



Bertha Cabrera, Miami Dade College

It was at the AFC – Association of Florida Colleges 74th Annual Meeting & Conference Wyndham Grand at Bonnet Creek in Orlando, the 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. “Cultivating a Sense of Belonging through Storytelling Among College Stakeholders” session that I felt compelled to tell my story as it relates to AFC.

I first joined AFC during my onboard meeting at Wolfson Campus in January of 2000. Then I held different officer positions at the MDC – Miami Dade College Chapter level encouraged by Wanda Curtiss, my colleague, friend, and mentor who just won the Living Legend Award this year to add to her collection of accolades with AFC. This is one of the benefits of belonging to AFC: Recognition, I have never regretted joining this well-organized organization as I agree with the motto at AFC “It Pays to Belong.”

While serving as an officer of the MDC Chapter, I took part in different AFC conferences and region meetings in Key West, Miami Beach, Broward, Panama City, Pensacola, Palm Beach, Dania Beach, Tampa, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and Orlando through the years making connections and building friendships along the way. My next step was applying for and serving at the State level as Secretary of the Administration Commission in 2014 under Dr. Tunjarnika Coleman-Ferrell chair’s term and later as Secretary for the Technology Commission under Jessie Clayton, Jamie Beck, and Dr. Belkis L. Cabrera consecutive chairs’ terms.

I vividly remember the visit to the House Legislative Assembly during a Leadership meeting in Tallahassee, where we were advocating for funding of the Florida College System. It is because of the college's existence that students can complete not only their associate's but also their bachelor's degrees nowadays. I can attest to the value of education as I completed my bachelor's in business and as an advisor, I encourage my students to transfer to their graduate studies as well. Funding opportunities and guidance are available at [ProFellow – Fellowships, Fully Funded PhD & Master's Programs](#) -indeed I will continue to advocate for AFC and Florida Colleges forever.