

SUMMER 2025



Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

News Brief

2025 FLORIDA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING INSTITUTE

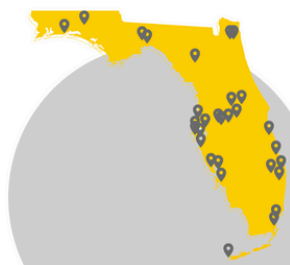
2025

Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute



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The 2025 Florida Postsecondary Program Planning Institute (FLPEPPI) took place from July 14 to 16 in Orlando, Florida. This year's theme was "Stellar Programs, Stellar Students, Stellar Employees." Nearly 250 participants were in attendance. Teams gathered for three days of dedicated time to facilitated strategic planning, learning and networking. Relive some of the highlights from the institute in our 2025 FLPEPPI video on [YouTube](#).

Congratulations to our 2025 Employer Appreciation Award Winner, Pathways School of Excellence, nominated by the SEU Link program at Southeastern University.

SEU Link Director Kelly Southmayd said that "Pathways has served as an internship site for our students almost every semester. The leadership of Dr. Shaw and Ms. Sumner (pictured left with Kelly) has been invaluable in providing our students with meaningful opportunities. Their willingness to demonstrate patience and grace, yet provide gentle, constructive feedback to our students has resulted in tremendous growth."

2025 EMPLOYER APPRECIATION WINNER



PATHWAYS SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE



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STUDENT HIGHLIGHT



2025 Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute (FLPEPPI) Student Panel

The Student Panel is always one of the highlights of the FLPEPPI. During the panel, students representing a state college, a technical college, and a university, speak about their experience attending an approved Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition program.

This year's 2025 FLPEPPI Student Panel included:

- Nickayla Bennett, a 2025 completer from Build Your Future at Orange Technical College - West Campus. Nickayla earned a credential in Professional Employment and her BARBICIDE certification. She currently works at The Lox Bar Hair Salon and volunteers at Equine Angels.
- Nile Nanke, a 2025 completer from FGCU RISE at Florida Gulf Coast University. Nile earned a credential in Community Employment and aspires to become a sports broadcaster.
- Jessica Gottlieb, a 2025 completer from Seahawk NEST at Broward College. Jessica earned a credential in Professional Employment and currently works on campus at the Broward College Testing Center.

Our student panelists will be featured in this year's Executive Summary, which will be published this fall.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Preparing for Our Inaugural Class of Students Phoenix RISE at Fred K. Marchman Technical College Todd Bryers, Program Coordinator



The staff at Fred K. Marchman Technical College (FKMTC) has been hard at work preparing for the launch of the inaugural class of the Phoenix RISE Program (RISE). The year has been full of exciting milestones: the team visited three established technical colleges to learn best practices, ordered furniture and supplies, designed their logo, received their first set of program shirts, established an Occupational Advisory Committee comprised of local business and community leaders, and conducted other activities including outreach and networking in the community.

One of the proudest accomplishments at Phoenix RISE is the creation of the Policies and Procedures Manual. This was a critical document for the program –this manual laid the foundation that allowed the program to officially accept five students. Thanks to the dedication of the team, they successfully developed the application, interview, and acceptance processes. Creating this manual was a goal we set at the 2024 Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute (FLPEPPI), and I'm proud to say we've met that goal. We're looking forward to further developing and improving our program in the coming years.

With our framework in place, we actively promoted RISE across the county—participating in transition nights, meeting with Pasco County Schools district staff, and hosting three group campus tours. After opening our application process, we conducted interviews and officially accepted five students into our first RISE cohort!

Our entire community is excited as we continue preparing to welcome these students into the FKMTC family. We look forward to supporting them as they develop vital employability and life skills that will open doors to meaningful careers within our local workforce. Each student brings their own unique strengths, and our team is looking forward to assisting them in growing and thriving as they build on their skills and talents. This is an incredible opportunity for everyone involved, and I am truly grateful to be a part of it.

IN THE NEWS



Congratulations to FCUSA's Program Manager and Outreach Coordinator Iris Neil, who was recently appointed as the chairwoman for the Southeast Postsecondary Education Alliance. Congratulations Iris!

FCUSA's Assistant Technical Assistant Director Christian Zimmerman had his first APA citation article in conjunction with Think College on the topic of how technical colleges can support students with intellectual disabilities. [Read the article.](#)



Congratulations to those Students who Participated in the SkillsUSA Competition this Year!



SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry partners collaborating to ensure America has a prepared workforce by offering educational programs, events and competitions to support practical and academic career technical education skills at the regional, state and national level.

Dekauri Grady (left) from Build Your Future at Orange Technical College - West Campus earned 2nd place in Employment and Application Process.

Andre "Andy" Sanchez (middle) from Project TOPS at Robert Morgan Educational Center & Technical College earned 1st place in Action Skills at the regional and the state level.

William James Oser (right), another student from Project TOPS, earned 1st place in Employment Application Process. William went on to the compete at the national level where he earned a silver medal.

Website Highlights



The Faculty Toolkit is now available on our website. The toolkit provides tools for program administrators to support faculty members and identify ways to they can meet benchmarks in the Transition Team Planning tool. Be sure to visit our website and explore the toolkit, located under the "Research to Practice" tab.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WEBINARS • CONFERENCES • RESEARCH



 Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

FCSUA MONTHLY WEBINARS

The first Tuesday of each month
3-4 p.m.
Save the Dates!

The FCSUA Informational webinars take place from 3 - 4 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month, starting in September. Stay tuned for more information regarding our upcoming webinars.

Professional Development Opportunities



Association of Florida Colleges' Region III Conference

September 5, 2025
Heathrow, FL.



Association for Career & Technical Education ACTE Region II Frames the Future of CTE

September 10 - 12, 2025
Fayetteville, GA.



Division on Career Development and Transition International Conference

October 8 - 12, 2025
Denver, CO..



State of the Art Conference

October 21 - 22, 2025
Syracuse, NY.



**NDEAM
2025**
80th Anniversary

Submit Feedback

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, along with known as NDEAM. NDEAM recognizes the value, importance and impact of hiring individuals with disabilities in the workforce. This year marks 80 years of recognizing NDEAM. As part of the celebration, this year's NDEAM theme 'Celebrating Value and Talent' will recognize the value and talent American workers with disabilities add to the workplace and economy and highlight their achievements both past and present. Resources from the U.S. Department of Labor will be available soon. Visit our Campaigns page for more ideas and resources to recognize this observation month.

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, ATTN: FCSUA News Brief.

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