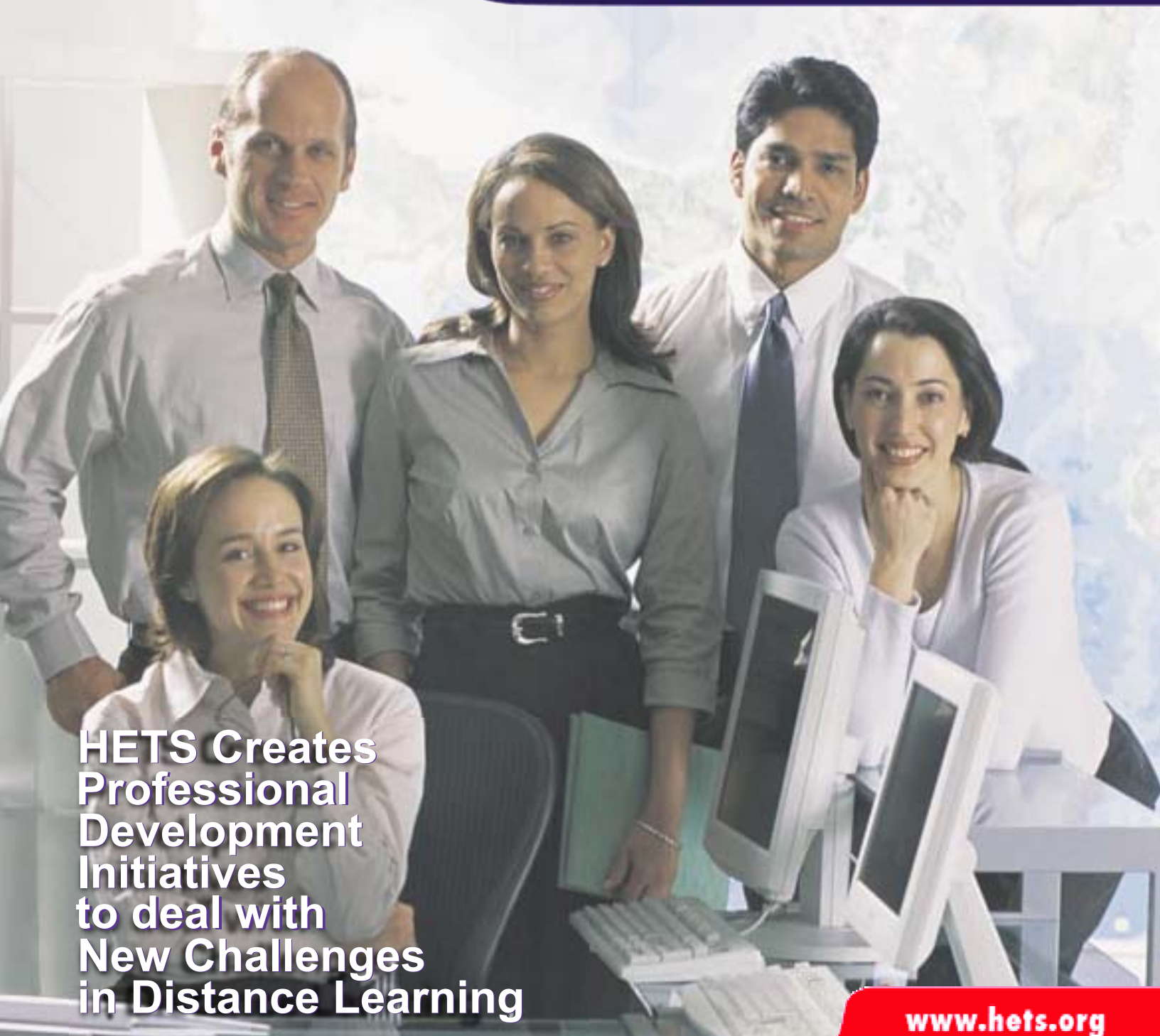


The Official Gazette of the Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System

# TOGETHER!

Issue one | May 2006



**HETS Creates  
Professional  
Development  
Initiatives  
to deal with  
New Challenges  
in Distance Learning**

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## Note from the Editor

Dear readers:

Welcome to the first edition of TOGETHER: the official gazette of the Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System. This publication is mainly a celebration of what collaboration can do for the success of Hispanic Higher Education. It is intended to be a medium for all the educational institutions, organizations, and corporations interested in reading and disseminating information on the options available, real-life experiences, and lessons learned in the academic sector. But, mostly, this publication is intended to foster partnership experiences among the academic, corporate, professional, and nonprofit sectors, in the many ways available.

From the very beginning, HETS has used several forms of collaboration as its key strategy in accomplishing its mission of widening higher education opportunities for Hispanic through the integration of technology innovations into education. Today, the HETS Consortium looks into a future of innovation in education and both inter-institutional and intersectoral collaboration for the success of Hispanic post-secondary education, while it expands beyond its own frontiers as a consortium of colleges and universities.

TOGETHER is all about togetherness. I encourage readers and representatives from all sectors to submit your ideas, articles, case studies, and letters, and be part of this new space for dialogue, expression, and collaboration. Let us collaborate, as we innovate for future of EDUCATION.

You can reach me at [wlatorrepr@yahoo.com](mailto:wlatorrepr@yahoo.com) with any of your questions, comments, and contributions.



**Willmarie Latorre**  
Editor

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# Key Initiatives to Cope With the Challenges

Creating unique and diverse professional development events tailored to the educational needs of today's higher education institutions

should be a key strategy in increasing opportunities for distance learning in higher education. Colleges and universities interested in taking advantage of the advancements in education, as well as broadening learning opportunities for their students, need to focus their attention towards the significance of on going training in this area.

As an organization dedicated to promoting the use of telecommunications and distance learning as means to facilitate higher

education and support the success of Hispanic learners in distance education, the Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System (HETS) has acknowledged the importance of creating different tools to improve faculty and academic leaders performance in these areas. In order for distance learning and educational telecommunications to be effective, faculty and administrators need to be in complete knowledge and control, understand its significance, and be able to integrate their expertise with the specification of this modality.

Through Professional Development Events (PDEs), the Consortium assists its members and individuals outside its member institutions acquire the necessary knowledge to cope with the challenges of Distance Learning and Educational Technology.

HETS has opened discussion and training spaces on key issues for a successful distance learning practice, such as quality indicators in distance learning, diversity issues in online instruction, best practices in online student support services, strategies to maximize retention rates, foundations of educational models, and effective electron

ic communication. Most importantly, subject areas for PDEs are selected based upon the needs identified among member institutions, as well as the opportunities and challenges posed by the current educational trends.

Other professional development initiatives, such as the First Hispanic Virtual Congress on "Blending Technology, Cultural Diversity and Distance Learning in Hispanic Higher Education"

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have taken place online, giving the opportunity to bring to a large audience the experience of learning, sharing, and discussing significant experiences, best practices, and lessons learned in Hispanic-focused online education, as well as to exchange ideas with colleagues and renowned experts.

The importance of these strategies lies in the significance of the Consortium's constituencies. HETS Professional Development Events are an important means of serving its members and discovering opportunities for future collaboration, as well as the creation of initiatives within and among our member institutions.



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## Helping Students Succeed in College Education

There is no doubt that college education is an important part of professional success. Furthermore, the relationship between a college education and success will become more and more significant in our information-driven global economy. This is why creating tools for student college success is so important for higher education institutions, high schools, and other related organizations.

Organizations and educational institutions should make every effort to provide existing

and future college students with significant means of accessing information, acquiring skills, and decision-making. College experience is all about the development of students, both as students and individuals. Helping students succeed in college, and in life, by assisting them in identifying and pursuing their purpose, as well as maximizing their potential, should be a strong objective for the diverse sectors dealing with education, especially at secondary and post-secondary levels. From selecting a major and

s u c c e e d i n g i n

college entrance tests, to financing college education, student success tools are a way of guiding an individual towards the accomplishment of his/her goals.

The Internet is one possible way of supporting student success in college education. The convenience provided by the web modality helps students have access support services and tools at any time and location. Career exploration tools, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, college entrance test reviews, and academic program

search utilities are some of the services that a student could have available at their institution's website. Students taking either on-site or online courses can take advantage of numerous e-tools that can assist them all through their college years. Hispanic college students in the United States, for example, can access language immersion tools completely online, at their own pace.

Even communicating with a mentor in an online environment can lead to informal interaction and opportunities for students to improve their speaking and teaching skills, which increase probability for college success.

In addition to using technology for distance education, technology can be used effectively to promote student support, success, and integration. In some cases, online services can be used to foster effective student-faculty relations by putting students in the role of instructor or consultant to faculty. In other cases, faculty and administrators offer academic advising entirely through the web, facilitating the access to this type of services.

In order to cope with student needs, colleges and universities need to evolve and follow educational trends. Institutions can get together

in order to learn from each other, and offer student services collaboratively. They should also be encouraged to approach corporations and non-profit organizations interested in supporting college students to look for partnering possibilities in this area.

These ideas are only a few one of the many ways available to satisfy students' needs for information, guidance, and support. The most important thing is that organizations and institutions, separately or collaboratively, aim for student success as a priority.

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Conservatorio de Estudios Avanzados y Especializados

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Conservatorio de Estudios Avanzados y Especializados

# Miami Dade College, a Key Player Addressing Florida's Workforce Needs



**Source: [www.mdc.edu](http://www.mdc.edu)**

Miami Dade College (MDC) and Florida's other 27 community colleges are playing an increasingly vital role in preparing young people to enter the workforce and in retraining adults to qualify for the fastest growing jobs in Florida, most of which require community college degrees, not university degrees. That's the finding of Florida TaxWatch in a new research report that details benefits to the students and the state's economy from a community college education.

"Without our fine community colleges in Florida, the many economic and social challenges the state has faced over the years would've have had an even greater negative impact on families and residents," said Dr. Padrón, president of Miami Dade College. "Community colleges have truly been the great equalizer in the Sunshine State affording millions of people the opportunity to access quality education and career advancement that would've otherwise been impossible without community colleges."

MDC has developed more than 60 new Associate degree and short-term training programs in the past six years, all responsive to emerging industries and careers in South Florida. Its ten professional schools provide trained person-

nel for South Florida's seven target industries identified by the Greater Miami Chamber, Miami-Dade County, and the Beacon Council's One Community One Goal Initiative. Furthermore, it trains approximately 65 percent of the County's nurses and graduates more nurses than any other college or university in the U.S.

MDC customized training contributes to many of the region's and the nation's outstanding companies. A partial list of companies assisted by MDC with activities such as workforce training and the provision of qualified graduates for employment includes American Express, AvMed Health Care Plans, Baptist Health Systems, BellSouth, Boston Scientific, City of Miami Police Department, Cordis Corporation, Florida Power and Light, IDS Telecom, IVAX, Mercedes-Benz Latina, Precision Response Corporation, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Telemundo RTI Productions, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The research, prepared by the group's Center for Educational Performance and Accountability, utilized forecasting models to examine the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of a community college education on Florida's economy in terms of output, wages, and employment.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION

# Investing Strategically in the Progress of Higher Education

Widespread use of technology is changing the way we work, learn, and communicate. In Higher Education, technology has had a dramatic impact on both the teaching and learning processes, opening up a world of diverse and enriching experiences for students and faculty members. Without a doubt, technology innovations have a key role in the development, improvement, and impact of Higher Education.

Academic institutions have a broad range of opportunities through the intelligent and strategic use of technology, as they compete in and prepare students for the global market. With their ready access to new technologies, higher educational institutions are well-positioned to take advantage of rapid changes in the field. At the same time, academic institutions play a sig-

nificant role in mobilizing technology resources to improve conditions for their constituencies, as well as in their nearby communities. Nonetheless, persistent economic hurdles and the continuous changes in technology make technology innovations inaccessible to many academic institutions.

Numerous corporations, as they recognize the invaluable contributions of higher learning, have realized the importance of technology advancements for the progress of these institutions. Technology related corporations donate millions of dollars annually to assist colleges and universities in developing the necessary infrastructure, building capacity, training the workforce, and creating programs to support their student population. They also provide scholarship funds to help increase the number of students completing science, technology, and information related degrees. These corporate citizens show a high level of awareness on the impact that higher education has on the overall development of their communities, on the every day lives of individuals, and the economy, at large.

Investment in higher education and technology within a higher learning environment facilitates the insertion of educational institutions and their constituencies into the new eco-



conomic model. It also helps reduce the gap between institutions with enormous amounts of resources, and those that struggle to survive, as well as between privileged and disadvantaged students. Simultaneously, this contributes to social change and creates more economic opportunities.

Corporations and educational institutions should create opportunities to discuss innovation opportunities, and ways in which they can

collaborate to make them happen. The industry and the academic sectors ought to know and match each other's needs and interests in order to take advantage of the opportunities available to both. Far from being a simple donation or goodwill demonstration, corporate social responsibility in higher education is a partnership between two sectors that join forces to contribute to the overall improvement of their society.



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# Professional Challenges and Opportunities in the Emergence of the Need for Bilingual Journalism



Did you know that there are more than a thousand Spanish publications, 500 Spanish newspapers, and 150 bilingual newspapers in the United States?

The social, demographic, economic, and cultural changes of our times raise the need for a journalistic practice capable of meeting the challenges of the new economic and technological society. For this to happen, journalists have to deal with the language and cultural particularities of a diverse society and a global and intercultural enterprise. This fact has intensified the need for a journalistic training and practice suitable to this era.

Bilingual Journalism emerges as a linguistic and technical approach to the social and demographic trends of countries in which the levels of population diversity make it necessary to broaden the access to information, trespassing language and cultural barriers. In the case of the United States and Puerto Rico, the need for qualified professionals that can manage both English and Spanish media is greater each day.

The major challenge in Bilingual Journalism is finding reporters, editors, and columnists that cannot only speak, read, and fully understand both languages, but that can also write following the journalistic techniques of the specific language and taking into consideration the culture of the media consumer. Based on this need, institutions such as Lehman College and the University of the Sacred Heart created collaboratively the first online program in Bilingual Journalism.

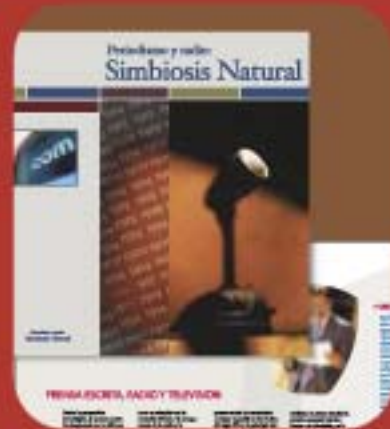
This type of opportunity has the potential to nurture the development of professionals in the field in a variety of ways. It represents a perfect opportunity to integrate the academic sector with the Journalism industry, benefiting professionals interested in expanding their success probabilities.

## EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

→ Nelson Vargas  
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### QUALITY DESIGN WORK

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### About the HETS Consortium

The Hispanic Educational Telecommunications-System (HETS) is the first bilingual distance learning consortium dedicated to serving the higher education needs of our fast-growing Hispanic communities. HETS was founded in 1993 to capitalize on the reach of evolving communications technologies to improve historically low Hispanic college success rates. As an organization dedicated to promoting the use of telecommunications and distance learning as means to facilitate higher education and support the success of Hispanic learners in distance education, HETS has acknowledged the importance of creating different tools to improve faculty and academic leaders performance in these areas. Please, browse through our site [www.hets.org](http://www.hets.org) to learn more about us and join us. With your support, HETS can expand its reach and provide your institution or organization the myriad benefits of joining our online familia to serve our diverse communities of higher learning.

### Member Benefits

- Enhance distance-learning resources
- Faculty training, program sharing, and other collaborative initiatives
- Access to state-of-the-art collaborative technology services and products at special discounts, group rates, or price splits
- Increase your outreach and service beyond your local community
- Get connected to a group of more than 20,000 faculty members, institutional leaders, partners, and administrators
- Guidance and Advising in Distance Learning and Educational Telecommunications
- Participation in efforts for new grants and funding resources for innovative distance learning programs
- Participate in collaborative projects and ventures with other distance education partners
- Use of HETS portal to promote DL courses and programs Access to thousands of contacts through HETS extensive listserves
- Free web hosting for institutional and collaborative project dissemination
- Participation and access to institutional surveys
- Develop and provide access to bilingual online learning tools and student support services
- Discount fees for faculty training and support
- Free access to training modules, learning objects, resources, and support services.

- Promote your latest news, events, and e-learning initiatives
- Exclusive access to the members-only Newsletter

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