

# COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH & IMPROVEMENT

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROPOSAL

Edison College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Public Safety Management

### *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

#### Staff Recommendation

**Edison College's request for degree-granting authority for the delivery of a Bachelor of Applied Science degree program in Public Safety Management should be approved by the State Board of Education.**

- Section 1007.33, Florida Statutes, enables community colleges to deliver specified baccalaureate degree programs when demand for the baccalaureate degree program is identified by the workforce development board, local businesses and industry, local chamber of commerce and potential students.
- Edison College has submitted a proposal that seeks the transfer of degree granting authority for the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Public Services Management from Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) to Edison College.
- The revised degree program proposed by Edison is designed to address the need for well-educated administrators in fire departments, emergency medical services agencies, police and sheriff's departments and other governmental bureaus in Southwest Florida.
- This proposal is an update of a 2001 proposal submitted by Edison Community College to deliver the program and was developed from the 2002 State Board of Education agreement that designed and approved a collaborative degree program between Edison and Florida Gulf Coast University.
- Edison is the principal party in the current agreement and, as the fiscal agent, receives a direct annual appropriation from the State. Edison makes an annual allocation to FGCU for the program.
- Enrollment for the Edison-FGCU partnership baccalaureate has remained low since the establishment of the program.
- Both institutions report that there is sufficient and growing demand in the Southwest Florida region for a bachelor's degree program in public safety management.
- Both institutions also report that the administration of the partnership program has been difficult and that the advertising, promotion and academic advising for the program have been inconsistent and insufficient.
- For each year of the agreement, most of the annual appropriations for the program have been carried forward by Edison.
- In July 2004, a joint letter from FGCU President Merwin and Edison President Walker was sent to the Commissioner of Education that requested "a modification to the Letter of Agreement to transfer degree granting authority for the Bachelor of Science degree in Public Services Management from FGCU to Edison."
- In August 2004, the Florida Department of Education advised Edison that a transfer would not occur unless Edison submitted a new application to the Florida DOE with CEPRI review.

# **COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROPOSAL**

## **Edison College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Public Safety Management**

### ***PROPOSAL REVIEW***

#### **Introduction**

Edison College has submitted a proposal that seeks the transfer of degree granting authority for the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Public Services Management from Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) to Edison College. This proposal is an update of a 2001 proposal submitted by Edison Community College to deliver the program and was developed from the 2002 State Board of Education agreement that designed and approved a collaborative degree program between Edison and Florida Gulf Coast University. The revised proposal has changed the program name to public safety management to reflect critical interagency security issues that now exist and is designed to address the need for well-educated administrators in fire departments, emergency medical services agencies, police and sheriff's departments and other governmental bureaus in Southwest Florida.

In July 2004, a joint letter from FGCU President Merwin and Edison President Walker was sent to the Commissioner of Education that requested “a modification to the Letter of Agreement to transfer degree granting authority for the Bachelor of Science degree in Public Services Management from FGCU to Edison.” In August 2004, the Florida Department of Education advised Edison that a transfer would not occur unless Edison submitted a new application to the Florida DOE with CEPRI review.

#### **.2002 Edison Proposal**

In 2001, Edison Community College proposed to establish a bachelor's degree program in Public Services Management. Following its review of the proposal, CEPRI recommended that the Florida Board of Education not approve this program. The 2002 Council recommended that “Edison Community College and Florida Gulf Coast University should jointly convene all interested public and independent postsecondary institutions to establish a cooperative baccalaureate program in public services management for delivery in Southwest Florida.”

At its May 2002 meeting, the State Board of Education approved funding to support a partnership agreement between Edison Community College and Florida Gulf Coast University in lieu of granting authority for Edison to grant baccalaureate degrees. A letter of agreement was established and authorized by the Secretary of Education, with Edison serving as the contracting authority and fiscal agent for the partnership agreement.

#### **2002-2004 Edison-FGCU Partnership: BS in Public Services Management**

- Current degree-seeking enrollment is 18 students. Total enrollment in degree courses is 102 students (admitted and non-degree in both PSM and CT).
- FGCU reports that despite low initial enrollments in the cooperative program, there is sufficient demand, particularly as the region grows and the number of trained safety

personnel and the complexity of their jobs grow. It reports that enrollments have been increasing.

- FGCU also offers AS to BS programs in criminal justice and in legal studies.
- Edison reports that a part-time advisor has been assigned to the joint program, with an office located in the Edison University Center.
- FGCU employs a full-time faculty advisor for the BS-PSM program.
- FGCU has provided CEPRI staff with details on program faculty and specific courses offered and specific locations in the region, including sheriff's offices and fire districts. The majority of the courses is offered in consideration of employee shift work and is available in evenings and on Saturdays. Student E-mails were submitted that contain extremely positive feedback on the content and the value of the degree program.
- In December 2004, FGCU circulated a memo to the Southwest Florida law enforcement and public safety community to restate the viability of the University's program and course offerings and to reassure students of its commitment to deliver the program in the region "wherever students are."
- The FGCU College of Professional Studies has received a \$500,000 grant from the US Department of Justice to establish a Center for Excellence in Law Enforcement and Public Safety. Under this Center is the Eagle Academy which is the umbrella for the BSAS in Public Management and courses located at the various law enforcement facilities. The grant will allow FGCU to expand its outreach to the public safety community with both credit and non-credit programs.

**State Funding**

**2002-2004 Edison/FGCU Partnership Program**

	<b>Appropriation</b>	<b>Edison Expenditures</b>	<b>FGCU Allocation</b>	<b>Edison Carry Forward</b>
<b>2002-03</b>	\$999,902	\$141,800	\$400,000	\$458,102
<b>2003-04</b>	\$333,333	\$119,583	\$133,333	\$538,519
<b>2004-05</b>	\$135,016 (not yet disbursed)	\$ 70,529	--	\$467,990 (balance)

- Edison reports that the 2005-2006 budget will be reduced 50 percent if the program is implemented. This will enable Edison to carry forward \$250,000 of current grant funds to the 2006-2007 year, eliminating a request for an additional appropriation in years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. If approved, the first appropriation request would be made in 2007-2008.

**2004-05 Edison College Proposal**

- Edison College has revised the name of the proposed baccalaureate degree program to "public safety management."
- Edison conducted a Public Services Forum in October 2004 and conducted surveys of public safety employees and employers to gain support for the application.

- A similar public services forum was arranged in December and was attended by CEPRI staff. Public safety representatives confirmed the need for this program. Some participants reported that Edison is more willing to deliver this program where needed than FGCU.
- At this forum, a representative from FDLE suggested that there is a statewide need for such a program.
- These Edison activities identified significant need for the program in the Southwest Florida region.
- A recent employer survey by Edison surveyed law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies within the College's five county service area concerning their current and future educational requirements. The survey found that a bachelor's degree is now or will soon be required for leadership positions with the rank of lieutenant through chief. This degree is also needed to provide promotional opportunities for employees.
- Edison reports that there is no partnership through the Edison University Center for a BS in public safety management that meets the stated needs of area employers.
  - Barry University offers a Bachelor of Public Administration at the Center with an emphasis on a broader spectrum of students who are focused on administrative career advancement.
  - Franklin University offers an internet-based BS in Public Safety Management with a generic curriculum and a general management focus.
- In a December 6, 2004 review of the Edison proposal by the DOE Division of Colleges and Universities, Chancellor Austin made the following recommendations:
  - "We are not convinced that ECC will be any more successful in meeting initial enrollment projections than FGCU has been, and suggest that the institutions work together in an effort to attract more students before abandoning the partnership."
  - "The question as to whether the program would be more appropriate as a statewide capstone AS to BS than as a local workforce degree should be explored."

### Statewide Issues

#### Statewide Program Delivery

Testimony was received that a baccalaureate degree program in public safety management may be more appropriate as a statewide capstone AS to BS degree program than as a local workforce degree.

Florida's community colleges offer career and technical degrees and certificates and associate degree programs in law enforcement, corrections, fire protection and/or emergency medical services and it is estimated that 85 percent of all first responders in Florida are trained through community colleges. There is a large and growing workforce in public safety, law enforcement, fire safety and emergency services in Florida that desire or need additional postsecondary education in their field. Additionally, employer and association surveys in these fields, particularly among federal and state law enforcement agencies, confirm that a bachelor's degree is now or will soon be required for advancement into leadership and/or management positions.

A number of institutions offer or are planning to offer baccalaureate programs in public safety fields. St. Petersburg College has developed a AS to BAS in Public Safety Administration with concentrations in fire, police and emergency management and is planning to make available the degree program via distance learning. Florida A & M University is developing a BS degree in

Emergency Management and Homeland Security Studies. Preliminary discussions are being held with other universities to offer specializations in unique areas of research, such as information studies, port security and cyber-security technologies. Through its School of Justice, Miami Dade College operates a regional public safety training center and offers degree programs and training toward certification/licensing in various areas of public safety. The School is considering the development of a BS in public safety administration.

Further, there is potential for public safety baccalaureate degree programs to address education and training needs of homeland security programs and initiatives, nationally and in Florida. Nationally, the Department of Homeland Security within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has significantly increased its education and training programs and services. Through its Emergency Management Institute, FEMA develops and delivers emergency management training to enhance the capabilities of federal, state and local government personnel. The Emergency Education NETWORK (EENET) is a satellite-based distance learning and information system used by the FEMA and other government agencies to bring interactive programming into virtually any community nationwide. With considerable experience and presence in Florida during the past year, FEMA has expressed interest in becoming involved in the State's response to the increasing need for education and training in homeland security areas.

In Florida, the State University System has established a Florida Consortium on Homeland Security in order to manage research and development among the institutions in areas of homeland security and to promote collaborations in technology development strategies. A statewide Institute is being developed to promote partnerships among the universities and industry. One of the goals of the Consortium is to include homeland security and emergency management education and training in its initiatives. A number of state community colleges are interested in consortium membership.

### **A State Plan**

Demand for access to postsecondary degree programs and services continues to increase throughout the State. Specifically, the state's availability and output of baccalaureate degree programs is an increasing concern of citizens and policymakers.

In 2002, CEPRI recommended that:

‘the boards of trustees of all community colleges and universities in each region of the State should jointly conduct a baccalaureate degree needs analysis.....Development of the needs analysis and plan should involve representation from the business community, workforce boards, chambers of commerce, economic development councils, and independent colleges and universities.’”

As the state policies that allow community colleges to offer specified baccalaureate degrees continue to evolve, a statewide plan for the delivery of baccalaureate education must be established.