

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Academic Affairs

**NO:** AAC 14-02

**COMMITTEE DATE:** October 22, 2013

**BOARD DATE:** October 29, 2013

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**APPLICATION OF SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO AWARD THE ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Springfield Technical Community College** to award the **Associate in Science degree in Health Information Technology**

Upon graduating the first class for these programs, the University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)

Contact: Dr. Carlos Santiago, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs

## BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

October 2013

### Springfield Technical Community College Associate in Science in Health Information Technology

#### INTENT AND MISSION

The Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) mission is to provide programs of a technical nature that support the needs of industry. The proposed Health Information Technology (HIT) program is guided by this mission of the college. The mission of the proposed HIT program at STCC is to prepare students for certification and practice as Registered Health Information Technicians (RHIT). HIT is an evolving profession in the healthcare environment and the proposed HIT program responds to the need for a skilled workforce to support the needs of the healthcare industry.

STCC has filed an expedited application for the approval of a proposed Associate in Science in Health Information Technology. The proposed Associate in Science in Health Information Technology has obtained all necessary governance approvals on campus and was approved by the STCC Board of Trustees on February 25, 2013. The required letter of intent was circulated on September 26, 2012. No comments were received.

#### NEED AND DEMAND

##### *National and State Labor Market Outlook*

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of medical records and health information technicians is expected to grow by 20% from 2008 to 2018. According to its *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, “technicians with a strong understanding of technology and computer software will be in particularly high demand.”<sup>1</sup> Postings for Health Information Technology jobs have increased 36 percent between 2007 and 2011<sup>2</sup>.

A recent survey completed by the Regional Employment Board indicated that a HIT program is needed in the Springfield area. Several local hospitals and health care organizations, such as Bay State Health Systems, have expressed a strong interest in the proposed program, anticipating the need to hire new staff in response to two significant factors. One factor is related to a “double coding” process which is scheduled to take effect in the near future. The second factor is related to the 23% of workers ages 55-64 who are expected to retire and will need to be replaced and another 82% ages 35-55, who will need further training to stay current with changes in the technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition, <http://www.bls.gov/oco> or Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Career Guide to Industries, 2010-2011 Edition, Healthcare, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm>)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.jff.org/publications/education/growing-jobs-sector-health-informatics/1432>

### *Student Demand*

At the local level, students who have graduated and earned the Certified Coding Assistant (CCA) credential at STCC are asking for further credentials to advance their careers in order to move into management positions. STCC maintains a listing of students who have expressed interest in the proposed degree program and hope they will have the opportunity to apply for admission.

### *Duplication*

There are no other institutions offering an HIT program in western or central Massachusetts, and three institutions offer an HIT program in the Boston or southeastern Massachusetts. The proposed STCC HIT program is expected to fill this void for the Springfield region.

## **ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS**

### *Admission*

Admission to STCC requires a high school diploma or its equivalent. Applicants who have had previous college experience must submit all college transcripts whether or not they are seeking transfer credit. Only courses from regionally accredited colleges in which the student has received a minimum grade of C and which are similar in content to those required in the student's program at STCC are eligible for transfer credit.

Additional proposed HIT program admission requirements:

- Completion of Medical Terminology or its equivalent, with a minimum grade C
- Completion of Computer Basics-Concepts/Applications or its equivalent, with a minimum grade C
- Completion of high school Algebra II with a C or better or ALGB-097 or higher in Math

Upon acceptance into the program, Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks will be required for each student to enter (and yearly to continue) in the program. Subsequent to enrollment, immunizations and a health examination are required.

The current STCC plan for the proposed program is to accept no more than 10 full time and 5 part time applicants in the first year. New students will be accepted only in the Fall semester and an objective point system will be used for entrance evaluation. The system consists of a weighted score made up of three factors, cumulative high school or college GPA; number of college credit hours completed; and grades and credit hours in specified course work. Application for readmission will be allowed only once and will depend on available space.

*Program Enrollment Projection*

|                      | <b># of Students Year 1</b> | <b># of Students Year 2</b> | <b># of Students Year 3</b> | <b># of Students Year 4</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| New Full Time        | 10                          | 10                          | 10                          | 10                          |
| Continuing Full Time |                             | 7                           | 7                           | 7                           |
| New Part Time        | 5                           | 5                           | 5                           | 5                           |
| Continuing Part Time |                             | 4                           | 8                           | 8                           |
| <b>Totals</b>        | 15                          | 26                          | 30                          | 30                          |

*Program Effectiveness*

| <b>Goal</b>   | <b>Measurable Objective</b>   | <b>Strategy for Achievement</b>   | <b>Timetable</b>   |
|---|---|---|--|
| Obtain specialized program accreditation from CAHIIM in conjunction with AHIMA  | Receive accreditation designation from CAHIIM in cooperation with AHIMA.  | Begin the application process as soon as state approvals are received; plan is to begin in early 2014. The CAHIIM process may take 1-2 years. | By Spring 2016   |
| Support underrepresented groups by recruiting, retaining and graduating a diverse student population  | Increased percentages of Black and Hispanic students in the department (both Health Info Technologies and Medical Coding and Billing) | Recruit, retain and graduate higher percentages of underrepresented, underserved groups.  | First HIT graduating class expected in two years from start of program |
| Graduates will demonstrate entry-level competencies by successfully passing the RHIT examination. The current AHIMA pass rate is 71% pass on the first attempt. Our goal is to meet or exceed this pass rate. | To meet or exceed the current AHIMA RHIT pass rate of 71%   | Offer a RHIT exam preparation course  | 2016   |

| <b>Goal</b>  | <b>Measurable Objective</b>  | <b>Strategy for Achievement</b>  | <b>Timetable</b>  |
|--|--|--|---|
| High Percentage achieved in job placement for graduates  | 70% of credentialed graduates will obtain a position in the HIT field within 180 days of graduation                            | By working with employers via affiliations and regional workforce initiatives, area employers are aware of our graduates and their competencies. | First HIT graduating class (2016)                           |
| Expand faculty via faculty additions   | One additional full-time faculty member by Fall 2015.  | Plan to initiate a search process in spring 2014.  | Fall 2015   |
| Develop and enhance course content and program operation   | Revise specialized HIT course content as needed to remain relevant   | Monitor AHIMA RHIT competencies and program efficiencies   | Fall 2014 and Ongoing                                       |
| Faculty will demonstrate current knowledge and expertise in areas taught   | Maintenance of AHIMA credentials   | Attend AHIMA continuing education training, meetings, etc.   | Ongoing   |
| Develop and enhance directed practice affiliations and Advisory Board  | Expand current clinical affiliations by adding 2-3 hospitals or medical practices to the affiliation group and Advisory Board. | Network with area medical groups and hospitals and develop relationships that lead to increased working relationships with STCC and our program. | Spring 2014 and Ongoing                                     |
| Review and analyze feedback from the directed practice sites and from students to ensure the effectiveness of the directed practice coursework | Obtain favorable responses from directed practice sites and from students regarding the directed practice experience.          | Evaluate directed practice experiences by surveys and questionnaires to sites and to students.   | After first year of offering the directed practice courses. |

### *Curriculum (Attachment A)*

The proposed HIT program will require students to complete 66 credit hours: 40 credit hours of required courses and 26 credit hours of general education and electives. The student will begin with introductory courses such as Introduction to Procedural Coding, Introduction to Health Information Management and Health Insurance and Reimbursement. The student then builds on these basic concepts with courses on Strategic Health Law and Ethics in Healthcare.

The current Advisory Board for the Medical Coding/Billing programs, included in the proposal, consists of representatives from area hospitals, medical practices, billing services and the Regional Employment Board. It is expected to serve as the Advisory Board for the proposed program. This board meets at least annually to review and discuss curriculum, affiliations with STCC, trends in healthcare information management, and employer needs. The group is expected to advise in areas of program curriculum changes, course content and areas related to employment opportunities in the HIT field.

### *Field Resources and Internships*

The proposed HIT program is expected to include two Directed Clinical Practice courses which will initially be provided by Shriner's Hospital and Western Massachusetts Hospital. It is anticipated that growth in the proposed program will result in additional clinical sites such as Holyoke Medical Center and Mercy Hospital. All clinical coursework will be overseen by a faculty member and guided by the American Health Information Management Association's standards in '*Clinical Practice Sites and Professional Practice Experience*'.

## **RESOURCES AND BUDGET**

### *Fiscal (Attachment B)*

#### *Costs*

The Medical Coding and Billing department at STCC presently has two full-time faculty members and adjunct faculty commensurate with the number of sections required. Full-time faculty costs, with benefits, under Year 1 reflect actual expenditures at the present time. Year 2 reflects the addition of a third full-time RHIT certified faculty member beginning in the 2014-15. This third faculty member is expected to add expertise to teach new courses in the area of informatics and will partially cover additional course sections anticipated by increased enrollments. Full-time faculty salaries for years two, three and four assume projected collective bargaining increases at 3.5%.

Adjunct faculty members are expected to teach approximately 12 sections annually. Costs are assessed at an estimated \$3,000 per section, and years two, three, and four costs reflect an anticipated collective bargaining increase of 3.5% for those years. Present levels of DCE sections have been maintained through years two, three, and four due to anticipated enrollment increases.

STCC plans that clerical staff for the HIT program faculty will be provided by the Dean's Office at the School of Business and Information Technology. Additional staff costs for

technical support by computer lab monitors are anticipated. These costs are projected at \$6,000 annually.

Costs for replacement of equipment and the purchase of new software are centralized in the college budget.

General administrative costs of \$7,250 include travel, mileage, assessment, publication, and conference fees for faculty professional development.

There are no start-up costs for space or equipment as the computers labs for Health Information Technology already exist.

There are no field or clinical resource expenses required for the program.

Marketing of the program will be financed through the college's Office of Marketing and Public Relations.

There will be an anticipated start-up cost of \$7,500 for the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) accreditation application, and anticipated costs of \$2,000 for expenses associated with any initial site-visit for AHIMA. These costs will be borne by the Office of Academic Affairs. Years two, three, and four reflect an ongoing expense of \$1,850, the annual membership fee for the Council for Accreditation of Health Informatics and Information Management CAHIIM/AHIMA.

#### *Faculty and Administration (Attachment C)*

The proposed program will initially be staffed with two current full time faculty members and adjunct faculty members. STCC plans to recruit and add an additional full time faculty member in the Fall of 2014.

#### *Facilities, Library and Information Technologies*

The proposed program will be utilizing the college's current library facilities, current labs and classroom equipment. Many classrooms have lecture projection options and individual computer stations. STCC general education requirements include computer literacy and all HIT students will be required to use laptop computers in the classroom by fall of 2013.

#### *Affiliations and Partnerships*

Advisory and industry partners include members of New England Orthopedics, Holyoke Medical Center, Bay State Medical Center, the Regional Employment Board, Mercy Medical Center, Positive Results, Hampden County Physicians Association, and Shriner's Hospital. The group meets at least annually and provides guidance and advice on curriculum and course content and other relevant issues pertaining to the HIT field.

### **EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

The proposed Associate in Science in Health Information Technology program was reviewed by Ellen Shakespeare, MBA, RHIA, CHDA, FAHIMA, Academic Director of Health Information Management at City University New York School of Professional

Studies and Joy Rose, MSA, RHIA, CCS, Program Director of Health Information Technology at Bristol Community College. The reviewers expressed support for the program as viable and positioned to fill a gap in western Massachusetts and meet regional healthcare employer needs.

Recommendations included the inclusion of a Professional Practice Experience (PPE) as a capstone course and continued recruitment of additional PPE sites. The reviewers suggested additional textbooks for consideration, a re-sequencing of four courses and consolidation of another two into one course, and the purchase of healthcare industry specific simulation software. Reviewers suggested that current faculty would be adequate at the outset to the program but an additional faculty member would be required by Fall 2015.

STCC agreed with the sequence and consolidation recommendations and will review the textbooks suggested. STCC agreed and is engaged in recruiting potential additional PPE sites. The institution is conducting a cost/function analysis of software and will consider additional faculty as enrollment allows.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Springfield Technical Community College and external reviewers. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed Associate in Science in Health Information Technology.

Curriculum Outline (Attachment A)

| <b>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 15)</b> |   |                            |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Course Number</b>  | <b>Course Title</b>   | <b>Credit Hours</b>        |
| MEDC-122  | Introduction to Procedural Coding                                       | 3                          |
| PROG-109  | Information Systems Fundamentals  | 3                          |
| MEDC-140  | Introduction to Health Information Management                           | 3                          |
| MEDC-120  | Introduction to Diagnosis Coding  | 4                          |
| MEDC-219  | Insurance and Reimbursement   | 2                          |
| HIIT-142  | Healthcare Informatics  | 3                          |
| HIIT-143  | Directed Clinical Practice 1  | 3                          |
| HIIT-240  | Strategic Health Information Technology                                 | 3                          |
| MAST-321  | Introduction to Pharmacology  | 1                          |
| MEDC-300  | Facility Billing & Reimbursement  | 3                          |
| MANG-110  | Principles of Management  | 3                          |
| HIIT-243  | Directed Clinical Practice 2  | 3                          |
| HIIT-244  | Law and Ethics in Healthcare  | 3                          |
| MEDC-230  | Electronic Health Record  | 2                          |
| HIIT-245  | RHIT Exam Prep Course   | 1                          |
|   | <b>Sub Total Required Credits</b>                                       | <b>40</b>                  |
| <b>Elective Courses (Total # courses required =0)</b>                       |   |                            |
| ELECTIVE  | General Education Elective (Arts, Humanities, etc. <b>noted below</b> ) | 0                          |
|   | <b>Sub Total Elective Credits</b>                                       | <b>0</b>                   |
| <b>Distribution of General Education Requirements</b>                       |   | <b># of Gen Ed Credits</b> |
| <i>Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages</i>      |   | <b>9</b>                   |
| ENGL-100  | English Composition 1   | 3                          |
| ENGL-200  | English 2 Introduction to Literature                                    | 3                          |
| ENGL-203  | Fundamentals of Oral Communication                                      | 3                          |
| <i>Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences</i>                    |   | <b>11</b>                  |
| BIOL-104  | Human Biology 1   | 4                          |
| BIOL-204  | Human Biology 2   | 4                          |
| STAT-142  | Statistics  | 3                          |
| <i>Social Sciences</i>  |   | <b>6</b>                   |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| PSYC-100Introduction to Psychology   | 3  |
| ELECTIVE-General Education   | 3  |
| <b>Sub Total General Education Credits</b>   | 26 |
| <b>Curriculum Summary</b>  |    |
| Total number of courses required for the degree  | 23 |
| Total credit hours required for degree   | 66 |
| <b>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</b>  |    |
| Medical Terminology or its equivalent, with a grade of C or better                               |    |
| Computer Basics-Concepts/Applications or its equivalent, with a grade of C or better             |    |
| High School or College Algebra II with a grade of C or better or placement in ALGB-097 or higher |    |

Program Budget (Attachment B)

| <b>One Time/<br/>Start Up<br/>Costs</b>   |   | <b>Annual Expenses</b> |                  |                  |                  |
|---|---|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|   |   | <b>Year 1</b>          | <b>Year 2</b>    | <b>Year 3</b>    | <b>Year 4</b>    |
|   | <b>Cost Categories</b>  |                        |                  |                  |                  |
|   | Full Time Faculty<br>(Salary & Fringe)  | 123,822                | 199,655          | 206,643          | 213,875          |
|   | Part Time/Adjunct Faculty<br>(Salary & Fringe)                                    | 36,000                 | 36,540           | 37,058           | 37,644           |
|   | Staff (part time lab monitors)  | 6,000                  | 6,000            | 6,000            | 6,000            |
|   | General Administrative Costs  | 7,250                  | 7,250            | 7,250            | 7,250            |
|   | Instructional Materials, Library<br>Acquisitions                                  | 1,000                  | 1,000            | 1,000            | 1,000            |
|   | Facilities/Space/Equipment  | n/a                    | n/a              | n/a              | n/a              |
|   | Field & Clinical Resources  | n/a                    | n/a              | n/a              | n/a              |
|   | Marketing   | n/a                    | n/a              | n/a              | n/a              |
| 9,500                                     | Cost of initial accreditation fee<br>and site visit – annual<br>accreditation fee | 9,500                  | 1,850            | 1,850            | 1,850            |
|   | <b>TOTALS</b>   | <b>\$183,572</b>       | <b>\$252,295</b> | <b>\$259,801</b> | <b>\$267,619</b> |
| <b>One<br/>Time/Start-<br/>Up Support</b> |   | <b>Annual Income</b>   |                  |                  |                  |
|   |   | <b>Year 1</b>          | <b>Year 2</b>    | <b>Year 3</b>    | <b>Year 4</b>    |
|   | <b>Revenue Sources</b>  |                        |                  |                  |                  |
|   | Grants  |                        |                  |                  |                  |

|       |                         |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|-------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|       | Tuition                 | 54,000           | 60,450           | 61,650           | 61,650           |
|       | Fees                    | 261,360          | 302,250          | 318,114          | 327,978          |
|       | Departmental            |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|       | Reallocated Funds       |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| 9,500 | Academic Affairs Office | 9,500            | 1,850            | 1,850            | 1,850            |
|       | <b>TOTALS</b>           | <b>\$324,860</b> | <b>\$364,550</b> | <b>\$381,614</b> | <b>\$391,478</b> |

Faculty Form

| Summary of Faculty Who Will Teach in Proposed Program   |                          |  |  |   |                               |  |   |
|---|--------------------------|--|--|---|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Please list full-time faculty first, alphabetically by last name. Add additional rows as necessary. |                          |  |  |   |                               |  |   |
| Name of faculty member (Name, Degree and Field, Title)  | Check if Tenured         | Courses Taught Put (C) to indicate core course. Put (OL) next to any course currently taught online.   | Number of sections   | Division of College of Employment             | Full- or Part-time in Program | Full- or part-time in other department or program (Please specify) | Sites where individual will teach program courses |
| McKethan, Tracey<br>MBA, CCA<br>Associate<br>Professor/Dept Chair                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to Procedural Coding (C)</li> <li>• Intro to Diagnosis Coding (C)</li> <li>• Advanced Coding</li> <li>• Electronic Health Records (C)</li> <li>• CCA Exam Prep (OL)</li> <li>• Health Information Management (C)</li> <li>• Health Office Basics</li> <li>• Health Office Advanced</li> </ul> | <p>3</p> <p>5</p> <p>7</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>7</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>16</p> | School of Business and Information Technology | Full Time                     | Yes, also teach in Medical Coding program                          | • Springfield Campus                              |

|  |                          |   |                            |   |           |   |                      |
|--|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|-----------|---|----------------------|
|  |                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility Billing &amp; Reimbursement (C)</li> <li>• Co-op Coding Internship</li> <li>• Technical Applications</li> </ul>   | 10                         |   |           |   |                      |
| Corcoran, Louise<br>MBA, RHIT<br>Assistant Professor | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to Diagnosis Coding (C)</li> <li>• Advanced Coding</li> <li>• Health Information Management (C)</li> <li>• Health Office Basics</li> <li>• Health Office Advanced</li> <li>• Facility Billing &amp; Reimbursement (C)</li> </ul> | 4<br>1<br>1<br>3<br>3<br>2 | School of Business and Information Technology | Full Time | Yes, also teach in Medical Coding program | • Springfield Campus |
| TBA  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to Procedural Coding (C)</li> <li>• Intro to Diagnosis Coding (C)</li> <li>• Health Office Basics</li> <li>• Health Office Advanced</li> <li>• Facility Billing &amp; Reimbursement (C)</li> <li>• Insurance and</li> </ul>      | TBA                        | Division of Continuing Education              | Part Time |   | • Springfield Campus |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | Reimbursement<br>(C)<br>• Advanced<br>Coding |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|