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BACCALAUREATE AND MASTER'S DEGREES

NEW PROPOSAL FORMS

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Institution: Gainesville State College

Institutional Contact: Dr. Marya Leatherwood, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: December 28, 2009

School/Division: Humanities and Fine Arts

Department: Communication

Name of Proposed Program: Communication and Public Service

Degree: B. A.

Major: Communication

Degree Inscription: B.A. Communication and Public Service

CIP Code: 09.0101

Anticipated Starting Date: 2011

Program Classification: Communication Studies

1. Description and Objectives of Degree:

Gainesville State College (GSC) seeks to offer a 120 hour Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Public Service (COMPS) degree,¹ to be offered on the Gainesville Campus. This degree is intended to prepare graduates interested in public service careers to compete in a diverse society marked by increasingly complex communication systems. While current undergraduate communication programs in Georgia emphasize rhetoric and broadcasting tracks, the proposed communication and public service degree program at GSC is distinctive in that it focuses on cultural and communication diversity, leadership and organizational skills, and both established and emerging communication technologies. Graduates will:

1. Demonstrate the written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills required for successful performance in the current technology driven business, corporate, non-profit, or public service environments.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of cultural diversity, globalization, media, environmental issues, and information technology on public service.
3. Demonstrate mastery of computer-based programs commonly used in media, corporate and public service organizations.
4. Demonstrate the ability to use qualitative and quantitative data to analyze competent communication in a critical manner in a variety of contexts within the public service arena.

Drawing from elements of the nationally recognized Annenberg School of Communication's program model, *Communication and Public Service*, this proposed degree will fill an unmet need since there are no undergraduate communication programs in Georgia that specifically prepare graduates for careers in public service. This degree will prepare students for government, non-profit or corporate positions such as corporate trainer, communication consultant, community affairs liaison, lobbyist, communications manager, legislative assistant, grant writer, special events coordinator, volunteer coordinator and fundraiser. The COMPS learning outcomes reflect the growing needs within government and nonprofit sectors for communication staff with expertise in these areas²

The proposed program builds on GSC's current associate degree in communication and incorporates reporting, writing and multimedia content/production courses from the existing journalism and media studies programs of study to prepare versatile Communication professionals to work in a variety of environments.

¹ Exclusive of the current Gainesville State College 3-credit hour Physical Education and Wellness requirements

²According to a 2008 Partnership for Public Service report, communication specialists are in demand at 11 of 34 federal agencies surveyed with opportunities available in telecommunications, public affairs, visual information, writing and editing and audiovisual production. <http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers/communications.shtml>. Also, the 2009 study *Social Media in the Nonprofit Sector: A Survey of Nonprofit Communications Executives*, further documents the growing need for staff with expertise in executing new/social media programs. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/22676961/Social-Media-in-the-Nonprofit-Sector-A-survey-of-nonprofit-communications-executivesprograms>. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/22676961/Social-Media-in-the-Nonprofit-Sector-A-survey-of-nonprofit-communications-executives>.

Our programs have a successful record of innovative teaching and learning, and faculty maintain memberships with the National Communication Association and Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, two of the largest national organizations dedicated to communication education. In 2003, Sigma Chi Eta, the honor society for two-year colleges sponsored by the National Communication Association, was founded and the Pi Chapter at Gainesville State College was recognized as the Chapter of the Year in 2006. Instructors within the communication program are already conducting traditional face-to-face classes, have developed and taught hybrid classes using WebCT/BlackBoard course managements systems and other web-based platforms, and have managed internships, service learning projects, and study abroad programs.

Offering the communication and public service degree meets the goals of GSC's strategic plan:

Strategic Goal 1: To affirm the College's core values and provide access and opportunities for a quality higher education, the proposed Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Public Service degree program contains courses and activities that focus on student learning and growth in communication, technology and service. These courses and activities are designed to foster an understanding of the multifaceted nature of communication that students within this degree program will need in order to function within myriad communication-oriented professions in the public service arena.

Strategic Goal 2: To facilitate success and educational growth attainment for all students and to foster a welcoming environment that values and reflects diversity and inclusion, the COMPS degree program addresses the cultural and educational needs of students while emphasizing the importance of engaged citizenry. Engaged citizen use technology and media to gain insight and become involved in the civic affairs of their communities. The annual Speak Out forum and the annual GSC Speech Contest showcase student expression in public address. Study abroad programs and The Great Debate Series explore and promote the communication disciplinary emphasis on cultural intelligence. Communication majors will be invited to complete volunteer and service learning projects and receive credit for completing internships at local non-profit organizations which promote cultural diversity. The COMPS program will build on the more than 140 existing service learning agencies that provide excellent opportunities for GSC students. In addition, communication majors will also become familiar with and participate in communication scholarship through research and conference attendance and presentation.

Strategic Goal 6: To enhance the College's services and opportunities in the community, the new Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Public Service degree would enhance the College's services and opportunities to the community in three ways. First, a number of quality interns each semester would be available to provide free student consulting to area business and non-profit organizations. Second, the co-curricular activities related to the communication area would help connect GSC with area high schools and further the quality of programs that can be offered with four-year degree students as opposed to two-year degree students. Third, the internships and co-curricular activities, in cooperation with other programs and departments for which the communication program has an established track record, would provide public programs and forums open to the surrounding community at large.

2. Program fit to institutional mission and to nationally accepted trends in the discipline:

The new program satisfies the GSC mission statement in place by addressing several of the core values mentioned in the mission statement: Offering a limited number of baccalaureate programs and upper-division courses to meet the educational, civic, and economic needs of the community and region; expanding career programs and courses relevant to area employment needs and the interests of students; and diversity in faculty, staff and student body supported by practices and programs that embody the ideals of an open democratic and global society. Consequently, no alteration to the mission statement will be needed.

3. Program justification to discipline/geographic region/ state/ nation and is not necessarily program duplication:

GSC will be the first in Georgia to offer a four-year degree in Communication with an emphasis on Public Service. GSC has steadily maintained 83 two-year communication degree students over the past two years, with approximately the same number of graduating students as incoming students. In an electronic and phone survey of declared COMM majors, 98% (or 81 of 83) of two-year COMM majors indicated that they would choose to remain to complete a four-year degree at GSC if offered. The COMPS program will also attract some of the 163 journalism and media studies majors who are seeking employment outside of the traditional news and entertainment industries. According to the recent *Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates*, based on responses from about 2,500 recent graduates, only 60.4% of the 2008 bachelor degree recipients landed full-time employment within a half year after graduation- a steep drop from 2007, when 70.2% had jobs. An important message embedded in this survey is that with the tough economy and rampant downsizing in the media industry, students are becoming increasingly flexible in their view of professional opportunities, especially the need to have versatile skills.³

4. Institutional resources that will be expended specifically for this program:

GSC does not anticipate any significant start up costs associated with the implementation of this program. Currently, the communication program at GSC has the appropriate level of faculty expertise and qualifications to deliver this four year degree. There are eight full time faculty, three of whom hold doctorate degrees and five have masters level and professional degrees. The expertise of these faculty encompasses and bridges diverse areas of communication (in teaching, research and professional engagement) including intercultural, corporate and organizational communication, debate, and media studies/journalism. With enrollment growth, it is anticipated that additional staff and faculty hires will be made to deliver and support the baccalaureate curriculum; tuition revenues will provide the resources needed to fund these positions.

Current library sources and equipment and software to support the program are adequate. Substantial electronic databases such as Galileo provide additional resources. The space dedicated for the communication classes and faculty offices are sufficient to house current program requirements, while anticipated student growth and new program development will be addressed with an additional 133,000 square feet of instructional space available in fall, 2011. The new classroom/office building will provide approximately 26 classrooms, 96 faculty/staff/administrative offices, and 13 computer/media/language laboratories. The new building will also contain a number of student study rooms, conference rooms,

student gathering spaces, lounges, and a multipurpose room that can accommodate 260 auditorium style seats.

³ http://www.grady.uga.edu/annualsurveys/Graduate_Survey/Graduate_2008/Grad2008Fullcolor.pdf