

FIU Office of Engagement Celebrates Second Year Anniversary



Florida International University (FIU) Office of Engagement celebrated its second year anniversary on Monday, February 06, 2012 from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. The celebration took place at the FIU Faculty Club with faculty, staff and community partners.

The office was established in February 2010 as part of President Mark B. Rosenberg’s vision of FIU as “a leading student-centered urban public research university that is locally and globally engaged”. President Rosenberg appointed Dr. Divina Grossman as founding Vice President for Engagement to spearhead the office to encourage the university and the community to collaborate in various projects.

Under Dr. Grossman’s leadership, the office has flourished, attaining the prestigious Community Engagement Classification by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, awarded to institutions that create partnerships with their greater communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of learning and resources in an environment of collaboration and reciprocity. FIU received the acknowledgement on the strength of its outreach and partnerships as well as curricular engagement. To support its application, FIU Office of Engagement created the Community Partnerships Database, a repository and tracking tool of FIU’s community work.

FIU faculty and staff have partnered with members of the community to tackle civic issues and contribute to the common good. Here are some examples of the Office of Engagement initiatives:

Life Sciences South Florida (LSSF)

Initially spearheaded by FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg and President Frank Nero of the Beacon Council, this initiative aims to establish an industry cluster in South Florida focused on life sciences, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and information technology. To stimulate economic growth in South Florida, LSSF will link the elements of the innovation ecosystem: research, entrepreneurship, venture capital and life sciences companies, with a goal toward increasing research density and accelerating research commercialization.

Project ACCESS (Achieving Community Collaboration in Education and Student Success)

A broad partnership with FIU and Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), designed to align our instructional, research and creative talents to improve academic success in public schools, increase high school graduation and promote students' transition into higher education. ACCESS is made up of ten strategic work groups and includes oversight from the FIU President, M-DCPS Superintendent and their respective leadership teams addressing issues such as articulation, pre-collegiate preparation, STEM initiatives, dual enrollment, arts and culture, collaborative research, clinical internships and other platforms.

The Education Effect

A university-assisted community school initiative to support educational achievement in the Liberty City community, funded by a \$1 million philanthropic grant from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. The initiative aims to develop an Aquaponics facility at Miami Northwestern Senior High School (MNWSHS), teach financial literacy to students, expand dual enrollment and deploy service learning courses at MNWSHS.

Faculty Service Learning

An initiative involving undergraduate and graduate faculty across multiple schools and colleges that works through professional development seminars and incentives to facilitate conversion of courses to service-learning. Service learning will prepare students to assume leadership roles on campus, in the community and in the workplace.

Internships

An initiative that aims to significantly expand the number of internship courses and university-wide internship programs and opportunities in partnership with corporations; chambers of commerce; local, state, and federal agencies; and non-profit organizations. Improving the quality and quantity of internships, this initiative aims to achieve enhanced student learning and preparation.

Florida Power and Light (FPL) Customer Care Center Partnership at FIU

In 2010, a unique partnership with FIU and the FPL Customer Care Center was created. The Center, located at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus, serves as a site of customer service operations and is staffed with FIU students hired by FPL as part-time employees. The diverse group of student employees ranges from freshman to seniors and provide customer service in English, Spanish and Creole. All employees undergo a rigorous hiring and training process. As of January 2012, 31 students were hired into full-time positions.

The office plans to remain active in the community providing leadership and creating partnerships that address local and global needs and priorities.