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Patricia McKay, Steve Odland and Daisy Vanderlinde announce the FAU donation.

Office Depot donates more than just dollars

BY BRIAN BANDELL

The figure that stands out to most in Office Depot's round of donations to local colleges last week is the \$3.5 million total figure, but the value is actually much more than that. The company is also donating the time of some senior leaders, such as Executive VP and CFO Patricia McKay, who will be joining a university board, and other management employees who will work directly with students and professors. Office Depot stands to benefit by finding talented students to recruit and getting help from students and faculty on improving its business.

"The combination of the two is what will really benefit both Office Depot and the community, Office Depot Chairman and CEO Steve Odland said.

The company donated \$2 million to build an executive education center for the College of Business at Florida Atlantic University's Boca Raton campus. The new 13,000-square-foot building will be used to teach employees and host meetings for Office Depot, which has a lack of large meeting space in its headquarters.

Florida International University has one of the top-rated international busi-

ness programs in the country and that's where Office Depot chose to form its partnership, donating \$1 million toward a new building. The input from FIU staff and students will greatly help Office Depot as it grows its business globally, Odland said.

Students at the University of Miami's Center for Advanced Supply Chain Management, which received a \$500,000 donation, will work directly with Office Depot staff using models of the company's supply chain.

Universities are increasingly looking for more from large donors than just slapping their name on a building, FAU President Frank Brogan said. Donors can provide invaluable help to universities by partnering with them, and that relationship often pays off for the companies by providing them with the best and brightest students, he said.

"Some people want to simply donate a building and that's fine," Brogan said. "But Office Depot wants to be heavily involved in the programming in that building and that's what we want to see more and more of at FAU."

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