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New partnership between Miami Dade College & Facebook focuses on real-world skills

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Realizing the importance in-demand real-world skills, [Miami Dade College](#) ^[1] (MDC) has entered into a partnership with Facebook to hone the digital marketing expertise of students and outside entrepreneurs. Students will earn a certificate when they complete 18 credits in the program. Small business owners and local entrepreneurs can acquire expertise in apps such as Instagram, learn how to build or expand their business, and engage more directly with their customers using different social media tools.

The partnership grew out of [Facebook Community Boost](#) ^[2], a two-year-old Facebook initiative that provides digital skills and training for job seekers, advises entrepreneurs on how to get started, and helps existing local businesses and nonprofits get the most out of the internet. MDC is the first and only higher-ed partner in Florida.

“We learned about Facebook Community Boost and their aim to empower over a million small business owners throughout the country,” says Sissi Rodriguez, assistant to the college president, special projects, for MDC. “We were interested because we were already working on a certificate program for digital marketing that was approved by the state last year.”

Teaching students the real-world skills employers seek

MDC is still developing the [curriculum, which will include real-world learning](#) ^[3]. Rodriguez says they are looking at ways to integrate Facebook’s expertise into some of their classes while looking out for the needs of the school’s students. MDC professors are collaborating with Facebook and received some training in December, when Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg announced the partnership at a public event in Miami.

“The classes at Miami Dade will be taught by our faculty, both the for-credit program and the community component. Facebook will be doing a train-the-trainers type of facilitating,” says Rodriguez.

The program will be open to students beginning in the fall 2019 semester. To earn the certificate, students must complete six three-credit-courses. MDC isn’t sure when it will start accepting applications, but they are already fielding questions from prospective applicants. “We don’t have an anticipated number of students just yet, but we also don’t anticipate having to cap classes. With six courses to choose from, there should be plenty of space for students to enroll in one of them,” says Rodriguez.

The curriculum is still being developed, but there is discussion about including a hands-on project in which students launch a digital marketing campaign using Facebook and Instagram for a nonprofit in the community, with Facebook donating credits for the campaign.

Partnering with a global company

Rodriguez identifies several advantages to colleges when they partner with a company like Facebook:

Teach in-demand skills. As social media and digital marketing are an integral part of society, students can sharpen skills that employers want.

Strengthen community ties. Local businesses can gain tools to connect and engage with their customers. "The bulk of businesses in Miami are family-owned. For a lot of these small businesses, [these tools are] not second nature."

Boost employment prospects. Students will get real-world experience so that they will be ready to work and put their degrees to good use immediately upon graduation. "Facebook understood where we're coming from—giving our students a quality education, but also a skill-based education that lets them run with it the moment they finish the program," Rodriguez says.

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[1] Miami Dade College: <http://www.mdc.edu/>

[2] Facebook Community Boost: <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/introducing-facebook-community-boost>

[3] curriculum, which will include real-world learning:

<https://www.ecampusnews.com/2018/10/12/real-world-learning-comes-to-campus/>

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