

TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A MASTER'S IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION EDUCATION AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

PREPARED BY: MARGOT PLOTZ, ACADEMIC POLICY OFFICER

I. SUMMARY

This consent item recommends approval of Colorado State University's (CSU) proposal to offer a new Master's in Agricultural Extension Education (M.Agr.).

II. BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from CSU's proposal:

CSU now offers, and will continue to offer, a graduate program leading to a Master of Agriculture degree utilizing Plans A (thesis option) and B (professional paper option). CSU proposes to offer students the additional option of earning the degree utilizing the Plan C (coursework only) option. Adding the Plan C option represents an additional and attractive element to the existing Plan A and B options for those students who wish to enhance their academic credentials but have no desire to obtain a Ph.D. The Plan C option is considered a terminal degree and will be assigned a different CIP code than Plans A and B.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

This degree supports the role and mission of CSU. 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, 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 College of Agricultural Sciences at CSU typically admits five to eight new graduate students each year into the Master of Agriculture, Agricultural Extension

Education, Plan A or B options. During 2010 there was a significant increase in the number of inquiries about the program compared to prior years which resulted in a significant increase in the number of applications received and approved. This was especially true for students who were interested in doing the program (either Plans A or B) via distance education (Division of Continuing Education) since they were not residents of Colorado. Thus, for whatever reason(s), demand for our Master of Agriculture program has been growing in recent years and CSU believes the Plan C option (both on campus and via distance) will fill a significant niche in assisting students achieve their goals.

DUPLICATION

CSU is the only institution, either public or private, that offers a graduate Master of Agriculture degree in Colorado. The most relevant degrees external to Colorado are located at North Carolina State University, Iowa State University, Oregon State University and Texas A&M University. However, none of those degrees are offered through distance education nor do they have the three Plan options CSU is proposing.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 23-5-129 (6)(b), department staff finds that CSU's proposed Master's degree in Agricultural Extension Education (M.Agr.) degree is consistent with CSU's role and mission.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the Colorado State University proposal to offer a Master's degree in Agricultural Extension Education.

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) While operating pursuant to a performance contract negotiated pursuant to this section, the governing board of a state institution of higher education:

(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.