

UNCW awarded funding for professional master's programs

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STAFF WRITER

In February the UNCW Graduate School received \$28,000 from the Council of Graduate Schools. Out of the seven proposals that were submitted as Professional Masters Degrees, six were accepted, which was more than any of the other 450 institutions in CGS.

This funding for the CGS goes toward planning and researching possible future Professional Science Master's degree programs and Professional Social Science and Humanities Master's programs. CGS partners with the Ford Foundation and the Sloan Foundation to organize these funds.

"The CGS is a long standing organization that is sort of the national organization of graduate schools," said Robert Roer, dean of UNCW's Graduate School.

The six areas that qualified for the grants were Computer Science and Information Systems, Applied Statistics,

Environmental Studies, Applied Behavioral Analysis in Psychology, Gerontology and Applied Sociology.

Jack Hall, the chair of Environmental Science said, "Each one of the six programs that got funded received \$4,000 to \$5,000 for expenses to essentially determine if there is a market, if there are capabilities and so on to develop a Professional Master's degree which is typically a non-thesis degree."

During this first stage of development, an advisory board comprised of potential local employers of businesses and industries as well as non-profit and government agencies is established. This advisory board meets with faculty to develop appropriate curriculum and assess training necessary for the workplace. The planning process also involves surveys and polls of students and industries to determine demand for the programs.

Once the program has been organized and established, then it must pass through

the second phase of the process. The Professional Master's Degree must receive support from UNCW administration and UNCW Graduate Council, as well as admitted by the University of North Carolina system's Office of the President and Board of Governors.

If the plans are passed then the second phase of implementation begins. Each Professional Master's program could be granted as much as \$25,000 each from the CGS.

Hall said of the programs, "It's not emphasizing the research component, primarily because it is a professional master's degree, what it is pushing is preparing people to go into the workforce, not preparing them to get a Ph.D." Students will be required to do advanced work and a capstone project in their field.

Although the second application is not due until October of this year, Computer Science and Information Systems is already well on its way to becoming the only Professional Master's CSIS Program in North Carolina, according to Art Gowan, associate professor of information systems.

"Our plan is by the end of this spring... to submit the final proposal for the joint program in CSIS," Gowan said. Posted on the Cameron School of Business Web site are tentative courses for the program. Gowan also stressed the importance of the future CIS building as providing enough resources, labs and faculty for the program.

If these programs make it through the application process to implementation, courses could be offered as soon as Fall 2005.

"I think it is really opening up a door on expanding our view on professional master's programs" Roer said.

Great decisions

DOUG BIGGERSTAFF

STAFF WRITER

An interesting new lecture series here at UNCW offers students course credit as well as lectures and discussions on current events.

UNCW is one of the hosts of the Great Decisions lecture series for 2004. It is a forum for students, professors and the community to learn about and discuss current foreign policies.

The lectures are held every Tuesday night at 8 p.m. in Cameron 105 and anyone can attend. An average of 200 students have attended each meeting.

The Great Decision's design allows it to be used as a course. For one credit hour, students can participate in the lecture series once each week.

The Foreign Policy Association publishes a Great Decisions book every year. The book contains articles on current, topical issues. Each student is required to read and submit a one-page summary for each lecture.

After each lecture, the students go into pre-arranged groups where they discuss the topic.

The students are given credit for the course based on the summary, attendance and participation in each activity.

Remonda Kleinberg, a professor of political science, said, "I think it is an excellent way to bring international affairs right to the students. There's no way they can leave without knowledge."

The next lecture is on March 16, Amy Hawthorne will be speaking on reform in the Middle East. For a complete listing of future lectures, visit the UNCW Web Site.

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