

June 18, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Florida Board of Education

FROM: Secretary Jim Horne

SUBJECT: Baccalaureate Degrees at Community Colleges – Follow-up on Board Action

This memo is provided as a follow-up status report on the May 14, 2002, action of the Florida Board of Education (FBOE) related to baccalaureate degree proposals from Chipola Junior College (CJC), Edison Community College (ECC) and Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC). The FBOE approved several recommendations that required me to respond within 30 days related to the program approval and funding of proposals.

During the past 30 days I have worked closely with the presidents and chief academic officers for each of the institutions. Our focus has remained on the needs of students who stand to benefit from the agreements made in this process. The level of collaboration and cooperation was superb. As was noted in our May 14th Board meeting, each proposal was unique and tailored to individual circumstances in very distinctively different communities. My approach maintained the unique nature of each institution's circumstances while delicately balancing it against the practical experience of economic efficiencies and academic quality. Representatives of the three community colleges and their state university colleagues, where appropriate, have worked with me and our staff to negotiate and develop programmatic and budget agreements consistent with Board direction. I believe the outcomes of our discussions represent the best means of providing additional access to students, particularly non-traditional and place-bond students, living in both urban and rural settings.

The 2001 and 2002 Florida Legislature appropriated a total of \$3.5 million to support baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges. Based on authority granted to me by the FBOE, I have determined funding needs totaling \$3,225,802; leaving \$274,198 for future consideration.

Stated below are summaries of activities related to the community college proposals. Agreements reached will be codified into "Letters of Agreement" with specific oversight and accountability criteria associated with the initial and continued approval of program offerings and implementation. You will recall that different types of relationships were approved in each of the three colleges.

Chipola Junior College

The FBOE approved my authority to pursue the establishment of a partnership between Chipola Junior College (CJC) and Florida State University (FSU) to offer Nursing, Business Administration, and Secondary Education degrees. If after 30 days I determined that an acceptable plan would not be available, the Board authorized me to approve CJC's ability to award degrees in those areas.

I approve \$310,500 to support a partnership agreement for FSU to offer baccalaureate degrees in Nursing and Business Administration on CJC's campus. Upon determination that an acceptable agreement would not be available, I also approve CJC's ability to grant a baccalaureate degree in Secondary Education and further designate \$187,000 to support start-up costs associated with establishing the program and pursuing appropriate accreditation.

CJC and FSU had the most difficult assignment. I commend both institutions for coming to the table with innovative ideas and flexible mindsets. Melding the needs of a rural community and a top research university brought some additional challenges to the discussions.

- *Nursing:* A Nursing degree partnership between CJC and FSU was easily established and will begin August 2002. FSU will assign an additional full-time faculty to expand office hours, advisement, and instruction.
- *Business Administration:* The Business Administration and Secondary Education degrees were more difficult to develop. I believe the best solution is to support FSU providing a Business Administration degree in partnership with CJC. While this is a general degree and does not contain the specific tracks of Accounting and MIS that CJC had proposed; a negotiated plan to test enrollment interest in those specified areas will provide the evidence needed to determine if expansion of the degrees is warranted. Enrollment will begin August 2002.
- *Secondary Education:* CJC has a unique program tailored to place-bound students, in collaboration with local school districts, with a career ladder for school district paraprofessionals. This program requires flexibility in offering alternatives for paraprofessionals currently working in surrounding school districts. Based upon the enrollment history at the Panama City campus, FSU proposed conducting the Secondary Education program in a cohort mode that would include students from both CJC and Gulf Coast Community College. The FSU plan was made in good faith but could not at this time offer the flexibility needed to meet the needs of perspective students. The CJC approach was constructed to provide greater program delivery flexibility for community members. After consideration of both proposals, I have determined it is in the best interest of local students to adopt CJC's proposal to offer the instruction. Therefore, I am granting CJC the authority to award the baccalaureate degree in Secondary Education. Enrollment will begin August 2003.

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Edison Community College

The FBOE approved my authority to pursue a partnership between Edison Community College (ECC) and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) to offer Public Administration and Computer Technology degrees.

I approve \$999,902 to support a partnership agreement for FGCU to offer baccalaureate degrees in Public Administration and Computer Technology on ECC's campus.

ECC and FGCU have collaborated to develop Associate in Science (AS) to Bachelors in Science (BS) degree partnership agreements that will allow students to easily transfer and complete the baccalaureate degree. I commend the cooperation of these two institutions to reach this agreement, as this expansion of AS to BS articulation agreements will benefit not only the southwestern region but also the entire state as a potential model for other partnerships. Enrollment will begin January 2003.

Miami-Dade Community College

The FBOE approved my authority to negotiate circumstances related to Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) granting baccalaureate degrees in Exceptional Student Education and Secondary Education.

I approved MDCC's funding request of \$1,728,400 to support start-up costs associated with establishing the programs and pursuing appropriate accreditation. This amount includes the \$500,000 appropriated for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

MDCC has begun pursuing Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation to deliver the four-year degree. The head of their teacher education program is already working with the Division of College and Universities to ensure their program meets the same rigorous standards as those of the state university colleges of education. I support funding of this agreement as initially requested, including associated costs for technology as verified by my Chief Technology Officer. Enrollment will begin August 2003.

As specified in the May 14th Board meeting, although Miami-Dade Community College and Chipola Junior College will eventually be accredited to grant four-year degrees, they must attain Florida Board approval to grant baccalaureate degree programs not specifically authorized in this initial approval.

Again, I commend the staffs of the community colleges and state universities for their willingness to work together throughout this long and oftentimes tedious process. Our Department of Education staff has also put in many hours to ensure that Florida citizens have improved access to the baccalaureate degree through these non-traditional pathways.

I believe we have fulfilled our responsibility of developing good agreements between all the parties. Further work of my staff with the institutions in crafting the Letters of Agreement will ensure appropriate state oversight and local accountability for effective program development and delivery. I am pleased with these cooperative efforts and confident that our institutions will provide high quality instruction for students under these unique agreements.

JH/jw
Attachments