Florida’s Virtual ESE Online Distance Learning Program

October 30, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Exceptional Student Education Directors
Florida Diagnostic Learning Resources System Directors
Regional Professional Development Partnership Coordinators

FROM: Lori Massey, Director, Florida’s State Personnel Development Grant

RE: Virtual ESE Online Distance Learning Program
Spring 2008 Course Offerings

The spring 2008 schedule of online courses offered via the statewide Virtual Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Online Distance Learning Program is:

- Identification and Assessment of Individuals with Low Incidence Disabilities
- Nature of Severe and Profound Disabilities: Theory and Educational Practice
- Assessment and Methods in Early Childhood Special Education
- Typical and Atypical Development for Young Children

These courses are sponsored by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services to assist teachers seeking an endorsement in Autism, Severe and Profound Disabilities, and/or Pre-K Disabilities. Please include announcements of these course offerings in regional notices, listservs or newsletters for teachers. A copy of the Virtual ESE Distance Learning Program flyer is included.

Since the Virtual ESE Program is the vehicle that connects special education courses from around the state, students register for the courses through the participating university nearest them. Each participating university and the contact persons are listed below:

Florida Atlantic University          Dr. Cynthia Wilson          (561) 297-3280          clwilson@fau.edu
Florida Gulf Coast University       Ms. Carolyne Geischel       (239) 590-7795           cgischel@fgcu.edu
Florida International University    Dr. Liz Cramer              (305) 348-2425          cramere@fiu.edu
Florida State University            Dr. Mary Frances Hanline    (850) 644-4880           mhanline@garnet.acns.fsu.edu
University of Central Florida       Dr. Bill Wienke             (407) 823-2402           wwienke@mail.ucf.edu
University of Florida               Dr. Penny Cox               (352) 392-0701           pcox@coe.ufl.edu
University of North Florida         Dr. Len Roberson            (904) 620-2185           lroberso@unf.edu
University of South Florida         Dr. Daphne Thomas          (813) 974-1383           dthomas@tempest.coedu.usf.edu
University of West Florida           Dr. David Stout             (850) 474-2856           dstout@uwf.edu

Students must have email and Internet capabilities.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Lori Massey, Director, Florida’s State Personnel Development Grant, by telephone at (772) 462-7190 or via email at lmassey@ircc.edu.
Autism Endorsement Course(s):

**Identification and Assessment of Individuals with Low Incidence Disabilities**

**Course Description:**
This course provides class participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to critically analyze the processes in place to identify students with low incidence disabilities. The influence of such disabilities on development and learning in a least restrictive environment is explored. Inherent in this is the complexity of learning needs that this group of students experience, and for many students, the co morbidity of different developmental disabilities along with the influences of societal and environmental issues. A further purpose of the course is to provide participants with the ability to appropriately assess the skills and abilities of students with severe disabilities in a way that assessment results can be translated into meaningful educational interventions in a least restrictive environment.

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Phyllis Jones, University of South Florida-Sarasota Campus

Severe/Profound Disabilities Endorsement Course(s):

**Nature of Severe and Profound Disabilities: Theory and Educational Practice**

**Course Description:**
This course offers an historical overview of theory and teaching applications for students with severe and profound disabilities (SPD) including major theories and trends. It addresses causes and characteristics associated with severe/profound/multiple disabilities. Frameworks for the design of programs, curricula and Individual Education Plans (IEP) for individuals with SPD are provided. Emphasis is placed on intervention strategies to include appropriate learning goals, teaching approaches, and environmental arrangements. Additional topics include inclusion in schools and communities; selection, use, and simple design of adaptive equipment and assistive technology devices; and individualized transition educational plans (ITEP).

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Cynthia Pearl, University of Central Florida

Pre-K Disabilities Endorsement Course(s):

**Assessment and Methods in Early Childhood Special Education**

**Course Description:**
This course investigates assessment tools used in early intervention and early childhood special education. It also explores the strategies and procedures used for screening, diagnoses and program planning.

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Anita Solarski, University of West Florida

**Typical and Atypical Development for Young Children**

**Course Description:**
This course focuses on the stages and sequence of development and the impact of disabilities and biomedical risk factors on learning and development. Covers normal child growth and development from conception to age five and what can go wrong at the different developmental stages; from genetic contributions through conception and pregnancy to birth and to five years of age. Crucial times for deficiencies will be discussed.

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Lee Cross, University of Central Florida

(Please Note: Online courses are equivalent to traditional courses; they are as rigorous and demanding as face-to-face courses. Please review the class syllabus prior to beginning a Virtual ESE course. Since these courses will be provided via distance education, students who enroll should be comfortable with using the Internet, listservs, and email, and should recognize that almost all course activities will be handled electronically. There will be no class meetings and students will not attend any group or class sessions. Participation in online chat sessions, which will be offered at various times via the Internet, may be required. Classroom observations may also be required.)