



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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CHE
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Ken Wingate, Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

FROM: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chairman, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Request for Amendment to Existing License to Add New Sites A.A.S., Administrative Office Management; A.A.S., Computer-Aided Drafting and Design; A.A.S., Criminal Justice; A.A.S., Healthcare Reimbursement; A.A.S., Medical Assistant; A.A.S., Medical Office Management; A.A.S., Paralegal Studies; A.A.S., Respiratory Therapy; A.A.S., Surgical Technology; B.S., Business Administration; B.S., Criminal Justice; and B.S., Health Services Management; and to add to the license new programs leading to the A.A.S., Medical Office Administration and A.A.S., Network Engineering Virginia College, Birmingham, AL, Columbia and Spartanburg

Summary

Virginia College (VC) in Birmingham, AL (www.vc.edu) requests approval of an amendment to its license to add **two new sites** in Columbia and Spartanburg. The College will offer at the two new sites existing programs leading to the A.A.S. degree in (1) Administrative Office Management, (2) Computer-Aided Drafting and Design, (3) Criminal Justice, (4) Healthcare Reimbursement, (5) Medical Assistant, (6) Medical Office Management, (7) Paralegal Studies, (8) Respiratory Therapy, and (9) Surgical Technology and existing programs leading to the B.S. degree in (1) Business Administration, (2) Criminal Justice, and (3) Health Services Management. In addition to the approved programs listed above, Virginia College requests approval to offer at the Columbia and Spartanburg sites **new** programs leading to the A.A.S. degree in (1) Medical Office Administration and (2) Network Engineering.

The programs will be offered on-ground with the option to take courses through Virginia College Online. After approval by the Commission, Virginia College officials expect to choose locations in Columbia and Spartanburg, renovate them to their specifications, and implement the programs at the new sites. With the approval of CHE, classes will begin at the Columbia site in April 2010 and at the Spartanburg site in July 2010.

Virginia College is a private, for-profit institution owned by Virginia College, LLC, an Alabama limited liability company that is a wholly owned subsidiary of Education Corporation of America (ECA), a Delaware corporation. Virginia College was founded in 1983 and operates campuses in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, as well as Virginia College Online. The network of schools enrolls a total of approximately 15,000 students.

The Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) has accredited Virginia College since 1990. Current accreditation extends through December 31, 2013. ACICS will initially grant interim inclusion for the Columbia and Spartanburg branches; final inclusion of a branch campus is granted after a site review, which is typically conducted within 18 to 24 months after establishment of a new branch. The U.S. Department of Education recognizes the interim accreditation and allows the school access to Title IV financial aid.

Virginia College owns Golf Academy of America, formerly San Diego Golf Academy, which operates a campus in Myrtle Beach. The Commission has licensed Golf Academy of America since 1998. The Commission has licensed Virginia College in Greenville since July 2008, and in January 2009 approved a branch campus in Charleston. Classes began in Greenville in October 2008 and in Charleston in October 2009. The first graduation for associate degree program graduates in Greenville is scheduled for September 2010 and in Charleston for September 2011.

Virginia College FTE ENROLLMENT		Greenville	Charleston
Degree	Major	FTE 10/1/2009	FTE 10/1/2009
AAS	Administrative Office Management	48	20
AAS	Computer-Aided Drafting and Design	0	0
AAS	Criminal Justice	0	0
AAS	Healthcare Reimbursement	0	13
AAS	Medical Assistant	0	57
AAS	Medical Office Management	87	9
AAS	Paralegal Studies	0	0
AAS	Respiratory Therapy	N/A	0
AAS	Surgical Technology	33	19
BS	Business Administration	0	0
BS	Criminal Justice	0	0
BS	Health Services Management	0	0
	Total degree program enrollment	168	118

The following information from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) shows student loan default rates at Virginia College. The following table shows the combined averages for all Virginia College campuses.

School	Type	Control	Programs		FY2007	FY2006	FY2005
Virginia College	Master's Degree or Doctor's Degree	Proprietary	Federal Family Educational Loan (FFEL) and Federal Direct Loan (FDL)	Default Rate %	7.7	7.6	4.1
				No. in Default	362	358	173
				No. in Repay	4651	4662	4167

The U.S. Department of Education sanctions a school when the school's three most recent cohort default rates are 25% or higher or if a school's current default rate is greater than 40 percent. Except in the event of a successful judgment or appeal, such a school will lose Federal Family Education Loan, Direct Loan, and Federal Pell Grant program eligibility for the remainder of the fiscal year in which the school is notified of its sanction and for the following two fiscal years. Virginia College's default rates for the last three years are far below this standard.

Applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent and must take an assessment exam unless they have already completed an associate or bachelor's degree program. Transfer credits may be accepted by the College if an official transcript is submitted and the credits were completed at an institution accredited by a recognized accrediting agency with a grade of "C" or above with comparable content. Courses completed more than five years prior to enrollment may only be transferred at the approval of the academic dean. Computer and technology-related courses generally are not accepted for transfer if completed more than three years prior to enrollment.

Tuition is charged per quarter. Depending on the program and number of hours attended each quarter, the total cost for an associate degree program is \$32,000 to \$37,000. The total cost for a bachelor's degree program is approximately \$61,500. According to institutional officials, the average loan debt for graduates of Virginia College-Huntsville, a campus similar to those proposed, is \$18,710.

Faculty at Virginia College branches in South Carolina who teach general education courses must possess a master's degree with 18 hours in the teaching discipline or must hold a master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline. Faculty teaching courses in professional, technical, and occupational areas that do not usually result in college transfer must possess appropriate academic preparation (usually a bachelor's degree) or academic preparation coupled with work experience. Faculty teaching upper-division core courses at the bachelor's degree level must hold master's degrees with at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline or a master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline. An appropriate number of faculty members must hold terminal degrees. Each degree must be from an institution accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Each Virginia College campus has an on-site campus president who reports to the respective regional general manager; regional general managers report to the Virginia College

CEO. Personnel at each site also include directors of admissions, career services, financial planning, and student accounting as well as an academic dean who oversees the academic program directors to whom the faculty report.

Based on previous experiences at similar branches, Virginia College officials project enrolling during the first year 722 students at the Columbia site and 640 students at the Spartanburg site. Enrollment projections are for students enrolled in degree and non-degree programs.

The following are descriptions for each existing program. The Commission approved the curriculum for each program previously when it licensed these same programs in Charleston and Greenville.

A.A.S., Administrative Office Management

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Administrative Office Management at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students enrolled in the Administrative Office Management program will learn organizational and planning skills; demonstrate proficiency with computer software and other office equipment; and further develop written and oral communication skills. Graduates may pursue positions such as office manager, executive secretary, or administrative assistant.

There is no specialized program accrediting agency for administrative office management. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, this occupation is expected to be among those with the greatest number of new employment options. Opportunities will be best for applicants with extensive knowledge of software applications.

All sixteen technical colleges offer associate degree programs in Administrative Office Technology. Forrest Junior College offers an associate degree program in Business Administration with a concentration in Office Administration; Brown Mackie College offers an associate degree program in Office Management.

A.A.S., Computer-Aided Drafting and Design

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Computer-Aided Drafting and Design (CAD) at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students in the CAD program employ specialized software to study 3D graphics, design, and architecture in order to draft on the computer designs for a variety of manufactured products. Graduates of this program will demonstrate skills in computing, CAD drafting, 3D design, and CAD customization.

ABET, Inc. is the specialized program accrediting agency for computer-aided drafting and design programs. Virginia College does not hold and does not plan to seek specialized accreditation. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, although CAD employment is projected

to grow more slowly than the average for all jobs, opportunities should be greatest for those with at least two years of postsecondary training and experience using computer-aided drafting and design systems.

Greenville Technical College and Midlands Technical College offer associate degree programs in Architectural Engineering Technology. ITT offers an associate degree program in Computer Drafting and Design.

A.A.S. and B.S., Criminal Justice

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer programs leading to the A.A.S. and B.S. degrees in Criminal Justice at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. The Criminal Justice programs at Virginia College are designed to prepare veteran criminal justice professionals for career advancement and to train individuals to enter the field of criminal justice for the first time. Students in the program will learn the history and development of court systems, study techniques of crime scene investigation, and be able to explain legal and moral courses of action for various situations in the criminal justice system. The program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree further explores the criminal justice system in various arenas, as well as research methods and administration. Employment in most federal law enforcement agencies requires completion of a bachelor's degree program.

There is no specialized program accrediting agency for criminal justice. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, opportunities in local police departments will be excellent for individuals who meet psychological, personal, and physical qualifications. Employment of probation officers and correctional treatment specialists is projected to grow as fast as the average for all occupations. Additional openings in this field will be created by the need to replace workers who retire and those who leave local agencies for Federal jobs and private sector security jobs.

In South Carolina, thirteen state technical colleges, one public college, and 11 private colleges offer an associate degree program in criminal justice. Four public and 14 private colleges and universities in the state offer a bachelor's degree program.

A.A.S, Healthcare Reimbursement

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Healthcare Reimbursement at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students in the Healthcare Reimbursement program will learn to utilize medical billing and coding software programs in the reimbursement process, classify coding and billing information to avoid claims rejections, become familiar with HIPAA compliance policies, and analyze accounting and financial data to be used in the healthcare environment.

There is no specialized program accrediting agency for healthcare reimbursement. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment but is offered by the National Healthcareer Association, the American Health Information Management Association, the American Academy of Professional Coders, and the National Center for Competency Testing.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, job prospects for medical coders should be very good and employment is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations.

A.A.S., Medical Assistant

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Medical Assistant at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. During the course of this program students will learn the administrative duties a medical assistant performs such as keeping records, scheduling appointments and tests, complying with insurance claim procedures, and clinical techniques such as reading vital signs and EKG's, administering medicine, and assisting with patient exams.

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) is the specialized program accrediting agency that accredits medical assistant programs. Virginia College does not hold and does not plan to seek specialized accreditation. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, job prospects should be excellent with employment projected to grow much faster than average. The *Handbook* ranks medical assistants among the fastest growing occupations over the 2006-16 decade. Helping to drive this growth in employment is the increasing number of group practices, clinics, and other health care facilities that need a high proportion of support personnel, particularly medical assistants, who can handle both administrative and clinical duties.

Other institutions in the state that offer an associate degree program in medical assisting are Brown Mackie College, ECPI, Forrest Junior College, Miller-Motte Technical College, Remington College, and South University. No public institution in the state offers an associate degree program in medical assisting.

A.A.S., Medical Office Management

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Medical Office Management at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg.

Students enrolled in the Medical Office Management program will study medical terminology, medical office procedures, and insurance billing; learn to prepare examination treatment areas; and develop strong computer and administrative skills for use in a medical setting. Students will be trained to provide clinical care for patients as well as to perform administrative tasks.

There is no specialized program accrediting agency for medical office management. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, this occupation is expected to be among those with the highest growth over the 2006-2016 decade. Employment opportunities should be best for applicants with extensive knowledge of software applications and for experienced administrative assistants. Opportunities also should be very good for those with advanced communication and computer skills. As medical assistants assume more of the duties traditionally assigned to secretaries, there is a trend in many offices for professionals and managers to replace the traditional arrangement of one secretary per manager with secretaries

and administrative assistants who support the work of systems, departments, or units. This approach often means that secretaries and administrative assistants assume added responsibilities and are seen as valuable members of a team.

Brown Mackie College offers a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Healthcare Administration. No public institutions in the state offer this program at the associate degree level.

A.A.S., Paralegal Studies

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Paralegal Studies at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students enrolled in the Paralegal Studies program will learn how to conduct legal research, draft legal documents, conduct client interviews, and assist attorneys with estates, real estate closings, and depositions.

The Standing Committee on Paralegals of the American Bar Association is the specialized accrediting agency for paralegal studies programs. Virginia College does not hold and does not plan to seek specialized accreditation. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, employment in this field is projected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations as employers try to reduce costs by hiring paralegals to perform tasks once done by lawyers. Experienced, formally trained paralegals should have the best employment opportunities.

Eight of the state's public technical colleges, Brown Mackie College, Forrest Junior College, Miller-Motte Technical College, and South University offer programs leading to associate degrees in paralegal studies.

A.A.S., Respiratory Therapy

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Respiratory Therapy at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students completing the program in respiratory therapy will be prepared to provide oxygen therapy and other support for patients who are unable to breathe unassisted. Respiratory therapists may teach breathing techniques to patients in rehabilitation centers, teach asthma or smoking cessation programs, demonstrate the operation of ventilators, and administer medications in aerosol form.

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) are the specialized program accrediting agencies for respiratory therapy programs. South Carolina law requires that respiratory therapists be licensed in order to work in the state. In order to be eligible for licensure, a student must graduate from an accredited program and pass a national exam. Virginia College is pursuing appropriate accreditation so that students may sit for the National Board for Respiratory Care exam and be eligible for licensure.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, job opportunities should be very good for respiratory therapists. Hospitals will account for the vast majority of job openings, but a growing number of openings will arise in other settings.

Eight of the state's technical colleges and Miller-Motte Technical College offer programs leading to associate degrees in respiratory care.

A.A.S., Surgical Technology

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Surgical Technology at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students enrolled in the Surgical Technology program will learn the proper application of sterile surgical techniques and develop knowledge that will allow them to work alongside surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists, and registered nurses to deliver integrated patient care.

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) is the specialized accrediting agency for surgical technology programs. On June 15, 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly signed into law a bill that will require individuals who wish to practice Surgical Technology in the state to have graduated from an accredited surgical technology program and be certified by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting. Virginia College is seeking appropriate accreditation for the program.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, employment for surgical technologists is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations. Hospitals will continue to be the primary employer, although much faster employment growth is expected in other health care industries.

Brown Mackie College and Miller-Motte Technical College offer programs leading to associate degrees in surgical technology. No public institutions offer an associate degree program in surgical technology.

B.S., Business Administration

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the B.S. degree in Business Administration at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students enrolled in the Business Administration program will develop the skills needed to gain a position in a variety of management settings. Coursework in this program focuses on decision-making skills, effective leadership, cutting-edge technology, and strategic planning.

The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) are the specialized program accrediting agencies for business and business-related programs. Virginia College does not hold and does not plan to seek specialized accreditation. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* lists a variety of management employment opportunities for holders of business administration credentials in a myriad of settings. Business service managers work throughout private industry and government and have a wide range of responsibilities, experience, earnings, and education.

Twelve public and 26 private colleges and universities in the state offer programs leading to bachelor's degrees in business administration.

B.S., Health Services Management

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the B.S. degree in Health Services Management at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. The Health Services Management program is designed to prepare students for mid-level management positions in healthcare organizations such as hospitals, physician practices, and home healthcare agencies. This health-based interdisciplinary program emphasizes effective speaking and writing skills, interpreting and analyzing data, and critical reading and listening skills.

While the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME) accredits professional master's degree programs in healthcare management, there is no specialized program accrediting agency for baccalaureate-level programs. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* predicts that job opportunities will be good in the field of medical and health services management as the health care industry continues to expand and diversify, requiring managers to help ensure smooth business operations. Hospitals employ the most medical and health services managers. Employment will grow fastest in practitioners' offices and in home health care agencies because many services previously provided in hospitals will shift to these settings.

Brown Mackie College, ECPI, South University, University of Phoenix, and Webster University offer programs leading to the bachelor's degree in healthcare management or administration. Saint Leo University also requests approval of the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing at its December 2, 2009, meeting for a program leading to the B.S. degree in Health Care Management.

A.A.S., Medical Office Administration (new program)

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a new program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Medical Office Administration at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. Students enrolled in the Medical Office Administration program will be prepared for entry-level positions as administrative assistants in a medical environment. Students will study medical terminology, general office procedures, patient scheduling, record transcription, and customer service skills. Students are not trained to provide clinical care for patients.

The curriculum for the program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Medical Office Administration is shown in the following table:

A.A.S. in Medical Office Administration	
Courses	Quarter Credit Hours
EDU 1010 Learning Framework	4
EDU 1020 Career Exploration/Planning	4
Communications (English)	12
Humanities/Fine Arts	4
Mathematics	4
Social/Behavioral Sciences	4
Total Foundation and General Education courses	32
AOM 1010 Keyboarding	4
AOM 1100 Word Processing	4
AOM 1200 Spreadsheets	4
AOM 1400 Presentations	4
BUS 1000 Introduction to Business	4
BUS 1410 Principles of Accounting I	4
BUS 1460 Computerized Accounting	4
BUS 1770 Customer Service	4
MED 1010 Medical Terminology	4
MED 1080 Medical Office Procedures	4
MED 1140 Medical Law and Ethics	4
MED 1200 Medical Office Transcription	4
MED 1840 Medical Insurance Procedures	4
MED 1850 Medical Insurance Applications	4
MED 2000 Computerized Medical Records Systems	4
MED 2610 Medical Office Administration Externship	4
Total Area of Concentration courses	64
Total Curriculum Hours	96

There is no specialized program accrediting agency for medical office administration. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, employment for administrative assistants is projected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations. Growing industries such as health care will continue to generate the most new jobs. Job opportunities should be best for applicants with extensive knowledge of software applications and should be very good for those with advanced communication and computer skills. The *Handbook* projects a 17 percent increase in employment positions for medical administrative assistants over the 2006-2016 decade.

Five of the state's technical colleges offer associate degree programs in administrative office technology program with the option to specialize in medical office technology. ECPI and Forrest Junior College also offer associate degree programs in medical office administration.

A.A.S., Network Engineering (new program)

Virginia College requests amendment of its license to offer a new program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Network Engineering at its new sites in Columbia and Spartanburg. The Network Engineering program is designed to prepare students for entry-level employment in positions that provide basic and advanced network administration and engineering services. Students will gain through classroom and hands-on experiences the skills needed to operate, install, configure, troubleshoot, upgrade, and maintain personal computers and complex networks.

The curriculum for the program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Network Engineering is shown below:

A.A.S. in Network Engineering	
Courses	Quarter Credit Hours
EDU 1010 Learning Framework	4
EDU 1020 Career Exploration/Planning	4
Communications (English)	12
Humanities/Fine Arts	4
Mathematics	4
Social/Behavioral Sciences	4
Total Foundation and General Education courses	32
NET 1010 Operating Systems, Security, and Network Essentials	4
NET 1020 PC Components and Professionalism	4
NET 1030 I.T. Technician	4
NET 1040 I.T. Administrator	4
NET 1100 Networking Foundations	4
NET 1130 Networking Technician	8
Area of Concentration Electives	44
Total Area of Concentration courses	72
Total Curriculum Hours	104

The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) and the Technology Accreditation Committee of ABET, Inc. are the specialized program accrediting agencies for programs such as networking engineering. Virginia College does not hold and does not plan to seek specialized accreditation for its network engineering program. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment; however, particular certifications are preferred for employment. The program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Network Engineering prepares students for networking and computer certifications such as Network +, Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), and Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator (MCSA).

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* predicts that employment of computer support specialists and systems administrators will increase about as fast as the average for all occupations. Job prospects should be best for those with a college degree and relevant experience. As computer networks continue to become an integral part of business, industries not typically associated with computers (such as construction) will increasingly need computer support workers.

Fifteen technical colleges offer programs leading to associate degrees in Computer Technologies. In addition, ECPI offers a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Computer and

Information Science; ITT offers a program leading to the A.A.S. in Information Technology with a major in Computer Network Systems; and South University offers a program leading to the A.S. degree in Information Technology.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission staff authorization to amend the existing license for Virginia College at Birmingham, Alabama, to establish branch campuses in Columbia and Spartanburg and offer existing programs leading to the Associate of Applied Science degree in (1) Administrative Office Management; (2) Computer-Aided Drafting and Design; (3) Criminal Justice; (4) Healthcare Reimbursement; (5) Medical Assistant; (6) Medical Office Management; (7) Paralegal Studies; (8) Respiratory Therapy; and (9) Surgical Technology as well as the Bachelor of Science degree in (1) Business Administration; (2) Criminal Justice; and (3) Health Services Management. The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing also commends favorably to the Commission the addition to the license for the sites in Columbia and Spartanburg new programs leading to the Associate of Applied Science degree in (1) Medical Office Administration and (2) Network Engineering. New and existing programs are to be implemented in April 2010 at the Columbia site and in July 2010 at the Spartanburg site. The Committee further recommends that the Commission delegate to the staff authority to license the sites in Columbia and Spartanburg when the facilities have been developed.