

## **Request for Authorization to Establish a Master of Social Work Degree at Appalachian State University**

### **Introduction**

Appalachian State University notified the UNC Office of the President of its intent to plan a Master of Social Work degree (CIP# 44.0701) in July 2005. ASU requests authorization to establish the program in August 2006.

### **Program Description**

The proposed Master of Social Work will be a 60-hour degree program—30 hours of a professional foundation curriculum and 30 hours in an advanced curriculum—with full-time on campus and part-time off campus components. Students will take courses in other departments as appropriate—courses leading to a certificate in Gerontology, substance abuse courses in Sociology or Psychological Counseling, school social worker courses from the College of Education, or courses in public administration and health care management. The primary goal of the advanced curriculum will be to prepare graduates who can function with a high degree of autonomy and effectiveness; contribute to the quality of services in their organizations and communities; and apply the knowledge, skills, and methods of advanced social work practice in an area of concentration.

### **Program Need**

The US Department of Labor projects that social work positions will grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2012. The rural counties served by ASU have high poverty and unemployment rates, and no other MSW programs are geographically convenient in the region. Administrators of regional agencies are strong proponents of an ASU MSW program, and student demand for the program has been documented by the ASU Graduate School, Office of Extension Instruction, and the successful undergraduate Social Work program. The proposed program complements establishment of the ASU Institute for Health and Human Services, which will maximize the capacity of health and human services disciplines to address regional needs through collaborative research, training, and clinical services. It is anticipated that 70 students will be pursuing degrees in the program by its fourth year.

### **Resources**

The only additional state resources required are enrollment expansion funding based on increased enrollment.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the request to establish a Master of Social Work degree at Appalachian State University effective August 2006.