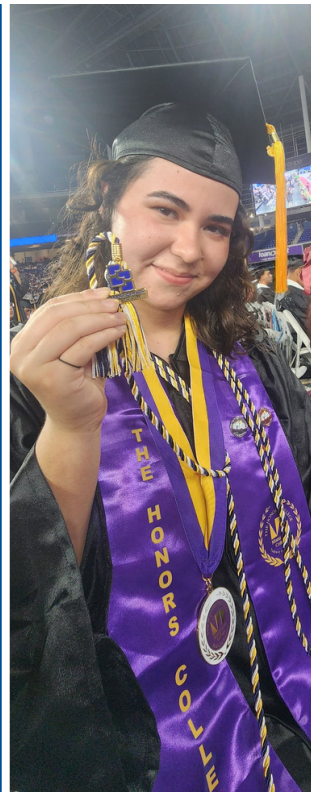
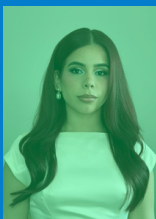




CLASS OF
2026
CHANGEMAKER SCHOLARS





CONGRATULATIONS



CLASS OF 2026!



ABOUT THE DESIGNATION

Miami Dade College believes that education should prepare students not only for successful careers, but also for lives of purpose, leadership, and positive impact. As a nationally recognized Changemaker College, MDC has long provided opportunities for students to serve their communities, develop leadership skills, and engage in meaningful civic learning.

Established in 2026, the Changemaker Scholar Designation was created to recognize students who exemplify these values at the highest level. As MDC's premier honor for changemaking, the designation is awarded to students who demonstrate exceptional commitment to service, civic engagement, leadership development, and community impact.

The students featured in this publication are the pioneering members of the inaugural Class of 2026. Through their dedication, they have helped establish a new tradition at MDC and set a standard for future generations of Changemaker Scholars. Their achievements reflect the College's vision of developing graduates who don't simply succeed in the world, but help improve it.

Scan this QR code to learn more about the Changemaker Scholar Designation in EngageMDC.





"From helping students submit impacts as a Civic Ambassador, to teaching Pelicans how to play catch as we rehabbed them... it has made me persistent, accountable, and emphasized my dedication to my community."

- Marcos Lopez

"Social change often begins with consistent, small actions that build collective impact over time... Effective leadership depends on collaboration, empathy, and the willingness to step outside of one's comfort zone."

- Ivette Gomez Fornos



"When we want to cause meaningful change, working with a group of people will help us advance further than we imagine... Opening ourselves to new ideas will help us develop projects that serve many purposes."

- Johnny Barahona



CHANGEMAKER SCHOLARS DESIGNATION

GRADUATE PROFILES



Angeline Alvarez

Major: Environmental Science

Through ECO Club, genCLEO, and AmeriCorps EnviroCorps, Angeline learned the value of consistency, collaboration, and using her voice for environmental advocacy. She plans to work as a government Environmental Specialist, teaching young generations about climate action.

Elanis Rodriguez Arzola

Major: Business Administration

Through volunteer hours (300+) and civic engagement, Elanis learned that impact begins with awareness and evolves through action, developing skills in leadership, communication, and problem-solving. She plans to explore the intersection of business, entrepreneurship, and social impact to create sustainable community solutions.





Johnny Barahona

Major: Accounting

Johnny earned the Gold Level Civic Action Award and completed 100+ service hours, learning that meaningful change requires collaboration and openness to new ideas. He plans to pursue economics through a Ph.D. to become an international environmental economic advisor.

Camila Pimienta Camano

Major: Biology

Camila's journey showed her that being a changemaker is defined by the willingness to act and uplift others, not by titles. Admitted to UNC Chapel Hill, she plans to pursue medicine with goals of advocating for equitable healthcare access for immigrant and underserved communities.



Maria Depierro

Major: Psychology

Maria learned resilience, courage, and that imperfect humans can still do incredible things through collaboration, leadership, and active listening. She plans to study psychology at FIU, get her RBT certification, and work with kids.



Steven Dominguez

Major: Sociology

Steven learned that change starts with small steps and that leadership is cyclical—shaped by others and passed forward to inspire new leaders through events like 'Democracy Talks.' He plans to pursue sociology at FIU before law school with aspirations toward criminal defense and government service.



Daniela Durrithy

Major: Biology

Through the Undergraduate Research Internship at UM and The Medusa Effect research project, Daniela learned that meaningful change begins with intentional efforts to create connection and support within communities. She plans to pursue biology and health research with a career combining healthcare, research, and advocacy.



Vanuela Fatal

Major: Logistics & Transportation Specialist

Through workshops and community service, especially food distribution, Vanuela learned that empathy is key to creating change and that she has the ability to make a difference. She plans to pursue Electronics Engineering Technology to become an automation engineer while continuing community service.





Irene Fidalgo

Major: Biochemistry

The Changemaker experience allowed Irene to grow as a leader committed to creating positive community impact through service, collaboration, and reflection. She plans to transfer to Yale University to continue biochemistry studies and research, developing innovative healthcare solutions.

Ivette Fornos Gomez

Major: Political Science

As an Andrew Goodman Foundation fellow and through Activism, Ivette learned that social change begins with consistent small actions and that effective leadership depends on collaboration and empathy. She plans to continue political science studies while pursuing ART-IVISM advocacy at her future institution.



Laura Garcia

Major: Pre-medical Sciences

Laura's Changemaker journey felt like a gift, teaching her that the positive change she wants to see is already within her and that nothing done to build community is too small. She plans to pursue Biology at FIU on a pre-medical track toward her dream of becoming a Doctor of Medicine.



Alexandrha Gargurevich

Major: Computer Engineering

Through involvement in SGA, Phi Theta Kappa, and campus service initiatives, Alexandrha learned that change requires consistent effort and a willingness to serve others. She plans to transfer to FIU for Computer Engineering with goals in AI and education, developing systems to make learning more accessible.



Manuel Gomez

Major: Political Science

Manuel transformed from an introverted student to an engaged civic leader, learning that he can continue changemaking wherever he goes by finding his community. With a full-ride to Amherst College and other top options, he plans to pursue political science and eventually become an immigration lawyer.



Diego Hernandez

Major: Political Science

With 52 verified impacts and 153+ service hours, Diego earned Civic Action Awards at all three levels and learned that leadership is about service and consistency. He plans to attend the University of Miami on a full scholarship to study Political Science, preparing for a career in human rights law and diplomacy.





Sofiya Korol

Major: AA in Law, AS in Paralegal Studies

Starting MDC as an introvert, Sofiya pushed herself to join clubs and discovered her foundational strengths through the Clifton Strengths assessment and SGA involvement. She plans to continue serving her community, and helping others in meaningful ways.

Marcos Lopez

Major: Fire Science and Technology

Marcos completed over 1,000 service hours and 300 civic action points, developing persistence and accountability through experiences from being a Civic Ambassador to rehabilitating pelicans at Pelican Harbor Seabird Station. He plans to pursue his first responder journey by completing the Paramedic course and Fire Academy.



Daisy Napoles

Major: Business Administration

Through Narrow Ridge, volunteering, and the Hialeah Campus Garden, Daisy learned she is capable of more than she thought and adopted a 'yes mindset' to new opportunities. She plans to continue her studies while focusing on making a difference.



Samuel Aquil Polanco Oleo

Major: International Relations

As Vice-President of the Social Science Society and iCED Civic Ambassador, Samuel discovered that leadership is not about visibility but about creating spaces where others feel empowered to act. He plans to earn his B.A. in International Relations and pursue a Ph.D.



Hilary Ramirez Payamps

Major: International Relations

Hilary's journey at Padron Campus taught her that creating change is an ongoing responsibility requiring consistency and dedication through civic engagement and volunteer work. She will continue to a four-year institution while remaining actively involved in service, study abroad, and service-learning programs.



Sabrina Quesada

Major: Business Administration

Hilary's journey at Padron Campus taught her that creating change is an ongoing responsibility requiring consistency and dedication through civic engagement and volunteer work. She will continue to a four-year institution while remaining actively involved in service, study abroad, and service-learning programs.





Jomar Quinones

Major: Mass Communication, Journalism

Jomar's volunteering with iCED helped him discover his strengths and step into the spotlight as a leader. He will continue at FIU Honors College pursuing digital communications and media.

Nicole Lopez Rivero

Major: Speech Pathology and Audiology

Nicole's volunteer service and civic engagement taught her that meaningful change comes from consistent, intentional efforts to support others and listen to their needs. She plans to pursue Speech-Language Pathology to serve individuals through compassionate, evidence-based care and advocate for communication equity.



Susana Rojas

Major: Business Administration

Susana's volunteering experiences shaped who she is and taught her that small impacts are what start planting flowers of change. She plans to pursue her bachelor's at UCF in Business while strengthening her changemaking skills in a new community.



Pietra Bernini Romano

Major: Mass
Communications/Journalism

Pietra founded MDC's first Communication Honor Society and organized Media Literacy Week with over 200 participants, learning that changemaking begins with dialogue and that leadership is about service and resilience. She plans to expand media literacy initiatives for younger students while pursuing journalism and public service.



Gabriela Sicre

Major: Biology

Through the Foundation of AMSA and Brushes of Hope, Gabriela learned that sustainable change happens at the intersection of direct service and systemic advocacy. She plans to pursue an interdisciplinary degree in medicine and humanities, followed by a dual MD/MPH program to advance health equity.

Joshua Solina

Major: Humanities

Joshua grew from someone with a fixed mindset into a leader who realizes that even the smallest help can change everything. He plans to transfer to a four-year institution and pursue education to help others reach their full potential.





Amanda Torrecilla

Major: Chemistry

The Changemaker designation recognizes Amanda's two years of community involvement, which filled her with joy and helped her understand her place in society as a future physician. She plans to transfer to a 4-year university and attend medical school to become a neurologist focusing on addiction research.

Fidel Alejandro Rodriguez Turino

Major: Biology

As a Phi Theta Kappa leader and National Marrow Donor Program ambassador, Fidel learned that meaningful change starts with small, consistent actions and that leadership is about serving others. He plans to pursue pre-med studies with a focus on cancer biology research while continuing stem cell donation advocacy.



Alejandro Fayad Valdes

Major: Economics

Through skills-based learning and volunteer service, Alejandro learned the value of taking initiative, being adaptable, and that leadership is about listening and collaborating. He plans to pursue Business Administration with interests in management, entrepreneurship, and global business.



Andrea Wagner

Major: Criminal Justice

Through service, leadership development, and student success initiatives, Andrea gained valuable experience creating positive impact in her community while growing as a leader. She plans to attend law school and remains dedicated to service and advancing meaningful change.



Congrats on being the first cohort of
MDC students to receive the
Changemaker Scholars Designation

- *Sincerely Changemaking Education and Social Innovation*
(CESI)