

Addition of degrees, minors approved by Southeast's Board of Regents

By Kayla Gaffney

Due to growing demands in the job market, Southeast Missouri State University's Board of Regents approved two new degree programs and two new minors on Dec. 15.

The new degree programs are the Bachelor of Industrial and Systems Engineering offered through the Department of Polytechnic Studies and the Bachelor of Industrial Distribution, which was created by the Department of Polytechnic Studies and the Harrison College of Business.

Dr. Gerald McDougall, interim provost, said there is a growing need for individuals with experience in these areas, and that is one of the main reasons for the creation of these programs.

"There are market needs for individuals that have engineering technology backgrounds, and more and more is related to technology changes that we see occurring," McDougall said.

McDougall said the university has been creating connections with employers in the area to better prepare students for their future jobs.

"The industrial distribution is a degree program that was created with some major employers in St. Louis where there is excess demand for individuals with that technical background in logistics and supply chain management," McDougall said. "The opportunities are there because these are technical degree programs and there are great opportunities in terms of employment."

Although the Board of Regents has approved these programs, they currently are being reviewed by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. Approval from the state needs to be implemented before Southeast can start offering these programs to students. But, according to McDougall, approval is expected to come in the near future.

McDougall mentioned how these programs will bring something new to the table and should attract more students who are interested in these particular fields to Southeast.

"We have structured them in a way that they would not be duplicative of other degree programs that already exist," McDougall said. "It definitely would be attractive to individuals that want to go into our manufacturing sector ... it could draw individuals from Illinois or other locations outside or farther away from us."

The new minors that have been created are the childhood trauma and outcomes minor, which is being offered through the Department of Human Environmental Studies, and the equine science minor that is offered through the Department of Agriculture.

As with the new degree programs, these new minors were created because there are job opportunities for individuals with experience in these areas. According to McDougall, a needs analysis is used to determine whether or not to create a new program.

"Whenever we propose a new program, we expect there to be what is called a needs analysis, [determining if there are] opportunities for employment or placement,"

McDougall said. "And in these cases, we have identified that there is sufficient demand to justify a degree program."

McDougall said the university continually looks at offering new programs not only to stay current with the job market, but also because a major factor for potential students is the different academic programs being offered.

"What we hope is that we are connecting with individuals that previously would not find Southeast their first choice of attendance," McDougall said.

According to McDougall, the minor programs only needed approval from the Board of Regents, so they started being offered to students this spring.

Along with the addition of these new minors, Southeast deleted the social rehabilitation minor. McDougall said the deletion of the minor comes from there being little interest from students.

"There was little demand, and there were other areas that were higher demand, so it's a matter of reallocating resources or faculty expertise to those areas where there is greater interest and greater demand," McDougall said.

Every year the university looks at each program's enrollment to see if a program is still as attractive to students as it once was or if interest in that area has gone down. This helps in deciding which programs are worth keeping and which ones are not.

"We examine our enrollment patterns and trends ... Is there a trend or history there that would suggest that this is no longer viable or attractive," McDougall said. "Market conditions may have changed and it may not be as relevant today as it was yesterday."