

5 strategies for boosting Latinx student success at Miami Dade College

College using grant funds to bolster STEM and health sciences program with a focus on high school graduates

By: [Matt Zalaznick](#) | September 29, 2020



Hispanic-serving institution grants will help Latinx students at Miami Dade College succeed in STEM majors and careers.

Miami Dade College aims to boost Latinx student success system-wide thanks to \$14 million in federal grants meant to improve outcomes at Hispanic-serving institutions of higher ed.

Five of the college's campuses received Title V grants, ranging from \$2.5 million to \$3 million each.

The funds will bolster STEM and health sciences programs with new models of instructional delivery, advising, professional development and dual-enrollment programs for high school students, says [Lenore Rodicio](#), Miami Dade's executive vice president and provost.

A key focus of the many of the [student success](#) programs will be helping high school graduates transition to higher education, Rodicio says.

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"A lot of the time what we hear from students is that preparation is key," Rodicio says. "Many don't realize the prerequisites that are required for math, science and other STEM fields."

About 60% of the college's students come from low-income backgrounds.

"The opportunity to pursue high education is transformational for our students, not just in terms of their own personal growth and career goals, it's transformational for their families and their communities," Rodicio says.

Here's how the five campuses will use the grants:

1. Homestead Campus: "Project STEM-Wave" will provide successive waves of STEM majors with a network of services to support quick degrees completion. The first group will consist of dual-enrolled high school students who are interested in STEM careers.

2. Kendall Campus: "Project STITCHES." The college's Student & Teacher Integrated Center for Health Sciences should improve persistence with tutoring programs and methods of instruction that better prepare students for health sciences courses.

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3. North Campus: Project HOLA. The Hispanic Opportunities to Learn and Achieve project will offer targeted support in gateway courses, experiential learning, and new research opportunities that better prepare students for the workshops.

The program's financial literacy component will guide students in applying for financial aid and choosing the proper courses for their degrees.

4. Padrón Campus: WeLearn 366 Institute. The institute's subject-matter experts and instructional designers will revamp blended courses. The initiative will also offer a one-stop workspace for student services.

5. Wolfson Campus: Opening the Gateways—Mathematics Success and Emotional Intelligence. This summer bridge program, which includes a center for teaching and learning, is designed to improve retention and completion rates among Hispanic high-need and low-income students.

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The college also provides bilingual advisors and tutors who can work with students in Spanish.

Currently, the COVID pandemic means many of those services are being provided online and by phone as the college's students return gradually to in-person instruction with masks and social distancing, Rodicio says.

"Our student population has really been impacted, and we've seen an enrollment decline," Rodicio says. "Students are really wanting that face-to-face interaction in the classroom, and they'd rather wait."

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