

Statement of
Faculty
Excellence



Miami-Dade
Community
College

At its meeting of April 19, 1990 the District Board of Trustees of Miami-Dade Community College adopted this revision to the Statement of Faculty Excellence. The revision reflects changes that were made to ensure that the Statement is relevant to non-classroom as well as classroom faculty. The key language that framed the twenty-nine characteristics of excellence articulated in the original Statement (adopted on October 25, 1988) has not been altered; rather changes broaden the supporting narration so that it better fits the many roles of faculty as they engage in the teaching/learning process whether inside or outside the classroom.

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**Statement of
Faculty
Excellence**

Revision
Adopted by
The Miami-Dade Community College
District Board of Trustees
April, 1990

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STATEMENT OF FACULTY EXCELLENCE

The qualities and characteristics of excellent faculty at Miami-Dade Community College are described in four categories: their own motivation and their ability to motivate others, their interpersonal skills, their knowledge base, and their skill at applying that knowledge.

ASSUMPTIONS

A set of assumptions undergirds and provides context for this description of faculty excellence.

1. **All Miami-Dade faculty whether their primary assignments are in the classroom or in non-classroom areas are involved in the teaching/learning process, that is, in imparting knowledge and skills to students and assuring student success.**
2. **The qualities identified as representative of faculty excellence apply equally to classroom and to non-classroom faculty.** These qualities are described in general terms in order to relate to all faculty; thus, to determine specific applications for individuals, further definition and elaboration will occur at the department level.
3. **This description of excellence is not intended to be a job description.** Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade Community College make many contributions to the College, by developing curriculum and new programs, through community involvement, by serving on committees and task forces, and by recruiting students, among other activities.
4. **This definition of faculty excellence is not designed as an evaluation instrument.** The qualities of faculty excellence as defined in this document have been identified by Miami-Dade faculty, administrators and students as significant in promoting student success. Therefore, any evaluation system devised should be based on this definition.

MOTIVATION

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade Community College are dedicated to their profession in higher education and to the community college philosophy as defined at Miami-Dade. Their greatest concern is for student learning; thus, they themselves are highly motivated to achieve excellence and strive to motivate students to reach their educational and personal goals.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade are enthusiastic about their work. Faculty, administrators, and students all regard enthusiasm as a primary motivational factor. Faculty manifest this enthusiasm in a variety of ways. They communicate their deep interest in their discipline fields and the satisfaction they themselves have gained through increasing their knowledge. Faculty demonstrate their enthusiasm in their professional areas by willingly working in a personal way with students or prospective students to help them achieve their goals. Faculty share with students and colleagues the rewards of their involvement in their professional organizations and associations. They build in students a sense of accomplishment when they demonstrate their learning and they instill in them both the desire and self-confidence needed to increase their learning. In short, they communicate the values and satisfactions to be gained in the teaching and learning activity.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade set challenging individual and collective performance goals for themselves. These goals address not only learning activities and other specific academic responsibilities, but also the many other areas of professional involvement. They continually strive to increase their own knowledge and to perfect their job-related skills, practices, and procedures. In so doing, they serve as positive role models for both students and colleagues.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade also set challenging performance goals for students. They communicate to students that progress is not made without a cost; it must be paid for in time and effort. Thus, they encourage students to overcome their limitations and to reach beyond their current achievements in an attempt to fulfill all of their potential.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade are committed to education as a profession. They value their work highly because of the intrinsic satisfaction they receive from knowing they have helped students to learn and to succeed in their lives. Regardless of circumstances, commitment to their students does not waver.

Excellent faculty, who are committed to the mission and values of Miami-Dade, project a positive attitude about students' ability to learn. Outstanding faculty have a strong commitment to the open door policy; they believe that students with diverse needs can learn and so they challenge them accordingly. This belief is, no doubt, a motivating factor for both students and faculty.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade display behavior consistent with professional ethics. They are aware that a failure to commit to professional standards weakens the profession. They guard against behavior that may detract from the teaching/learning process. Thus, these faculty maintain the most professional and ethical relationships with students and colleagues.

Finally, excellent faculty are concerned with the many aspects of students as individuals, not just in their roles as learners. Accordingly, they provide counsel and assistance whenever appropriate.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade Community College interact actively and positively with students and with their colleagues. Their interpersonal skills are evident in their interaction with students, staff, and colleagues, and with community members and business, civic and governmental representatives.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade treat all individuals with respect. This respect characterizes all of their dealings with students, especially when providing corrective feedback. This professional attitude is critical when they interact with students, colleagues and members of the community.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade respect diverse talents. They recognize that students have different strengths and weaknesses, have different learning styles, and bring different skills and backgrounds to the teaching/learning process. Consequently, they encourage students to develop their individual abilities in learning situations.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade work collaboratively with colleagues. They know the importance of bringing their collective strengths to deal with departmental, campus and College issues in order to achieve excellence in the teaching/learning process. Their collaborative efforts serve as a model for students both inside and outside the classroom.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade are available to students. They realize that student contact with faculty is critical to the success of the majority of Miami-Dade students. Hence, they provide students ample opportunities for such contact and encourage students to meet and interact with them.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade listen attentively to what students say. They are sensitive to nonverbal as well as verbal cues, including careful analyses of students' written responses. They pay particular attention to student feedback in critiquing and improving their own performance.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade are responsive to students' needs. They realize that students, in addition to needing academic support, often need encouragement and individual attention as they try to adjust to the varied demands in their lives. Excellent faculty can also provide legitimate and appropriate responses to students' needs. They are careful to maintain a professional approach in their interactions with students.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade are fair in their evaluations of students. They maintain objectivity and follow carefully the evaluation criteria which they provide to all students at the beginning of each term. They do not allow subjective opinions to interfere with student evaluations.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade present ideas clearly. They are good transmitters as well as good receivers of messages. Faculty and students agree that communicating ideas clearly is one of the most critical interpersonal skills.

Finally, excellent faculty at Miami-Dade create a climate that is conducive to learning. They know that the atmosphere in the learning environment can have a great impact on student learning. They see things in perspective, taking themselves and their subject matter with appropriate seriousness, but respecting the fact that there are important disciplines and interests in life, other than theirs. In some cases, that sense of perspective may be manifested in a sense of humor; in other cases, tolerance, open-mindedness, acceptance, approachability, and sensitivity may be the positive characteristics that create the atmosphere conducive to learning.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade Community College have the intellectual skills and knowledge requisite for superlative performance. They have a thorough understanding not only of their own work areas and disciplines, but also of how students learn and develop. This knowledge base is essential in their work within the context of Miami-Dade's open admissions policy.

Fundamental to excellence, according to faculty, administrators, and students, is that faculty members at Miami-Dade are knowledgeable about their work areas and disciplines. This knowledge includes not only the content of the disciplines, but also their roles in their departments and their campus in support of the overall teaching and learning process. These faculty also share their knowledge with one another in a collegial effort to achieve excellence. There is no substitute for faculty members' having in-depth knowledge of their fields and disciplines in order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to students. Without substantial knowledge in their fields, faculty are ill-prepared to foster student learning, even if their motivational techniques and interpersonal skills are sound.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade are knowledgeable about how students learn. They understand established principles of learning which serve as a foundation for their work with students as they advise, teach and provide learning support. This knowledge encompasses the many differences in students which, in part, stem from the great cultural diversity found on the Miami-Dade campuses.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade integrate current subject matter into their work. Students should have information and the results of research and study which reflect the latest work in the field. Excellent faculty consistently update their own knowledge, professional skills, and resources to make their instruction meaningful, timely, and refreshing to their students.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade also provide perspectives that include a respect for diverse views. They provide a variety of theories and interpretations that represent the best thinking in their fields. Moreover, they demonstrate to their students an openness and willingness to communicate and share differing views. These excellent faculty are particularly sensitive to Miami-Dade's diverse student body, which represents a wide variety of cultures and academic traditions.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade do their work in a well-prepared and well-organized manner. Faculty have clear learning goals and well planned activities enabling students to master content material and to process and apply information. Faculty proceed logically and use time effectively so that students learn as much as possible. Faculty provide assistance to students in a clear manner so that they know and can use the College's educational systems effectively.

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE BASE

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade Community College not only know well their own professional fields and established principles of learning, but they also put these principles of learning into practice as they carry out their responsibilities related to the teaching and learning process. They continue to seek ways to meet individual needs of students and to help students learn as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade provide students with alternative ways of learning. This implies that faculty understand different learning styles and analyze the effectiveness of different instructional strategies. Faculty match students' individual learning styles by employing a variety of instructional strategies, given the limitations of the learning environment. Faculty help students discover their most effective ways of learning and plan their educational programs and individual study accordingly.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade stimulate intellectual curiosity. They develop challenging presentations and activities, while keeping the subject at an appropriate level of difficulty and creating an interactive learning environment, one in which students are not merely passive observers.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade also encourage independent thinking. As students develop independence in acquiring, analyzing, and accessing knowledge, they are able to take more responsibility for their own learning. Thus, the faculty member's role becomes less that of a communicator of information and more that of a mentor who guides students in their pursuit of learning. These outstanding faculty understand that students must develop independent thinking in order to make the most productive use of their talents and abilities.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade encourage students to be analytical listeners. To develop their students' intellectual curiosity and independent thinking, they provide opportunities for students to analyze carefully what they hear. As students listen more carefully and more critically, they will be able to engage in more mature conceptual thinking.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade provide cooperative learning opportunities for students. In recognition of current research on learning, they plan learning strategies that promote collaborative study among students. As students understand that learning is properly a collaborative rather than a competitive activity, the entire educational process at Miami-Dade will be enhanced.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade give constructive feedback to students promptly. They understand that timely feedback that promotes positive action is most useful to students. Thus, they use various means to respond to students in a timely manner.

Excellent faculty at Miami-Dade give consideration to feedback from students and others. These faculty know the importance of analyzing and evaluating their own performance. Thus, feedback from students, from other faculty members, and from observers of their performance, is welcomed as a positive resource for their own improvement. Excellent faculty use this feedback to make immediate adjustments that improve student learning.

Finally, excellent faculty provide clear and substantial evidence that students have learned. This evidence allows both students and faculty to have accurate and realistic appraisals of their performance, to know the effectiveness of their work. To acquire this evidence, excellent faculty first establish clear objectives and performance standards. With this positive evidence, excellent faculty can enjoy the professional and personal satisfaction of work well done.