

# Fort Valley State University

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M. MIDDLETON

College of Arts and Sciences  
History, Geography, Political Science, and Criminal Justice

Letter of Intent for Graduate Proposal

Master of Arts in History

Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code

Starting Date  
Fall Semester, 2009

## Letter of Intent for Master of Arts in History Graduate Program

Institution: Fort Valley State University

Date: July 7, 2009

School/Division: College of Arts and Sciences  
Science, and Criminal Justice

Department: History, Geography, Political

Name of Proposed Program: Graduate Degree Program in History

Degree: Master of Arts      Major: History CIP Code:

Starting Date: Fall Semester 2009

### **INSTITUTIONAL MISSION**

#### **1. Does this program further the mission of your institution?**

a. Yes, creation of an MA in History will further the mission of the Fort Valley State University. This graduate program fits perfectly into the liberal arts tradition of the Fort Valley State University (FVSU), and it will fill a unique role in providing graduate education opportunities to rural and minority Georgians who are currently under-represented in graduate programs in the state. Currently, no one of the traditional African-American institutions in the system offer graduate work in history. To the south and west of FVSU, graduate work in history is unavailable. To the southeast such work is available only along the coast (at Georgia Southern and Armstrong Atlantic). Thus the proposed degree furthers FVSU's goals of: enhancing "opportunities for the intellectual, personal and professional development of the under served segment of the population in the state....;" and providing "a broad based curriculum to specialize in excellent programs in the arts and sciences...and a broad general background of education in the liberal arts tradition."

#### **2. Will the proposed program require a significant alteration of the institutional mission?**

a. No, this program will not require any alteration of the institutional mission but will rather operate within the established mission of FVSU as stated above.

b. This program will entirely support the existing mission and goals of the university.

#### **3. Will the program require the addition of a new organizational unit to the institution (e.g. college, school, division, or department)?**

- a. No, the initiation and establishment of this program will not require the addition of a new organizational unit to the Fort Valley State University. The program will be established in the College of Arts and Sciences as part of the Department of History, Geography, Political Science, and Criminal Justice.

**4. Is it likely that a SACS visit for substantive change will be necessary?**

- a. SACS will have to be informed of the change. Since the program is an outgrowth of the existing baccalaureate degree a visit may not be necessary. Dr. Vann Newkirk has volunteered to help with this process from the Office of Academic Affairs at Fort valley State University.

**5. How does the proposed program help meet the priorities/goals of your strategic plan?**

- a. Strategic Initiative One as stated in the FVSU Strategic Plan includes Development of State-of-the-Art Academic Programs. The MA in History will build on the existing undergraduate program in history and create such a program. The two levels of study will reinforce one another and help draw talented instructors and students. The expanded program will also allow better use of both instructional and research resources. Recruitment efforts can also reinforce helping both programs to grow.

**6. Will this proposal require an additional or change in your institutional plan?**

- a. No, this proposal will not require changes in the institutional plan.

**7. Will the program require an increase in state appropriation within the next five years?**

- a. The need for added funding will depend on program growth. Current facilities and staff can support the program. A recent grant of more than \$900,000 for the expansion of the library collection combined with the resources in Galileo will provide research basics. As the program expands, and almost certainly within five years, providing adequate numbers of classes while keeping up with required core courses and the undergraduate program will require adding faculty. There are currently more than enough history classes taught by adjunct professors to fill the schedule of another full-time historian.

**8. If this is a baccalaureate program, will you be asking for an exception to the 120 expectation or to the core curriculum?**

- a. This is not a baccalaureate program.

**9. Are there program delivery formats that will be new or different for your institution?**

- a. This is no need for new/different delivery formats for the MA in History at FVSU. Upper level undergraduate courses, although the level of expectation is not as high, are

done in similar fashion to graduate classes. The department also houses two programs that are currently being put on-line, components of the MA in History can be added as online offering as needed.

### **NEED**

#### **1. Provide a brief justification for why the state needs graduates from this program and why the University System needs this program.**

The growth of demand for teachers has increased the need for credential upgrades. In-service teachers need graduate courses and degrees. The University System does not provide such courses and programs for history teachers in the south central and western parts of the state. The System has been seeking ways to provide programs for military personnel in the state and history is a popular field among such individuals. FVSU is closer, by an hour's drive, to Robins Air Force Base than any other similar offering. In addition, MA degrees at the regional colleges in the System can serve as feeder programs for doctoral degree study at the research universities.

#### **2. Give a brief justification for why your institution should offer the program.**

FVSU has a particularly distinguished faculty in history. The work of the four full-time faculty members is supplemented by three administrators who also hold doctoral degrees in the field. Every member of this group is published and all but one have books to their credit. There is also a good mix of specializations including early and modern U.S., modern Europe, and Africa. Therefore the faculty has better credentials for teaching at the graduate level than that of most smaller universities. FVSU is geographically well-positioned to provide the program for parts of the states that do not currently have access. I-75 provides easy access from the south and the recently completed Fall Line Freeway from Columbus to Macon does the same for the west. Proximity to Robins Air Force Base gives access to a military audience. Thus FVSU can offer a quality program to fill a gap in public education in the state. The only private school program in the area is Mercer University in Macon, which is significantly more expensive than schools in the University System.

#### **3. If the program is applied or professional in nature, describe the kind of data you will use to support the need for the program.**

The proposed MA in History is not applied and/or professional in nature, but rather an academic program.

#### **4. Provide a brief description of whether and why students will enroll in the program.**

As indicated above the target audiences for the program include in-service teachers, graduating undergraduates seeking graduate education, and military personnel (both active and retired). Teachers will enter the program both to upgrade their credentials as required by licensing regulations and to improve their pay which comes with obtaining graduate degrees. Many

bureaucratic jobs value the study of history, and just being a member of Phi Alpha Theta International Honor Society in History gains a federal employee an upgraded service rating in a number of fields. The number of graduate history degrees being awarded is growing indicates a demand.

**5. What kinds of data do you intend to use to show student demand for the program?**

The Georgia Department of Labor can supply data about demand for people in a particular field of study. We will also survey in-service teachers, school superintendents, and undergraduates to determine interest in the program and willingness to hire its graduates.

**STUDENTS**

**1. Estimate the number of students who will graduate annually from the program in the Steady state.**

It is estimated that 8-12 students will graduate annually once the program is in place. Based on the growth in the field of public education and enrollment in graduate schools, we may have even more students graduating than currently estimated.

**2. What percentage will likely be form other existing programs?**

FVSU has no graduate programs that are comparable to the MA in History and other than Mercer University there are none in the immediate area. Therefore it is not expected that the program will draw students away from other programs.

**3. Which programs will students come from?**

The program will be attractive to graduates from history, political science, and other social science undergraduate fields.

**BUDGET**

**1. Estimate the steady state cost of the program (in current dollars) and indicate the percentages from reallocation, student fees, grants, and outside dollars.**

The program will call for an additional instructor to expand the areas of study included, but the department currently has enough courses taught by adjunct instructors to more than fill the teaching load (four courses) of a full-time instructor. Thus one-half to three-quarters of the new professor's load would be service courses in the core curriculum. She/he would therefore generate more than the minimum number of FTE's per semester despite having somewhat smaller graduate and/or upper division courses. The cost of adding an instructor would be approximately \$75,000 in salary and benefits plus provision of office space and equipment.

**2. Estimate the start-up costs for the program and indicate possible fund sources.**

Improvements in the library should cost at least \$125,000, but this is being funded by a grant from the Department of Education. One faculty member should be added. There are currently more than enough history courses taught by adjunct professors at FVSU to fill another full-time historian's teaching load. Thus only part of the cost of the new hire will be part of the new program. The cost of a new faculty member will be approximately \$50,000 plus benefits per year.

**COLLABORATION**

It should be noted here that the efficient use of state resources is an essential ingredient in new program approvals. If there is any doubt about how you will address the questions below, a conference is recommended.

**1. If there are similar programs in your service area, how will the proposed program affect them?**

The nearest similar program is at Mercer University in Macon. The cost differential between such a private institution and a public one should make the FVSU program attractive to some potential Mercer enrollees. It should also mean that the two programs can co-exist without conflict. The next closest is at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, which is approximately a 90 minute drive from FVSU. Although these programs may compete for some students, the GCSU enrollment focus tends to be to the north and east while the FVSU program will look south and west. Due to its heritage as an HBCU, Fort Valley may also be more attractive to minority students. Overall, however, there does not seem to be much reason to think that the two programs will conflict.

**2. Do you plan a collaborative arrangement with another institution or entity?**

Although open to such agreements and eager to arrange feeder programs from undergraduate institutions, we do not currently have such arrangements.

**OTHER**

**1. Are there other elements of the proposed program that might give the staff greater insight to the overall value of this program to the University System strategic plan?**

A. This program will expand the quality liberal arts education available in the System and make it more accessible to under served populations.

B. Georgia will benefit from having better prepared social scientists as teachers, planners, bureaucrats, lawyers, legislators, and others who need to understand society and its patterns over time to provide needed services.