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# POLK STATE COLLEGE

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CLEAR SPRINGS  
ADVANCED  
TECHNOLOGY  
CENTER

*Inviting Applications and Nominations for*

# President



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EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND CONSULTING



**Polk State College, in Central Florida, seeks a dynamic and experienced leader to serve as President.** The President serves as the institution's chief executive officer and corporate secretary to the board of trustees, providing visionary, mission-driven leadership. The President guides strategic planning and institutional effectiveness while fostering a culture of student success, access, and academic excellence.



## OUR VISION

Polk State College is the leading choice for higher education in Polk County.

## OUR VALUES

Adaptability, Integrity, Knowledge, Leadership Innovation, Quality, Respect, and Service

# ABOUT THE COLLEGE

**Polk State College is Polk County's largest serving institution of higher education and workforce development, providing access to affordable associate and baccalaureate degrees, career certificates and workforce training programs.**

Established in 1964, Polk State College spans seven locations serving more than 14,000 degree-seeking students and 9,000 individuals in short-term workforce training programs annually. In addition to its main campuses in Winter Haven and Lakeland, and centers in Bartow, Lake Wales, and Winter Haven, Polk State College is currently constructing its eighth location in Haines City-Davenport.

An institution of the Florida College System, Polk State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and completed its decennial reaffirmation in 2021 with no findings, placing the College in an approximated 5% of higher education institutions in the southern region. Polk State College also boasts the highest continuing education and job placement rate out of the 28 Florida College System institutions for its associate in science graduates.

With 80 academic programs that span Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Business, Education, Health Sciences and Nursing, Public Safety and Liberal Arts,

Polk State College offers a variety of paths for students to obtain the education and training they need for high-wage, in-demand careers within the region. Polk State College partners closely with industry leaders and employers to ensure instruction is aligned with local needs. In addition to leading continuing education and job placement rates, Polk State College programs boast 100% licensure pass rates in areas including Corrections, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Law Enforcement, Nursing, Paramedic, Physical Therapist Assistant and Respiratory Care.

Polk State College is a recipient of \$820,000 in Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) funding to enhance and expand its Nursing Program, as well as a \$2.8 million Florida Job Growth Grant to launch a Welding Program and expand its Computer Numeric Control (CNC) Machining Program. In 2025, for the first time in Polk State College history, the institution was the primary recipient of a National Science Foundation grant totaling \$494,795 to fund the Activating STEM Skills and Efficacy for Transfer (ASSET) Project, which will enrich STEM curriculum and create more hands-on learning opportunities.

Polk State College also invests in quality services to support students on their academic journeys. With

an advisor-to-student ratio of 1:365 and initiatives including the First-Year Experience and success coaching to assist first time-in-college students with onboarding and navigating their first year of college, retention rates continue to increase. Students are also supported by generous donors through the Polk State College Foundation, which awards approximately \$1.2 million in scholarships each year.

The College also operates three charter high schools. Polk State’s many advantages include small class sizes; hands-on learning; dedicated faculty; day and night classes; online options; affordable tuition; excellent financial aid; and vibrant student life, including fine arts opportunities, clubs, and intercollegiate athletics.

### Polk State College Foundation

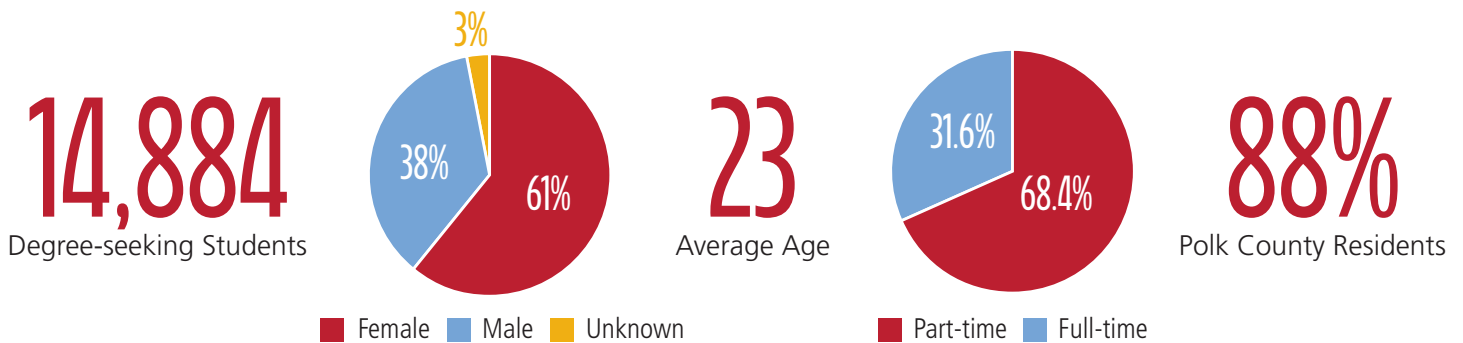
The Polk State College Foundation, Inc. is a tax-exempt corporation whose purpose is to provide Polk State College with resources for the advancement

of the College, its students, faculty, staff and other constituencies in fulfillment of the College’s mission.

The Polk State College Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of community leaders, as well as a strong management team to ensure that donations are wisely managed and leveraged to maximize the benefit to the students. The Polk State College Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization as designated by the Internal Revenue Service.

### Polk State College Mission

Polk State College is a quality higher education institution that provides Polk County and beyond with access to affordable associate and baccalaureate degree programs, career certificates, and workforce employment programs that are delivered to students through various modalities and innovative technologies.





# THE OPPORTUNITY

**The President serves as the institution's chief executive officer and corporate secretary to the board of trustees, providing visionary, mission-driven leadership. The President guides strategic planning and institutional effectiveness while fostering a culture of student success, access, and academic excellence.**

Working collaboratively with faculty, staff, students, trustees, and community partners, the President oversees financial stewardship, resource development, academic programs, enrollment management, and campus operations.

The role carries responsibility for policy implementation, regulatory compliance, and accountability to state performance goals.

As the institution's principal ambassador, the President cultivates partnerships, advances workforce and transfer pathways, and ensures responsible governance aligned with state law and Board priorities.

## Key Responsibilities

Polk State College, the largest public college in Polk County, Florida, is an indispensable and valued community partner, highly responsive to local educational and workforce needs.

The Polk State President is a visible, active member of the College community and must display technical and principled leadership in all matters.

**To achieve this, the President must be an accomplished, energetic leader who:**

- Provides visionary leadership, reporting directly to the District Board of Trustees and ensuring compliance with the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education while aligning institutional priorities with state and community needs to advance student success and academic excellence.
- Articulates and advances a compelling, mission-centered vision in partnership with the Board, guiding strategic planning and institutional priorities, and taking calculated, transformational risks to position the College for success in a rapidly changing educational environment.

- Demonstrates extensive academic leadership experience, including accreditation, curriculum development, articulation agreements, and workforce alignment, ensuring programs meet evolving student and community needs.
- Fosters a culture of engagement, promoting collaboration, transparency, and respect among students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders, and advancing the “one college” concept across multiple campuses and centers.
- Serves as the College’s chief executive and public representative, strengthening relationships with legislators, community leaders, industry partners, and donors, and partnering with the College’s direct-support organization and Board of Trustees to advance advocacy, resource development, and philanthropic support consistent with Florida law.
- Provides strategic, transparent, and ethical fiscal stewardship, aligning resources with institutional goals, promoting affordability, diversifying funding streams, and ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and audit requirements.
- Champions academic excellence and student success, advancing high-quality instruction, innovation, comprehensive student-centered services, and seamless systems, using data-informed strategies to improve enrollment, retention, completion, and institutional effectiveness.

- Leads long-range planning for capital assets, facilities, and technology, integrating innovation and digital transformation to enhance learning, operational efficiency, and institutional growth.
- Cultivates and sustains a high-performing workforce, supporting professional development, leadership growth, a positive organizational culture, compliance with employment laws, and strategic talent management.
- Demonstrates experience in crisis management, safety planning, and institutional resilience, ensuring preparedness and effective response to emergencies.
- Maintains a strong, transparent, and collaborative partnership with the Board of Trustees, providing timely, data-informed counsel, executing Board policies faithfully, and ensuring clear communication and thorough preparation to support effective governance.

### Required Minimum Qualifications

- An earned doctorate or other terminal degree is preferred.
- Candidates must have a combination of credentials and/or experience sufficient to guarantee the respect and confidence of a wide range of college constituents.
- Candidates with a variety of leadership experience are strongly encouraged to apply.





# CENTRAL, FLORIDA

Polk County is a “best of both worlds” location that offers Central Florida access, economic momentum and authentic Florida lifestyle. Nestled in one of Florida’s fastest growing regions, residents are conveniently located between Orlando and Tampa but enjoy small-town benefits.

Polk County is a tight-knit community where networking is relationship driven, business leaders are accessible, and schools and colleges are expanding. With more than 550 lakes, expansive outdoor recreation as well as growing arts and food scenes, there is a lot to experience within county lines.

Polk County is home to attractions including LEGOLAND® Florida Resort, Westgate River Ranch Resort, Bok Tower Gardens, Bonnet Springs Park, and historic downtowns and museums that provide entertainment for the whole family.

Both Polk County public schools and private schools are excellent and plentiful as well as the three chartered schools operated by Polk State College. Within Polk County there are also many medical centers, hospitals, clinics, and physicians from which to choose.

## Application & Nomination Process

*Confidential inquiries are welcomed, and nominations are invited.*



**MYERS McRAE**  
EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND CONSULTING  
(478) 330-6222 MyersMcRae.com

### Applications

1) All application packets must include the following:

- a) A letter of application that addresses the responsibilities and qualifications of the position
- b) A current Curriculum Vitae
- c) At least four references with full contact information including e-mail (*References will not be contacted without consent from applicant.*)

A background and criminal report will be conducted on the finalists selected for campus interviews.

2) **Submit application materials online, preferably as PDFs.**

Additional information is requested with the submission of materials.

**The deadline for applications is April 29, 2026.**

[APPLY HERE](#)

*Confidential inquiries are welcomed, and nominations are invited.*

### Nominations

Submit nominations with complete contact and e-mail information for the individual being nominated.

[NOMINATE HERE](#)

### Consultants

Polk State College has retained Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting to assist the Search Committee in its identification and review of the President. **Kenny Daugherty**, President, and **Brianna Douglas**, Ph.D., Vice President and Consultant of Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting, are leading this search. Request a conversation regarding this search at [KennyDaugherty@MyersMcrae.com](mailto:KennyDaugherty@MyersMcrae.com) or [BriannaDouglas@MyersMcrae.com](mailto:BriannaDouglas@MyersMcrae.com).



*Polk State College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs, activities, or employment. For information about the College's equal access and equal opportunity policies and procedures, or to file a complaint, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, 3425 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland, FL 33803, 863.669.2903, [compliance@polk.edu](mailto:compliance@polk.edu). For additional information, visit [polk.edu/compliance](http://polk.edu/compliance).*