

Coordinated Degree Program

Fort Lewis College and University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work

Request for CCHE approval, November 5, 2009

Executive Summary

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Fort Lewis College requests approval of a coordinated undergraduate-graduate degree program with the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. This proposal is for a unique public – private collaborative partnership between the two institutions. The proposal is to offer a 3 + 2 program whereby students could in five years obtain both a BA from Fort Lewis College and an MSW from the University of Denver through its Four Corners MSW program. The program is NOT a new degree program for either institution. Rather, it combines two already existing and successful programs. The target date for implementation is Summer 2010.

Background

The University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work (UD-GSSW) has been offering a Masters of Social Work in the Durango area since 2002. A total of 61 students have graduated from the program since its inception; 34 of those (56%) are graduates of Fort Lewis College. Working together the two institutions have developed a 3 + 2 program that would allow Fort Lewis students who follow the appropriate degree plan to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology or Sociology from Fort Lewis College and a Masters of Social Work degree from DU-GSSW. The two degrees will be earned during or at the end of a five year coordinated program that includes three years of Fort Lewis College courses and two years of DU-GSSW courses. The Fort Lewis College Bachelor of Arts degree will be completed at the end of the fourth year and the MSW from DU-GSSW will be completed at the end of the fifth year. Those students accepted and completing this coordinated program will complete the two degrees in five years rather than the usual six years, thus saving the students a year of tuition, fees, and other school-related costs. The first student participants will be those entering the DU Masters of Social Work program as part of a new cohort group in Summer Term, 2010. It is anticipated that three to five Fort Lewis College students will join each cohort group. Those groups begin in the Fall of even numbered years and are completed in two calendar years.

Proposal and MOU

As prescribed in Section 4.02.02 of the Policy and Procedures for the Approval of Proposals for Coordinated Academic Degree Programs, the two institutions have agreed upon degree plans for students which indicate those Masters level courses at DU that will be transferred to Fort Lewis College and substituted for graduation requirements. Plans for both Psychology and Sociology majors are included in the memorandum of understanding that has been approved by both institutions with signatures of the Provosts at each institution (see Appendix A of detailed proposal). On March 18, 2009,

the University of Denver Board of Trustees approved the program (Appendix B). The Board of Trustees for Fort Lewis College approved the program at its regular meeting on June 9, 2009 (Appendix C).

Curriculum

Fort Lewis College students who wish to pursue the coordinated degree program will complete three years (minimum 90 credits) at the College, including all general education requirements and specific major requirements in either Sociology or Psychology. Curriculum details are included within the Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix A).

Admission Process and Criteria

In addition to completing the required major and general education requirements, a recommendation is required from the designated Fort Lewis College official in order for a student to be considered for admission to DU-GSSW. DU-GSSW admission requirements must also be met by the student.

Graduation Requirements

Each institution has existing degree requirements for the degrees that will be earned by the students. The Bachelor of Arts degree requirements in Psychology and Sociology for this program will be completed through three years of prescribed major and general education requirements. Those students who are selected to participate will substitute the first-year graduate courses in the MSW program for a usual set of prescribed senior year courses in the major.

Resources

The coordinated program will utilize the resources currently available to Fort Lewis College students as provided through the two degree programs, Psychology and Sociology. The DU graduate work will utilize the existing DU-provided resources delivered as part of the Four Corners area offering of the MSW. Classes are taught both in Durango and In Denver, with the latter being offered through the use of an interactive polycom television system for Four Corners students.

Administrative Responsibilities

DU-GSSW administrative responsibilities will be assigned to Wanda Ellingson, Clinical Associate Professor at University of Denver and director of the DU Four Corners MSW program and Dr. Jean East, Associate Professor and Director of Distance Education at DU. Dr. Beverly Chew, Professor of Psychology, will serve as the Fort Lewis College administrative point person.

Financial Aid

Students in the program will be eligible for financial aid from Fort Lewis College, as available and as they qualify, during the first three years of the program. When the students enter the DU program they will be eligible for financial aid from DU as available and as they qualify.

Program Quality

The Fort Lewis College portion of the coordinated program will be monitored for quality during the periodic program review process for each of the two degree programs (Psychology and Sociology). University of Denver will utilize existing program evaluation as part of their program review and will

adhere to accreditation standards to insure quality and effectiveness for the graduate portion of the coordinated program. During the seven years the program has been in existence in the Four Corners region, the quality has been at least at the level of the campus program and the success and placement of the graduates has been well documented and reviewed.

Benefits to the State

The Four Corners Region has a complex set of boundaries, jurisdictions, and authorities which impact delivery of social services and which can inhibit the offering of educational degree programs. DU-GSSW found that even with these challenges, the region is rich in cultural diversity and the need for well-educated service providers is high. Building on a commitment to serve rural areas of the State, DU-GSSW chose to work with those living in and familiar with the region in order to meet that commitment. Graduates of the Masters Degree program are able to complete their degree requirements in the local area and are placed in a field practicum close to their home. The results have been very successful and gratifying and the program has continued to serve the Southwest Colorado region and its residents for the past seven years. The coordinated degree with Fort Lewis College demonstrates and solidifies the continuing commitment of DU-GSSW to serve the Four Corners Region.

Host Institution

The host institution for the undergraduate work in this coordinated program is Fort Lewis College. The host institution for the graduate portion of the program is University of Denver—Graduate School of Social Work at its Durango off-campus location.

A detailed proposal is attached.