

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR APRIL 5, 2017 12:59 AM

State budgets hurt higher education

State legislators released budget proposals last week that included steep cuts to higher education funding, a true concern for institutions like Miami Dade College, which are the great equalizers in the communities they serve and the backbone of the region's workforce training.

Proposals from the state House and Senate call for millions of dollars in reductions to Florida College System funds. For Miami Dade College, this could prove devastating for students who depend on our programs to prepare for college-level courses that ultimately lead to graduation and well-paying jobs. Among initiatives potentially on the chopping block are developmental education programs, which help the neediest of students.

Institutions like Miami Dade College are nimble, responsive and innovative places of learning that are worthy of investment and financial support. Any threat to the sustainability of our academic programs is ultimately a threat to the financial stability of our state. Florida's colleges are change makers and these institutions cannot continue producing successful graduates without adequate funding and support.

It is ironic that the \$55 million cut to the Florida Colleges' developmental education programs — of which \$14 million would hit MDC — is the same amount proposed to boost the medical and law programs at the State Universities. Students in developmental education are the most vulnerable and worthy of receiving a second chance.

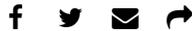
An education is the only passport to lifelong success. Today, more than ever, the opportunity to achieve a post-secondary credential is imperative for social and economic mobility.

Our state simply cannot afford to lose talented and committed leaders because our colleges were denied necessary funding to keep crucial academic programs running.

ARMANDO J. BUCELO, JR., CHAIR,

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

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