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FIU MOVES ITS DOWNTOWN PRESENCE TO LARGER BRICKELL SPACE

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Florida International University is expanding its downtown Miami presence – adding students, a new global governance program, and a more-prestigious address.

Beginning this fall, FIU's downtown educational center will operate from a new location: 1101 Brickell Ave. The new space will house College of Business Administration and School of International and Public Affairs programs, as well as FIU's Metropolitan Center, a local public affairs think-tank.

Though FIU has offered some master's degrees downtown since 2004 – occupying office space above Flagler Street's landmark Macy's building – the move to a new location will more than double FIU's capacity to serve students in the area. Right now, FIU serves about 500 students downtown, but the new Brickell location will have capacity for more than 1,000 students. Brickell's prominence within the business community should also provide FIU's programs more visibility.

Degrees offered will include business and management-oriented Professional MBA, Healthcare MBA, Master of Science in International Real Estate, and a new Master of Arts in Global Governance that prepares graduates for jobs with internationally-focused groups such as non-profit organizations.

For a long time, the main challenge of remaking downtown Miami was persuading people to live there. Now, with downtown boasting roughly 70,000 residents, attention has shifted to providing the type of neighborhood amenities that people want – places to shop, for example. Places to eat.

And for the upwardly mobile urban professional, places to learn.

"It's really a very convenient location for downtowners," said Alyce Robertson, executive director of Miami's Downtown Development Authority. "Brickell is the financial center of Miami-Dade."

Recent changes to state law provided a big incentive for FIU to expand its master's degree offerings. In 2010, the Legislature authorized state schools to charge "market rate" tuition for certain graduate-level programs. Under the old tuition structure, the school's MBA programs were losing money, FIU President Mark Rosenberg said.

With the new ability to charge higher tuition, "we expect that this will actually generate some additional revenue to add even more programs," Rosenberg said.

MBA students might be less than thrilled with these legislative changes. Assuming FIU's new price scale is approved by the state's Board of Governors, the price of a Professional MBA will jump from \$42,000 to \$45,000. The cost of a Healthcare MBA will jump from \$42,000 to \$48,000.

"It gives us greater freedom to offer programs that people demand," Rosenberg said. "And how do you know they demand it? Because they're willing to pay the higher price for those programs."

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