PROGRAM PLANNING SUMMARY

PROGRAM DESIGNATION:

Institution:	Coastal Carolina University
Academic Unit:	Spadoni College of Education
Program Title:	*Master of Education in Instructional Technology*
Credit Hours:	36 Credits
New or Modification:	New Program
Proposed Date of Implementation:	Fall, 2008

JUSTIFICATION OF NEED

For over a decade, the state of South Carolina has recognized that technological proficiency is essential for students and educators to be successful in the rapidly evolving information-based global economy. The most recent State Technology Plan (2003-8) identifies a five dimension framework to operationalize these needs and facilitate the design of progress benchmarks:

1) **Learners and their Environment** – the use of technology to advance student understanding of content in state curriculum standards.
2) **Professional Capacity** – the implementation of sustained professional development programs for all educators, including administrators.
3) **Instructional Capacity** – the development of strategies to integrate technology into curricula and teaching for all grade and ability levels.
4) **Community Connections** – the development of partnerships and collaborative efforts to support technology activities and community involvement in education.
5) **Support Capacity** – the provision of necessary support infrastructure and resources to ensure efficient and effective uses of technology.

These five technology dimensions support the goals of No Child Left Behind (2001), the South Carolina Educational Accountability Act (1998), and the South Carolina Teacher Technology Proficiency Proviso 1.29 (2003), by "improving student achievement in the core curriculum through technology proficiency and encouraging the effective integration of technology resources and systems through teacher training and curriculum development" (STP 2003).

More recently, as part of the Pathways to Success initiative within the South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act of 2005, Information Technology has been designated one of 16 clusters of study from which high school students must (by 2009) declare a major. The implication of this new model is the potential for the development of new teacher certification areas and teacher-training programs pertinent to technology.

Finally, it is important to recognize that various national and international organizations have formally recognized the need for technology training in U.S. public and higher education. For example, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which is the preeminent national auditing agency for colleges of Education nationwide, identifies technology as one of the core emphasis strands in its conceptual model, and publishes standards specific to technology for program accountability. Moreover, NCATE also endorses the NETS (National Educational Technology Standards), which are published by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) to help public education and teacher training institutions standardize the integration of technology, curriculum and professional productivity. South Carolina is one of 50 states to endorse the NETS officially, which at

an operational level, means that teacher technology performance is included in all systematic evaluation protocols.

Perhaps the strongest justification then for the proposed program is that it addresses a common need for all teaching disciplines – to apply research, theory and technology to solving instructional or performance problems. It is important to point out that this need is evident in other professional settings as well, including business, government, healthcare, military and nonprofit organizations. Thus, the utility of an Instructional Technology degree has the potential to transcend public education career paths; graduates from this proposed program would not only advance their abilities as classroom teachers, but they would also have the credentials and knowledge base to pursue entry-level instructional technology positions in professional settings outside of public schools.

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM DEMAND AND PRODUCTIVITY

CCU completed a comprehensive analysis of the potential market for this proposed program in the fall of 2006. Over 700 certified teachers from primarily Horry and Georgetown counties responded to a detailed survey probing their interest in and preferences for a masters program in Instructional Technology. High demand for this program was overwhelmingly evident, with 143 respondents indicating that they would start the program immediately if it were already available, and 369 suggesting they would begin within one year.

The significant interest in the proposed program can be explained in part by data from the survey. Two factors clearly emerged as dominant: 1) a personal interest in technology, and 2) a desire for career advancement not necessarily limited to classroom teaching. More likely, however, the most exacerbating factor generating interest in the program was the recent partnership between the university and Horry County Schools whereby the district began supporting its teachers financially in the pursuit of certain masters degrees at CCU. In fact, CCU's current M.Ed. programs have experienced a 900% increase in admissions (72 active, up from 8 in 2005) since the partnership initiative began in fall, 2006.

Data from the survey also help estimate anticipated program matriculation. The majority of participants (61%) indicated a preference for a two-year completion pace, taking two courses per semester and summer. Thus, given a reasonable and conservative target of 12 new enrollments per year, total annual enrollment in the proposed program should average 24 students by the beginning of the second year (Fall, 2009), with the initial graduating class receiving conferred degrees by August, 2010.

ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROPOSED PROGRAM DUPLICATES EXISTING PROGRAMS IN THE STATE

The proposed program is designed to meet the Advanced Standards for School Media and Educational Technology Specialists (SMETS), which are developed by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT), and endorsed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Currently only one AECT-based program in Instructional Technology exists in South Carolina, a joint venture between USC Columbia and USC Aiken. Alternative non-AECT accredited programs with 100% online delivery are also available from Lesley University, Nova Southeastern University and other distance learning institutions. CCU is uniquely positioned, therefore, to offer this campus-based program to certified teachers working in Horry, Georgetown and neighboring counties.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM TO EXISTING PROGRAMS AT THE PROPOSING INSTITUTION

CCU offers graduate programs in the Spadoni College of Education, the College of Natural and Applied Science, and the College of Business Administration. Programs offered in the Spadoni College of Education include the Master of Education in Early Childhood, Elementary, or Secondary Education, and the Master of Arts in Teaching in Art, English, Mathematics, Music, Science and Social Studies.

Currently, all M.Ed. programs in the Spadoni College share a common core sequence in foundational educational disciplines, such as learning theory, behavioral management, and diverse populations. The curriculum for the proposed program will incorporate courses from this shared educational core, plus advanced specialization and elective coursework in Instructional Technology. This integrated framework is very common for graduate programs of this type that target the professional development of previously certified teachers.

Given the inter-disciplinary nature of the field of Instructional Technology, select courses in the proposed program curriculum may be available for co-listing in other programs, both within and outside the Spadoni College. This potential collaboration will be encouraged to accommodate the needs and growth of existing and future programs.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS VIA INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

CCU is interested in developing a cooperative relationship with any other institution in the state that would like to collaborate in the advanced study of instructional technology applications for certified teachers. Such cooperation could include sharing personnel or curricular resources via face-to-face or electronic modalities.

TOTAL NEW COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSED PROGRAM (GENERAL ESTIMATES)

The primary new costs associated with implementing the proposed program will be faculty salaries (estimated at $50,000 each). Currently, the Spadoni College has only 1.75 faculty dedicated to Instructional Technology. These faculty are full-time, tenure-track, and teach an average of 7 sections of undergraduate Instructional Technology courses per semester.

To accommodate offering new graduate courses for the proposed program, CCU will require a minimum of one additional full-time tenure-track faculty member prior to initial enrollments, with a second added by the end of the first year. By comparison, most institutions across the country with this program have between four and ten full-time Instructional Technology faculty (source: http://www.aect.org/curricula).

Additional costs necessary to implement the proposed program will include technology resources and library materials. Currently, the Spadoni College houses two state-of-the-art computer labs where the majority of program courses would be taught. Costs associated with maintaining these labs are already covered by an annual operating budget generated by designated tuition fees. However, it will be necessary to acquire limited additional equipment and software more advanced than what is currently utilized for teaching undergraduates (estimated at $15,000). Much of the library resources are already in place, with minimal cost to expand holdings over 5 years (approximately $5,000) expected.