

APPENDIX K

Request for Authorization to Establish a B.S. Degree in Health Systems Administration at Western Carolina University

Introduction

Western Carolina University notified the Office of the President of its intent to plan a BS degree in Health Systems Administration (CIP# 51.0701) in September 2004. WCU requests authorization to establish the program in August 2005.

Program Description

Health Systems Administration will be a baccalaureate completion program intended for allied health practitioners with an associate degree who want to advance into leadership and managerial roles. The program will prepare graduates to assume entry and mid-level administrative positions in a variety of healthcare organizations and/or to pursue graduate study. Because the program is designed for working adults, it will be offered via distance education, primarily using the Internet and videoconferencing sites in western North Carolina (Blue Ridge, Tri-County, and Western Piedmont community colleges). Graduates of the program will possess leadership skills for diverse health settings that improve unit and organizational effectiveness. Program graduates will be prepared to deal with evolving integrated healthcare delivery systems and technological innovations. They will complete a faculty supervised field experience for the purpose of applying and integrating conceptual and technical competencies into their work environments.

Program Need

WCU has had numerous requests from individuals, area health care facilities and other organizations to provide a distance learning degree program in health care administration. Strong interest and support for the program have been expressed by the Western North Carolina Healthcare Network and by regional community colleges. According to the US Department of Labor, the structure and financing of healthcare is rapidly changing with an increasingly regulatory environment and restructuring of work environments. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the need for health systems administrators will increase 20 to 35 percent through 2010 as the health services industry continues to expand.

Resources

Program needs will be addressed through enrollment increase funds and reallocations. Almost all courses for the proposed program current exist at WCU and support other healthcare-related programs, and some are already in the distance learning format.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the request to establish a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Systems Administration (CIP# 51.0701) at Western Carolina University effective August 2005.