

APPENDIX O

Request for Authorization to Establish a Master of Social Work Degree at UNC Wilmington

Introduction

UNC Wilmington notified the UNC Office of the President of its intent to plan a Master of Social Work degree (CIP# 44.0701) in May 2003. The university requests authorization to establish the program in August 2004.

Program Description

The Master of Social Work program will focus on the development of skilled advanced practitioners. The curriculum is constructed in terms of a foundation first year and an advanced practice-focused second year. Extensive field placement in clinical practice settings with close supervision by faculty, clinical instructors, and field supervisors is a key component of the proposed program. The Council on Social Work Education accredits social work education, and such accreditation is linked to eligibility for licensure and certification in NC. All accredited social work programs provide foundation content in designated areas including social work practice, human behavior and social environment, social research, social policy, professional values and ethics, social and cultural diversity, populations at risk, and social and economic justice. Advanced year content will include coursework in advanced clinical research, applied ethics, clinical practice, the organizational and financial context of practice, and diversity issues in practice.

Program Need

UNCW is in an area of the state that faces the prospect of continued rapid growth, while rural areas inland face continuing decline. This combination creates a demand for graduate-trained social workers and requires expansion of social and human services systems. In virtually every area of social work service, a shortage of MSW-level social workers is reported. The demand for MSW-trained social workers in North Carolina reflects national trends with anticipated growth in employment in mental health, aging services, child and family services, and protective services. East Carolina University has offered a distance education MSW program in the Wilmington area for the past nine years with 150 persons enrolled in the three cohorts of that program. That part-time program has ended, and ECU has moved its off-campus program to other areas of the State. Over 100 prospective students have already indicated interest in registering in a new UNCW program. The existing Bachelor of Social Work program at UNCW currently enrolls 125 students. It is anticipated that 60 students will be enrolled in the program by its fourth year.

Resources

Some current institutional resources will be reallocated to begin the program. No other additional state resources are required to implement the program.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the request to establish a Master of Social Work degree at UNC Wilmington effective August 2004.