

IN THE NEWS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



Working Smarter is a
Whiz!

Whiz
by  SoftBank
Robotics

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MSU Infrastructure Planning and Facilities Brings On Whiz

IPF Custodial Services' recent lease of three robotic vacuum cleaners promises to not only help improve the productivity of their staff, but also help advance the university's mission to advance knowledge and transform lives.


The autonomous Whiz vacuums are easily programmed and can cover up to 15,000 square feet per charge.

"The vacuums are programmed by manually running them over the desired route," said Trhile Brown, Custodial

Services operations supervisor. "Once they have learned the route, we simply push them up to a small QR code affixed to the wall that designates the starting point and push the start button – they take it from there." He added, "The vacuum then returns to the QR code once its pre-programmed route has been finished."

The vacuums are currently deployed in the MSU College of Law and the Broad Business Complex. Evening cleaning teams are using them to cover large, common areas such as hallways, corridors and lobbies.

"With the Whiz units handling the larger, high-traffic areas, our team members can focus on more detailed work in personal spaces, like offices," Brown said. "These autonomous vacuums work as a staffing supplement, taking care of some of the more monotonous jobs, allowing our skilled staff to take care of more essential tasks." He added,



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- Trhile Brown, operations supervisor - Custodial Services

“They can be invaluable when a team is down a crew member, helping ease the burden of those who are working short-staffed.”

The autonomous vacuums also have onboard sensors that detect people and obstacles, stopping the units before they make contact.

“Softbank Robotics, the company who makes the vacuums, gave our staff extensive hands-on training with the units, and have been in regular contact with us since their deployment,” Brown said. “We receive daily usage statistics from them and are using the data to help us determine our return on investment.”

“There is even an Engineering student group who is going to use our deployment of the autonomous vacuums as an opportunity to complete a time and effectiveness study as part of their capstone project.”

This article was originally published on the MSU IPF website [here](#).

