October 29, 2026

TO: THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

FROM: DR. KATHLEEN PLINSKE, PRESIDENT

RE: RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

On August 3, 2026, Linda E. McMahon, Secretary of the United States Department of Education, issued *A National Call to Action to University Presidents and Governing Boards*, calling on every postsecondary institution to describe to the American public its commitments to rigorous teaching, pathbreaking research, and national service. This *Call to Action* asks institutional leaders to address specific questions concerning admissions criteria, the free exchange of ideas on campus, intellectual pluralism, faculty hiring and evaluation practices, affordability, and the maintenance of academic standards in the age of artificial intelligence.

On August 18, 2026, Florida became the first state to formally respond to the *Call to Action* through a joint statement signed by State University System Chancellor Ray Rodrigues and all 12 System University Presidents, as well as Florida Commissioner of Education Dr. Henry Mack and all 28 Florida College System Presidents. The statement affirmed the Florida College System and State University System's commitment to rigorous teaching, pathbreaking research where applicable, and service to the nation, while outlining the standards and priorities Florida's institutions are committed to upholding.

Valencia College now proposes its own answer to the *Call to Action* through a formal resolution of its District Board of Trustees. The resolution will affirm the College's programs, practices, and institutional commitments to its students and the public, consistent with its mission to advance regional prosperity through personal and professional growth by providing access to high-quality, affordable learning experiences that foster intellectual curiosity, promote civic literacy and engagement, while supporting the workforce needs of the community. The adopted resolution will be posted on the College's website, in the spirit of transparency and as suggested by the *Call to Action*.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The President recommends that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College adopt and approve the Resolution in Response to the National Call to Action, as presented.

Kathleen Plinske
President

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WHEREAS, Valencia College, established by law as an open-access postsecondary institution, is committed to combining high academic standards with broad educational opportunity, with a focus on affordability formalized by official College policy, consistent with the mission and responsibilities prescribed for Florida College System (FCS) institutions by Florida law; and

WHEREAS, while many colleges and universities choose to highlight how selective their admissions have become, Valencia College, as an open-access FCS institution, is proud to accept for admission the top 100% of eligible applicants; and

WHEREAS, academic rigor is fundamental to the value of a Valencia College education, and the College is committed to maintaining high standards of teaching, learning, academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, and preparation for further education, meaningful employment, and lifelong learning; and

WHEREAS, Valencia values the freedoms of speech, thought, expression, and assembly as part of its core educational and intellectual mission and is committed to creating a learning and working environment that supports these values and encourages the free exchange of ideas, while also maintaining the integrity of the academic environment and the security of students, employees, visitors and college property; and

WHEREAS, transparency strengthens public confidence in higher education, and Valencia College is committed to clearly communicating its academic programs, admissions requirements, educational expectations, costs, policies, and measures of student success to students, families, employees, the community, and the public; and

WHEREAS, accountability is essential to the stewardship of a public institution entrusted with taxpayer resources and the aspirations of its students, and Valencia College is committed to responsible governance, sound fiscal management, continuous institutional improvement, and regular assessment of faculty and staff performance and whether its programs and services fulfill the College's mission and best serve our students; and

WHEREAS, the award of a continuing contract indicates professional faculty performance at Valencia College, attainable only after successful completion of a comprehensive Teaching/Learning Academy program, documented evidence of effective performance of job duties and successful demonstration of practice. At Valencia, maintaining a continuing contract carries the expectation of ongoing demonstration of specified performance criteria as evidenced by responsible performance of the faculty member's job description and faculty roles and responsibilities in alignment with the established Essential Competencies of a Valencia Educator. Evidence of meeting this ongoing expectation is assessed via annual performance evaluations and periodic post award continuing contract performance reviews; and

WHEREAS, committed to careful stewardship emphasizing the effective and prudent use of student tuition revenues and state funding, Valencia College is proud to operate successfully at the lowest dollar per-student cost of any college or university in Florida; and

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WHEREAS, Valencia has demonstrated steadfast commitment to affordability, as formally articulated in College policy, and its District Board of Trustees has not increased tuition and fees for more than a decade. Last year, supported by grants and scholarships, more than 40% of students at Valencia College paid nothing out-of-pocket for tuition and fees; and

WHEREAS, successful student outcomes are central to the College's public purpose, and Valencia College is committed to measuring and improving student achievement, persistence, completion, transfer, career readiness, and employment outcomes, including placement and salaries, while providing students with quality academic advising, and support resources necessary to achieve their educational and career goals; and

WHEREAS, Valencia has committed to a rigorous academic program review process and will only offer academic programs that yield a demonstrable return on investment for students and that yield average graduate salaries above the average salary of individuals without a college credential; and

WHEREAS, meeting Florida's workforce needs is a central responsibility of the Florida College System and a defining component of Valencia College's mission, and the College is committed to developing and strengthening programs and partnerships that prepare students for high-demand well-paying careers, support regional economic development, and respond to the evolving needs of Central Florida employers and communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College hereby responds to the *National Call to Action to University Presidents and Governing Boards* issued by Linda E. McMahon, Secretary of Education of the United States of America, by affirming that Valencia College's commitment to academic excellence, transparency, accountability, student success, and service to its community is grounded in its statutory mission as a Florida College System institution and in its responsibility to the students, families, taxpayers, employers, and communities it serves; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District Board of Trustees reaffirms its commitment to the College's open-access mission, including providing high-quality and affordable educational opportunities to all who can benefit, maintaining high academic standards, fostering intellectual curiosity and civic literacy, supporting students in achieving their educational and career goals, and responding to the workforce and community needs of our Region and State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College commends the Executive and Legislative Branches of the State of Florida for their substantial leadership in establishing and enhancing the conditions necessary for Florida's public colleges to advance educational attainment, economic opportunity, and student success.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this 29th day of October 2026

Michael A. Sasso, Chair

John F. Davis, Vice-Chair

Dr. Kathleen Plinske, Secretary and President