

One Book, One Campus
Office of Undergraduate Studies
Student Success Initiative
Florida Gulf Coast University

DRAFT 5, September 12, 2012
With Approval from the General Education Council

I. Philosophy

To increase student engagement and success, Florida Gulf Coast University fosters a common intellectual experience across the entire campus. The experience, which focuses on first year students but includes a broader array of undergraduate and even graduate students, formally and informally connects faculty, staff, administrators, and students and integrates a variety of programs, activities, and offices. At the heart of the common intellectual experience is a reading project, the “One Book, One Campus” project, that reinforces key learning values of the institution (such as civic engagement, ecological perspective, or diversity) and that provides the foundation for fostering an intentional learning community.

Research has demonstrated a strong connection between student success (defined as retention and persistence) and an integrated, campus-wide approach to engaging students. Several elements of such an approach are reiterated in the research (Laufgraben, 2006; Ishler and Upcraft, 2005; Barefoot, 2005; Martin and Hurley, 2005):

- Modeling of intellectual and social habits, such as curiosity, critical and creative thinking, open-minded discussion and listening;
- Emphasis on out-of-class interactions between faculty and students (and between staff and students);
- Modeling of academic behaviors, such as taking responsibility for learning and seeking assistance when needed;
- Creation of learning communities, both within the curriculum and outside the curriculum;
- Inclusion of service learning activities that engage students and that connect them to the campus, to faculty and staff, and to each other;
- The use of upper level students (peers) to engage lower level students through such things as supplemental instruction, peer mentoring, etc.

The common intellectual experience at FGCU emphasizes all of these elements and others by building on and connecting the work already being completed at Florida Gulf Coast University. Through connecting the programs, activities, and offices that are already focused on student success, the common intellectual experience will bring coherence to our work and make it—and the learning that occurs as a result—more intentional.

II. One Book, One Campus

Research has demonstrated that “Common reading programs contribute to student success because they emphasize reading as an intellectual skill central to student achievement and promote learning with and from others” (Laufgraben, 2006). Campus reading projects model academic behavior, emphasize critical thinking and reading skills, and close the gap between student expectations of college and actual academic experiences, all necessary components to student success. Those projects that are most successful become infused in the campus culture, reaching into all areas of the institution and offering students multiple pathways to become engaged. Most importantly, they offer the opportunity to create a community of intentional learners.

The committee for the selection of the book will be comprised of faculty, staff, administrators and students from across the campus. At least one faculty member from each college and one student will be

invited to join the committee. In addition, administrators and staff from across the university who work with first year student issues will be part of the committee. The committee, in its constitution and its operation, will invite and support multiple perspectives.

Membership will be on a rotating basis, with membership lasting for two years; members can hold successive terms. Members must be willing to read all the selected potential texts and attend meetings to discuss these readings in a collaborative manner. In order to maintain the curricular integrity of the courses that require the book, faculty from those areas will be represented on the committee and **the Chair of the Committee will be the Composition Program Director**. In addition, these faculty will be responsible for selecting the 6-8 books that will be read by the committee over the summer and for making the final selection of the book. The following is suggested membership:

- Composition Program Director
- First Year Humanities Seminar Coordinator
- College of Arts and Sciences In-Unit Faculty Member
- Lutgert College of Business In-Unit Faculty Member
- College of Education In-Unit Faculty Member
- College of Health Professions In-Unit Faculty Member
- U. A. Whitaker College of Engineering In-Unit Faculty Member
- Library In-Unit Faculty Member
- Composition Faculty Members (2)
- First Year Humanities Seminar Faculty Members (2)
- Faculty Senate Leadership
- Council of Deans
- Council of Chairs
- General Education Council
- Undergraduate Admissions Office
- First Year Advising Office
- Housing and Residential Life Office
- Teaching, Learning, Assessment Initiative Director
- Alumni and Foundation Office
- Athletics
- Student Representatives (1-3)

Individual members may fulfill more than one of these positions. Members are responsible for acting as liaisons between the committee and their respective areas, keeping their units informed, engaged, and involved in the project. Other members may be added depending on specific features of the reading project in a given year. **The Composition Program Director, with support from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, will facilitate the committee.**

III. Process for Selecting a Book for the Reading Project

Faculty and staff from across the campus may nominate potential books in the Spring semester, with information explaining how the book fits into the parameters of the reading project for that year, along with ISBN, cost, etc. The faculty who will be teaching the book, facilitated by the Chair of the Committee, will review all suggestions and select 6-8 books to be read by the One Book, One Campus committee. Books will be purchased through the office of Undergraduate Studies and will be shared across the committee.

The committee will recommend 2-3 books to the Chair of the Committee who, working with the faculty teaching the book (Composition faculty and FY Humanities Seminar faculty) and in consultation with the

Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Chairs of the relevant departments, will make the final selection of the book. The selection of this book will constitute the basis for the summer reading project and courses taught in the Fall semester.

Timeline:

- February 10 – Chair of the Committee and Dean of Undergraduate Studies announces FY Book for upcoming year
 - call for nominations for the following year (due March 1)
- March 1 -- Chair collates nominations and sends out to faculty who teach the book
- April 1 -- Chair and faculty who teach the book review suggestions and select 6-8 books to read
- May 1 to September 15 -- Committee reads selected books
- October 15 -- Committee recommends 2-3 books to Chair of the Committee
- February 1 – Chair of the Committee and faculty who teach the book, in consultation with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Chairs of the Departments, make final decision
 - announcement sent out to the university community
 - call for nominations for the following year (due March 1)

IV. Previous Reading Project Books

- 2003 James McBride, *The Color of Water* (Cultural Diversity)
- 2004 Jim Fergus, *One Thousand White Women* and Terry Tempest Williams, *The Open Space of Democracy* (Community Awareness and Involvement)
- 2005 Julia Butterfly Hill, *The Legacy of Luna* (Ecological Perspective)
- 2006 Tracy Chevalier, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Aesthetic Sensibility)
- 2007 Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (Ethical Responsibility)

- 2008 Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (Cultural Diversity)
- 2009 Greg Mortenson and David Relin, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace... One School at a Time* (Community Awareness and Involvement)
- 2010 Susan Cerulean, *Tracking Desire: A Journey after Swallow-tailed Kites* (Ecological Perspective)
- 2011 John Strelecky, *Life Safari* (Ecological Perspective)
- 2012 In process based on current practices

- 2013 One Book, One Campus process (under these guidelines)

V. References

- Barefoot, Betsy O. 2005. "Current Institutional Practices in the First College Year." *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student*
- Ishler, Jennifer L. Crissman, and M. Lee Upcraft. 2005. "The Keys to First-Year Student Persistence." *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student*.
- Laufgraben, Jodi Levine. 2006. Common Reading Programs: Going Beyond the Book.
- Martin, Deanna C. and Maureen Hurley. 2005. "Supplemental Instruction." *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student*.
- National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition.
<http://www.sc.edu/fye/>.