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Washington Update
Florida Atlantic Joins Latin American Grid Initiative
By Ronald Roach
Jan 9, 2007, 23:10

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Joining the computing grid generates more IT opportunities for Hispanic students.

Florida Atlantic University has joined the IBM-led Latin American Grid, or LA Grid, making it the 10th institution to affiliate with the computing consortium. Institutions and universities belonging to the LA Grid have banded together to create professional information technology opportunities for Hispanics and to advance research in areas such as life sciences, weather modeling and prediction.

The LA Grid is a collection of computing resources in North America, Latin America and Spain that can act as one massive supercomputer. The consortium has become one of the world's largest university grid initiatives, spanning three continents, including Spain's Barcelona Supercomputing Center. The grid provides computing power for researchers and students and fosters greater collaboration on social research.

"We are very excited to be a part of the LA Grid initiative and look forward to collaborating with IBM and our partners. FAU was selected because of our advanced research, Hispanic technical professional talent and executive commitment to fulfill the vision of LA Grid," says Dr. Larry F. Lemanski, FAU's vice president for research.

Talent development is a major goal for LA Grid members. Several studies, including the May 2006 survey for *Computing Research News*, have reported that few Hispanic students graduate from U.S. colleges with information technology degrees. As part of their commitment to the grid, member universities provide students with hands-on access to research projects and offer IBM-sponsored programs that provide internships and mentoring to students.

"IBM is investing talent, technology and resources for this initiative to make it a catalyst to build the next generation of technology talent across the United States and Latin America. The strong partnership between FAU and other academic institutions will play an important role in creating jobs, driving innovative technology into the marketplace and stimulating Florida's economy," says Pete Martinez, vice president of IBM Consulting Services.

With FAU's addition, LA Grid will gain another 150 servers and will have 1,500 available shared processors. The goal is for the grid to include as many as 30 universities and 10,000 member processors by 2010. Nationally recognized for its racial and ethnic diversity, FAU has a student population that is 17 percent Black, 16 percent Hispanic, 5 percent Asian and 4 percent international.