

APPENDIX T

Request for Authorization to Establish a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forensic Science Western Carolina University

Introduction

Western Carolina University notified General Administration of its intent to plan a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forensic Science (43.0106) on April 26, 2005. The university now requests approval to establish the program in August 2006.

Program Description

Western Carolina University is proposing to offer an interdisciplinary degree program in the field of Forensic Science within the Department of Chemistry and Physics in the College of Arts and Sciences. The proposed program is a 120 hour baccalaureate degree that will take advantage of the institution's strengths in the related areas of Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Clinical Laboratory Science, Criminal Justice, and Psychology. The interdisciplinary approach will prepare students with a strong theoretical and laboratory background in the natural sciences, acclimation to the justice and forensic, and oral and written communication skills. Moreover, students will engage in real life work experiences with internships or cooperative assignments. The proposed program is based on the accreditation standards of the American Association of Forensics Sciences and recommendations from the National Institute of Justice. The proposed program will seek accreditation from the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation (FEPAC).

Graduates of the proposed program will have the skills to obtain employment in private or government forensic laboratories. In addition, students will have the background to pursue graduate studies in forensic science or related disciplines.

Program Need

The proposed interdisciplinary, degree program will serve as a valuable link to the natural and applied sciences, and it is expected to add to enrollment growth at WCU. Student interest in forensic science is substantial. Further, it is expected that a degree program in forensic science will contribute to regional economic development and the law enforcement community. A review of local, state, and national data indicate there is, and will be, a demand for graduates in forensic analysis in federal and state criminal investigations, and in security-related industries. Moreover, the proposed program will provide opportunities for advancement for employees within the law-enforcement and security-related industries. By the fourth year of the proposed program in forensic science, it is projected that there will be 70 students enrolled.

Resources

The proposed degree program has been supported by \$225,000 in focused growth funds from General Administration. The university has appointed five faculty members in the past three years who will teach and conduct forensic research. The director of the proposed program will be hired using 2006-2007 focus growth funds. Beginning in 2007-2008, program growth needs will be funded using enrollment growth funds. The present library resources are more than

adequate for the program. A new Biotechnology facility, a Decomposition Research facility, and a forensic anthropology research laboratory will support the program.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve Western Carolina University request to establish the Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science, effective August 2006.