

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Daniel Ornt, VP and Dean, CHST
From: Jeremy Haefner, Provost and Senior Vice President
Subject: Concept paper for a Masters in Social Work
Date: May 15, 2017
Cc: William Destler, Chris Licata

On behalf of President Destler and myself, I thank you and your faculty for the work you all do for the university, particularly as it pertains to the development of new academic programs. We know how much time and effort goes into writing an academic program concept paper and even more goes into the construction of an academic program. We also know that approving an academic program is an extremely serious commitment that the campus undertakes and so making sure that our review and decision-making process is as stringent as possible is a priority for me.

So thank you for submitting a concept paper proposing an Master in Social Work.

By way of context, it is important to understand the recent activity with regards to new programs here at RIT. An analysis of the new program activity found on the Academic Affairs Academic Program Management website (<http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicprogrammgmt/>) indicates that there are currently over 40 programs in various states of development, more than 20 that NYSED is considering for approval and more than 15 that have been approved and operational. A minority of these programs are reaching their enrollment targets.

Also, if we look at the new program proposal trajectory prior to the moratorium (2007-2012), there were 29 additional new programs approved by NYSED during that time period alone.

This activity demonstrates RIT's creativity, ambition, and agility when creating and considering new programs.

Adding to this context is the exciting new RIT Strategic Plan "Greatness through Difference" which articulates a number of bold goals and objectives that will place RIT in the forefront of higher education. While many goals could and will shape and impact the future programs we add to the portfolio, there are some that stand out. First, there are

several goals that will push the university to becoming first among private universities for the production of STEM graduates – particularly, STEM graduates from underrepresented populations. Second, we wish to increase graduate student enrollments by 30% in a fiscally prudent manner. Third, we aim to develop “T-shaped” students with capabilities in interdisciplinary problem-solving and with a range of pivotal skills often found in the liberal arts and integrated across STEM curricula. In addition, we wish to materially increase our student-centered research footprint. All of these aspirations require considerable resources and strategic decisions.

Finally, as you know, RIT will be welcoming a new president, Dr. David Munson, in July and we are anxious to know where he sees the academic portfolio going in the future.

It is in this context that I met with the President, SVP Jim Watters and SVP Jim Miller to review program proposals.

With regards to your concept paper for a Masters in Social Work degree, we are approving this program concept to move forward towards a full proposal at this time. The proposal itself had great merit with its focus on behavior health and we appreciate the vision of this program as a means to support a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. There were concerns about such a degree. First, the name of the degree – Masters in Social Work – gives many people pause and the leadership team felt that the name does not adequately reflect the true intent of the program. Second, it was clear that there was not complete agreement between the proposers and Enrollment Management and Career Services about the stable state of student numbers in this program. Finally, the proposed degree program would face some healthy competition and we would expect to see an analysis of differentiation of the program. These concerns are substantial in the eyes of campus leadership and so I urge you to address them in the full proposal. Finally, approval to move forward with the development of a full proposal does not guarantee approval of the final degree as the President reserves the right to make that final decision.

I am happy to discuss these concerns as you move forward.

I thank you for submitting this concept paper and please express my gratitude to the faculty who worked towards its development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Haefner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeremy Haefner
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs