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## **Hillsborough Community College Student Named Finalist for the 2002 Florida College Student of the Year Award**

Gainesville, Fla. (04-02)— José Manuel Montalvo, a junior in International Business with a 3.74 GPA at Hillsborough Community College, is one of seven finalists statewide for the 2002 Florida College Student of the Year Award.

Montalvo and 19 other students from universities and colleges across Florida will share \$55,000 in scholarships and prizes and will be honored on Friday, April 12, at an awards ceremony and press conference at the Capital Building in Tallahassee.

Montalvo was selected from 144 applicants in the annual scholarship program sponsored by *Florida Leader* magazine, SunTrust Education Loans, and Office Depot. The Florida College Student of the Year Award celebrates 15 years of recognizing outstanding Florida college students for their campus leadership, academic excellence, financial self-reliance, and campus and community service, and Montalvo can claim the distinction of being the first finalist from Hillsborough Community College in the 15-year history of the award.

As a non-traditional, minority student who had an illiterate father, Montalvo, lives “by the philosophy that ‘dreams don’t have expiration dates.’” As part of the Honors Institute, he truly involves himself in the joy of learning, participation, and seeing something through to the end.

“He has been an outstanding student in the Honors Institute,” says Karen R. Linsky, professor in the Honors Institute. “He commits himself to something and does it because he feels that it’s important, not because he has to or because he’s required to.”

Montalvo serves as vice president of the Phi Chi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society at HCC’s Dale Mabry Campus. His list of contributions and activities are endless, organizing the “Christmas Toy Drive,” founding the “Fix and Feed Feline Feral Fund,” and organizing and chairing the “Water Conservation Symposium.” Competition and newsletter artwork, poetry, writings—you name it, he’s contributed it, even writing an essay to help Phi Chi win the 2001 Florida Regional “Most Improved Chapter” award.

Montalvo also serves as treasurer for the Student Government Association at Dale Mabry. Through that, he co-chaired SGA’s Student Lounge Committee where he oversaw picking out the architectural design and furnishings for a new “cyber café.”

Off-campus, he mentors high school students through ENLACE (Engaging Latino Communities for Education) on the importance of a college education and arranges for local high school tours of HCC.

“That’s probably my greatest accomplishment,—making younger students realize that they need to go to school now, to get things done now,” Montalvo says. “I emphasize education all the time. Literacy is important to me. My dad was illiterate; that’s why I feel passionate.

### **About Oxendine Publishing, Inc.**

In its 19th year, Oxendine Publishing produces three magazines, including *Florida Leader*, and sponsors the 13th annual “Best of Florida Schools” awards. Oxendine also publishes *Student Leader* and sponsors the 15th annual “Florida College Student of the Year Award” and the 5th annual “What Florida Students Think” survey. For more information and expanded coverage visit [www.floridaleader.com](http://www.floridaleader.com).