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Jose E. Hernandez appointed Chief Diversity Officer for USF System

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— Jose Hernandez, Ph.D., USF System Chief Diversity Officer

University of South System Florida President Judy Genshaft announced Monday the appointment of Jose E. Hernandez to the newly created position of Chief Diversity Officer and leader of USF's expanded Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Hernandez, a former USF diversity official who has served at the University of North Carolina Wilmington in recent years, will return to USF to lead a proactive and positive strategy to expand USF's diversity and inclusion efforts in all aspects of system operations, the president announced.

"Dr. Hernandez is an accomplished leader with a demonstrated record of promoting a climate of inclusion and cooperation that strengthens our campuses," Genshaft said. "The USF System recognizes one of its greatest assets is the rich diversity of its faculty, staff and students. Our university is committed to creating a successful learning and working environment that not only

reflects the state of Florida and the communities we serve, but creates a future where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential."

Hernandez has served as Associate Provost for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion for the University of North Carolina Wilmington since 2008, where he led efforts to meet the university's strategic diversity goals and designed, implemented and evaluated initiatives that advanced institutional goals. Hernandez formerly served as USF's Director of Diversity and Inclusion from 2002 to 2008, and as coordinator of USF's McNair Scholars Program for graduate students from 2000 to 2002. He also served as a faculty member in the College of Education at Bethune-Cookman University from 1987 to 2000.

"I am excited to contribute to USF's efforts in diversity and inclusion," Hernandez said. "As a modern global university, USF is a major center of education that provides world-class opportunities for student success. Being part of these efforts, and the dynamic Tampa Bay region, is a great opportunity to help shape a promising future for our campuses and the larger community."

The creation of the new Office of Diversity and Inclusion is a first step in modernizing and enhancing USF's diversity and equal opportunity programs, the President noted. Since last year, USF's diversity efforts have been under review by the nationally-leading firm Virtcom Consulting, which will be suggesting a series of steps to enhance inclusion and equality efforts.

While the university will continue to build a strong and independent compliance system that ensures employees and students are free from discrimination, the new approach also will promote efforts that build connections between people that enriches the educational experience, strengthens the workplace, and enhances USF's competitiveness on a state, national and global scale.

"The USF System is in the middle of one of the most diverse areas of our nation – which gives us both special a vantage point and a special responsibility," the President said. "We are not just an economic powerhouse for our region; we are the intellectual center of our region. People look to us to lead the way."

As part of the effort to provide an appropriate, inclusive, safe and comfortable academic and work environment, USF has established policies that prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of the following: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, and/or gender identity and expression. See more information or guidance on equal opportunity matters.

Hernandez earned a doctorate in education at the University of Central Florida in 1994, a Master of Science in Counseling and Human Systems in 1981 from Florida State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Florida State University in 1979. Prior to his career in higher education, Hernandez served for eight years as a case manager and supervisor for a community

mental health system, and has been a Florida State Licensed Mental Health Counselor since 1985.

He is a member of the National Association for Diversity Officers in Higher Education, the International Society for Diversity and Inclusion Professionals, launched the Latino Alliance for Southeastern North Carolina and was a member of the board of directors for Phoenix Employment Ministry in Wilmington. He was nominated for a 2013 HRC North Carolina Gala Award; received the Hispanic Pathways Award, Latin Community Advisory Board October 2007; and the Tampa Hispanic Heritage Man in Education, October 2006 among other honors.

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