

Fall 2000

# Florida International University Magazine Spring 2000

Florida International University Division of University Relations

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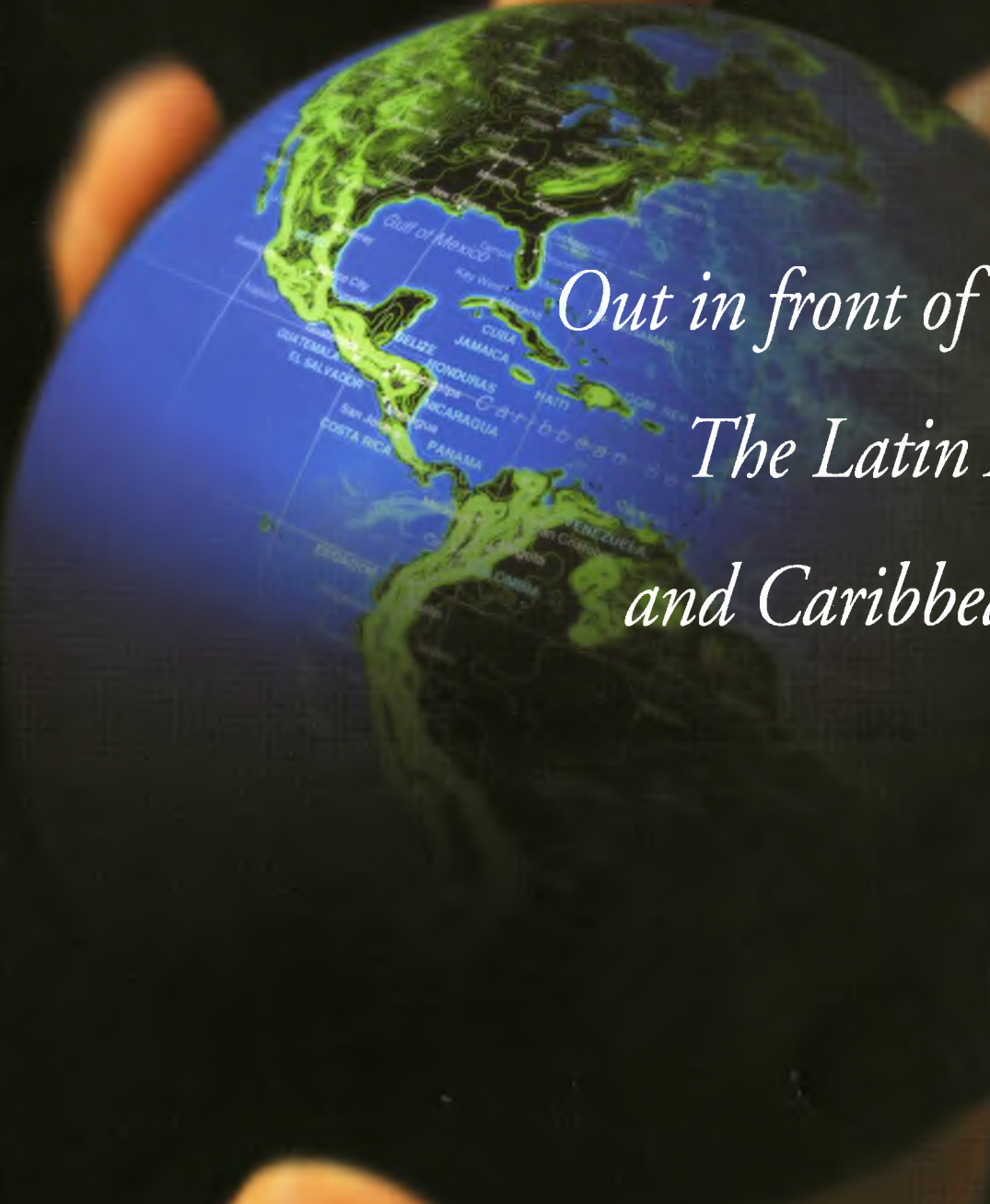
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SPRING 2000

# FIU *magazine*

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*Out in front of the curve:  
The Latin American  
and Caribbean Center*

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

FIU's alumna in Congress, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen • Immigration and Ethnicity Institute • Plants, carbon dioxide and global warming



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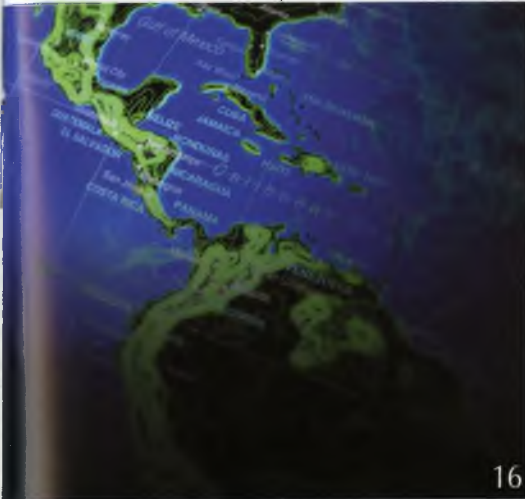
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While technology has advanced tremendously over the ages and continues to progress at ever-increasing speed, it often seems as if the state of human relations has barely progressed since the origin of the species. That's why I find a key part of FIU's mission – to promote greater international understanding – especially noble. The University's international mission is also compounded by its geographical location and the diversity of its students, faculty and staff.

The cover story in this issue of *FIU Magazine* takes a look at a center in the international arena which has gained national prominence, FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center. Another article illustrates the work of the FIU Immigration and Ethnicity Institute, which studies the domestic impact of immigration and ethnic issues. International scientific research with global implications is examined in a piece on Steven Oberbauer's work in the Costa Rican rain-forest and Alaskan tundra. We also have a profile on alumna Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who helps shape foreign policy in her role as a congresswoman.

FIU's destiny as a major public urban research university is certain. But perhaps some day the University will be most well known by the "I" in FIU.

Todd Ellenberg  
Editor

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### FIU LAW SCHOOL ON ITS WAY

The Florida Legislature unanimously approved a bill to establish a law school at Florida International University by the Fall of 2003, and re-establish a law school at Florida A&M University. FIU's law school will be South Florida's first public law school.



It is expected that the law school bill will be signed by Governor Jeb Bush and then FIU will move toward hiring a dean, faculty, staff and developing a curriculum in accordance with the standards of the American Bar Association.

For updates on the new law school, visit the FIU web site at [www.fiu.edu](http://www.fiu.edu)

### COMMERCIAL USE OF PANTHER SKIN EXPECTED SOON

Panther Skin, the material and method developed by FIU researchers that can dramatically strengthen aging aircraft and increase passenger safety, has received a federal stamp of approval that could hasten its widespread commercial use.

Last fall, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released test result data on Panther Skin's ability to significantly strengthen aircraft. The results were issued at the Third Joint FAA/Department of Defense/NASA Conference on Aging Aircraft in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Panther Skin is a lightweight, solvent-resistant, fire retardant plastic (polyisocyanurate) that has been shown to reduce aging aircraft concerns while increasing passenger safety from fire and other corrosive elements that normally affect aircraft.

Very lightweight and solvent- and fire-resistant, Panther Skin bonds permanently to the metal skin and supporting frame of a plane's fuselage, adding strength and rigidity. It has been proven to end fatigue to the structure of an aircraft, making the body of the plane 10 times



stronger, thereby extending the life of the plane by 100 to 150 percent.

"The true value of Panther Skin lies in its promise to help save lives," said Milton Torres, the FIU researcher who has been working on Panther Skin. "Panther Skin will retard fire for up to 26 minutes, allowing for a greater passenger survival rate after a crash. ...You can imagine the choice for airline passengers: flying on a fire-safe or a non-fire-safe airplane."

By strengthening the body of the plane, Panther Skin will also help extend the life of an aging fleet: Some 5,000 airplanes flying the American skies today are more than 20 years old. In fact, 80 percent of the U.S. commercial fleet is more than five years old. The average life of an aircraft is currently 20 years, but with Panther Skin applied it could be extended to as long as 50 years.

The substance can be applied either by spray equipment or by liquid pour. The solidification of Panther Skin takes place in less than five minutes. It has been estimated that applied to a Boeing 727, Panther Skin would cause a loss of payload of approximately 200 pounds and would cost around \$250,000. During a 20-year life span, Panther Skin would cut corrosion costs by at least 50 percent over 20 years.

Torres, who spent the last 10 years researching Panther Skin, anticipates that licensing agreements for the commercial use of the product could soon be reached. He said that there have been inquiries from organizations including the Air Force, Boeing, Lear, Airbus and Embrear to purchase Panther Skin. Any licensing fees received for Panther Skin will be split 50-50 between the University and Torres. For more information, visit [www.eng.fiu.edu/pantherskin](http://www.eng.fiu.edu/pantherskin)

### NEW IDENTITY AND INCREASED DEVELOPMENT PLANNED FOR NORTH CAMPUS

Renewed growth and a fresh identity are in store for FIU's North Campus.

Last fall, it was announced that the North Campus will be renamed the Biscayne Bay Campus. For years, the North Campus has been known for its serene waterside setting. In May, the University will request official approval for the name change from the Board of Regents.

The change in identity is just the start, however, of what's in store for the campus. Academic programs will be expanded, buildings will be renovated and new facilities will be planned. To that end, two senior administrative officers – one for broad-based responsibility for the campus and another for focusing academic efforts – have been appointed.

"Internationally, Biscayne Bay is a very well-known and highly valued place," said Provost Mark Rosenberg. "The fact that you have a campus on this stunningly beautiful place is an asset, and we need to take advantage of it."

Raul Moncarz, professor of Finance, was named vice provost for Academic Affairs for the campus. In this capacity, he is responsible for developing the campus master plan — including the possible construction of new facilities, managing the campus-related budget, coordinating enrollment management efforts for the North Campus, and developing and promoting partnerships with the communities associating with the

campus. A member of the provost's staff, he will work with all University divisions to ensure that campus operations are maintained and enhanced.

Moncarz is a founding member of the University and the Department of Economics, where he served as its chair from 1988 to 1994. He has served as assistant to the executive vice president and assistant vice president for Academic Affairs at FIU, with responsibility for developing FIU's relationship with Miami-Dade Community College (1977-79).

Brian L. Cutler, professor of Psychology, was named associate vice president for Academic Affairs, the chief academic officer for the campus. In this capacity, he is responsible for developing the North Campus academic master plan and for promoting academic excellence through high quality research, teaching and creative activity. He will monitor the overall level of campus academic efforts and promote the development of more on-campus start-to-finish degree programs. Currently professor of Psychology, he served as associate dean of the Col-



lege of Arts and Sciences from 1992-98, where he assisted the College in achieving a 42 percent enrollment increase, implementing 14 new graduate programs, and significantly increased grant funding.

Strides to open the North Campus took place during the administration of Harold Crosby, FIU's second president. When the campus first opened in 1977 it consisted of four trailers and the Trade Center Building, which served as the main building on campus.

Today, the 195-acre campus has over 8,000 students – more than the total enrollment of other universities – and 11 major structures, which includes housing that can accommodate 552 students.

## POLL REVEALS 'COMPLACENCY' AMONG HURRICANE EVACUEES

An FIU/Florida Poll revealed that the largest evacuation in Florida history took place last September, when some two million Floridians from almost 800,000 households evacuated their homes as Category Four Hurricane Floyd approached.

The evacuation rates were highest in the area near Jacksonville and progressively diminished further south along the east coast of the state.

In Miami-Dade County, the estimated evacuation rate was low enough to indicate that a good number of Miami Beach and Key Bis-

cayne residents stayed in their homes and would have been at risk if the hurricane had not turned north.

"This is an ongoing trend that we have noticed," said FIU hurricane researcher Walter Gillis Peacock, an associate professor of Sociology and Anthropology. "The poll results confirm our concern that people who live in areas that evacuated for recent storms, including Hurricane Andrew, are less likely to evacuate. Complacency is a factor."

The poll's data indicated other important issues resulting from the Floyd experience:

- The experience of Floyd lessened the willingness of Floridians to say they will evacuate for the next big hurricane. This "experience" effect may indicate complacency or it may indicate more realistic appraisal of a hypothetical question.
- Evacuees in the northern half of Florida were more likely to evacuate to hotels or motels than those in South Florida. They were much more likely to evacuate outside of the area where they live. This resulted in much more traffic congestion and potential risk had the hurricane come onshore.
- People in coastal areas were generally supportive of actions taken by officials. Seventy-nine percent felt official decisions were correct or mostly correct.
- Having an evacuation plan is the most important way households can prepare for a major hurricane. The data suggested that the experience of earlier hurricanes such as Erin and Andrew taught people along the South Florida coast the importance of having a plan with nearby safe houses as the best destination. Authorities need to plan evacuation areas, maps, and public education programs with this in mind.

The results were based on a random telephone sample of 1,224 people conducted in October and early November. Of those surveyed, 12.6 percent said they did evacuate their homes as Floyd approached. Given the margin of error for the survey (plus or minus two percent), the actual number of evacuated homes is between 770,000 and 800,000

# FIU citations



Stephen Fjellman

## First, Gatorland and then SkyVenture

"I don't know who would go from Iowa to see Disney (World) and then take a day off to go to these places," said Stephen Fjellman, chairperson of the University's Sociology and Anthropology Department, who noted the way smaller, grade B attractions in Orlando continue to thrive. "I think it's just sheer numbers. If you get enough people, it'll keep these places alive."

—The Orlando Sentinel, November 25, 1999



Tometro Hopkins

## 'Yuh as a rezedent ave di rights ahn di rispansabilities...'

"It [the pamphlet] would be just as hard for a Jamaican to read as it [would be] for us [creolists]," said Tometro Hopkins, associate professor of English and a linguist specializing in Creole. "It's a word-for-word translation and you can't do that. This is just English with an accent [pronunciation]." Hopkins was commenting on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development pamphlets, directed toward Haitian Americans, which were written in an imitation Jamaican dialect but not what is considered Jamaican Creole English.

—The Dallas Morning News  
November 16, 1999

households. Assuming most households evacuated together, this corresponds to almost two million evacuees. Five percent of respondents lived in households that took in evacuees, corresponding to 325,377 households taking in evacuees (with the margin of error, about 320,000 to 330,000).

"In this survey, 'evacuation' can mean walking a block from your mobile home to a friend's house," said Hugh Gladwin, director of the Institute for Public Opinion Research (IPOR) at FIU, which conducted the study. "As a result, the poll estimate may differ from traffic counts on expressways."



The poll questions were part of FIU's continuing research on hurricane preparation behavior, which has been conducted since Hurricane Andrew. The evacuation research group includes Gladwin, Peacock, Betty Morrow and Nicole Dash at the Laboratory for Social and Behavioral Research at the International Hurricane Center, as well as Christina Gladwin at the University of Florida.

Researchers at IPOR continue to process data from the poll that track issues important to Florida residents and decision-makers. Results will be posted on the IPOR web page as they become available at [www.fiu.edu/orgs/ipor](http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/ipor)

### **PUBLIC HEALTH PROJECT AIMS TO REDUCE HIV AMONG MINORITIES**

A project being launched by three faculty in the Department of Public Health aims to eliminate health disparities in the African American and Hispanic populations in Broward County, with an emphasis on reduc-

ing the incidence of HIV infection and AIDS.

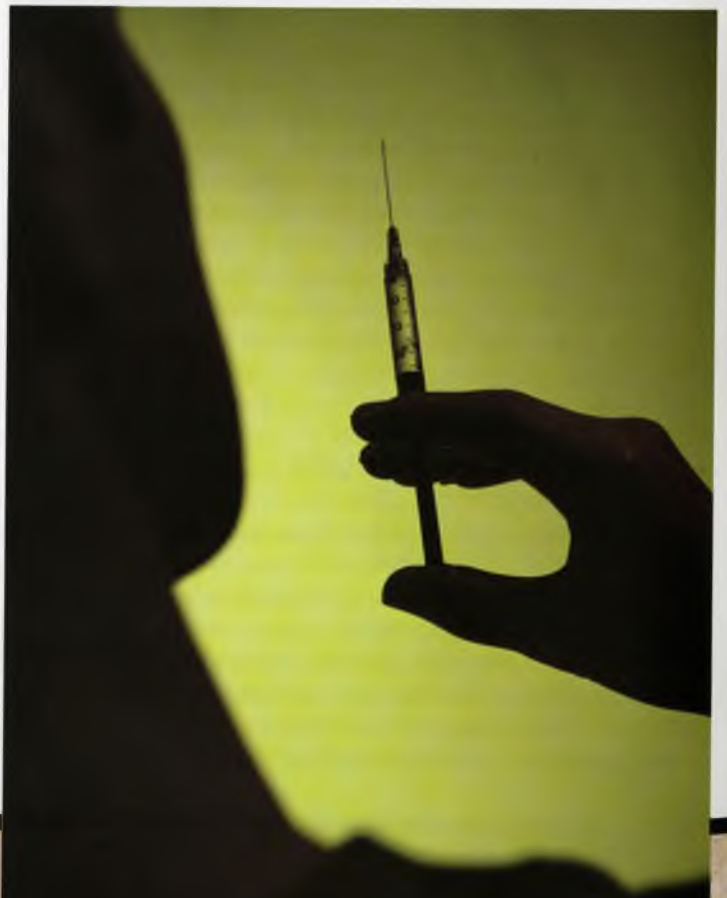
Virginia McCoy, chair of Public Health, Professor William Darrow and Associate Professor Robert Stempel received \$331,22 in funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the planning phase of a project in which FIU and four collaborating community-based organizations will develop an action plan.

"The goal is to prevent minority populations from becoming infected – and if they do become infected, ensuring they have the same access to quality health services as the white population," said Darrow, who is nationally known for his pioneering research on the spread of AIDS.

For the last three years for which data exists (1996-98), four cities in South Florida – Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and Fort Pierce – have had the highest rate in the nation of HIV among 18 to 25 year olds. In Broward County, 60 percent of all HIV cases are among minorities, although they constitute only 25 percent of the total population. The rate of infection among African Americans is four times higher than whites, and for Hispanics it's two times higher than whites.

The project is part of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) initiative known as REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) 2010. CDC has distributed \$9.4 million to 32 organizations throughout the country that are formulating such programs; FIU was one of two in Florida that received a grant. By September 2000, participating organizations must submit their four-year implementation plans to compete for \$30 million in funding that CDC will distribute in the next round.

FIU is partnering with the following Broward organizations: Think Life, Inc., Hispanic Unity of Florida, Minority Development and



Empowerment, Inc.-Haitian Community Center, and Minority Institute of Health.

"In many respects, this represents the kind of research that urban universities ought to be focused on – research that has the potential for very real benefits for the urban community," said CUPA Dean Ronald Berkman.

The University's investigators and the four organizations have been conducting discussion groups with individuals at risk to identify problems and possible solutions. They also conducted formative evaluations of promising interventions to address current deficiencies in the health care system.

"This is a real opportunity for innovation," Darrow commented. "It's not about just printing another pamphlet about HIV prevention.

"If people aren't using condoms, we want to learn *why* they aren't using condoms. For others at risk, we want to know why they're injecting drugs and sharing needles. People know what they *shouldn't* do, but they're still doing it. What inhibits safer sex and injection practices? In some cases it's cultural competency or perhaps mistrust of government information. There are no simple answers to the questions we seek to answer. We need to get at the underlying values, beliefs and folk tales of different cultures – and to be effective, we must deal with them as they are, not as the moral imperialists would like for them to be."

## HCET PROVIDES EXPERTISE AND SUPPORT FOR OPA-LOCKA REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Vice President Al Gore announced that FIU is one of 14 Hispanic-serving institutions that will be awarded a total of \$5.65 million in grants to help rehabilitate low-income communities.

Under the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities Program (HSIAC), a program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), FIU's Hemispheric Center for Environmental Technology (HCET) will receive \$400,000 for a local rehabilitation project in Opa-Locka.

The Community Gymnasium Project is a partnership between FIU-HCET and the city of Opa-Locka to acquire vacant property to build a community gymnasium for area residents. FIU-HCET will provide technical expertise and assistance in evaluating the environmental status of the site.

The vacant lot, adjacent to the newly renovated Seagull Park, Northwest 22nd Avenue and 103rd Street, is in an area of the city that is designated as an Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community and is also designated as a proposed brownfields economic development area.

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial facilities where real or perceived environmental contamination complicates expansion or redevelopment. The city block in Opa-Locka has minor environmental impacts such as building waste, construction debris and other pollutants, which will be detected and eliminated to develop an improved area of recreation.

FIU-HCET will use the HUD funding for the environmental assessment and to purchase the land, which will then be given to the city of



Opa-Locka. The facility will be owned and managed by the city of Opa-Locka and will provide several employment opportunities to local low- and moderate-income individuals.

This is HCET's first project in the brownfields area. There are an estimated 2,100 brownfield sites in the corridor from Florida City north to Port St. Lucie, and 600,000 throughout the country.

"This is really an example of FIU helping the community and our commitment to improving the local environment," said Nick Lailas, HCET senior program manager for environment.

## FOOTBALL KICKOFF CHANGED TO 2002

In February, University officials announced that pending Board of Regents' (BOR) approval, the inaugural season of FIU football will be the fall of 2002.

"Originally, our goal was to put this team on the field in 2001. However, our ongoing



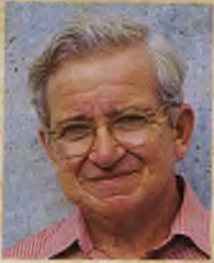
Mario Diamant

## From Ricky Martin to novelas

"Spanish-speaking people have come a long way from being second-class citizens here to feeling pride in the language and culture," said Mario Diamant, associate professor and coordinator for Spanish-language programs in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. "There used to be a feeling of shame, but nowadays there's a sense of pride and its growing. It's a natural shift when people become fluent in both languages."

—Austin American-Statesman  
November 12, 1999





Dan Wakefield

## Just say no to paperback redemption

"I don't like those books that are five easy steps to peace and happiness," said

Dan Wakefield, distinguished visiting writer in the Creative Writing Program, who has published several books on his spiritual reawakening. "I think a lot people get discouraged and they think they messed up and so they're not really Christian or whatever it is."

-Chicago Tribune  
December 22, 1999

research into this matter led us to the conclusion that the extra year will make the FIU football and athletic programs that much stronger," said FIU Senior Vice President for Business and Finance Paul Gallagher. He cited three reasons for the decision:

- The stadium expansion will take approximately two years. The current stadium on University Park will be expanded to hold 16,000 – 18,000 fans in the first phase of the expansion and ultimately 30,000.
- Title Nine regulations dictate that FIU maintain equilibrium between men's and women's athletic programs. FIU plans to begin programs in women's rowing and swimming, but these programs will take some time to implement.
- The search for a new athletic director is underway. A professional search firm is being contracted to help FIU identify potential candidates for the key position.

"The FIU family and this community deserve and expect a top-notch program, and these extra 12 months will allow us to make sure they get it," said Gallagher, who is spearheading the football effort.

Originally, the University was slated to seek BOR approval for the program at February's meeting. Instead, approval by the Regents will be sought at the May meeting.

For months, officials at FIU have been working to set the stage for football success. A fund-raising effort has already yielded \$3 million, and FIU student fees for football have totaled \$2 million. A season ticket campaign, which began late last year, has garnered support from hundreds of alumni and friends of the university.

"Financially, we are in good shape," said Gallagher. "In a year, we will be in even better shape – with \$8 to \$9 million in the bank – and we will have the leadership of a new athletic director."

Don Strock, director of football operations, noted that recruiting for players will begin once the program is approved. He said that more than 20 high school football coaches have expressed interest in sending players to FIU.



## ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU VISITS FIU

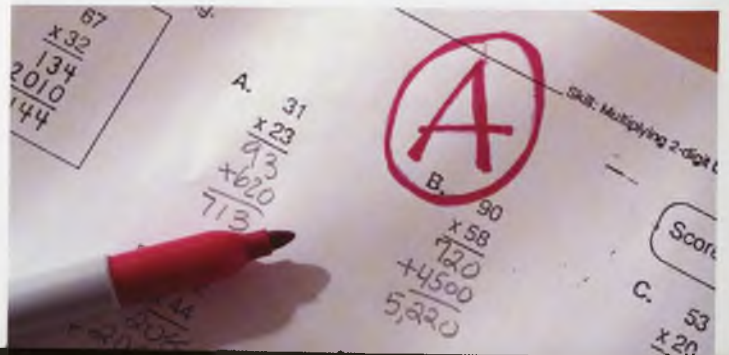
Last December, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a leading figure in South Africa's struggle to end apartheid and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, delivered a lecture at FIU and was honored with the conferral of an honorary doctorate. Seen are (front row, from left) FIU President Modesto A. Maidique, Tutu, Provost Mark Rosenberg; (back row, from left) Carole Boyce-Davies, director of the African-New World Studies Program, and Tito Omaghom, North Campus president of the Student Government Association.

## FIU ALUMNI NAMED MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Two alumni of the FIU College of Education were recently honored by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools for being tops in their posts.

Dennis Davis (M.S. '75), principal of Sunset High School, was named Miami-Dade County Principal of the Year and received a check for \$5,000. Sunset High, has 4,700 students. Davis began his career as a biology and math teacher at the former Mays High School and held administrative posts at several schools before being named Sunset High principal in 1992.

Patricia JoAnn Cohen (B.S. '89), who teaches language and arts and reading to second-grade students at Wesley Matthews Elementary School, was named Miami-Dade Teacher of the Year. She was given the "Francisco R. Walker Golden Apple Teacher of the Year" award; she received \$7,000 and her school got \$2,000.



## CONCERT CHOIR WINS FIRST PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Last fall, the Florida International University Concert Choir, under the direction of John Augenblick, participated in the First International Choir Festival and Competition of Fort Lauderdale and won first place in the Chamber Choir Category. In addition, the panel of five judges, made up of leading choral conductors from around the world, gave FIU's Concert Choir the highest rating of any choir in the competition.

"As their conductor, I am extremely proud of the fine work by the 21 students in this choir," said Augenblick, director of Choir Studies. "The Concert Choir was especially honored to win first-place honors in this prestigious event. They represented FIU as wonderful musical ambassadors to the 22 choirs from 10 nations that participated in the competition."



This was the first International Choral Competition to be held in the United States. By winning this competition, the Concert Choir qualified to participate in the 2000 Choir Olympics to be held in Linz, Austria in July.

## INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ESTABLISHED

It is estimated that service sector exports from Florida to foreign countries totaled some \$9.4 billion in 1998. Based on the magnitude of this business and the desire to expand it further, the University has created a new institute devoted to promoting the state's export of services.

The Institute for International Professional Services (IIPS), affiliated with the Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) and the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), will work in partnership with the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) to be at the forefront of strategic thinking on the future development of Florida's international service economy.

IIPS will be responsible for analyzing trends in the export of services, as well as investment in services. Through the gathering of key statistics on service industries and the monitoring of current trade initiatives and commitments, IIPS will seek to identify trends in service industries and opportunities, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The institute will work closely with the state's business community to identify obstacles to trade in services. One of the first initiatives is

to conduct a survey, in collaboration with GMCC's International Services Group, to inventory Florida's international services community. The survey's findings will provide valuable insights into Florida's strengths as a global and hemispheric services center.

Mark B. Rosenberg, FIU's provost and executive vice president and a longtime advocate of the growth of the services sector in Florida, said "this initiative will help the Florida business community accelerate its competitiveness in the rapidly changing global economy."

Service trade accounted for 90 percent of growth in U.S. employment in the last two decades. A U.S. Department of Commerce 1997 report suggested that every \$1 billion of service exports supports 20,000 service jobs.

The role of services in Florida's economic development cannot be overlooked; currently, the service sector is responsible for nearly 25 per cent of the state's annual gross state product. The export of business, professional and technical services will ensure Florida's future competitive advantage.

In addition to its other activities, the IIPS will develop credit and noncredit certificate programs in international services.

## LABOR REPORT FINDS ECONOMIC BOOM NOT BENEFITING FLORIDA'S WORKERS

Despite the state's booming economy, Florida's workers are not sharing in the prosperity and are not a priority of the state's public policies. That's among the key findings in the second annual Labor Report on the State of Florida issued by FIU's Center for Labor Research & Studies.

The study, conducted by Bruce Nissen and Pete Cattan of the center, focuses on the disparity between Florida's overall economy and the status of its workers, who often labor under standards and conditions well below national or regional norms.

"Compared to the nation and the other states of the Southeast region, on most measures of worker well-being Florida is sliding backward," the report states.

Unemployment rates in Florida have steadily dropped for some time, from 8.3 percent in 1992 to 5.5 percent in 1995 to 3.9 percent in June 1999. Total non-agricultural



Dario Moreno

## Black and white (memories and politics)

"It's important to remember that 75 percent of the Cuban Americans in this country were born in Cuba," said Dario Moreno, associate professor of Political Science, on the intense emotions stirred by the Elian Gonzalez saga. "They remember Cuba and what they lost when they left there. For them it is black and white, good and evil. Fidel (Castro) is the devil incarnate, Cuba is hell on earth and sending a six-year-old boy back to that hell is immoral."

—*The Atlanta Journal  
and Constitution*  
January 9, 2000



John Landrum

## Make sure you eat your vegetables

"The surprising finding of this study is that dosages of as little as 2.4 mg of lutein per day produced measurable increases in the retinal pigment levels of the subjects in just six months," said John Landrum, associate professor of Chemistry, who has conducted research on lutein and the way in which it may protect against age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss among adults. Lutein is found in green, leafy vegetables and yellow vegetables and fruits. "This study is one of a kind that shows how lutein dietary supplements can increase the amount of pigment present in the macula of the human retina."

-PR Newswire  
January 7, 2000



employment has also been rising rapidly – by June 1999 it was up 3.5 percent from a year earlier. Eight years of economic expansion have also been accompanied by rising incomes, although not as rapidly as for the nation as a whole. Last year, Florida per capita income was \$25,922, which was 97.9 percent of the U.S. average.

Looking at wages, however, Florida appears worse than it does in terms of income. As of the fourth quarter of 1998, the Florida average yearly wage was \$30,150, only 89.6 percent of the national average. Despite the current economic expansion, median hourly wages in Florida (adjusted for inflation) have dropped since 1989.

The state also has a large concentration of workers earning very low wages. As of 1997, 9.2 percent of the state's workers only earned the national minimum wage (\$5.15/hour) or

less, compared to a national average of 7.7 percent. The study also found that 33.2 percent of Florida workers earned less than the wage needed to keep a family of four above the poverty level, compared to a national average of 28.6 percent.

Nissen and Cattani also considered employee treatment in the workplace. Florida has 19.6 percent of its residents without health insurance coverage, placing it 45th of the 50 states. The state's tax burden is about average for the U.S., despite its reputation as being a low tax state. In 1998, its tax burden was 95.3 percent of the U.S. average, 26th of the 50 states. But Florida is actually a high tax state from a worker's perspective, because the state's highly regressive tax structure forces workers and low-income people to pay a disproportionate percentage of the taxes collected. **FIU**

Pictured below are three rare stoneware artifacts originating from Thailand, part of the donations to The Art Museum at FIU.

## Campaign for FIU receives notable gifts-in-kind

The Campaign for FIU continues to move toward its \$200 million goal. Reaching the \$179 million mark, the campaign recently received several noteworthy gifts-in-kind. These contributions include both equipment and other tangibles that complement research and teaching, or artwork, books and other items that enhance FIU collections.

The College of Business Administration in March confirmed a gift of computer software from Oracle Corporation worth more than \$1 million. The software will assist in the creation of a new database and support e-business courses in the college's new MIS graduate program.

The Art Museum at FIU has benefited from a number of recent gifts-in-kind. A Virginia collector gave the museum 113 works that together have an appraised value of nearly \$250,000. Among the treasures are many fourteenth and fifteenth century ceramic pieces from Thailand. A Palm Beach couple donated 93 works with a total appraised value of more than \$200,000. The pieces include a rare fifteenth century Sawankaloke blue and white glazed figure from Thailand. A total of 313 art objects, valued at \$600,300, were donated to The Art Museum in 1999. The 1999 donations include including an etching by Milton Avery and a Wassily Kandinsky woodcut print.

The School of Architecture has taken possession of more than 3,400 slides depicting art, architecture and urban design. A professor emeritus from MIT donated the collection along with several architecture books geared toward working professionals. The gift has a value of nearly \$100,000. Local architect William Cox donated a \$25,000 two-volume set of Frank Lloyd Wright monographs printed in Germany in 1909.

The Department of Visual Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences has been given a collection of 1,500 ceramic molds. The gift from a local donor has a value of more than \$20,000.

In addition to gifts-in-kind, several significant cash donations to a number of different programs have been made this year. The College of Business Administration received a \$200,000 commitment from Burdines department store to endow the Burdines Professorship in Retailing and establish an undergraduate certificate program in retailing. State matching funds will bring the value of the contribution to \$250,000. The College of Engineering received a \$75,000 gift from SMLX Technologies in support of graduate fellowships in biomedical engineering. **FIU**



In a highly competitive field driven and judged by the bottom line, Gerald Grant ('78 B.S. Management, '89 MBA) has always maintained a keen focus on the human side of business. It's an approach that has paid off.

Last year, Grant, a vice president and district manager for the Florida/Caribbean region of AXA Advisors, LLC, one of the world's leading investment managers, was ranked in the firm's top 3 percent in sales nationwide, placing him among the top 222 of 7,400 sales representatives.

"My commitment, my passion, is to customer service," he recently explained at his Kendall office. "We need to treat our clients the way we would want to be treated. Dedication to the client makes the difference that enables success."

Grant's approach is not restricted to nine to five. His philosophy of helping people is reflected in his active civic involvement. He is past president and a current board member of the Florida International University Alumni Association, treasurer of the 100 Black Men of South Florida, member of the Miami-Dade Urban Bankers Association, and board member of the Urban League of Greater Miami. In recognition of his civic involvement, Grant was recently named the 2000 winner of AXA Advisors – Miami/Fort Lauderdale Branch's Community Service Award.

A self-described "people person," which is readily apparent in his affable and warm nature, Grant initially studied accounting at FIU but switched to management when he sought a career with more interpersonal contact. A student during the early years of the University, he fondly recalled the intimate and competitive atmosphere of his classes. He also credited the vital contributions of FIU faculty, particularly Lynda Raheem, who served as an advisor and role model over the years. Shortly after graduating in 1978, when he was in the parking lot of Burdines, Grant met the individual who became his personal mentor: Leroy Borofsky, an executive in Burdines finance department, would help guide his career over the years.

"He helped me see how I could become a mentor for others," he said. "The more you help others, the more they help you."

After receiving his undergraduate degree, Grant entered banking, serving as a branch manager with Great Western Bank and being

named "Branch Manager of the Year" for two consecutive years. He then moved to Citibank, where he held the position of branch vice president and cluster manager. After 11 years in banking, during a time of major changes and downsizing in the industry, he joined Equitable Companies.

"I wanted to make the transition into the investment field," Grant said. "It offers you more tools to meet clients' needs."

Last year, Equitable launched its new brand, AXA Advisors, LLC, to represent the broad range of financial products and services offered through its network of financial professionals. As district manager, Grant is responsible for a number of financial advisors in Miami and personally provides services to small business and professional clients.


"It's always valuable to have an investment plan and to constantly improve on what you've had before," Grant commented. "So even if you don't always hit it (on every investment), you can still do pretty good."

In addition to counseling his clients, Grant finds time to counsel and mentor community adolescents through his leadership involvement with 100 Black Men of South Florida.

"We act as guides to teach them to do what we do," he commented, recalling the important role Borofsky played in his life as his mentor. "We hope that if we are effective, they'll learn the value of mentoring and mentor others as well."

Grant is also proud of his contributions to his alma mater through the Alumni Association. "I always wanted to see the board (of the Association) improve," he said. "There are many things the Association can do for alumni. One of the biggest changes I thought I accomplished as president was to improve the effectiveness of the board."

Grant stressed the important role his family – Jennifer, his wife of 19 years, daughter Jasmin and son Gerald III – has played in his life. Reflecting on his accomplishments to date and his belief in the importance of community service, Grant affirmed one of his core philosophies: When you help others, you help yourself.

"If you ever want to achieve something, just do it – despite the obstacles," he said. "Once you start, others will come to your aid to make it happen. I don't think of what I do professionally as working. I'm helping other people and doing what I love to do." 

## Focus on human side spells success for Grant



*"Dedication to the client makes the difference that enables success."*

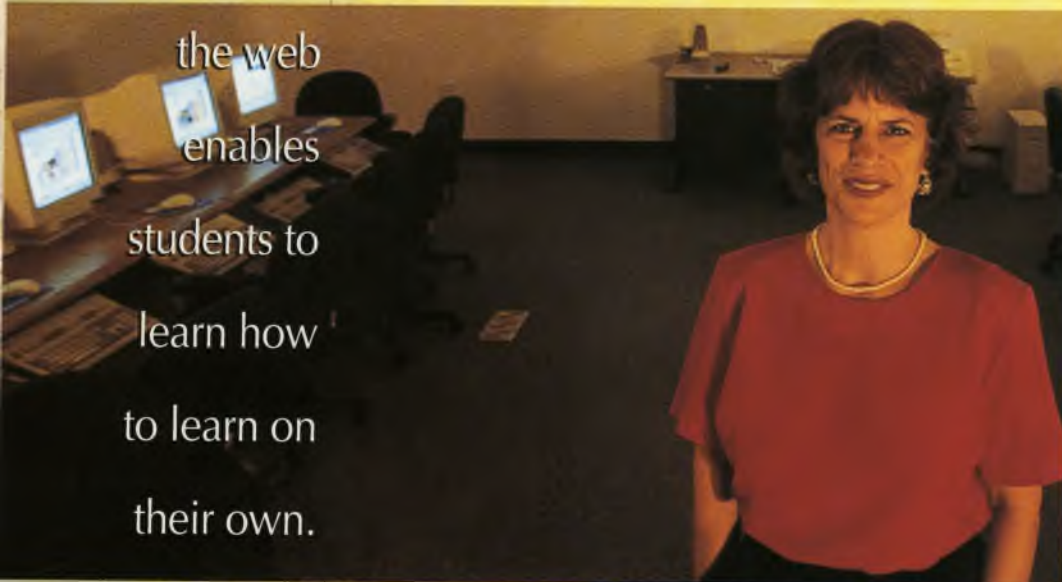
## Dramatic rise in on

"I think offering courses on

the web enables students to learn how to learn on their own.

They have to be more self-reliant, and I think that's a valuable lesson."

—Claudia Owen



*Kristi Lozano, assistant director of the University's Instructional Development Center (IDC)*

Claudia Owen, a member of Florida International University's Geology faculty since 1990, was recently chatting with the students in her "Introduction to Earth Science" course. Several students had questions concerning minerals and volcanism, subjects that would be included on an upcoming quiz, as well as a recent homework assignment on weathering.

This may sound like a typical classroom exchange, but there was one huge difference: a gulf of thousands of miles separated professor and students, and the session was taking place in a virtual, online "chat room." Owen was in front of her computer in Oregon, while the students were in front of their computers at their homes and offices in South Florida.

Owen, who was on a leave of absence from the University, was teaching her second course on the Internet, a trend that is becoming increasingly popular at FIU as well as countless other universities throughout the country.

The use of the World Wide Web as a tool to deliver courses – either partially or in their entirety – has grown dramatically over the past few years. Utilizing WebCT (Web Course Tool), powerful software designed for instructional use, the number of courses has increased from two in the fall of 1998 to 286 in spring 2000. The 286 courses include those that use supplemental web content (web-assisted); courses where some of the classes are replaced by web content (campus/online); and courses that have no class meetings except for optional orientations and tests that are conducted at a proctored location (fully online).

"I originally expected the students to not do as well as in a regular course, because they didn't get the instruction in a class-

# Online learning at FIU

room," said Owen, whose course was fully online. "But I thought it was worthwhile to offer the course on the Internet for those who wouldn't be able to go to class. The first semester grades were lower (than the regular course) but the grades are now higher. These students have been doing better on the Internet."

"I think it's more personal (teaching on the Internet), which is really weird. You'd think it would be less personal. But when you're sending e-mails back and forth to a student, they're getting more one-on-one feedback. It's very interesting.

"I think offering courses on the Web is valuable for two basic reasons: for students who can't make it to campus or fit it in their schedule. You can still help them and that's very valuable. The other aspect is different. It's very valuable in helping students succeed – it enables them to learn how to learn on their own. They have to be more self-reliant, and I think that's a valuable lesson."

Every college and school at FIU, as well as several centers and institutes, are now using WebCT to deliver course content in some fashion. Kristi Lozano, assistant director of the University's Instructional Development Center (IDC), has taken the lead training faculty on the software. Last year, the IDC held 54 workshops, ranging from WebCT Made Simple to intensive WebCT Institutes (five days). In the workshops, faculty learn how to create and publish Web-based course materials and use WebCT's full suite of web authoring, course delivery and management tools. In addition to WebCT, faculty are exposed to an array of online teaching and learning strategies and other multimedia tools for creating multisensory and interactive content.

"The faculty love this stuff, they've been

very receptive," Lozano said. "These are new tools for teaching and the students like it."

Some of the WebCT tools that have been incorporated in the University's online courses include:

- Homepages and linked content pages
- bulletin boards for threaded discussions
- e-mail
- chat rooms and white boards of live discussion and instruction
- glossaries
- calendars, to post assignments and events
- online quizzes with instant grading and recording in the grade-book and feedback to students on their performances
- articles for critiquing and for interacting with other students
- digital video and audio clips
- special areas where students can build their own web pages and share group projects and presentations

"Work and personal commitments often create many demands on our time," said John Carpenter, professor and chair of the Educational Foundations Department in the College of Education, who has taught several online courses. "Busy lifestyles demand a flexible approach to study, a way of catering to the individual needs of all students. Learning is not as simple as reading a book. Concepts often have to be examined, discussed, and digested before they can be understood."

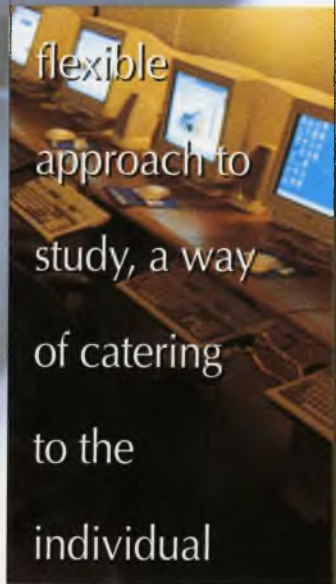
"EDF 6608 (Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education) online has been developed as a fully interactive classroom," Carpenter said. "In this virtual classroom, the students and I may be involved in group presentations, compiling modules for printing, search tools, viewing one's own progress or student record. Some topics may not require a lot of discussion and may be presented as a structured set of notes. As the students progress through each module, the tools provided in EDF 6608 online become more familiar and more comfortable to use."

As chairperson of his department, Carpenter has initiated an online "homesite" for the development of this large unit as a "virtual department." The "homesite" serves as a means of rapid communication where information, discussion and decision-making are accessible at any time and at any location for the faculty members.

For more information on FIU's growing online programs, visit FIU's Online Campus page at [www.fiu.edu/~online](http://www.fiu.edu/~online). 

"Busy lifestyles demand a flexible approach to study, a way of catering to the individual needs of all students."

—John Carpenter



# HOT &

## FROM THE TROPICAL RAINFOREST

### Ecophysiologicalist Oberbauer focuses on

*It is an ecosystem where temperatures are always high and rainfall exceeds 70 to 100 inches per year. Tropical rainforests contain more than half of the world's species, although they cover only 7 percent of the earth's land surface. Given the biological richness of the tropical rainforests, only a minority of plant and animal species have been described and named. For millions of years, complex interrelationships between the rainforest's inhabitants have shaped their evolution.*



No two ecosystems would seem to have so little in common. Quite often, though, there's more than what meets the eye.

◀ For **Steven Oberbauer**, FIU professor of Biological Sciences and director of the Tropical Biology Program, the tundra and the tropical rainforests provide valuable clues

for changes affecting the entire planet. For more than 20 years, Oberbauer has conducted extensive research in the Alaska tundra and the Costa Rican rainforest, and to this day he continues to divide his time between FIU and trips to these remote locales.

While much of his research has been in botany, his interest goes far beyond the plants. He analyzes their impact on the ecosystem and, in turn, the ecosystem's impact on the atmosphere. This global perspective focuses on an invisible element

in these divergent ecosystems – carbon dioxide – and its potential impact on global warming. A large portion of the earth's carbon is trapped beneath tundra in the form of peat and other plant life that hasn't entirely decomposed. Tropical rainforests are known to play a vital role in the exchange of gases between the biosphere and atmosphere.

"We know the carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere is increasing," Oberbauer said recently, a few weeks before leaving on a trip to Alaska. "That's the purported cause of global warming.

"There's no question that the carbon dioxide concentration has gone up and there's no question that it directly affects plants. The increase in carbon dioxide affects plant photosynthesis. Plants use carbon dioxide – that's what they take out the air for photosynthesis to make sugars. So we're basically fertilizing all the plants in



# COOL

## EST TO THE ALASKAN TUNDR

# ses on CO<sup>2</sup> and global warming

*It is the coldest of all biomes. The tundra looks like frozen-over prairie land most of the year. Found only in the most extreme northern and southern latitudes, temperatures often reach -50 degrees F in the winter. Only the top layer of the soil is able to thaw out during the brief summers; deeper layers of soil remain frozen throughout the year, a condition known as permafrost. Trees cannot grow in this harsh climate, only low-growing plant life and wildflowers.*

the world with the increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. So their photosynthetic rates are higher than they used to be before the carbon dioxide increase started happening."

Like most scientists, Oberbauer's research interests evolved over the years as the result of his studies and work with university professors. His interest in biology, however, dated back to his early years growing up in the "back country" near San Diego. As early as fourth grade, he knew he wanted to become a scientist/biologist, and his favorite pastimes included bird watching and gardening. He credits his older brother, Tom, with stimulating his interest in botany. Today, Tom is a botanist and planner for San Diego County.

After completing his B.S. in biology at San Diego State University in 1976, one of his professors offered him a job that would take him to a region of future research. He soon found himself in

Fairbanks, Alaska, conducting research in plant ecophysiology.

"Ecophysiology used to focus on how individual plants would work," Oberbauer explained. "For instance, how does this plant live in this environment? Now the whole field has changed to more of: How does that plant working in that environment affect the whole ecosystem process? Ecophysicologists began addressing even bigger questions that addressed big global issues."

Oberbauer returned to San Diego State for his master's degree in biology, continued working in Alaska and was subsequently admitted to Duke University's doctoral program in botany, one of the best in the country. When he arrived at the Durham, North Carolina campus in 1979, Boyd Strain, his academic advisor, made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

"Strain said, 'What do you think about going to the tropics?' I said, 'Sure, why not?'" Oberbauer recalled.





The walk-up tower built in the middle of old-growth tropical forest near La Selva, Costa Rica.

Strain conducted pioneering research on the way in which higher carbon dioxide levels were affecting plants. Another member of the department, Don Stone, was the director of the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS). The OTS is a consortium of universities and research institutions from the United States, Latin America and Australia dedicated to education and research on the tropics and their natural resources. At the time, Stone was trying to encourage faculty and students to conduct more research at field stations in Costa Rica maintained by OTS.

"So I went to Duke and my first semester there I went on an OTS course at their La Selva Biological Station, a 4,000-acre site located northeast of San Jose," Oberbauer related. "I spent the whole semester in Costa Rica. It was wonderful. Even though I was doing ecophysiology, I was very interested in identifying plants and plant taxonomy. In Alaska you could show me any plant, and I would know what it was. In Costa Rica you can find 200 species of trees in a very small area, and there are 2,000 species of plants in the small area where I work. It was a fabulous experience."

Stone noted how conditions at La Selva were "pretty primitive" and the contributions Oberbauer made to advance research at the site.

"With the advent of the work that Steve did, he helped establish the field of ecophysiology at La Selva," Stone said. "He was part of tremendous change at that field station and

in tropical work in general. Today, La Selva is one of top two field stations in the world. I think of Steve as being a pioneer in the tropics. FIU has also come from nowhere to having a national presence in tropical research."

While in Costa Rica in 1982, he met Maureen Donnelly, a woman studying poison dart frogs. Three years later, they would become husband and wife. Today, Maureen is also an associate professor of Biological Sciences at FIU.

"We carried out a long-distance romance until 1992, when she came to Miami from New York," he said. After receiving his doctorate in 1983, Oberbauer returned to Costa Rica for a post-doctoral project on drought tolerance of tropical trees. Next, he



A research assistant at the field station at La Selva, Costa Rica.

embarked on a project with the station directors at La Selva, David and Deborah Clark.

"We wanted to start a project together," Oberbauer said. "They worked on rats for their Ph.Ds. They were tired of dealing with blood and dead animals and things that bite you. So they embarked on what they hoped to be this long-term study of how trees grow. How fast they grow, which ones survive, which ones die, what kind of conditions do they like, what kind of conditions do they die in. They were demographers studying population processes. But they said, 'You know, to really understand why these plants are dying in these conditions, we need a physiologist to work on these.' So we teamed up and started writing grants together."

After completing his post-doc in 1984, Oberbauer returned to San Diego State as a research associate and also traveled to Alaska to work on projects funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The federal agency was interested in learning how oil development on the North Slope could damage the ecosystem. In 1988, he accepted his position at FIU.

Today, Oberbauer is engaged in two major research projects thousands of miles apart: the Carbono Project, at La Selva, Costa Rica, and another at the Alaskan North Slope near Toolik Lake.

The Carbono Project was conceived in 1992 and funded in 1996 by the Department of Energy as part of the AmeriFlux and FluxNet networks, U.S. and worldwide networks of sites monitoring the carbon balance of ecosystems. Additional funding has been provided by the National Science Foundation.

The initial component of the project was born when Oberbauer and his La Selva colleagues began to study the factors that help or hinder tree growth. The Clarks had found that there were large annual variations in tree growth occurring at the forest level, and they wanted to discover which specific climactic conditions (light, wind, humidity and temperature) were associated with these swings.

The second component of the project is to study the factors affecting the productivity of tropical rainforests and their contribution to the carbon balance of the atmosphere. Undisturbed tropical forests have long been thought



Wood samples from trees in the Costa Rican rainforest that are measured for levels of carbon dioxide.



*A field station plot on plant growth in the Alaskan tundra.*

to be in carbon balance with the atmosphere; that is, they take up as much carbon dioxide as they release. Recent studies in Brazil, however, suggest that undisturbed tropical forests there may be taking up carbon. On the other hand, studies of the composition of the atmosphere suggest that tropical forests may be releasing carbon during some years, a finding possibly associated with periods of drought.

In order to measure the exchange of carbon dioxide, they built a 132-foot high walk-up tower in the middle of old-growth tropical forest where sensitive micrometeorological measurements determine the exchange of carbon dioxide and water of the surrounding forest with the atmosphere.

"The logistical challenges of setting up the project have been formidable, but the results coming in are well worth the headaches," Oberbauer said. "The main question in the most simplistic sense is: Are tropical forests helping, hurting or neutral with regard to this carbon dioxide increase in the atmosphere and climate warming. What it looks like so far is that this forest (at La Selva) is actually taking carbon dioxide out the atmosphere, net, and storing some. So then you ask, where is that carbon dioxide going? Well, some is going into the wood in the trees, some is going into the wood that has fallen to the ground and some is going into the soil."

The project has been a magnet for related studies, with more than 10 investigators from five universities undertaking or proposing collaborative research. These studies involve sci-

entists from FIU, University of Missouri-St. Louis, University of Florida and University of Göttingen in Germany. Oberbauer hopes to keep the project operating for at least another six years and is confident that DOE will provide the funding to make it possible.

"One of the reasons DOE is interested in this is they're subject to pressures from lobbyists from fuel companies," he explained. "There's a certain amount of pressure to show that the North American continent is actually a sink for carbon, that we're taking up carbon. And there are quite a number of studies that suggest this is true, even though we are also the largest users of fossil fuels (which add carbon to the atmosphere). So they set up this network to do this, and they would like



*A research assistant at a field station in the Alaskan tundra.*

this network to go at least 10 years – not only to find out where we are now, but to see how these forests are going to respond to the increasing temperatures we're seeing."

Since 1995, some 4,000 miles north of Miami in the Alaskan tundra, Oberbauer has been studying how plants would respond to a longer growing season prompted by global warming – and how that might affect the ecosystem. Climate models suggest that the higher latitudes and the poles will experience more global warming than temperate or tropical areas.

To simulate a longer growing season (which ordinarily starts late May-early June), Oberbauer removes snow from small plots of land and heats the soil in some of them. Then

he compares the growth between the experimental samples and those that grow under normal conditions. He has found that the experimental plants that start growing earlier in the season finish growing earlier; they can't take advantage of the longer growing season. "In terms of the net ecosystem affect, it's basically balancing out in terms of how much carbon is exchanging," Oberbauer noted. "It's not changing the system dramatically in terms of the net balance of carbon dioxide based on the extended growing season."

A great deal of carbon is also locked beneath the tundra in the form of peat. For years, the arctic tundra was thought to be a carbon "sink" that stores more carbon dioxide than plants release. Due to global warming, however, this peat would decompose and enter the atmosphere – which would make global warming even worse.

"The tundra is already changing from being a sink and helping the carbon dioxide problem to being a source and making it worse," Oberbauer commented.

"People are now becoming quite convinced that the climate is warming, and it's probably due to carbon dioxide that we've released in the atmosphere. According to physics, if you put more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the atmosphere has to get warmer – by physical principles that has to happen. There are other variables. We're dumping all this other stuff in the atmosphere that is reflecting light. But, ultimately, with the higher carbon dioxide there's going to be warming." **FIU**



*Plant samples from the simulated longer growing season studies in Alaska.*

# Out in front

FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center

A globe centered on the Americas, showing North and South America. The title 'FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center' is written in a large, yellow, serif font, curving over the top half of the globe. The globe is set against a dark background with a subtle pattern of light spots.

# of the curve:

by Michael R. Malone

The glass display case outside the office of Florida International University's Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) brims with news about the center's activities. Flyers line bulletin boards with announcements of upcoming LACC lecture programs and study abroad opportunities. Clippings of articles written by, or quoting, LACC's affiliated professors in the nation's major dailies document the national importance that LACC now commands.

Inside the center, a series of wall clocks – Miami, Santiago, São Paulo, Mexico City, Los Angeles – mark the region's pulse. Magazine racks display *Americas*, *Forbes*, *Economía*, *Latin American Reports* and other publications to inform visitors of the latest trade and cultural developments. Alluring photographs of Caribbean beaches, Costa Rican mountains and Guatemalan peasants dressed in colorful *huipiles* adorn the walls.

Latin America lives and breathes here. Just as Miami has grown to become the "gateway to the Americas," LACC serves as the University's bridge to the hemisphere to the south. Since a modest founding in 1979, LACC has become one of the country's preeminent centers for study on Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a federally supported National Resource Center for Language and Area Studies, with a mandate to promote graduate and undergraduate education, faculty research, and public education on Latin American and Caribbean affairs.

LACC offers a master's degree program, as well as a variety of undergraduate and graduate certificate programs. The center draws on the intellectual capital of more than 145 affiliated FIU faculty, who span a diverse range of disciplines, including economics, political science, history, sociology, anthropology, religious studies, music, dance, public and educational administration, criminal justice, business, engineering, geology and environmental studies. LACC also has six centers and institutes (Cuban Research Institute, Summit of the Americas Center (SOAC), Intercultural Dance and Music Institute (INDAMI), Florida-



LACC's founding fathers Mark Szuchman and Mark Rosenberg

Mexico Institute, Florida Caribbean Institute, Institute for International Professional Services) and is affiliated with other programs and centers at FIU. In FIU's early days of the 1970s, though, LACC was still just a vision in the minds of two faculty members.

Mark Rosenberg and Mark Szuchman, the founders of LACC, both arrived at FIU in the mid-'70s as committed Latin Americanists, schooled at the two finest Latin American studies programs in the country (University of Pittsburgh and University of Texas) at the time. The two soon found a group of professors – Tony Maingot, Ken Boodhoo, Barry Levine, Maida Watson, Raul Moncarz and others – who were natural candidates for the team they sought to build.

"Our vision here was to have a program that could look like the Texas or Pittsburgh program – nationally ranked, nationally visible. We immediately set about to do that," said Rosenberg, now FIU's provost, with LACC's earliest frustrations and triumphs still vivid in his mind.

At the time, FIU was still a toddler on the college scene, unsure of its identity. It was a

very local university, offering only upper-division studies for undergraduates and a handful of master's programs.

"It was a battle," Szuchman recalled, "to sell FIU as a natural studies center hub for the region when neither the state nor the University were yet ready to sustain such a commitment." But "the conjuncture was right" for a Latin American studies center to form the centerpiece of this national education institution, said Szuchman, today the associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Rosenberg and Szuchman met at a budgetary committee meeting and soon thereafter managed to secure \$40,000 in seed funding from the University to establish the basis for a center. They opened a dialogue with other interested faculty, keeping in mind one absolute truth about Latin American studies – support from Washington was crucial.

They looked to a natural ally, the University of Florida, a recipient of funding from the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) (later the National Resource Center/NRC) since the late '50s. The federal program, created by Congress to address the fact that the United States was woefully underprepared to deal with foreign cultures and Third World countries, provided funding to established programs of excellence. At the time, the NRC encouraged a collaborative approach for universities seeking such assistance.

In collaboration with UF, Rosenberg and Szuchman competed against the nation's top schools. They devised a curriculum and packaged a dynamic proposal, submitting it in the winter of 1979. "To our delight, we were recognized as being competitive at the undergraduate level. FIU at that time was only seven years old, and it was really the first time that we had successfully competed for a prestigious national funding program," Rosenberg said.

The award, he added, "catalyzed an excitement and a belief that we were on the right track and set forward a whole set of larger thought processes for the budding center. The University jumped on board because they saw that this was something that made sense within the context of our mission."

## Sprinting in the '80s

With no dedicated space nor staff and just a minimal budget, the two had turned a dream into a reality, modeling their initiative on what they had witnessed at their two graduate schools. Leapfrogging its infancy, the maverick center sprinted ahead, confident in its vision and heady as an eager teen. In the fall of 1980, LACC took another major stride when it hosted Robert E. White, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador (1980-81) at the time of the Salvadoran civil war, for a talk on campus.

"The fact that we could command a national audience and national visibility, and that the U.S. ambassador in such an important country was willing to come and speak at our university," was a boost for LACC and a direct reflection of the esteem bestowed by the NRC funding, Rosenberg noted.

Sensing another opportunity, in 1982 LACC hosted a debate between then U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua, Lawrence Pezullo, and Arturo Cruz, Nicaraguan ambassador to the United States.

But LACC was wholly unprepared for what occurred.

The local audience saw both speakers as "enemies." In his capacity as a representative of the revolutionary Sandinista government, Cruz was viewed as the ambassador who ousted strongman Anastasio Somoza and the reason that many Nicaraguans had to leave their country. The event marked the first Contra (opponents of the Sandinista government) rally ever held at FIU. Fistfights broke out in



the auditorium. Fires were set on campus. State police drew their weapons and Metro-Dade police were summoned to subdue the crowd. The invited guests were whisked out of the back of auditorium.

"It was an absolute disaster, but it was an incredible learning experience, Rosenberg acknowledged. "We learned that the rules of the street were not the rules for academia and that we had to identify and spend more time thinking about what our arena was and where our value-added was. We recognized that in a



LACC's current director Eduardo Gamarra

place like Miami we needed to focus on national academic competitiveness."

A key outgrowth of the incident was that Latin American studies faculty met frequently in the '80s to discuss everything LACC was doing. "We wanted to make sure that we were somehow striking a balance between the diverse ideological interests of the faculty on one hand and the need for academic rigor and competitiveness on the other," the provost said.

The experience prompted LACC to retool its program development strategy and to identify five key constituency groups: journalists and editors, business people, teachers, decision makers and other academics.

The '80s were also years for the center to look beyond the federal government for funding. Private foundations, such as the Ford Foundation, were targeted. A small grant in 1984 from this prestigious organization allowed for an exchange with Caribbean academics, marking the first time the University had successfully secured funding from a major New York foundation. It was followed by major grants from the Tinker and then the Mellon Foundations. Recognition from these private prestigious foundations was an important precedent for LACC and for the University, Rosenberg said.

LACC channeled this funding into its principal resource: its faculty. Field research is crucial to keeping faculty in the trenches and at the forefront of their fields, Rosenberg said, and this emphasis on faculty development is an essential facet of the center's ethos.

## Expanding horizons in the '90s

Miami's singular environ forced LACC to adopt a more sensitive stance, but the setting offered the center major benefits and keys to its future development.

LACC's vision has broadened along with its role and impact in recent years. With the rise of graduate programs, the center responded by focusing on getting more foundation support for research and for developing a graduate program of its own. LACC also expanded its outreach activities by seeking partnerships in the community.

In the early '90s, LACC made the conscious decision to invest in personnel with technical skills. That decision enabled the center to develop projects and initiatives, in conjunction with other FIU units, that are considerably more advanced in information technology. The center established a Latin American and Caribbean information center at the library, designed to provide research-oriented services to faculty and graduate students with a focus on information technology. Under the leadership of LACC's research director, A. Douglas Kincaid, the center has formed a collaborative arrangement with the College of Engineering to create a Latin American and Caribbean communications network laboratory, a venue where computer engineering students can work with faculty to develop skills in advanced information technology.

The center's competence in information technology has not gone unnoticed. When the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) set up its 21st Century Task Force to help its membership make better use of information technology, Rosenberg was invited to chair. Kincaid replaced him in 1999.

### 'So much depth, so many people of talent'

LACC's current director, Eduardo Gamarra, came to FIU in 1986. Gamarra left his native Bolivia during the military rule of General Hugo Banzer to attend college in the U.S. and earned his doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh. Gamarra arrived at FIU bent on the academic circuit – writing books, publishing articles and teaching. He had no reason to believe his career would deviate until one Friday night in 1994 he got a call from Mark Rosenberg.

"I want you to become interim director of LACC. You've got 48 hours to decide," Rosenberg told him. "You're insane," Gamarra responded, then called everyone he knew for advice. His only previous administrative experience had been with the U.S. Catholic

Conference, assisting refugees from the Mariel boatlift at Ft. Chaffey in Arkansas. "If I'd had more time to consider, I'm sure I'd have said 'no,'" he admitted.

"By 1994, LACC had so much depth, so many people of talent. The base was so well laid, strong in the Caribbean, strong in Central America," he remembered. LACC saw itself as a single unit, yet it coordinated a number of institutes.

Gamarra got a crash course in administration and the monumental support of Rosenberg, Kincaid, Lidia Tuttle, then the assistant director, and other key individuals.

Today, LACC's director employs a "manage-

ment-by-consensus" leadership style, a true democracy in which the collective wisdom of the cadre of institute directors is solicited and appreciated. The intention is for LACC to become the preeminent center for the study of Latin America and the Caribbean in the United States. To do that, Gamarra said, the center must remain ahead of the curve on information technology, understand the direction of regional economies, particularly in the services sector, stay abreast of the direction trade will take and keep ahead of any center on Cuba. "As each year passes," he added, "we are getting closer to that vision."

LACC has historically played and continues

to play a key role for the University by supporting other departments, institutes and units in their endeavors. As one of the oldest major interdisciplinary centers on campus, that role is a natural one, Gamarra says.

What's clear to Gamarra is that LACC's strength is not based on individuals, himself included. "Everybody has put so much into LACC, they've dedicated their lives to it, and it's going to be here long after we're gone."

The center's mission is, above all, to educate – students, faculty, journalists, business people, teachers. It promotes the study of Latin America in a unique inter-American setting, tailoring programs to make them relevant

## THE CUBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The precursor of the Cuban Research Institute (CRI) – the only academic center in the United States devoted exclusively to the study of Cuba and Cuban Americans – was a faculty committee on Cuban Studies created in 1989 to advise then Provost Judith Stiehm on matters relating to Cuba and Cuban-Americans. Lisandro Pérez was appointed to chair that committee and as institute director has navigated CRI through the choppy waters of Cuban issues since its formal establishment in 1991.

The CRI concentrates on the three dimensions of the University's work – research, teaching and service – and is the unit that handles all issues that have to do with Cuba and Cuban-Americans, Pérez explained. The institute has unique opportunities to develop Cuba-related programs, based on the following factors:

- its location in the largest concentration of the Cuban diaspora, a community with more than 700,000 persons of Cuban origin, geographically situated at the limited gateway between Cuba and the United States.
- the largest nucleus of faculty experts on Cuba or the Cuban-American community of any university in the U.S., distributed across the various colleges and schools of the University, from the humanities and the social sciences, to education, business, and public affairs.
- the largest undergraduate student body of Cuban origin of any university (including the University of Havana).

Throughout its history, Pérez has never wavered on the center's direction. Local programs for the community are necessary, he noted, but the CRI must develop a national and international reputation. "I always thought that this was the place that there was going to be a unit, a nationally recognized center on Cuba and Cuban-Americans. It should be here in Miami and we should have it here at FIU," Pérez said.

But in Miami, where Cuba and controversy are as inseparable as beans and rice, how has the CRI managed its focus?



L I S A N D R O P E R E Z

"If you're a research center on Cuba, you need to have contact with people from Cuba. I never saw it any other way. It has nothing to do with politics; it has to do with the way you do academic work," Pérez says. Since the CRI's first major outside funding, from the prestigious Ford Foundation in 1992, the CRI has developed academic contact with Cuba along with their other initiatives. A Rockefeller Foundation grant awarded for 1995-98 helped fund a CRI fellowship program.

The CRI receives more inquiries than any other center in the country dedicated to the study of Cuba. Since holding its first Conference on Cuba in October 1997, that forum has garnered a reputation as *the* foremost conference in its field. The third conference will be held in fall 2000. Pérez explained that the CRI has never sought the participation of Cubans from the island, but that it's only natural to expect that proposals from there will be forthcoming.

In 1998, the CRI began a five-year term managing the leading journal in the field, *Cuban Studies*. Pérez, with the invaluable assistance of specialist Uva de Aragón, is responsible for articles, editing and layout, while the University of Pittsburgh Press handles publication.

The CRI boasts the largest number of academics (about 25) of any institution in the U.S. engaged in research on Cuba, with expertise ranging from economics to visual arts. Pérez seeks to involve more faculty and to support the work of those faculty already engaged in Cuba-related projects. New grants from the Christopher Reynolds and Ford Foundations have provided funds toward research and travel for graduate students.

CRI's principle link to the island is through the University of Havana. Any contact is driven by requests from FIU faculty, Pérez said.

In the near future, Pérez plans to start fund raising locally. Other short-term plans include taking undergraduate students to study in Cuba, as other U.S. colleges have done for some time.

to the community. Throughout, the preservation of one value has remained “absolutely crucial” and that is a tremendous sense of independence. This spirit has encouraged a climate of pluralistic debate, particularly on issues regarding Cuba.

### The challenge today

LACC founding director Rosenberg believes the center’s challenge today is to keep up with the University. “In many ways, LACC was at the forefront of nationally visible and recognized programs early on in the history of the University, and now we have a lot of LACCs, a lot of programs that are doing

very well,” the provost said. The center’s challenge, he suggested, is to renew itself and to remain vigorous by maintaining and enhancing its quality.

Rosenberg recognized that area studies are far more comparative, far more transregional than in the past. LACC, he said, has done a good job of fostering new initiatives, like INDAMI, SOAC, the Hemispheric Center for Environmental Technology (HCET) and the Institute of International Professional Services (IIPS). The programs are an indication of the center’s persistent search for high quality and for its willingness to work with the faculty on their terms. That continued willingness to

innovate, Rosenberg emphasized, is critical for LACC’s continued success.

The programs that LACC has developed for its targeted constituencies – journalists and editors, students and teachers, policy makers and business leaders – have cemented the center’s leadership profile. Over the past decade especially, LACC’s foresight to develop information technology and link those advancements to specific seminal processes or events in Latin America – the Summit of the Americas, the Free Trade Area of the Americas – has catapulted the center to the forefront of Latin American studies centers in the nation.

As a result of its vision to create the Sum-

## THE INTERCULTURAL DANCE AND MUSIC INSTITUTE

In 1991, Andrea Mantell-Seidel was an FIU visiting professor with a doctorate in dance, a specialization in Native American ritual and a passionate vision.

LACC had recently undergone their three-year review by the federal National Resource Center (NRC) and the NRC’s recommendation had not gone unheeded: expand the curriculum beyond the traditional humanities and social sciences.

“I didn’t really know the structure of LACC at the time. I just kind of walked over and was passionate and tenacious enough about my idea for a dance/cultural institute,” Mantell-Seidel recalled.

“I used to joke with Andrea that ‘we don’t do gigs’ at LACC, but it was a metaphor for ‘we need to focus on academic issues,’” Rosenberg remembered. Investing in dance at that point, he said, was peripheral to the goal of creating a solid program. He did not say “no,” but instead adopted the stance that characterizes his administrative style: Show me the merit and that you’ve got enough energy and commitment to make it work.

She did, and in the fall of 1992, the Intercultural Dance and Music Institute (INDAMI) was welcomed into LACC as a joint project with the Theatre and Dance Department. As it does for its other institutes, LACC plays a supporting role for INDAMI, providing space and services such as graphic design and technology support.

The Institute stretched and sweated with smaller local grants and funding, but driven by the need to have a larger impact on national dance curriculum reform, Mantell-Seidel looked to Washington. On an early morning plane ride to the capital, she made her case to Rosenberg for how dance was the ideal vehicle to prepare students for the multicultural workplace of the 21st century. For how Latin American and



ANDREA MANTELL-SEIDEL

Caribbean dance needed to take its place alongside Western European traditional dance. And for how dance is a primary means by which cultures encode cultural identity, religion, political values and social relations.

In Washington, Rosenberg demonstrated his understanding of the federal funding process. The result? Of the 3,000 applications, only 70 projects were funded – and INDAMI was the proud recipient of a three-year

\$225,000 U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant.

The Institute focuses on furthering a synergy between dance and area studies. Now in the second year of the grant, INDAMI’s “faculty task force” strives to incorporate Caribbean-based dance into the classroom as a way of communicating the essential place of dance and ritual in cultural identity.

The Institute’s other major thrust is its Summer Dance Institute, now in its third year. The one-week intensive event of lectures, panel discussions and workshops takes place at the New World School of the Arts in conjunction with the Florida Dance Festival, which moved to Miami several years ago.

Mantell-Seidel recognized that the FIPSE grant would not have been possible without LACC’s reputation as a sponsoring entity and the center’s expertise in writing federal grants. She applauds the synergy that comes from collaborating with such visionary colleagues.

“LACC is like a well-run corporation, merging corporate efficiency with academic freedom and where the staff is supported yet motivated by the demand for absolute excellence. There really is the courage to be adventuresome and to innovate and, though we are housed within LACC, we have the autonomy to create our own vision,” Mantell-Seidel stressed.

mit of the Americas Center, LACC was able to secure \$500,000 a year in funding from the state of Florida, which is channeled into the FIU budget. Provost Rosenberg stressed how important that funding is for LACC to continue to build and expand its programs.

LACC is now collaborating with the Inter-American Dialogue and the Institute of Iberoamerican Studies of Hamburg, Germany, to conduct a major study of development prospects and trends for Central America over the next two decades. Called Central America 2020, the project seeks to generate innovative ideas and recommendations for international development assis-

tance to promote sustainable economic growth, expanded citizenship and enhanced social welfare in the region. The project will run throughout the year 2000 and culminate in a large international conference, workshops, and numerous publications. In mid-March, LACC hosted two major events: the XXII conference of the Latin American Studies Association, and a key conference on Colombia – one of the region's hot spots. For Gamarra, the latter forum was indicative of the center's future focus.

"We have to be aware, through seminars and research, of where the ball is going.

That country (Colombia) is about to explode, and LACC is going to have to play a major role by developing a Colombian studies program, by recruiting faculty to keep up with where things are going. That's the role that LACC has to have." ■

Michael R. Malone writes on culture and ethnicity and teaches creative writing at FIU. He has written two books, *A Guatemalan Family: Journey Between Two Worlds* (Lerner 1997) and *A Nicaraguan Family* (1998), and his articles have appeared in *Americas Magazine*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, among others.

## THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS CENTER

The Summit of the Americas process began in Miami in 1994 with a historic three-day meeting that brought together all 34 democratically elected leaders of the Western Hemisphere. FIU and LACC were heavily involved, and the following year, capitalizing on the University's strategic location and faculty expertise, they established the Summit of the Americas Center (SOAC). The center, which has been backed by \$500,000 a year from the state of Florida, was created to research, analyze and monitor the accords of the 1994 Summit, with special attention to Florida's role in hemispheric trade and commerce. At the 1998 Santiago, Chile Summit, LACC and SOAC were intimately involved in a major support role.

For the center's first five years, a major focus was on Florida, specifically on enhancing hemispheric trade and commerce – which will benefit the state – and since 1998, SOAC has sought to educate Floridians about the ongoing process toward creating a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The SOAC has conducted research, sponsored conferences and produced publications on the movement toward hemispheric integration and its impact on Florida trade, labor, agriculture and other state issues.

Building on the success of SummitNet, FIU's first Internet site for 1994 Summit-related information, SOAC developed AmericasNet (<http://americasnet.net>) to be the information backbone of the hemispheric integration process during the 1998 Santiago Summit. The center is now revamping the web site and launching a new information policy, through which it will offer more timely news, analysis and comment on Summit implementation, with special emphasis on FTAA negotiations and the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, Canada in April 2001.

The changes on AmericasNet are among the initiatives that have been launched by the SOAC's new director, Carl Cira, who has been leading the center since last October. Cira, a lawyer by training, was with the U.S. Agency for International Development for 15 years,



CARL CIRA

managing democracy development and legal reform programs in Costa Rica, Chile, Bolivia and Colombia. He also served as executive director of the International Law Institute at Georgetown University.

Cira views the center as a clearing-house – for both Florida and the rest of the hemisphere – for information and education on hemispheric integration. "Our current focus is the FTAA negotiations process, which we follow, analyze and disseminate for the benefit of Florida," Cira

said. "FIU produces graduates who can respond to this developing trend and many of them will enter international trade. There also are enormous potential benefits to South Florida as a whole from this trend, especially if we are successful in the effort to assure that Miami is the location of the Permanent Secretariat of the FTAA in 2005."

The center also intends to launch new academic programs for the local and international markets. Cira said plans are moving forward to establish a certificate program in international trade next year as well as a course for Latin American trade negotiators. The latter course would be offered both in Miami and in foreign countries, with elements included on the Web.

The center continues to produce an ongoing series of conferences with LACC on issues affecting the region. In March, they presented *Colombia: Armed Conflict, Peace Prospects, and Democracy*, a successful two-day event that addressed Colombia's economy and politics and the search for solutions to problems including drugs and corruption. Upcoming conferences will focus on Venezuela, Peru and Jamaica.

The SOAC also recently released its latest trade report, "The Florida Position Paper: The FTAA Negotiations and Florida's Role in Hemispheric Integration." The paper presents a consensus of views by Florida's business and public affairs leaders on the movement toward hemispheric free trade by 2005. The report states that the state's future is "intimately linked" to the successful completion of FTAA negotiations.





## IMMIGRATION AND ETHNICITY INSTITUTE:

# Monitoring the vital signs

Lately, it seems every time you pick up a newspaper or turn on a news program, experts are crunching numbers: four of 10 residents in New York City speak a language other than English at home; by the year 2010, 69 percent of Miamians will be foreign-born; by 2025, native-born whites will no longer be the majority in eight states, including California and Texas; by 2050, native-born whites will comprise only 53 percent of the total U.S. population.

Terms such as “the browning of America” and “white flight” have entered the daily lexicon with subtle, yet clear connotations of rising anxiousness. If one assumes that the U.S. Census Bureau and demographers are reporting these figures in response to growing concern from lawmakers over the implications of this accelerating diversity, then ground-zero for researching the successful management of this phenomenon may be Florida International University’s Immigration and Ethnicity Institute (IEI).

“I really think Miami is a harbinger of what is going to happen and is happening in many other places in the United States,” says Alex Stepick, director of the institute and professor of Sociology and Anthropology. “Because of the number of minorities, it is a wonderful social laboratory, an opportunity to study the political, economic, and social relationships that are changing America in many ways. Trying to understand what is going on in Miami will not only be a good lesson for the people of Miami, but for all of the United States.”

Stepick’s orderly office belies the sheer volume of dynamic research the institute is currently conducting. His desktop is uncluttered,

# of a changing America by Carlos Maza

save for a neat stack of documents and the remnants of a lunch hurriedly consumed between appointments. A child's drawing (his daughter's) hangs behind him on the mostly unadorned, freshly painted white wall. Stepick's eyes flash with the enthusiasm of someone who thoroughly enjoys his life's work. He is quick to let out an infectious laugh, especially when he explains the improbable, yet equally logical path his career has followed, leading him to the front lines of immigration scholarship.

"The original research for my dissertation was in Mexico. Once I finished, I had an opportunity for a congressional fellowship in Washington, D.C. working with Mickey Leland, a senator from Texas. This was 1980, and, of course, Miami was a hot topic: 125,000 refugees arrived from Mariel, Cuba. Around that time, 25,000 Haitians also arrived. It was an interesting, fascinating time because there was a dramatic contrast between the welcome the Cubans were receiving and the rejection the Haitians were getting. In Washington, the Black Caucus was the only group speaking out in favor of the Haitians. My employer, Leland, had an interest, but no one working on the topic. In typical Washington fashion, since I had worked in Mexico – that was Latin America – (they figured) I should know about Haitians! Right? (laughs) Basically, I was told, 'You know Haitians.'"

Advocating equality for Haitians, Stepick met with President Carter and key congressional leaders. "That was fun and fascinating," he recalls. "It was also intellectually interesting trying to figure out why these two groups were being treated unequally."

Stepick felt a gnawing desire to really know

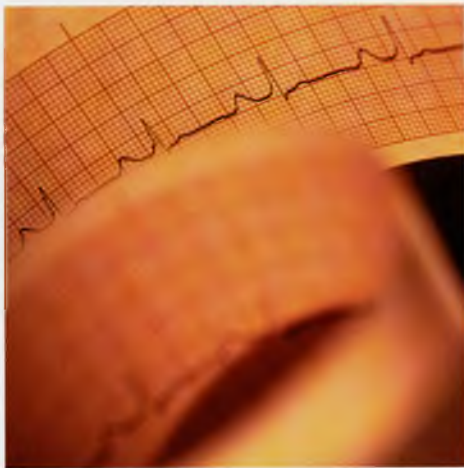


what he was talking about, instead of being one of the "typical instant experts that happens in Washington." Fortunately, after his congressional fellowship ended, he was awarded a yearlong fellowship at Duke University as part of a special immigration program headed by Alejandro Portes, current president of the American Sociological Association and professor of Sociology at Princeton.

Stepick took advantage of the opportunity to read about Haitian culture, Haitian refugees, refugee law and immigration in general, gradually filling in his evolving perspective on the uniqueness of the Haitian exile experience. The fellowship allowed him "to read everything that, by my standards, I should've read before I began working with Haitians." The association with Portes led to future collaborations as co-investigators.

*"I really think Miami is a harbinger of what is going to happen and is happening in many other places in the United States."*

*—Alex Stepick*



*Changing Miami seemed to signal a social upheaval of which the first stirrings were being sensed across the country.*

At the end of that year, FIU had an opening in the Sociology Department and Stepick reasoned, "If I was going to be an expert on Haitian refugees, that was the place to be. Anthropologists normally have to travel halfway around the world to do their work; FIU provided the unique opportunity to work where I lived.

"I learned Haitian Creole, lived in the Little Haiti neighborhood of Miami and worked with all the Haitian organizations. I started conducting true anthropological research because one of the things I learned early on in Washington was that people were making claims – specifically like 'Haitians are economic refugees, not political refugees as the Cubans' – without bringing any data at all. No one had done any serious research at all. The claims on both sides were very ideological, superficial. On the one hand, some were arguing, 'Haiti is a poor country – they must be economic (refugees). While those on the other side, the ones I was working for, were equally outrageous, saying, 'They're political (refugees) because the Duvalier regime is horribly repressive.' And they were both right. But no one had actually gone out and talked with the refugees to find out what was really going on from their perspective."

Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, the cyclical nature of the immigration crisis kept the plight of Haitian refugees in the media spotlight, albeit not necessarily in a positive light, and solidified Stepick's standing as the "Haitian expert." As Stepick became more fluent in Haitian Creole and culturally savvy in Haitian customs, he immersed himself deeper into the community, conducting surveys and becoming familiar with individuals as well as working extensively with organizations. His expertise grew, coinciding with a national shift in refugee and immigration consciousness. The scholar, who had been inadvertently thrust into the Haitian situation because he had conducted research in Mexico, never looked back.

"I was in the right place at the right time," he smiles and says.

But the dramatic contrast between the treatment of Cubans and Haitians still confounded Stepick. Along with Portes, he initiated a project to compare the experiences of Haitian refugees and Mariel Cubans for eco-

nomical and sociological conclusions. Through this work, his research focus expanded from Haitian immigrants to encompass a broader Miami context.

As immigration and subsequent racial tensions continued to alter the landscape of Miami through the '80s and into the '90s, the national media again turned its attention south. This time, though, changing Miami seemed to signal a social upheaval of which the first stirrings were being sensed across the country. National organizations and foundations became more interested. Since Stepick had developed a reputation as an anthropologist conducting ethnographic work, he and other FIU researchers attracted the attention of organizations funding immigration and assimilation studies.

At that time, in the early 1990s, the Ford Foundation was creating a national project on interethnic relations named Changing Relations Between Newcomers and Established Residents, a three-year anthropological study that concentrated on observing how people worked together and interacted in a number of environments. In Miami, these included a high school with Haitian and African-American students, construction sites, garment factories, restaurants and motels employing members from these two groups along with Hispanics. Research assistants worked as actual employees in these settings for one- or two-year periods as they conducted observations. One researcher even participated on a chamber of commerce committee, observing and taking notes. To implement the Miami phase of the project, Stepick assembled a "dream team" of immigrant and refugee experts that included: Guillermo Grenier, currently director of FIU's Center for Labor Research and Studies; Marvin Dunn, associate professor of Psychology at FIU; and Max Castro, currently senior research associate at the University of Miami's Dante B. Fascell North-South Center. The research generated reports, and a book will be published on the Miami findings.

Next, the Carnegie Corporation funded \$175,000 for a three-year project titled Interaction Among Immigrant and Native-Born Minority Adolescents. About five years ago, when Stepick was on an assignment with the Russell Sage Foundation, he produced a research proposal prompted by a needs assess-

ment he had conducted within the Haitian community. An interesting finding emerged from that assessment: Whereas in the 1980s, Haitian refugees cited immigration status and employment opportunities as their chief concerns, in the mid-90s, their children also became a priority.

"Throughout the '80s Haitian children had been the 'good kids' in school, the model minorities," Stepick explains. "But now, not everyone obviously, but more and more youths were involved with drugs, Haitian gangs emerged, teenage pregnancies – all those things that other communities face, but the Haitians had been (previously) relatively immune to. Not surprisingly, Haitian leaders were concerned."

Stepick found there were similar issues in other Miami immigrant communities. He and his wife, Carol, designed a project to explore a key question: Why do adolescents from comparable backgrounds develop different attitudes toward education?

"These are kids who ostensibly have the same social conditions, same neighborhoods, same high schools, same socioeconomic status," explains Stepick. "Yet some of them become valedictorians or academic stars or at least view education as the way to prove themselves, while others give up on education and think it's a waste. By standard sociological thought they should be the same. So what is it that distinguishes one from the other?"

The Stepicks set out to investigate some of the different groups in their laboratory home of Miami. They initially decided to focus on Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, West Indians and Mexicans. They subsequently broadened the study to include African Americans, a crucial decision that added more depth and scope – and, consequently, much greater national significance to their study.

The research proposal evolved into a project titled Academic Orientations of Immigrant and Native Minority Adolescents, which was first submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF responded with the largest grant for cultural anthropology they had ever awarded: \$395,000 over five years. The Andrew Mellon Foundation awarded \$130,000 over three years, and the Spencer Foundation granted \$35,000 for the same study. The project has become the IEL's

most consuming endeavor, employing between 10-15 graduate students. In all, over 300 students were studied.

The initial research focus, which identified factors that distinguish successful kids, revealed interesting results. Not surprisingly, the single most important factor in an adolescent's academic orientation is the existence of a trusting relationship with an adult.

"It could be a parent, but not necessarily. Sometimes an older sibling, an aunt or uncle. It varies individually and by ethnic group, due to family structure. For instance, West Indians had high incidences of living in households where an older sibling or relative was the primary adult. These kids are sent to the U.S. for an education while their parents remain in their homeland."

The more assimilated Cuban adolescents were most likely to trust in a cousin or uncle. They were more concerned with parties, cars and how they were perceived by their friends. Conversely, the groups that American society most negatively stereotypes – blacks, Haitians, West Indians, Mexicans – were the ones most focused on the future. "Even the ones not doing well in school worried about it. The Cubans most clearly resembled the native-born American white kids. Other than the fact that they were bilingual, they could've been right out of 'American Graffiti,' or all of those other adolescent American culture movies," Stepick adds with a laugh.

Of even greater relevance were the disturbing findings on prejudice and discrimination experienced by the subjects. From his Washington days, Stepick learned that that race is a large and fundamental issue. His work with adolescents has strengthened his conviction. "We wanted to address the issue of ethnic identity. For those just entering high school, ethnic identity is trivial, not as important as rockers, rappers and social groups within the high school. Their grandmother may speak Spanish and talk about Cuba, but it means nothing to them. As they progress through high school, they gradually begin to get an understanding of what those words mean and how they apply to them.

"Specifically, black kids get a much keener understanding of how important it is that you are, or are not, black in the U.S. And it is especially poignant and difficult for the

*Not surprisingly, the single most important factor in an adolescent's academic orientation is the existence of a trusting relationship with an adult.*

*Further research is needed to evaluate how some people could shed layers of negative racial stereotypes in certain contexts.*

Haitians. There's such strong anti-Haitian prejudice in Miami – 'boat people,' jokes, HIV rumors, etc. If a Haitian attempts to 'cover-up' – that's the actual term within the community – all they can do is become African American. Then they must deal with all the negative stereotypes of young black males. It's a difficult position and amazing that any of them ever rise above it. And some do, indeed, rise above it and become proud of being Haitian and also proud of being black." Stepick feels that these findings indicate further research is needed to evaluate how some people could shed layers of negative racial stereotypes in certain contexts.

The work also revealed possible strategies for managing discrimination. According to the study, Cubans reported no discrimination; Nicaraguans and Mexicans reported some, but much lower levels than black youths. Although there were instances of solidarity between Haitians and African Americans, cases of discrimination between those two groups were also reported.

"We found that in the high school setting the most likely place to find positive interethnic relations is on sports teams. Obviously, there everybody is after the same goal, and they must cooperate if they want to win. We also found it to occur in Advanced Placement Classes, which is consistent with the general sociology finding that proposes the more education a person has, the less prejudiced they are likely to be.

"We also found these results outside the high school setting; in unionized construction and the chamber of commerce. This supports what is known as 'the contact hypothesis,' which is that people develop positive feelings, beliefs, relationships with other groups if they come in contact with them while on equal status.

The main point is that while race is the most fundamental dividing issue, it can be overcome in the right circumstances."

The volume of data gathered from the study will grow exponentially within the next few years as Stepick's researchers continue to track those original ninth-grade students of five years ago through their high school years. Over the past year, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Pew Charitable Trusts and others have expressed interest in information regarding these adolescents' transition to adulthood.

"There is concern about a general, widespread American problem of kids caring less about politics, religion and institutions in general. There is also interest in addressing these institutions' ability to act as positive influences during the difficult ages of transition," Stepick explains. In the funding stage is the next large, critical project of the institution: Religion, Immigration and Civic Life in Miami.

Yet another project attempts to research and document what is happening to the minority welfare population of Miami-Dade County. This study tracks 30 minority women in their efforts to progress out of welfare dependency. Key findings have revealed that the state of Florida has good policies that are not adequately implemented. Most of the consultation periods, where caseworkers could be assessing the real needs of these women, are consumed by paperwork.

"Once again, there is failure – not out someone's malice, but out of inadequacies in the system," Stepick laments. He specifically mentions the case of a woman who had to request a day off from her new job so she could apply for child-care benefits. Lack of information about transitional benefits and low levels of provision of these benefits have thwarted attempts of most of the sample population to successfully progress from welfare to work.

The research experience has also enriched Alex Stepick, the teacher. "One of the neatest things about being at FIU is the people I study are also my students. We've had graduate students from Haiti, the West Indies, African Americans, Nicaraguans, Cubans. After I discuss a particular finding or theory, I like to ask my students, 'How does that resonate with your personal experience?' (He employed this technique numerous times on this writer dur-

ing the course of this interview).

"I've had a fascinating thing occur often in my classroom where someone from a particular group will explain an experience or feeling they believe to be unique to their group, only to have students from other groups say, 'Wow, you've felt that also?' This opportunity has given me the unique experience of teaching things that are part of the daily experiences of the students, as opposed to talking about exotic people where the students feel, 'This is happening somewhere, but it is not part of my daily life.' Teaching became like research."

Although the institute's findings have produced important scientific papers and been widely published in academic and foundation journals, Stepick realizes the issues he studies should not only fall into the realm of academic writing. His books, such as the edited volume *Miami Now!* and *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* attempt to reach a broader audience. When asked about other effective methods to share his findings so that other communities might benefit from the hard-earned experiences of Miami, he answers, "I'm very concerned about this frequently and, to be honest, don't feel that I've adequately found the answer."

The increasing frequency of Stepick's glances to the stack of papers on his desk and the buzz of graduate students hovering outside the office door signify that the interview must draw to a close. Outside the antiseptic walls of the institute, Miami's hot pavement sizzles in the sun and reverberates beneath different rhythms and diverse footsteps. The repercussions echo not only in places like Miami, Los Angeles and New York City, but increasingly on Main Street U.S.A. Like triage physicians, the researchers must scramble out to wrap fingers around the different pulses and record the fluctuating temperatures. As the Immigration and Ethnicity Institute monitors the vital signs of a changing America, Florida International University is on the cutting edge in providing effective strategies for healing the wounds of the cultural divide. **FIU**

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*Carlos Maza is a freelance writer and is pursuing an M.F.A. in Creative Writing at FIU. Currently, he is completing his thesis, a memoir of his bicultural childhood.*

# On the other side of the tape recorder: a research subject's perspective

"The first culture I was exposed to when I came here was Hispanic. I learned my first Spanish from Chuck Norris."

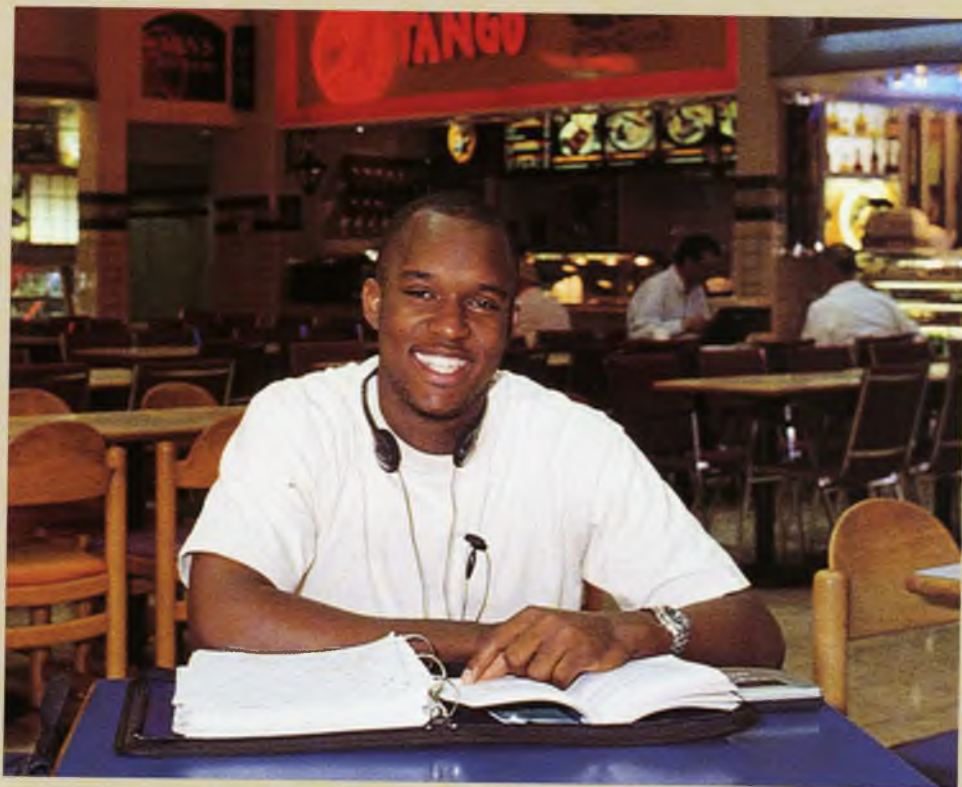
Nineteen-year-old Jamal sits in the noisy food court of a busy Miami mall. A plate of Bourbon Chicken and 'dirty' rice from the Cajun Grill sizzles before him. The mixed aroma of diverse options swirls around him: hints of Chinese and Greek, Cuban, Italian, even a burger may be frying. Around the corner, the trendy uniformity of Nautica and Nike, Reebok and The Gap beckon with the irresistible allure of image. As Jamal speaks, an elderly couple passes behind him, the wife chastising her blue-eyed husband. Her sentences are stretched by the unmistakable, rhythm of Argentinean Spanish. Nearby, a woman with dark, proud Andean Indian features picks at a plate of French fries.

"I watched the Spanish channels because they showed my favorite American adventure films, although dubbed-over," Jamal explains.

He was born and raised in the Bahamas to Jamaican parents and considers both cultures his. He joined the IEI's Academic Orientation of Immigrant and Native Minority Adolescents project as a tenth-grader and participated through his high school graduation last year. He is still being tracked and surveyed while preparing to enter college. "I like the psychology program at FIU. I'm also thinking of joining the service. I've always wanted to be a pilot."

As a subject, Jamal and his group regularly met with an assigned researcher to answer questions relating to their school experiences in Miami and the contrasts with island life. He was also asked about his experiences outside of school and feelings as a minority. Later in the program, questions were similar, but from the context of change. "They started asking, 'Remember when you said this? Do you still feel that way?' or 'What are your views now?'" Jamal explains.

One prospective supporter currently evaluating a significant grant proposal, Kimon Sargeant of the Pew Charitable Trusts, says, "Dr. Stepick and the Institute's research has provided excellent, valuable knowledge in



this field." The work, though, has not only advanced the field of ethnic studies – it has also benefited the researchers and subjects themselves."

"I've become more sensitive to the way people are treated. Not only discrimination, but the stereotypes attached to people. I'm more open-minded," Jamal says. "My group really got into the program and participated." The researcher assigned to Jamal even allowed him to attend a class she was teaching, further piquing his interest in psychology.

Paula B. Fernandez, a former researcher now with the U.S. Bureau of the Census, found that the work with the high school students enriched her appreciation of cultural diversity and exposed her to valuable field research. Daniel Clapp, a former research assistant involved in the early work on Haitian immigrants, credits Stepick with inspiring him to continue research professionally. In 1991, he founded National Opinion Research Services, a marketing and public

opinion research company that last year generated \$2.5 million in revenues while employing FIU students.

Jamal believes the "watering down" of cultures is unfortunate but overall, "races are learning how to get along. I think the future will definitely be a positive one. Any problems will be internal (within each group). That mentality that says 'we've got to hold on to our race' eventually will die out. Racists are old. Today, there is a mixture of speech, dress, music; eventually everything will merge."

Jamal offers a metaphor for the need to adapt to the changing demography. He remembers some small Bahamian islands that are connected by sandbars during low tide. "You can see tourists stranded because they didn't get back before the tide came in."

In the case of the 21<sup>st</sup> century melting pot, FIU's Immigration and Ethnicity Institute is providing the knowledge for America's adaptation to cultural diversity. **FIU**



Alumna Ileana Ros-Lehtinen:  
opening doors in

# Congress and the community

by Victoria Stuart



## *“Buenos Dias! Come on in!”*

Those words and an open door are the signature characteristics of FIU alumna Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen’s Miami office and the hallmarks of her political career. She arrived calm and smiling for this interview, having just dropped her daughters off at school. We suggest that the interview take place in her private office, but she sits down at the reception table in the lobby, facing the door.

“When I’m here, I like to be accessible to everyone,” she explained.

That type of accessibility is just one of the characteristics that has helped Ros-Lehtinen develop a solid base of loyal supporters. For someone who once thought she would never end up in politics, Ros-Lehtinen’s supporters enabled her to achieve several political firsts. They elected her as the first Hispanic woman to the Florida state legislature in 1982, and in 1989 they

helped her become the first Hispanic woman ever to be elected to Congress.

“Ileana is beloved by her constituents because she connects with them,” said colleague Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart. “She is concerned about the issues that matter most to them, and they appreciate that greatly.”

Perhaps Ros-Lehtinen’s popularity stems from her love of community and the formative experiences she has shared with so many South Floridians. Ros-Lehtinen’s family fled from Cuba to the United States when she was seven years old, and at a tender age she learned about the rigors of life as a refugee. However, her early career interests focused on education rather than politics.

“If you had asked me about my goals for the future when I was a high school senior, I would have answered that I could see myself in front of a classroom,” she said. “I always wanted to be a teacher. My father was an education major before he switched to accounting and my aunt was a teacher in Cuba, so it was very much a family profession.”

Ros-Lehtinen attended Miami-Dade Community College, then earned her bachelor’s degree from FIU, majoring in education and minoring in English literature. She went on to earn her master’s degree from the University (in education) in 1987.

After a stint as a student teacher at Miami Killian Senior High School, she became certified in elementary education and taught at local schools for several years. Then she decided to go out on her own.

“A little elementary school in Hialeah became available at that time, and I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to start my own business,” she remembered. “I talked to my parents about it, and we started a family enterprise.”

Ros-Lehtinen operated the private school for nearly nine years. During that time, she also volunteered to help her friend Demetrio Perez with his political campaign.

“I enjoyed the campaigning and developed a strong interest in politics,” she said. “My first thought was to run for a seat on the Miami-Dade School Board because it seemed like a natural extension of my interests in education and politics.”

“However, once I started doing research about how one goes about getting elected to public office – back then I didn’t know anything about the process – and attending campaign training schools, I saw that it would be nearly impossible for me to get elected to the school board,” she explained. “At that time, the elections were countywide. Also, I was a Republican and there



*“When I’m  
here, I like to  
be accessible  
to everyone.”*





weren't many Republicans (being elected to the school board at the time).

"But once I was bitten by the bug of politics, it wasn't difficult to switch my goal to the state legislative races."

In the early 1980s, Florida was in the process of changing over from multimember districts to single-member districts.

"That was a much smaller piece of the pie, and I felt it was manageable and winnable as a Republican."

It was. Ros-Lehtinen served four years in the Florida House of Representatives and three years as a state senator. In 1989, she became the first Hispanic woman elected to the U.S. Congress, when she won a hotly contested special election to fill the vacancy left by Claude Pepper's death.

However, it wasn't always easy to open those doors.

"In the beginning, I had to run against the political establishment of the time, and it was vicious," she said. "It was part of the mentality of the 'good old boy' network. But I knew that was what it was going to be like, so I did not let it get to me. I concentrated on my mission and my objectives, and I didn't worry about the rest of it. It's the same sort of opposition that anyone who doesn't fit the established culture would receive. But I think that perseverance counts. I think that when they finally realized how determined I was, they backed off."

"Today, that culture of hostility is not in evidence, and there are many more minorities and women in public office."

In fact, since Ros-Lehtinen's election to Congress, four other Hispanic women have been elected, and more are expected to win in the next go-round.

"Ileana has helped Hispanics immeasurably by being seen by her colleagues as an effective and personable legislator," Diaz-Balart said.

Much of that is due to the "grass roots" emphasis that has always been a part of her philosophy.

"I enjoy the people-to-people contact as much as the legislative part of my job," Ros-Lehtinen explained. "Many of the issues that I have become involved with have been brought to my attention by my constituents."

For example, the congresswoman is responsible for:

- creating legislation that would offer a tax credit for employers who provide child care for their employees
- expanding access to higher education by introducing and ensuring passage of the Florida Pre-Paid College Tuition Program, the College Saving Program and other tuition assistance plans
- leading congressional efforts to obtain federal funding to clean up and revitalize the Miami River
- launching the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act and other projects to assist senior citizens
- organizing efforts to preserve Stiltsville, the unique Florida landmark community in Biscayne Bay, and place it on the National Register of Historic Places

She has also been involved in lobbying for funding for breast cancer and eye disease research, reducing crime, improving South Florida's economic climate and dozens of other issues.

She is also the first Hispanic woman to chair a congressional subcommittee, and is currently heading the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade in addition to serving on several others.

"I am dedicated to improving the quality of life in South Florida, for us and for our children. As a member of Congress I am able to tackle difficult issues and help spearhead positive solutions," she said. "However, education and the fight for a free Cuba are my original priorities and the issues that inspired me to go to Congress in the first place."

While many members of Congress move to Washington, Ros-Lehtinen is adamant about maintaining her South Florida home.

"This is my neighborhood and my community. This is where I grew up," she explained. "I don't want to lose touch with the people and issues that are closest to my heart. So I will fly home as often as I can, even if it's only for a day."

Debra Zimmerman, the congresswoman's administrative assistant and chief of her Miami office, said that when Ros-Lehtinen is in town "she never wastes a moment."

"She'll take her daughters to school early and sit with them in the classroom for a while, then come to the office and meet with people,

then head out to a press conference or a blood drive. She always returns her calls, and she's never late for anything."

Zimmerman attributes the congresswoman's success in handling her diverse responsibilities to her family's caring and nurturing support.

"Their participation and support has helped make my political career possible," said Ros-Lehtinen, who refers to her father – her campaign manager – as "the Wizard of Oz."

"He's like the man behind the curtain, but unlike the movie, where they say 'pay no attention to that man,' we *do* pay attention to my dad. He's very low key and likes to stay out of the public eye, but he's an integral part of every campaign. As a successful businessman, he knows how to set forth a plan, have an objective, carry out goals and have a winning strategy.

"My mom is also a wonderful organizer and a great people person. She's mapped out a lot of our door-to-door campaigns, and she's in charge of our volunteers. And my brother continues to run the family business, which makes it possible for the rest of us to do what we do."

The congresswoman also takes the time to nurture others, both on her staff and throughout the community.

"I always make an effort to speak to young people, especially young women, and encourage them to become involved in their communities," she said.

She makes a special effort to encourage FIU students and graduates to work toward leadership positions in the community. More than half of her staff are either alumni or current students.

"She encourages us to get our degrees, and she even gives us flex-time to attend classes," said Henry Pollack, one of Ros-Lehtinen's congressional aides.

"FIU has been a wonderful source of inspiration for me, and it has been great to talk about it in Congress," Ros-Lehtinen added. "In fact, we started a new alumni chapter up there (in D.C.)."

As for the future, Ros-Lehtinen's goal is to stay in Congress for as long as she can. "There's still so much to do," she said. "After 41 years, Cuba is still not free. My mission is not over, and if God gives me an opportunity and voters vote me back in, I'd like to remain." ■

Victoria Stuart is a local freelance writer.



# FIU moves to Washington

In June 1999, to help advance FIU's goal of attaining Research I university status, Steve Sauls, vice president of University Relations, and Tom Breslin, vice president of Sponsored Research, organized the University's first federal relations office in Washington, D.C. Securing additional federal funding is critical to achieve Research I, and an ongoing presence in the nation's capital helps make this possible.

To secure federal funding for research, more and more universities across the nation are opening offices in D.C. or using governmental relations firms for their voices to be heard in Congress.

Housed in the offices of the prominent law firm of Long, Aldridge and Norman LLP, the D.C. federal relations team is led by Randy Nuckolls, FIU's Washington counsel and partner in the firm, and Mercy Viana, an FIU alumna. Nuckolls has more than 20 years of experience working with higher education institutions on matters before Congress and federal agencies. Prior to entering private practice, Randy served for six years as chief counsel and legislative director for Georgia's senior Senator Sam Nunn.

"Clearly, I see the potential of FIU as one of the nation's premier research universities," Nuckolls said. Our role is to help FIU to achieve this goal by pursuing additional federal funds and expanding its research portfolio."

Viana received a bachelor's degree in political science from FIU and a master's in public administration from George Washington University. Before accepting her current position, she worked with Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Andersen Consulting.

"I was motivated to work for something I believe in – my alma mater," Viana said. "We have a great university in our own backyard, and we want the world to know who we are. I am fortunate to be working with a fine group of professors, administrators and a supportive congressional delegation."

## 1999 Achievements

The FIU team serves as a facilitator between the University and the federal government, helping the University's research centers and professors market their technical expertise to federal agencies and Congress.

Last year, with the help of Congresswoman Carrie Meek and Appropriations Chairman C.W. Bill Young, FIU was earmarked \$2.5 million in the FY 2000 budget for the Windstorm Simulation and Modeling Program managed by the International Hurricane Center (IHC). FIU also received a commitment from Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson to renew and expand the Department of Energy's partnership with FIU's Hemispheric Center for Environmental Technology (HCET). Because of its accomplishments, the Center will continue to receive \$5 million per year for the next five years. The expansion includes an additional \$2


million per year to train minority students in the areas of engineering and the sciences. With the support of the South Florida delegation and Senators Bob Graham and Connie Mack, the team also secured a grant for the National Policy Research Center on Nutrition and Aging.

## Current legislative priorities

President Maidique summarizes FIU's current federal legislative priorities into three major areas: "brownfields, bluefields, and greenfields." HCET is now pursuing brownfields redevelopment activities. Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial facilities where real or perceived environmental contamination complicates expansion or redevelopment. The goal is to create the National Resource Center for Brownfields at FIU and to partner with the Environmental Protection Agency to develop, adapt and certify new technologies in this area. The Brownfields Center would conduct environmental assessments and cleanups of contaminated sites, and provide a community outreach program for low-income neighborhoods.

The IHC embraces the bluefields. In addition to working with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), the IHC is leveraging its expertise in the area of emergency management and training. IHC seeks federal support to create a Global Emergency Management Institute (GEMI). Since 1995, the IHC has developed a certificate program to train businesses and government officials in emergency management. The proposed international training center would focus on emergency management, mitigation, vulnerability assessment and preparedness.

FIU's Southeastern Environmental Research Center (SERC) constitutes the greenfields. Since 1983, SERC has led efforts to restore and preserve the greater Everglades ecosystem. The goal is to establish the National Everglades Center for Sustainable Ecosystems. The Center would partner with the U.S. Corps of the Engineers and serve as the national coordinator to develop, adapt, export and apply techniques and methods for restoring and/or maintaining sustainable ecosystems around the globe. In the upcoming year, SERC plans to play a critical role in the Corps of Engineers Everglades Restudy, the subject of considerable congressional attention and funding.

Other federal priorities being pursued include FIU's National Policy and Research Center on Nutrition and Aging, which works to reduce malnutrition and promote good nutritional practices among American elders. Funds are also sought to establish a Center for Detector Development and Simulation, which would operate in conjunction with FIU's Experimental Nuclear Physics Group. The center would produce new detectors needed in experiments at the Department of Energy's Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility and other national laboratories. 



## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHES NEW REGIONAL CHAPTERS

The FIU Alumni Association has hit the road and is branching out to get its network of chapters alive and thriving!

On the regional front, the Association is forming organized groups of members in most of the major metropolitan areas of the United States that have a large alumni contingent.

This past February, Interim Alumni Relations Director Carlos Becerra and Chapters Coordinator Wil Lash hosted an ambitious group of alumni in Atlanta and formally launched efforts in that area. Also in attendance at the reception held at the Hyatt Regency were Steve Sauls, vice president of University Relations, and Delois Weekes, associate vice president of Sponsored Research, who brought the group up to speed on the University's current accomplishments and goals.

The Atlanta group is starting to plan regular programs for their chapter. There are over 700 alumni currently living in the metro-Atlanta area.

Next on the agenda was the San Francisco area, which boasts more than 200 alumni. Alumni Relations staff and President Modesto A. Maidique were in San Francisco for an April 18th launch reception. Former Alumni Association President Leonard Simpson is heading up the efforts there and is looking forward to great success.

In addition to Atlanta and San Francisco, several other cities are in the works, including Chicago and New York, and closer to South Florida, Tallahassee, Orlando and Tampa slated to launch this summer. These cities will eventually join Washington D.C., which has the most active regional chapter.

Lash, the new chapters coordinator, was hired in December 1999 to oversee and coordinate the development of these regional chapters as well as those for academic units. To date, the colleges of Business and Education, as well as the Honors College and the School Of Architecture, have begun efforts to formalize their alumni groups. They join the longstanding chapter of the School of Hospitality Management.

If you reside in any of the previously mentioned areas or are interested in helping form a chapter for an academic unit, please contact Wil Lash, chapters coordinator, at 305-348-1572, or 1-800-FIU-ALUM.

## CALL FOR E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Help us keep in touch with you by letting us know your current e-mail address. We want to keep you well informed of your association's activities as well as what's going on at your alma mater – and will be doing so more and more via e-mail.

Send your e-mail address to [alumni@fiu.edu](mailto:alumni@fiu.edu).

## MEMBER TRAVELERS SAVE ON PARKING

Airport Fast Park, an airport off-site parking facility, is happy to offer FIU Alumni Association members (with current membership card) a reduced rate of \$6 per day. This is \$2 off the regular rate and off the daily parking rate at the airport. They guarantee fast, courteous and comfortable service from the parking lot to terminal and return, assisting you in each direction with luggage handling and optimum drop-off location. Their facility is completely fenced, video monitored, well lit and attended 24 hours a day. Also available are additional incentives for frequent customers as well as optional American or United air miles for each day when you pay their full rate of \$8 per day.



Airport Fast Park is located on NW 31st Street and Le Jeune Road (east of Baker Aviation) For alumni who do not hail from Miami, Fast Park is growing and presently offers their preferred rate and services at the following airports: Albuquerque, Baltimore, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky, Memphis and a soon to be opened location in Austin. For more information, you can read about them on their web site at [www.airportfastpark.com](http://www.airportfastpark.com).



### PACK YOUR BAGS WITH FIUAA

Imagine traveling the world – or maybe just to New York City – with your Alumni Association! The FIUAA is presently looking into the possibility of offering travel packages to alumni as part of its new programming. Under consideration are excursions to both domestic and foreign destinations, with a variety of themes and expense ranges. Alumni feedback regarding preferred locations, length of travel, desired price range, and type of itinerary will allow staff to select appropriate and attractive packages that best meet their needs and provide a memorable experience for all. Call Karen Siegall, programs and services coordinator, at 1-800-FIU-ALUM for more information and to offer your suggestions.

### ASSOCIATION JOINS THE TEAM

At its January meeting, the Alumni Association Board of Directors voted to become a Football Founder and be among the exclusive group of individual and corporate leaders providing financial support to help FIU field its first football team in 2002.



### FIU HOMECOMING 2000 GOLF OPEN FIRST PLACE FOURSOME

*FIU Police Department, left to right: Chief Jesse Campbell, director, University Police; Gregg Isom; Harvey Clayton; Bruce Hardy, FIU Football Operations; Don Strock, director, FIU Football Operations and tournament host; and Jerry Isom.*

The board recognized that intercollegiate football will bring new levels of visibility to FIU. The Alumni Board of Directors is proud to be a visible participant during this important period in FIU history. To become involved in this effort, call Carlos Becerra at 1-800-FIU-ALUM

### MENTOR PROGRAM LAUNCHED


On March 16, the FIU Alumni Association Mentor's Program was launched at a luncheon at the University Park campus. This joint effort of the Alumni Association and the Student Alumni Association pairs members with current students who share career interests. Participants are encouraged to set their own pace and be creative in the ways they interact. If you are interested in serving as a mentor, call Wil Lash at 1-800-FIU-ALUM.

### ANNUAL ALUMNI AWARDS PROGRAM POSTPONED

The Annual Alumni Awards program, originally scheduled for May, has been postponed until September and will be presented as part of a new annual program commemorating the opening of FIU. A signature event of the Alumni Association, the Annual Alumni Awards ceremony seeks to recognize outstanding and distinguished alumni in the areas of professional achievement, community service and service to the University. For more information or for sponsorship opportunities, call Karen Siegall at 1-800-FIU-ALUM.



### ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

The Board of Directors invites all members to the Annual Meeting of the Alumni Association on Thursday, June 15 at the Hotel Intercontinental in downtown Miami. The evening will begin with a brief business meeting and presentation of the association's strategic plan and end with a cocktail reception. 



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*Celebrating Excellence, Creating Opportunity: A History of Florida International University* chronicles FIU's development from an abandoned airport to one of America's most dynamic young public universities. It tells the story of the University's earliest beginnings through its formal establishment, opening in 1972, and the rapid growth and development of its first 25 years. It also relates the lives and visions of the people who made the University a reality and built it into what it is today. *Celebrating Excellence, Creating Opportunity* captures the spirit of Florida International University as it enters its second quarter-century.

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