

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Media Advisory

**To: News Directors and Assignment Editors**

**Date: March 19, 2003**

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### **Palm Beach Community College and the American Association of University Women to host ninth-grade girls in Sister-to-Sister Summit**

**Jacqueline E. Woods, AAUW executive director, will be the keynote speaker**

**What:** Palm Beach Community College and the Palm Beach County Interbranch of the American Association of University Women are sponsoring a Sister-to Sister Summit, giving 75 ninth-grade girls from diverse backgrounds an open forum to discuss everything from health and wellness, self-esteem and dating to self defense, college success and etiquette.

The summit will include breakout sessions, a luncheon with a lesson on etiquette, an awards ceremony and a panel discussion featuring local accomplished women. The keynote speaker will be **Jacqueline E. Woods**, executive director of the AAUW, a 150,000-member organization with more than 1,500 branches nationwide that lobbies and advocates for education and equity for all girls and women.

**When: Friday, March 28- 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**Where:** Allied Health building- PBCC at Lake Worth, 4200 Congress Ave.

#### **Background:**

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The AAUW launched the nationwide dialogue among girls following a 1991 study it commissioned. *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* found that as girls reach adolescence, they experience a significantly greater drop in self-esteem than boys. It confirmed previous research showing that girls are systematically, if

unintentionally, discouraged from a wide range of academic pursuits--particularly in math and science. In a subsequent study by the AAUW's Educational Foundation, *The AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls*, issues such as sexual harassment, violence, early sexual activity, substance abuse and body image have been labeled the "evaded curriculum."

- The local summit was proposed by Sherry Fletcher, coordinator of PBCC's GEAR UP - Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, a grant-funded program based at Pahokee Middle Senior High School. She approached the coordinators of other PBCC programs and later the AAUW to host the event. More than half the girls participating in the summits are from Belle Glade and Pahokee.
- Organizers have tapped outstanding women in the community to serve on a "Women of Accomplishment" panel as part of the event. The panel includes **Dr. Catherine Lowe**, a West Palm Beach ophthalmologist; PBCC District Board of Trustees members **Susan K. Baumel** and **Carolyn L. Williams**; the board's student representative, **Minal Weaver**; and PBCC at Lake Worth **Provost Maria Vallejo**, Ph.D.

**Althea Riddick**, interim vice president of instruction at the College of Albemarle in Elizabeth City, N.C., will be the summit's closing speaker.

#### **About Palm Beach Community College:**

Palm Beach Community College, a richly diverse comprehensive two-year institution with a history of achievement since 1933, offers more than 100 programs of study at campuses in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Belle Glade and Palm Beach Gardens. PBCC is dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County by providing associate degrees in arts and science, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning.

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