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GE Invests \$11 Million in E-Initiatives, Diversity

The University has announced several significant educational partnerships with the General Electric family. Collectively, the GE Fund, GE Capital and GE Industrial Systems have pledged \$11 million over the next five years to help catalyze UConn's emergence as an educational leader in e-business and e-engineering and to bolster the University's diversity initiatives.

The GE investment, announced on Tuesday to an audience of more than 200 people at the Stamford campus, represents the largest single corporate investment in UConn and will support the Schools of Engineering and Business, and the Neag School of Education. The philanthropic portion of the investment is \$9.5 million and is the second largest gift to be given to the University. The largest was Raymond Neag's \$23 million gift made to the School of Education last year.

A research grant of \$1.5 million from GE Industrial Systems to the School of Engineering brings the GE total to \$11 million.

The GE announcement is the third corporate gift announced this fall. Others include Aetna, which is contributing \$2.7 million, matched by \$1.3 million for a total of \$4 million; and United Technologies Corp., which has pledged \$4 million, matched by state funds for a total of \$6 million.

Gov. John G. Rowland said vision and corporate partnerships are contributing to UConn's success and to a desire that the state's flagship public university become one of the best in the nation.

"GE, you bring good things to light, and you bring good things to UConn. This is extraordinary," he said.

Such partnerships, said President Philip E. Austin, "dovetail our research with Connecticut's economic realities" and contribute to the development of a highly skilled workforce for the state.

"GE's support will be a vital asset in preparing our students for a diverse, technology-intensive 21st-century workforce, enabling our faculty to conduct cutting-edge research with GE



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Lloyd Trotter, president and CEO of GE Industrial Systems, right, speaks during an event at the Stamford campus to announce several significant educational partnerships with General Electric. Listening are UConn alumnus Denis J. Nayden, chairman and CEO of GE Capital Corp., and Joyce Hergenhan, president of the GE Fund.

and supporting Connecticut's knowledge-based economy," he said.

The GE family investments will fund:

- the construction and equipping of 18,000 square feet at the Stamford campus, including the creation of a 10,000-square-foot state-of-the-art GE Capital e-lab, in which students and faculty will work with GE Capital executives to analyze e-projects and explore new e-commerce models;
- the development of an e-engineering center, including cutting-edge joint research projects with GE Industrial Systems to prepare students for the integrated, global, team-based engineering used in industry today;
- new "e-learning" approaches to incorporate information technology

into effective teaching and learning practices;

- programs to support increased enrollment and success of under-represented minority engineering and business students.

The commitment by GE, both in dol-

lars and in resources, represents a major advance in education and business partnerships. Five GE senior executives will be located at the new e-lab site in Stamford, working with students and faculty on e-business projects. Using the facility's advanced technology, students will tackle complex e-business issues and will have the opportunity to report results and solutions to GE management.

The specific commitments are:

- **GE Capital**, based in Stamford, Conn., will invest nearly \$2.5 million in 2000 to establish the GE Capital e-lab at UConn's Stamford campus. The initial investment will create offices, classrooms, and a 10,000-square-foot emerging technologies demonstration lab, as well as a high-tech "dark room" for e-project research and development. It is anticipated that \$1 million per year will be invested over the next five years to support the continuation of the program.

Student and faculty teams under the leadership of a GE Capital-UConn steering committee will explore,

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analyze and make recommendations on real GE Capital e-business projects and will explore new e-commerce models.

"The investment that GE is making in the School of Business will have enormous benefits for our students and faculty," said Thomas Gutteridge, dean of the business school. "Because students will gain experience working on real e-business problems, they will be better prepared for the e-business revolution and able to enhance their job market competitiveness. Likewise, the GE investment will vastly enrich the research and teaching opportunities for our faculty."

Denis Nayden, chairman and CEO of GE Capital and a UConn alumnus, said, "e-business and digitization are an elixir for an exciting and radical transformation in every one of our 28 business models. GE Capital will drive the development and implementation of real world e-business and technology solutions at the GE Capital e-lab by joining the talents of bright, energetic students, research faculty and GE business executives.

"We are commissioning projects such as improved design of web-enhanced back office operations and building new business models through digitization," Nayden added. "UConn students and faculty will be enriched by an unprecedented learning and applied research experience. GE Capital will benefit from the projects and we hope to take advantage of the direct talent pipeline to tomorrow's e-business leaders."

- **GE Fund**, the philanthropic foundation of the General Electric Company, will provide a grant of \$1.5 million over five years, to be split equally between the schools of business and engineering. The money will be used to develop and launch innovative ways of working and learning across distances; pilot new technology-based curricula, in collaboration with the Neag School of Education; train faculty; and strengthen outreach, scholarship, and support activities to increase enrollment and success of minority students.

"The Neag School of Education is excited to collaborate with the School of Business in the design, delivery and evaluation of e-business distance learning programs," said Richard Schwab, dean. "Integrating our school's expertise in educational technology with the business school's

knowledge of e-business has the potential to create an international model on how to most effectively deliver the advanced training and development programs necessary to compete in today's economy.

Joyce Hergenhan, president of the GE Fund, noted, "Our \$1.5 million commitment to UConn is one of the largest ever made by the GE Fund. UConn's faculty, staff and students have demonstrated their energy and enthusiasm to prepare a future workforce that can work effortlessly across borders, time zones, languages and cultures. We're happy to help them do so."

In addition, the GE Fund's alumni matching gift program will match, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, the gifts of GE employees and retirees who are UConn alums. These gifts are expected to provide an additional \$1.5 million over the five-year period.

- **GE Industrial Systems**, based in Plainville, Conn., will also provide \$1.5 million to the School of Engineering over three years for joint research in materials, circuit breaker technology, and energy management projects, in which faculty and practicing engineers will work side by side, sharing their ideas and discoveries.

"I am pleased that, in this era of revolutionary breakthroughs in the area of information technology, General Electric is investing in the UConn School of Engineering to advance educational and research activities in these technologically critical areas," said Amir Faghri, dean of the School of Engineering.

Lloyd Trotter, president and CEO of GE Industrial Systems, added, "By joining the research of great minds from UConn and GE we can work together to explore new technologies and form a new e-engineering environment that will dramatically change how engineering concepts are created, as well as how teachers teach and students learn."

GE is a diversified services, technology and manufacturing company. The headquarters of GE and 11 of its businesses are located in Connecticut.