Institute honors 11 alumni in higher ed administration

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UF’s higher education administration program only selects its Outstanding

Graduates every five years, so it’s a big deal when the winners are announced. That’s why officials at the UF Institute of Higher Education announced this year’s 11 recipients at a special gathering of their peers—at a special alumni reunion and awards banquet held concurrently on Jan. 28 with the annual gathering of the Community College Futures Assembly in Orlando.

The competitive awards program recognizes selected professionals—all Ph.D. or Ed.D. graduates of UF’s higher education administration program—for their effectiveness as community college administrators, participation in collegewide strategic planning, community involvement, and professional activities at the state, regional and national levels.

The UF alumni winners of 2012 were:

– Devi Drexler, educational policy consultant with the Florida Department of Education division of accountability, research and measurement
– Hank Dunn, president of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (N.C.)
– Carl Hite, president of Cleveland State Community College (Tenn.)
– Anne Kress, president of Monroe Community College (Rochester, NY)
– Anna Lebesch, vice president for workforce development at St. Johns River State College (in Palatka, Fla.)
– Jeanna Mastrodicasa, assistant vice president for student affairs, University of Florida
– Christopher Mullin, program director for policy analysis with the American Association of Community Colleges in Washington D.C.
– Tina Barreiro O’Daniels, associate provost at the Tarpon Springs campus of St. Petersburg College (Fla.)
– Brian Polding, chair of the College of Information Systems and Technology, and the School of Business at North Florida campus of the University of Phoenix (in Jacksonville)
– Kristy Presswood, associate vice president of the College of Education, Daytona State College (Fla.)
– Deanne Williams, associate professor and chair, hospitality management department at Virginia State University (in Petersburg, Va.)

The recipients emerged from a pool of 30 nominees reviewed earlier in the month by a panel of leading higher education professionals from the CCFA organization.

Capsule summaries below highlight noteworthy achievements and honors of the winners:

Devi Drexler, PhD
Educational Policy Consultant
At the Florida Department of Education, Dr. Drexler provides statewide analysis and information to support policy decisions of the deputy and commissioner of education, such as FCAT analysis and review. She’s worked in student affairs administration at several institutions including the University of Florida, FSU, Georgia Gwinnett, Santa Fe, Lake Sumter and Tallahassee Community Colleges. Drexler is a member of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the Pi Lambda Theta International Honor Society.

Hank Dunn, EdD
President
Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College (N.C.)

Dr. Dunn has worked in community colleges for nearly 30 years, with 21 years in the Florida Community College System. At A-B Tech, he aligns budgets to the strategic plan, creates flexible learning formats and helped to pass a countywide sales tax worth $129 million to the college for repair, renovation and building of facilities. Dunn helped increase enrollment by 10,000 students in a four-year period in a past position at Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana.

Carl Hite, PhD
President
Cleveland State Community College (Tenn.)

During his 15 years as president of Cleveland State Community College, Dr. Hite has made sure his college not only keeps pace with the tremendous changes occurring in higher education, but leads the way in implementing essential changes. CSCC is a past recipient of the prestigious Bellwether Award, received after the college’s redesigned math program was recognized by President Obama as a program that every American community college should replicate. Hite is leading efforts to scale up the redesign “across the curriculum.” Hite is president of the National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges.

Anne M. Kress, PhD
President
Monroe Community College, Rochester, NY

Previously, as provost at Santa Fe Community College, Dr. Kress negotiated a faculty contract change, grew international programming and sustainability efforts, began the Center for Innovation and Economic Development, and moved SFC to a four-year degree. As the current president of Monroe Community College, fundraising has improved each year during the recession and MCC hosted the first event to raise over $100,000 in one evening. MCC has expanded its honors program and changed policies to improve student success and completion.

Anna M. Lebesch, EdD
Vice President for Workforce Development
St. Johns River State College (in Palatka, Fla.)

Dr. Lebesch has worked in higher education for over 15 years as a counselor, instructor and administrator. Last year, she implemented St. Johns River’s first bachelor of science degree in organizational management and helped garner a $1.9 million federal grant for the college’s nursing programs. She is a member of the Reaccreditation Leadership Team and the Institutional Planning Council. Lebesch is an active member of numerous Clay County associations and chairs the county’s economic development council.
Jeanna Mastrodicasa, PhD  
*Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs*  
*University of Florida*

In her current post, Dr. Mastrodicasa developed the UF Division of Student Affairs' 2010-2015 strategic plan and submitted all materials for the SACS five-year accreditation review. She has made assessment an integrated part of the division's work processes. In her previous position as associate director of the UF Honors program, she reorganized the university's undergraduate research program and managed applications for Fulbright Scholars from UF. Mastrodicasa has co-authored a book about the millennial generation in the workforce and is serving her second three-year term as a Gainesville city commissioner.

Christopher Mullin, PhD  
*Program Director for Policy Analysis*  
*American Association of Community Colleges (D.C.)*

Dr. Mullin provides analysis and data to guide AACC’s advocacy efforts on causes such as federal student financial assistance and college costs and policies. He has written 30 policy documents, 10 peer-reviewed journal articles, four book chapters, and edited one book. Mullin serves on the advisory boards of the national Pathways to College Network, the National Education Finance Conference and the Gates Research Advisory Board of the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Tina Barreiro O'Daniels, EdD  
*Associate Provost*  
*St. Petersburg College, Tarpon Springs Campus (Fla.)*

As the college’s No. 2 administrator, Dr. O'Daniels supports the provost in operating a 120-acre campus with 6,000 students at the Tarpon Springs campus of St. Petersburg College. She serves as associate provost and also is chief student affairs officer and student dean, while participating in collegewide strategic planning and policy implementation. She is an editorial board member for the Council for the Study of Community Colleges and continues to serve as an executive coach and learning plan mentor for UF’s Institute of Higher Education.

Brian Polding, PhD  
*Chair, College of Information Systems and Technology, & School of Business*  
*North Florida campus of the University of Phoenix*

Dr. Polding, the North Florida campus 2011 Outstanding Employee, has chaired the School of Business for 11 years and also is acting director of academic affairs. He supervises eight faculty area chairs and 80 part-time faculty members and is a member of the university president’s academic cabinet. He also teaches and serves on doctoral dissertation committees. He has consulted with companies such as IBM and AT&T on the development of management training programs. Polding is a Supreme Court certified mediator for the Florida Family Courts.

Kristy Presswood, PhD  
*Associate Vice President, College of Education*  
*Daytona State College (Fla.)*

Dr. Presswood has worked in numerous divisions in her 18 years at Daytona State. She was instrumental in the early implementation of a campus computer network and an online student services system, and currently oversees adult education and the School of Education. The education school has a robust system of tracking all pre-service teachers, and Presswood’s future
plans call for automating processes that will advance faculty advising, student tracking and field experience tracking for the school and college.

**Deanne Williams, EdD**  
*Associate Professor and Chair, Hospitality Management Department*  
*Virginia State University*

Williams spearheaded the accreditation of VSU’s hospitality management program that led to its transition from program to department status. She also obtained grants to provide low-income students with scholarships, which had a direct effect on graduation rates. She also serves as an American Council on Education Internationalization committee member and launched the university’s first formal study-abroad curriculum. Williams is a member of the Petersburg Area Tourism Board and the National Advisory Board of the Disney College Program.

UF’s institute of Higher Education works closely with its affiliate colleges in offering continuing professional development opportunities for practitioners and conducting needed research in the field of higher education and community college administration.

The Community College Futures Assembly, now in its 18th year, convenes annually as an independent national policy forum for key opinion leaders to work as a “think tank” in identifying critical issues facing the future of community colleges. The group also conducts the nationally recognized Bellwether Awards to honor trend-setting community colleges.

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