

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Polk State College President Anastasios Kamoutsas and Florida Polytechnic University President Devin Stephenson sign an expanded transfer agreement July 30 at Florida Poly's Barnett Applied Research Center, joined by legislators, trustees, industry representatives and students. The agreement broadens access to 10 Florida Poly STEM degrees.

Polk State and Florida Poly partner to build regional STEM pipeline

LAKELAND, Fla. – Polk State College and Florida Polytechnic University have entered into an articulation agreement, establishing the Eagle to Phoenix Pathway program for students.

Polk State President Anastasios Kamoutsas and Florida Poly President Devin Stephenson signed the agreement on Thursday, July 30, at the university's campus, strengthening the partnership between the institutions and expanding opportunities for students.

Under the agreement, Polk State students can complete their Associate in Arts (AA) degree and all required prerequisites on the college's campuses before seamlessly transferring to one of 10 targeted bachelor's degree programs at Florida Poly – the state's only public university exclusively dedicated to STEM.

The agreement builds on a 2019 partnership that created a transfer pathway to only one Florida Poly bachelor's degree. Students will now be able to transfer into one of 10 bachelor's programs.

The available pathways include:

- Aerospace Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science
- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Applied Mathematics
- Computer Engineering
- Cybersecurity
- Environmental Engineering
- Physics

The partnership builds upon the statewide 2+2 articulation system, which guarantees AA graduates admission to a state university, by ensuring acceptance into specific Florida Poly programs.

Thursday's signing ceremony brought together students, community supporters, industry partners and institutional leaders to mark the launch of a partnership designed to accelerate student success.

Mason McRae, a prospective participant and Polk State Chain of Lakes Collegiate High School student, is completing Engineering Technology courses at Polk State. He said the new program is opening doors for himself and his peers.

"With Florida Poly and Polk State partnering for this program, it lays out my college plans and provides a seamless transfer for a specialized engineering pathway," said McRae, who plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering.

After graduation, he hopes to continue to a career as a fixed-wing jet mechanic with the Air Force Reserves and eventually become a NASA propulsion engineer.

"I believe the Eagle to Phoenix program is what will help me reach that future," McRae said.

President Kamoutsas said the agreement opens vital new avenues for local students.

"Today's signing marks a truly historic moment for Polk State and the students we serve," he said. "By guaranteeing acceptance to 10 high-demand programs at Florida Poly, we are removing barriers and providing our students a clear,

confident path to their bachelor’s degrees. This partnership will transform lives, strengthen families and help build a strong, more innovative Florida for generations to come.”

The new pathway addresses the state’s growing demand for career-ready STEM professionals.

“This partnership demonstrates what’s possible when higher education institutions unite around a shared commitment to student success,” President Stephenson said. “The Eagle to Phoenix Pathway program expands access to a world-class education while strengthening the pipeline of highly skilled talent our state needs. Together, we are creating more opportunities for students to achieve their goals and make meaningful contributions to their communities and beyond.”



Polk State College President Anastasios Kamoutsas and Florida Polytechnic University President Devin Stephenson sign a partnership agreement establishing the Eagle to Phoenix Pathway program at Florida Poly’s Barnett Applied Research Center on July 30.

About Polk State College:

Located in Polk County, Florida, and established in 1964, Polk State 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. [Connect](#) with Polk State.

About Florida Polytechnic University:

Florida Polytechnic University is ranked the No.1 public college in the South for five years in a row and No. 3 best value public school in the South by U.S. News and World Report. It is a top 30 public engineering program without a Ph.D. in the nation for five years in a row. Florida Poly is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and a member of the State University System of Florida. It is the only state university dedicated exclusively to STEM and offers ABET-accredited degrees.

Florida Poly is a powerful economic engine within the state of Florida, blending applied research with industry partnerships to give students an academically rigorous education with real-world relevance. Florida Poly’s iconic Innovation, Science, and Technology Building, designed by world-renowned architect Dr. Santiago Calatrava, has won more than 20 global awards and was named one of the 16 most breathtaking buildings in the world. Connect with Florida Poly.

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