

Miami Dade College soon will have a stellar new leader | Opinion

[BY BERNIE NAVARRO](#)

JUNE 24, 2019 05:00 PM, UPDATED JUNE 24, 2019 05:04 PM



Classes that allow students to get high school and college credit are among MDC's many programs. *MDC.EDU*

Last week marked the first step toward a new chapter for Miami Dade College. The members of the college's [Presidential Search Committee](#), after thoroughly vetting many qualified candidates, completed their charge to put forward four finalists for the Board of Trustees' consideration. One of the four will become the next president of "Democracy's College."

The presidency of any college or university is not an easy job, especially when the institution has transformed an entire community and been led by one of the most iconic leaders of higher education in the country. MDC is the largest institution of higher education in the United States, with more than 165,000 students and eight campuses. It

has changed for the better the lives of more than 2 million alumni and their families since its founding almost 60 years ago.

The 17-member Presidential Search Committee understood the ramifications of its decision and tackled its civic duty with a great sense of pride and responsibility. The committee comprised internal and external stakeholders from all walks of life, backgrounds and age groups, and with different insights and life experiences. Among us was a student, a Fortune 500 CEO, professors, business leaders and philanthropists to list a few, with each bringing a unique and thoughtful perspective, each of which became central to our deliberations. Even with this awesome diversity, I was delighted that our final decision was unanimous.

In 1987, T.D. Allman wrote “Miami: City of the Future,” which prophesied that the city represented the new American melting pot. Today, Miami is a multicultural mosaic that has realized that prophecy and shown unequivocally that our strength lies in our diversity. Miami Dade College has always been a beacon of hope for minorities, and in the coming weeks, MDC’s Board of Trustees will interview four stellar candidates — one African-American man and three women, of whom one is Hispanic and another is Asian.

I was pleased by the exhaustive, inclusive and transparent process that the committee undertook to identify these candidates. In the end, our stellar national reputation was an excellent recruiting tool and allowed us to communicate with more 550 people as part of our search efforts, which resulted in 45 applicants.

From this group of applicants, seven were invited to interview with the members of the Presidential Search Committee, which yielded [four formidable finalists](#):

- Dr. Paul Broadie, Gateway Community College and Housatonic Community College
- Dr. Divina Grossman, University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences
- Dr. Lenore Rodicio, MDC’s executive vice president and provost
- Dr. Reagan Romali, of Long Beach Community College District/Long Beach City College

I am more encouraged than ever by the wonderful feedback I’ve received about MDC from the scores of community leaders I contacted as I prepared to lead this charge. I am

proud to report that MDC — Miami’s “beacon of hope” — soon will have a new leader who will affirm what Allman floated in his book: Miami is the city of the future.

Bernie Navarro is chairman of Miami Dade College’s Presidential Search Committee and chairman of the Board of Trustees.



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