, is fueling current and future growth in the sector. This expansion in demand is also the result of an aging population across America, including South Carolina, whose healthcare needs are waxing rather than waning with longevity. Meanwhile, South Carolina's population is among some of the worst in the nation, ranking 43 out of 50 states in overall health in 2014, according to the Centers for Prevention and Disease Control. Two out of three of every SC adult are overweight or obese, and 12.5% of SC's population has diabetes, placing us 47th among the 50 states where 50th is the worst. This parallels SC's ranking for high cholesterol, at a prevalence of 42.6%, making us highly vulnerable to cardiovascular disease and related illnesses. For these and other reasons, healthcare is a big business and among the leading reasons that Metro Charleston is considered a "medical mecca" for our state and the entire southeastern region of the country.

SC State University's MBA in Healthcare Management would be the only "in person" degree program of its kind available to Lowcountry residents. Other MBA programs exist, including by the College of Charleston with daytime weekday classes and The Citadel with evening classes, but no other specifically focuses on healthcare services management. In fact, the emphasis on services is a relatively new area of emphasis in higher education, as opposed to the more traditional, broader concentration on healthcare which covers both pharmaceuticals, medical devices and medical supplies manufacturing as well as services management. MUSC offers the MHA (Master of Health Administration) degree by its College of Health Professionals, which stresses the study of epidemiology and policy aspects of healthcare and is geared more to those seeking careers in more clinical environments. With a terminal degree in health services research and having taught at the College of Charleston an undergraduate Fall 2015 term course in "Structure of the U. S. Healthcare Delivery System," I consider this new MBA concentration from South Carolina State University to fill an unmet need and talent gap among the master's programs available in this field in the area.

According to the EAB, a national membership organization offering research in best practices and opportunities in higher education based in Washington, D.C., professional master's programs are both growing and changing. Across the next decade, master's degrees are projected by EAB to grow far faster than degrees at any other level. This new growth will come primarily from professional master's programs focused on specific job skills that help students gain a new job or advance in an existing position. According to the EAB, these programs tend to be part-time, draw on multiple academic disciplines, make significant use of adjunct faculty with practical work experience, and serve the older adult learner. The offering of this new MBA concentration to the ever-expanding healthcare services workforce in Metro Charleston will give its graduates an edge in competing for the jobs in such areas as medical practice management, financial analysis and planning, and healthcare marketing and communications.

The LGC was launched 15 years ago as a consortium of MUSC, The Citadel, and the College of Charleston to bring graduate-level education to working professionals to meet this area's workforce needs. It shares the campus with the College of Charleston's School of Professional Studies, offering its bachelor's degree completion program and non-credit continuing education to the older adult learner. With 50,000 square feet of space, this totally wireless facility houses 23 high-tech classrooms with high definition projectors and digital document cameras, five of which have videoconferencing capability. Additionally, there are three computer labs with 80 personal computers. Depending on instructor preference, the latest in 21st century classroom technology allows live, synchronous connections between multiple classroom locations to leverage the State's teaching resources in higher education.

Service amenities enable our targeted, older adult learners – working full time and balancing family and workplace with studies and career goals – to be successful. The LGC places an overarching emphasis on student centeredness by offering library services for research assistance, onsite tutoring, lactation rooms for working mothers, 300 spaces of safe, free parking, onsite food service, and archived lecture-capture for access by students. Visionaries intentionally placed the LGC away from downtown, in proximity to where the growing populace of the area lives and works. Hence, the North Charleston location is purposeful for ease of access by students after a long workday with ease of ample parking. This is of key strategic value in recruitment and program enrollment. We are only 70 miles from Orangeburg, located at the intersection of I-26 and 526 highway arteries in North Charleston. With 90 minutes or less of driving time, nearly one-third of the population of the entire state can reach the LGC location.

The LGC embraces the addition of South Carolina State University (SCSU) as our newest partner institution, joining Clemson University and the University of South Carolina alongside our three original member institutions. We are committed to publicizing its presence to the general public and especially to healthcare services employers in the area for their help in building awareness of this professional master's program for their employees. A marketing launch campaign by the LGC is planned as soon as all approvals are in hand by the SCSU and an

official news release can be issued to the media. I thank you for this opportunity to be of service to the working professionals of our state. And I trust this will be only the beginning of a blossoming and enriched working relationship between us.

Sincerely,

Nancy Muller, Ph.D., MBA
Director and Associate Dean
Lowcountry Graduate Center