

\$13M+ donation aims to spur innovation and more



Miami Dade College's Kendall Campus. (Photo: MDC)

BY **TABITHA WHISSEMORE** MARCH 4, 2020

“To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk.”

That quote by Thomas A. Edison is on the wall of the Wolfson Campus **Makers Lab** at **Miami Dade College** (MDC). The Kendall Campus Makers Lab is getting its own new, state-of-the-art pile of “junk” (and a makeover) to spur invention thanks to a \$12 million donation from the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation.

The Makers Lab already is equipped with high-precision industrial tools, including laser cutters, 3D printers and computer-aided design (CAD) software that allow students to experiment, problem-solve and create in a safe space and at no cost to them. Students from engineering, information technology, robotics, visual and performing arts and other disciplines come to the lab to collaborate and innovate.

The funding will serve to enhance collaborative learning and student research, and help yo build learning communities.

Faculty and staff will be encouraged to develop and integrate course and/or program modules into existing curriculum. External partners will get opportunities to use the space, engage students and develop potential internship or apprenticeship pathways. That could increase enrollment in disciplines such as digital art, theater, ceramics, jewelry, sculpting, architecture, robotics, engineering and IT.

More good news

A \$12 million donation is a reason to celebrate. But MDC’s good news doesn’t end there.

The foundation also has provided \$1.2 million to boost hospitality and culinary education at the Wolfson Campus. This includes the creation of a training facility featuring a hotel room, hotel front desk and dining room.

The funds also will help to support the college’s **Miami Culinary Institute**, which needs a savory/pastry kitchen to expand its offerings to include a new pastry chef culinary program.

“We have a tradition at MDC of creating classroom spaces that mimic real-world workspaces for our students,” said Lenore Rodicio, the college’s executive vice president and provost. “This donation by the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation will allow us to expand our innovative facilities to ensure that our students acquire the most up-to-date, hands-on skills in a wide variety of key workforce areas, including STEM fields, the arts and hospitality.”

The foundation has supported MDC for more than 50 years, allowing the college to provide financial assistance to thousands of low-income students. The support also has led to innovative academic spaces and programs in cutting-edge fields, including cyber-security, artificial intelligence, and fashion design and merchandising, to name a few.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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