

TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER MASTER OF ARTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

PREPARED BY: HEATHER DELANGE

I. SUMMARY

This action item requests approval for the University of Northern Colorado to offer a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice. By providing one of the state's few graduate degree opportunities in criminal justice, the MACJ will help to meet the workforce needs of the state's criminal justice agencies and organizations.

II. BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from the University of Northern Colorado's proposal for the Master of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice:

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

The Master of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice supports the role and mission of the University of Northern Colorado. The statutory mission states:

There is hereby established a university at Greeley, to be known as the university of northern Colorado. The university shall be a comprehensive baccalaureate and specialized graduate research university with selective admission standards. C.R.S. 23-40-101(1).

The proposed program is offered at only three other public institutions in the state, none of which are in the northern region. The addition of graduate coursework in the field will enable related graduate disciplines to draw upon the expanded competencies for students. Science education students at the graduate level, in particular chemistry education and biology education, can benefit from acquiring added competencies in forensic science, which requires familiarity with the field of criminal justice. In addition to enhancing their employment opportunities, students can assist in the development of future generations of forensic and criminal justice professionals.

EVIDENCE OF NEED/DEMAND

UNC's criminal justice faculty conducted a needs assessment in the Summer of 2008 to identify the need for a master's degree in criminal justice as well as to identify program preferences. Two different online surveys were developed and

sent to administrators in criminal justice agencies across Colorado and to UNC criminal justice alumni who might be interested in graduate programming. Respondents included 66 administrators and 88 individuals. Approximately 40 percent of the individual respondents indicated they would be likely to apply for a master's program. Over 60 percent of the administrators indicated they have employees who would be interested in a graduate program in criminal justice offered by UNC. Only 7 percent of these respondents indicated they did not have employees who would be interested in such a program.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

No additional faculty resources will be needed to implement the program. The MACJ can be offered with a full-time contingent of six faculty without negatively affecting the criminal justice BA program. It will be necessary for the current criminal justice faculty to receive training in online instruction. The UNC criminal justice staff is enthusiastically anticipating the opportunity to help develop a new program that is consistent with quality online instruction.

III. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

The Department staff has 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)(b). The program meets all performance measures set forth by the state.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the Master of Arts in Criminal Justice degree submitted by University of Northern Colorado.

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)