

Posted on Mon, Dec. 06, 2010

Campaign to boost ranks of Hispanic professionals will visit FIU

BY Laura Isensee
The Miami Herald



Courtesy of Center for Hispanic Leadership

Glenn Llopis with the Center for Hispanic Leadership will partner with Florida International University and other colleges across the country to reach a goal of training 1 million Hispanic professionals in the next decade.

When Glenn Llopis was 23 and starting his career at beverage giant Sunkist, an executive gave him some advice. "You're a little too passionate," Llopis recounted the senior executive saying.

He didn't take the tip. Instead, Llopis listened to his dad.

"Don't ever stop being you naturally are," Llopis said, reciting his dad's words.

His father, Frank Llopis, was a musician who left Cuba in the 1950s, came to the United States by way of Mexico and built a career as a chemical engineer with Miller Brewing Company.

Now Llopis, 44, is spreading his father's advice to Hispanic business men and women in South Florida and across the United States.

His institute, the Center for Hispanic Leadership, will visit Miami-Dade County in the spring during a 10-city U.S. tour. The center will partner with Florida International University among other colleges across the country. Together the institute and the colleges will hold workshops on Hispanic leadership and diversity.

The tie-up is a natural one, said Luis Casas, the director of marketing, communications and recruiting at FIU's College of Business Administration. "We see this as a long term relationship," Casas added.

Llopis' overall goal is to train 1 million Hispanic professionals in the next 10 years and boost national statistics on Hispanics in the workplace.

In 2008, only about 7 percent of Hispanics held management, business or financial positions, according to the Pew Hispanic Center.

Llopis believes it is key for Hispanics to tap into their personal and cultural strengths, for example

the immigrant perspective.

“An immigrant who comes to a new country comes with faith, hope and love ... We see opportunity that others don't see,” said Llopis, who recently launched a free electronic book about how Hispanic leadership can help U.S. corporations.

It's also important for Hispanics to obtain formal college degrees and to pursue ongoing education and networking, said Roseangel Quintero, who is the senior manager at FIU's Office of Executive and Professional Education for the College of Business Administration.

Llopis urged business students and workers in Hialeah and South Florida to follow the spirit of entrepreneurs, especially because the recession has changed how people build careers.

“The basic answers are I'll go to find work placement, find a counselor, do a resume. Those are old rules. They apply, but they don't apply as much today,” Llopis said.

Instead, Llopis said people should take a proactive approach and create their own brand.

“Write your own job description. Go to the employer where you believe your brand best fits and go sell yourself,” Llopis said.

For more information, go to www.hispanicleadershiptour.com.