BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

Southwestern College

RECOMMENDATION

Southwestern College meets the Chancellor's minimum standards for applied associate degree programs. Provisional authorization is recommended for the associate of applied science degree programs in criminal justice, network communications and information systems, and medical administrative assistant. Provisional authorization is also recommended for the associate of applied business in business management. Provisional authorization will continue through December 31, 2012, contingent upon continuing accreditation from the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools and continuing recognition from the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools. Provisional authorization is also contingent upon the Chancellor's written approval of progress reports that demonstrate satisfactory progress toward compliance with all standards. The Chancellor shall withdraw provisional accreditation if, in the Chancellor's judgment, the progress reports do not demonstrate satisfactory progress in any area. Progress reports are due by April 1, 2010, and April 1, 2011. A follow-up review will be performed prior to December 31, 2012 to determine continued authorization of the programs.

Profile: Southwestern College is a co-educational, for profit, career college operating four campuses in southwestern Ohio—a main campus in Dayton, two branch campuses in the Cincinnati area, and a third branch campus in Franklin. The Southwestern campuses offer certificate, diploma and applied associate degree programs related to college's mission, which can be described as a commitment to education and training to achieve proficiency through a "skills first" curriculum.

Accreditation/Authorization: Southwestern College currently accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) and is recognized by the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools (SBCCS). This is the college's first request to the Chancellor and the request is in response to HB 119 of the 127th General Assembly, which requires the Chancellor's authorization for associate degree programs in proprietary colleges and schools as a condition of their students' eligibility for OIG/OCOG funds, a state needs-based financial aid program.

Program Information: Southwestern College is seeking authorization for the following programs:

Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice
Associate of Applied Science in Network Communications and Information Systems
Associate of Applied Science in Medical Administrative Assistant
Associate of Applied Business in Business Management

Each program requires at least 90 quarter hours for completion and includes course work in general education, applied general education and the technical/occupational area.

Review Results: The external review team noted numerous strengths during the review, including: an active student mentoring program, the use of benchmark data for assessing the institution's success relative to retention and graduate rates; and the use of life-skills workshops to enhance student success.

The team also noted several areas of non compliance with the Chancellor's standards and recommended that the institution: develop a strategic plan; enhance the rigor of its general education curriculum; assess incoming students so that those not ready for college-level work could be placed in developmental courses; ensure adequate budgets for replacing laboratory supplies; improve the credentials of full-time and part-time faculty members to meet the Chancellor's faculty standards; develop a process for monitoring the adequacy of library staffing and resources; compile and use evaluation results for program improvement purposes (for general education and technical areas) and clarify the ACICS and SBCCS approval status of the business management program.

The institution responded appropriately to the recommendations of the consultants' report by demonstrating how the recommendations were accepted and integrated into the proposed programs, or, in the case of recommendations that could only be complied with over time, by presenting a clear plan for the implementation of the recommendations and a timeline for such.

Recommendation to the Chancellor: Southwestern College meets the Chancellor's minimum standards for applied associate degree programs. The review team recommends provisional authorization for the associate of applied science degree programs in criminal justice, network communications and information systems, and medical administrative assistant. Provisional authorization is also recommended for the associate of applied business in business management.

Provisional authorization will continue through December 31, 2012, contingent upon continuing accreditation from the ACICS and continuing recognition from SBCCS. Provisional authorization is also contingent upon the Chancellor's written approval of progress reports that demonstrate satisfactory progress toward compliance with all standards. The Chancellor shall withdraw provisional accreditation if, in the Chancellor's judgment, the progress reports do not demonstrate satisfactory progress in any area. Progress reports are due by April 1, 2010, and April 1, 2011. A follow-up review will be performed prior to December 31, 2012 to determine continued authorization of the programs.

End of Comment Period: June 1, 2009
No Comments Received, Recommend Approval

APPROVED:

Eric D. Fingerhut, Chancellor — Date 6/26/09

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