

DATE: January 29, 2004

SUBJECT: University of Tennessee Memphis, Master of Occupational Therapy

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: After January 2007, the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) no longer will accredit baccalaureate programs. To meet this mandate, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center proposes to develop a Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT). Upon approval, the bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy will be terminated and the master's degree will become the entry-level requirement for program accreditation and licensing. Students will graduate with advanced skills and abilities enabling them to apply appropriate treatment to meet diverse health care needs.

PROPOSED START-UP DATE: Upon approval.

Commission staff have reviewed the program proposal according to the academic standards adopted by the Commission on November 14, 2002. Each standard is referenced below.

1.1.20A MISSION: The proposed program is consistent with the mission of the role and scope of the university mission. "To offer a broad array of programs in Allied Health Services, Basic Medical Sciences, Biomedical Engineering, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy to improve human health through education, research and public service, with an emphasis on improving the health of Tennesseans."

1.1.20B CURRICULUM: The proposed program is composed of three years of preparatory study followed by a two-year graduate program. This 3+2 curriculum model allows entering students to acquire a more comprehensive liberal arts education background and enhance preparation in the areas of inquiry, assessment, and research. Pre-requisite coursework includes social sciences, humanities, business and technology. It is important that higher education produce graduates to enter the profession of occupational therapy with the ability to perform at higher levels of critical thinking, professional judgment, communication and skills to solve problems. The curriculum is structured in a manner consistent with ACOTE. The proposed program requires 81 semester hours. Of this, 15 hours are required fieldwork. To complete the curriculum all courses must be newly developed (23).

Projected Program Productivity

| Student Projections | FTE Enrollment | Graduates |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Year 1 | 40 | 20 |
| Year 2 | 40 | 20 |
| Year 3 | 40 | 20 |
| Year 4 | 40 | 20 |
| Year 5 | 40 | 20 |

1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS: In addition to completing the prerequisite course work, applicants must have a minimum “C” grade point average, have work/volunteer experience in occupational therapy, leadership potential as evidenced by participation in extracurricular activities, references and complete an essay. Matriculating students also must maintain an overall minimum GPA of “C”, demonstrate a level of professionalism, meet minimum technical standards and complete a culminating project.

1.1.20D FACULTY: The current faculty members represent diverse areas of allied health. However, two additional full-time faculty members are needed. New faculty must hold doctoral degrees, have experience teaching occupational therapy at the graduate level, conducting research, grant writing, and designing curricula to support the proposed program. Doctorally prepared faculty members in the College of Medicine will continue to teach specific courses (anatomy, neurobiology, and pathology). Occupational therapists and experts in related health professions in the community will serve as guest lecturers.

1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES: The University of Tennessee Health Science Center Library serves as a resource library in the National Network of Libraries of Medicine and as a major health sciences resource library within local, state, and regional consortia and networks. Resources are available through traditional holdings and also through on-line library databases. Currently, there is a need for more journals that are specific to the various aspects of occupational therapy.

1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION: The proposed program will be administered through the Department of Occupational Therapy in the College of Allied Health Sciences.

1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES: The UT Health Science Center, Department of Occupational Therapy has professional relationships, contracts, and/or affiliation agreements with numerous sites located all over the southeast. Of the 31 health care facilities that responded to a survey, 28 indicated that they would support the program by providing fieldwork placements for students.

1.1.20H FACILITIES/INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT: No additional facilities or construction is required to support the proposed program. The College of Allied Health Sciences recently moved to a larger space. During the February, 2003 site visit from ACOTE, evaluators recommended that the outdated lab equipment be replaced and

that limited teaching resources in the labs be upgraded in order for students to train on equipment found in current occupational therapy settings.

1.1.20I STUDENT/EMPLOYER DEMANDS: The mandate of the national accreditation association leaves no option for the Memphis area students interested in the occupational therapy profession. There is only one other program in a Tennessee public institution and one at a private institution. The need for occupational therapists is expected to increase, as the population ages. The proposed program will enable UTHSC to continue providing training to meet that need.

1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION: The proposed program is not duplicative. Tennessee State University also will propose plans to terminate their bachelor's degree in occupational therapy and request approval for the MOT. There are no other programs in occupational therapy located at public institutions in Tennessee. The bachelor's program at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga was terminated and will not request approval for the master's degree.

1.1.20K COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS: None indicated.

1.1.20L DESEGREGATION: The program will not impede the state's effort to achieve racial diversity.

1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION: To insure quality and effectiveness, program evaluations will be conducted by the curriculum committee of the College of Allied Health Sciences. Evaluations will be based on consistency with the ACOTE, student/graduates' certification scores, alumni surveys, patient/employer surveys and feedback from student focus groups. The bachelor's degree in occupational therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Education. The site visit in February, 2003 granted re-accreditation for seven years. Since ACOTE accredits programs rather than degree levels, upon approval, the current accreditation status will extend to the proposed program.

1.1.20N ARTICULATION: N/A

1.1.20O EXTERNAL JUDGMENT (Graduate Programs): The proposed program is based on the principles set forth by the Tennessee Council of Graduate Schools. On August 17-18, 2003, an external review was conducted by Dr. Karin Opacich, professional consultant and evaluator for occupational therapy education. In her final report, she fully endorsed the proposed MOT. Dr. Opacich considered the location of the proposed program within a health science center to be an asset and was pleased by the intellectual resources available to students and faculty along with the commitment of faculty and the university administration. She also approved of the newly renovated space that enhances opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate. Dr. Opacich was selected by THEC in collaboration with the University of Tennessee System staff.

1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT/SOURCE: The rationale for the accreditation requirement of the master's degree to enter the profession is similar to advanced degree requirements that have occurred in physical therapy. Ongoing changes in the

healthcare system require more advanced skill levels. The proposed program will make it possible to continue to provide access to occupational therapy training in West Tennessee. Memphis offers the closest occupational therapy training for students from Martin, Mississippi, Missouri and Arkansas. The budget for the bachelor's degree will be reallocated to support the proposed master's degree. Additional costs associated with library resources and instructional equipment will be covered by HUD-funded grants. The first year of the grant is \$99,000 and \$211,000 in the second and third year. The program is also seeking additional funding sources and is expanding current grants.

1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING: An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following approval. The review will be based on goals established in the approved program proposal. At the end of this period, campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. These goals include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation numbers, program cost, progress toward accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance and other goals set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. As a result of this evaluation, if the program is found to be deficient, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. Copies of such recommendation will be forwarded to the Education Committees of the General Assembly. The Commission may also choose to extend this period if additional time is needed and requested by the governing board.