



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Council on Postsecondary Education
OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER
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Enclosure 5b3
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TO: Members of the Council on Postsecondary Education
FROM: Jim Purcell, Ed.D, Commissioner for Postsecondary Education
DATE: May 18, 2016
RE: **Proposal for the Creation of a Master of Science in
Operations Management at Rhode Island College**

Background

Rhode Island College is proposing to offer a Master of Science degree in Operations Management from the Management and Marketing Department of the School of Management. For many years, RIC has offered a track in Operations Management in its B.S. in Management. With the growth in demand for professionals in this field, RIC states that there is a population of students who have undergraduate degrees in business or related fields and who desire advanced study in Operations Management. The proposed program will meet the unaddressed need in the marketplace for a graduate program in Operations Management.

Operations Management (OM) is the field that organizes and coordinates the production of goods and services. OM deals with logistics, material and information flow, coordination of processes, and delivery. This is a more technical area of business and the field is changing rapidly. With fluctuations in the availability of commodities and unstable price structures, businesses must be able to respond to changing circumstances and the effects on the supply chain. The science and technology of OM is the core area of study being addressed in this program. This program will allow students to acquire knowledge and skills that are applicable to diverse types of organizations.

Rationale

The proposal states that the M.S. in Operations Management at RIC will provide students with a significant competitive advantage in the marketplace since the master's degree is becoming necessary to reach higher-level positions. The proposal states that operations management originated in the manufacturing sector and many manufacturers continue to rely on high-quality operations management expertise; however, operations management is also essential

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for most organizations in the service sector to sustain a competitive advantage. This has resulted in the aggressive recruitment of OM experts.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, the number of positions in the management of companies and enterprises is expected to increase by 25.6%, from 10,513 in 2012 to 13,200 in 2022. The position of General and Operations Manager is identified as being one of the 50 occupations with the most job growth. Specific occupations that can be obtained with a degree in this area include: Management Analysts, Business Operations Specialists, and Business and Financial Operations Specialists. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook describes this career area as follows: "Industrial production managers oversee the daily operations of manufacturing and related plants. They coordinate, plan, and direct the activities used to create a wide range of goods, such as cars, computer equipment, or paper products." In 2014, the national median salary for this position was \$92,470 and the annual mean wage for Rhode Island was \$110,000. Of the individuals aged 25 to 44 with Master's degrees, 28.7% are employed as Management Analysts, 12.9% as Business Operations Specialists and 14.3% as Business and Financial Operations Specialists.

The program will prepare students to sit for the Project Management Institute (PMI) and the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS) certification exams. According to RIC, the consensus of employers is that these certifications are highly regarded within the industry and will give graduates increased competitiveness in the job market and a higher salary potential. PMI offers a comprehensive certification program (eight certifications) for project, program and portfolio management practitioners of all education and skill levels. A PMI 2011 survey of 30,000 project management professionals found that those with a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification earned an average of \$111,824 per year. In comparison, those without the certification earned nearly \$14,000 less per year. APICS is the premiere professional association for supply chain and operations management and is recognized for its designations of Certified Production and Inventory Management (CPIM), Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP) and Supply Chain Operations Reference Professional (SCOR-P). According to AICS, individuals with the Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP) certification earn an average of 21% more than those lacking CSCP certification.

Institutional Role

This program mission fits with the array of programs in the RIC role, scope and mission statement which includes offering baccalaureate and graduate degrees in the professional fields including a comprehensive slate of business programs. This graduate program builds upon an undergraduate track in operation management within the B.S. in Management.

Interinstitutional Considerations

Within the region, Southern New Hampshire University offers an M.S. in Operations and Project Management; Northeastern University offers an MBA in Operations Management; the University of Bridgeport offers an M.S. in Technology Management; and New England Tech offers a Master's of Construction Management. URI offers a 36-credit MBA that does not focus exclusively on operations management. The MBA programs at Bryant, Johnson and Wales and Providence College also do not focus on operations management. Doctoral programs in operations management exist at MIT, Northwestern and Georgia Tech. Students wishing to pursue a doctorate will be well-positioned for advanced graduate study after completing the M.S. in Operations Management at RIC.

Program

The program will be offered face-to-face and supplemented with online materials and assignments. The M.S. in Operations Management is designated as a dual degree program which will allow students in the B.S. in Management at RIC to begin pursuing the master's degree while undergraduates. RIC undergraduates with 60 credits may be accepted for the dual degree program; once the students have earned 90 credits towards the bachelor's degree, they may earn 15 credits towards the master's degree. To count for graduate credit, students must earn a B or higher in each course. Upon completing their undergraduate degrees in good standing, their graduate program acceptance will be changed from conditional to final acceptance. After completing their bachelor's program, students may complete the 33-credit M.S. in Operations Management with as few as 18 credits.

The specific program content was determined through research into similar programs at the University of South Carolina, University of Maryland, The Project Management Institute, Western Carolina University, and through discussions with industry leaders (CEOs of regional organizations, the American Production and Inventory Control Society), academic experts, and a survey of job requirements as identified in publically posted job openings. An ad hoc advisory board consisting of Providence members and officers of the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS), as well as other industry leaders, met with members of RIC's School of Management to develop and review the content of this program. Members of APICS have supported RIC's efforts to establish the M.S. in Operations Management.

Curriculum

Students take the following required courses (*Indicates new course developed for this program):

3 Credit Introductory course:

- MGT 455: Strategic Operations Management (3 credits)

18 Credits of Core Skills Courses including:

- MGT 510 – Leading Productive Workplaces*
- MGT 520 – Enterprise Excellence through High-Performance Teams
- MGT 515 – Managing Change and Innovation*
- OM 525 – Managing Quality Processes and Continuous Improvement*
- OM 530 – Business Analytics, Data Analysis, Decision Making*
- OM 535 – Project Management*

3 Credit Project

- OM 590 – Directed Research Seminar*

9 Credits of Restricted Electives (including 3 courses from the content areas below in any combination)

Health Care Administration Operations

- HCA 501 – Introduction to the U.S. Health Care System – 3 credits
- HCA 537 – Quality and Performance Improvement in Healthcare – 3 credits
- HCA 547 – Transformational Leadership in Health Care Organizations – 3 credits

Information Technology, Operations Management (Logistics and supply chain management)

- ACCT 510 – Advanced AIS: Systems Modeling – 3 credits
- CIS 535 – Data Management – 3 credits
- CIS 543 – Decision Support Systems – 3 credits

The main specialization within this degree is in Logistics and Supply Chain Management. The college plans to add a new course next year in Logistics and Supply Chain Management to the list of core requirements. A second specialization is available in Health Care Administration Operations, which dovetails with the new M.S. in Health Care Administration that is also being proposed.

Faculty

There are currently four full-time faculty in this area. Faculty who teach Operations Management courses at the undergraduate level also will teach the courses for the Master's degree. The additional sections required for the graduate program will likely necessitate the addition of a faculty line and hiring of additional adjuncts. Most of the restricted electives are already offered by other departments in the School of Management.

Students

The college expects this program to attract working professionals, recent graduates and current RIC undergraduates. An initial enrollment of 10 new students per year is expected, reaching a maximum headcount of 30 full and part-time students when the program reaches full capacity. Ten graduates per year are expected.

Evaluation

The program evaluation will include the following measures:

- Enrollment
- Retention and graduation percentages
- Outcomes assessment of student learning through the final project
- Employment data for graduates
- Student satisfaction surveys
- Alumni satisfaction surveys

Financial Viability

Since no special equipment or resources are needed, the major investment is in faculty. By leveraging existing faculty resources with the addition of a new line if the program grows according to plan, RIC anticipates that this program will be financially self-sustaining. The added visibility this program will afford RIC in the business community will also provide returns on the investment of faculty time.

RIOPC Review

RIOPC staff reviewed the information on the proposal to offer an M.S. in Operations Management at Rhode Island College. This program appears to be within the mission and scope of Rhode Island College and therefore does not require Council approval.