International business plan competition starts

By Sherri C. Ranta

New programs and opportunities for students will be offered this fall through Florida International University's College of Business Administration and the Alvah H. Chapman Jr. Graduate School of Business, school officials said.

Upper-level undergraduate and graduate students will be eligible to enter the Howard J. Leonhardt New Venture Challenge, an international business-plan competition open to students at universities in Florida, the Caribbean and Latin America, said Sally Gallion, associate dean, college of business.

By working together, the business and engineering colleges will nurture young student entrepreneurs, she said, and emphasize the importance of bringing innovation to the market, creating technology and then being able to translate the results into a viable business.

Prizes and operating costs, Dr. Gallion said, will be financed through a gift from Mr. Leonhardt and a grant from the National Science Foundation. A businessman and entrepreneur in biomedical engineering, Mr. Leonhardt is founder of BioHeart Inc., a cardiovascular disease management organization based in Weston.

A redesigned master of accounting program, Dr. Gallion said, will bring the curriculum in line with the marketplace and include a focus on information systems. The new program will offer concentrations in accounting and assurance services.

A new graduate program, Masters of Science in Management - Human Resource Management, will cover the traditional human areas, she said.