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Largest college in Florida leverages AI to advance student success

Miami Dade College (MDC) opened an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center at the North Campus last fall. The state-of-the-art facility is designed to prepare tomorrow's AI workforce.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that 513,000 new jobs will be created in the AI field by 2029. They include occupations like software developer, machine learning engineer, and robotics scientist in industries such as health care, manufacturing, cybersecurity, retail construction, supply chain management, business information technology, education, and transportation.

The more than 13,000-square foot facility will serve as the epicenter for all curriculum and software that is produced to support MDC's growth as a leader in applied AI. The center's conception and vision are the product of a strategic partnership with industry giants like Microsoft, Intel, and IBM.

"We are so proud to open the doors to MDC's AI Center, where students and the community can gain the critical skills to ascend within the current job market," said MDC President Madeline Pumariega in a press release last fall. "The fast evolution of technology has increased the demand for trained AI professionals across virtually every industry. MDC is leading the way to fill that gap."

Upon entering the AI Center, visitors are greeted by a holographic concierge powered by IBM's Watson AI software that assists with directions and provides information.

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The AI Center has dedicated classrooms, quantum computing labs, multi-use spaces, and a design-thinking room. In addition, a robotics lab and a makers lab facilitate taking an AI project from concept to prototype.

According to MDC, the College allocated five million dollars to construct the AI Center and has received several grants from the Knight Foundation, National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Miami Downtown Development Authority (DDA), among others, to finance the creation of degrees and professional development opportunities in AI.

The funding has supported several initiatives that will be now incorporated into the AI Center, including

- Development of certificates, and associate and bachelor degrees in applied AI in collaboration with an industry advisory committee composed of national AI experts
- Implementation of AI4ALL College Pathways, a nationwide initiative to expose every MDC student and faculty to AI regardless of discipline
- Free community education on the latest AI trends and practices via a monthly AI Speaker Series
- Hosting of AI high school programs to introduce the next generation to AI, like the Mark Cuban Foundation AI Bootcamp.
- Partnership with Intel AI for Workforce Program to train faculty and incorporate Intel's expertise in AI into the curriculum.

More than 500 MDC faculty participated in the "Leveraging AI to Advance Student Success" workshop and other professors completed training in Applied AI and even created projects utilizing AI. Student participation is also on the rise with 90% of partakers being minorities (71% identifying as Hispanic and 19% as Black).