



September 11, 2025

TO: THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

FROM: DR. KATHLEEN PLINSKE
President

RE: REAFFIRMATION OF *DIRECTCONNECT TO UCF* PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT
AND ADOPTION OF REVISED JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL FLORIDA
HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

The *DirectConnect to UCF* partnership was established in November 2005 as a region-wide, collaborative higher education strategy to expand student access, promote academic success, and address the significant workforce needs and economic growth of Central Florida. Initially formed between UCF and five Florida College System (FCS) institutions, including Valencia College, the partnership has since expanded to include seven FCS institutions.

Since its inception, *DirectConnect to UCF* has enabled more than 75,000 students to earn bachelor's degrees at UCF through the transfer pipeline, generating more than \$435 million in collective tuition and fee savings. This impact has not only transformed the lives of participating students and their families but also strengthened the communities and workforce of the region.

The current partner institutions include UCF, College of Central Florida, Daytona State College, Eastern Florida State College, Indian River State College, Lake-Sumter State College, Seminole State College, and Valencia College. Together, the partners have prepared a revised Joint Resolution for formal reaffirmation and adoption. This revised Joint Resolution is intended to replace the original Joint Resolution, the Regional Partnership Operational Plan, and the First Addendum to the Joint Resolution. A copy of the revised document is attached for review and consideration.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The President recommends that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College adopts the revised Joint Resolution of the Central Florida Higher Education Consortium and reaffirms the *DirectConnect to UCF* partnership commitment on behalf of Valencia College, as presented.



President

**A JOINT RESOLUTION (RESOLUTION) OF THE
CENTRAL FLORIDA HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
(CONSORTIUM)**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA (UCF) BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES OF
COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA,
DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE,
EASTERN FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE,
INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE,
LAKE-SUMTER STATE COLLEGE,
SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE, AND
VALENCIA COLLEGE**

Re-affirming the 20-year, DirectConnect to UCF® (DirectConnect) partnership commitment, which is a region-wide, partnership-driven, higher education strategy designed to expand student access, promote student success in higher education, and meet the extraordinary workforce needs and demands for growth in Central Florida.

WHEREAS, on November 9, 2005, the original five institutions (now known as Eastern Florida State College, Lake-Sumter State College, Seminole State College, University of Central Florida, and Valencia College) executed “A Joint Resolution” (Resolution), and collectively created what is known as the Central Florida Higher Education Consortium (Consortium);

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2015, the Consortium presidents created a “Regional Partnership Operational Plan” as an addendum to the Resolution to more effectively reflect the current state of the partnership rather than revising the original Resolution;

WHEREAS, in 2015, as a result of a request by the College of Central Florida and Daytona State College to join the Consortium, the original five institutions unanimously agreed to admit them as members of the Consortium by executing a “First Addendum to Joint Resolution;”

WHEREAS, the DirectConnect to UCF program has increased access since its

inception and has grown to include additional institutions, the current Consortium partners unanimously agreed to invite Indian River State College (IRSC) to join the Consortium at IRSC's request in 2025 as part of this agreement.

WHEREAS, more than 75,000 bachelor's degree earners at UCF have transferred through the DirectConnect pipeline, producing for them a collective savings in tuition and fees of more than \$435 million dollars, and enhancing the lives of these transfer students, their families, and our communities;

WHEREAS, the nationally distinctive and award-winning DirectConnect program is the unique brand of the Central Florida Higher Education Consortium that further builds quality and success around transfer pathways for timely degree completion by leveraging the long-standing support of transfer student policies in the Florida College System and State University System;

WHEREAS, the DirectConnect program provides inclusive excellence through greater college representation of Pell eligible, first-generation, and traditionally underrepresented populations resulting in enhanced social mobility for graduates in our communities;

WHEREAS, the DirectConnect program collaborates to align and provide strategic academic programs to meet the regional and global workforce needs and high-demand for quality, higher education graduates;

WHEREAS, a shared governance structure oversees the DirectConnect program and leads, through executive sponsorship and collaborative institutional leadership, the Consortium's strategic initiatives of convenings and work teams to address data sharing, degree pathways, curriculum alignment, academic and student support, and major- and transfer-readiness;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES OF COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE, EASTERN

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE, INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE, LAKE-SUMTER STATE COLLEGE, SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE, AND VALENCIA COLLEGE THAT THIS RESOLUTION REPLACES THE PREVIOUS RESOLUTION, REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP OPERATIONAL PLAN, AND FIRST ADDENDUM TO JOINT RESOLUTION;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT ALL CONSORTIUM PARTNER INSTITUTIONS AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

Section 1. Governance.

The Consortium partner presidents provide executive sponsorship at the highest level of a shared governance structure; partner presidents convene annually to provide leadership, accountability, and direction to the Consortium.

The DirectConnect to UCF[®] (DC) Steering Committee oversees strategic planning, policies, and practices of the Consortium with a focus on major and transfer readiness of students throughout the entire educational pathway and experience. Membership of this committee includes chief academic, enrollment, and student affairs officers of Consortium institutions. The DC Steering Committee meets at least twice per year. An annual report of DirectConnect to UCF will be presented annually to the Consortium presidents.

The Consortium Academic Coordination Committee (CACC) oversees academic program needs and plans for the Consortium. This committee also oversees curriculum alignment initiatives. Membership of this committee includes chief academic officers of partner institutions and two UCF administrators appointed by the provost. The CACC meets at least twice per year.

The Workforce Development Committee conducts, collects, reviews, and analyzes labor market demand data to develop data-informed recommendations for associate and bachelor's degree programs necessary for workforce needs. The Workforce Development Committee will provide data by region and county as requested by the CACC for program review needs.

Florida College System institutions seeking membership in the Consortium will send a formal letter of interest to the presidents of each member institution indicating their willingness and ability to comply with the requirements set forth in the Resolution, including but not limited to: active participation in Consortium planning meetings, data sharing, faculty participation in curriculum alignment meeting, and resource development efforts that might include research,

grants, and philanthropy. Consortium presidents will review such membership requests at the next scheduled partner presidents meeting. All member presidents will have a vote on the request, and the request to join the Consortium must be unanimously approved.

Section 2. Operations.

The foundation of this partnership is a guarantee of admission (consistent with University and Florida Board of Governors policies) to the University for all Consortium Associate in Arts (A.A.) graduates, selected Associate in Science (A.S.) graduates and Specialized Associate in Arts Transfer graduates (S.A.A.T.). The Consortium partners are committed to this guarantee.

DC Steering Committee.

The DC Steering Committee will select co-chairs, one from UCF and one from a partner FCS institution, to serve two-year terms and to regularly organize and convene meetings. The DC Steering Committee will oversee the operations of the partnership program.

Consortium partners commit to a proactive strategy of cooperation to identify prospective DirectConnect students and to enhance the transfer and major readiness of students who plan to transfer to UCF, with a goal of improving student success.

The DirectConnect Steering Committee will develop operational plans to promote the major- and transfer-readiness of students in the pipeline. Students who follow the plans and are major- and transfer-ready will start their UCF journey in the major and term of their choice.

Consortium partners commit to promoting an access for success approach to student success, with clear curricular pathways including but not limited to Specialized Associate in Arts Transfer degrees. The Consortium partners will work collaboratively to ensure that DC students enter a curricular pathway as early as possible in their undergraduate journey, knowing that our students are best served by completing their associate's degree and common program pre-requisites prior to their admission to UCF, positioning these students for timely degree completion at UCF.

Consortium partners commit to developing a transfer student success operational plan for the admission of DirectConnect students into a specific major, including the establishment of pathways for students who choose to enter the DirectConnect pipeline. These pathways should specify the preferred manner and time by which students will declare their intention to enter the DC pipeline; the milestones that DC students should attain prior to their matriculation

at UCF; the definitions of major and transfer readiness; and how UCF will manage DC pipeline students who have not completed the curricular pathways.

CACC.

The CACC committee will select co-chairs, one from UCF and one from a partner FCS institution, to serve two-year terms and to regularly organize and convene meetings. A process and procedure will be developed to formally communicate among the member institutions on requested academic program proposals. Through this process, the Consortium will more effectively and efficiently support academic program development. Programs of concern that cannot be resolved by the CACC will be referred to the Consortium member presidents for deliberation and final approval.

Each Consortium institution will develop a five-year plan for potential new and expanded programs to share with the CACC. The compiled programs will be reviewed and analyzed by the Workforce Development Committee to assess for meeting regional and local workforce needs. The CACC will develop a Regional Master Plan of associate and bachelor's degrees to provide transparency and support for program development and to provide for more seamless support of the state regulated processes.

The CACC will oversee curriculum alignment efforts for the Consortium.

Section 3. Data Sharing.

Consortium partners will routinely share institutional and student data related to this partnership work. Data sharing will enable the Consortium to make data-informed decisions to improve the quality of the partnership and the student experience, while also advancing the public accountability of the access and success missions of our institutions.

Section 4. Resource Management.

Consortium partners will collaborate to advance the important work of the Consortium through identification and partnership efforts around grants, research, and joint philanthropy.

Section 5. Partnership Obligations.

Consortium partners will create specific operating plans to guide the local strategy within the framework of this resolution. Day-to-day collaboration among partner institutions will

provide a climate for planning, trust, and innovation, and will capture best practices and the most creative thinking from each partner. The interdependent nature of the Consortium will enable deeper alignment of systems, policies, and procedures, thus ensuring a seamless transition for students.

Section 6. Stewardship.

While this resolution is not a legally binding contract, it is a pledge to stewardship, not only of the public resources entrusted to each institution, but of our mission to extend the very best in educational opportunity to this regional community and the students to whom we are enjoined.

Section 7. Signatures.

James Henningsen President College of Central Florida	Date
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Charlie Stone Chair, Board of Trustees College of Central Florida	Date
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Thomas LoBasso President Daytona State College	Date
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Randy Howard Chair, Board of Trustees Daytona State College	Date
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James Richey President Eastern Florida State College	Date
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Ronald Howse Chair, Board of Trustees Eastern Florida State College	Date
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Timothy Moore President Indian River State College	Date
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Christa Luna Chair, Board of Trustees Indian River State College	Date
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Laura Byrd Interim President Lake-Sumter State College	Date
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Bret Jones Chair, Board of Trustees Lake-Sumter State College	Date
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Georgia Lorenz President Seminole State College	Date
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Bob Cortes Chair, Board of Trustees Seminole State College	Date
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Kathleen Plinske President Valencia College	Date
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Michael Sasso Chair, Board of Trustees Valencia College	Date
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Alexander Cartwright President University of Central Florida	Date
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Alex Martins Chair, Board of Trustees University of Central Florida	Date
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