Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees  
January 17, 2006

SUBJECT: Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Nomenclature Change

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PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve nomenclature change for Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

FGCU is requesting permission to convert the Liberal Studies majors into 14 separate Bachelor of Arts degree programs: Art, Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Communication, English, Environmental Studies, History, Marine Science, Mathematics, Psychology, Social Sciences, Spanish, and Theatre.

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Supporting Documentation Included: Memo from the Provost

Prepared by: Joseph L. Ravelli, Director of General Education

Legal Review by: N/A

Submitted by: Provost Bonnie L. Yegidis
December 12, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Trustee Larry Hart, Chair
Academic/Student/Faculty Affairs Committee
FGCU Board of Trustees

FROM: Bonnie L. Yegidis
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: B.A. in Liberal Studies Nomenclature Change

Proposal

The College of Arts and Sciences currently offers a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Liberal Studies with 14 different majors. The College is proposing to convert the Liberal Studies majors into 14 separate Bachelor of Arts degree programs: Art, Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Communication, English, Environmental Studies, History, Marine Science, Mathematics, Psychology, Social Sciences, Spanish, and Theatre. The conversion was approved by the College and University curriculum committees.

The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Liberal Studies - Individualized Program of Study will remain a part of the College of Arts and Sciences degree inventory. Students who wish to develop unique programs of study to meet individual interests will continue to receive this degree.

Background

In 1996, when the College of Arts and Sciences first created its curriculum, the faculty developed a philosophy for an integrated core of study which was to be common to all majors. The curricular structure thus consisted of a single degree - the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies - to which each major was to be linked. The decision to offer one degree was a sound one since there were very few faculty in each of the areas of the majors. Because of the extensive growth of Arts and Sciences in the last nine years, the College now has sufficient faculty to support separate, stand-alone degrees in all 14 areas.
Rationale for Nomenclature Change

The nomenclature change will more accurately convey to FGCU’s students, its constituents, and the state, the types of programs of study the University provides. Moreover, important considerations underlie the need for individual baccalaureate degrees:

Student satisfaction: Students have requested the changes in degree titles so that employers and graduate schools have a clearer understanding of the focus of their degrees.

Recruitment of students: The change will provide students accessing information about FGCU curricula, through the University’s publications or the state’s FACTS system, a more accurate picture of FGCU’s academic programs.

Reporting to the state: Under the current “one degree” label (Liberal Studies), the University is unable to provide an accurate picture to the state of the diversity of majors offered in Arts and Sciences. Having state-recognized, separate degree programs would allow FGCU to report progress in providing programs in content areas that the state has labeled as critical needs areas such as the physical sciences (e.g., Chemistry).

Recommendation

The nomenclature change involves no changes in curriculum; each degree program will consist of 120 credits and will include the state-mandated common prerequisites to facilitate transfer of students from other state institutions; no program will have limited access; and, no budgetary changes will result from the nomenclature change. If approved, the nomenclature change would take effect in fall 2006. I recommend approval of the degree nomenclature changes listed above.