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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Palm Beach State selects Bennett to lead Belle Glade campus

She comes on board Jan. 28

(Belle Glade, Fla. – Dec. 11, 2012) Dr. Holly Bennett will join Palm Beach State College Jan. 28 as the new provost of the Belle Glade campus.

The Pennsylvania native has 20 years of higher education experience, including a background in workforce and economic development. She comes to Palm Beach State from Belmont College, a two-year college in Ohio where she has been serving as dean of workforce and economic development since 2009. She was chosen to lead the Belle Glade campus after a national search that drew 146 applicants. She replaces Dr. Marcia Hardney, who resigned earlier this year.

Bennett said she is looking forward to coming to Palm Beach State and the Belle Glade campus.

“I see a lot of opportunity there,” Bennett said, noting that she gets to bring a fresh set of eyes to the campus and the community. “You’ve got the sugar industry. I think there is a lot that we can do. Palm Beach State College has a very good reputation as a community college.”

She knows first-hand the challenges of communities like the Glades where unemployment has reached more than 40 percent. She was hired by Belmont College specifically to develop a strategic plan for Ohio’s Harrison County, which was hit hard during the last economic recession. Steel plants closed, and the coal industry, faced with stringent environmental regulations, shut down some of its mines, leaving many out of work. With the support of the Harrison County Commission, she spearheaded the creation of a strategic plan to help attract new industries, retain current industries, and spur economic development. “We worked largely with all volunteers to put together the strategic plan,” she said. Bennett also was elected to the Regional Planning Board to assist with the implementation of the plan.



Prior to going to Belmont College, Bennett worked for three years as dean of college preparatory services at Mohave Community College in Kingman, Ariz. and for five years as basic skills director at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington, N.C. She also has worked at Pennsylvania State University as a program coordinator/instructor and as a consultant at other colleges and universities. She first began working in higher education in 1988 as a Computer Information Systems instructor at Ivy Tech State College. She holds a Ph.D. in workforce education and development from Pennsylvania State University, a master's degree in employee relations from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a bachelor's degree in social studies education from Grace College, and an Associate in Applied Science degree in computer programming from Ivy Tech.

Serving 49,000 students annually, Palm Beach State College is the largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, providing bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, professional certificates, career training and lifelong learning. Established in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, it offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.

Editor's note: Contact College Relations and Marketing for a high-resolution photo of Dr. Holly Bennett

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