ITEM: 10

Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees
September 18, 2012

SUBJECT: 2013 Legislative Agenda

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve 2013 Legislative Agenda for the 2013 Legislative Session.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These items have been reviewed and proposed by President Bradshaw and his Cabinet, and now need approval by the FGCU Board of Trustees prior to the 2013 Legislative Session.

Supporting Documentation Included: FGCU 2013 Legislative Agenda

Prepared by: Director of Government Relations Jennifer Goen

Legal Review by: N/A

Submitted by: President Wilson Bradshaw
FGCU 2013 Legislative Agenda

1. State Supported Funding

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) was established by the Florida Legislature in 1991 to provide an institution of higher learning to a previously underserved area of Florida. FGCU is requesting additional general revenue in order to improve metrics that reflect student success. Additional resources are necessary to increase graduation and retention rates and better prepare students for employment after graduation, all indicators of student success. FGCU is working to round out the academic program portfolio in a thoughtful way in response to regional economic development, including adding additional STEM programs based on market demand. FGCU can accomplish these goals by hiring additional faculty, advisors, and staff and provide more support for additional student retention services; expanding existing STEM programs to increase the number of STEM graduates; increasing internship opportunities for students; bolstering career advising services; and collaborating with other institutions to add additional certificate programs in marketable skills to give students a competitive edge in the workforce.

- Recurring General Revenue Request $13,000,000

2. Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) Funding

In response to FGCU’s goals to enhance student learning outcomes, provide first class learning facilities and be a leader in the field of renewable energy, PECO funding is a high priority. FGCU’s PECO request includes the continuation of essential infrastructure funding, the completion of the Innovation Hub building, the expansion of the chiller plant, and the addition of Academic Building 9.

FGCU’s chiller plant is at maximum capacity for current campus operations. The expansion of the chiller plant will allow FGCU to most efficiently provide the necessary cooling capacity to fill current building needs, and is required to support any additional facilities on campus. Infrastructure funding is needed for routinely planned and unexpected maintenance as well as projects that are essential for safety. One safety project in critical need of funding completion is a third access road as an additional means of egress from campus in the event of natural disasters and other emergencies.

In addition, FGCU is requesting the remaining installment of PECO funding for the Innovation Hub building for renewable energy. FGCU’s Research Innovation Hub was developed through the combination of a gift of land and endowment for an eminent scholar from John D. Backe to become the FGCU research park, which will house the Renewable Energy Institute. The Institute blends educational opportunities with research programs as a means to partner with the
renewable energy and solar industries, the electric utilities, other universities and local and state governments to develop technologies and a trained workforce for the next generation of clean energy production in Florida and the US. Combining research and education with public outreach, and a state-of-the-art energy park and visitor center will make the FGCU renewable Institute a magnet and nucleus for developments in renewable energy throughout the region as well as attracting companies, venture capital, research laboratories and industries from the US, the Caribbean, Central and South America and the world.

To continue to provide competitive and affordable access to further FGCU educational opportunities in southwest Florida will require additional academic classrooms, laboratories and office space. Academic 9 is essential to meet the needs of the student population as well as continue to attract talented faculty.

In sum, FGCU’s PECO request for 2013-2014 includes the following:

- Roads, Parking, and Infrastructure $7,000,000
- Innovation Hub Research Building $7,633,807
- Central Energy Plant Expansion Phase 3 $9,000,000
- Classrooms/Offices/Labs, Academic 9 $2,607,590

3. Courtelis Matching Funds and Major Matching Gifts

During the 2011 Legislative Session, the passing of Senate Bill 2150 suspended the Courtelis Matching program and Major Matching Gifts program. The current statute allows the program to resume after the $200 million backlog of the State University System is funded.