

Fourth Annual Math Faculty Retreat
Enriching Classroom Experiences:
New Perspectives

Miami Dade College
March 2-3, 2006

As the robins signal the onset of spring, late winter at Miami Dade College (MDC) signals this annual two-day retreat (MR). This year, mathematics faculty examined an overview of college-wide initiatives designed to advance students' progress. The initiatives included:

- Cooperative Learning.
- Frequent Testing.
- Practice Sessions.
- Project-based Instruction.
- Classroom Management Software.
- Graphing Calculators.

Participants were given an update of the progress being made by the various Oversight Subcommittees of the *Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) - Student Success At Miami Dade College: The Mathematics Connection*. Readers may recall that the *QEP* resulted in the College's continuing accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 2004.

On the second day, Intermediate Algebra took the spotlight as a part of a presentation about Florida's community colleges and the plan for Developmental Mathematics sponsored by the Florida Two-Year College Mathematics Association. This plan includes a multi-faceted curriculum, course development and project evaluation.

The Research and Best Practices portion of the agenda was managed by the keynote speaker, Cheryl Ooten (Mathematics Professor, Santa Ana College [CA]). The author of *Managing the Mean Math Blues* (Prentice Hall, 2003) made a media-rich

presentation entitled, Math Student Success – Some Theory, Practice and Research. Participants were actively engaged learning how to re-frame thoughts and words, and singing “I Love My Algebra” to the tune of “Oh, Come Let Us Adore Him”. The traditional “Table Talk” session centered on a lively discussion of implementing self-selected best practices.

As the retreat drew to a close, faculty shared their experiences with global education. An atmosphere of life-long learning, multi-culturalism, and service can be created by threading global issues within the tapestry of the mathematics curriculum. Looking ever-forward, the mathematics faculty engaged in an important discussion of the College’s twenty-five general education outcomes. They will play a significant role in the assessment and reform of these decade-old outcomes.

The 2006-2007 academic year will provide an opportunity for faculty to bring life to their personal action plans and to convene again in March 2007. For further information concerning *MR '03, '04, '05, and '06* contact Prof. Linda Burton at lburton@mdc.edu. For information about the *QEP*, contact Dr. Patrick Bibby at pbibby@mdc.edu.