

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

SUMMARY

Lake Area Technical College
Substantive Program Application
Long-Term Certificate
Conservation Law Enforcement

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness (“Committee”) met on 4/25/2024 to consider the merits of the above application. After review, the Committee makes the following action recommendation to the Board of Technical Education:

- Approval
- Disapproval
- Deferral
- Other:

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Institution	Lake Area Technical College
Program Identifier Code (If applicable)	
Program Title	Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate
Program Award Level: Check all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-Term Certificate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Long-Term Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Associate of Applied Science
CIP Code (6 Digit)	43.0107
Projected Implementation Date	5/27/2025
Location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Main Campus <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

SUMMARY

Type of Substantive Change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Program (B.1.1) <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Curriculum Modification (B.1.2) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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Describe the change the institution is seeking approval of.

Lake Area Technical College (LATC) is seeking approval to establish a long-term certificate in Conservation Law Enforcement. This certificate creates a pathway for students completing their AAS in Law Enforcement to receive additional training as they work to become a Conservation Law Enforcement Officer in state, tribal, or federal agencies.

With advisement from law enforcement and the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks, LATC has packaged the certificate into a summer semester. Law Enforcement students can enroll the summer between the first and second year of their AAS degree or the summer after completing their degree.

This certificate is unique among Conservation Law Enforcement programs. Most programs train students in conservation and biological topics first, and then students are required to pursue law enforcement training. In South Dakota, this typically means attending the 13-week Law Enforcement Academy in Pierre and passing certification exams following college graduation. In contrast, students pursuing the Lake Area Technical College certificate will receive Law Enforcement training, including full certification through the South Dakota Law Enforcement Training Commission, via the established AAS program and then add the specialized conservation law enforcement officer courses.

Lake Area Tech has long-offered both a Law Enforcement and a Natural Resource Management program, so the college is well-equipped to effectively offer this new certificate option. It will add value to students' career opportunities and will help public agencies who rely on LATC's graduates to fill skilled professional roles.

CRITERION 1: MISSION

The program aligns with the system's mission and strategic priorities.

1.1. The program aligns with the system's mission of preparing a technically skilled workforce prepared to serve the state of South Dakota and its regions.

1.2. The program aligns with the system's strategic priorities.

1.1. Describe how the proposed program aligns with the system's mission.

The mission of Lake Area Technical College, as part of the South Dakota Technical College System, is to provide superior, comprehensive technical education that changes lives and launches careers. This proposed one-semester certificate will open the door to an additional career option for LATC Law Enforcement students. The certificate provides a seamless and efficient path into Conservation Law Enforcement for those who have a passion for the outdoors and wildlife and fisheries practices.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, South Dakota has the second largest concentration of Fish and Game Wardens in the country (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes333031.htm>). South Dakota currently employs approximately 137 people in this field, and that number is expected to increase 3% by 2030, according to the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation. Along with this employment increase, the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Department provided LATC with a statement of need describing that 20% of their conservation officer workforce will be eligible to retire over the next four years.

Further, related fields such as First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers, as well as Compliance Officers, show a predicted increase of 11% and 6.5% respectively, according to the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation. With this certificate, graduates would be able to pursue these career fields as well.

CRITERION 2: DEMAND

The program leads to meaningful employment, adequate student enrollment, and/or fulfills needs not being met by existing education and training providers.

- 2.1. The program leads to high-wage occupations that have an average/mean wage greater than the median wage across all occupations.
- 2.2. The program leads to high-demand occupations that have project annual openings (a measure of demand for workers) greater than the average across all occupations or is shown as an economic and/or labor market emerging field for the state of South Dakota and its regions.
- 2.3. The program's student enrollment is adequate to justify program existence.
- 2.4. The program fulfills a demand not being met by existing education and training providers in the region and/or state.

2.1. Describe the wage projections for occupations associated with the proposed program by completing Appendix 2.A.

2.2. Describe the demand projections for occupations associated with the proposed program.

A. Complete Appendix 2.A.

B. If an emerging field for the state of South Dakota, describe the field. Letter(s) of support, detailing demand, should be attached as appendices.

2.3. Describe projected student enrollment for the proposed program by completing Appendix 2.B.

2.4. Describe how the proposed program fulfills a demand not being met by existing education and training providers in the region and/or state.

A. Identify closely related program(s) that currently exist at other public higher education institutions in the system or state. If none, write "None."

South Dakota State University offers a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Natural Resource Law Enforcement. Dakota Wesleyan University offers a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Wildlife Management. According to their websites, both programs provide the conservation and biological training a conservation officer would need. However, students would need to pursue law enforcement training on their own after completing those degrees.

B. If applicable: Describe the ways in which the demand is not currently being met by the aforementioned program(s) and provide justification as to why the program should be approved by addressing the following conditions that warrant duplication ([BP 303.2](#)). Select all that apply.

Unmet Demand (C.5.1.1)

Industry Partnership (C.5.1.2)

Increases Student Access (C.5.1.3)

Other:

I. For each condition selected above, provide a brief justification.

Industry Partnership: South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) staff from the Law Section have worked side-by-side with the Lake Area Tech team to plan this certificate option. From jointly creating program outcomes to specific course syllabi, content and activities, this certificate has been designed to provide excellent preparation for students who wish to become Wildlife Training Officers.

Currently, the majority of new conservation officers are trained in-house through the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department's Wildlife Training Officer Program. The officer training program is 16 weeks of conservation training led by current SDGFP officers. While the proposed certificate will not necessarily replace the 16 weeks of training, it will better prepare individuals for many aspects of the training. The proposed certificate timeline also ensures that the students will have received their Law Enforcement training, including full certification through the South Dakota Law Enforcement Training Commission, prior to the SDGFP training.

This pathway greatly expedites the traditional Bachelor's degree route, which places the Law Enforcement Training and Wildlife Training academies post-graduation. According to the SDGFP Law Enforcement Training Supervisor, receiving this certificate will not change the length of the wildlife field training program for these new officers; it will, however, allow for greater focus on key areas of emerging wildlife enforcement, as much of the introductory content will have been covered while obtaining the certificate. The new certificate will provide the SDGFP with highly qualified, ready-to-work individuals in a much quicker timeframe.

Unmet Need: South Dakota currently employs approximately 137 people in the Conservation Law Enforcement field and that number is expected to increase 3% by 2030, according to the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation. Along with this employment increase, the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Department provided LATC with a statement of need confirming they expect 20% of their conservation officer workforce to be eligible for retire over the next four years. In addition to the SDGFP, a state agency, tribal and federal agencies also hire wildlife and fisheries officers and park rangers who are required to have a law enforcement background.

Increases Student Access: Currently South Dakota does not have a degree program that combines law enforcement training and the wildlife and fisheries background needed to be work-ready in a conservation law enforcement officer role. LATC's unique program combination, capitalizing on established programs in Law Enforcement and Natural Resources Management, has the potential to efficiently help South Dakota fill its Conservation Law Enforcement Officer workforce needs.

CRITERION 3: DESIGN

The program's learning assessment strategy, program of study, and delivery methods are designed to provide students with the necessary competencies, as demonstrated through program learning outcomes.

- 3.1. The program is aligned to competencies, as demonstrated through program learning outcomes, that are developed with and continually validated by relevant stakeholders.
- 3.2. The program has a learning assessment strategy to validate student mastery of the program learning outcomes.
- 3.3. The program has an integrated program of study designed to develop and reinforce the program learning outcomes.
- 3.4. The program, when appropriate, includes a work-based learning component that develops and reinforces the program learning outcomes.
- 3.5. The program, when appropriate, offers flexible delivery methods to increase student access.

3.0. Describe the proposed program's alignment with the program award level requirements established in [BP 301.1](#).

A. Does the program align with the requirements?

- Yes
 No (Requesting Exemption)

B. If no: Provide a detailed rationale for program exemption. Specify which requirement(s) in BP 301.1 are not met; cite specific policy sections (e.g., B.3.4), when appropriate. If external organizations are involved (accreditation, regulatory, licensure, etc.), reference the organization name(s), specific requirements (including citations), and a justification for why the exemption should be approved.

3.1. Describe the program learning outcomes.

A. Provide a list of program learning outcomes for each proposed award level. Learning outcomes should be specific to the program.

Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify regionally significant wildlife, fish, plants and grasses.
2. Interpret the principles of habitat, land and wildlife management.
3. Apply conservation and parks laws/regulations to conservation law enforcement scenarios.
4. Demonstrate the equipment maintenance, operation, and safety skills needed in the field.

B. Describe the how the program learning outcomes were developed and validated.

The program learning outcomes were developed through extensive industry and higher education research to ensure they include the necessary job skills and knowledge required by Conservation Law Enforcement Officers. LATC representatives met regularly with members of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Law Section, including several current Conservation Officers, throughout the planning process. These conversations guided the development of the program learning outcomes.

After the first year of the program and extensive assessment measures, the program learning outcomes will be revised, if necessary, by the Advisory Board to ensure all outcomes remain appropriate and relevant.

3.2. Describe the program's learning assessment strategy.

- A. Describe how students will demonstrate mastery of the program learning outcomes. Description should be specific to the program's learning assessment plan vs. the institutional assessment plan.

Students will demonstrate mastery of student learning outcomes through a variety of formative and summative assessments. These will include course exams and demonstration of skills through competency checklists. Post-graduation surveys conducted by employers and LATC's placement report also help to determine the success of the program's graduates.

- B. Is the program preparation for a professional licensure and/or certification examination?

- Yes (Detail in Appendix 4: Section 3)
 No

3.3. Describe the program of study by completing Appendix 3.

3.4. Describe the program's work-based learning component.

- A. Does the program have a work-based learning component? If so, select all that apply.

- None
 Apprenticeship
 Internship or Externship
 Clinical
 Capstone
 Other:

- B. If none, describe why.

There will not be a work-based learning component included in the curriculum for the certificate; however, students will complete a 120-hour Law Enforcement Practicum as part of their Law Enforcement AAS degree. Students who plan to complete the Conservation Law Enforcement Officer Certificate will be encouraged to complete this Practicum with a Conservation Law Enforcement agency.

3.5. Describe the program's delivery methods.

- A. Select the program's primary delivery method(s)¹. Select all that apply.

- On Campus
 Online
 Blended
 Apprenticeship
 Other:

- B. Describe how flexible delivery methods are being leveraged to increase student access.

Lake Area Tech will start the program as a traditional program, offering face-to-face instruction. As the program develops, Lake Area Tech will consider offering Blended or Apprenticeship opportunities. LATC has a number of Blended programs and Registered Apprenticeships currently, which will make adding those delivery methods to this certificate relatively seamless.

To begin, the certificate will only be offered to LATC Law Enforcement students. In the future, LATC will examine ways to offer this training to past and current Law Enforcement Officers wishing to add the Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate to their career portfolio. Students completing the SD Law Enforcement Training

¹ **In Person:** 100 percent of courses are available in-person. **Online:** 100 percent of courses are available via distance learning. Delivery is only via the Internet. **Blended:** Delivery includes a required combination of both in-person and online courses. If a student has the option to take courses online, but is not required to do so, the program is not necessarily considered blended.

Academy or the Law Enforcement program at another technical college might also wish to complete the certificate option.

CRITERION 4: ALIGNMENT

The program is vertically aligned to an education and training pathway.

- 4.1. The program is vertically aligned to an education and training pathway, reflecting efficient articulation of:
 - 4.1.1. Non-degree credential/industry certification
 - 4.1.2. Certificate to diploma
 - 4.1.3. Diploma to associate of applied science
 - 4.1.4. Associate of applied science to baccalaureate

4.1. Describe the alignment of the proposed program along an education and training pathway.

A. Complete Appendix 4.

B. Describe the projected alignment between the proposed program and existing academic programs within the technical college system.

The LATC Natural Resource Management program includes several classes that are also required in the Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate. Certificate completers could easily pursue further credentials in Natural Resources Management, if they want a stronger background in ecology, botany, mapping, water quality, and wildlife and fisheries management.

C. As applicable: Insert any additional comments here.

CRITERION 5: CAPACITY

The institution demonstrates the internal and external resources necessary to develop, implement, and sustain the program.

- 5.1. The institution demonstrates the financial resources necessary to develop, implement, and sustain the program.
- 5.2. The institution demonstrates appropriately certified and qualified faculty are in place with expertise in content, pedagogy, and related industry to develop and validate the program learning outcomes.
- 5.3. The institution's physical facilities (e.g., classrooms, laboratories) reflect current industry and/or occupational standards necessary to develop and validate the program learning outcomes.
- 5.4. The institution's equipment and technology resources reflect current industry and/or occupational standards necessary to develop and validate the program learning outcomes.
- 5.5. The institution demonstrates the ability of the program to meet institutional and programmatic accreditation standards, as applicable.

5.1. Describe the institution's financial capacity to develop, implement, and sustain the proposed program.

A. Complete Appendix 5.

B. Describe the proposed program's anticipated local fee structure. Description of fee structure should be specific to the program.

Below is the anticipated tuition and fee structure for the Conservation Law Enforcement certificate:

Summer Semester			
	Cost/credit	# of credits	Total Cost
Tuition	124.00	12	1,488.00
State Facility Fee	36.00	12	432.00
Department Fee	67.00	12	804.00
Campus Support Fee	10.00	12	120.00
State & Local M&R Fee	7.00	12	84.00
TOTAL			\$2,928.00

Students will also purchase textbooks, a toolkit for repair work, and required safety items.

C. What is the proposed program weight factor (funding formula)?

- Standard Cost (1)
 High Cost (3)
 High Cost, Low Density (5)

I. Provide rationale related to the selection of proposed program weight factor.

Both LATC's Law Enforcement and Natural Resources Management programs have a "1" weighted factor for state aid distribution. The Certificate has a comparable level of equipment requirements. The student to faculty ratio will be 10:1 which is smaller than either full program due to the skills training and scenario-based instruction incorporated in the certificate coursework.

D. Describe the contingency plans in case anticipated enrollments, income, or resources do not materialize.

Since both our Law Enforcement and Natural Resource Management programs are fully staffed and funded, if student numbers for the certificate are lower than expected, we do not anticipate any staff reductions. Should the certificate not materialize, it could be terminated with minimal financial loss to LATC.

5.2. Describe how the institution will ensure the appropriate certified and qualified faculty are in place with the expertise in content, pedagogy, and the related industry to develop and validate the program learning outcomes.

A. Describe the necessary qualifications of faculty who will be involved in the program.

Current qualified faculty will teach the courses in conjunction with specialty adjuncts as needed. The present program instructor in the Natural Resource Management program has a Bachelor's of Science in Biology and experience teaching environmental and conservation topics. LATCs Law Enforcement instructor has more than 20 years of experience in the field. Adjuncts with experience in wildlife and fisheries law and policy and with the specialized equipment needed for success as a conservation law enforcement officer will supplement permanent faculty.

B. Does the instructorship(s) currently exist in the roster of Instructor Salary Support market value determinations?

- Yes
 No

I. If no: Describe the SOC(s) codes and titles that will need to be added.

5.3. Describe the existing and/or new physical facilities that will be utilized or needed to reflect current industry and/or occupational standards. Outline short- and long-term investments in physical facilities.

Law Enforcement students do not have classes during the summer semester, so those classrooms and their technology will be used by Conservation Law Enforcement certificate students. Much of the hands-on training for this program will be done outdoors. LATC expects that no additional physical facilities will be needed for this certificate.

5.4. Describe the existing and/or new equipment and technology resources that will be utilized or needed to reflect current industry and/or occupational standards. Outline short- and long-term investments in equipment and technology resources.

As Lake Area Technical College begins this program, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department has offered to allow LATC usage of large equipment items such as boats, ATV/UTVs, and snowmobiles. The current LATC Law Enforcement program has training materials this certificate will use as well, including cones, radios, and other law enforcement tools. Short-term investments in equipment and technology will be minimal. Long-term investments would include a boat, ATV, snowmobile, and trailer.

5.5. Describe the institution's and proposed program's ability to meet institutional and programmatic accreditation standards, as applicable.

A. Specify Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements.

- Notification Only

- Approval Required
- None
- Other:

B. Is there an accrediting or professional organization that has established standards for the program?

- Yes
- No

C. If yes: Describe the ability of the proposed program to meet professional accreditation standards. If the program does not or cannot meet those standards, describe the area(s) in which it is deficient and indicate steps needed to qualify the program for accreditation. Provide the date by which the program would be expected to be fully accredited.

If the institution does not plan to seek specialized accreditation, provide a rationale for not seeking.

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
Appendix 2.A: Labor Market Information

Lake Area Technical College
 Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate

SOUTH DAKOTA								
SOC* CODE	SOC* TITLE	AVERAGE ANNUAL OPENINGS	2020 EMPLOYMENT	2030 EMPLOYMENT	NUMERIC CHANGE: 2020-2030	PERCENT CHANGE: 2020-2030	MEDIAN: ANNUAL WAGE (2020)	AVERAGE: ANNUAL WAGE (2020)
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	62,664	491,588	526,251	34,663	7.1	\$36,823	\$44,961
33-3031	Fish and Game Wardens - US BLS		120				\$50,440	\$50,700
33-3031	Fish and Game Wardens - SD DLR		137	141	4	2.92%	\$53,845	\$54,123
45-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers - SD DLR		551	612	61	11.07%	\$56,280	\$59,320
13-1041	Compliance Officers - SD DLR		1,086	1,158	72	6.63%	\$59,860	\$65,900

NATIONAL								
SOC* CODE	SOC* TITLE	AVERAGE ANNUAL OPENINGS	2022 EMPLOYMENT	2032 EMPLOYMENT	NUMERIC CHANGE: 2022-2032	PERCENT CHANGE: 2022-2032	MEDIAN: ANNUAL WAGE (2022)	AVERAGE: ANNUAL WAGE (2022)
33-3031	Fish and Game Wardens - BLS	6,530	6.9	6.5	-0.4	-6.3	\$59,500	\$59,860
45-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers - BLS		56.6	58.1	1.5	2.7	\$ 54,490.00	\$58,820
13-1041	Compliance Officers - BLS		377.5	394.7	17.2	4.6	\$ 71,690.00	\$76,980

SOURCE: South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Labor Market Information Center (LMIC) (<https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/>)

DATE:

- NOTES:** Occupational data is based on activity that happened in the labor market up to two years ago (and is projected forward from that point). Since the most recent South Dakota data was published, SD Game, Fish, and Parks has adjusted their pay structure for Conservation Officers and has made changes to their positions. These adjustments are not included in the published BLS or SD DLR data. To provide a more accurate understanding of the need for the Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate, SD Game, Fish, & Parks described their wages and projected need to LATC. Points of note include the following:
1. SD GFP Conservation Officers and Seasonal Park Rangers make up more than 2/3 of SD's workforce in this field (86 conservation officers and 12 seasonal park rangers).
 2. Over the next four years, nearly 20% of conservation officers will be eligible to retire.
 3. The starting salary for newly hired conservation officers is \$59,508 per year. A 5-year officer makes roughly \$63,517 annually and a 10-year officer makes \$68,047.
 4. The labor market is competitive in this field among states, federal agencies, and tribal governments who have officers enforcing fish and game laws.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes333031.htm>

DATE:

NOTES:

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Appendix 2.B: Student Demand Projections

Lake Area Technical College

Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	4	4	4
Headcount: Full-Time	10	10	10
Headcount: Part-Time			
Headcount: Total	10	10	10
Total Program or Site Capacity	10	10	10

Notes:

It is anticipated that there will be strong interest in this program option. Lake Area Tech will be careful to not over saturate the labor market, however, and will cap the option at 10 students per cohort, unless unusual circumstances in the future justify the expansion to a larger annual cohort.

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Appendix 3: Program of Study

Lake Area Technical College
 Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate

MONTHS:	3
SEMESTERS:	1
TOTAL CREDITS:	12

PREFIX AND NUMBER	TITLE	CREDITS	DESCRIPTION	EXISTING COURSE
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I. GENERAL EDUCATION CORE				
SUBTOTAL OF GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS:		0	TOTAL NEW COURSES:	0

II. PROGRAM CORE				
CLE 100	Land and Habitat Management	3	This course provides hands-on training in plant/grasses identification and an overview of major land-use practices and how these practices and conservation programs influence habitat quality. Land management tools such as fire, herbicides, biocontrol agents, mechanical treatment, and livestock grazing will be critically discussed, evaluated and practiced when applicable.	N
CLE 110	Equipment Use	3	This course provides an introduction to equipment operation, safety, and maintenance. Topics include boat, ATV/UTV, and snowmobile operation, maintenance, and trailering, and hand/power tools training. Upon completion, students will be able to safely operate equipment and perform the routine maintenance and repair required in a conservation career.	N
NRM 220	Introduction to Wildlife and Fisheries Laws and Policies	3	This course provides a basic understanding of conservation history and introduces students to conservation and parks laws and rules. The focus of the course is on South Dakota and Federal laws and regulations related to conservation topics. Students will critically apply laws and regulations to conservation law enforcement field scenarios.	N
CLE 120	Wildlife Identification and Management	3	This course provides a basic study of regional wildlife and fish species; students will practice identifying those species in the field. Wildlife diseases, wildlife damage management, and wildlife educational programming will also be covered. Students will examine current issues and case examples related to wildlife conservation and management.	N

NOTE: The Conservation Law Enforcement courses include curriculum that has recently been added to the Natural Resource Management (NRM) program outline. The new curriculum and classes have been approved by the NRM Advisory Board and will be offered starting in Fall 2024. Although the classes are now included in the NRM outline, they are noted here as Not Existing because they have not yet been taught.

SUBTOTAL OF PROGRAM CREDITS:		12	TOTAL NEW COURSES:	4
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SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Appendix 5: Financial Projections

Lake Area Technical College
 Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Student FTE	4	4	4

I. PROJECTED EXPENDITURES

A. ONE-TIME			
New/Renovated Facilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Sub-Total: One-time	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 15,000.00

B. RECURRING			
B.1. PERSONNEL			
FTE (Faculty and Staff)	12,000	12,000	12,000
Salary & Benefits	\$ 3,480.00	\$ 3,480.00	\$ 3,480.00
B.2. OPERATING			
Rental / Lease	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contractual Services	\$ 6,600.00	\$ 6,600.00	\$ 6,600.00
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Supplies	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,500.00
Travel	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Sub-Total: Operating	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00
Total: Recurring	\$ 16,980.00	\$ 16,980.00	\$ 16,980.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)	\$ 56,980.00	\$ 34,980.00	\$ 31,980.00
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II. PROJECTED REVENUE

Tuition	\$ 14,880.00	\$ 14,880.00	\$ 14,880.00
State Fees	\$ 5,040.00	\$ 5,040.00	\$ 5,040.00
Local Fees	\$ 9,360.00	\$ 9,360.00	\$ 9,360.00
Location-Based Fees	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Sources	\$ -	\$ 24,353.04	\$ 24,353.04
Federal Sources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Private Grants or Gifts	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 69,280.00	\$ 53,633.04	\$ 53,633.04
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REVENUE - EXPENDITURES	\$ 12,300.00	\$ 18,653.04	\$ 21,653.04
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**Projections are held constant based on current fiscal year. Inflation or rate changes are not factored.*

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Appendix 5: Financial Projections

Lake Area Technical College

Conservation Law Enforcement Certificate

Notes:

Local fees include campus support fee, department fee, local M & R fee, and uniforms.

Projected expenses and revenues do not include any potential costs related to required tools, textbooks, or laptops.



DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH, AND PARKS

Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182

March 8, 2024

South Dakota Game Fish and Parks
Sam Schelhaas, Law Section Chief
43349 Hwy 52
Yankton, SD 57078

South Dakota Board of Technical Education
800 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 575436

South Dakota Board of Technical Education Members:

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) is excited to hear that Lake Area Technical College (LATC) is exploring the addition of a certificate for a conservation officer career. As we understand, this would be an add-on to the basic law enforcement certification they currently offer. SDGFP is charged with protecting the natural resources and state parks that are available to the citizens and its visitors of South Dakota. At full staff SDGFP employs 86 full time conservation officers and 12 seasonal park rangers. Our duties as a conservation officer coincide with standard law enforcement duties but are also very different. As a conservation officer we work in the outdoors with the sporting public on a daily basis. Conservation law enforcement requires the use specialized equipment that traditional law enforcement does not use. Conservation officers are also viewed by the public as area experts in the field of natural resources.

In the past many of the conservation officers hired possessed a Bachelor of Science degree with an emphasis in wildlife and fisheries. While this degree gives our officers a background in wildlife and fisheries, they are often lacking a background in law enforcement. Conversely, the law enforcement degree LATC offers to students provides a background in law enforcement for the position of a conservation officer but still leaves an educational gap in wildlife and fisheries. Combining the two as LATC is looking to do will give students the knowledge in law enforcement and the background in natural resources to be successful as a conservation officer. We have had several conversations with LATC regarding this new certificate and are excited to help develop the program.

There is a constant need for law enforcement officers in South Dakota and SDGFP is no exception to this. In 2021, we were down approximately 20 conservation officers statewide. Recently, the State of South Dakota evaluated the pay structure for conservation officers. Over the last two years, conservation officers have seen over a 20% increase in pay with starting salaries now at \$59,508.00 per year. While this increase in pay has helped SDGFP both recruit and retain conservation officers, we are anticipating a significant amount of turnover of officers in the next 3-5 years due to retirements.

In closing, SDGFP is excited that LATC is looking to add this one-of-a-kind certificate to their law enforcement program and we fully support this addition. We have engaged in several conversations with LATC to assist with development of what they are currently recommending and will continue to work with them to see the program succeed if implemented.

Sincerely,

Sam Schelhaas