

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Palm Beach Community College math professors win statewide award**

(Lake Worth, Fla. – June 5, 2007) Palm Beach Community College math Professors Gail Burkett and Karen Pain have won the statewide Exemplary Practice Award from the Florida Association of Community Colleges Curriculum Commission for combo courses Burkett developed that have significantly boosted the success rate of students in prep math courses.

The FACC Curriculum Commission will formally present the award, which comes with a \$500 prize, during the organization's annual conference in November. FACC is the professional association for Florida's 28 public community colleges.

Burkett, of Jupiter Farms, who taught part time at PBCC for nine years before becoming a full-time math professor in 2000, created the idea for the combo courses and launched them in fall 2005 to address the low 45 percent to 50 percent pass rate in prep math. In the combo courses, the pass rate jumped to an average of 80 to 85 percent.

Boosting students' success in math also has been a focal point of PBCC's federally-funded Title III grant program, where Pain worked before becoming a full-time math professor last year. She teamed with Burkett to promote the combo courses concept. Pain, of West Palm Beach, also presented the combo courses to the Curriculum Commission in St. Augustine May 9 along with two other finalists for the Exemplary Practice Award.

"I am absolutely thrilled," said Burkett, who also is a finalist for FACC's Professor of the Year Award, which will be presented in November. "I would love to be able to pass the idea on to other schools so that they can have equal success rates."

In the combo courses, rather than focus on Prep I for an entire term, students spend eight weeks in Prep I and then advance to Prep II for another eight weeks.



Or, they take Prep II and Intermediate Algebra back-to-back. In the combo courses, they have the same professor and must register and pay for the courses at the same time. The courses are intensive. They meet four days a week for one hour and 15 minutes.

Burkett said the combo courses eliminate the amount of time spent re-teaching material. The combo courses also help the students move through the sequences faster and with more success.

Burkett said after the first semester saw a success rate of 80 to 85 percent, she continued it. Other areas of prep offered by PBCC, including Reading and English, also are using the concept to boost success in those subjects.

**About Palm Beach Community College:** Serving more than 46,000 students annually, Palm Beach Community College is the largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, providing associate degrees, professional certificates, career and customized training and lifelong learning. Florida's first public community college, PBCC offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.

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**Editor's note:** A photo of Professor Gail Burkett is available at [www.pbcc.edu/images/marketing/gailburkett.jpg](http://www.pbcc.edu/images/marketing/gailburkett.jpg).

Professor Karen Pain's photo is available at [www.pbcc.edu/images/marketing/karenpain.jpg](http://www.pbcc.edu/images/marketing/karenpain.jpg).

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