New FIU panel to advise foreign clients on global commerce

By Tom Harlan

Florida International University has formed a consulting group to advise Latin American and Caribbean clients on global commerce.

The International Advisory Services Group, part of FIU’s College of Business Administration, will hire out the university’s faculty for consulting projects.

The group is to work with a range of organizations from private companies to multilateral institutions and advise Latin American and Caribbean clients on strategies that can help them build their enterprises.

Instead of doing mass-market projects, the group is to focus on smaller, cost-effective management and training projects that capitalize on the expertise of FIU’s faculty, said Jerry Haar, group co-director and a management and international-business professor at FIU.

Small business accounts for 90% of private enterprise in the world, Mr. Haar said. He said the group is to work on projects that give FIU a decent return on its investment, engage faculty and students and enhance the quality of the educational programs offered by the university.

The group is to tap FIU professors from the College of Business, School of Policy and Management, Global Entrepreneurship Center, College of Law, College of Engineering, Latin American and Caribbean Center and Summit of the Americas Center.

FIU has all the elements of a consulting practice in areas of public and private management, development, information technology, health services and education, Mr. Haar said.

“We have a multicultural, multilingual, multifaceted faculty in the College of Business and elsewhere in the university,” he said.

“We have one of the top centers for Latin American and Caribbean studies in the world. And we now have a new law school with scholars who are looking at international legal issues.”

The group also will work with legal, consulting, accounting and engineering professionals, Mr. Haar said. The group plans to work with InfoAmericas, a Latin American consulting firm run by John Price, an adjunct marketing professor at FIU.

“We’re creating certain synergies here,” Mr. Haar said, adding that the group is to assemble virtual teams based on the project.

If FIU doesn’t have experts for a particular project, the group will enlist other professors in the state university system. For example, he said, the group may work with professors at the University of Florida’s College of Agriculture.

The group will tap graduate students from FIU’s international programs to give them practical experience in their chosen fields.

The group may also help unemployed doctoral students find work with local consulting firms.

“We’re incubating a laboratory of clinical practice and management consulting for students,” he said. “Theory without practice, especially in a professional school, is only half the equation.”

All programs are to be coordinated through the College of Business Administration’s Center of Excellence in Management, which houses the group, Mr. Haar said.

Jerry Haar: Group will use the FIU faculty, students to do projects...