



March 1, 2019

Ms. Christine L. Mee
Executive Director of Planning & Research
Coastal Carolina University
P. O. Box 261954
Conway, SC 29528

Dear Ms. Mee:

Thank you for your letter of December 4, 2018, in response to our letter of November 9, 2018, requesting a prospectus for the new Master of Arts (M.A.) degree program in Communication, effective fall 2019.

The 33 credit hour M.A. program, which is consistent with the mission of Coastal Carolina University, will have two concentrations: Communication Leadership and Communication Advocacy. Communication Leadership will focus on students' organizational skills, while Communication Advocacy will focus on using communication skills to advocate for others. The target audience is entry/mid-level workers in business, legal, technology, or other fields, who are seeking career advancement. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education approved the new program on June 7, 2018. The expected initial enrollment is 15 students, with administrative oversight provided by the Chair of the Communication, Media, and Culture Department. A comprehensive list of all programs offered by the University was provided; there are no approved off-campus instructional sites.

Admissions and graduation requirements were provided. The curriculum, course descriptions, and student learning outcomes were also provided along with a definition of credit hours. The M.A. program will be delivered through a combination of traditional face-to-face and distance learning instruction. Various tools will be used to assess student learning such as exams, literature reviews, and a final project or thesis. The program will be included in the University-wide institutional effectiveness process, which was described in detail. This process aligns assessment targets with the institutional strategic plan, assesses student learning, reports and analyzes results, then uses the results for planning/budgeting purposes.

The Faculty Roster describes the qualifications of the 14 full-time faculty members who will support the M.A. in Communication program. The faculty members all have related doctoral degrees and are actively engaged in research and/or scholarly work. All appear qualified to teach the assigned courses. Qualifications for two future faculty hires were also provided and appear appropriate. Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications is the responsibility of the peer review teams who will assess the faculty as part of the institution's next



Ms. Christine L. Mee
March 1, 2019
Page 2

SACSCOC accreditation review.

Library and learning resources appear to be adequate. The Kimbel Library has an extensive collection of physical and online resources including databases, books/eBooks, journals, and streaming media that support the communication curriculum. Access to these items is available to students either in person on the main campus, or online through the Library website. Additional external materials are available through the shared resource program, PASCAL Delivers, and through interlibrary loans. Reference and research assistance is provided by professional librarians through in-class instruction, individual consultations, and online research guides. Librarian services may also be accessed via virtual chat, text, email, and phone.

Student support services appear to be adequate and are available to all students. In addition to standard academic support services such as financial aid, admissions, and student records, the University offers additional support through counseling, veterans' services, and disability accommodations. The Office of Graduate Studies will serve as the primary resource, and each student in the M.A. program will be assigned an academic advisor. The Career Services Center assists students in finding employment opportunities appropriate to their interests and abilities. Student health services and wellness programs are also available on campus.

The physical resources appear to be adequate. Instruction for the proposed M.A. program in Communication will be conducted primarily in existing space within Brittain Hall. This 49,146 square foot building houses faculty/staff offices, 3 large classrooms with tiered seating, and 12 classrooms with capacity of 25-30 seats. All classrooms are equipped with standard furnishings, plus internet connectivity and Smart Board/Promethean instructional technology. Teaching, research, and writing within the new program will be supported by conventional computer labs and software packages. Technical infrastructure is already in place to support the distance learning portion of the program through the Moodle learning management system.

Financial support for the program appears to be adequate; a five-year projected budget was provided. Revenues will be generated primarily through tuition and fees, and are expected to outpace expenses each year of the program's operation. Expenses will include instructional salaries, library resources, and supplies. A contingency fund of \$6.6 million has been set aside to cover costs in the event enrollment projections are not realized. The University is not on reimbursement for Title IV funding.

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the M.A. degree program in



Ms. Christine L. Mee
March 1, 2019
Page 3

Communication with two specialized concentrations. It was the decision of the Board to approve the program and include it in the scope of the current accreditation. Please note that, at its meeting in June 2018, the Board of Trustees approved modification of the “*Substantive Change Policy for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement*,” for any type of substantive change requiring approval. If an approved substantive change has not been implemented within two years of action by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, the institution will need to submit a new prospectus for the change or application for a level change.

Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of review of the prospectus.

Sincerely,


Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW/SKO:lp

Enclosure

Cc: Dr. David A. DeCenzo, President
Dr. John S. Hardt



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Tim M. Hofferth, Chair
 Ms. Dianne C. Kuhl, Vice Chair
 Mr. Paul O. Batson, III
 Mr. Devron H. Edwards
 Dr. Bettie Rose Horne
 Mr. Richard A. Jones, Jr.
 Mr. Kenneth W. Kirkland
 Ms. Allison Dean Love
 Dr. Louis B. Lynn
 Vice Admiral Charles Munns, USN (ret.)
 Mr. Kim F. Phillips
 Ms. Terrye C. Seckinger

 Mr. Jeffrey M. Schilz
 Interim President and Executive Director

June 12, 2018

President David A. DeCenzo, Ph.D.
 Coastal Carolina University
 P.O. Box 261954
 Conway, South Carolina 29528-6054

Dear President DeCenzo:

This letter is to confirm that at its meeting on June 7, 2018, the Commission approved the **Master of Arts degree in Communication with concentrations in Communication Leadership and Communication Advocacy** at Coastal Carolina University to be implemented in Fall 2019.

The following table lists the chronology of the program approval process:

Program Proposal Received	2/1/18
ACAP Consideration	3/29/18
CAAL Consideration	5/24/18
CHE Consideration	6/7/18

The program will be noted in the Commission's *Inventory of Approved Programs* with the following information:

Degree Designation	Title of Program	CIP Code	Site Identifier
M.A.	Communication with concentrations in Communication Leadership and Communication Advocacy	090900	51001 (Coastal Carolina University-Main Campus)

Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. John Lane, Director of Academic Affairs, should you have any questions about the Commission's action.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Schilz
 Interim President and Executive Director

cc: Dr. Ralph Byington
 Dr. James Solazzo
 Inventory file
 Program file