



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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CAAL
Agenda Item 1
05/06/2010

Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director

May 6, 2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chair, and Members of the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

From: Dr. Gail M. Morrison, Director of Academic Affairs and Licensing 

Consideration of Awards for Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education) Competitive Grants Program, FY 2010-11 (New and Continuing)

Background

The purpose of the Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education) grant program is to enable eligible institutions, or groupings of such institutions, to serve as "state-of-the-art" resource centers for South Carolina in a specific area related to the improvement of teacher education. Teacher education encompasses both in-service and pre-service training. These "resource centers" develop and model state-of-the-art teaching practices, conduct research, disseminate information, and provide training for K-12 and higher education personnel in the Center's specific area of expertise.

Requests for Proposals for Centers of Excellence for the FY 2010-11 project year were issued to all eligible public and private institutions in September 2009. At the request of the Education Oversight Committee, proposals were requested that focus on teacher recruitment and retention. Four proposals were received for consideration:

- ❖ Columbia College
Center of Excellence for Partnership for the Preparation and Retention of Excellent Practitioners
- ❖ Newberry College
Center of Excellence for Teacher Recruitment and Retention of Teachers
- ❖ University of South Carolina – Columbia
Center of Excellence for Professional Development of Preschool Personnel

- ❖ University of South Carolina - Upstate
Center of Excellence for Serving Teachers at At-Risk Schools

A Review Panel (**Attachment 1**), consisting of one representative from the Department of Education, one representative from the Middle Level Teacher Education Initiative, one representative from the Education Oversight Committee, representatives from Centers of Excellence, and one staff member from the Commission on Higher Education, was appointed to review the proposals and to make recommendations. The Panel was chaired by Dr. Ronald Joekel, a professor from the University of Nebraska. Abstracts for the four proposed Centers are also attached (**Attachment 2**).

Review Panel Recommendations

The Review Panel met on February 19, 2010, to receive presentations from the representatives from each institution and discuss the merits of each proposed center. After receiving presentations from each of the applicants, the panel members conducted a lengthy discussion about the proposals and concluded that none of the proposals as presented at the February 19 meeting merited funding. The review panel recommended that three of the proposals (Columbia College, Newberry College, and USC-Upstate) be provided the opportunity to resubmit their proposals with a revised, narrower focus. CHE staff met with each of the three institutions and provided technical assistance for resubmission of the proposals. Two of the institutions (Newberry College and USC-Upstate) chose to resubmit their proposals for consideration. The review panel reconvened on April 9, 2010, to receive presentations from the institutional representatives and to discuss the merits of the proposed centers. The panel's recommendation is to fund the proposed center from Newberry College.

The proposed center from Newberry College rated the highest in the panel's evaluation. The purpose of the Center of Excellence to Retain and Empower Teachers through Action, Innovation, and Networking (RETAIN) is to increase teacher retention in high need schools in SC through (1) an innovative retention programmatic model, (2) high-quality in-service professional development, and (3) a Research Center of current and action research related to teacher retention. RETAIN will increase teacher retention in high need school districts by implementing a Guaranteed New Teacher Program, creating a RETAIN new teacher online support network, and extending support of mentors from one to three years through an incentives-driven mentorship program. The Center will provide high-quality in-service professional development by developing and implementing advanced mentor training for the Program for Alternative Certification of Educators (PACE) mentors, and it will develop a Research Center to conduct current research and publish one or more position papers specific to South Carolina topics related to teacher retention. The Center will partner with three small high need districts: Fairfield County School District (six schools), Lexington School District 4 (four schools), and The School District of Newberry County (seven schools) that meet the requirements for teacher turnover, Education Accountability Act (EAA) report card rating, and poverty indexes.

The proposed center from USC-Upstate had notable goals and objectives, and potential, but the panel was charged with selecting the proposal it felt had the most promise to fulfill the purpose of the *Center of Excellence Program Guidelines* and to increase teacher retention in

South Carolina. In FY 2009-10, the S.C. General Assembly approved the Commission's request for an appropriation of \$537,526. With three centers in the third and fourth years of funding (**Attachment 3**), funding is available for only one new Center for FY 2010-11.

The non-funded project proposals have been referred to the Commission's *Improving Teacher Quality Competitive Grants Program*. The institutions proposing these projects have been urged either to adapt their proposals to the requirements of that program and submit them for funding or to revise the proposals and resubmit them to next year's Center of Excellence (Education) competition.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing accept the Review Panel's recommendation and approve a new award to Newberry College to establish the Center of Excellence to Retain and Empower Teachers through Action, Innovation, and Networking (RETAIN) in the amount of \$150,000, pending submission of 1) a revised budget; 2) a plan of action to involve administrators in the activities; and 3) revised goals and objectives to reflect a focus on the transition of new teachers from the initial to continuing certificate.

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing accept the staff's recommendation and approve continued funding for Clemson University, the College of Charleston, and the University of South Carolina-Aiken, pending submission of formal budget requests for FY 2010-11 and final reports for FY 2009-10.

- Attachment 1:** Review Panel Members
Attachment 2: Proposal Abstracts
Attachment 3: Continuing Centers of Excellence

Attachment 1

**Centers of Excellence
FY 2010-11
Review Panel
February 19, 2010
8:30 am – 2:00 pm**

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<p>Dr. Tammy Pawloski Director Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty Francis Marion University School of Education Florence, SC 29501 843-661-1475 tpawlosk@fmarion.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Paula Egelson Director Center of Partnerships to Improve Education and the Center of Excellence for the Advancement of New Literacies College of Charleston School of Education 66 George Street Charleston, SC 29424-0001 egelsonp@cofc.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Fred Splittgerber Grant Coordinator Middle Level Teacher Education Initiative 124 Buckhead Drive Irmo, SC 29063 H: 803-234-6649 C: 803-447-7749 fredusc@aol.com</p>
<p><u>Staff Support:</u> Dr. Paula Gregg Program Manager Academic Affairs and Licensing Commission on Higher Education 1333 Main Street, Suite 200 Columbia, SC 803-737-2246 pgregg@che.sc.gov</p>		

Proposal # CtrEx10-01: Center of Excellence to Retain and Empower Teachers through Action, Innovation, and Networking (RETAIN)

Project Directors: Cindy Johnson-Taylor
School of Education
Newberry College

Purpose: To increase teacher retention in high need schools. The Center of Excellence for Teacher Retention (RETAIN: Retain and Empower Teachers through Action, Innovation, and Networking) at Newberry College will increase teacher retention in high need schools in SC through (1) an innovative retention programmatic model; (2) high-quality in-service professional development; and (3) a Research Center of current and action research related to teacher retention. RETAIN will partner with Fairfield County School District, Lexington 4 School District, and The School District of Newberry County.

Activities to be implemented. RETAIN will increase teacher retention in high need school districts by implementing a Guaranteed New Teacher Program, creating a RETAIN new teacher online support network, and extending support of mentors to three years through an incentives-driven mentorship program.

The Center will provide high-quality in-service professional development by developing and implementing advanced mentor training for the Program for Alternative Certification of Educators (PACE) mentors, a graduate-level course for in-service teachers on data and assessment literacy, and Poverty Workshops to assist in-service teachers in working with children of poverty (collaborate with Francis Marion University Center of Excellence).

RETAIN will develop a Research Center to conduct current research and publish a position paper specific to South Carolina on each of the following topics as they relate to teacher retention: strategic management of human capital; needs of millennial teachers; working with students of poverty; teacher working conditions; and effective teacher and principal leadership. The Research Center will conduct action research with teacher participants on issues specific to local and statewide retention needs.

Center staff will create a RETAIN Research Center Website for publication and dissemination of position papers and data from action research in engaging formats such as videos and webinars as well as related tools and networking opportunities. Also, they will plan and host an annual Teacher Retention Symposium to disseminate the research findings.

Target population. The initial target population includes the 17 high need schools in the three partner school districts; the Center will expand its target to the entire state of South Carolina.

Expected Outcome. The primary expected outcome is the establishment of a sustainable, innovative Center that will lead to systemic changes that will greatly improve the retention of teachers in South Carolina.

School/District Partners: Newberry College will partner simultaneously with three small high need districts: Fairfield County School District, Lexington School District 4, and The School District of Newberry County. The Center will work with six high need schools in Fairfield, four in

Lexington 4, and seven in Newberry that meet the requirements for teacher turnover, Education Accountability Act (EAA) report card rating, and poverty indexes.

Proposal: CtrEx10-02: Center of Excellence for Serving Teachers at At-Risk Schools (STARS)

Project Directors: Elaine Wiegert
School of Education
USC-Upstate

Abstract

The proposed Center of Excellence, STAARS, represents a partnership between the University of South Carolina Upstate (USC Upstate) and Spartanburg School Districts 6 and 7. The two primary goals of STAARS are to retain novice teachers who are employed in at-risk elementary schools and to recruit minority, male teachers for the elementary education program at USC Upstate.

To address the first goal, university faculty will develop graduate level courses to address classroom management, working with diverse student populations and classroom action research, in addition to a conversational Spanish class that will be offered for recertification credits. A cadre of retired teachers will support district efforts to support induction teachers in each of the participating schools. One retired teacher will be assigned to each of the participating schools.

During the second year of the grant, a pilot study will be conducted to determine the feasibility of using Second Life virtual classrooms to deliver instruction to participating teachers. In years three and four, teachers from low performing schools in Cherokee, Union and Laurens Counties will be invited to participate in the program, with instruction being delivered by way of Second Life virtual classrooms. In year five of the project, teachers from across the state will be invited to participate in grant activities

In year three of the grant, USC Upstate will host an annual conference to disseminate schools project results and best practices for the increasing teacher retention in high needs elementary schools. Schools involved in the grant will become Professional Development Schools associated with the University of South Carolina Upstate.

In an effort to attract minority males into the education profession, USC Upstate will implement a REAL Men Teach program.

Proposal: CtrEx10-03: Center of Excellence Partnership for the Preparation and Retention of Excellent Practitioners (PPREP)

Project Directors: Lynne Noble
School of Education
Columbia College

Abstract

The Center of Excellence (PPREP) is a partnership among Columbia College, Lee County Schools and Lexington School District One, specifically the Pelion area schools to improve teacher preparation, increase new teacher retention and ultimately, impact the academic achievement of students in high-needs settings. PPREP has three major goals. The first is to completely revise the teacher education curriculum for early childhood, elementary, middle level and special education teacher candidates. The curriculum will collapse currently discrete courses into a seamless and ordered set of courses that purposefully constructs content, skills and dispositions. Students will be required to travel through these courses in order in a cohort designed to build in peer support and collaboration. In addition, the clinical experiences will be more closely aligned with course objectives, and time in the schools in practice settings will greatly increase. This work will be spearheaded by the grant Director, two grant faculty members, supported by the Education Division faculty and administration and informed by two school district personnel assigned to work on this grant.

A sub-cohort of students will be identified in their sophomore year to participate in clinical settings in Lee County (Bishopville Elementary, Lower Lee Elementary and Lee Central Middle) and Lexington One (Pelion Elementary, Forts Pond Elementary and Pelion Middle). Classroom teachers will be carefully chosen as cooperating teachers and will be videotaped demonstrating specific skills and content mastery. These tapes will be used in college courses. These teachers will also be available by webcam to participate in courses as needed. (This allows teacher candidates not in the sub-cohort to be exposed to these settings.) To the extent possible, the districts will hire these students as teachers in these, or very similar, schools upon their graduation.

A second goal is to improve retention rates of new teachers in these schools. New teachers will be assigned a school mentor and a college mentor. The Triad will create an individual Plan of Practice (POP) and the mentors will support the new teacher through the first three years (Phase 1) of his/her career. Eventually, these new teachers will also be Columbia College graduates, exposed to the new curriculum and therefore receiving both services of the PPREP grant.

A third goal is to create a research and dissemination agenda. Columbia College faculty and school personnel will (the Development and Research Team) will spend the second year of the grant designing and beginning the implementation of research on preparation and retention. Classroom teachers who participate in the Divergent Learning Master Degree program will also be engaged in action research in their own classrooms. This research is expected to be published in appropriate journals and will be the basis for conference presentations by College and school faculty and classroom teachers. The administration of the PPREP project will create an e-newsletter (Quarterly), which will be disseminated to school district personnel and teacher education institutions, that documents the most current work in the field as well as the

activities, research and results of the PPREP project. The work of PPREP will culminate in a conference during the fifth year of the grant.

***Proposal: CtrEx10-04: Center of Excellence for Professional Development of
Preschool Personnel***

Project Directors: William Brown
School of Education
USC-Columbia

ABSTRACT

For the last two years, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee has recommended that the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) fund a Center of Excellence to address the clear and compelling professional development needs of preschool personnel in South Carolina.

USC-Columbia proposes to support pre-kindergarten personnel in South Carolina with high-quality professional development through a newly established Center of Excellence for Professional Development of Preschool Personnel. The purpose of the proposed Center of Excellence will be to develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain a statewide system of responsive and collaborative professional development for personnel working with four-year-old pre-kindergarten children who are at high risk for school failure. If funded, this Center of Excellence will be located at USC-Columbia.

The university plans to establish the Center by working collaboratively with preschool personnel at Florence School District 1 and by developing an active Advisory Board composed of key stakeholders from across South Carolina. From the Advisory Board, a “community of practice” will be launched for preschool professional development. The Advisory Board and evolving community of practice will guide professional development efforts across the five-year project. Hence, the project’s ultimate aim is to enhance professional development planning and to make more accessible high-quality professional development information that will be useful to early childhood personnel working with preschool children across South Carolina.

The initial target population for developing a community of practice for preschool professional development will be personnel working with four-year-old pre-kindergarten children who are at high risk for school failure (e.g., living in poverty, MEDICAID eligible). By creating a more responsive and collaborative professional development system, USC-Columbia expects statewide planning efforts in professional development will be enhanced greatly and that preschool personnel recruitment and retention will be strengthened.

Appendix 3**Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education)
New and Continuing Projects
FY 2010 - 11**

Center	Institution	Project Director	FY 2010-11 Award	Award Year
Advancement of New Literacies in Middle Grades, College of Charleston	College of Charleston	Paula Egelson	\$ 112,500.00	Year 5 of 5
Center of Excellence in Middle-level Interdisciplinary Strategies for Teaching	USC-Aiken	Gary Senn	\$ 112,500.00	Year 3 of 5
Center of Excellence for Inquiry for Mathematics and Science	Clemson University	Bob Horton	\$ 112,500.00	Year 3 of 5
Center of Excellence to Retain and Empower Teachers through Action, Innovation, and Networking	Newberry	Cindy Johnson-Taylor	\$ 150,000.00	Year 1 of 5