Creating Solutions
Office of Engagement | 2013 Year in Review
Be Worlds Ahead in Creating Solutions

FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg and Vice President for Engagement Irma Becerra-Fernandez talk with students Stephanie Aristide, Sherine Metayer and Darius Alleyne, all participants in FIU’s Golden Scholars summer bridge program.
Every great university must answer the question – what does community engagement mean to our institution? How can we partner with our community, locally and globally, in ways that go beyond the traditional roles of higher education?

At Florida International University, the answer lies in our commitment to working with our partners throughout the region to tackle the problems facing our world today – to serve as a solutions center that focuses on collaboration and cooperation to make a difference.

The seventh largest university in the nation, FIU is a public, urban-serving research institution that is recognized for its commitment to learning, entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. As a Carnegie-engaged university, we work to find solutions to the most challenging problems of our time. FIU serves an increasingly diverse population. Almost 80 percent of our students are minorities and more than 60 percent are Hispanic. We are first in the continental U.S. in awarding baccalaureate degrees to minorities, including Hispanics; first in awarding engineering degrees to Hispanics; and eighth in awarding engineering degrees to African-American students.

Committing to a robust role in strengthening the K-20 continuum, FIU launched ACCESS (Achieving Community Collaboration in Education and Student Success) – an innovative partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), our nation’s fourth largest school district – to improve student learning and help students transition into higher education and careers.

We increased dual enrollment offerings and created a summer bridge program to support students making the transition from high schools in underserved neighborhoods to college life at FIU. We also stepped up our efforts to offer a multitude of pre-collegiate opportunities, including tutoring, advising and exposure to the FIU campus.

That’s the power of community partnerships.

But that’s only the beginning. Our efforts stretch far and wide and continue to grow with each passing day as we learn of new opportunities for FIU to partner with the community to be a catalyst for change.

We are working with community partners to reach out to former foster care and homeless youth to offer them customized services to help them succeed. We are working with industry leaders to create more opportunities for students to engage in internships in their fields, increasing their chances of career success. We are increasing our mentoring initiatives, service learning courses and engaged research, all with the goal of enriching the lives of our students as changemakers in the world in which they live.

These all represent the power of community partnerships.

Community engagement is not one program, one initiative or one idea. It’s a collective attitude of willingness to step in where we are needed, develop partnerships in the community and lead the way for change.

Engagement is at the heart of everything we do at FIU. With your support and involvement we will continue to align our efforts to address the most pressing needs of our time.

Thank you for all you do for FIU and for your community!
Ja’Brielle Reese from Miami Southridge Senior High School receives help from an FIU Mastery Math Lab learning assistant.
As South Florida’s public university and an anchor institution in Miami-Dade County, FIU is committed to providing access to a university education to eligible students who have the preparation, drive and determination to earn a college degree. We believe that a 21st century public university should pride itself on who it is able to enroll and graduate. We believe the American dream is alive and thriving at our FIU.

To translate our commitment into action we have developed ACCESS – Achieving Community Collaboration in Education and Student Success – a strategic collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). As an achievement-oriented partnership, ACCESS has enabled us to align our combined instructional, research and creative talents to improve the academic success of our K-12 students.

Chaired by the superintendent of M-DCPS and the president of FIU, ACCESS is improving student success in public schools, increasing high school graduation and promoting students’ transition into higher education. It is made up of 20 strategic work groups, each with its own unique vision and goals, which are overseen by top leadership from M-DCPS and FIU.

We are celebrating our shared successes including:

- MAST@FIU Biscayne Bay Campus opened in August 2013, following the highly successful MAST magnet school model at Homestead and Key Biscayne. The partnership supports state objectives to have more and better qualified Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) graduates in Florida.
- From Fall 2009 to Spring 2013, the number of M-DCPS students enrolled in dual enrollment at FIU has expanded from 425 to more than 6,000; dual enrollment courses increased from 16 to 127; and the number of schools offering dual enrollment increased from six to 38.
- Dual enrollment results in more than $3 million in tuition savings for M-DCPS students. For every dollar invested in dual enrollment, $10 in savings is returned to students.
- 196 M-DCPS teachers are now credentialed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to teach college-level, dual enrollment courses at FIU.
- 85 K-8 teachers from M-DCPS have received a new FIU STEM certificate, indicating advanced training in STEM subjects.
- FIU has opened its Mastery Math Lab, where students learn college algebra in a high-tech, high-touch environment, to M-DCPS students on Saturdays. Of the students who participated in the pilot program, 79 percent successfully passed the end-of-course exam. The county average was 66 percent.
- FIU has offered multiple professional development workshops and teacher training to M-DCPS dual enrollment teachers on subjects such as writing and rhetoric and science.
- Tutorial programs are in place throughout the school year and summer.
- Student field trips to FIU are offered during the school year and summer.
- Internships in the FIU College of Education include science, music and social studies in M-DCPS elementary schools.

ACCESS is an example of how we identified an issue of critical importance to our community – student success, which has social and economic implications for the future of our world – and we formed a strong partnership to find solutions that are benefitting our students and the community.
a university community school partnership in Liberty City, Miami
2013 was a banner year for Miami Northwestern Senior High School (MNW) in Liberty City. Named an “A” school for the first time in its history, the school increased its graduation rate from 64 percent to nearly 80 percent, saw its graduating class earn nearly $6 million in scholarships and increased the number of students accepted into post-secondary education by 10 percent.

The school launched a new aquaponics laboratory – the first of its kind in a Miami-Dade County Public School – which allows students to learn science hands-on. This new pedagogical platform supported Miami Northwestern students in ranking highest in science achievement among all schools in the district’s Educational Transformation Office (ETO), which focuses on improving outcomes in low-performing schools.

The aquaponics lab and organic garden serves as a centerpiece for hands-on learning across a variety of disciplines, including science, business, culinary arts and civic engagement. The school also celebrated the inauguration of Plant It Forward, an innovative new program focusing on nutrition and social entrepreneurship.

FIU is proud to have contributed to the school’s success through its groundbreaking university community school partnership. The Education Effect, now in its third year at Miami Northwestern, launched in 2011 with a seed investment of $1 million by JPMorgan Chase. The Education Effect aligns university expertise, resources and research-based intervention programs to address the pressing educational and social needs of students at Miami Northwestern and its feeder schools. The partnership is garnering impressive results and solidifying a long-term vision for growth and sustained impact to improve educational outcomes in one of Miami’s most socio-economically challenged and culturally rich neighborhoods.

It reflects FIU’s dedication to serving as a solutions center for our community and is positioning Miami Northwestern as a district model for school and community transformation.

Highlights of the partnership’s success to date include:

- Supporting the school in achieving its first-ever “A” grade, up from its historical “D/F” grade
- Establishing the first aquaponics lab in M-DCPS and constructing an organic, native garden with more than 100 plants and trees representing 22 different species
- Increasing the percentage of students earning 3.0 GPA or higher from 15 percent to 45 percent
- Increasing the graduation rate from 64 percent to nearly 80 percent
- Increasing the number of students accepted to post-secondary education by 10 percent
- Improving students’ learning skills:
  - Students reading on grade level increased from 19 percent to 30 percent.
  - Students performing in the bottom quartile (lowest 25 percent) in reading demonstrated learning gains from 48 percent to 63 percent.
  - Students performing on grade level in biology increased from 52 percent to 70 percent.
  - Students performing on grade level in math increased from 33 percent to 53 percent.
- Engaging more than 1,000 elementary, middle and high school students in visits to FIU
- Empowering 150 students with comprehensive skills in finance and investment through a financial literacy program
- Tripling the number of college credit courses available to Northwestern students and quadrupling the number of students participating
- Offering the first-ever dual enrollment course in Environmental Science at an M-DCPS school.
- Engaging more than 50 FIU students and more than 100 MNW and feeder-pattern school students in service learning (Writing for Social Action, Writing Fellows, The Rhetoric Project, Math and Civics Institute, Liberty City mural painting and Project CAREE with the Center for Leadership)
- Quadrupling the number of students admitted to FIU
As a senior studying biological sciences, Ruslan Garcia, FIU Class of 2013, presented his findings on safer treatments for melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, at the first STEM Undergraduate Research Symposium in March 2013. Garcia’s presentation took home the top prize at the event, which showcased scientific work by more than 70 students from eight colleges and universities in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
Florida is one of the fastest growing life sciences regions in the world and South Florida is leading the charge. With a strong base of private industry, startups and entrepreneurs, world-class universities, venture capitalists and some of the leading non-profit research institutes in the world, South Florida has built a solid resource base to become a top life sciences industry destination.

To further that momentum, FIU led the creation of a consortium of top educational, economic development and research institutions to unite our efforts to build a strong and thriving life sciences industry cluster in the region. The Life Sciences South Florida (LSSF) initiative draws inspiration from successful industry clusters such as Silicon Valley, the Florida High Tech Corridor in Central Florida and the Research Triangle in North Carolina.

By utilizing our collective assets and collaborating with regional, state, national and international governments, industries and communities, we promote innovation, investment, entrepreneurship and economic growth in biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and information technology to promote high-tech and high-paying jobs.

LSSF is making significant advances in key initiatives:

- **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) K-20 Student and Workforce Development**: More than 70 students from eight colleges and universities participated in the first LSSF STEM Undergraduate Research Symposium at Miami Dade College on March 16, 2013. Plans are underway for the Second Annual LSSF STEM Undergraduate Research Symposium, to be hosted at FIU on Saturday, April 12, 2014. Students showcase original research in STEM fields, compete for prizes and network with life sciences industry leaders about internships and career opportunities.

- **Shared Technology and Communication Portal**: FIU has taken the lead in establishing a Shared Technology and Communication Portal through which member institutions can search for and access research equipment and laboratory services. Participating institutions in the pilot implementation include FIU, Florida Atlantic University, Nova Southeastern University, University of Miami and Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience. Future plans include rollout to all LSSF member institutions.

- **BioFlorida Conference**: LSSF was a sponsor of the 2013 BioFlorida Conference, held in Tampa on September 15-17, 2013. FIU will host the first-ever BioFlorida Latin American and Caribbean Life Sciences Conference March 27-28, 2014.

- **Seven50 Partnership and Third Annual Seven50 Summit**: LSSF joined the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership (SFRP) and its Seven50 initiative in an effort to strengthen our contribution toward long-term planning for the South Florida region.

- **Life Sciences Webinars**: Regional webinars are conducted monthly to educate faculty, graduate and doctoral students, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and other companies about scientific breakthroughs and potential commercial applications and spin-off companies. Topics have included healthcare technology; venture capital for biotechnology businesses; techniques in biopharmaceutical research; and innovations in biomedical testing. All of the webinars may be viewed on the LSSF website at http://lifesciencessf.org/resources/index.shtml.
For Oscar Morejon, FIU Class of 2013, giving up his summer vacation to intern with Suffolk Construction in downtown Miami turned out to be a smart move. A graduate of FIU’s OHL School of Construction, Morejon parlayed that experience into a full-time job as an assistant superintendent for the privately held firm with offices throughout the U.S.

“It’s a great feeling to work as an intern and then get placed as a full-time, salaried employee,” said Morejon, whose current position includes overseeing construction of a 13-story retail center in downtown Miami with a crew of more than 100 workers. “The internship gave them the opportunity to know me and for me to know them.”

Morejon’s experience is exactly what FIU seeks to replicate for every student – the opportunity to gain valuable workplace experience that aligns with their chosen field of study and future career goals.

Nearly all employers are looking for graduates with experience so we are putting the mechanisms in place to make sure that is possible for every one of our students. FIU has embarked on partnerships with key institutions and organizations, locally and globally, to further that goal. Major milestones from 2013 include:

- Students participating in academic or non-academic internships increased from 4,183 to 4,652, an increase of 11.2 percent from the prior year.
- Launching the first international internship program through the OHL School of Construction Management. Two FIU students participated in 10-week, paid summer internships with OHL Construction at its headquarters in Madrid.
- Launching a pilot program in Mysore, India, in which two FIU medical students worked at the Public Health Research Institute of India, led by epidemiology professor Purnima Madhivanan.
- Expanding the FIU Student Partnership Program with FPL, helping the company attract local, top-tier talent and providing employment opportunities to FIU students at an on-campus, student-staffed customer care center. Each of the 39 students who completed the program was offered a full-time position upon graduation. FPL has committed to expanding the program by 11 positions in 2014.
- Moving forward with the second year of the Mayor’s Executive Internship program, in conjunction with the Miami-Dade County Mayor’s Office. Fifty-two students have participated and graduated, and five have been hired fulltime with Miami-Dade County government.
- FIU has recognized 10 companies for their leadership and commitment to providing valuable internship experiences to FIU students, as well as placing former interns in permanent positions upon graduation. The 2013 President’s Internship Honor Roll includes the following companies: Baptist Health South Florida; Carnival Cruise Line; Disney; IBM; Miami-Dade County; Price Waterhouse Coopers; State Farm; Target; Telemundo; and the U.S. Department of Energy.
“It’s a great feeling to work as an intern and then get placed as a full-time, salaried employee,” said FIU graduate Oscar Morejon, whose current position includes overseeing construction of a 13-story retail center in downtown Miami with a crew of more than 100 workers.
According to non-profit partner Educate Tomorrow, less than 10 percent of foster care and homeless youth enroll in college, and less than 1 percent graduate. During the 2012-2013 academic year at FIU, approximately one-third of the former foster care and homeless youth were on academic probation with a GPA of less than 2.0 and half had less than a 2.5. The struggles of these students reflect the nationwide challenges this particular population faces.

In 2013, FIU launched Fostering Panther Pride, an initiative designed to offer customized services to former foster care and homeless students. The goal is to provide opportunities for these students to succeed academically and graduate in good standing from a top-tier public research university.

Already, FIU and the community have stepped up to support these efforts:

The Miami Foundation, Educate Tomorrow, the Miami Coalition for the Homeless, Voices for Children, the Office of the Provost, FIU’s Vice Provost Steven Moll and Chad Moss Construction have contributed a combined total of $133,000 to fund the program.

Fostering Panther Pride is comprised of five components:

- **Success Coach**: An individual who serves as the contact person to provide students with a support system and help them navigate the university’s resources. The Success Coach will be responsible for organizing customized outreach focused on financial aid, study skills, internships and other services that will assist students in graduating with an FIU degree.

- **Mentoring Program**: Students are assigned a trained mentor to help guide them through their undergraduate journey.

- **Student Academic Assistance**: High school seniors will have an opportunity to participate in the Golden Scholars Bridge Program, a summer transition academy for those needing one area of remediation to be admitted to FIU.

- **First Generation Scholars**: $100,000 in scholarships over the next five years has been secured for students who are first in their family to receive a college degree.

- **Research**: FIU faculty involved in this initiative identify best practices to assist the population of former foster care and homeless youth, to produce a replicable model for other communities and institutions. Through collaborative efforts with our partners, FIU looks forward to further developing and sustaining this initiative to create an ongoing impact on our students.

Spearheaded by the Office of Engagement, supported by the College of Law and nurtured by a committee of administrators and faculty with an interest in helping homeless and former foster care students, the program will be housed in Undergraduate Education.
As a former foster care student, Ruth Rios did not have the typical college experience. Working two jobs and without a car or cell phone, Rios graduated from FIU in 2010 with an undergraduate degree in exercise physiology and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in business administration. Fostering Panther Pride will provide special services to students like Rios to help ensure they graduate and succeed. Rios shared her story at an event in November to launch the program.
Business students Xenia Sepulveda, Adeline Pin, Lina Kuratomi and Hermain Hanif are interning at American Airlines, one of the first supporters of the Talent Development Network.

Retaining the intellectual capital of the South Florida region is an essential component of developing an economically thriving community.

At FIU, we work hard to make sure our talented graduates can find the high-paying career opportunities they need to make South Florida their home.

To further that goal, FIU is leading the charge to create a regional talent development program that will provide undergraduate and graduate students with meaningful work experience in seven targeted industries, inspired by the One Community One Goal (OCOG) Strategic Plan:

- Aerospace
- Creative design
- Hospitality and leisure
- Information technology
- Life sciences and health care
- International banking and finance
- Trade and logistics

Led by OCOG’s Academic Leaders Council, the Talent Development Network will provide the online technology platform to match students with paid internships at participating companies. The goal is to create a pipeline of new employment opportunities in South Florida, benefiting local businesses, students and the greater community, with the additional goal of retaining our intellectual talent in South Florida.

The Miami Foundation has offered a $100,000 challenge grant to establish the network and several individuals and organizations have pledged early support, including American Airlines, Baptist Health South Florida, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Shaffer Foundation and Miami-Dade County Commissioner Juan Carlos Zapata.

Participating academic institutions include Barry University, FIU, Florida Memorial University, Miami Dade College, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, St. Thomas University and the University of Miami. In addition to coordinating paid internships with industry partners, the Talent Development Network will increase retention, graduation and job placement rates in South Florida for our students.

An ideal vehicle to support the regional effort towards One Community One Goal, the Talent Development Network will provide industry partners valuable return on their investment through employer education and assistance in the development, recruitment and implementation of effective internships. Additionally, partners will be engaged with higher education institutions in new ways to help shape curriculum to better reflect current trends and industry needs.

This initiative aims to create 200 new paid internship opportunities in our region and create an internship culture among industry in South Florida.
James West, a third-year medical student, is completing his surgery rotation at Baptist Hospital. Baptist Health South Florida is one of five organizations that has committed to supporting FIU’s Talent Development Network.
Fundraising
Community Support Making Every Dollar Count

Every project undertaken by the FIU Office of Engagement would not be possible without the support and collaboration of our many partners, public and private. This year, we have been fortunate to receive commitments totaling nearly $1 million to fund a diverse array of initiatives. We are grateful to those who have contributed to our success this year and look forward to continued collaboration with our partners to advance our shared goals.

2013 Office of Engagement Contributions and Commitments:

- **JPMorgan Chase Foundation**: Completed a three-year, $1 million investment in support of The Education Effect with a final installment of $300,000.

- **Charity Service, Inc.**: $5,000 to support FIU’s Math and Civics Summer Institute to engage elementary school students from Liberty City.

- **Department of Defense Mentor Protégé Program**: $82,000 to fund three faculty and three graduate students to participate in a mentor protégé project at FIU.

- **JPMorgan Chase**: $158,000 to fund The Education Effect’s Plant it Forward program, in support of science, culinary arts, engineering and social entrepreneurship instruction at Miami Northwestern Senior High School (MNW.)

- **Fostering Panther Pride**: $133,000, including $25,000 from Educate Tomorrow; $24,000 from the Miami Coalition for the Homeless; $15,000 from The Miami Foundation; $10,000 from Voices for Children; and $50,000 from Chad Moss Construction, which will be matched dollar for dollar by the state for a total impact of $100,000.

- **The Health Foundation South Florida**: $27,000 in support of the Health Effect, to conduct needs and capacity assessments for the Liberty City community and specifically the John H. Peavy Adolescent Health Center located at MNW.

- **Himan Brown Charitable Trust**: $25,000 awarded for MNW students to participate in FIU’s Golden Scholar Program, a six-week summer bridge program to help students make the transition to FIU.

- **Student Government Association**: $10,000 to fund a new online internship portal at internships.fiu.edu.

- **One Community One Goal (OCOG) Academic Leaders Council (ALC) Talent Development Network (TDN)**: $25,000 in commitments have been received from several organizations, including American Airlines ($5,000), Baptist Health South Florida ($5,000), Commissioner Juan Carlos Zapata ($5,000), the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau ($5,000) and the Shaffer Foundation ($5,000). The Miami Foundation tentatively offered a challenge grant of $100,000 to start the initiative.*

- **Life Sciences South Florida STEM Undergraduate Research Symposium**: $7,000 from the FIU Division of Research ($1,000); FIU Undergraduate Education ($1,000); FIU College of Engineering and Computing ($1,000); Florida Atlantic University ($1,000); Florida Gulf Coast University ($1,000); Nova Southeastern University ($500); Palm Beach State College ($500); Miami Dade College Office of the Provost ($500); and Indian River State College ($500) to fund the Life Sciences South Florida Undergraduate STEM Research Symposium.

- **The Miami Foundation**: $19,000 to establish an agro-ecology afterschool research program at MNW.

*Contingent upon matching dollars being secured.
Talent Development Network

Five organizations have committed $5,000 to help fund the Talent Development Network, to match The Miami Foundation grant of $100,000.

- American Airlines
- Baptist Health South Florida
- Commissioner Juan Carlos Zapata
- The Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau
- The Shaffer Foundation

JPMorgan Chase

Completed a three-year $1 million investment and contributed an additional $158,000 to fund The Education Effect’s “Plant it Forward” program.
Since 2004, FIU has been an active participant in the traditional Liberty City Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade. Through The Education Effect Partnership, students from throughout Liberty City, including Miami Northwestern Senior High School, Brownsville Middle School and others ride the FIU float, interacting with FIU football players, cheerleaders, faculty, staff and administrators.
On the cover: Miami Northwestern Senior High School freshmen Chyanne Hunt (left) and Ashley Hepburn (right) create geometric structures to help them understand various mathematical concepts through the nationally acclaimed Algebra Project. The program is a component of The Education Effect, FIU's university community school partnership in Liberty City.

Thanks for your Engagement!

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