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PRESS RELEASE

Florida College Access Network

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FCAN Announces 2021 Workforce Education Innovator Award Winner

Florida innovator recognized for going above and beyond to support students' college dreams

Over half of Floridians have lost their job, had a pay cut, or saw a reduction of hours because of COVID-19. Florida needs to increase access to high-quality workforce training and education so that Floridians have the credentials they need to achieve a rewarding career.

That's why FCAN is pleased to announce the honoree of the third annual Workforce Education Innovator Awards, which honor school, community and business leaders who prepare students of all ages for a future in high-demand fields that offer economic mobility.

The 2021 Workforce Education Innovator is
***Nadia Kotula, Dean of Academic Affairs,
Hillsborough Community College, SouthShore Campus***

Partnering with Enterprising Latinas, Ms. Kotula developed a program, "Women Building Futures," where a cohort of 25 Latina and African American students from low-income households completed a workforce program in the field of construction. The women worked on-campus with a certified licensed construction instructor to attain their ABC Construction licenses and certifications to be licensed contractors in this in-demand field.

Ms. Kotula also led the HCC SouthShore Campus in transitioning faculty and student support virtually. She developed several trainings to support faculty unfamiliar with conducting virtual learning and delivered "Teacher Tech Kits" which included cameras and laptops to faculty at their homes at the beginning of the pandemic.

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Lastly, Ms. Kotula created additional academic support services by reconfiguring the campus library to support social distancing, especially for students who did not have access to resources outside of campus that would allow them to attend virtual classes.

Nominations for the Workforce Education Innovator Award were evaluated through a competitive process. This year's honoree reflects the sorts of creative practices that result in strong student outcomes. The FCAN Innovators are usually honored at a special awards luncheon as part of the annual FCAN Summit but will be honored virtually this year.

"Nadia Kotula is the kind of leader we needed this year who met the hardships brought on by the pandemic with creative and timely innovations," said Charleita M. Richardson, FCAN's Executive Director. "Because of her ingenuity, our community is discovering better ways of operating that will endure long after the pandemic, and for that we are thrilled to honor her leadership."

Please join us in congratulating, Nadia Kotula, the 2021 Workforce Education Innovator on this well-deserved recognition!

About Florida College Access Network

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is Florida's first collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve an education beyond high school and prosper in Florida's dynamic economy. We envision a Florida working together where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all. For more information, visit floridacollegeaccess.org.

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