

ITEM: 5  
Policy #: 2.005  
FKA: 2.41

**Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees**  
**June 19, 2007**

**SUBJECT:** Policies Pertaining to Academic Programs

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**Proposed Board Action**

*Approved as presented*

Approve the following policies pertaining to academic programs:

- Academic Learning Compacts
- Academic Program Authorization
- Academic Program Review
- Professional Certificate Programs
- Programs Offered Outside FGCU's Five-County Service Area
- Suspension and Discontinuance of Academic Programs

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

On January 25, 2007, the Board of Governors (BOG) issued public notice of intent to promulgate several regulations pertaining to academic programs. Subsequently, on March 29, 2007, the BOG adopted regulations dealing with the following topics: program authorization, program termination, limited access, hours to degree, program review, and student learning outcomes. These regulations are available on the BOG website [http://www.flbog.org/BOG\\_regs/](http://www.flbog.org/BOG_regs/)

The regulations codified many existing practices and brought together numerous policies relating to the above topics that had previously existed in statutes, regulations, resolutions, and policy memoranda. The regulations also clarified authority and responsibility of the BOG and the university boards of trustees, which was vague in statute. In addition, the regulations called for university boards of trustees to adopt policies in specified areas.

The attached policies presented to the FGCU Board of Trustees for review and approval respond to this mandate. The proposed policies are described in the attached executive summary. Relevant University procedures are also included as supporting documentation.

**Supporting Documentation Included:**

1. Executive Summary
2. Academic Learning Compacts Policy
  - Academic Learning Compacts Development and Review Procedures
3. Academic Program Authorization Policy
  - Curriculum Development Procedures
4. Academic Program Review Policy
  - Program Review Procedures
5. Professional Certificate Programs Policy
6. Programs Offered Outside FGCU's Five-County Service Area Policy
7. Suspension and Discontinuance of Academic Programs Policy

**Prepared by:** Associate Vice President for Planning and Institutional Performance Paul Snyder, and Director of Program Development and Curriculum Cathy Duff

**Legal Review by:** General Counsel Wendy Morris

**Submitted by:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Bonnie Yegidis

**Executive Summary  
Proposed Policies Pertaining to Academic Programs  
May 23, 2007**

ACADEMIC LEARNING COMPACTS

On January 25, 2007, public notice was given of the intent to promulgate a new Board of Governors (BOG) regulation on Academic Learning Compacts. On March 29, 2007, the BOG approved Regulation 6C-8.016 Academic Learning Compacts. This regulation, which was drafted with significant input from university personnel, clarified the requirements for universities to define expected student learning outcomes and to develop related assessment processes to demonstrate student achievement in all baccalaureate degree programs in the State University System. The regulation supplants existing policies and more clearly delineates the authority and responsibilities of the BOG and the university boards of trustees with regard to Academic Learning Compacts.

The proposed FGCU Board of Trustees (BOT) policy on Academic Learning Compacts and related procedures include definitions for terms that describe ALC products and processes. The policy delegates responsibility for developing, approving, implementing, and evaluating the ALCs to appropriate faculty, administrative units, and faculty teams. Approved ALCs are available to current and prospective students on the FGCU website. A student who has completed requirements for a baccalaureate degree at FGCU is certified as having completed a course of study that includes specified learning outcomes in the areas of content-discipline knowledge and skills, communication skills, and critical thinking skills.

The University has had a similar policy since 2005. The earlier policy was approved by the University Faculty Senate, Deans Council, the Executive Group, and the President.



## FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### **POLICY TITLE**

Academic Learning Compacts

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Florida Board of Governors (BOG) has determined that each State University System (SUS) institution must adopt policies and procedures for developing, implementing, and reviewing Academic Learning Compacts (ALCs) consistent with BOG Regulation 6C-8.016.

The following definitions describe ALC products and processes at FGCU:

*Academic Learning Compact (ALC):* A student-friendly, jargon-free document that is available on the university's website to current and prospective students. Each ALC must contain:

- (a) A paragraph that describes the program's mission or purpose,
- (b) Statements that describe expected core student learning outcomes, and
- (c) Statements that describe potential assessment strategies.

*Core Student Learning Outcomes:* Concise statements that describe what each active and successful graduate, who has participated in the joint teaching-learning-assessment process as part of a given baccalaureate degree program, will know and be able to do (competencies). Each ALC contains jargon-free statements that describe outcomes in the following areas:

- (a) Content/discipline-specific knowledge and skills,
- (b) Communication skills, and
- (c) Critical thinking skills.

*Assessment Strategies:* Mechanisms or tools that may be used to assess individual student attainment of expected core student learning outcomes. The ALC lists possible assessment strategies that may be used, including the courses/locations that students might expect to encounter these strategies. The actual assessment strategies to be used by faculty are described in the Assessment Plan.

*Assessment Plan:* A description of how every student in a given undergraduate degree program is assessed to determine the extent to which the student has met the expected

core student learning outcomes. The plan must (a) be feasible, (b) identify the specific assessment strategies to be used to assess individual student attainment of every core student learning outcome, (c) be of adequate quality to withstand external review, and (d) compare favorably to best practices in the discipline. Data collected for the assessment plan is stored, analyzed, and summarized in accordance with the Evaluation Plan.

*Evaluation Plan:* A description of the system used to substantiate the assertion that graduates have truly achieved the expected core student learning outcomes. The plan and its components (a) can involve sampling, (b) must be robust with appropriate measures of validity and reliability, and (c) may include comparisons of student performance to the student performance at other institutions or to national norms.

*Use of Results:* A description of how results of student assessment and program evaluation are used to continuously improve program effectiveness and student learning.

### **RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE**

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

### **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE**

Office of Curriculum and Instruction

### **WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY**

- All faculty and administrators charged with delivering baccalaureate degree programs.
- All enrolled and prospective undergraduate students.

### **PROCEDURES**

The Office of Curriculum and Instruction coordinates development, approval, and implementation of ALCs in consultation with appropriate teams of the FGCU Faculty Senate, including the Undergraduate Curriculum Team, the Program Review Team, and the General Education Council. ALC processes are described in the document entitled Academic Learning Compacts Development and Review Procedures.

Approved ALCs are available to current and prospective students on the FGCU web site. Students completing baccalaureate degree requirements are certified as having completed a course of study that has included student learning outcomes that address communication skills, critical thinking skills, and content/discipline knowledge and skills with appropriate methods of assessment.

The efficacy of ALC efforts is evaluated as part of FGCU's program review cycle at least once every seven years as required by BOG Regulation 6C-8.015 Academic Program Review 2007-2014. Each FGCU baccalaureate degree program review must state how results of the assessments have been used to improve student achievement and program effectiveness. The review will also examine the rigor of the assessment methods used in the program.

*History of Policy: New 08-18-2005; Amended 06-19-2007*