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GE Giving \$11m to UConn e-plan

By DANA AMBROSINI

STAMFORD -- In the single largest corporate contribution the University of Connecticut has ever received, General Electric Co. will donate at least \$11 million during the next five years.

The gift, announced Tuesday, consists of funds from three GE divisions for projects on UConn's Stamford campus.

"This is classic GE," Lloyd G. Trotter, president and chief executive officer of GE Industrial Systems, said Tuesday.

"We love hanging around with winners," he said, referring to the university. GE Industrial, GE Capital and the GE Fund are providing the money. The company's headquarters is in Fairfield.

This year alone, nearly \$2.5 million from GE Capital will underwrite 18,000 square feet of construction at the campus, including a 10,000-square-foot e-lab. The computer laboratory will be devoted to exploring Internet business opportunities. Students will work with GE Capital executives on new e-commerce projects and models.

UConn estimates GE Capital will invest another \$1 million per year over the next five years to support that program.

GE Industrial Systems will provide \$1.5 million over five years for an e-engineering center, where students will conduct joint research projects with that division.

GE Industrial manufactures products used to distribute, protect and control electrical power and equipment.

In addition, the GE Fund will kick in \$1.5 million over five years to support enrollment and increase financial, academic, and mentoring resources for minority engineering and business students, said Joyce Hergenhan, president of the philanthropic arm of GE. Part of that money will also go to fostering new technology curricula.

The GE Fund will also match donations made by employees and retirees who are UConn alumni, Hergenhan said. She said those contributions should top \$1.5 million, bringing the total contribution to more than \$11 million.

Executives of GE and UConn officials met with Gov. John G. Rowland Tuesday in the new e-lab to announce the gifts.

"GE, you bring good things to light, and you bring good things to Connecticut," Rowland said. "We're combining a flagship university with a flagship company."

UConn President Philip E. Austin was thrilled with the company's support.

"Organizations, like individuals, are known by the company they keep," Austin said.