



Florida International University to cluster master's programs, expand in Brickell office building

By Ashley D. Torres

Florida International University's downtown graduate program locations are to consolidate, expand and relocate to 1101 Brickell Ave. beginning this fall.

The new 32,000-square-foot, three-floor facility is to house College of Business Administration and School of International and Public Affairs programs as well as the Metropolitan Center, an applied social science research and training institute that focuses on economic development, housing and land use.

The university currently serves roughly 500 students at locations in Macy's Downtown and the Metropolitan Center, 150 SE Second Ave.

However, the success of these graduate programs has forced the university to acquire more space with 1101 Brickell Ave., said university President Mark Rosenberg, which provided the "best combination of accessible parking and quality space."

The 10-year, \$12 million university lease was awarded to Florida East Coast Realty, owners of 1101 Brickell Ave., after several proposals from area buildings were examined.

"We think this location maximizes the energy and importance of downtown," Dr. Rosenberg added, "with the vibrancy of Brickell," providing great instruction and a pleasant dinner and gathering environment.

Miami's core has become a hub for higher-education locations that offer graduate and professional degrees for area residents and business professionals.

The attraction, said Alyce Robertson, the Downtown Development Authority's executive director, is the concentration of new downtown residents who can attend school close to home and area me professionals who can attend classes directly after work.

The authority has made downtown-based educational opportunities a priority, Ms. Robertson added, because they are an important component of economic development.

The new facility is to accommodate 1,000 students and initially offer six master's degree programs, including the new Master of Arts in Global Governance.

The expanded downtown location responds to the growth of adult learners looking to go back to school as well as the demand for downtown-based programs.

In addition, the expanded facility is an integral component of increasing enrollment by 2,000 students each year for the next 10 years, a goal set by the university's board.

The target annual increase, Dr. Rosenberg said, is a number the university can responsibly take each year, reflects the rising success of the Miami-Dade County Public School System turning out academically-advanced students and responds to the university's national and international prominence.

A new strategic plan by the university's board looks to hire at least 800 faculty members over the next 10 years, Dr. Rosenberg said, some of whom are to teach courses at the new downtown site.

The university does not have any other specific plans for new facilities, Dr. Rosenberg said, but is always looking for attractive locations to offer programs.

An additional university plan includes improving access to the university's Biscayne Bay Campus, home to its School of Hospitality & Tourism Management and School of Journalism & Mass Communication, in order to grow that campus's enrollment.

CMiami's Downtown Development Authority is considering the downtown core area's retail mix as T.J. Maxx requests a location near Macy's.