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November 14, 2000

## G.E. to Invest \$11 Million in UConn Partnership

By PAUL ZIELBAUER

**H**ARTFORD, Nov. 13 — The University of Connecticut and General Electric are forming a partnership that will allow engineering and business students and faculty members to work with G.E. executives to develop advanced computer and Internet-based products, university and company officials said today.

UConn officials said the partnership, underwritten with \$11 million in grants and donations from G.E., would offer students a technologically advanced environment and curriculum to learn the latest business and engineering methods and, it is hoped, to create new ones of their own. Executives of G.E., based in Fairfield, Conn., said the project would give the company a forum to test new technologies and a ready pipeline to UConn's best and brightest students.

The investment, which G.E. and UConn planned to announce Tuesday at a news conference with Gov. John G. Rowland at UConn's Stamford campus, will pay for two new laboratories, university officials said.

The university, based in Storrs, and G.E. have cooperated on education projects for 50 years, but this is the first time the two have collaborated on a project to bring executives, professors and students together for specific projects, said Marissa Moretti, a G.E. spokeswoman.

The announcement follows a year of discussions among state officials, including Mr. Rowland, and business and academic leaders around the state, to draw more technology-based business into Connecticut, Ms. Moretti said. The \$11 million investment is the

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largest corporate donation the university has ever received. G.E. also started a partnership last year with Penn State University to open a high-tech office park in Erie, Pa., Ms. Moretti said.

At UConn's Storrs campus, undergraduate and graduate engineering students will work in a new engineering laboratory, the G.E. Information Technology Clinic, to build an Internet-based design system allowing them to work with engineers in other countries, said Amir Faghri, dean of the school of engineering.

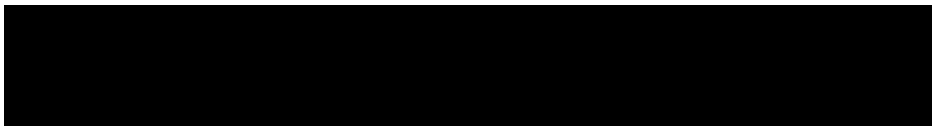
"We really want to change how we are doing business," Mr. Faghri said. "We cannot rely on the old traditional courses that we used to offer."

Construction began in July on another laboratory, for now known simply as the e-Lab, which is to be unveiled Tuesday on the Stamford campus. The 10,000-square-foot lab will eventually house offices for several business school teachers and at least five G.E. executives who will work part time on a rotating basis, said Rich Dino, associate dean of the business school.

In the lab, about 40 students each semester will work beside company managers on new business applications, like business-to-business auction systems on the Internet, an electronic stock-trading system, and will test some of G.E.'s products before they are marketed, Mr. Dino said.

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