

# FINDING STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY



**W**e're privileged in South Florida to live in one of the most dynamic, culturally diverse communities in the nation. Long regarded as the "Gateway to the Americas," the region is rapidly becoming a major global crossroads. Well over half of South Florida's five million residents hail from the far reaches of the globe—not just Latin America and the Caribbean but Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

The multicultural, multiethnic richness of our community poses special challenges to our health care system. From the front line of health care, nurses know that cultural and language issues impact not only perceptions of illness but also access to and delivery of care. Given the increasing globalization of our society, addressing these challenges is a matter of national significance.

This issue of *Heartbeat* profiles some of the women and men who are pioneering new approaches to health care in response to these challenges. They include our award-winning faculty, whose interdisciplinary expertise equips our students with the breadth of knowledge required to succeed in today's complex health care environment. Notably, 18 percent of our faculty and 11 percent of our students are men—surpassing the national average of 4 percent for male faculty and 9 percent for male students and reflecting the growing importance of men in the nursing workforce.

Our student body is among the most ethnically and racially diverse in the nation. Many of our students and faculty are bilingual, and cultural competency is one of our top priorities. By exposing our students to international experiences such as the new international "mini-mester," we are preparing them to become even better global citizens.

The expansion of our curriculum to include the B.S. in Health Science degree further illustrates our school's commitment to preparing well-rounded health care professionals. Students will benefit from interdisciplinary courses rooted in contemporary models of health care developed by expert health care providers.

With one of the nation's premier academic medical centers, the University of Miami continues to lead the way in providing state-of-the-art research and education programs in health care. Our School of Nursing and Health Studies will play a prominent role in defining problems, developing solutions, and delivering quality care to our local and extended community for years to come.

From the front line of health care, nurses know that cultural and language issues impact not only perceptions of illness but also access to and delivery of care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Peragallo', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Nilda "Nena" P. Peragallo, Dr.P.H., R.N., F.A.A.N.

Dean and Professor, School of Nursing and Health Studies