

**TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN APPLIED INDUSTRIAL/ ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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**I. SUMMARY**

Colorado State University has submitted a proposal for a Master of Science Degree in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology (I/O Psychology) to be offered through the Department of Psychology in the College of Natural Sciences. The I/O psychology degree program will be delivered fully as an online program. The primary objective of the Master of Science Degree in Applied Organizational/Industrial Psychology is to prepare students to work as applied researchers in the areas of human resource management and organizational management. A second objective of the program is to complement the existing doctoral program in I/O Psychology. Offering an applied, research-oriented Master's program creates clearer graduate training opportunities for students. Additionally, doctoral students will have opportunities to support the Master's program through course design and graduate teaching assistant (TA) positions.

This M.S. in I/O Psychology came about as a result of a needs assessment distributed to 1200 individuals in the human resource area and 567 undergraduates from CU-Boulder.

Fifty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that getting a master's degree in I/O Psychology was important. Forty-nine percent indicated that getting a master's degree would be beneficial to their career plans.<sup>1</sup>

The Board of Governor's for the Colorado State University System approved the Master of Science in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology at Colorado State University on February 25, 2009.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The following is summarized from the Colorado State University proposal for the Master of Science in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology Degree.

The program will prepare students to work as applied researchers in the areas of human resource management and organizational management. Graduates will work in consulting firms, organizations with large human resource departments, or city, state, and federal governments. Typical responsibilities for Master's-level research psychologists include: supporting talent management programs by developing and validating selection tests;

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<sup>1</sup> Master's Degree in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology, proposal, page 3.

supporting training and development programs by conducting needs assessments and evaluating training effectiveness; supporting organizational development efforts by conducting, analyzing, and feeding back employee attitude surveys; and supporting leadership development programs by developing and monitoring 360°-style assessment programs.

CSU's Department of Psychology focuses on applied graduate degrees and the specialty in Industrial/Organizational Psychology is integral to the identity and mission of the department: it currently offers a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. The doctoral program is annually recognized as one of the top 15 in the country and one of the best in the western United States. Students enrolled in the doctoral program earn a Master's degree along the way to the doctorate but the master's degree is not considered a terminal degree. The M.S. in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology would be a terminal degree providing students with the necessary credentials to enter the field or advance in current employment situations.

Currently, there are over 100 terminal masters I/O Psychology programs offered in the U.S. but only three are offered fully online. The online Master's program is designed to attract different students than those applying to the Ph.D. program in I/O Psychology.<sup>2</sup>

#### **ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT:**

The Master of Science in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology degree program supports the role and mission of Colorado State University by blending teaching, research, and extension in the design of the program. By offering the program online, the program can reach a broader constituency inside Colorado, outside Colorado, and on an international basis.

The statutory mission of Colorado State University is to “. . . be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards offering a comprehensive array of baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degree programs. Consistent with the tradition of land grant universities, Colorado State University has exclusive authority to offer graduate and undergraduate programs in agriculture, forestry, natural resources, and veterinary medicine”. *C.R.S. 23-31-101*.

#### **EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR THE PROGRAM:**

In addition to the results of the needs assessment survey distributed to individuals in the field of human resources [cited earlier], the demand for the program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics which suggests occupations for psychologists are expected to grow faster than the average (27% or more) and “Industrial Psychologists will be in demand to boost worker productivity and retention rates in a

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<sup>2</sup> Master's Degree in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology proposal, page 1-2

wide range of businesses.” The proposal also cites Colorado Labor market information which projects the I/O jobs will increase 28% between now and 2015.<sup>3</sup>

**EVIDENCE OF STUDENT DEMAND:**

Evidence from surveys, interviews, and inquiries to The Division of Continuing Education indicates students would enroll in this program. The spring 2006 survey indicated that a large number of human resource professionals and graduating psychology majors were interested in a Master’s program in Applied I/O psychology, and most preferred an online format to a weekend-based program

The expectation is for 10 – 20 students to enroll in year one, and 20 - 25 in subsequent years. The program administrators hope to eventually reach a steady state with a cohort of 30 students entering the program each year.

**III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Department staff has reviewed this proposed program to ensure that it meets the State’s performance measures outlined in C.R.S. 23-5-129.6. The program meets all performance measures set forth by the state.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Commission approve the Master of Science in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology to be offered by Colorado State University.

**V. STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

C.R.S. 23-5-129.6

**VI. ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS**

The program proposal materials are attached.

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<sup>3</sup> Master’s Degree in Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology proposal, page 4.