BIOGRAPHY

Kathleen Plinske serves as president of Valencia College, a community college located in Orlando, Florida. As a first-generation college graduate, Plinske is passionate about the role education can play in transforming the lives of students and their families, and in turn, our communities.

Prior to being selected in a nationwide search as Valencia’s fifth president, Plinske had served at Valencia since 2010 as Campus President of the Osceola, Lake Nona, and Poinciana Campuses and as Executive Vice President and Provost. In these roles she spearheaded efforts to significantly increase access to higher education in traditionally underserved communities, led the planning of several new buildings and a new campus, organized efforts to design successful transfer and career pathways, and led the collaborative development of a collegewide strategic impact plan with an explicit focus on advancing racial equity in student outcomes.

Prior to joining Valencia in 2010, Plinske began her career at McHenry County College, a community college in her hometown of Crystal Lake, Illinois. Over the course of nine years, she held a number of roles, including vice president of institutional effectiveness and interim president.

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Plinske attended Indiana University Bloomington as a Herman B Wells Scholar, earning a bachelor’s degree in Spanish and physics. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, she completed a master’s degree in Spanish from Roosevelt University, and a doctorate in educational technology from Pepperdine University. An avid lifelong learner, she has continued her education by subsequently earning a master’s degree in business administration and a master’s degree in industrial and systems engineering from the University of Florida.

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Plinske is happily married to her husband, Larry W. Tyree, who shares her love for golf, the Florida Gators, the Chicago Cubs, and their dog, Cooper.