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MIAMI DADE COLLEGE, SOFTBANK TEAM UP TO OFFER A PATH TO PROSPERITY IN DATA SCIENCE

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By Nancy Dahlberg

As soon as SoftBank announced its DS4A (Data Science for All) bootcamp program, Antonio Delgado knew that Miami Dade College needed to bring it to its students. MDC's dean of Engineering, Technology and Design said the new DS4A/Empowerment program is designed to prepare job-seekers from underserved communities for careers in data science and Miami Dade College is full of these students who embrace these opportunities to learn these in-demand skills in emerging technologies. What's more, DS4A is an ideal first step in a seamless career pathway because students can then pursue a bachelor's degree in data analytics right at MDC, Delgado said. "We are the largest college in the nation serving minorities, and we have [one of the top 10 most affordable bachelor's degrees](#) in data analytics in the nation."

This morning, Miami Dade College announced it is partnering with SoftBank and Correlation One, [the tech education company that created DS4A](#), to offer MDC students this 18-week program free of charge. Faculty can take part in it as well to broaden their knowledge and skills, Delgado said.

Qualifying students will get 18 weeks of data and analytics training while working on case studies and projects, including projects with SoftBank portfolio companies. The program for MDC also includes Python training even before the program starts, and during the bootcamp students will be connected with mentors. Upon completion,

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students will receive credit toward a bachelor's in data analytics at MDC, reducing their overall tuition. They will also be connected with employment opportunities at SoftBank and other enterprises in South Florida, MDC said.

Pablo Hurtado is one of the MDC students who has already been accepted into the new program that begins April 17. Born in Cuba and raised in Nicaragua, Hurtado immigrated to Miami about three years ago. In Nicaragua, he started studying economics but took a computer science class and loved it, so now at Miami Dade College Hurtado is majoring in computer science.



Miami Dade College student Pablo Hurtado is studying computer science.

Hurtado hasn't taken any classes in data analytics yet, and he applied for the new program to get an introduction to the field. "I want to see in the future if I want to pursue that path for a career. If I like really data science, I could become a machine learning engineer," he said. Hurtado will also be working at Lyft this summer in a software engineering internship. "I don't want to close any doors. I think at the end of the summer I will have a better idea of what I want to do in the future."

Whichever path Hurtado chooses, those are good choices to have, and Delgado said MDC is committed to providing affordable, hands-on curriculums in the most in-demand technology fields for its students. MDC was the first in the state to offer data analytics as a bachelor's degree in 2015, and its graduates are getting offers before graduation, including from major healthcare systems, insurance companies, logistics companies and from government, Delgado said.

"The point is that we are creating these pathways at a time when Miami is growing, the talent needs are growing, and we are positioning the minorities we have in our community to fill these roles," Delgado said. "Our mission is to empower students with a ticket to economic growth."

Although the first cohort gets underway this month, SoftBank and Correlation One's DS4A program is ongoing and members of the greater community [have been encouraged to apply](#) as well. SoftBank's overall goal is for DS4A/Empowerment to train or upskill at least 10,000 people from underrepresented communities -- prioritizing those who identify as Black, Latinx, or LGBTQ+ -- over the next three years. Regardless of major, all MDC students are eligible to complete the assessment to enter DS4A / Empowerment's pilot cohort of 1,000 Fellows, which will include at least 50 Miami students, and there are plans to expand the Miami footprint significantly this fall.

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"In today's rapidly changing economy, employers have a critical role to play in streamlining the path between education and the jobs of the future," said Laura Gaviria Halaby, SoftBank's Head of Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives. "That's going to depend on creative partnerships between industry, universities, and learning platforms with the potential to address both skill and equity gaps in fast-growing industries like data science."

Marcelo Claure, SoftBank's COO and CEO of SofBank International Group, [will be speaking today](#) at 10 am as part of Miami Dade College's Global Business Leadership Series. [You can watch the livestream here](#).

Photo at top of post shows Miami Dade College students on MDC's Kendall campus.

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