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CONTACTS: Azure Collier / Fitchburg State College / (978) 665-4694 / acollier@fsc.edu
Stuart Pologe / Words That Cook, LLC / (774) 885-2000 / stuart@wordsthatcook.org

PARTNERSHIP BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO LITERACY EDUCATION

Fitchburg/Natick, MA – On January 1, 2006, the Fitchburg State College Center for Professional Studies will begin offering a new and unique distance education literacy course in partnership with Words That Cook, LLC, a Natick-based provider of innovative educational courseware and television programming.

A Foundation for Literacy: Reading Aloud, Storytelling & Writing teaches ways of fostering children's literacy development at early childhood, elementary and middle school levels. In a distinct and contemporary approach, the teaching in this distance education course utilizes not only a textbook, but also expert audio files, Internet resources and instructional DVDs. Assignments are completed with one or more children, and there are no prerequisites. Students wishing to take this course do not need to be actively enrolled in degree programs.

The course developers took rigorous steps to ensure that the course is coherent, user-friendly and based on the latest research in literacy education. Words That Cook solicited input and reviews from experts across the country. Educators at Fitchburg State College also collaborated with Words that Cook to achieve college accreditation.

The Center for Professional Studies, which provides development opportunities for educators, will offer the course for three Undergraduate credits or for 45 Professional Development Points (PDPs). The course is targeted toward education majors, paraprofessionals, teachers, librarians, those in the childcare industry and anyone else who works with children. Additionally, the course was developed with the impending education requirements for Head Start professionals in mind.

It is the sincere hope of both Fitchburg State College and Words That Cook that the course will attract and accommodate students from all walks of life and even draw students into the fields of education and language arts, ultimately leading to the advancement of children's literacy skills.

"This is a great opportunity for teachers and other concerned professionals to expand their knowledge of fostering children's literacy development at all stages," said Windy Honeycutt, interim director of The Center for Professional Studies. "Literacy is a major concern in the United States, and this class provides skills that will help educators meet the literacy standards in today's classrooms."

For more information, visit www.wordsthatcook.org. Course registration begins January 1, 2006.

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