Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees
April 17, 2007

SUBJECT: New Degree Proposal: Master of Science (M.S.) in Criminal Justice

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve new M.S. in Criminal Justice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

FGCU is requesting permission to offer a M.S. in Criminal Justice as described in the Executive Summary.

Supporting Documentation Included: (1) Memo from Provost, and (2) Executive Summary of Degree Program

Prepared by: Director of Program Development and Curriculum Cathy Duff

Legal Review by: N/A

Submitted by: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Bonnie Yegidis
March 26, 2007

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: Master of Science (M.S.) in Criminal Justice

The College of Professional Studies is proposing the addition of a M.S. in Criminal Justice. Faculty of the Division of Justice Studies, in consultation with community members and potential students developed this proposal. The proposed program builds upon the strengths of existing degree programs offered by the college. The proposed program advances the theoretical perspectives and practical applications of the existing B.S. in Criminal Justice through the development of advanced administrative skills that increase the effectiveness and professionalism of criminal justice personnel. As noted by numerous agency heads, a graduate degree is particularly beneficial to those seeking advancement in their current agencies as well as those seeking employment in federal law enforcement agencies and federal courts.

The M.S. in Criminal Justice will be 36 semester credit hours in length. It is consistent with the criteria for new degree authorization adopted by the Board of Governors on April 30, 2003. The proposed program has been approved by both the college curriculum team and the university-wide Graduate Curriculum Team.

Implementation of the M.S. in Criminal Justice program will provide Southwest Florida with a high quality program that is consistent with the university’s mission. I recommend approval.
FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

Executive Summary
New Program Proposal

Degree: Master of Science (M.S.)
Major: Criminal Justice
Concentrations: None
College: Professional Studies
Department: Justice Studies
Suggested CIP: 43.0104
Anticipated Implementation Date: Fall 2007

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Master of Science (M.S.) in Criminal Justice is designed to prepare graduates for advancement in justice-related professions, particularly as administrative and management level officers in corrections and juvenile justice. The program will provide graduates with an in-depth understanding of management of criminal justice agencies as it relates to the agency, the law, the courts, and the public. The curriculum consists of 36 semester credit hours in foundational criminal justice and administration of justice courses. Courses will be offered primarily face-to-face on the main campus. As student demand indicates, courses may be offered online or off campus to supplement main campus offerings.

The current Florida system of higher education emphasizes the two-year Associate of Science (AS) degree for entry level qualifications and a bachelor’s degree for line supervisors and mid-level managers in the field of criminal justice. This master’s level program builds on the skills and foundational knowledge students have acquired in their four-year degree and allows a more in-depth and advanced treatment of the essential skills and knowledge necessary in criminal justice management.

Specific positions for which this program will prepare students include:
1. Police chief
2. Sheriff or Commanding Officer of law enforcement agency
3. Superintendent or Commanding Officer of corrections agency
4. FBI, ATF, and other federal law enforcement agent
5. Ph.D. student
6. Researcher in criminal justice

CONSISTENCY WITH FGCU MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Section II.D. of the State University System Strategic Plan sets forth the following goal, ”Meeting community needs and fulfilling unique institutional responsibilities.” The proposed M.S. in Criminal Justice is designed to directly support this goal by meeting
community needs which have been identified by local surveys and inquiries, as shown in the section on “Need and Demand” which follows. The program will directly address goal I.A.5. Access/Diversity. Criminal justice agencies are increasingly recruiting a diverse workforce (see diversity discussion below).

The proposed M.S. in Criminal Justice fulfills several goals stated in the University’s mission, including pursuing academic excellence, embracing diversity in its students (as criminal justice is an increasingly diverse profession), nurturing community partnerships (with criminal justice and other social service agencies through internship placements, etc.), valuing public service, and keeping the advancement of knowledge and pursuit of truth as noble ideals at the heart of the University’s purpose (by providing advanced education in a field that is beginning to require higher educational standards). The proposed program also fulfills the FGCU mission as it “infuses the strengths of the traditional public university with innovation and learning-centered spirit, its chief aim being to fulfill the academic, cultural, social, and career expectations of its constituents” by offering an academic degree preparing students to be exceptional administrators and leaders in criminal justice agencies. Further, the proposal is in response to a need to serve the southwest Florida region with an avenue to earn a M.S. in Criminal Justice from a reputable, regional institution. Numerous agency heads have expressed their desire(s) for such a program and they have also vowed their support in terms of encouraging their employees to enroll in the program.

NEED AND DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM

The number of positions in law enforcement is expected to increase at an average rate in the foreseeable future (in comparison to other fields) (U. S. Department of Labor, 2007a & b). Although few criminal justice agencies or correctional agencies require graduate degrees, education is an advantage for competitive positions, such as federal law enforcement. A survey of Dade County law enforcement officers found that officers with higher education levels are more likely to report that they are “outstanding” or “above satisfactory” than officers with lower education levels in several areas of policing including accepting responsibility, undertaking leadership roles and initiative, understanding federal and state laws and resolving conflict without resorting to force among other performance categories (Kakar, 1998). Locally, need for the program has been indicated by the Southwest Florida Police Chief’s Association; this group approached the FGCU administration requesting the master’s degree in criminal justice last year. Surveys of prospective employers and students indicate that there is local demand for a master’s degree in criminal justice with emphasis on management and administration. To judge student interest in the program, surveys were administered to two groups in fall 2006: potential employers that may encourage their employees to enroll in the program, and potential students. To assess the extent to which employers will recommend the program, we began by surveying members of the Southwest Florida Police Chiefs’ Association (see Appendix A for survey items and results). Employer support strongly encourages employees to enroll. Despite the availability of master’s in criminal justice programs from local private institutions, the chiefs are supportive of the proposed program. Of the fifteen respondents, more than half (eight) indicated that they would be “very
likely” to recommend that their employees “enroll in the proposed MS in Criminal Justice program at Florida Gulf Coast University”. Eleven respondents chose Public Safety Management as their first choice for a concentration in the degree.

These findings were supported by a survey of potential students. Invitations to complete the survey were emailed to students currently enrolled in undergraduate courses in the Division of Justice Studies, and to employees of several local agencies (through their supervisors). Of the 125 respondents, 69 (55.2%) indicated that they were interested in the program at the time they were surveyed. An additional 36 respondents (28.8%) indicated that they may be interested in the future. Of the 105 respondents indicating interest in the program, the largest group (37 respondents or 35.2%) indicated administration as their first choice for a concentration area.

ANTICIPATED ENROLLMENT

Projected enrollment for the M.S. in Criminal Justice program is summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
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RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Six full-time criminal justice faculty members on existing lines will staff the program. One new hire (scheduled to begin in fall 2007) will begin teaching graduate courses as needed in fall 2008. Library holdings to support the proposed program include approximately 6,719 books and e-books, 417 serials and e-journals, and 105 A/V materials. An additional $2000 is being requested for the first year, $5000 per year after the first year (recurring) in order to provide more in-depth materials for the students working on theses and projects. No additional physical resources (e.g., classroom, laboratory, or office space) are needed to implement the program. Two graduate student assistantships to serve the new program are being requested at a cost of approximately $15,240 per academic year.