

APPENDIX K

Request for Authorization to Establish a Bachelor of Science in Fire Science at Fayetteville State University

Introduction

Fayetteville State University notified General Administration of its intent to plan a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fire Science (43.0202) on September 14, 2005. The university now requests approval to establish the program in August 2006.

Program Description

The proposed BS degree in Fire Science, which will be housed in the Department of Natural Science, is an interdisciplinary degree that is designed to prepare students in the fundamental scientific principles for fire rescue, risk assessment, and the managerial skills necessary to operate a firefighter workforce. Further, the proposed program represents a collaborative partnership with a local public high school (E. E. Smith High School), Fayetteville Technical Community College, and the City of Fayetteville to establish a pipeline in fire science that will produce a more diverse firefighting workforce. The proposed BS at FSU is intended for working firefighters who want to further their education and career advancement. It is anticipated that some students who will enroll in the proposed baccalaureate program will be graduates of the Fire Academy at E. E. Smith High School and graduates of the fire protection technology associate degree program at Fayetteville Technical Community College.

The proposed degree in Fire Science will require 121 semester credit hours of course work. Forty-four of these hours will be in the general education core, 59 hours will be in Fire Science required courses, and 18 hours in one of two concentrations -- Management or Investigation. The management concentration is for firefighters interested in moving into managerial positions in fire stations. The investigation concentration is intended for firefighters who are interested in learning how to apply forensic techniques to determine if fires are the result of criminal activity. The majority of the coursework will be offered online because of the schedules of firefighters.

Graduates of the proposed fire science degree program will be able to manage a fire department, develop a plan for responding to hazardous materials, develop a public education strategy, demonstrate knowledge of the legal aspects of fire protection, and demonstrate the integration of knowledge and skills through a capstone residential experience that can occur at either the fire station on FSU's campus or another suitable fire station. The proposed degree program has been developed to meet the standards for accreditation for the International Fire Science Accreditation Congress, the agency that accredits such programs.

Program Need

The proposed program addresses several of FSU's strategic objectives—to contribute to intellectual capital formation and to prepare citizens to become leaders in a multi-ethnic and global society. The proposed program was developed because of a community acknowledgement (that originated in the 1990's) that the firefighting workforce did not represent the demographics of the community it served and that it was necessary to create a pipeline in fire science in order to prepare more diverse firefighters (women and minorities) who would be

eligible for further career advancement in fire science. National data also reveal that there is an under representation of minorities and women in fire science and related areas.

The results of two surveys conducted by FSU lend support that there are students and current firefighters who would pursue a bachelor's degree in fire science, if one were available. Because of the aforementioned, a partnership was formed that includes the City of Fayetteville, Cumberland County Schools, Fayetteville Technical Community College, and Fayetteville State University. The City of Fayetteville has located a fire station across the street from the University, so that the facilities of the fire station can be used for instruction. Letters of support have been received from the chairman of the Board of the Education of Cumberland County Schools, North Carolina State Firemen's Association, and the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters.

Resources

FSU anticipates hiring two new faculty members (with expertise in management and fire science) in the next two years. The new faculty will be funded through enrollment increase dollars. The library has applied for Title III funds to expand its acquisition in the area of fire science. In the meantime, reference materials can be acquired through interlibrary loan. Since the majority of the program is online, minimal physical facilities will be needed. Online infrastructure already exists on campus; faculty use Blackboard for enhancing traditional courses and for online course delivery. The fire station located on FSU's campus is an 18,000 square foot fire station with classroom space, multimedia capabilities and fourteen dorm-style beds. The fire station will allow students to have hands-on experiences in administrative and other skills to gain professional experience. E. E. Smith High School is one mile from FSU's campus. The Director of the proposed Fire Science program will be located at the fire station.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve Fayetteville State University's request to establish the Bachelor of Science in Fire Science effective August 2006.