

**TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A MASTER OF OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY DEGREE PROGRAM AT COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY - FORT COLLINS**

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I. SUMMARY

This agenda item requests approval for Colorado State University to offer a Master of Occupational Therapy.

II. BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from Colorado State University's (CSU) proposal:

The Occupational Therapy department offers, and will continue to offer, a graduate program leading to a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT). The department is proposing to offer students the additional option of earning a Master's in Occupational Therapy (MOT), a more practice-oriented degree that has gained prominence in the profession. This degree option builds on the strengths of the existing graduate professional program leading to a MSOT. The proposal does not seek to establish a new program but to request an additional and refined degree option of an MOT degree.

Having the ability to offer both an MSOT and an MOT degree is beneficial for students and faculty alike. The MOT course of study will be focused on helping these students develop advanced competencies related to evidence-based practice, successful inter-professional collaboration, and effectiveness working with diverse people and groups: all requirements of contemporary practice.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

The Master of Occupational Therapy supports the role and mission of Colorado State University. The statutory mission states:

There is hereby established a university at Fort Collins to be known as Colorado state university. Colorado state university shall 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. The Colorado commission on higher education,

in consultation with the board of governors of the Colorado state university system, shall designate those graduate level programs that are the primary responsibility of Colorado state university. Colorado state university has the responsibility to provide on a statewide basis, utilizing when possible and appropriate the faculty and facilities of other educational institutions, those graduate level programs. The commission shall include in its funding recommendations a level of general fund support for these programs. C.R.S. 23-31-101

The land-grant concept of a balanced program of teaching, research, extension, and public service provides the foundation for the University's teaching and research programs. The role and mission of CSU requires that the University be a comprehensive graduate research university. The graduate occupational therapy program at CSU prepares students to meet vital human and societal needs pertaining to the ability of people who are afflicted by injury, illness, disability or other adverse circumstances to participate in health-promoting and meaningful daily activities. As noted, CSU is proposing to add a new degree option of a MOT degree to the existing option of the MSOT degree.

EVIDENCE OF NEED/DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM:

The occupational therapy program admits 40 new graduate students each year; there were 155 applicants in 2007 and 2009 saw an increase in the number of applications by 36% over the 2008 admission period. Many more applicants applied over the past three years – and were found to meet the program's rigorous admission standards – than CSU had the resources to admit.

According to the US Department of Labor, employment of occupational therapists is expected to increase 23% between 2006 and 2016, much faster than the average for all occupations. US News and World Report has named occupational therapy a "recession-proof profession" and ranked it as one of the top 30 careers nationally.

DUPLICATION/SIMILAR PROGRAMS IN THE STATE:

Based on the accrediting body, the large majority of accredited occupational therapy programs in the nation are located in the eastern and mid-western states. CSU is the only institution, either public or private, that offers a graduate occupational therapy program in Colorado. The nearest accredited programs are located at the University of New Mexico; the University of Utah; and the University of North Dakota at Casper College. The University of Puget Sound is the nearest top-twenty-five ranked occupational therapy program that offers both MOT and MSOT degree options.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Department staff have reviewed this proposed program and letters of assurances from academic administrators to ensure that the degree program 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 RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the Master of Occupational Therapy degree program submitted by Colorado State University.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant statute and policy are on file in the Academic Affairs Office.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-5-129 (6)(b)