March 17, 2016

Proposed new MA Program in Community Planning, Policy, and Design

Dear Council Members:

We are proud to present to you this proposal for a new Master of Arts program in Community Planning, Policy, and Design. This program is designed to unite a number of disciplinary strengths at the School of the Arts and the College of Charleston in a unique and powerful way, as well as directly serve our institution’s strategic vision, particularly in the inter-related realms of public service, sustainability, and socio-political diversity. We will teach students to be practical community builders and effective place-makers—to serve city governments, development companies, architecture/urban design firms, and others by combining what we call “progressive traditional” design skills with a knowledge of public policy, real estate economics, and practical transportation and land-use planning. The College of Charleston is strategically positioned to offer this program for the following reasons:

• We have a nationally recognized Public Administration graduate program.
• We are home to the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Center for Livable Communities, and Riley has committed to playing an active role in our new program (see attached letter of support).
• We have a vibrant Urban Studies program with graduate planning and transportation courses already on offer.
• We have the nation’s largest undergraduate Historic Preservation & Community Planning Program, with urban design studio courses regularly featuring internationally recognized leaders in the field, such as Andres Duany and David M. Schwarz.
• We have a many architectural and urban history course offerings in a leading Art & Architectural History Department.
• Our top-notch Business School has founded the new Carter Real Estate Center.
• Our historic urban campus sits in the heart of one of the nation’s oldest, most dynamic, and most beloved cities, with an array of assets and challenges that has already made it a perfect classroom for our undergraduates.

The CPAD MA also supports the envisioned future for the School of the Arts. The CPAD MA utilizes “The outstanding, comprehensive, student-centered undergraduate and graduate programs within the School offer professional/conservatory-level training within the context of the College’s liberal arts tradition that produces creative and performing artists and art scholars, leaders of business and not-for-profit agencies, and audience members for the creative environment of the twenty-first century.”

The strategic vision of our College is focused upon sustainability and diversity, two crucial areas of public discourse that are inseparable from community building. By immersing themselves in Charleston’s diverse neighborhoods, our students will learn to build upon pluralistic cultural traditions and support multi-faceted community aspirations. The program presented here explicitly addresses all five Goals in the College’s current Strategic Plan. Furthermore, it also presents an opportunity engage Strategies 2-4, and 6-10 as defined in the College’s Strategic Plan.

Goals

1. Provide students a highly personalized education based on a liberal arts and sciences core and enhanced by opportunities for experiential learning. The CPAD MA explicitly addresses this goal through diverse courses that challenge students to seek informed and unique solutions to urbanization issues. A significant number of courses are studio based and or utilize urban contexts as classrooms—which are by definition “opportunities for experiential learning”. (fulfills Strategy 4)
2. Develop or enhance nationally recognized undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in areas that take advantage of our history, culture and location in Charleston and contribute to the wellbeing of the region. With the CPAD MA we are developing a nationally (and internationally) recognized graduate program that explicitly takes advantage of one of the more successful urban renewal and development strategies ever undertaken in the history of the United States as directed by Mayor Joe Riley. In teaching students to be practical community builders and effective place-makers they will serve city governments, development companies, architecture/urban design firms, and others locally, regionally, nationally and indeed internationally further enhancing the reputation of the College. (fulfills Strategies 2 and 10)

3. Provide students the global and interdisciplinary perspectives necessary to address the social, economic, environmental, ethical, scientific and political issues of the twentieth century. The CPAD MA’s primary strength lies in its interdisciplinary approach to producing citizens who effect positive change on their communities to allow for a better future for our species. One that is in sync with mitigating negative impacts of urbanization on the environment, economies and the socio-political fracturing that societies are facing here in the US and internationally. Nationally and internationally recognized faculty will be participants and we already have a growing list of individuals and institutions who/which have global reputations who/that are willing to come to teach and participate. (fulfills Strategies 3 and 8)

4. Establish and promote a vibrant campus-life atmosphere dedicated to education of the whole person through integration of curricular and co-curricular or extracurricular activities. In utilizing Charleston as a classroom and encouraging CPAD MA students to apply learned lessons to their home communities, the program efficiently integrates curricular and co-curricular pedagogy. (fulfills Strategy 5)

5. Achieve financial security by creating a new financial model for the College of Charleston. In line with current budgetary constraints, the CPAD MA program will strengthen the College’s financial future by attracting donors to minimize budgetary outlays and will in-fact be a revenue generating program. (fulfills Strategies 6-7 and 9)

We hope you will agree that now is the time, and that the College of Charleston is the place, for this innovative new program, which promises to bring together many different skill sets and backgrounds to create community builders. Together we can empower our students to become stewards and servants of their societies, as well as leaders in an important and growing field.

Sincerely,

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