



TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: John L. D'Agati *John L. D'Agati*

SUBJECT: Paul Smith's College, North Country: Master Plan
Amendment to offer a Master of Science (M.S.) in Natural
Resources Conservation

DATE: May 23, 2019

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Margellen Eis*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to offer a Master of Science degree program in Natural Resources Conservation?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute and State regulation.

Proposed Handling

The question will come before the full Board at its June 2019 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

Procedural History

Paul Smith's College submitted a proposal for a Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Natural Resources Conservation. The proposed program represents the institution's first master's degree program.

Background Information

Paul Smith's College seeks to amend its master plan to enable the establishment of a Master of Science (M.S.) program in Natural Resources Conservation. A master plan amendment is required because this would be the institution's first program at the

master's level. The Regents will consider separately a charter amendment to authorize the College to award the M.S. degree.

Paul Smith's College is recognized for its delivery of experiential education. The College's mission is to (i) develop career-ready graduates through hands-on, personalized education; (ii) educate, research, and advocate on issues that improve our planet and the lives of the people that inhabit it; and (iii) help the Adirondack region be ecologically and economically sustainable. The institution presently offers baccalaureate programs in natural resources conservation areas. The institution asserts that each of those programs are designed to prepare students for "real work" through hands-on/brains-on experiential learning which it hails as a hallmark of a Paul Smith's education since its founding in 1946.

The M.S. in Natural Resources Conservation program will use the institution's experiential education approach to provide students with enhanced credentials that increase their job competitiveness and ability to serve in leadership roles in public and private sectors. As the only four-year degree granting institution in the Adirondack Park and having the subject matter expertise within its faculty body, Paul Smith's College believes it is uniquely positioned to offer an M.S. in Natural Resources Conservation.

The institution furnished data secured through the NYS Department of Labor that suggests prospective employment of program graduates in the North Country region are very favorable with projected employment growth over the next 10 years for natural resources conservation-related occupations of 15.9% compared to 7.2% for all occupations with an average wage of \$59,328 for related occupations compared to \$43,540 for all occupations. Public sector jobs are potentially available with local governments, and state and federal agencies. Private sector jobs are potentially available with environmental consulting and engineering firms.

Paul Smith's College intends for the prospective student body to include students presently enrolled in its conservation-related baccalaureate degrees. A survey with results suggesting strong to very strong interest in a master's program in this field at the institution was furnished. Conservative estimates project enrollment of 20 students in the program's first year and growth to 40 students by year five. Enrollment projections are comprised of roughly equal numbers of North Country Region, New York State, and out-of-state residents.

The Department conducted a comprehensive review of this proposed program which included an extensive self-study conducted by the College, the proposed program plan, and an external expert peer review and determined that the proposed program complies with the standards for registration as set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. In March 2019, a canvass of all degree-granting institutions in the North Country region was conducted. Of those canvassed, there were no objections or statements of negative impact should the program be registered

Related Regents Items

N/A

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize Paul Smith's College to offer a Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Natural Resources Conservation. The amendment will be effective until June 4, 2020, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case master plan amendment shall be without term.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board approves the master plan amendment, the Department will register the M.S. degree program in Natural Resources Conservation and the College will proceed to recruit and enroll students in the program.