

APPENDIX M

Request for Authorization to Establish a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Degree at Winston-Salem State University

Introduction

Winston-Salem State University notified the Office of the President of its intent to plan a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree (CIP# 51.2306) in August 2004. The university requests authorization to establish the program in August 2005.

Program Description

The proposed Master of Science in Occupational Therapy will prepare students to become competent entry-level practitioners and researchers. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) will accredit the program. Four constructs related to occupational performance will form the core of the curriculum: occupational performance roles, engagement in occupation, performance areas, and environment. Coursework and practical skills will emphasize critical foundation knowledge, biological basis of occupational skills, analysis of occupation, skills development and clinical application, professional development, and research/evidence-based practice. Following graduation students will take the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy Examination and, upon successful completion, apply for state licensure. The last six months of the two-year curriculum will include two 12-week full-time fieldwork experiences under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist.

Program Need

In 1999, the American Occupational Therapy Association passed “Resolution J,” which requires all occupational therapy professional education programs in the US to move to the post-baccalaureate level by January 1, 2007. The WSSU Occupational Therapy baccalaureate program is accredited through December 2006. In order to be reaccredited, the master’s program must be in place by fall 2005, which will enable WSSU to complete the required self-study and prepare for a site visit by fall 2006. Along with the growing national need for occupational therapists, the Piedmont region of North Carolina has experienced a large increase in the number of potential employers seeking to fill occupational therapy positions. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the demand for occupational therapists is growing in response to an aging population and growth in the number of individuals with disabilities and impaired function requiring therapy, including children with special needs. In particular, the program will address the health care needs of underserved minority populations.

Resources

No additional state resources are required. Program needs will be addressed through internal reallocations and enrollment increase funds.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the request to establish a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree (CIP# 51.2306) at Winston-Salem State University effective August 2005.