

TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends approval for University of Northern Colorado (UNC) to offer a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

II. BACKGROUND

COMMISSION AUTHORITY

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's role and responsibility in the review of new academic programs at institutions operating under a performance contract is defined in §23-5-129, which states that:

(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.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

The following is summarized from UNC's proposal:

The Masters of Business Administration is designed for individuals in the northern Colorado and southern Wyoming region who want to advance their career but need flexibility because they have other commitments, such as work and family, that conflict with the traditional lockstep, cohort based, program design offered by other MBA programs. The flexibility components include 1) Location: the Monfort College of Business MBA program will be offered on-site at the University of Northern Colorado's

Centerra facility. This location provides easy access to students from all over the front-range. 2) The program will be structured to allow students to progress at their own pace and with online technology used to supplement instruction. Students will be able to adjust the speed with which they go through the program which we believe will support a high completion rate. The program can be completed in as little as two years or the students can take up to five years to finish.

In addition to providing students with a flexible degree completion option, another unique aspect of our MBA is that the curriculum and applied learning experiences will be informed by research and seminars based on our receipt of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program Award. The new MBA program will encompass original organizational design and innovation principles in the area of sustainable entrepreneurial excellence and will be based on the research Monfort College of Business has done with Baldrige award recipients. In addition, our MBA students will also have the opportunity to apply their learning in our newly formed business incubator. A third unique aspect of our program will be a focus on health care management. Due to the expected growth in population in the northern Colorado region, in the number of aging baby boomers, and in changes in health care delivery, the need for healthcare management will increase dramatically. Given the excellence in the health care programs we now offer (e.g., nursing, gerontology, rehabilitation, audiology, speech language pathology and exercise science) this MBA with a health care focus aligns with our mission and program offerings. In summary, the curriculum will provide students with a well-rounded learning experience that builds on their undergraduate degree and work experience and is designed to meet the growing need for health care management.

Additional information on this proposed degree, unrelated to fit with statutory role and mission, is attached (Attachment A).

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

This degree supports UNC's statutory role and mission, which states in part:

(1) 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.
(2) The university of northern Colorado shall be the primary institution for undergraduate and graduate degree programs for educational personnel preparation in the state of Colorado. The university shall offer master's and doctoral programs primarily in the field of education... C.R.S. 23-40-101

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b), department staff finds that UNC's proposed Master of Business Administration degree is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. As evidence that UNC is not moving away from the centrality of its statutory role and mission, 55% of all UNC master's degrees are in education related disciplines and 51% of all master's level graduates in academic year 2013 were from education related disciplines.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve University of Northern Colorado's proposal to offer a Master of Business Administration.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

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

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

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