

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Polk State College names Anastasios “Stasi” Kamoutsas as its sixth president

Wednesday, June 3, 2026 — The Polk State College District Board of Trustees named Anastasios “Stasi” Kamoutsas as the institution’s sixth president on Wednesday with a 5-0 vote.

Kamoutsas, currently Florida’s Commissioner of Education, will join Polk State on July 6, following Dr. Anne Kerr’s completion of service as interim president in June.

“We are confident in Mr. Kamoutsas’s leadership, experience and vision to move our College forward,” Board Chair Ann Barnhart said. “We look forward to the difference he will make in the lives of our students, faculty, staff and community members who we support through the endeavors of our College.”

Vice Chair Greg Littleton could not attend Wednesday’s Board meeting but provided a strong letter of support for Kamoutsas. Board member Ashley Bell Barnett participated remotely and could not vote, but she provided remarks that upheld the Board’s decision and expressed confidence in Kamoutsas.

Kamoutsas is an experienced legal and policy professional with extensive experience in education and public service at the state and local levels. He has served as Commissioner of Education since 2025 and held several leadership roles within the Florida Department of Education, including Chief of Staff, General Counsel, Chief Litigator, Assistant General Counsel and Legislative Affairs. He also served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Ron DeSantis.

Prior to his service at the state level, he served as Staff Counsel for the Dade County Police Benevolent Association and as an Assistant State Attorney with the Miami-Dade Office of the State Attorney. Kamoutsas earned his Juris Doctor from Regent University School of Law, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Florida International University and an Associate of Arts in Political Science from Florida State University.

Prior to the Board’s 4 p.m. meeting, Kamoutsas met with approximately 250 students, faculty, staff and members of the community during meet and greets on the Lakeland and Winter Haven campuses. He also toured the Clear Springs Advanced Technology Center in Bartow and visited the Center for Public Safety in Winter Haven. A survey was distributed following the meet and greets to solicit feedback to help inform the Board’s decision. The Board also received numerous letters of recommendation from education leaders and public and private sector executives from across the state.

Kamoutsas emerged as the Presidential Search Committee’s sole recommendation for the position following a national search that yielded more than 100 applicants. The feedback and recommendations reinforced the Committee’s endorsement.

“I am grateful for the overwhelming support from the District Board of Trustees, Presidential Search Committee and College community,” Kamoutsas said. “I am committed to building on Polk State’s strong foundation and ensuring that we continue to meet the growing workforce demands of Polk County.”

“Polk State is a top economic engine for this community, and we will provide the highest level of academics and services that fulfill our College’s mission and uphold Polk State’s vision of serving as the top choice for higher education and workforce training in the State of Florida.”



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During Wednesday's meeting, the Polk State College Foundation also announced the establishment of an endowed scholarship: the Deputy David Michael Goddard Legacy Scholarship in honor of Goddard who was killed in a crash when his Polk County Sheriff's Office patrol car was tragically struck by a pickup truck in 1989. The family's initial investment of \$110,000 will support students in Polk State's Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice programs. Kamoutsas's background in law and work representing law enforcement officers made the Foundation's presentation especially meaningful to him.

The celebration continued with a reception at Vitrum Lounge with key community stakeholders and dinner at Arabella's with the Board.

Throughout the day's festivities, Kamoutsas shared priorities including workforce education, seamless articulation and the importance of civil discourse. He also highlighted the nearing completion of the Polk State Haines City-Davenport Campus, the launch of the College's Welding Program and the importance of data-informed decision making.

"It is an honor to join Polk State College on the cusp of significant developments," he said. "I look forward to supporting student success, the work of faculty and fostering community connections."

About Polk State College

Located in Polk County, Florida, and established in 1964, Polk State College is a multi-campus institution serving more than 14,000 students with Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Science, Associate in Arts, and Associate in Science degrees, as well as 9,000 individuals in a wide range of certificate and workforce training programs. 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.