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How to get a hot tech job? Miami Dade College to offer 'big data' degree

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Data scientist, data analyst, data architect, business intelligence analyst – the job titles vary but companies can't seem to get enough of them in this hot tech sector.

What's more, these data analysts that prepare and analyze large data sets are garnering average salaries exceeding $100,000, several recent national salary surveys show. Yet, companies say workers lack the skills for the abundant opportunities in both public and private sectors, including healthcare, finance, manufacturing, energy, education, logistics and construction.

To help fill that gap, Miami Dade College's School of Engineering and Technology on the Wolfson campus plans to launch a new big data program in spring 2017, becoming the first educational institution in Florida to offer an undergraduate degree in data analytics. The program was recently approved by the State of Florida.

"Data science and analytics has been identified as a field where the shortfall in the workforce will be in the hundreds of thousands," said Djuradj Babic, director of MDC's School of Engineering and Technology, citing a McKinsey & Co. report that forecast nearly 200,000 vacancies nationwide in the field by 2018. "The effect of this gap in related fields such as information technology and cybersecurity will be threefold."

The program will begin with a College Credit Certificate in Business Intelligence, progress to an Associate in Science in Business Intelligence, and culminate in a Bachelor of Science in Data Analytics. "As we researched nationwide, we found that degrees were only being offered at the graduate or post-graduate level. Our undergraduate pathway is a model that can be replicated and applied nationwide," Babic said.

Industry partners include NextEra Energy, Siemens Energy, the Business Higher Education Forum, Oracle, SAS, Accenture, Miami-Dade County, Miami Children's Hospital and Miami-Dade County Public Schools, MDC said. For more information on the program, visit http://entec.mdc.edu/BS-DA.htm.

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