

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Amber L. Ernst-Leonard  
Assistant Director, Public Relations & Communications  
305-809-3531/ amber.ernstleonard@fkcc.edu

## **FKCC Improves Emergency Preparedness and Communication with Implementation of *Connect-ED*<sup>®</sup> Service**

*School-to-Student Communication System Built Specifically for Higher Education Allows Campus Leaders to Reach Thousands of Students, Faculty and Staff in Minutes*

Key West, FL (May 26, 2009)– Florida Keys Community College announced today the immediate deployment of the **Connect-ED**<sup>®</sup> communication service from Blackboard Connect Inc. (formerly known as The NTI Group, Inc.), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Blackboard Inc. (NASDAQ: BBBB), to provide FKCC leaders with the ability to reach students, faculty and staff with time-sensitive information within minutes.

“Today we are forced to prepare for situations that years ago we never could have anticipated happening,” said Dr. Randy Charles, Provost. “We recognize the important role that immediate communication plays in safety and have selected the Connect-ED service because of its successful track record and multi-modal capabilities that will allow us to keep students and staff informed whether they are at home, sitting in front of their computers, or on their way to class.”

Built exclusively for post-secondary institutions using the experience gained in delivering hundreds of millions of messages for educators over the past seven years, the service enables campus leaders to schedule, send, and track personalized voice messages at up to six phone numbers and two e-mail addresses per student and staff member. In all, the multi-modal service helps officials reach out to students and staff via:

- Voice messages to home phones, work phones, cell phones, and even e-mail addresses
- Text messages to cell phones, PDAs, networked digital signage, and other text-based devices
- Text messages to e-mail accounts
- Messages to TTY/TDD receiving devices for the hearing impaired

“It’s crucial that we are able to notify students quickly in time-sensitive situations because up-to-date communication helps minimize the spread of misinformation, restore order and provide direction,” Dr. Charles said.

The system can be used to notify entire student populations and staff members of school closures and contingency plans due to unforeseen incidents. The Connect-ED service has been successfully used for communication by schools across the country during events, such as the wildfires in Southern California, Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Ernesto, school evacuations, campus notifications required by the Clery Act, and to help locate missing persons.

FKCC will be testing the Connect-ED service on June 8, 2009. The campus advises that it is also testing the data provided by students. If you are a community member who erroneously receives a call the FKCC Helpline at 305-809-3135 and your number will be removed or added to the service immediately as appropriate.

More information about the Connect-ED service for post-secondary educators is available at [www.blackboardconnect.com](http://www.blackboardconnect.com).

### **About the *Connect-ED* Service**

The ***Connect-ED***<sup>®</sup> service is provided by Blackboard Connect Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Blackboard Inc. (NASDAQ: BBBB). The service was created specifically for K-12 schools and school districts based upon the award winning ***Connect*** platform. Additionally, the company provides the ***Connect-ED*** for Higher ED service, a unique service designed to meet the needs of institutes of higher learning. The service can be used to send targeted, time-sensitive voice and text messages to landlines, cell phones, e-mail addresses, PDAs, pagers, TTY/TDD receiving devices, and other text receiving devices and is SIF v1.1 certified. The ***Connect*** platform is a Software as a Service (SaaS) solution that has been in service since early 2001 and includes the ***Connect-ED***, ***Connect-CTY***<sup>®</sup>, ***Connect-GOV***<sup>®</sup>, and ***Connect-MIL***<sup>®</sup> systems. In 2007, the ***Connect*** platform was used by over 20,500 active sites to send over 240 million voice calls and over 17 million e-mail and SMS messages to constituents.

*\*Blackboard Connect Inc. does not sell, lease, share, or rent personally identifiable information (names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) to any companies or persons outside of Blackboard or its service providers.*

###