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Miami woman tapped to lead Florida College System



Madeline Pumariega | **Take Stock in Children** - Take Stock in Children

BY KATHLEEN MCGRORY

Herald/Times Tallahassee Bureau

The Florida College System has a new chancellor: former Miami Dade College administrator Madeline Pumariega.

The Miami native is the first woman and the first person of Hispanic descent to hold the job.

“It’s an amazing opportunity to serve,” she said Wednesday. “I always say, the colleges are gateways of opportunities. They make things happen across our state.”

Pumariega had most recently served as president of the statewide non-profit Take Stock in

Children. Prior to that, she spent nearly two decades at Miami Dade College. She was president of the Wolfson Campus from 2011 to 2013, and played a key role in growing the Miami Culinary Institute. She was also involved in the launch of the Idea Center, the college's new entrepreneurship hub.

As chancellor of the state college system, Pumariega will focus on access and affordability.

"It's about making sure that everyone in Florida that has a desire to make something great with their life has the chance to use those tools, and be ready for that workforce opportunity," she said.

State Education Commissioner Pam Stewart praised Pumariega's "extensive background in higher education."

"She is the right choice to ensure we continue in our positive direction," Stewart said in a statement Wednesday.

Local leaders praised her leadership skills.

"People like to follow her," said Miami-Dade School Board member Raquel Regalado. "She brings a level of engagement we haven't seen in the past. She's dynamic, bilingual, bi-cultural."

Vance Aloupis, state director of The Children's Movement, said he couldn't think of anyone better for the job.

"Her role as president of the downtown campus for Miami Dade College and her subsequent role as CEO of Take Stock in Children shows that she understands the continuum of education," Aloupis said.

Pumariega is a graduate of Hialeah High. She attended Miami Dade College and the University of Central Florida, and holds a bachelors from St. Thomas University and a masters degree Florida Atlantic University.

She is a doctoral candidate at Barry University in Miami Shores.

The Florida College System is made up of 28 institutions. It serves more than 800,000 students.

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