Program Planning Summary

Master of Education Degree in LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND CULTURE

Spadoni College of Education

Coastal Carolina University

Program Designation:

The program is a Master of Education [M.Ed.] degree in Language, Literacy and Culture with two options: English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL], or Literacy. Both options consist of a total of 36 graduate credit hours.

Proposed Date of Implementation: Fall 2008

Target Audience: Certified teachers seeking advanced study in ESOL and/or Literacy.

Justification of Need for the Program:

Option A. ESOL:

There is an urgent need to prepare English as Second Language specialists in South Carolina to address the rapid growth of English Language Learners [ELLs] in the public schools. In the last ten years, the overall K-12 population in the state decreased by over two percent, while in the same period the number of ELLs increased by over 500 percent. Horry County, where Coastal Carolina is located ranks 4th in the state in the number of ESOL students.

The shortage of teachers qualified to meet the needs of the fast growing ELL population is a major challenge for the state and the region. A survey of the US conducted by the Office of English Language Acquisition revealed that the nationwide average of prepared teachers to ELL student ratio is about 1:24. South Carolina together with North and South Dakota had the most need for qualified teachers for these students. The ratio in these three states is over 1 to 600.

Option B. Literacy:

Also, there is an urgent need to prepare teachers in South Carolina who are knowledgeable about literacy in order to address the problems of illiteracy in this state and in our specific region. Charles Bierbauer, Dean of University of South Carolina's College of Mass Communications and Information Studies in an October 2005 article in *The State* urged immediate action to address these alarming statistics:

• One-third of South Carolina students are reading below state standards in eighth grade (in 2002).

• South Carolina has the third-highest adult illiteracy rate in the United States.

• Illiteracy rates are higher than 40 percent in five counties — Allendale, McCormick, Williamsburg, Clarendon and Lee. (Williamsburg, Clarendon, and Lee are in close proximity to Coastal Carolina University).

Close examination of U.S. Census Data from the latest census (2000) for a six county area (Horry, Georgetown, Clarendon, Williamsburg, Lee, Marion) revealed that the percentage of high school graduates over age 25 varied from a low of 61.4% in Lee County to a high of 81.1% in Horry County. The average percentage of high school graduates in that six county area adjacent to and including Horry County, home of Coastal Carolina University, is 69.4%. These high school graduation percentages reveal that approximately 30% of South Carolina residents over the age of 25 in our neighboring counties do not have a high school diploma.

Obviously, there is an urgent need for graduate programs in our region of the state to educate our public school classroom teachers about literacy in order to begin to address these alarming statistics in our state and in our region. Teachers need to be equipped with the latest instructional strategies and research to help students succeed in school, and literacy is the key to that success.

Anticipated program demand and productivity:

Meetings with administrators of the three districts closest to Coastal Carolina University have repeatedly indicated a need for master degree programs in both ESOL and Literacy. In addition, a survey of Coastal Carolina students attests to the viability of both options. There were 95 students who responded to the survey, of those, 89 [85 percent] indicated that they were interested in pursuing a master's degree in education in the next five years. When asked what program of study they were interested in, 67 students indicated Literacy, while 37 indicated TESOL. Note: Some students were interested in both programs.

Assessment of extent to which the proposed program duplicates existing programs in the state:

The only institution in South Carolina offering a masters degree in TESOL is Furman University. The University of South Carolina offers an M.A. in Linguistics as well as a graduate certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

The Master of Education in Literacy or Reading is offered by Winthrop University, Clemson University and the Citadel. The proposed program would not duplicate existing programs due to its emphasis on culture and its appeal to local educators. In terms of geographic location, no existing program is near the Coastal Carolina University campus.

Relation of the proposed program to existing programs at Coastal Carolina University:

CCU offers masters level programs in the Spadoni College of Education, the College of Natural and Applied Science and the College of Business Administration. Programs offered in the College of Education include the Master of Education in Early Childhood, Elementary Education and Secondary Education [with concentrations in English, mathematics, science and social studies] and the Master of Arts in Teaching in art, English, mathematics, music, science and social studies. All programs have been nationally accredited by NCATE and share a common conceptual framework.

The proposed program will have a common core that will be shared by the two options and will also follow the standards of the respective professional associations, IRA and TESOL. The M.Ed. in Language Literacy and Culture will be housed in the Spadoni College of Education and as such, the college's history of offering study at the graduate level and in working with local school districts will contribute to the success of the program.

Relationship of the proposed program to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation:

CCU is interested in developing cooperative relationships with other institutions in the state that would like to collaborate in the preparation of ESOL or Literacy specialists.

Total new costs associated with implementing the proposed program:

It is estimated that the program will need to hire two additional faculty members and will require additional library resources. The institution has identified anticipated costs at about $150,000.