

September 20, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Trustees, St. Petersburg College

FROM: William D. Law, Jr., President

SUBJECT: Proposed SPC Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions (Working Title)

Attached is the latest draft of the program abstract for the proposed SPC Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions (working title). Recall that we have been working on this initiative (previously generically called the “Government Institute”) for several years. In 2007 the Florida Legislature allocated \$7.5 million to support the creation of the institute, honoring Congressman C. W. Bill Young.

The lynchpin and first activity of the Institute – the baccalaureate program in Public Policy and Administration – launched this fall term, and the oil crisis in the Gulf provided the College (and fledgling institute) an opportunity to engage the public in a serious discussion on responses to the crisis and pathways to a more comprehensive energy policy for Florida.

With the start of the baccalaureate program and forum series, and encouragement from Congressman Young’s office, the College seeks to move forward with the formal designation and program plan for the Institute. This abstract ties the Institute’s mission squarely with the mission of the College, with a clear focus on world-class academic programs, civic engagement and community outreach which have always been the hallmarks of SPC. We are particularly excited about ways the Institute will engage our students, and those in Pinellas K-12 institutions, in understanding and involvement in all levels of government.

We seek the Board’s feedback at this time, and propose to return with a full program plan at the October Board meeting. The legislative support provided will fund the Institute requiring no subsidization from the College’s operating budget.

The SPC Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions (working title): Vision, Mission and Proposed Program

A multi-faceted policy center committed to: offering high-quality programs and activities that address real-world problems in a systematic, strategic way; providing leadership to address the needs of the communities served by St. Petersburg College, and preparing students for careers in public policy and administration in a global marketplace.

Proposed Mission Statement

“The Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions at St. Petersburg College is dedicated to advancing academic excellence, community engagement, economic vitality and public understanding through high-quality, solutions-directed public policy programs. Its purpose is to enrich the educational experience, engage with government at all levels to promote unity and efficiency, facilitate economic activity and involve citizens in their college and government.”

Recommended Activities and Programs

Five broad areas of focus from which a variety of policy programs can be built:

- 1. Academic Enrichment:** A primary focus of the institute should be to support existing academic programs to enhance the educational experience, with special emphasis on the Public Policy and Administration baccalaureate program. But there are opportunities in other disciplines as well, including Environmental Studies, Consular Training, Public Safety Administration, Ed Studies, Sustainability, Business Administration and International Business. Some activities for immediate focus:
 - Develop student internships in Pinellas, the Tampa Bay region, Tallahassee and Washington.
 - Develop shadowing opportunities with officials from cities, counties and colleges.
 - Assist the Dean and faculty in facilitating articulation of SPC Public Policy and Administration graduates into Master’s studies in USF Master of Public Administration program.
 - Assist St. Petersburg College in facilitating planned new programs in Diplomatic Protocols with State Department and Non-Government Organizations, Military Language Training with Central Command at MacDill AFB, and Foster Care Training with the Department of Children and Families.
 - Develop student exchange programs with foreign colleges and organizations in conjunction with the Center for International Programs.
 - Provide research opportunities with Congressman Young’s archives.

- Offer seminars with guest lectures by public leaders on key policy issues. Require a significant student paper to develop critical thinking as well as professional writing skills.
- Make attendance at institute's public forums part of course credit when relevant (faculty decision), with an option for "global awareness points" in the transcript again in conjunction with the Center for International Programs.
- Work with the Deans, faculty and students in creating curriculum for and staging Model Congress and Model UN.
- Work with the Graham, Frey and USF-St. Petersburg Institutes to promote civic education.

2. Civic Engagement: In addition to the State and National Connections noted later in this abstract, a primary focus of the Institute is to work with all 24 local government jurisdictions in Pinellas County to improve communications, efficiency and collaboration. Secondary: Advance the level of professionalism among local elected officials. Third: Increase citizen involvement in their government, from informed voting to attending government meetings to filing for public office. To put these goals into action:

- Become a center for assisting and mediating relationships with all 24 separate government units in Pinellas County, and the Tampa Bay region where appropriate. Approach it from an efficiency basis: how can the governments work together to improve service, cut costs and work across jurisdictional lines for infrastructure, disaster response, emergency services and transportation. Make use of the EpiCenter's Collaborative Labs and staff for staging and facilitation.
- Provide leadership training for local government officials, from basic instruction for newly elected officials to management training for mid-level supervisors to executive training for division directors and CEOs.
- Invite Florida League of Cities to stage Elected Officials Institute workshops on campus in partnership with the institute.
- Stage a "Candidate College" each election season to instruct those considering running for public office in the basics of conducting a campaign.
- Sponsor candidate debates during election season and forums on Constitutional Amendments.
- Offer classes on citizenship for community members.
- Collaborate with other policy institutes when appropriate, especially Florida Centers and Institutes with similar missions, to stage joint programs such as candidate debates and the "Candidate College."

3. Public Discourse: Become a center for discussion of key policy issues and initiator of discourse on topical issues that are difficult to resolve. Leading recommendations:

- Stage regular public forums on issues of great immediate concern, such as the current three-part series tied in to the Gulf oil spill.
- Lead the public debate on chronic local and regional issues, such as locating the future new Rays stadium, the future of light rail, water use and conservation or health care

concerns. Assemble teams from faculty and outside experts to develop consensus and invite stakeholders to seminars at the EpiCenter Collaborative Labs.

- Engage students in relevant degree programs such as Business Administration, Public Policy, etc., to conduct surveys on local issues and offer findings to local news media and public officials.
- Offer classes on citizenship and civic engagement for the public.

4. Economic Vitality: Identify a key economic activity that best fits with the College's programs and focus on becoming a center of excellence for that. The most often cited area is sustainable practices, from renewable energy to green building standards to enabling business development, with Pinellas as primary focus and Tampa Bay region secondary. Action steps:

- Specialize in renewable, sustainable economic activities to become a center for clean energy policy. Work with the A.S. and B.S. faculty to create this synergistic connection between the college and EDCs in Pinellas.
- Identify business clusters in our immediate community and throughout Pinellas County and Tampa Bay. Bring together elements within those clusters to strategize on expanding ability of the clusters to access Small Business Administration loans. Cluster examples: health-care providers, assisted-living facilities, retail, and real estate/construction. Hold workshop(s) at EpiCenter.
- Partner with Seminole Economic Development Commission in its strategic plan for economic development called SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). Open EpiCenter Collaborative Labs for strategic planning sessions facilitated by appropriate Business faculty.
- Work with organizations like Enterprise Florida and Workforce to support analysis and discussion of local and statewide economic development and budget issues.

5. State and National Connection: With the statewide support for this Institute and the involvement of Congressman Young in the initial visioning, this focal point has the most potential to put the institute – and St. Petersburg College – in the national spotlight. This key part of the Congressman and state leaders' vision was reinforced by a number of stakeholders interviewed. Among opportunities:

- Draw on the Congressman's vast experience and network in Washington to facilitate programs and draw speakers from the national arena. Create an annual dinner event featuring national-level speaker on a topical issue. Make this a revenue-generating event.
- Separately, or in conjunction with above, develop an annual "flagship" workshop named for Congressman Young and focused on significant national issues with prominent speakers as headliners, again calling on Mr. Young and staff to help recruit world-class thinkers and leaders to campus. Topic examples: Veteran's affairs as Iraq/Afghanistan wars wind down; national health care plan; new anti-terrorism tactics; coping with climate change; the national debt crisis. This workshop has the triple effect of enriching

students' academic experience, raising awareness of SPC, and generating economic activity for the Pinellas hospitality industry.

- Partner with Rep. Young (and staff) to arrange internships and/or visits to Congress.
- Hone student research skills working with Congressman Young's archives.
- Stage a Model Congress curriculum for public high school students similar to the Enterprise Village program that teaches middle school students economic principles by role-playing in model main-street settings. Public Policy program students assist.
- Work with the Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs, Center for International Studies and the Dean of the Public Policy program to create a Model UN especially to engage Public Policy and Administration students and A.A. and baccalaureate students in their global awareness components.
- Seek alliance with appropriate state and national "think tanks" and associations that share key elements of the Institute's mission and support proposed activities, e.g., Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (<http://www.congresscenters.org/>).

Summary

The policy institute has the potential to be one of St. Petersburg College's strongest components, a public face of the college that emphasizes scholarship, leadership, community involvement and entrepreneurial expertise. The plan outlined above is conservative but ambitious, and can be structurally phased to start small but able to expand rapidly once well under way.

The plan is intended to be a road map for the institute's launch and initial programs, as well as a blueprint for long-term sustainability. But it is not cast in stone. As with any map, the user can choose a different road if he knows a closer route – or if the route is blocked. New college priorities, changing events in the state, nation or world, or new financial imperatives, may dictate a change of focus. It is important that the institute remain nimble enough to respond to change in a timely and strategic way.

Unemployment Rates

No High School Diploma	14%
High School Diploma	9.5%
AA or AS Degree	7.5%
BA/BS or Higher Degree	4.4%

Factors and Indicators Affecting Completion

1. Full time v. Part time student – Full time student completion rate is significantly higher than part time student.
2. The more remediation needed the less success in completion.

Strategies to Consider

1. Cohort based classes and programs.
2. Block Scheduling
3. Distance Education – small class size (tuition premium)
4. Financial Aid – Inform student of financial aid package if full time