



BOARD OF REGENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

BACCALAUREATE AND MASTER'S DEGREES

NEW PROPOSAL FORMS

(Submit One Copy)

LETTER OF INTENT

Institution: Fort Valley State University

Institutional Contact (President or Vice President for Academic Affairs): Dr. Larry E. Rivers

Date: February 3, 2009

School/Division: College of Education

Department:

Name of Proposed Program: Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)

Degree: Master of Arts in Teaching in Secondary Education

Major: Education with a concentration in a teaching field

Degree Inscription: Master of Arts in Teaching in Secondary Education

CIP Code:

Anticipated Starting Date: January 2010

Program Classification: Graduate – Master's level for Initial Teaching Certification

1. Program Description and Objectives:

a. Objectives of the program

This program will significantly assist in alleviating the shortage of teachers in our general area while answering the mission of the Board of Regents to “Double the Number, Double the Diversity.”

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at Fort Valley State University (FVSU) leading to initial certification will be guided by the College of Education's (CoE) Conceptual Framework – The Proficient Educator. The five performance objectives for this program as presented in the conceptual framework are: 1) The Proficient Educator demonstrates competence in content knowledge; 2) The Proficient Educator uses effective pedagogical

skills; 3) The Proficient Educator uses technology appropriately to enhance learning; 4) The Proficient Educator evidences a caring disposition; and 5) The Proficient Educator has an understanding of and appreciation for diversity. Other objectives include: to produce more highly qualified teachers; to give pre-service teachers opportunities to acquire knowledge of teaching and learning at the graduate level; and to provide extended field experiences and clinical practice to pre-service secondary level candidates.

In addition, the PSC/NCATE standards for new programs, the Regents' Principles, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NPBTS), and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium INTASC Standards will serve as the standards for the program

This MAT program is designed to provide alternative initial preparation at the master's level for qualified candidates who did not complete an undergraduate teacher preparation but who have a bachelor's degree in a recognized teaching field from a regionally accredited institution. The 36 semester-hour program will provide a curriculum incorporating the competencies and knowledge necessary for any accredited program. Candidates will receive 30 hours of professional pedagogical courses and practicum, concluding with an action research project, a supervised internship, and 6 hours of master's level content.

b. Needs the program will meet

1. Teacher shortage. The Master of Arts in Teaching program will address a critical need in the state. Research shows that student populations are expected to increase more rapidly in certain parts of the country, such as the South and West, resulting in increased demand for teachers in those regions. Job opportunities will be better for secondary teachers who are highly qualified because they have a undergraduate content major in their teaching field, some master's level content and master's level pedagogy. In addition to job openings resulting from growth, a large number of openings will result from the need to replace teachers who leave because of spousal relocation, trends in the economy, or retirement. Because of the attractiveness of this program, we estimate graduating 5 – 10 candidates in the first 3 – 5 years.

2. Student demand. At the present time, six (6) candidates are enrolled in our Middle Grades post-bacc program. These students would have been MAT candidates had the program existed when they began inquiries into certification. Everyday content majors inquire about certification rules and are given information about the MG post-bacc program, but more would be interested if they could capitalize on their content major and be certified to teach high school. Additionally, proposing the MAT will replace those secondary programs that FVSU had in the past and will negate the need for undergraduate programs in secondary teaching fields.

c. Brief explanation of how the program is to be delivered

Instruction will be delivered in formats already in use at FVSU, including face-to-face classes on the Warner Robins campus, online classes, and some hybrid (a combination of on-line and face-to-face) classes. The advanced program is designed to assist students in acquiring a broad range of knowledge and skills and a repertoire of specialized teaching skills. In addition to the supervised practicum and supervised internship, field-based instruction is incorporated in the course work leading to the degree. A specialized research practicum allows students to continue to apply content knowledge in an authentic setting. Although the majority of the program will be offered at the Warner Robins center, those courses that include labs may use the Main Campus facilities.

d. Prioritization within the institution's strategic plan

Within the university's strategic plan, the proposed program is a priority. Strategic Initiative #1 of the Strategic Plan states: "Sustain and Increase Enrollment." One way to increase and sustain enrollment is to identify and offer new programs to attract students with varied educational and career interests. Moreover, the current administration is extremely supportive of the CoE and teacher preparation in general. In the past, we have been unable to fulfill numerous inquiries from persons asking about courses to prepare recipients of bachelor's degrees in content areas to become teachers. A post-baccalaureate certification program in Middle Grades education has provided this route for some, but there is still a need to provide a program for those who wish to teach in high school. Research underscores a critical need for highly qualified teachers at all levels and this MAT program will fulfill that need for secondary teachers in grades 6 – 12 in the major subject areas (English, math, history, biology, chemistry, physics, political science, and economics) as well as for teachers in Spanish, Art, and Music.

Teacher preparation at FVSU is becoming one of the university's "niche" programs. Strategic Initiative #3 of the Strategic Plan states: "Develop and Maintain a Positive Institutional Image and Cultivate and Communicate the Brand of the University to all Stakeholders." FVSU is committed to changing its image in many ways, including through development of new initiatives and enhancement of existing initiatives and services to significantly increase name and brand recognition and the image of the institution by 2011-2012 academic year. The addition of a Master of Arts in Teaching initiative to our program will enhance name recognition and offerings for the CoE and the university as well as prepare persons for the excellent job prospects because of the growing need for highly qualified teachers in the middle Georgia area.

2. Description of the program's fit with the institutional mission and nationally accepted trends in the discipline.

FVSU Mission. The mission of Fort Valley State University is to advance the cause of education with emphasis upon fulfilling commitments that our community members have undertaken collectively. This proposed program is consistent with the mission of the

university which is, among other commitments, the enhancement of teacher training programs grounded upon a liberal arts foundation, as is reflected in over 112 years of experience and tradition.

CoE Mission. The mission of the CoE is to prepare proficient educators who demonstrate in-depth content knowledge, cultural competence and sensitivity as well as an array of effective pedagogical skills that have been honed through rigorous classroom and field-based experiences, and to facilitate successful teaching/learning outcomes in diverse environments. We strive to create learning environments and opportunities that prepare proficient educators to perform effectively and ethically in a global and technological society.

Trends. Because of the emphasis on content knowledge and content testing in secondary schools throughout Georgia, the growing trend in teacher preparation programs is to offer the MAT. Graduates from the MAT program have a larger content base than those who complete a BA in secondary education and are therefore more knowledgeable of the content needed in secondary education. This program contributes to the NCLB mandate of the “highly qualified teacher” in that it graduates candidates with more content knowledge and master’s level pedagogy. This program will be attractive to individuals who are considering a career change as it will offer an option for certification at a higher pay rate. These are some of the reasons that more colleges and universities are offering this program rather than the secondary education program and the post-bacc program.

3. Description of how the program demonstrates demand and a justification of need in the discipline and geographic area and is not unnecessary program duplication.

Due to the growing shortage of teachers in Georgia, there is an ever increasing demand for colleges and universities to offer more educator preparation programs. Indeed, the Board of Regents’ expects educator preparation programs to begin now to plan for how they will fulfill the need for teachers in 2020. In a recent speech made to FVSU students and faculty, Superintendent Kathy Cox indicated that a growing number of teachers in Georgia are driving across state borders to fill the slots left vacant in schools. That says that Georgia is doing something positive to attract teachers, but there is still a need.

A recent report indicated that teacher preparation programs graduated fewer than five physics teachers in the last decade. The numbers of graduates in other critical areas are similar. The MAT program attracts graduates with critical needs degrees who are changing careers. And in this economy, many of those critical needs majors are finding the need for employment due to downsizing and/or closing of businesses. Therefore, offering another teacher preparation program at this time may be fortuitous for both applicants and institutions.

At the present time, the only MAT program in the area is available from Georgia College and State University which has a graduate division in Macon, Georgia, some 30 miles distant from Fort Valley. The program is offered only in a cohort structure, thus sometimes delaying start time for applicants. With the approval of the MAT, Fort Valley State University will be the only Historically Black College and University in the

University System of Georgia to have such a program. Even though FVSU is a minority institution, it is open to all ethnicities. FVSU encourages diversity and has majority students enrolled in the university and the CoE, and both the university and the CoE include diversity in their recruitment plans. The MAT will attract many candidates from regional undergraduate programs; it will attract persons from industry, from public service, and from other careers who are looking for a career change. The MAT will increase the university and CoE diversity because it attracts from a variety of sources and because it will attract a variety of ages and ethnicities.

In addition, FVSU is very attractive to commuter students because of its central location. By offering this program primarily at the Warner Robins Center, students will have an easier access to facilities as that campus is only a few miles off the interstate. Convenience does play a role in choice of schools for working adults.

4. Brief description of institutional resources that will be used specifically for the program (e.g., personnel, library, equipment, laboratories, supplies & expenses, capital expenditures at program start-up and when the program undergoes its first comprehensive program review.

Personnel – Two faculty positions will need to be filled. These are currently vacant and budgeted. Advertisements for these positions will indicate that applicants need to be qualified for both undergraduate and graduate positions, as current faculty in CoE teach in both programs. It is hoped that within a few years, the enrollment will sustain moving existing faculty to fulltime graduate status or will sustain hiring of more graduate faculty. Projected costs: \$45,000 salary =38% fringe benefits = \$62,000 per position annually or for both positions \$125,000 annually.

There is adequate graduate faculty in each of the content disciplines to begin the program. Again, it is believed that enrollment will sustain the eventual hiring of more graduate faculty.

Start – up Costs. The primary costs for start-up of the program will focus on the purchase of library/learning resources, possible upgrade of technology at the Warner Robins center, and marketing and advertising. A recent grant to the library will cover the costs in that area and all other start-up costs will be covered through Education and General (E & G) funds. Approximate start-up cost for the program will be \$15,000 to cover recruitment and marketing.

Operating Costs. Operating costs will include consumable supplies, travel for professional development of faculty and reimbursement of travel expenses associated with supervision of candidates in clinical experiences, and the purchase of additional library/learning resources for the Warner Robins center library (see above). Approximate operating costs for the first two years will be \$36,000; fees collected from increased enrollment will defray costs not covered through E & G funds.

Library - We have plans to significantly increase and update our holdings by spring 2010. Following the acquisition of a grant for one million dollars, faculty have begun to submit

requests for books and journals related to their disciplines. Currently, we have 2,452 print titles in our collection that are cataloged under the Library of Congress (LC) classification range for education. These consist of a combination of reference and circulating books. There are also approximately 40 subscriptions to education journals. As part of the library's participation in GALILEO, Georgia's statewide virtual library, students have access to over 400 full-text journal titles in the subject area of education.

Our library resources need building to accommodate the needs of candidates in the new program. The CoE recently received \$25,000 to begin the process of building resources in the Curriculum Materials Center (CMC) located on the main campus and available to all FVSU students. We understand that it will take several years to acquire the kind of collection we need for this new program. We have hired a library support person for the CMC who is assessing our needs and making recommendations to faculty as well as accepting recommendations from faculty regarding pertinent library resources. This person is a trained librarian with many years of experience.

Facilities Our current College of Education facilities include: comfortable, well-equipped offices that are well maintained; a Curriculum Materials Center; a Tutorial Center; a Distance Learning room; and several computer laboratories. The Curriculum Materials Center provides resources and literature for examining teaching/learning trends in P-12 education. The Henry Alexander Hunt Memorial Library, also known as the Learning Resource Center (LRC) or simply, the library, employs modern technology in services offered to increase users' social, intellectual, and global interaction. The library subscribes to a limited number of CD-ROM databases and print resources from other institutions that may be accessed through interlibrary loan. Our students enjoy the services of Georgia Library Learning Online, Public Access Works Sources (PAWS), Interlibrary Loan, and Web access.

The Warner Robins Center is a modern structure with several classrooms, a computer center, multi media resources, and administrative offices. It serves the community well as it is centrally located and easily accessible and as it provides adequate classroom space in a modern and comfortable atmosphere. The technology center allows students access to the Georgia Library Learning Online (Galileo), Interlibrary Loan, and Web access.