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## **The FIU Metropolitan Center Names New Advisory Board Officers**

**Miami – November 7, 2008** – The Florida International University Metropolitan Center is pleased to announce a new slate of officers for its 2008-2009 Advisory Board. Christine M. Barney has been named Chair of the Board of Directors. Other appointments include Ramon Flores, the Area Director for Regulatory & External Affairs for AT&T Florida as Vice Chair and the Honorable Shirley Gibson, Mayor of the City of Miami Gardens as Secretary. The announcement was made by Dr. Dario Moreno, Director of the FIU Metropolitan Center.

Barney, who succeeds Rick Rodriguez Piña of Piña and Associates as Chair, is CEO and managing partner of rbb Public Relations, the *PRWeek Magazine* 2008 Agency of the Year. Barney develops and coordinates multifaceted communications programs for a variety of companies including Florida Power & Light Company, The Florida Marlins, Language Line Services, Starbucks and Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Under Barney's leadership, rbb is the only Florida firm to win every major industry award. Her innovative management style and "employee-driven workplace" philosophy put the firm on the *Wall Street Journal's* Top 30 Small Workplaces list for the last two years.

"Christine Barney's proven experience will help us better advance the Center's goals" said Dr. Moreno. "Christine is one of our most dedicated Board members and has committed countless hours to the Center's work"

The Metropolitan Center at Florida International University is engaged in the study of the demographics, economics and politics of South Florida. The overall goal of the Center, as an "applied research" institute, is to provide decision-makers with the best possible information to forge solutions to the problems confronting South Florida's urban areas. The Center provides research, training, and technical assistance to governmental and nonprofit institutions in South Florida. The Center provides usable knowledge to inform decision-makers on economic development, land use, housing and public opinion. It also provides organizational management planning and development to strengthen local organizations' ability to serve their client base.

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