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Press release: 2006: 01: 19: USF Receives Funding for Summer Teaching Institute

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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(St. Petersburg, Fla) Jan. 19, 2006 - Lisa Austin knows the value of hard work. Not only is she a full-time teacher at Safety Harbor Elementary School, but she’s also enrolled in Educational Leadership classes at USF St. Petersburg. Austin is pursuing her Master’s of Education in Educational Leadership through a program called School Leadership for Results.

As part of the program, she works with a mentor, Lisa Grant, principal of Gulfport Montessori Elementary School. By learning in both the classroom and with an experienced school leader, Austin is one of a number of USF St. Petersburg students paving the way for the advanced preparation of educational leaders for Florida’s school districts.

Support for the program is available through the generosity of Progress Energy. For the past two years, Progress Energy has invested $75,000 in the College of Education to support the School Leadership for Results program. These funds provide tuition assistance for 25 students, one full-year fellowship for an outstanding leadership student, and books and materials.

This year the College of Education received an additional gift of $60,000 from Progress Energy for its Teacher Leadership Institute, which, in conjunction with Pinellas County Schools, will launch this summer. Two hundred to 300 educators from Pinellas and surrounding school districts will participate in a series of professional events at the Institute at USF St. Petersburg May 19-20. In addition, the school district will match a major portion of these funds to provide full tuition for 25 district-nominated teachers to receive certificates of Advanced Graduate Studies in Teacher Leadership. The certificate comprises a five-class sequence of graduate courses.

“These generous gifts from Progress Energy will make a critical difference in the lives of teachers interested in expanding their knowledge and their leadership capacity,” said Vivian Fuego, dean of the College of Education. “The evidence is clear. Teachers who are skilled as leaders have greater impact on student learning, and they remain longer in the teaching profession as productive professionals.”

Progress Energy is also investing $125,000 in the College of Marine Science to support two educational programs; the K-12 Teaching Fellowship Program and the Oceanography Camp for Girls. The K-12 Teaching Fellowship Program helps schools improve science education in grades 3 to 10 by providing teacher training, science materials and classroom teaching support from trained scientists. Oceanography Camp for Girls is a three-week summer education program for girls entering high school. It encourages pursuit of science careers through hands-on experience.

“Progress Energy is not only a power company, we’re also part of the community,” said Bill Habermeyer, president and CEO of Progress Energy Florida. “Better teachers mean better students, and, through some of USF’s programs, it can also mean a better environment – and that can enhance the entire community.”

--USF St. Petersburg--