

BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

North Central State College Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapist Assistant

Executive Summary/Recommendation

**This program clearly meets the Chancellor's standards for associate degree programs.
There were no serious concerns raised in this review.**

Request: North Central State College proposes an Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapist Assistant in response to the growing need for trained occupational therapist assistants in northeast Ohio. An occupational therapist assistant works under the supervision of an occupational therapist to provide rehabilitative services to individuals with mental, physical, emotional, or developmental impairments. Rehabilitative services and activities performed by an occupational therapist assistant are part of the patient's treatment plan developed in cooperation with an occupational therapist. The services and activities performed by an occupational therapist assistant include helping an injured worker re-enter the workforce by teaching them how to compensate for lost motor skills, to helping individuals with a physical disability learn how to increase their independence.

The College's Occupational Therapist Assistant Advisory Committee used the data collection services of Economic Modeling Specialist, Inc. (EMSI) to assist them in determining the current and continued need for occupational therapist assistants in the nine counties served by the College. The EMSI data indicated northeast Ohio's expected growth rate for this occupation through 2011 is 14 percent. The greatest need identified by the data was in home health services with a 46% increase, followed by out-patient facilities at 20%, and nursing homes and hospitals at 8%.

The U.S. Department of Labor/Bureau of Labor Statistics 2006 Report relates the employment growth and job openings for this occupation is projected to grow much faster than the average as the demand for occupational therapy services increase as a result of the aging population, increased rate of heart attacks and strokes, trauma victims, children with sensory disorders and individuals needing to learn to live with a disability. The employment of occupational therapist assistants is expected to grow 25 percent from 2006 to 2016. Job openings in the field are resulting from new positions being created and the replacement of occupational therapist assistants who are leaving the profession as a result of career advancement and/or retirement.

Graduates of the program will be able to find career opportunities in northeast Ohio's public and private health care facilities, early intervention and long-term nursing homes, mental health care facilities, rehabilitative hospitals and clinics, adult-day care centers, health and wellness centers, and acute care programs with a starting salary ranging from \$34,000 to \$48,000 a year. Due to the demand for trained occupational therapist assistants in northeast Ohio, graduates of the proposed program will be actively recruited for positions in the region as well as across the state.

Program Purpose/Mission: The purpose of the proposed program is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a degree in the growing healthcare field. The proposed program supports the College's mission by offering a degree that has been developed in response to the healthcare providers need for additional occupational therapist assistants and communicated that need to the College.

North Central State College is a community-based educational institution that serves the residents of nine counties and offers high quality, technical education in more than sixty (60) associate degree and certificate programs in Health, Business, Public Service and Engineering Technologies, as well as customized workforce training programs. A model college of the 21st Century, the College was recently recognized by the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) of the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission and the National Achieving the Dream Framework for

Institutional Improvement, for its quality initiatives. The College is a lead partner in the development of a multi-county P-16 Council, charged with improving access to education and increasing prosperity of individuals by meeting the changing employment needs of regional business and manufacturing.

Enrollment: The College is projecting an enrollment of (16) full-time students and ten (10) part-time students beginning Fall Semester 2009. The College further projects that student enrollment will grow to twenty-eight (28) full-time students and sixteen (16) part-time students, beginning January 2010. High school students participating in the College Tech Prep Program, Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO), CollegeNOW, the Governor's 'Seniors to Sophomores' initiative and others interested in a healthcare career will be attracted to the proposed program. Individuals who are unemployed or underemployed, veterans, adult learners, employees interested in up-grading their skills and retired individuals interested in learning a new skill will also be attracted to this proposed program.

Curriculum: The curriculum is structured to provide students with the general education courses required for this proposed program and the specialized technical courses needed to meet the educational requirements for this proposed degree. Off-site clinical lab experiences are incorporated into the curriculum and offer students the opportunity to work with professionals in the field and learn from their knowledge and experiences.

Graduates of the proposed program will be eligible to take the national certification examination administered by the National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy (NGBCOT). Upon successful completion of the exam students will be awarded the title "Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant."

Faculty/Resource Needs: The Occupational Therapist Assistant program will be located within the Health and Public Services Division of the College. The Chair of the Allied Health Division which includes respiratory care, radiological science and the sciences of biology and chemistry will provide program oversight and supervision to ensure the proposed program is successful.

The College hired a new full-time faculty member to be the program director as required by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). A second faculty member will be hired to assist with teaching and serve as the clinical instruction coordinator. The College submitted its Program Development Plan required by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) to become an accredited program and is currently preparing for the Association's visit in early fall.

Current College facilities will be used to support the needs of the proposed program and includes classrooms, laboratory space, computer lab, and equipment needed for enrolled students. Students will also have access to the campus library and to existing student support services (e.g., counseling, advising, tutoring, etc.) to ensure their academic success. The College is financially prepared to offer this program.

Program Duplication: The proposed program is not being offered at any other two-year institution within sixty miles of the College. Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, James A. Rhodes in State College in Lima, and Owens Community College in Toledo offer a similar program and are more than sixty miles from Mansfield, Ohio. The College has expressed its willingness to share "best practices" and to explore opportunities for collaboration with other campuses interested in offering this or similar degree programs.

End of Comment Period: February 27, 2009
No Comments Received: Recommend Approval

Approved:	
	5/4/09
Eric D. Fingerhut, Chancellor	Date: