November 28, 2016

Dear Graduate Council Members,

I write to address the questions posed regarding the College of Health Professions & Biomedical Sciences’ (CHPBS) proposal to establish a Master’s program in Occupational Therapy (OT). The impetus for creating this program is based on the recommendations of the AAIP Task Force, whose final report indicated substantial growth potential in the health and medical professions. Additionally, UM received a grant from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to conduct a feasibility study related to this specific profession. Both of these made clear the viability of UM expanding our academic offerings to include OT and we charged CHPBS to develop a proposal for doing so.

The proposal Dean Reed Humphrey prepared outlining the five-year budget projections for this program estimates the startup cost for the first year of this program at $686,380 with an additional $410,854 needed in year two. This budget indicates proposed tuition revenues in year two (shown as program year 1 in the budget) which will offset the upfront costs for starting the program. The approximate start-up costs are $1.08 million dollars which is about what we would anticipate for such a program.

Your questions concerning how these costs will be handled as the program works to become revenue generating, which is projected for its second year of operation, are on point and I offer these clarifications/explanations to your questions. We see four (4) sources for securing these resources: 1) seeking legislative funding as a health and medicine initiative, 2) requesting additional support from OPI, 3) using funds reallocated from program prioritization as may be available, and 4) seeking external philanthropic support. Of course all of these potential sources of revenue are tentative. However, we remain very encouraged that such a highly needed program (as reflected in the OPI-funded feasibility study) should be received very positively. At the same time, please know that if we are not able to secure the start-up resources necessary we will delay the program’s implementation. It is, however, critical that we solidify internal academic approval for this program in order to pursue these potential funding avenues.

I have seen the other questions you have asked about this proposal and understand that Dean Humphrey has or is providing the information requested. I hope that what he provides, along with this letter addressing funding sources for the program, will be sufficient to move the proposal through your review/approval process. We hope to get this to OCHE for Board of Regents review the next time the Board meets to review academic items. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Beverly Edmond

BE/cc

cc: Royce C. Engstrom, President

Reed Humphrey, Dean, College of Health Professions & Biomedical Sciences