

**DOWNTOWN MIAMI** NOVEMBER 4, 2015

# Miami Dade College courts museum developers

## HIGHLIGHTS

Gary Nader submitted an unsolicited bid to build an art museum and condo towers on college land

He says he'll donate 1,000 works from his Latin American art collection

The college is giving other developers a chance to best his offer



BY DAVID SMILEY

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Miami's foremost collector of Latin American art wants to team up with Miami Dade College to build two 50-story towers and a museum on Biscayne Boulevard to showcase his private collection.

But first, Gary Nader may have to maneuver politically tricky situations, and seek more than \$100 million in subsidies from the agency charged with eliminating Overtown's blight. He may have to compete against some of Miami's biggest developers — including one whose name is on an art museum just a few blocks away.

In an unsolicited bid submitted to the college six months ago, Nader and a star-studded team of builders and designers proposed a six-story cultural center on a 2.6-acre parking lot across the street from the Freedom Tower. The building would include a 125,00-square-foot museum for Nader's art, a 1,600-seat theater designed by Emilio Estefan, and a conference center large enough to host 3,000 people.

Nader and his team, dubbed Nader + Museu LLP, also proposed a parking garage, a sculpture garden, and more than 500 luxury condos and 144 condo-hotel units. Nader says the college would come away as the owner of a top-notch institution stocked with more than 1,000 pieces of art valued at an estimated \$60 million, which Nader says he'll donate from his collection.

"This is my legacy," he said Wednesday in an interview.

Nader, meanwhile, would be part of the museum's management and get prime placement for his collection without having to purchase the land. He and his partners would likely come away with a handsome profit from the sale of condos and condo-hotel units selling at \$1 million and up, though some proceeds would go to an endowment to help pay for the cultural center's likely operating losses.

He says his team has already spent \$2 million putting its plans together. But the deal isn't a given.

Under a new state law, the college's consideration of Nader's unsolicited proposal triggered a competitive process for a public-private-partnership with the college. Nader's team lobbied for the college to give other teams just three weeks to come

up with proposals, the minimum window under the law. The college, which wants a 100,000-square-foot museum, conference center and 1,600-seat theater, settled on 90 days.

Interested bidders have until January to submit proposals to compete with Nader. Included among a few dozen people who attended a Wednesday afternoon pre-submittal conference at the college were employees of Related Group, whose CEO's name, Jorge Pérez, adorns the Pérez Art Museum Miami down the street.

Nader, who had unlimited time to create his offer, remains confident, saying his donation is worth more than the land.

"If somebody wants to compete with that, come over and throw your punches," he said.

Still, there are complications beyond competition.

To build his project, Nader wants a property tax break worth \$140 million in today's dollars. The money, which would go toward the cultural center, would be paid over decades from the Southeast Overtown Park West Community Redevelopment Agency — a potentially dicey proposition given that the anti-poverty agency would be linked to a development with luxury condos.

On Wednesday, Miami Commissioner Keon Hardemon, the CRA chairman, sent his chief of staff to the college to make clear that no one has secured any agreement for tax-increment financing.

Nader may also get some pushback from the county-owned Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, which cost more than \$400 million to build and operates a 2,200-seat concert hall just a few blocks north on Biscayne Boulevard. Rolando Montoya, the college's provost for operations, said Wednesday that MDC wants the theater to host presidential debates and film screenings that otherwise end up at the city's Gusman Center.

"We have become the top generator of cultural life, artistic life in downtown Miami," he said. "And we really lack in downtown Miami the necessary facilities to continue enhancing that role."

But Alan Fein, chairman of the Performing Arts Center board of directors, questioned whether Miami really needed another venue.

“A venue of that size at that location makes no sense to me,” he said, making clear he was speaking personally and not on behalf of the board.

Nader, who unveiled his concept one year ago, before he'd settled on a location, says he likes Miami Dade College's parking lot because he wanted to partner with a cultural institution and create something more than a private development.

“I can build anywhere else and I can keep my donation,” he said. “The amount of prestige this college will get ... is unparalleled. This is not another development. It's very far from it.”



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Regarding the proposed Nader funded Art Center. Why another Latin based Institution? Why not Caribbean, which could encompass all the region? The tower right next to the proposed building site, features Latin themes in quite a lot of its exhibits, not to mention the fact that (in my opinion,) has FAR too many shows featuring artist outside the school, rather than the facility and students that it represents..

Like · Reply ·  1 · 1 hr**Micco Mann** · University of Miami

Good points which can be ironed out before the contracts are signed.

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**Micco Mann** · University of Miami

This rendering alone shames the Perez. This is landmark architecture and will draw attention to itself and its mission. As for the Arsht guy who can't see the need for the 1,600 seat theatre, one theatre or two-- his-- does not make an "arts district." Make it happen.

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