

TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF MASTER OF GREENHOUSE GAS MANAGEMENT & ACCOUNTING AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends approval for Colorado State University (CSU) to offer a Master of Science in Greenhouse Gas Management & Accounting.

II. BACKGROUND

COMMISSION AUTHORITY

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's role and responsibility in the review and approval of new academic programs at institutions operating under a performance contract is defined in §23-5-129(6)(b), which states that new and modified program proposals shall be reviewed and approved only on the basis of fit with the institution's statutory role and mission.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

The following is summarized from CSU's proposal:

Accurate quantification of greenhouse gas mitigation efforts is central to the clean technology sector. Very soon professionals of all kinds (business people, accountants, lawyers) will need to understand carbon accounting and crediting. Over the next few decades food production is expected to double and energy production must triple in order to meet growing global demands; sustainable management of land use and agricultural systems will be critical. The food and energy supply challenges are inextricably linked to the challenge of limiting anthropogenic impacts on climate by reducing the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere. To avoid serious disruption of the climate system and stabilize GHG concentrations, society must move aggressively to avoid emissions of CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O and to actively draw down CO₂ already in the atmosphere. A new cadre of technically adept professionals is needed to meet these challenges. This program will leverage existing, internationally-recognized expertise from across campus, and enable students from diverse backgrounds to develop the skills needed to fill this emerging demand.

Additional information on this proposed degree, unrelated to fit with statutory role and

mission, is in Appendix A.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

This degree supports CSU's statutory role and mission, which 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. 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. (23-31-101, C.R.S.)

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b), department staff finds that CSU's proposed Master of Greenhouse Gas Management & Accounting degree is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. CSU's Board of Trustees approved the program at its May 9, 2014 meeting.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve Colorado State University's proposal to offer a Master of Science Greenhouse Gas Management & Accounting.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-5-129 Governing boards - performance contract - authorization – operations

(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.

APPENDIX:

Appendix A: Supplemental Information

APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This supplemental information is unrelated to the proposed degree's fit with the institution's statutory role and mission. The following is summarized from the institution's proposal:

EVIDENCE OF NEED

In its second year of delivering on-line courses, the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (established in partnership with Harvard University Extension) delivered courses to nearly 900 enrollees across six different courses. The workforce needs assessment survey they carried out concluded that (1) US organizations are ill-prepared for emerging regulatory emissions reporting; (2) carbon markets are not "up-to-snuff"; and (3) competency concerns loom with expansion of climate programs. The report also cites a dearth of existing programs. Graduates of traditional programs at other Universities who have taken relevant coursework or crafted degrees with a structure similar to ours have been placed quickly. We are aware of four professional development programs (the GHG Management Institute, and one through the School of the Environment at the University of Toronto, and CSA International Learning Services; and SAI Global); all of which are offered primarily online. A similar residential program exists at Northern Arizona University – the MS in Climate Science and Solutions. Enrollment there has grown to 20 students over the three-year lifetime of the program.

We expect about 12-20 new students to be enrolled in the degree program on an annual basis. We expect to attract students from environmentally-oriented undergraduate programs, such as those in the Warner College of Natural Resources, the College of Agriculture, the College of Natural Sciences, and even the College of Engineering (likely from Atmospheric Sciences and the Department of Mechanical Engineering). We expect to recruit from working professionals in diverse fields, in particular through, and in conjunction with, our recently-established Institute offering short courses to professionals (GHG-ACT). We expect to have enrollments of 25-35 students and be awarding 12-20 degrees annually within five years of initiation of the program. These projections are based on our personal appeals for development of such a program and documented demand for similar, non-degree programs.

DUPLICATION

We are aware of no similar programs within the state of Colorado.