



*We are Polk.™*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Polk State College classes start Monday and enrollment is up**

**Winter Haven, August 16, 2019** — Polk State College will welcome students back to its campuses and centers across Polk County on Monday, August 19, and faculty and staff are looking forward to a successful 2019-2020 academic year.

Enrollment is up 1 percent from last fall as of Thursday, August 15, and the College continues to see increased retention, specifically for full-time freshmen.

“This is particularly exciting as we continue to enhance services for all students to ensure they persist on their paths to degrees, certifications, and employment,” Polk State President Angela Garcia Falconetti said. “We continue to be innovative and forward thinking through programs such as the First Year Experience, implementing strategies proven to increase student retention and completion.”

The First Year Experience (FYE) program guides incoming first-time-in-college students through their freshmen year with advising, extra support, and the First Year Seminar Course focused on college success. FYE welcomed more than 1,150 students and 750 parents to Polk State this month during three First Flight events on the Winter Haven and Lakeland campuses, where they connected with peers, faculty, and staff.

When FYE launched in fall 2014, full-time freshmen had a one-year retention rate of 58 percent. The College now boasts a nearly 70 percent retention rate for full-time freshmen, who are required to participate in FYE.

Polk State serves nearly 16,000 degree-seeking students each academic year plus 12,000 students at Polk State Corporate College, where they can earn nationally-recognized workforce certifications.

Enrollment for the fall 2019 semester is only expected to increase as students have the ability to enroll through Sunday, August 25. The College also offers a 12-week session that starts September 16 and an eight-week session that starts October 14.

Thanks to funds received during the 2018 Legislative Session that allowed the College to hire six additional advisors, students are experiencing reduced wait times and all incoming first-time-in-college students are assigned to their own advisors.

Polk State also celebrated a successful 2019 Legislative Session, receiving \$1.25 million in operational support and preserving the Polk State JD Alexander Center in Lake Wales, which serves approximately 1,100 students each year.

“Support from the Florida Legislature, our Polk County Legislative Delegation, and the community assists us in fulfilling the Polk State mission of providing access to affordable, quality higher education which is critical for Polk County,” Falconetti said. “The positive impact of expanded opportunities continues to show, and I could not be more thrilled to welcome everyone to Polk State for another successful academic year. Soar, Eagles!”

### **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.