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FIU signs lease to have business classes at downtown Macy's

BY VANESSA KRAUSE

Some business students will be taking master's degree classes at Macy's under a lease agreement between Florida International University and the retailer.

The school has signed a three-year lease for the sixth floor of Macy's at 22 E. Flagler St. to open its new Downtown Center in August, said Lisa Kauffman, senior vice president of marketing for Macy's Florida.

"We are bringing our evening programs to the downtown community," said Jose De La Torre, dean of the Chapman's Graduate School of Business. "It is in a more accessible location. People can avoid rush hour, pop out of the office and go to class."

Unlike at the main campus, where students take classes at their own pace, students at the

Downtown Center will begin and end their degrees together, Mr. De La Torre said.

Beginning in August the first two programs offered will be the 18-month master of business administration and the executive master of science in taxation. In January, the school plans to start master of science in finance and master of science in international real estate programs at the new site.

Ms. Kauffman said the operation of morning and evening classes in the building won't affect store operations because the building is open by 7 a.m.

"We have a very large space in the downtown area. That space was never used for offices. It was used as training rooms and open space for gatherings," she said.

"The whole arrangement works very well to support our needs." Ms. Kauffman said the sixth floor

is the only space leased at the moment and there are no plans for other deals.

"We will continue to operate in this location," she said.

Mr. De La Torre said students will have access during certain hours to parking right across the street from the store. Quick meals for students will also be provided, he said.

The four programs, two beginning in August and the other two in January, are the only ones to be offered initially but expansion is a possibility, he said.

"We have a lease of three years – renewable for two more. If it goes beyond five, it'll take time to establish and get things off the ground."