

TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

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I. SUMMARY

This agenda item requests approval for the University of Colorado Denver (UCD) to offer a Master of Science Degree in Historic Preservation. This program is part of the College of Architecture and Planning and is designed to prepare students for a career in the diverse and multi-faceted field of Historic Preservation.

II. BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from the University of Colorado Denver's proposal to offer a Master of Science in Historic Preservation (MSHP):

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

The Master of Science in Historic Preservation supports the role and mission of the University of Colorado. The statutory mission states:

The role and mission of the several campuses of the university of Colorado shall be as follows: The Denver campus of the university of Colorado shall be an urban comprehensive undergraduate and graduate university with selective admission standards. The Denver campus shall offer baccalaureate, masters, and a limited number of doctoral degree programs, emphasizing those that serve the needs of the Denver metropolitan area. The Denver campus has statewide authority to offer graduate programs in public administration and exclusive authority in architecture and planning. C.R.S. 23-20-101(1)(b).

EVIDENCE OF NEED/DEMAND

Design and planning professions are rapidly changing and professionals are discovering the need for new skills to remain informed and competitive in the job market. Over the past three decades, an increasingly larger percentage of money spent on construction (and by extension design work and planning approvals) has been in reuse and renovation of existing structures. Historic Preservation graduate programs are largely clustered in the east and south, where there are 20 programs with a combined total of 700 to 800 enrolled students.

UCD already offers a Graduate Certificate in Historic Preservation, which provides one direct measure of demand in this field – although this measure may be understated due to the higher desirability of a graduate degree as opposed to a certificate. Current enrollment for the certificate program averages at 25 at any given time¹.

The Bachelor of Environmental Design program on the Boulder campus offers an elective introductory historic preservation course in both fall and spring semesters. Enrollment is capped at 30 students each semester and regularly reaches full enrollment. This course satisfies the MSHP entry-level prerequisite, and this Boulder class would be an ideal venue for introducing preservation as a career option. The MSHP program offers a clear path for these students to continue their education for a preservation-specific degree in Colorado.

In recent years, international students have taken preservation courses, with several students having earned a certificate. American degrees are highly desirable and UCD has structured its curriculum in a way that uses the American West to illustrate principles of broader applicability. UCD anticipates that the MSHP will be particularly attractive to international students who have already earned professional architecture or planning degrees elsewhere.

Colorado has become an epicenter of historic preservation activity. At the federal level, historic preservation has steadily grown since 1966. At the state level, Colorado has one of the largest grant programs for historic preservation in the country as well as a tax credit program for rehabilitation.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

This program will rely largely on the existing faculty of the College of Architecture and Planning and those who currently identify with the Center of Preservation Research and a potential pool of adjunct and honorarium faculty drawn from highly qualified professionals residing in the metro Denver area. The University of Colorado Denver is able to begin the program with the current tenured/tenure-track staffing levels.

III. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

The Department staff has reviewed this proposed program to ensure that the degree program meets the State's performance measures outlined in C.R.S. §23-5-129(6)(b). The program meets all performance measures set forth by the state.

¹ CAP professional degrees (March, MLA, MURP) typically require more than one year, there is a larger total of certificate students than number who graduate in any given year.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Department staff recommends that the Commission approve the Master of Science in Historic Preservation degree submitted by the University of Colorado Denver.

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)