

Miami Dade College scores \$13 million in grants

HIGHLIGHTS

Most grants aimed at helping Hispanic students

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Some money will buy lab equipment

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BY ALEX HARRIS

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Miami-Dade College swept grant season with nearly \$13 million in awards designed to offer enriched educational opportunities to low-income and high-need students.

The grants are focused on improving teaching in the classroom and services for students outside the classroom, said Lenore Rodicio, provost for academic and student affairs.

“Obtaining grants like this really gives us funds to expand programming and offer services we weren't able to before,” she said. “They have potential for great impact.”

These title V grants are aimed primarily at serving Hispanic students, who make up the majority of MDC's student population.

MDC's Wolfson Campus program — Accelerate, Retain, Complete with Opportunities and Support — is aimed at creating a support network for 600 STEM students. The goal is to keep Hispanic and other low-income high-need students engaged in the program.

A similar program will be created for the Kendall Campus STEM students. The STEM Talent Opportunity Priority will offer Hispanic and other underrepresented students peer tutoring, undergraduate research opportunities and a support network.

The research opportunities, led by Kendall Campus professors, include sequencing organisms' genomes and developing chemical compounds of medications.

“It really runs the gamut,” Rodicio said,

Carlos Ruiz, an associate professor on MDC's Hialeah campus, teaches basic anatomy and physiology. The grant-funded program Science Student Access and Success project, aimed at his campus, institutes a professional development institute to “train the trainer” and make the benefits of the funds last even after the money runs out.

Grants funds will also bring his campus lab equipment like a dissection camera, useful for re-watching and critiquing dissections in great detail, as well as a high-tech software that analyzes images for data.

Other purchases include human simulators that mimic medical emergencies like cardiovascular events, renal failure and high blood pressure.

“They're like living dummies,” Ruiz said. “These are great learning tools.”

On the InterAmerican Campus, grant funding will create the Institute of Teaching and Learning to train professors in the concept of active teaching and learning and create a repository of best practices.

Rodicio said participants in the institute will be focus on student-centered learned and invite teachers to ask nontraditional questions.

“How do you create a classroom environment where you move away from lecture to students being an active participant in their learning?” she said.

The First In The World grant, given by the Obama administration, looks to encourage students to finish math courses. About 97 percent of MDC’s students enrolled in these courses are underrepresented and low income students.

“These grants really help us to take a step back and look at how we teach and how these students learn,” she said.



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