



# Scenes from Miami Hack Week: Our students are on frontlines of the future of tech

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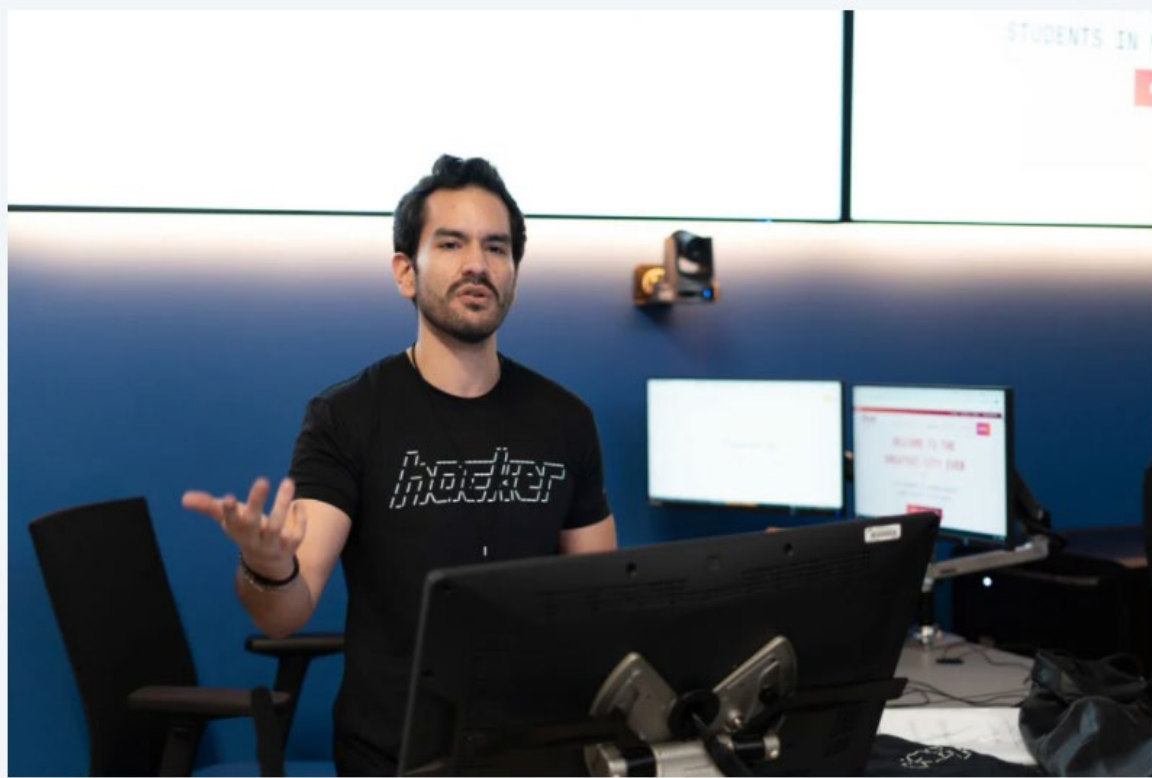


[Miami Hack Week](#) is in full swing – and local Miami students are showing #MiamiTech what they’ve got. This year, along with the 2,000+ hackers from over 35 countries participating in Miami Hack Week, about 100 FIU and Miami-Dade students are competing for the Hack@Campus championship title.

Organized by FIU alumnus, founder of FIU’s Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE), and Program Manager at Microsoft Azure IoT Cesar Villa-Garcia, Hack@Campus is the first-of-its-kind student hackathon that focuses on student projects and talent throughout Miami Hack Week.

“Last year, Miami Hack Week was attended mostly by professionals and other individuals in the industry. But this year, we wanted to provide interested students the opportunity to participate in Miami Hack Week through

the Hack@Campus platform,” said Villa-Garcia. “With help from UPE, FIU, and Miami Dade College, Hack@Campus was organized for students to show off what they’re capable of alongside industry professionals, coders, and hackers.”



This year’s Hack@Campus’ theme, the “Future of Miami Tech,” enables students to focus on projects ranging from websites, mobile applications, browser extensions, and other technologies that address the needs of our community. Students are using “future of tech” tools and technologies, such as blockchain, machine learning, and virtual reality, to launch their projects and hopefully see it on the market for users to enjoy.

“For our project, my group [pictured at top of post] is coding a Chrome browser extension that can enable recruiters to easily source local Miami talent for job opportunities in tech,” said FIU sophomore and computer science major Zackary Santana. “We’re hoping to enhance the LinkedIn user-experience for both the recruiter and the job-seeker by making it easier to connect tech jobs with local talent looking for them, ultimately bridging the disconnect between Miami talent and Miami tech startups,” Santana continued.



*FIU student Zachary Santana. He and his team are pictured at top of post of this post. Photography: Jose Hernandez*

Genesis Guardado joined up with teammates Cassandra de la Cruz-Munoz, a UX/UX expert, Adrian Valdés Díaz, a freelance web developer, and Kennashka DeSilva, the team’s blockchain expert, on Day 1 of Hack Week. Guardado recently changed her major to computer science at Miami Dade College and, she says, “I have been having so much fun since! I am so grateful to be here and have this opportunity to have an impact on the future through technology.”



*Miami Dade College student Genesis Guardado (in yellow) and her team.*

Guardado's team is hacking an app that offers rewards for students who complete community service. "Utilizing the 311 database on the City of Miami website, we've created a program that allows students to help with maintaining a safer, cleaner community. Whenever anyone in the city files a complaint about graffiti, or illegal dumping, students will have an opportunity to address it. An example might be creating a mural over some harsh graffiti," Guardado explains. Students earn community service hours and incentives in the form of MDC Coins redeemable for rewards like free courses, merch and meal discounts.

With Miami becoming the nation's hot spot for tech, and with new tech firms and organizations making their way to the Magic City daily, Hack@Campus and Miami Hack Week organizers wanted to ensure that students and their talent were not left behind as the history of #MiamiTech continues to get written.

"We're really excited for students to experience what #MiamiTech is all about," continued Villa-Garcia. "Hack@Campus is providing Miami students opportunities to interact with Miami's growing tech community, connect with friends, share ideas, and learn from local founders, engineers and techies across the country," he continued.

"I'm an international student from the Dominican Republic, and when I heard about Hack@Campus, I jumped on the opportunity. It's a great way for me to gain experience in tech, connect with people, and create something that can really fulfill the needs of our Miami locals," said Samantha Martinez, a junior at Miami Dade College majoring in cybersecurity.



*MDC student Samantha Martinez*

When the Red Bulls run out and the hacking concludes on Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, students will perfect their pitch and showcase their projects to fellow students and Miami Hack Week attendees at the Miami Hack Week Closing Expo, taking place at The Oasis, Magic City (363 NE 61<sup>st</sup> St., Miami, FL 33137) from 2 – 4 p.m. Hack@Campus winners will be announced shortly after.

"We have phenomenal talent from across the county participating in Hack@Campus. I've had the chance to check out the work that the students are doing, and they're building some really exciting projects," continued Villa-Garcia.

So – grab your remaining energy drinks, pop the popcorn, and get ready to witness game-changing projects hacked and coded by none other than local, 305 talented students ready to change the world.

*NOTE: This post will be updated – check back! Nancy Dahlberg contributed to this report.*

Read more at : <https://www.refreshmiami.com/scenes-from-miami-hack-week-miamis-students-are-on-frontlines-of-the-future-of-tech/>