
Docket Item: 6.4 - CONSENT ITEM: Southwestern Oregon Community College | Water Quality Treatment, AAS.

Summary:

Southwestern Oregon Community College proposes a new Associate of Applied Science in Water Quality Treatment. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed program. After analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the degree as proposed.

Staff Recommendation:

The HECC recommends the adoption of the following program: Southwestern Oregon Community College AAS in Water Quality Treatment.

Recommended Motion:

Move to approve the following degree: Southwestern Oregon Community College AAS in Water Quality Treatment.



Southwestern Oregon Community College seeks the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission’s approval to offer an instructional program leading to an Associate of Applied Science in Water Quality Treatment.

Program Summary

The Water Quality Technology, AAS degree includes five introductory courses in water and wastewater operations, 24-credit hours of related cooperative work, and foundational courses including math, science, and STEM elective courses. The coursework will help prepare for the Level I Certification exams. The cooperative work experience is hands on training and is equivalent to approximately 5 months of full-time work experience.

1. Describe the need for this program by providing clear evidence.

All community water and wastewater systems must be operated under the supervision of certified operators. This is desirable career with low turnover, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. The median annual salary is \$62,900 in Oregon. In 2020 there were 1,144 operators in Oregon and 125,200 operators nationwide. Annual openings are projected at about 97 jobs in Oregon and 10,800 jobs nationwide. Also, many experienced operators are reaching retirement age. Employment information is from Oregon Employment Department and US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2. Does the community college utilize systemic methods for meaningful and ongoing involvement of the appropriate constituencies?

This degree is being offered in collaboration with Umpqua Community College. The WQT classes will be taught by UCC faculty and offered to Southwestern students through course sharing. This ensures the program will be more sustainable for both institutions and will help meet the industry need across a broader region of Oregon.

Additionally, the collaborative planning team has consulted with industry partners and conducted a comprehensive survey of industry needs for this degree. Feedback from industry (to date) includes the following partners:

DEQ Advisory Member Name Represents:

Amy Willman Large system operator

Mark Milne Large system operator

Justine Abrook Large system operator

Mike Edwards Large system operator

Steve Sagmiller Small System Owner

Tom Stow Large System Owner

Matt LaForce Education
Matt Etzel Small system operator
Heather Daggett (Union) CII/TII Small system operator
Heath Cokeley Industry Associate (OAWU)
Jim Baird Large system operator/owner, PNCWA Industry Associate
Kim Symons Small system operator (not yet certified)
Nathan Dryden Small/Large system operator

3. ***Is the community college program aligned with appropriate education, workforce development, and economic development programs?***

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4. ***Does the community college program lead to student achievement of academic and technical knowledge, skills, and related proficiencies?***

Equal access is ensured for all students through course scheduling and wraparound services. Tutoring services, academic advising, and other support services are available to students on campus and at a distance.

Student proficiencies are assessed and students are advised of their skill level as correlated to industry standards for certification and employment. Continuous improvement planning will be based on outcomes from both qualitative and quantitative student performance data.

5. ***Does the community college identify and have the resources to develop, implement, and sustain the program?***

The WQT requires no additional faculty, equipment, and/or other resources. In fact, the degree may contribute to increased enrollments in traditionally under enrolled courses. Additionally, the course sharing partnership will likely lead to better sustainability for the degree for both institutions and could function as a model for future partnerships that could help build capacity and sustainability for Southwestern and other rural community colleges in the future.

Assurances

Southwestern Oregon Community College has met or will meet the four institutional assurances required for program application.

HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION

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1. *Access.* The college and program will affirmatively provide access, accommodations, flexibility, and additional/supplemental services for special populations and protected classes of students.
2. *Continuous Improvement.* The college has assessment, evaluation, feedback, and continuous improvement processes or systems in place. For the proposed program, there will be opportunities for input from and concerning the instructor(s), students, employers, and other partners/stakeholders. Program need and labor market information will be periodically re-evaluated and changes will be requested as needed.
3. *Adverse impact and detrimental duplication.* The college will follow all current laws, rules, and procedures and has made good faith efforts to avoid or resolve adverse *intersegmental* and *intra-segmental* impact and detrimental duplication problems with other relevant programs or institutions.
4. *Program records maintenance and congruence.* The college acknowledges that the records concerning the program title, curriculum, CIP code, credit hours, etc. maintained by the Office are the official records and it is the college's responsibility to keep their records aligned with those of the Office. The college will not make changes to the program without informing and/or receiving approval from the Office.