

INDEPENDENT SINCE 1880

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Alumni Donate \$20M for New Tech, Humanities Integration Initiative

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People meet in the Bloomberg Center at Cornell Tech on Roosevelt Island. Cameron Pollack // Sun Photography Editor

Just weeks after the official opening of Cornell Tech on Roosevelt Island, Cornell announced a new initiative to promote technology in the humanities as a result of a \$20 million donation from the Milstein family.

This donation, announced Wednesday night, will establish the Milstein Program in Technology and Humanity, a collaboration between the College of Arts and Sciences and Cornell Tech.

Through this collaboration, the initiative will allow students in Arts and Sciences to get specialized courses in computer science in addition to free courses at Cornell Tech's Roosevelt Island campus and internships in New York City.

"It is thrilling to imagine the potential of the Milstein Program and how it will influence the future of higher education in the context of our global economy and digital age," said Gretchen Ritter '83, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

According to the University, students enrolled in the Milstein Program will select their major in Arts and Sciences but will also have access to resources to develop a proficiency in computer science.

A cohort of 100 students, 25 from each class year, will also spend their summers in New York City to listen to speakers, work as interns or be mentored. The first group of students will be selected from this year's applicant pool and will enter as freshmen in Fall 2018.

The University said Howard Milstein '73 and Michael Milstein '11, who both graduated from the arts college, collaborated with Ritter and Daniel Huttenlocher, dean of Cornell Tech, to develop the idea.

“Thanks to the Milsteins, we are able to create a truly distinctive experience for undergraduates in Arts and Sciences,” President Martha Pollack told the Cornell Chronicle. “I believe this program will be a model for our other Ithaca-based colleges and schools seeking creative partnerships with Cornell Tech to meet student and societal needs.”

Both Howard and Michael Milstein told The Chronicle they felt that “technology is increasingly vital to all aspects of our society,” and that it is important to include the “disciplines of the humanities and social sciences” in its progress.

For Michael Milstein, the intersection of technology and a strong liberal arts background allows the emerging technology leaders to be able to “communicate, understand and maximize the societal benefit of their work” along with the “technical foundation to drive progress.”

Ritter shared these sentiments from Milstein, saying that “our society needs innovative problem solvers who have the vision and background to think creatively and broadly about ways to address our greatest challenges.”

Howard Milstein currently serves as the Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of New York Private Bank & Trust and its operating bank, Emigrant Bank, according to Forbes.

The Milstein family — ranked as the 90th richest family by Forbes — have made other recent donations to several New York institutions, including New York-Presbyterian Hospital, the New York Public Library, American Museum of Natural History. Milstein and his wife Abby Milstein also created the The Howard and Abby Milstein Foundation in 2002.

Milstein currently serves as on the Board of Trustees. Past donations by the Milstein family have established Milstein Scholars Program, Milstein Fellowship for Faculty Excellence, Milstein Faculty Fellowships for Strategic Hires. A donation by Paul Milstein, father of Howard Milstein, in 2007 led to the building of Milstein Hall in College of Architecture, Art and Planning.
