

MDC-Homestead Campus Readies for Fall

By Charlie Hudson | Aug 6, 2021



Full staff has already returned to work as MDC-Homestead faculty will be teaching via in-person and remote options.

There are construction sounds rather than classroom conversations as Miami Dade College-Homestead Campus prepares for the 2021 Fall Semester.



Routine maintenance and repair of the breezeway is nearing completion as other construction projects are in progress.

Hugh Hudson

Notwithstanding the challenges of operating during the pandemic, Dr. Oscar Loynaz, who became Campus President in December 2020, was able to have a phased-in transition with staff and faculty.

“We are encouraging a return to campus for the engagement of students as part of their experience,” he explained in discussing updates and some exciting programs ahead. “We are still in Phase II which means they have options of in-person classes; MDC-Live which is virtual, but on a set schedule with an instructor and interaction with classmates; MDC On-line as all virtual;and there is the blended option.”

He reiterated their understanding of different circumstances within the student population. Some can focus primarily on their classes. Others have to work full or part time while some have family obligations to meet, or a combination of family and work commitments to juggle.

“Our honor society, the Homestead Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), does a project each year for the President,” he added. “This year’s project will be what a post-COVID campus should look like. Early work is split almost evenly between those who want to be on campus and those looking for more virtual. An example is the current PTK president who commutes here by public transportation. She says she wants to be on campus because she enjoys the leadership opportunities that gives her.”

In fact, “opportunity” is one of the words in the current marketing materials of, “Head HOME to MDC Homestead: Hope, Opportunity, Motivation, Excellence”.

The fall term begins August 23, 2021 and they’re anticipating between 4,000-5,000 students for the semester. (They are using the 2019 student population for comparison in view of 2020 disruptions.)

Four-year and two-year degrees can be achieved in multiple disciplines and there are many technical certifications available to qualify graduates for in-demand occupations. “In addition to academic programs that include entertainment technologies, nursing, and the arts and sciences, the Homestead Campus is home to the Eig-Watson School of Aviation.”

For students making their way in returning to or initially entering MDC, work on the breezeway should be completed in time and new food choices will be in place as Uncle Boo’s Catfish Corner will be open. The impressive main entrance and large parking lot off Flagler Avenue is under construction. It will have a distinctive sign and a security gate.

Another important project is the construction of "the nursing skills and simulation lab", which in addition to serving students will also be open to hospitals, etc., and the community for nurses and paraprofessionals to practice scenarios and conduct professional development activities. According to Loynaz, this major enhancement to the nursing program additionally provides a benefit to First Responder and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training. Aside from no longer having to share space, room will later be available for Paramedic Training. "This means an individual can enter with a high school diploma and plan to go all the way through First Responder, EMT, and Paramedical Certification in Homestead."

As previously reported, Loynaz's vision and philosophy are straightforward. "For me, having students first is the priority. Any person who walks into the college will have the assistance necessary to help them achieve their goals. They can be intimidated with the process in a large institution, and I want their experiences to be as seamless as possible. I want everyone who comes here to be able to fulfill their dream. I want to make sure we have the academic programs that meet the needs of the community and of local industry and business."

Speaking of needs of the community, there was special coordination this summer to develop and conduct an inter-organizational project in support of a request from the Homestead City Manager's office.

Although MDC-Homestead does not have the equipment scope of MDC's Miami Animation & Gaming International Complex (MAGIC), they do have expertise and a capability in the subject of gaming. The Cybrarium has virtualreality and other computer-based resources. MDC-Homestead personnel subsequently collaborated with the Cybrarium to hold a two-week summer camp focused on game design for fifteen students ages thirteen-to-seventeen. It was highly successful and can serve as a model for future activities.

In looking ahead to 2022, not only is the impressive Student Success Center on track, MDC-Homestead has also been designated as the fifth campus to be an Honors

College. As explained on the main website, “The Honors College at Miami Dade College is a learning community of some of the region's brightest

students supported by the resources of the largest institution of higher learning in the country. Over a period of two years, you will build a network of lasting relationships that will inspire you to pursue your dreams.” It is an advanced program that also comes with special scholarship opportunities. More details about the program will be available later in the year. (<https://www.mdc.edu/honorscollege>)

Despite the advantage of having a local campus, going away to college is often a goal for students. “They can have the best of both worlds,” Loynaz pointed out. “Students can attend the first two years here, save money, perhaps work parttime, get an Association Degree or just credit hours, and go on to other universities to complete a Bachelor’s degree.”

For more information, <https://www.mdc.edu/homestead> or visit 500 College Terrace, Homestead, Florida;

Tel: (305) 237-5000.

To view a description of the four class attendance options, <https://www.mdc.edu/registration/options/>

http://www.southdadenewsleader.com/news/mdc-homestead-campus-readies-for-fall/article_a193c0fa-f635-11eb-ba06-bfe2850ba05c.html