

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA  
December 6, 2007**

**SUBJECT:** Ph.D. in Biostatistics at the University of Florida

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**PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

Consider for Approval the Ph.D. in Biostatistics at the University of Florida,  
CIP Code: 26.1102

**AUTHORITY FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACTION**

Section 7(d), Art. IX, Florida Constitution  
Board of Governors Regulation 8.011

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions proposes to establish a doctoral program in biostatistics. The Ph.D. program is designed to facilitate students' development of a strong theoretical foundation in biostatistics, broad-based understanding of biostatistical methods, and expertise in a cognate field. The proposal cites recent national reports on health care needs that confirm that biostatistics is now a growing contributor to the advancement of health sciences research and discovery, and that state that the U.S. faces a critical shortage of biostatisticians with graduate training.

A minimum of 90 credits beyond the bachelor's degree would be required for the doctoral degree. There would be considerable emphasis on methodology courses, as students would be required to explore a selected cognate field in some depth, such as Genetics, Epidemiology, or Environmental Health. Additionally, students would acquire experience in the planning of experiments and establishing a collaborative interaction with an investigator.

**Observations and relevant page numbers in staff analysis:**

- The University believes that this Ph.D. program would support its goals to become a top tier institution nationally and to continue to be a leader in health care research. (pages 2-3)
- The academic and physical resources are in place at the University to address the proposed program's goals. (page 3)
- The initial class would have two students, and the program would gradually grow to eight new students by the fifth year. (pages 10-11)
- The low student enrollment that is projected (1.5 FTE) would result in a high cost per FTE in Year One (\$106,757). (pages 11-12)
- Six faculty would have primary roles in providing instruction and student support

- in the Ph.D. program, and six faculty would have secondary roles. (pages 6-7)
- In the State University System, the University of South Florida offers a Ph.D. program in Biostatistics, and Florida State University gained approval by the Board of Governors in December 2006 to offer the Ph.D. in Biostatistics. (page 10)
  - The College of Public Health is seeking accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) and reports that the proposed Ph.D. in Biostatistics program is an essential component of its accreditation plans. The proposal does not identify the three doctoral programs that the College intends to establish to meet the CEPH standard. (page 5)
  - The Council on Education for Public Health has clarified that a single Ph.D. in Public Health designation can be used to meet the doctoral degree standard, as long as there are at least three distinct public health areas of concentration offered within that degree. (pages 5-6)
  - Regarding accreditation, there is now an initiative in the field of public health to develop a national voluntary credentialing examination for graduates of CEPH-accredited programs and schools. (page 6)

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**Supporting Documentation Included:** Provided with Committee Materials

**Facilitators/Presenters:** Richard Stevens, Director of Academic and Student Affairs