IBM Newsroom

University of Florida and IBM Team Up to Solve Society's Biggest Challenges

IBM's investment advances UF's 'AI University' initiative

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — The University of Florida announced this week a new collaboration with tech giant IBM (NYSE:IBM) to launch a comprehensive skills program designed to extend UF's vision to be an international leader in artificial intelligence, data science, fintech, and other related technologies that can help solve society's biggest challenges.

UF — already ranked by U.S. News & World Report as one of nation's most innovative universities — and IBM will work together to support UF's faculty and students as they develop diverse and high-demand skillsets in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, quantum cloud computing and data science that align with industry needs and trends. The collaboration will extend to West Palm Beach, where UF is exploring an opportunity to co-create academic programming at a new campus that will serve the needs of the region's rapid influx of companies across sectors, including finance and technology.

The collaboration is the next step in UF's ambitious goal to be the leading "AI University" in the nation. The initiative will help UF transform the nation's workforce and bolster research by embedding technology into its curriculum across disciplines.

"This collaboration with IBM puts us on the fast track to leadership in helping the world meet the greatest challenges of the 21st century," UF President Kent Fuchs said. "By deepening our progress in artificial intelligence and other critical information technology, it will give our professors, scientists and students the right tools at the right time -- benefiting everyone from teachers preparing schoolchildren for career success to doctors providing patients the very best health care to farmers growing more sustainable, healthier, productive crops."

In a memorandum of understanding, IBM is pledging to UF software and tools to bolster the university's work in AI and data science, including hybrid cloud. The multi-year initiative with IBM includes plans to develop at least one new degree program in AI, and the provision of online coursework, software, lecturers and case studies from the IBM Academic Initiative. IBM will also help establish a campus center that focuses on finance and technology education and research, and will provide curated course content, access to the IBM Cloud, and digital certificates to award upon course completions.

The collaboration with IBM follows last year's substantial and transformational investments from UF alumnus and NVIDIA co-

founder Chris Malachowsky to boost the university's AI and data science capabilities. UF's AI University initiative is highlighted by more than $250 million in support from the university, the state of Florida and generous donors.

"Working side-by-side with a company the caliber of IBM moves UF a giant step toward our efforts to transform how people work, learn and play," said Cammy Abernathy, dean of UF's Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering. "Our motto in our college is 'Powering the new Engineer,' and that exactly what IBM is doing."

IBM's relationship with UF is part of the company's Global University Programs, which provide assets, training, curriculum content, hands-on labs and software to academic institutions to advance relevant skills for today's workforce. Through IBM's Global University Programs more than 900,000 students are enrolled in at least 334 specialized academic courses in over 10,000 universities and schools across the world. The company has committed to train 30 million people worldwide by 2030.

IBM's investment in UF supercharges the university's efforts to serve Floridians and others throughout the world. Plans include using advanced technology to reimagine how industries operate and prepare for the future. By embracing artificial intelligence and other powerful technologies, UF can help Florida become an economic powerhouse while addressing some of the world's most pressing concerns, university leaders say.

"If we are going to be successful in advancing technologies such as AI and training people to apply it to civic, social and business challenges, it will require us to partner with key institutions of higher education and research like the University of Florida," said Justina Nixon, an IBM Vice President and Global Head of Corporate Social Responsibility. "Skills are a human right and we aim to work with partners to make state of the art education and career readiness as widely accessible as possible. Today's announcement with the University of Florida is designed to advance this critical agenda."

The University of Florida, which traces its roots to 1853, has a long history of established programs in international education, research and service, and is one of only 17 public, land-grant universities in the Association of American Universities, which comprises America's leading research universities. UF is ranked No. 5 in the most recent U.S. News and World Report's list of best public universities.

Additional assets available online: Documents

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