

TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN ACCOUNTING AT UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-COLORADO SPRINGS

PREPARED BY: DR. IAN MACGILLIVRAY, DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

I. SUMMARY

This item recommends approval for University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (UCCS) to offer a Master of Science degree in 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 UCCS's proposal:

The primary objective of developing a Master of Science in Accounting (MAcc) program at UCCS is to provide a graduate-level, broad-based educational experience for individuals seeking a career in public accounting, industry, or government. The proposed MAcc will provide students with a graduate level accounting education and will include courses in areas such as financial accounting theory, auditing and assurance, federal taxation, managerial decision-making, and accounting ethics. Upon completion of the MAcc, most students will meet the education requirements for the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) certifications.

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 UCCS's statutory role and mission, which states:

The Colorado Springs campus of the university of Colorado shall be a comprehensive baccalaureate and specialized graduate research university with selective admission standards. The Colorado Springs campus shall offer liberal arts and sciences, business, engineering, health sciences, and teacher preparation undergraduate degree programs, and a selected number of master's and doctoral degree programs. [§23-20-101(1)(c), C.R.S.]

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b), department staff finds the proposed degrees are consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. CU's Board of Regents approved the program at its April 17, 2015 meeting.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve University of Colorado Colorado Springs' proposal to offer Master of Science degree in 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

Beginning July 1, 2015, CPA licensure in Colorado will require that new licensees complete 150 hours of university coursework. It is anticipated that this requirement for licensure will increase demand for graduate accounting degrees. Offering the program in southern Colorado will help fulfill the region's business needs of having well-educated graduate accounting students who are CPA-eligible. It will also offer the opportunity for undergraduate accounting graduates from other southern Colorado institutions to pursue a MAcc closer to home.

While our current MBA with an emphasis in accounting provides the necessary accounting and other business hours to meet the new CPA education requirements, a MAcc is perceived as more desirable by some prospective students and employers—especially those affiliated with CPA firms. As proof of the potential demand for the program, 42 MBA-Accounting students are currently enrolled in UCCS's MBA program, making it the second largest area of emphasis. In addition, other Colorado universities south of Denver graduate approximately 100 students per year with a bachelor's in accounting.

DUPLICATION

Department staff confirms that master's degrees with the same CIP code are offered at

- Colorado State University
- Colorado State University – Global Campus
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- University of Colorado Denver
- University of Northern Colorado