



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. R. Austin Gilbert, Jr., Chairman, and Members,
Commission on Higher Education

From: Ms. Dianne Chinnes, Chairman,
Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

**Consideration of Follow-Up Report to CHE's Evaluation
Of Existing Programs in Life Science (FY 1997-98)**

Background

At its meeting on February 3, 2000, the Commission on Higher Education approved the Committee on Academic Affairs recommendation to grant **Clemson University's** request for a six-month continuation of provisional status for the following programs:

**M.S./Ph.D., Nutritional Sciences
M.S./Ph.D., Biochemistry
M.S./Ph.D., Plant Pathology
M.S., Botany**

The stipulation for granting this extension to address the CHE consultants' recommendations was that Clemson would provide to the Commission by March 1, 2000, a report on the programmatic revisions for these programs.

The Commission had placed these programs on provisional status after it accepted the *CHE Consultants' Evaluation of Existing Programs in Life Sciences Report* at its meeting on October 14, 1998. This report presented the findings of a team of six external consultants who reviewed during FY 1997-98 Life Science programs in the State. Institutions with programs receiving provisional approval had until December 1,

1999, to submit a response to the Commission regarding recommendations for these programs.

Clemson was requested to conduct an internal analysis of the programs recommended for provisional and termination status. In particular, the institution was to determine the role of its plant science programs in light of its land-grant mission and assess how are these programs are to fit into the institution's movement toward a highly technical approach to these disciplines as evidenced by the Genomics Institute and Plant Biotechnology Building. The need for a more unified and consolidated approach to these programs was repeated as a theme throughout the consultants' evaluation. The Commission requested that the institution provide an update on how it will pursue enhancement of these programs and their integration into the new technology venues.

Summary of Institutional Responses

The report provided to the Commission by Clemson University indicates that the institution has been examining how its numerous life science programs relate to one another, to new high-tech approaches, and to its land-grant mission. As a result of this continued analysis, the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences is recommending that the M.S. and Ph.D. programs in Nutritional Sciences be terminated. This recommendation has been forwarded to the Provost for his consideration and action. The Graduate School has been advised to cease accepting new graduate students for these programs. The University has indicated that students currently in the program should graduate by 2002.

The University demonstrates its commitment to the M.S./Ph.D., Biochemistry through the construction of the \$27 million plant biotechnology building and the establishment of the Genomics Institute. Since the review, \$400,000 in renovations have occurred in biochemistry teaching and research space. Enrollment in these programs have increased by three students bringing the total for 1999-2000 to eight. The institution is requesting full approval of these programs.

According to the Clemson report, "The faculty and chairs of the Departments of Biological Sciences, Plant Pathology & Physiology, Horticulture, and Crop and Environmental Soil Sciences agree that a reduction in the number of graduate degrees, a consolidation of degrees and the renaming of graduate degrees are all in order." The University, therefore, proposes the following changes that will affect the provisional status of the M.S./Ph.D, Plant Pathology and the M.S., Botany:

1. The four existing master-level programs in the plant sciences will be consolidated into one program leading to the M.S. degree in Plant and Environmental Sciences. The programs to be consolidated are the M.S., Plant Pathology; M.S., Botany;

M.S., Horticulture; and M.S., Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences programs. The degree will have both a thesis and non-thesis option and will consist of 30 credit hours.

2. The three existing doctoral-level programs in plant sciences will be consolidated into one program leading to the Ph.D. degree in Plant and Environmental Sciences. The degrees to be consolidated are the Ph.D., Plant Pathology; Ph.D., Plant Physiology; and Ph.D., Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences programs. Each student's curriculum will be based upon the student's interests and corresponding needs.

Students will not be admitted to these seven degree programs after Fall 2000. It is expected that students in the terminated programs will complete their masters' degrees by 2003 and the doctoral degrees by 2005. Clemson will also urge current students to transfer into the two new degree programs. The University faculty are currently examining the course offerings in these programs to determine duplication and areas that need new courses. This effort should streamline the programs in the plant sciences and allow the infusion of more up-to-date courses into the two re-configured programs.

Recommendations

The Committee on Academic Affairs recommends that the Commission:

1. Grant full program approval to the following program:

Clemson University M.S./Ph.D. Biochemistry

2. Endorse the decision of Clemson University to terminate the program leading to the M.S./Ph.D. degrees in Nutritional Sciences Spring Semester 2000;
3. Endorse Clemson University's decision to terminate the following programs, effective October 1, 2000, with no new students admitted after Fall 2000 semester:

M.S./Ph.D., Plant Pathology
M.S., Botany
M.S., Horticulture
M.S./Ph.D., Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences
Ph.D., Plant Physiology

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