



# Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# FALL 2025



**JACQUELINE  
DWYER**

Program Assistant  
Director of Technical Assistance

## WELCOME TO THE FCSUA TEAM!



**TEJA  
PUVVULA**

Graduate Research  
Assistant

The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities is pleased to welcome Jacqueline Dwyer and Teja Puvvula to our team.

Jacqueline Dwyer is a Program Assistant Director of Technical Assistance who earned her bachelor's degree in psychology in 2005 and her master's degree in exceptional student education in 2011. Additionally, she holds graduate certificates in Autism Spectrum Disorders from UCF and Dyslexia from the University of Florida Literacy Institute. Prior to joining the team at FCSUA, Jacqueline worked as a Human Resource Development (HRD) Learning Resource Specialist at Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS), an IDEA Funded State Project. She started her career in education as an Exceptional Student Education teacher with Volusia County Schools. She served as a member of the Volusia Community Transition Team for more than 12 years offering support to students, families, educators, administrators, and community stakeholders in the area post-secondary settings for students with disabilities. In her free time, Jacqueline volunteers as an assistant coach with Special Olympics Florida for Stand Up Paddle (SUP). She enjoys reading, traveling with her family and friends, and attending live music events.

Teja is a Graduate Research Assistant who earned his bachelor's in computer science and is currently pursuing his master's in computer science at UCF. His expertise spans across full stack web development, machine learning and cloud integrations. Prior to pursuing his masters, he worked as a Senior Software Engineer for over 2.5 years at Beautiful Code LLP in Hyderabad, India. Teja enjoys listening to music, sketching nature landscapes, cooking, playing table tennis and learning about new tech.

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## **Juan Cabrera , Okaloosa UP**

### ***Okaloosa Technical College***

Juan Cabrera is a student in the Okaloosa UP program at Okaloosa Technical College who will graduate in December. During his time in the program, he has been a shining example of what perseverance and determination can do.

Juan has built an independent lifestyle: sharing a home with roommates, holding a part-time job as a laborer/stocker in a small convenience store located on a local military base and even commuting on his electric scooter to school and to work. Along the way, he has earned his OSHA 10 certification, is completing specialized career instruction courses, and is earning valuable carpentry skills. He has also maintained a 3.3 GPA, showing his commitment to both academics and personal growth.



"We've had the privilege of watching Juan grow from a quiet, subdued student into a confident and caring leader among his peers," says Cheryl Rushing, program coordinator for Okaloosa UP. "This December, he will graduate from our program, carrying with him not only credentials, but also the confidence and independence to take his next steps forward. We couldn't be more proud of all he has accomplished and the bright future ahead of him."

After graduation, Juan plans to move to San Antonio, Texas, where he has family support. His goals are to find work in construction or continue his career on a military base.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT



## **Real World Preparation for Real World Employment** Jacqueline Cassidy, Pinellas Technical College

The Unique Professionals (UP) program at Pinellas Technical College (PTC) at the St. Petersburg campus is a specialized initiative designed to support students with disabilities in achieving their career goals. This program offers a tailored approach to education, providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in various vocational fields.

The UP program focuses on delivering individualized instruction and support, ensuring that each student receives the attention they need to thrive. Students engage in hands-on training in a variety of trades, including automotive technology, culinary arts, and cosmetology, among others. This practical experience is complemented by classroom instruction that emphasizes soft skills such as resume writing, workplace expectations, and job seeking skills.

One of the key features of the UP program is its emphasis on real-world application. Students have the opportunity to participate in internships and work-based learning experiences, allowing them to gain valuable industry exposure and build professional networks. These experiences are instrumental in enhancing employability and preparing students for successful careers post-graduation.

Additionally, the UP program fosters a supportive community where students can connect with peers and mentors, creating an inclusive environment that promotes personal and professional growth. Through this comprehensive approach, the UP program at PTC equips students with the tools they need to pursue fulfilling careers and lead independent lives.

# FPCTPS IN ACTION

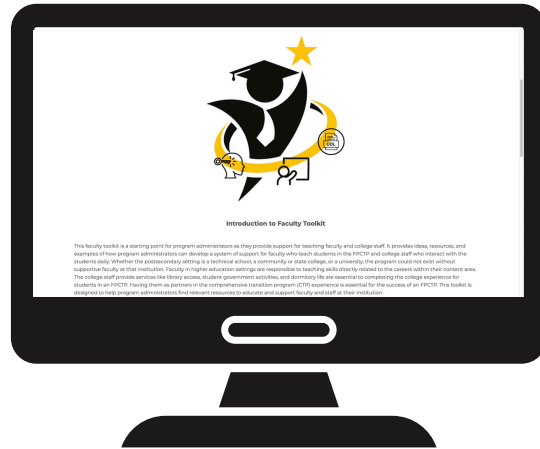


Congratulations to our FPCTP completers who have found employment with the program that prepared them for the workforce!

Ivory Richardson is a 2023 completer who now works as a Student Alumnus Assistant for Project SAINT at Santa Fe College, assisting new students as they adjust to campus, participating in marketing events, and providing general office help.

Guillermo Montedonico is a 2024 completer who now works as a Peer Facilitator for the Seahawk NEST Academy at Broward College, assisting new students enrolled in the program.

# WEBSITE UPDATES



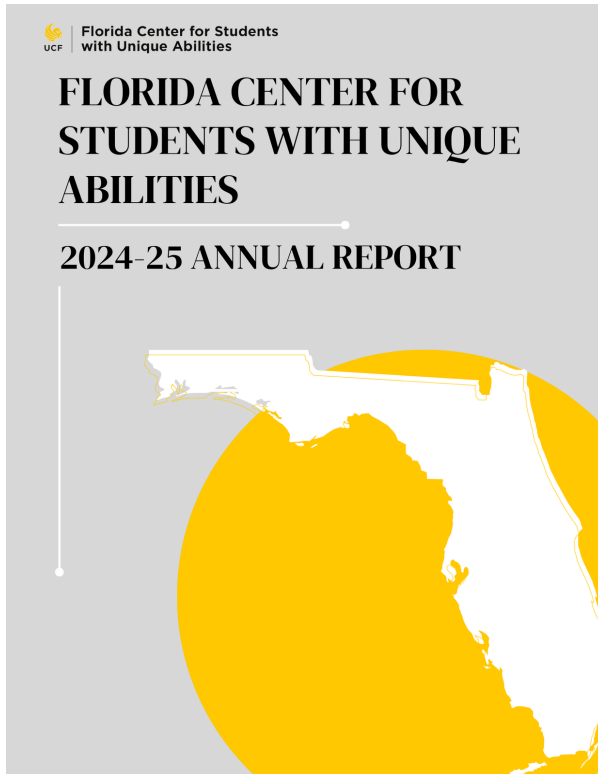
The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities is continually updating our website for visitors.

The latest updates to the website include:

- 1) An updated credential dashboard to view all current credential offerings at all approved programs.
- 2) A downloadable reporting schedule for all approved programs.
- 3) The 2025-26 FES-US Scholarship Survey, available in both English and Spanish.
- 4) Our new Faculty Toolkit is available for program coordinators and staff members to learn tools and resources available for working with students with intellectual disabilities.

Visit our website [FCSUA.org](https://FCSUA.org) for more information.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



ucf | Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities  
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

## FLORIDA CENTER FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE ABILITIES



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2024-25

Our Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities 2024-25 Annual Report and our Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities Executive Summary 2024-25 is now available on our website.

### Association of Florida Colleges

*2025 Success Summit: AFC Annual Meeting & Joint Councils Convening*  
Nov. 12-14, 2025  
Orlando Florida

[Registration](#)



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Southeast Post Secondary  
Education Alliance

[Call for Proposals](#) for the 2026  
Conference is now available



**NDEAM  
2025**  
80th Anniversary

Submit Feedback

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year marks the 80th anniversary of this observation, which takes the month to recognize the impact and importance of individuals with disabilities contribute to the workplace.

We have been recognizing our students and completers from our programs throughout the month on our social media channels. Be sure to check out our Facebook, X, and Instagram to see all the amazing jobs and careers our students have obtained.

Email Us

We'd love to hear from you on what is happening at your institution. Please send stories and photos to [fcsua@ucf.edu](mailto:fcsua@ucf.edu), ATTN: FCSUA News Brief.

Like Us/Follow Us!

