Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees
June 17, 2008

SUBJECT: New Degree Program Proposal: Bachelor of Science in Child Development

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve a new degree program, Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Child Development, under CIP 13.0101 (Education, General).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

FGCU is requesting permission to offer the B.S. in Child Development as described in the Executive Summary.

Supporting Documentation Included: (1) Executive Summary

Prepared by: Interim Associate Vice President for Curriculum and Instruction Cathy Duff

Legal Review by: General Counsel Vee Leonard (June 3, 2008)

Submitted by: Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Peg Gray-Vickrey
Degree: Bachelor of Science (B.S.)
Major: Child Development
Concentrations: None
College: Education
Department: Division of Undergraduate Studies
Anticipated Implementation Date: Fall 2008
Suggested CIP: 13.0101

Program Description

The proposed B.S. in Child Development program will prepare students for employment in the fields of child care and children’s services for young children from birth to age five. This program is the result of a joint initiative between Florida Gulf Coast University and Edison College. The two institutions have approved an articulation agreement that provides for the smooth transfer of students from the A.S. in Early Childhood Education program at Edison College to the proposed B.S. in Child Development program at FGCU.

A primary purpose of the proposed program is to serve students who transfer from Edison College with the A.S. in Early Childhood Education. The program could also serve a larger population of future educators who seek options other than the College of Education’s current state-approved teacher education preparation programs (Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Biology Education, Secondary Mathematics Education, Secondary Science Education, and Special Education).

The B.S. in Child Development curriculum synthesizes best practices and pedagogy across disciplines. The program is designed to provide educators with the knowledge and skills needed to serve children who have wide range of abilities and who come from a variety of socio-economic and cultural contexts. The proposed B.S. in Child Development program does not lead to initial teacher certification by the Florida Department of Education. The curriculum consists of 120 semester credit hours. There are no state-mandated common prerequisites. Students with the A.S. in Early Childhood Education from Edison College may transfer up to 72 credit hours to FGCU including general education coursework. Those students will earn at least 48 hours of upper-division credit at FGCU and satisfy all other FGCU graduation requirements. Required FGCU coursework includes 45 credit hours offered by the College of Education. These courses emphasize child development, learning theory, reading and early literacy,
instructional strategies, and internship in child care sites. Students will also complete the three-credit-hour University Colloquium.

The curriculum has been approved by both the college curriculum team and the university-wide Undergraduate Curriculum Team. The proposed program is consistent with the criteria for new academic program authorization adopted by the Florida Board of Governors on March 29, 2007.

**Consistency with FGCU Mission and Strategic Plan**

This program continues the university’s innovative tradition of collaborative planning with local community colleges – in this case, Edison College. Additionally, by providing a program which capitalizes on the strength of both institutions and provides the area with child care workers who achieve the new state requirement of a four-year degree, the program clearly advances the university mission by infusing “the strengths of the traditional public university with innovation and learning-centered spirit” and contributes to the chief aim “to fulfill the academic, cultural, social, and career expectation of its constituents.”

**Need and Demand**

The field of child care is undergoing changes. In the past, child care consisted primarily of mothers who cared for their own children as well as children of others in their private homes. Today, child care is a state-regulated enterprise that is utilized by many working parents. Because of the critical nature of child care, legislators and governmental entities have enacted laws and guidelines to enhance the overall quality of child care and promote the cognitive development of children from birth to age five.

The 1998 Head Start Act required 50 percent of its workforce to have an associate’s degree by 2003. Edison College met that need by offering an A.S. in Early Childhood Education. As a result of new regulations, by 2010, at least 50 percent of the Head Start workforce must have a bachelor’s degree. In addition, Florida voters recently passed a constitutional amendment for Voluntary Prekindergarten for all four year olds. Further, the legislation has a mandate for pre-kindergarten teachers to seek a bachelor’s degree in the areas of child development or early childhood education.

Five Edison College students will complete the A.S. in Early Childhood Education by summer, and these students have expressed a desire to enroll in a bachelor’s degree program. Approximately 25 other students are enrolled in Edison’s Early Childhood Education program and will complete degree requirements in the near future. Other community colleges in Florida also offer similar associate’s degree programs, and their students could enroll in the proposed program as well. The advisors of both Edison College and FGCU field multiple calls from the community regarding early childhood education and child development programs in response to increased media attention in the field.
**Enrollment**

Consistent with the need and demand data provided above, the program anticipates that five students will apply for admission in fall 2008. Most of these students are currently working in child care settings and will enroll on a part-time basis. For that reason, they can be easily absorbed into the regularly anticipated numbers of students registering for the courses included in the program. The number of students in this program will grow slowly as the students in the “pipeline” begin to complete the A.S. in Early Childhood Education at Edison College and seek the B.S. in Child Development at FGCU.

**Resources**

The proposed curriculum consists of courses currently offered by the College of Education. No new courses are needed. Additionally, because most students will enter this program on a part-time basis, their numbers will be absorbed into the current student population anticipated for these courses. Current faculty resources are sufficient, and current library resources are sufficient. No additional resources are anticipated within the first two years of the program. If, by Year 3, enrollment increases such that additional sections of courses are required, adjunct faculty will be hired on an as-needed basis to teach the extra course sections.