

APPENDIX D

Request for Authorization to Establish a Master of Construction Management Degree at Western Carolina University

Introduction

Western Carolina University notified the UNC Office of the President of its intent to plan a Master of Construction Management degree (CIP# 15.1001) in March 2004. The university requests authorization to establish the program in August 2005.

Program Description

WCU currently has an undergraduate degree in Construction Management. The Master of Construction Management (MCM) will be a complete online Masters degree delivered from WCU. The program will be a collaborative effort with WCU's existing online Master of Project Management (MPM) degree, an American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business (AACSB) accredited program that currently has 120 students enrolled in multiple cohorts. While construction management is a unique and industry specific set of project management skills, general skills gained from the MPM first year courses will benefit MCM students, and these courses will contain construction management projects. During the second year of MCM, students will take specific advanced courses in construction management, including advanced topics such as 3D simulation modeling. This will allow both an efficient use of WCU's faculty resources and integration of a new online Masters program using an existing infrastructure.

Program Need

The construction industry, one of the largest employers in the US, has a consistent shortfall of qualified construction management professionals. Advances in building materials and construction methods, the need to replace much of the nation's infrastructure, and the growing number of multipurpose buildings, electronically operated "smart" buildings, and energy-efficient structures will further add to the demand for more construction managers. There are only 30 graduate level construction management programs nationwide, and graduates experience 100 percent career placement. The nature of the construction industry is that managers are transient, moving from one project to another. Because of this and the long hours spent on site, construction industry employees do not have the chance to enroll in campus-based graduate programs. The online nature of this degree will make it much more accessible for these individuals. It is anticipated that 30 students will enroll in a cohort annually for a total of 60 enrolled students after the first year.

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 Construction Management degree at Western Carolina University effective August 2005.