

July 2008

Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science, Seattle Central Community College

Introduction

Seattle Central Community College is seeking Higher Education Coordinating Board approval to offer a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science. Following legislative authorization to expand the number of schools within the community and technical college system that could offer applied baccalaureate degrees, Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) was selected as one of three additional colleges to develop a baccalaureate degree pathway for students who have completed a technical associate degree.

The Applied Behavioral Science program is being proposed in response to a shortage of credentialed human services specialists to work with drug abuse, mental illness, homelessness, domestic violence, school failure, and other endemic societal issues requiring skilled social service providers. With implementation of the BAS program, graduates of a broad range of associate-level human services programs would have access to a baccalaureate degree program that would allow them to advance in their field; and, due to changes in the degree requirements for some occupations, remain employed in their field. The proposed program would begin in fall 2009 and would enroll 20 FTE students in the first year of instruction, growing to 40 FTE students at full enrollment by the second year.

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan

The primary mission of Seattle Central Community College is to "...provide opportunities for academic advancement, workplace preparation, and service to the community." Consistent with this mission, the BAS program would build on the strength of existing human services programs at SCCC and prepare students to advance professionally and meet the needs of their local community.

While the program aligns well with the mission of Seattle Central Community College, the college's new authority to grant bachelor's degrees, even when limited to a single program, represents a significant expansion of the institution's role and mission. Developing a degree program at a new level has implications for accreditation and potential impacts on students, faculty, and institutional resources. These implications and impacts are discussed later in this summary.

Program goals are consistent with those of the *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*, in that they provide opportunities for students to earn degrees at higher levels and respond to the state's economic needs. The proposed degree program would respond to local employer and community needs in a field identified as an area of employer demand in the *State and Regional Needs Assessment*.

Diversity

SCCC has a strong track record of successful diversity efforts, with the result that it enrolls a student body more ethnically diverse than the surrounding community. However, Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander students are underrepresented relative to the population of Seattle and King County. To supplement ongoing college-level diversity efforts, department-level diversity efforts would include:

- Continuing faculty relationships with a wide range of community agencies, many of which represent minority groups and have been an effective source of student recruitment;
- Maintaining a diverse department faculty;
- Soliciting state tuition waiver funds that support students of color intending to work in the addictions field;
- Faculty participation in campus initiatives including retention projects and the current "Achieving the Dream" project directed at high risk students;
- Offering classes in languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish;
- Recruiting graduates to serve as ambassadors;
- Use of the alumni photo project "What We Do" as a marketing tool for recruiting underrepresented students;
- Recruiting through SCCC student organizations serving Asian and Hispanic/Latino students;
- Emphasizing the plan for program diversity in presentations to feeder programs; and
- Ongoing evaluation of the student mix.

Program Need

Program planners provided evidence that the proposed program would respond to needs expressed by students, employers, and community stakeholders.

To assess student demand, program planners computed an estimate based on the number of graduates from social and human services and other relevant associate degree programs at institutions within a 20-mile radius (Bellevue Community College, Edmonds Community College, Highline Community College, and Lake Washington Technical College). Assuming that 20 percent of graduates from such programs would sign up for the proposed program, its planners estimated 22-25 applicants per year.

To verify this estimate, program planners surveyed students enrolled in SCCC's Social and Human Services and Interpreter Training programs during January 2008 to ascertain their interest in the proposed program. Of the 150 respondents, 123 (82 percent) did not already possess a bachelor's degree. Eighty-five of these respondents (69 percent) said they would be "very interested" in continuing in the new four-year degree. This suggests that the 20 percent assumption in the student demand assessment above was conservative.

Program planners provided evidence of employer demand for the proposed program by using the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment Report*, in conjunction with labor market data from the Employment Security Department and industry sources, to compute a demand-supply gap for 11 occupations of interest to graduates of the proposed program. These occupations included mental health and substance abuse social workers; community and social service specialists; social and human services assistants; child, family, and school social workers; government program eligibility interviewers; interpreters; and five other relevant occupations.

Based on Employment Security Department projections for 2009-2014, total regional and state employer demand for all 11 occupations combined is 465 annual job openings in Seattle/King County. Based on baccalaureate degree completion data from the national Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System database and percentages in the Occupation and Education matrix in the HECB's needs assessment, total Seattle/King County workforce supply is 167 annual graduates. Consequently, there is a demand-supply gap of 298 annual openings in the Seattle/King County area. In other words, program planners estimate a current unmet local employer demand of 298 annual openings, which is large relative to the 30 graduates per year that the proposed program would produce. This result is consistent with the needs assessment, which notes a gap between the employer demand and worker supply for human and protective services.

Evidence of community demand for the proposed program takes many forms. Legislative mandates, changing certification standards from professional associations and new government initiatives are all manifestations of community demand for the proposed program. For example:

- New developments in medication protocols have changed standard practices in the chemical dependency field;
- New Washington State registration and certification requirements have affected the flow of new people into the counseling profession;
- The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf now requires that interpreters obtain a BA degree by 2012 to meet certification standards;
- King County passed a sales tax increase starting in 2008 specifically for the purpose of enhancing substance abuse services and mental health services; and
- House Bill 1794 authorized applied baccalaureate programs.

Ultimately, the community would benefit from the proposed program because its graduates would be better prepared to serve the community's residents than they would be without the opportunity to earn the proposed degree.

Finally, the proposed program would not duplicate existing programs. Currently, there are no public or private institutions in the state that admit Associate of Applied Science students into a Bachelor of Applied Behavioral Science or any similar professional degree. Although a few institutions offer a transfer pathway to a degree such as a BA in Social Welfare, those pathways are direct transfers for Associate of Arts students rather than Associate of Applied Science students. In addition, both The Evergreen State College and Antioch University offer “upside down” liberal arts baccalaureate degrees, but neither one includes the kind of technical courses that the proposed program does.

Program Description

The Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science would provide a baccalaureate opportunity for graduates from a range of associate-level human services programs. Students who meet prerequisite coursework requirements and have completed an Associate of Applied Science – Transfer (AAS-T), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), or Associate of Technical Arts (ATA) with an emphasis in areas such as social and human services, substance abuse, vocational rehabilitation, or interpreter training would be eligible for admission to the BAS program. Students who have completed a certificate in these areas and hold an appropriate associate degree would also be eligible to enroll in the BAS program. Graduates would possess a stronger grounding in their discipline through deeper knowledge in foundational courses and additional specialized training in their field of study.

To apply to the program, students would be required to earn an appropriate associate degree as described above and possess an overall grade point average of 2.0 or higher. In addition, students would be asked to submit a “letter of intent” that describes their experience and interest in the program and two letters of recommendation. The selection process would be designed to comply with the institution’s Office of Civil Rights policy on admissions. As such, letters would be reviewed blind and applicants who meet the minimum qualifications and whose letters support the greatest alignment with program goals would be selected.

Once enrolled in the program, students would be required to complete a total of 90 credits of coursework, 60 credits of which must be at the “upper division” (300- or 400-level). The curriculum would include 30 additional credits of general education coursework (for a total of 60 required for graduation), 30 credits in required core courses for the major, and 30 credits of electives in the major. The general education coursework draws on a mix of new courses and existing coursework offered by SCCC with courses offered at 200, 300, and 400 levels. Similarly, the major electives also draw on a mix of existing courses and newly designed courses for the major including some existing 200-level courses.

The general education curriculum would include 60 general education credits over four years. Students would achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate ability to engage clients in professional relationships;
- Possess a broad theoretical knowledge base of Applied Behavioral Science and its related disciplines;
- Develop information assessment and research interpretation skills specific to Applied Behavioral Science;
- Develop a professional ethical orientation that informs and enriches a student's future contributions to the field;
- Enhance oral and written communication skills, including technology used to enhance communications;
- Develop team-building and group skills to create high-performing client and work teams;
- Employ creative and critical thinking to enhance problem solving; and
- Employ sound principles of organizational behavior.

These student-learning outcomes would be measured according to a student assessment plan featuring multiple indicators of student achievement as measured by faculty, employers, professional licensure, peers, and self. Specific measures would include: examinations, technical writing, research papers, persuasive papers, essay exams, faculty and peer evaluation of team projects, workplace assessments, performance-based presentations, internship evaluations, and capstone projects.

Graduates would be prepared for positions in a range of human services occupations working to address issues of drug abuse, mental illness, homelessness, domestic violence, school failure, and other endemic societal issues. In several of the occupations this program would target, new industry standards are driving the need for a bachelor's degree.

The proposed program would participate in SCCC's regular five-year program assessment cycle, which includes a self-study, an evaluation by the division dean, evaluation by external experts (as needed), and a final review by senior administration. Because the baccalaureate degree is a new initiative, the program and its curriculum would initially be reviewed on an annual basis, rather than the five-year cycle applied to existing SCCC programs. Multiple measures of assessment would be utilized including: academic and field readiness of entering students; student success in transitioning to upper-division coursework; student retention and completion; faculty assessment of student skills, knowledge and ethical practice; student focus groups; student surveys; employer surveys; and technical advisory committee evaluation. Data collected would be analyzed and evaluated by program faculty, the program director, and appropriate deans and administrators.

The program would draw largely on existing faculty; however, a full-time faculty director position would be hired to lead implementation of the degree program. The current faculty are highly qualified. Those teaching in the major disciplines all are required to maintain appropriate certifications in their field and most hold a master's degree or higher. Eighteen doctoral faculty have been identified to assist in the development and instruction of the general education curriculum as well. In the first year of instruction, the program would accommodate 20 FTE (30 headcount) students and the program would grow to approximately 40 FTE (60 headcount) by the second year.

Upon HECB approval of the degree program, SCCC would submit documentation to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities for a “substantive change” regarding the addition of the new bachelor’s degree program. In addition, SCCC is considering seeking specialized accreditation with the National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC).

Program Costs

The program would enroll 20 FTE students in the first year of instruction, growing to full enrollment of 40 FTE students by the second year of instruction. Existing faculty would provide much of the program development and instruction; however, a full-time faculty director would be hired to support the program. Faculty would contribute courses as part of their teaching load and, typically, the director and several faculty would each teach one course in the program per term. During the planning year, 1 FTE is budgeted for program development. Beginning in the first instructional year, the program would support approximately 1.5 FTE faculty (including the director), growing to 2.0 FTE at full enrollment. Administrative and clerical costs are based on 1.25 FTE, including full-time clerical support and .25 FTE hourly support. Finally, the program would support a half-time counselor and support .25 FTE of a librarian.

The institution has reviewed a range of available student support services and is making sustained additional investments in the library. The college would add \$38,000 to the library budget in the planning year and \$15,000 annually thereafter. In addition, the program would support a portion (.25 FTE) of a library staff position.

Prior to the first year of instruction, the college would receive planning funds in FY 2009 of \$226,000 to cover start-up costs that would typically be reflected in the first year budget. In addition, SCCC is investing \$50,000 in local funds to cover office renovations necessary to house the program. As a result of the planning year investments, the cost per FTE in the first year of instruction with an entering class of 20 FTE is only slightly higher than the cost at full enrollment at 40 FTE. Costs are \$12,300 in the first year and \$10,300 at full enrollment. The average cost of instruction for upper-division coursework in social sciences at the regional baccalaureate institutions ranges from \$7,452 to \$8,402 per FTE (including indirect costs).

External Review

The program was reviewed by two external experts, both of whom supported the proposal: Mary Lee Nelson Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Counseling Psychology, University of Wisconsin–Madison; and Ms. Gillian Marshall, MSW, Faculty and Director of Practicum, Trinity Lutheran College.

Dr. Nelson stated that it was without a doubt one of the strongest program proposals she had read. She expressed the belief that the program would be a complete success and predicted that it would be a very bright feather in the cap of Seattle Central Community College. She noted that the coursework looked appropriate for a bachelor's degree and the upper-division emphasis on ethics, program evaluation, and group processes is very good. She also noted that the faculty, administration, student services, and counseling staff would be sufficient, as would the library and other facilities.

Dr. Nelson recommended adding an abnormal psychology class as a requirement in the curriculum. Program planners responded that abnormal psychology would be a requirement for all students preparing for licensure as a chemical dependency professional and it would be an elective for all other AAS students. Dr. Nelson also made a few more suggestions and program planners responded appropriately.

Ms. Marshall stated that she found many strengths and few concerns. She noted that the proposal was clear and cohesive and did a wonderful job of outlining the local need for bachelor's level human service workers. She also noted that the proposed lower- and upper-division courses appeared to complement each other and would be highly appropriate. Her concerns consisted mainly of points of clarification in the proposal, which program planners addressed.

Staff Analysis

The proposed program would support the unique role and mission of the institution by providing a degree pathway for area students that would support their career and educational goals and the needs of the local community for an appropriately prepared workforce.

The proposed program would also advance the goals of the strategic master plan by providing opportunities for students to earn degrees at higher levels and responding to the state's economic needs. The program would provide an academic pathway for incumbent workers to enhance their professional skills and advance in their careers. It would benefit students, their families, and the local community by helping prepare graduates for human service occupations that are in high demand locally.

Consistent with the goals and limitations of applied baccalaureate degree programs offered by the community and technical colleges, the program would provide a career-oriented bachelor's degree pathway for students who have completed an applied associate degree and wish to progress in their field.

The proposed program would include a student assessment approach with well-defined student learning outcomes that would be assessed in a variety of ways at multiple points in time. Similarly, program assessment would employ a number of measures at multiple points in time.

The proposed program would respond to demonstrated student, employer, and community needs; and it would be consistent with the *State and Regional Needs Assessment* and the institution's own assessment of need. In particular, the proposed program would offer an opportunity for advancement of skills so incumbent workers can remain current in their field and advance in their profession.

The proposal identifies strategies to attract and retain a diverse student body, including outreach and retention efforts.

The proposal has been evaluated by external reviewers who have expressed support for the program. The program developers have been responsive to reviewer comments.

Adding bachelor's degree granting authority to Seattle Central Community College's mission has implications for accreditation and potential impacts on students, faculty, and institutional resources. SCCC has been thoughtful about these issues and has dedicated resources to support additional library resources and student support services. These efforts should position the college to support students, faculty, and staff in the upper-division coursework.

The program would not duplicate existing programs and the costs appear to be reasonable, given the facility and infrastructure needs required to support a new four-year degree program at a community college.

Recommendation

Based on careful review of the program proposal and supplemental sources, HECB staff recommends approval of Seattle Central Community College's Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science. The HECB education committee discussed the proposal during its June 23, 2008 meeting and recommended approval by the full board.

RESOLUTION NO. 08-25

WHEREAS, Seattle Central Community College proposes to offer a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science; and

WHEREAS, The program is consistent with legislative authorization to expand the number of community and technical colleges offering applied baccalaureate degrees; and

WHEREAS, The program would support the institution's mission by providing a degree pathway for students that would support their career and educational goals and the needs of the local community for an appropriately prepared workforce; and

WHEREAS, The institution has committed to provide the services and support necessary to expand its institutional role and mission by offering a baccalaureate degree program; and

WHEREAS, The program would support the *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* by providing opportunities for students to earn degrees at higher levels and responding to the state's economic needs; and

WHEREAS, The proposal identifies strategies to attract and retain a diverse student body; and

WHEREAS, The proposed program would respond to demonstrated student, employer, and community needs and would be consistent with both the *State and Regional Needs Assessment* and the institution's own assessment of need; and

WHEREAS, Students would benefit from the program because it would allow them to advance in their profession; and

WHEREAS, The program would not unnecessarily duplicate existing programs in Washington and would be offered at a reasonable cost;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science at Seattle Central Community College, effective July 21, 2008.

Adopted:

July 21, 2008

Attest:

Bill Grinstein, Chair

Roberta Greene, Secretary