

“Power” Partnerships

By Rodney Miller, Dean of FPL Group University

The statistics are startling . . .

As Bob Escoto, Senior Vice President for Human Resources at Florida Power & Light Company recently reported:

*“The average age of our craft worker is 48 years old;
27 percent are eligible to retire today;
46 percent will be eligible to retire in the next 5 years;
That’s half of our workforce!”*

Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) has long been recognized for innovative solutions to power needs throughout the U.S. Now they needed to provide that same innovation to solving their immediate and long-

To solve future workforce needs, FPL has initiated an innovative program of “power partnerships” between the company and the curricula of the area’s community colleges.

term workforce needs. The hiring of Mr. Rodney Miller, Manager of the FPL Group University, resulted in new “power partnerships” that are now being developed with Florida’s community colleges to add to the partnerships previously in place with Florida’s universities.

These “power partnerships” feature a combination of a common Statewide curriculum, coupled with cooperative education

assignments. Signing ceremonies took place to symbolize agreement and support between FPL and the Miami Dade College and between FPL and Indian River Community College.

The common curriculum was developed initially to sup-

port two Nuclear Power Plants in Homestead (Turkey Point) and St. Lucie with three program options in instrumentation and control, electrical maintenance, and mechanical maintenance. Classroom instruction, which began in January with inaugural classes at both colleges, is followed by paid cooperative education assignments each summer for “hands on” application of concepts learned. Specific faculty expertise in nuclear concepts is being augmented by FPL employees from either St. Lucie or Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plants and viewed via video conferencing by students at both Miami Dade College and Indian River Community College.

Recently these partnerships have been expanded to include a common curriculum supporting the power generation needs at FPL and the combined nuclear and power curricula is being jointly developed initially between four of Florida’s community colleges – Edison College, Indian River Community College, Miami Dade College, and Palm Beach Community College. The curriculum for all programs and options will be available to any of the Florida community colleges to meet FPL workforce needs. The cooperative education component is an important part of the student’s total educational experience.

Florida Power & Light Company believes these expanded Florida partnerships will go a long way to helping them meet their challenging hiring needs for the future.