IRMA BECERRA-FERNANDEZ, PROFESSOR AT FIU’S COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION INDUCTED INTO “CIRCLE OF COMPADRES”

MIAMI, Fla. – (Oct. 6, 2004) – The Ph.D. Project Information Systems Doctoral Students Association recently welcomed Irma Becerra Fernandez, associate professor at FIU’s College of Business Administration (CBA), into its “Circle of Compadres” for her service in mentoring African-, Hispanic-, and Native Americans pursuing doctoral degrees.

“Receiving this recognition was an honor,” Becerra-Fernandez said. “It’s such a worthy initiative to be a part of, and to have participants tell me that I have been a role model for them made this one of the most special moments of my life.”

The nationally-recognized Ph.D. Project, a 10-year alliance of corporations and higher education institutions, strives to improve workforce diversity by expanding business school faculties. Its front-running benefactor, the KPMG Foundation, calls the endeavor “the jewel in our business-education crown.” The network has helped increase the number of minorities in business school faculties by an unprecedented 140 percent since its inception. It currently is comprised of 401 doctoral candidates and 700 faculties in information systems, finance, accounting, management, and marketing.

“Diversity is critical to the quality of preparation for the workplace,” said Bernie Milano, president of the KPMG Foundation and founder of The Ph.D. Project. “It is the help and guidance of people like Irma Becerra-Fernandez that makes our program so successful.”

Prior to receiving the award in August of this year at the American Conference on Information Systems in New York City, Becerra-Fernandez first became involved in the organization about three years ago as a workshop presenter. She’s presented several discussions on the topics of successfully obtaining funded research and on achieving excellence as an under-represented group. The award recognizes Becerra-Fernandez for embracing her role as a supporter of the Project, inspiring students, and ensuring the highest standards of scholarship.
Florida International University’s College of Business Administration, South Florida’s leading business school with unique expertise in international business, entrepreneurship, and information technology (IT) strategy, is the largest of the University’s professional schools. Among the College’s more than 30,000 alumni are some of South Florida’s most successful business leaders and entrepreneurs. Approximately 8,000 students are enrolled in its undergraduate business courses and more than 800 graduate students study in its Chapman Graduate School of Business every year. Another 1,000 participate annually in one or more of its professional and executive education programs.

The College is one of only 480 business schools in the world—about 25% of all business schools—accredited by the AACSB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. It ranks in the top 10 among these schools in the number of students it graduates each year, and its Chapman School offers the 6th largest part-time MBA program among them. U.S. News & World Report (2005) ranked the College’s undergraduate international business programs the 9th best in the nation and its graduate international business programs among the top 25 in the U.S. (Best Graduate Schools 2005)—the only Florida business school to make both lists. Business Week (October 21, 2002) also ranked the College among the best in the U.S., placing it in the group with American, Fordham, George Washington, South Carolina, Syracuse, Rutgers, Tulane, and others. For the past three years, America Economia, a premier pan-regional business journal, has rated it among the top 50 MBA schools for Latin American students. For the last five years, Hispanic Business has ranked the College among the top 25 business schools for Hispanics. Hispanic Trends (Summer 2003) ranked the College in its list of the Top 25 MBA programs for Latinos—the only Florida business school to make the cut. Additionally, in March 2004, HispanicMagazine.com ranked the school in its Top 25 colleges for Latinos. The College also is one of only 30 business schools to have received a U.S. Department of Education grant to establish and support a Center for International Business Education and Research.

For additional information about the CBA and its Chapman School, please call Assistant Dean Sally Gallion at (305) 348-6631, e-mail gallions@fiu.edu or visit the College’s website at http://cba.fiu.edu