

# MDC-Homestead Opens Nursing Simulation Center

By Charlie Hudson and Hugh Hudson | February 4, 2022



Nursing Student Gabriel Covarrubias and Anna Johnson demonstrate how students interact with a simulated patient in the ward portion of the Simulation Center. Gabriel is also a lab technician in the Center and Anna is also Miss MDC Homestead Campus. – Hugh Hudson-



MDCNS Group (L to R) Dr. Tommie Norris, Dean, MDC School of Nursing; Dr. Malou C. Harrison, MDC Executive VP and Provost; Dr Oscar Loynaz

President Homestead Campus, Bryan Stewart, President, MDC Medical Campus; Madeline Pumariega, President MDC; Heather Hope, Nursing Lab Manager; nursing student Anna Johnson; Marcos Perez, Senior Vice President, Leon Medical Centers; Efrain Monzon, Vice President, Leon Medical Centers.

Each president of Miami Dade College Homestead Campus has built upon the mission of, “providing quality, affordable, and accessible education to the families and important communities we serve.”

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 marked yet another major investment in the highly-ranked nursing program with the official ribbon cutting for the Benjamin Leon School of Nursing, Simulation and Skills Center.

Dr. Oscar Loynaz, President, MDC Homestead Campus, welcomed guests with an acknowledgement they weren't able to invite as many individuals as planned due to the COVID-19 spike. “We're very excited; this center is amazing. I want to say thank you to the Leon Family. Their generosity has really taken us to another level and allowed us to create the simulation and skills center that is unparalleled and new to Homestead,” were among his early remarks. In thanking the Trustees and MDC leadership for their support, the architects for their work, and all the faculty and staff sections who helped the simulation center become active, he emphasized collaboration with the MDC Medical Campus in the heart of the Miami Health District. “I also want to thank Dr Stewart and the entire Medical Campus team. We are two campuses supporting one school where the outcome is to make better nurses and healthcare practitioners and make our community healthier.”

President of MDC, Madeline Pumariega, reiterated the close relationship between the two campuses and the continuing growth of programs in Homestead. The critical shortage of healthcare workers,

especially nurses, was addressed at a recent round table meeting that included CEOs, deans, legislators, and Florida's Lieutenant Governor. MDC has developed a Five-point Plan they revealed during the meeting. The plan extends from partnering with high schools through all levels of college and continuing education/professional development. "It's [the plan] grounded on quality and this lab gets us there. We're committed to growing our nursing program by 40%," she said in her remarks. "We could not do it without partners; part of the plan is our industry partners; expanding clinical opportunities, sharing resources, and providing scholarships." She pointed out MDC graduates consistently perform at high levels on NCLEX [National Council for Licensure Exam].

Dr. Tommie Norris, Dean, School of Nursing, shared an office with Dr. Loynaz when she first came to MDC and learned early on of an economic reality within the communities. "One of the things that has really drawn me to Miami-Dade College and every day I wake up and worry about it is how many of my students live in poverty." She cited a student who had difficulty on an exam because of being faced with the choice of paying rent or buying the expensive textbook. In other remarks, she included, "Some of the partnerships we're putting into place like with the Leons and others provide those much-needed resources to help." She noted there are 356 nursing students enrolled in Homestead and a huge population waiting to get in. After graduation, these students will fill critical needs and be on the path of sustainable careers. "I had to make sure students in Homestead had the opportunity to learn to practice in a safe environment." In addition to vital nursing skills such as putting in an IV, the technology of the center enables life-like interaction with mannequins. This gives training in communication as well as technical ability. "We've been told by a lot of our practice partners the nurses have medical skills, but don't know how to communicate."

"On behalf of the entire Leon Family, once again we affirm our support of MDC and specifically the Benjamin Leon School of Nursing," said Marcos Perez, Senior Vice President of Leon Medical Centers, in his remarks. "This new state-of-the-art center is just another example of how we hope to continue to lead and innovate together in order to prepare our students and deliver the clinical excellence and compassion you have already mentioned."

Anna Johnson, a nursing student and Miss MDC Homestead, spoke passionately about the yearning students have to serve their community and described the Benjamin Leon School of Nursing as, "A catalyst for the dreamer." In addition to praise for the exemplary faculty and staff, she said the technology of the center would bring together their skills; skills she and other students were readying to help relieve the strain placed on nurses and healthcare workers who've been on the pandemic's frontline. "I know in my heart and believe that Miami-Dade Homestead Campus breeds the healthcare professional leaders of tomorrow. The professionalism we are developing right here on this very campus is going to change the world."

Dr. Malou C. Harrison, Executive VP and Provost, MDC, asked for an extra round of applause for Johnson and all the inspiring comments. "I'm a resident of South Dade and this new simulation center makes me very happy because it comes to a community that will really benefit from it." She also noted, "We have some of the most ambitious of students at Miami Dade College; many are the first in their families to attend and graduate college." In remarking on the important technology of the center, she reminded everyone that people behind it are central to success. The faculty instill quality in students who make up almost 80% of allied health professionals and first responders in the area. All have either graduated from or started out at the college.

An MDC press release described the state-of-the-art addition to the campus. “The Benjamin Leon School of Nursing, Simulation and Skills Center at the Homestead Campus is designed to prepare individuals with the evidence-based principles and skills necessary to successfully perform in real-world clinical settings by helping them reduce errors, improve safety, and elevate the quality of patient care. This 4,850 square foot facility features a control room, two simulation rooms, two debriefing rooms, two skills wings, and a health assessment wing. This supportive learning environment where our MDC Nursing students will thrive, can also be utilized for interdisciplinary collaborative efforts with the South Dade healthcare community and other health-related programs within the college. Students will ensure their professional competency by mastering skill application, clinical judgement, and critical thinking skills in a non-threatening environment. This one-of-a-kind health training venue will provide much needed resources and expertise for the ever-growing community of South Dade and beyond.”

Learn more at: [https://www.southdadenewsleader.com/news/mdc-homestead-opens-nursing-simulation-center/article\\_d14c1f2c-854b-11ec-9877-17073fb374af.html](https://www.southdadenewsleader.com/news/mdc-homestead-opens-nursing-simulation-center/article_d14c1f2c-854b-11ec-9877-17073fb374af.html)