

**TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE
 IN SOCIAL WORK AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

PREPARED BY: MARGOT PLOTZ

I. SUMMARY

Colorado State University (CSU) has submitted a proposal to offer a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Work. The proposed program will prepare graduates to become researchers to contribute to the social welfare field; assume leadership positions within social work education for the academic community; and will also prepare graduates to become high quality faculty in social work programs at institutions throughout Colorado and the nation. Graduates will be able to teach at all levels of education in social work.

II. BACKGROUND

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

Social work as a profession seeks to serve those populations at most risk in society. It addresses individual, family, and community needs through public and private agency practice as well as through policy practice and research. Poverty, health care needs, criminal justice needs, mental health needs, in addition to the aging population and immigration needs, have been increasing. The requests for undergraduate and graduate professionally degreed social work practitioners to fill the many positions in agencies, hospitals, schools, extended care facilities, mental health services, community services, and many others have been is on the rise as well.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

This degree supports the role and mission of Colorado State University. The statutory mission states:

There is hereby established a college at Ft. 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, master's, 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. C.R.S. 23-31-101

EVIDENCE OF NEED

The proposed PhD in social work would provide the opportunity for professional master's level practitioners, in the state, region and across the country, to pursue a PhD in social work at a public, land grant institution. There currently is a very low number of PhD programs in social work in the western part of the U.S. (eight programs); and in particular in the intermountain, high plains region. Only one social work PhD program currently exists in the State of Colorado and in the entire Rocky Mountain corridor.

DUPLICATION

In Colorado the only other PhD in Social Work program is at the University of Denver (DU). In contrast to CSU, DU is a private institution. CSU's proposed program will not only focus on research and scholarly production, as does DU's program, but will also include comprehensive curricula emphasizing both teaching theory and practice as well as educational leadership development. Additionally, although DU admits applicants without a master's degree in social work, CSU's proposed program will require that applicants have an Master of Social Work (MSW) as part of admissions criteria in order to ensure that applicants are not restricted from teaching practice courses in their future careers as educators.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129 (6)(b), Department staff finds that the proposed program fits the centrality of the institution's statutory role and mission to offer a comprehensive array of baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degree programs in the state of Colorado.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Social Work is consistent with Colorado State University's campus role and mission. Staff recommends that the Commission approve this degree.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant materials are on file in the Academic Affairs office and are available upon request.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-5-129(6)(b)

(6) (b) Need not consult with nor obtain approval from the Colorado commission on higher education to create modify, or eliminate academic and vocational programs offered by the institution, so long as such creations, modifications, and eliminations are consistent with the

institution's statutory role and mission. Institutions shall submit information to the department demonstrating that the creation or modification of an academic or career and technical education program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. The Colorado commission on higher education shall have the authority to override the creation or modification of an academic or vocational program if the change made by the governing board is inconsistent with the institution's statutory role and mission.