Academic Excellence – $30 million

At the heart of any great university lies a commitment to excellence, a quest for generating new knowledge and a passion for passing that knowledge on to its students. At FGCU, that means a steadfast commitment to faculty, to meaningful degree programs and to world-class facilities and equipment. The quality of academic programming at FGCU reflects our promise to offer students high-quality, challenging programs that are relevant to their lives today and into the future.

Investment in Faculty

Excellent teaching stands at the heart of Florida Gulf Coast University’s commitment to its students. FGCU faculty members are excellent teachers, who contribute to the development of new knowledge through research and scholarship. Our success in educating the next generation of community leaders is based on a vibrant reciprocal relationship between faculty and students engaged in teaching and learning. Investment in faculty includes:

► Funding to ensure that FGCU can recruit and retain outstanding faculty.
► Expansion of faculty training programs – like the New Faculty Academy and the Course Design Academy – offered through The Lucas Center for Faculty Development.
► Named Professorships and Eminent Scholar Chairs, which provide distinguished faculty with the
resources to develop programming initiatives to enrich the educational experience for FGCU students.

- Funding for scholarly research, which improves the lives of residents of Southwest Florida, the state and beyond. Research is an integral and essential part of the teaching mission and plays a major role in the educational process at FGCU. Currently, FGCU faculty members are working on a diverse array of research projects including Solar Energy, Biofuels, Red Tide, Human Trafficking, Sexual Abuse of Children, and Germicides. The opportunities for student research in these and many more research projects enrich the learning environment at FGCU.

**Investment in Degree Programs**

FGCU is constantly reviewing its degree offerings, searching for new relevant opportunities for our students, which will ensure employment of graduates and address the needs of the region.

Funding for new programs to ensure excellence is constantly needed. The University is currently exploring the following:

- Bachelor’s degree in Entrepreneurship
- Bachelor’s degree in Cyber-Security
- Center for Undergraduate Research
- Veterans’ Institute
- Experiential Learning Programs

New challenges require a rapid response from the University’s leadership, while unexpected opportunities must be seized or they may disappear. Funding to support new programs ensures that the University’s leadership has resources available to address a broad range of initiatives that could include:

- Providing start-up resources for new endeavors that advance the University’s strategic priorities.
- Underwriting special student or faculty travel associated with fulfilling learning or research objectives.
- Enhancing the FGCU Honors Program.
- Encouraging interdisciplinary research.

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When I began to search for a gifting and naming opportunity, I looked at four criteria that were very important to me as a teacher.

**First**, the college or university’s goal is to be highly ranked for its academics. There is little question that FGCU is working diligently toward that end. Furthermore, I am very impressed by its faculty and administration.

**Second**, the institution needs to be actively growing and forward-looking in its curricula. The physical growth of the campus in just a few years has been astounding.

**Third**, its physical facilities have to be at the cutting edge for teaching effectiveness. FGCU’s facilities in Marieb Hall are breathtaking. They are the best I’ve seen, and I’ve seen a lot.

**Fourth**, the faculty, curricula, and facilities must produce graduates that will be highly sought after and well paid.

FGCU and Marieb Hall have handily met my criteria. I knew that this was the place.

— Elaine Nicpon Marieb, Donor, Professor and Author
Investment in Facilities and Equipment

It is critical that the University continue to offer world-class facilities and equipment to meet the educational needs of our students. New areas of study require funding for classrooms and equipment vital to their success. In addition, replacement of outdated equipment is constantly needed to ensure excellence within existing programs. For example, new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs, so necessary for job growth in the state, will require a large investment to retain FGCU’s position as a leader among higher education institutions in Florida in the coming years.

How You Can Help

Funding to support Academic Excellence is needed at all levels. These include the following:

► Eminent Scholar Chairs

Named Eminent Scholar Chair endowments attract and retain the finest faculty by providing the funding to pursue independent research and other scholarship activities. Eminent Scholars attract internationally renowned authorities to FGCU. Their leadership, knowledge and cutting-edge research enhance the educational experience at FGCU and bring prominence to the University.

► Distinguished Professorships

Persons named to Distinguished Professorships have demonstrated excellence in research and scholarly activities, are widely published and show a commitment to using their own achievements to give their students the most stimulating and up-to-date education available in their fields. Earnings from these endowments are used by faculty to support their research and instruction.

► Programs

Named program endowments provide support each year for selected academic programs. These gifts advance academic programs by providing funding not available through state budget allocations.

► Facilities and Equipment

State-of-the-art equipment and facilities are critical to the success of FGCU’s academic programs. With the expansion of degree programs, particularly those in the sciences and health professions, advanced technical laboratories and equipment are necessities in classrooms and research laboratories.