Children’s Creative Learning Center at FIU
Advisory Board Meeting
March 22, 2018 3:00pm
CCLC Conference Room

MINUTES

Attendees: Gisela Field, Judith Cohen, Lucia Obregon, Matilde Gramling, Silvia Valdes, Alexandria Pipitone

I. Leadership Transition
   A. Introduction of new Program Coordinator, Alexandria Pipitone
   B. Silvia in Director position looking at where the Center is at that moment and the vision
      1. Taking a look at the reputation of the Center and the customer service
      2. What can the Center be more flexible on without changing the philosophy of the program or making it difficult on the classroom teachers
         a. More lenient on arrival time, rest time items and other charges
         b. Implemented REMIND App: 1 sentence reminders that go directly to the families’ phones the day before a due date or event
      3. Good feedback from families
      4. Also looking at staff
         a. Professional Development: Teachers have been able to attend classes and seminars
         b. Always asking “why” to ensure that things are not being done “just because”
   C. Matilde highlighted that the Center is an Auxiliary and a business but we cannot lose the “Center touch”
      1. Silvia as the Director has prompted this change
   D. Silvia emphasized the importance of input from all stakeholders including parents, staff and Board members is imperative to the success of the Center
   E. Matilde spent time at the Center and lived through the day-to-day operations during the transition

II. Center Updates
   A. Center Updates
      1. Enrollment
         a. Was a previous concern, especially since the Grant was coming to an end, on how it would affect the budget
         b. Now all the classes are filled with 15 children and the Graham Center is filled with 8
         c. 15 and 8 respectively is the maximum capacity for the classrooms
         d. Increase in enrollment makes a significant positive change in the budget
         e. Teachers have been able to maintain a successful classroom with the increase in enrollment
      2. Accolades
         a. University collaborations
         b. Last year, the Center collaborated with 9 new programs on campus
         c. Not just beginning new collaborations, but reinvigorated old collaborations, like with the School of Education
         d. More teachers will be completing the Cooperating Teacher Training so that the Center can accommodate more Field Placement Students and Internships
e. Department of Nutrition and Dietetics: Advised on the food policy and provided a workshop for the parents. Highly regarded by parents
f. Advising professors that the Center can accommodate their students for assignments and projects
g. Thus far these programs have participated: Dental Students, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Psychology, Education
h. Also feeding into what the University is striving for and FIU’s goals but supporting in our own way
i. The Center is projecting a different image to the University community

3. Student research opportunities
   a. 2 happening with the next couple of weeks
   b. Each month, there is a new request to conduct research or observe at the Center

4. FIU News articles
   a. Increases the awareness and peaks the University’s awareness
   b. Changes the way the University Community views the Center

5. FIU Service & Recognition Awards
   a. Silvia reached out to parents passively and parents jumped at the chance to recognize the teachers
   b. If the selection committee didn’t previously know who CCLC was, and the importance of their jobs, now they know the entire team
   c. The University can see the impact since parents from the different departments on campus nominated the teachers
   d. Matilde expanded that Silvia has changed the morale of the teachers

6. Office renovations summer 2018
   a. The Center needed a way to increase the safety and security of the front office to limit access to the children and classrooms
   b. Sought council from the FIU Chief of Police and he recommended the double barrier seen in the floor plans
   c. The Center also needed an additional office space for the Program Coordinator position
   d. Office will have a window so that the Director and Program Coordinator can see the entry and reception space
   e. The reception area is being divided into two where to the left is the reception space and the right is the office space
   f. Double entry system: a second door will limit the access to the classrooms
   g. Security film will be placed on all windows to deter easy access
   h. Intercoms in the classrooms are being changed into Emergency phones
   i. Goal is to have project completed over the summer
   j. Silvia has shared with a few current families and they have received it positively
   k. Gisela questioned about the outdoor area, intruders could jump the fence and access the children much quicker than being able to access the building
      I. Pertinent now that the entrances are open on 117th
      II. Hedges may reduce visibility to secure the grounds
      III. Concrete fence would be ideal to reduce visibility, limit access, and protect the children
      IV. Tarps could also reduce visibility and yellow poles would prevent anyone from driving into the outside area
V. Federal Funding may be released and Matilde will find out more if the Center is eligible to enhance outdoor security if needed, will contact Chief Casas again to review outdoor space

B. Review of CCLC Budget
   a. 2013-2014 & 2017-2018
      a. Revenues have increased due to increase in enrollment, increase in CIT allocation which helps with Student Tuition Fees
      b. Salaries has increased because we no longer have the grant and changes in leadership
      c. Increase in benefits due to FIU changes
      d. Increase in minimum wage for Support Staff
      e. Expenses: Silvia looked at all the things that the Center could cut and make a routine in order to streamline the expenses
      f. Food Program: We no longer serve lunch as per allergies and food preferences
         a. The grant made it free for FIU Students but when we no longer were awarded the Grant, it was not as popular with families
         b. The Center now has a reasonable accommodations request that are approved through the Disability Resource Center. Current request includes epi-pens. All teachers and staff are trained in order to be able to accommodate these families.
      g. Ending Fund Balance is for building renovations and “rainy days”
      h. Office Construction is being paid for by the Center directly, there is no additional funding from the University
   b. Board of Trustee need for care ages 0 – 2
      a. Recent discussion from FIU Board of Trustee to CFO about the need for Faculty child care for ages 0 – 2
      b. Discussed contracting child care outward to Kinder Care: there is a current agreement with Kinder Care where FIU Employees get a 10% discount for their children
      c. Matilde shared our waitlist numbers and showed that we do not have many faculty on the waiting list creating uncertainty about where the concern is coming from
      d. We will be created a “need survey” to the FIU Community and Matilde will take the lead
      e. College of Business Marketing Department will help in the creation of the survey to ensure that it is not biased and written correctly
      f. FIU Employer of Choice: There was a previous need for Birth through 2 but funding was not available at the time
      g. The Center is trying to address these concerns by analyzing different enrollment ideas
         I. Potentially eliminating Kindergarten freeing a classroom for a younger age group
         II. For now, a survey is necessary to find where the need is
         III. We cannot wait until we have the funds to expand to address the need
         IV. We need a donor in order to expand the Center
      h. Gisela questioned if there would be any other space on campus that is cheaper than to build and to sell the current space back to the University
i. Possibly the PiKapp House; Matilde and Silvia are going to find out if the space would be appropriate for expanded services
j. Gisela recommends to keep Kindergarten as it keeps to connection to Grade School preparation
   I. The preparation the children get at Kindergarten is beyond Public school kindergarten
k. Silvia shared the current enrollment in the older age group is a mixed age group of Kindergarten and VPK children making assessment and lesson planning difficult as the standards are so different
l. The Center’s largest waiting list group is 0-2 years old
m. Judy mentioned surveying families to see how the children fair when transitioning to elementary school
   I. Alumni Survey sent out but it is currently under review
   II. Libby works with families one-on-one to ensure that if the children need special services, they get it before transitioning to Elementary School
n. Early intervention services are becoming more prominent with all age groups
   I. Included speech and language screening youngest children this year
   II. Last year, collaborated with Quality Counts to work with families that have children with behavioral issues
c. Discussion of Center Tuition and Fees
   a. Tuition Market Survey Review
   b. The Center has not changed tuition since 2015
c. Created a survey and spoke with Centers in the area to get more information on ratios, teacher training, accreditation, and cost
d. Board of Trustee is only interested in Faculty and Staff need but the student need may need to be analyzed as well
   I. A separate survey could be created to find out that need
e. Lucia questioned if the other SACS accredited schools in Miami offer care for children ages 0-2 and how much is it
f. Kinder Care discounted rate for FIU families is more than the Center’s Staff and Faculty rates
   I. Teachers do not have degrees but they may not be necessary as long as the quality is still there
g. What is a quality service to offer FIU Employees
d. Center Tuition Fee Profile
   a. Working with Auxiliary enterprise to analyze the tuition from a business standpoint
   b. Should the charge be different per age group since the ratios require more staffing
c. The profile includes information from other Florida State Universities to have another benchmark
d. Most of the schools price differently per age group
e. The leadership is also changing in many of these programs; Silvia got to meet with the Director of UF Children’s Center and they discussed arranging a meeting with all Florida State Universities next Fall being held in Gainesville
f. All Universities can collaborate together and share information on funding and University support

g. Tuition increased in 2015-2016 for all groups except the Staff group
   I. Accommodates the recession and ending of the grant

h. Considering a Tuition increase for the 2019-2020 School Session
   I. Not interested in charging differently for each age group since there is already a variety of contracts because of FIU Affiliation
   II. Have to make sure that Students are accommodated because of CIT and SGA funds
   III. Gisela suggested considering a half day option for students or faculty

C. Change in DCF Regulations
   1. More things for the Office to manage
      a. Office calls families if a child is not present at school within an hour of expected arrival time
      b. Can no longer use wading pools
      c. A lot of policies are changing and that trickles down to the facilities

D. Collaboration with City of Miami Beach
   1. Satellite Center in the Museum for City of Miami Beach Employees
   2. It turned out to be too expensive but nothing is terminated yet

E. Establishment of Advisory Board
   1. Purpose of Board
      a. Board is an Advisory Board
   2. By-Laws
      a. The Center does not currently have any By-Laws or any listed purpose of the Board
      b. Working with Office of General Counsel to draft Advisory Board By-Laws
      c. Using the Florida Statutes to determine who is required to serve on the Board

3. Fundraising
   a. Fundraising is the priority in order to expand the program through Building
   b. Plans from 4-5 years ago was $7-8 Million to duplicate the current building
      I. Matilde and Silvia will go back to Facilities to analyze the current cost and expansion model
   c. Gisela explained that it is important to analyze the impact of the Board
      I. Board needs to expand and diversify the group with people from different backgrounds, not just Education
      II. Judy agreed and added that the Board members should be donating to the Center as well “You can’t ask anyone else for money if the people on board are not donating”
      III. Include it in the By-laws or establishment of Board positions
      IV. Donations can be made through United Way or Ignite

4. Next steps are to determine individuals who may be interested in serving on the Board that would be able to advocate for the Center
   a. Gisela mentioned using connections within the early childhood community to network
   b. One of Silvia’s goals is to increase Center visibility within the community
      I. Gisela will introduce Silvia to influential people in the Community beginning with The Children’s Trust