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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Polk State College President to receive Phi Theta Kappa
Paragon and Regional Distinguished Service awards**

Winter Haven, FL, Feb. 21, 2019 — Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society recently announced Polk State College President Angela Garcia Falconetti as a 2019 Paragon Award for New Presidents and Regional Distinguished Service Award recipient for her dedication to students and their success.

More than 500 college presidents were eligible for the Paragon Award, with only 25 being chosen by the international organization, which will recognize Falconetti during the Society's annual convention in Orlando this April.

"Phi Theta Kappa is an outstanding organization that instills in our students the importance of academic achievement, community service, and strong values that allow them to persevere on their paths to success," Falconetti said. "I am honored to be nominated by our students and humbled to be recognized by the Society for the accomplishments we have achieved together at Polk State College."

Falconetti was nominated by Polk State's Phi Theta Kappa chapters Beta Upsilon Upsilon on the Lakeland Campus and Xi Pi on the Winter Haven Campus.

"During the first year Dr. Falconetti has been at Polk State College, she developed a vision to strengthen student success by hosting forums with students, faculty, and staff to learn directly what they most value about the College experience," her nomination says. "From this input, President Falconetti has worked to expand partnerships with local employers, organize new learning opportunities, and increase connections between the College and nonprofit groups that provide support services for students."

The nomination also noted Falconetti's successful advocacy during the 2018 Legislative Session to secure recurring operational support for the College to promote successful student learning.

Additionally, Polk State's Phi Theta Kappa chapters commended Falconetti for her support of the honor society and its students, noting that when she attends events, inductions, and ceremonies, she always gives a warm welcome, thanks, and words of support that motivate students and community members.

“More importantly, she takes the opportunity to congratulate the students for their achievements and commends them for striving toward the four Phi Theta Kappa hallmarks of scholarship, leadership, service, and fellowship while living up to the mission of the organization,” the nomination highlights.

Phi Theta Kappa recognizes academic achievement and provides students with leadership and community service opportunities. To be inducted, students must have at least 12 college credits and a certain grade-point average determined by chapter. For Polk State’s chapters, which serve about 500 active members, that’s a 3.50 GPA.

Phi Theta Kappa students have a 91 percent student success rate, according to the Society, and research has shown that strong presidential leadership and support of the organization increases member success and the depth of their college experiences.

“We are proud that our nomination has shined a light on the wonderful Phi Theta Kappa advocate we have in Dr. Falconetti,” Phi Theta Kappa Beta Upsilon Upsilon Advisor Penny Morris said.

Phi Theta Kappa Xi Pi Advisor Anthony Cornett echoed a similar sentiment.

“Dr. Falconetti has strongly backed Phi Theta Kappa at our College, and I am thrilled that she is the recipient of these awards,” he said. “She has most certainly earned them, and I can only help we can continue to show our gratitude for the assistance she provides our organization.”

About Polk State College

Located in Winter Haven, Florida, and established in 1964, Polk State College is a multi-campus institution serving more than 16,000 students with Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Science, Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees, as well as a wide range of certificate and workforce training options. The College also operates three charter high schools.

Polk State’s advantages include small class sizes; hands-on learning; dedicated faculty; day and night classes; online options; affordable tuition; excellent financial aid; and a diverse community and vibrant student life, including fine arts opportunities, clubs, and intercollegiate athletics.