

ITEM: 8

**Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees
April 17, 2007**

SUBJECT: Out-of-state Tuition Waiver for Graduate Students Enrolled in Web-based Distance Learning Courses: Pilot Programs in Colleges of Education, Health Professions, and Professional Studies

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve as presented

Degree and non-degree seeking, out-of-state graduate students, enrolled in web-based distance learning courses, within the Educational Technology Concentration within the M.A./M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction from the College of Education, the M.S. in Health Science from the College of Health Professions, and for two proposed programs, the Executive M.P.A. concentration within the existing M.P.A. program and the Compliance Specialist Graduate Certificate program from the College of Professional Studies, will have their out-of-state tuition and fees waived. This accommodation will be made for two academic years for non-degree-seeking graduate students, beginning the fall of 2007. Degree-seeking students presently within these programs and newly admitted degree-seeking students within the next two academic years have their out-of-state tuition and fees waived through completion of their graduate degree or for 5 years from their time of admittance, whichever comes first.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Academic Affairs and the Office of Administrative Services are proposing a pilot program for review by the FGCU Board of Trustees that would permit out-of-state students enrolling within FGCU's distance learning (DL) graduate courses to be charged a reduced tuition rate. The details of this proposed pilot program are attached. Although such a change may in the near term negatively impact revenue gained from tuition, a reduction of the out-of-state tuition for graduate DL

students should ultimately boost graduate enrollment considerably and therefore offset the revenue lost by the rate reduction.

In order to approach this change conservatively, the Offices of Academic Affairs and Administrative Services recommend that FGCU undertake a pilot project that evaluates the financial ramifications of such a change before a campus-wide accommodation is considered for review and adoption. The Offices recommend that the following four graduate programs, which involve significant reliance upon distance learning for their delivery, be included in the pilot: (1) the Educational Technology Concentration within the M.A./M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction from the College of Education; (2) the M.S. in Health Science from the College of Health Professions; (3) the pending Executive M.P.A. concentration within the existing M.P.A. degree program and (4) the pending Compliance Specialist Graduate Certificate in the College of Professional Studies. These four programs can support and wish to bolster out-of-state enrollment through distance learning. The pilot program will permit them to charge the in-state tuition rate for all their students regardless of residency for a limited duration. These three colleges, in conjunction with the Office of Graduate Studies, will implement a recruitment campaign to increase out-of-state enrollment and then track the effects on tuition revenue, faculty, staff, and equipment resources, and the number of full-time equivalent graduate students generated through distance learning. These data would then be used to assess the feasibility of a university-wide policy change.

POINTS OF JUSTIFICATION

- Out-of-state students have little incentive to take individual DL courses or to enroll in DL-only graduate programs at FGCU when required to pay the full out-of-state tuition rate. Prospective students can simply apply and register elsewhere. Consequently, these students represent potential revenue and diversity lost to FGCU.
- DL students do not impact FGCU's facilities as intensively as face-to-face students, thus imposing the full out-of-state tuition rate is difficult to justify.
- An Office of Graduate Studies survey administered in 2006 indicated that many graduate programs in the Colleges of Education, Business, Professional Studies, and Health Professions depend heavily upon web-based DL courses; those programs receive numerous inquiries from out-of-state students, yet they do not apply or enroll because of cost. The survey results suggest that enrollments would increase substantially if a more modest tuition rate were charged.
- The University of West Florida (UWF) and Florida State University (FSU) have similar accommodations for out-of-state DL students. UWF charges an alternative fee; FSU waives the out-of-state portion of the tuition. Many SUS universities charge an e-learner rate.
- A report produced by an Ad Hoc Committee of FGCU's Deans' Council, titled "Distance Learning Update and Recommendations", dated

December, 2005, made a similar recommendation to reduce tuition for out-of-state e-learners.

- The Board of Governors is considering the introduction of an e-learner rate to encourage distance learning.
- The short-term financial impact for this pilot program upon revenue will not be significant. These revenues are from the out-of-state fees that will not be assessed.

Supporting Documentation Included: None

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Legal Review by: General Counsel Wendy Morris (March 28, 2007)

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