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CHE
1/7/2010
Agenda Item 8.02.C.1

January 7, 2010

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 Site A.A.S., Massage Therapy and A.A.S., Medical Assisting Miller-Motte Technical College, Lynchburg, VA, at Conway

Summary

Miller-Motte Technical College (MMTC) (www.miller-motte.edu) requests approval of an amendment to its license to offer at a **new** site in Conway **existing** programs leading to the A.A.S. degree in (1) Massage Therapy and (2) Medical Assisting. Programs will be delivered on-ground with the option to take select courses online with permission. With the approval of the Commission on Higher Education, classes will begin in April 2010.

Miller-Motte Technical College is a private, for-profit postsecondary institution owned through several corporations by Delta Career Education Corporation, a Delaware corporation. Delta Career Education Corporation operates nine campuses in South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. The network of schools enrolls a total of over 4,700 students.

The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) accredits MMTC. ACICS will initially grant interim inclusion for the Conway branch; 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 Title IV financial aid for students enrolled at a school with such accreditation.

The Commission has licensed MMTC in Charleston since January 1, 2001. The following chart shows the enrollments and number of graduates at the Charleston campus for the programs proposed to be offered in Conway.

MMTC FTE ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATES Charleston		
Major	FTE as of 6/30/2008	Graduates FY 7/1/08-6/30/09
Massage Therapy	83	15
Medical Assisting	217	37

The following information from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) shows the combined student loan default rates for MMTC campuses.

School	Type	Control	Programs		FY2007	FY2006	FY2005
Miller-Motte Technical College	Associate Degree	Proprietary	Federal Family Educational Loan (FFEL) and Federal Direct Loan (FDL)	Default Rate %	15.5	10.0	17.0
				No. in Default	96	41	36
				No. in Repay	616	406	211

The USDE sanctions a school when the school's three most recent cohort default rates are 25 percent or higher or if a school's current default rate is greater than 40 percent. Except in the event of a successful adjustment 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. MMTC's default rates for the last three years are below this standard.

For admission, applicants must present evidence of high school graduation from an accredited high school or a General Education Development certificate, be beyond the age of compulsory high school attendance, be interviewed by a MMTC admission representative, and receive a minimum score of 15 on the Wonderlic assessment test. The assessment test may be waived for applicants who have taken the SAT or earned at least 15 hours of college credit. Transfer credits may be accepted by the MMTC 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. Credits earned seven or more years prior to enrollment will be evaluated on a course by course basis. Skills courses in which technology may change significantly in a short period of time may require additional testing as part of the credit evaluation.

Tuition for the proposed programs is \$270 per credit hour. The total cost for the massage therapy program is \$31,005 and for the medical assisting program \$30,045. Students who enroll continuously will be guaranteed the same tuition for the entire program. The average student loan debt for a graduate of an associate degree program at MMTC is \$15,000. MMTC projects that it will enroll 20 students in each program in the first year.

Faculty members teaching general education courses must have 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 members teaching core courses must hold a bachelor's degree or appropriate academic preparation coupled with work experience. Faculty degrees must be from an institution accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

At the branch in Conway, the institution will employ full-time staff including a campus director who will report to a regional vice president. The proposed site will employ directors of education, financial services, career planning, and admissions, all of whom report to the campus director. Full-time program directors and a librarian will also report to the campus director.

The following are program descriptions for the massage therapy and medical assisting programs. The curricula for both programs were approved by the Commission when it licensed these same programs in Charleston.

A.A.S., Massage Therapy

MMTC requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Massage Therapy at its new site in Conway. The program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Massage Therapy prepares graduates for entry-level careers as professional massage therapists. Students are provided with the knowledge necessary to develop massage protocol and perform an extensive therapeutic massage with a focus on whole-body wellness. Graduates are prepared for employment opportunities in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, medical offices, spas, health clubs, and private practice.

The Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA) is the specialized program accrediting agency for massage therapy programs. MMTC does not hold and does not plan to seek specialized accreditation for its massage therapy program. South Carolina law requires licensure for those who practice massage therapy. Such licensure requires 500-hours of approved training, a high school diploma or GED, and a passing score on an approved exam. Graduates of the program will be eligible to take the national certification exam administered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork or the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards; subsequently, graduates will be eligible for licensure as massage therapists in South Carolina.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, employment in massage therapy is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations over the 2006-16 decade as more people learn about the benefits of massage therapy. This occupation includes a large percentage of part-time and self-employed workers, and many practice massage therapy as a secondary source of income. Employment is concentrated in metropolitan areas, resorts, and destination locales.

Eight technical colleges and seven private institutions in the state offer a 500-hour or more certificate program in massage therapy. Virginia College offers a program leading to an associate degree in massage therapy.

A.A.S., Medical Assisting

MMTC requests amendment of its license to offer a program leading to the A.A.S. degree

in Medical Assisting at its new site in Conway. The program leading to the A.A.S. degree in Medical Assisting prepares graduates for entry-level careers as important members of the healthcare team. The program emphasizes hands-on experience in both front-office administrative and back-office clinical skills and develops traits employers seek such as the ability to assume responsibility, make decisions, and work independently. Graduates may pursue career opportunities in the growing healthcare industry in doctors' offices, medical clinics, and other medical facilities as clinical medical assistants, administrative medical assistants, and medical office managers. Medical assistants work under the supervision and direction of a physician or licensed healthcare practitioner.

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) is the specialized program accrediting agency for medical assisting programs. MMTC is seeking appropriate accreditation for the program at the Conway site. The medical assisting program at the currently licensed campus in Charleston holds CAAHEP accreditation. Practitioner licensure or certification is not required for employment as a medical assistant.

The U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* projects that employment for medical assistants will grow much faster than average, ranking medical assisting among the fastest growing occupations over the 2006-16 decade. Job opportunities should be excellent, particularly for those with formal training and certification. As the health care industry expands because of technological advances in medicine and the growth and aging of the population, there will be an increased need for all health care workers. Helping to drive job growth is the increasing number of group practices, clinics, and other health care facilities which demand that support personnel, particularly medical assistants, perform both administrative and clinical duties.

Other institutions in the state that offer associate degree programs in medical assisting are Brown Mackie College, Forrest Junior College, South University, and Virginia College. No public institutions in the state offer an associate degree program in medical assisting.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission an amendment to the license of Miller-Motte Technical College to offer at a new site in Conway existing programs leading to the Associate of Applied Science degree in (1) Massage Therapy and (2) Medical Assisting. The Committee further recommends that the Commission delegate to the staff authority to license the site in Conway when the facilities have been developed.