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Bring Tri-Rail to downtown Miami

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Over the past five decades, Miami Dade College has grown into one of the largest employers in South Florida and the largest institution of higher education in the country, with more than 165,000 students. We are also proud to enjoy the largest Latino student enrollment of any campus-based college or university in the United States.

Our students and employees live in communities throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties and many spend a significant amount of their day traveling to our campuses.

At our Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami, students and staff must battle significant traffic congestion as the business district continues to expand, bringing additional employees and consumers to the area. With the new construction and influx of new residents, we can only expect congestion to worsen.

This is why I strongly support the Tri-Rail extension onto the Florida East Coast Railway Corridor and the utilization of Miami Central, All Aboard Florida's downtown Miami station.

The addition of 26 direct trains per weekday from all points north on the existing Tri-Rail system to the new All Aboard Florida MiamiCentral Station would provide a convenient way for students and staff to travel to the Wolfson Campus to work, attend classes and participate in the many cultural and educational programs we offer downtown, including the Miami Book Fair International and the Miami International Film Festival.

As the leader of an underfunded public institution, I understand the value that public-private partnerships have and the important role they can play in addressing community needs in a cost-effective way.

The city of Miami and Miami-Dade County leaders must take advantage of this unique opportunity to expand the intermodal transit center that is currently under construction to include Tri-Rail so that residents and visitors to Miami alike have access to an integrated transportation system that will benefit the community for years to come.

EDUARDO J. PADRÓN, PRESIDENT,

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE,

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