

FIU expands business program to target businesses, foreigners

By CHARLOTTE LIBOV

Florida International University is expanding the non-degree business offerings at its downtown campus and reaching out to additional countries, a new director at its College of Business Administration says.

Robert Garcia, who became director of executive and professional education at the college in May, said the expanded curriculum is part of the college's plans to strengthen its offerings to local companies and also broaden its reach to Jamaica and Haiti, which the university is adding to the roster of Caribbean, Latin American, Central American and Middle Eastern countries already served.

"We have a lot to do, but its going very well," Mr. Garcia said. "We are getting a great reception."

Mr. Garcia is charged with developing, promoting and delivering non-degree educational programs to individuals, corporations and government agencies throughout South Florida,



Robert Garcia: FIU targets Haiti, Jamaica with expanded program.

the US and to other countries, said Joyce Elam, executive dean of the college.

"We are confident that Robert Garcia is the ideal person to help us engage regional and international business professionals and to communicate the value of this educational platform," she said. She noted that he speaks both Spanish and English and will meet with business leaders throughout the Americas to further develop FIU's professional and executive program portfolio.

FIU already offers degree pro-

grams from its Alvah H. Chapman Graduate School of Business at Macy's. But beginning in July, Mr. Garcia said, it will add non-degree courses from the business administration college as well.

In addition to the expanded downtown offerings, he said, hours will be extended, with classes offered evenings and Saturdays.

"Right now, we are going to start with presentation skills and then we will offer all of our courses. We are in the process of creating a schedule," he said. He said he is meeting with businesses to see what courses they wish to see at the school. "We know that banks downtown are interested in our offering banking courses."

"I think that most companies may not have the resources in-house," he said. They are looking to a university to provide them with the skills to deepen the expertise of their employees and senior leadership people. Our faculty has very good relations with local businesses and

are able to propose courses that are very practical and have rich content."

The college, he said, already offers programs in several countries, including Latin and Central America, and has partnerships in the Middle East. Now, the school is adding Jamaica and Haiti.

"There are companies or individuals who have called us and requested it," Mr. Garcia said. "We've had some participants from those countries attend our programs here as well."

There are two types of non-degree programs: executive education and professional education.

"Our executive education program is offered in leadership, sales and marketing, strategy and finance," Mr. Garcia said. "It usually serves senior executives within Fortune 500 companies that need to enhance their skills to become more effective leaders."

The professional education program usually attracts participants from local businesses, from front-line employees to

supervisor personnel, who are seeking training in fields such as finance, management and business writings, because they have been newly hired or promoted, he said.

In addition to its Miami Downtown Center, classes will be offered at FIU's University Park Campus, Biscayne Bay Campus and FIU-Broward Pines Center.

Mr. Garcia came to FIU after serving as senior vice president, global accounts, at Lee Hecht Harrison, a global career management service company. Before that, he was an executive at United Healthcare, where he created management development programs and managed multi-specialty medical centers. He has also conducted research and published articles in the fields of pediatrics and psychology. He holds an executive master of Business Administration degree from Florida International University and is certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources.

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