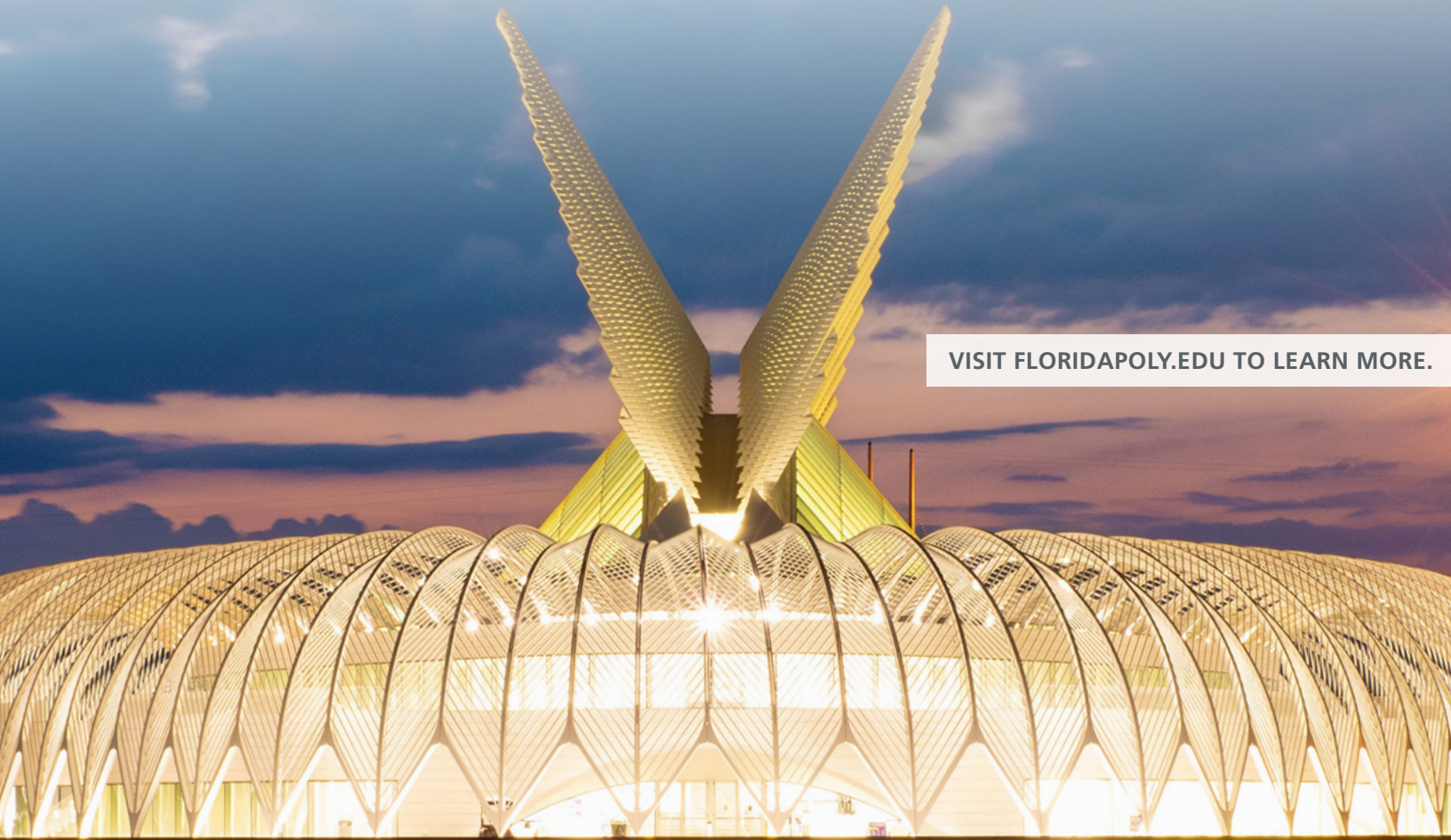




**FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC  
UNIVERSITY®**



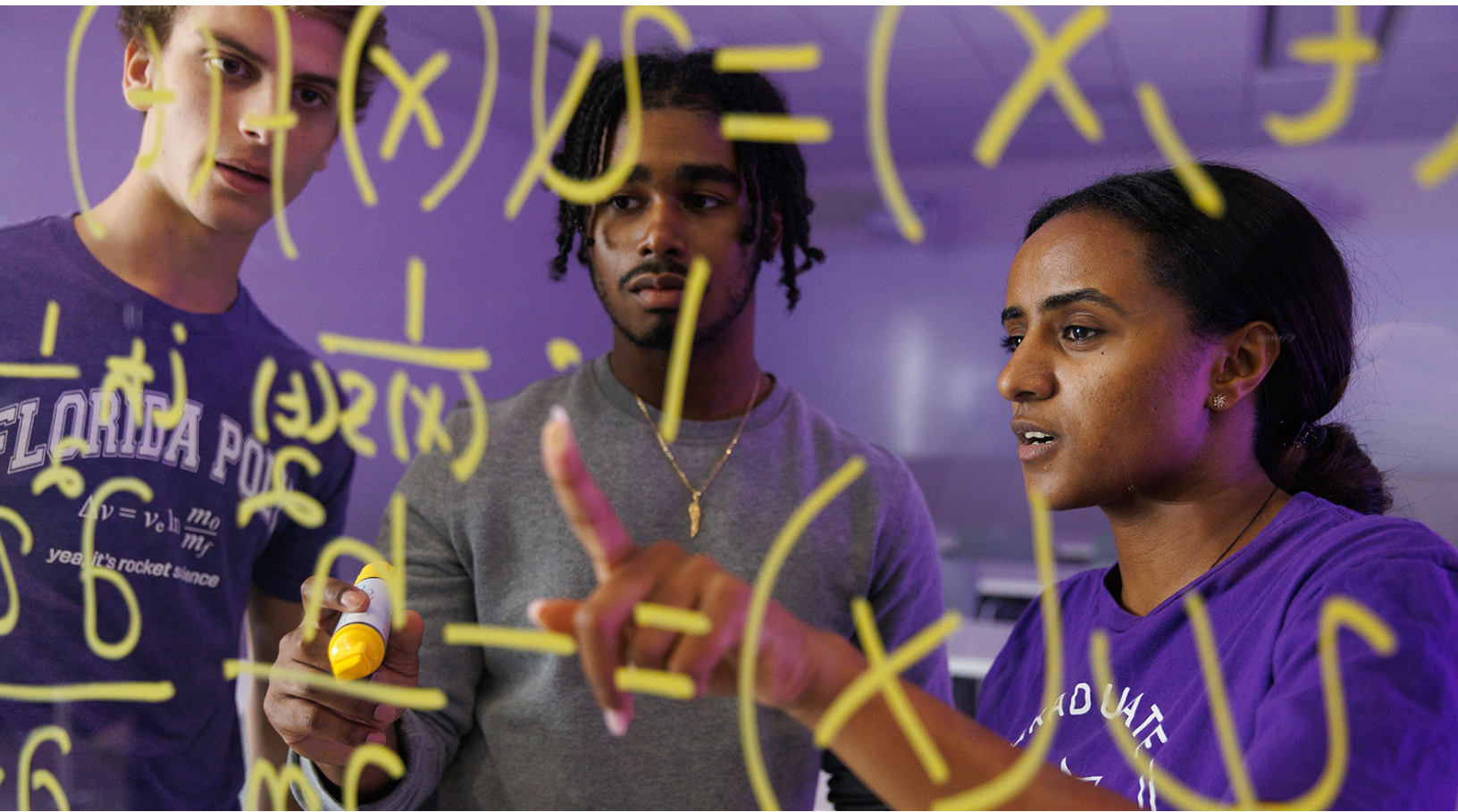
VISIT [FLORIDAPOLY.EDU](http://FLORIDAPOLY.EDU) TO LEARN MORE.

*Inviting Applications and Nominations for*

# Chief Development Officer



*Florida Polytechnic University, based in beautiful Lakeland, Florida, seeks an experienced leader in development with a proven track record of successful fundraising across diverse sources to serve as its **Chief Development Officer**.*



## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Florida Polytechnic University was created 2012 as Florida's first and only all-STEM public university and welcomed its first class of students in the fall of 2014. The University's goal: provide an excellent STEM-focused education preparing high-ability students to meet the mounting statewide demand for the high-skill professionals industry needs to succeed and continue innovating.

After aggressively achieving critical milestones and accreditations, the University began building its reputation as a remarkable provider of STEM degrees. It rapidly proved its value to the state with the success of its very first graduating class and has been growing since into a solid producer of highly skilled graduates.

Florida Poly is nationally ranked and recognized for its top-quality STEM education, career outcomes, and outstanding affordability. It has more than 1,700

high-achieving students working toward degrees in 12 undergraduate and five graduate programs. Each program is created to be responsive to the evolving needs of industry as technology and scientific advances develop. With an emphasis on hands-on education and small class size, the University provides students with real-world experience through internships, capstone design projects, and employment opportunities with high-tech employers throughout the state.

Florida Poly has deliberately and exponentially grown essential aspects of the institution, including student enrollment, distinguished research faculty, academic programs, industry partnerships, and campus facilities. The iconic campus in Lakeland boasts two award-winning and architecturally stunning academic buildings, and a third opens in 2025. Its student body has grown significantly, sparking the need to build a third residence hall, which opened in the fall of 2024.



## #1 PUBLIC COLLEGE

in the Southeast



## #20 PUBLIC ENGINEERING PROGRAM

in the nation without a Ph.D.



## #2 BEST VALUE

Public College in the Southeast

Florida Polytechnic University stands as a beacon of innovation and cutting-edge education in the state of Florida. With its distinctive focus on core STEM disciplines, state-of-the-art facilities, and a commitment to research and industry collaboration, the University has successfully created an environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on learning. And as it continues to evolve, Florida Poly remains dedicated to shaping the future of its students and making impactful contributions to the fields of engineering and applied sciences, as well as to the state's economy.

### OUR MISSION

We serve students and industry through educational excellence and discovery, advancement, and application of knowledge in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

### OUR VISION

Highly desirable graduates and solutions for a resilient high-tech economy.

### FLORIDA POLY FOUNDATION

The Florida Polytechnic University Foundation empowers students to achieve their dreams of higher education, provides essential resources for faculty and staff in their pursuit of groundbreaking research, and drives key University initiatives, enabling Florida Poly to give back to its community, the state, and the world. The Foundation accomplishes its mission by partnering with the University to engage the community, inspire investment, and steward resources to build a world-class university. The Foundation is the University's 501(c)(3) direct support organization.





# THE OPPORTUNITY

Florida Polytechnic University is seeking a Chief Development Officer with proven leadership experience to oversee the Florida Polytechnic University Foundation and serve as the Foundation’s CEO. As the Chief Development Officer and CEO of the Foundation, the right candidate will work closely with the University President and Foundation Board to plan and lead fundraising initiatives, establishing very high expectations and aggressive, achievable goals. The role oversees all Foundation activities, including fundraising and managing relationships with current and prospective donors.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Development Operations

- Directs a program of fund development for the University, which achieves goals for external resource development, charitable contributions, planned giving, donor cultivation, alumni and donor records, campaign management, and resource allocation.

### University Foundation

- Coordinates all major decisions regarding the Foundation with the President of the University.

### Fundraising Goals

- Establishes and is accountable for fundraising and alumni development goals and objectives each year.
- Administration of an annual fund campaign and special, major, and planned gift programs.
- Administration of prospect/donor research, gift processing and records, donor cultivation, recognition and stewardship, and the comprehensive and integrated operations and systems needed to support the University.
- Creates a culture of strong collaboration with the University and operates the Foundation in lockstep with the mission, vision, guiding principles, and strategic plan of the University, and the administrative goals of the University President.

### Donor Relations

- Identifies and cultivates prospective donors (individuals, corporations, and foundations).
- Provides leadership for communicating the needs of the University to donors and prospective donors. Manages personnel and develops aggressive goals for fundraising for all development officers.

## Reporting

- Prepares appropriate statistical reports on all fundraising, development, and alumni activities, and presents those reports regularly (as requested) to the President.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Nine years of experience with demonstrated successes.
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Master's degree in a relevant field preferred. In lieu of a degree, any appropriate combination of relevant education, experience, and/or certifications may be considered.
- Five years of fundraising experience in the university, nonprofit, or corporate fundraising environment. Higher education fundraising with expertise in donor relationship management experience preferred.
- Proven track record of successful fundraising across diverse sources, including major gifts, grants, and individual donations.

## SKILLS & ABILITIES

- Strong leadership, communication, and strategic planning skills; excellent interpersonal communication skills; excellent financial management skills; and demonstrated effective personnel management and accountability experience.

- Ability to work within a culture of collaboration, respect, transparency, and harmony.
- Ability to lead and inspire a team to achieve aggressive goals; skill in providing clear direction, delegating, and removing obstacles to get work done; skill at holding self and others accountable to clearly stated commitments.
- Ability to communicate with and effectively represent the University and the Foundation to targeted audiences, both verbally and in writing.
- Ability to lead a Foundation Board that actively participates and engages in meetings and fundraising activities, and brings potential donors to the University.
- Demonstrates success in building and managing relationships with and raising funds from industry, corporations, and private donors.
- Knowledge of current trends in university fundraising and capital campaigns.
- Knowledge of industry relations and current methods of fundraising from industry.
- Knowledge of prospect research and grant proposal development.
- Ability to act with honesty, integrity, and authenticity, and within the framework of the University's guiding principles.





## Kelli Stargel

Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Development, and External Relations

Kelli Stargel is the Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Development, and External Relations at Florida Polytechnic University, where she leads the efforts to develop and manage statewide relationships and partnerships, leveraging them to further the University's goals. This includes maximizing engagement opportunities for industry partners, donors, business and community leaders, and other major constituent groups throughout the state.

A former Florida State Senator (2012–2022) and Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Stargel played a pivotal role in shaping the state's budget, particularly in education, infrastructure, and economic development. She also served in the Florida House of Representatives (2008–2012), where she championed policies that expanded access to education, strengthened workforce development, and supported STEM initiatives. During her time in the legislature, Stargel was instrumental in pushing policy that established Florida Poly as the State of Florida's only all-STEM University as well as securing necessary state funding.





**#1 Fastest Growing City in the U.S.**  
– Bloomberg

**#2 Best City for Wage Growth**  
– Moneygeek

**#5 Safest Places to Live**  
– U.S. News and World Report

# LAKELAND

Nestled in the heart of Central Florida, Lakeland blends small-town charm with big-city conveniences. With about 120,000 residents, it offers an ideal mix of peaceful suburban life and the excitement of a lively city. Known for its stunning landscapes, Lakeland is home to several beautiful lakes, including Lake Hollingsworth, Lake Mirror, and Lake Morton. These tranquil spots provide opportunities for boating, fishing, picnicking, and outdoor exercise, with the historic Lake Mirror Promenade being a favorite for leisurely strolls and cultural events throughout the year.

Lakeland has something for everyone, including Downtown's charming Munn Park Historic District, with its unique shops and restaurants, and the newly opened Bonnet Springs Park, an urban and natural park perfect for families and outdoor lovers. Circle B Bar Reserve offers restored wetlands and wildlife trails, and the Downtown Farmers Curb Market is a terrific spot to explore local produce, crafts, and more. For foodies, the city's diverse dining scene offers everything from gourmet restaurants to casual eateries. Lakeland's rich cultural scene features live performances at the Lakeland Community Theatre and the Polk Theatre, and the Imperial Symphony Orchestra brings beautiful music to the city.

For education, Polk County boasts a strong school system with 120 public schools including magnet

and charter schools, nearly 30 nationally accredited workforce academies, six Florida Arts Model Schools, and 25 private schools.

With warm, sunny weather year-round, Lakeland offers endless opportunities for outdoor activities and sports. The city is home to the Detroit Tigers' spring training and hosts various other sporting events. Just a short drive away, residents can catch professional sports teams like the Tampa Bay Rays (MLB), Lightning (NHL), and Buccaneers (NFL), as well as the Orlando Magic (NBA) and Orlando City Soccer Club (MLS).

Locally, you can enjoy hiking and birding at Circle B Bar Reserve, kayaking with exotic animals at Safari Wilderness Ranch, exploring trails, gardens, and museums at Bonnet Springs Park, or fishing for bass at Tenoroc Fish Management Area, one of the top lakes in the state.

Above all, Lakeland's greatest treasure is its people. Both longtime residents and newcomers in this friendly community give the city a warm and lively vibe. From historic neighborhoods to modern developments, Lakeland's diverse mix of living options reflects the city's growth and charm. With its natural beauty, business opportunities, cultural richness, and modern amenities, Lakeland truly captures the essence of the Florida lifestyle, making it an ideal place to call home.

## Application & Nomination Process

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



### Applications

- 1) All application packets must include the following:
  - a) A letter of application that includes the candidate's (1) interest in and qualifications for the position, (2) leadership philosophy, and (3) vision for Florida Polytechnic University Foundation and fundraising
  - b) Current curriculum vitae or résumé
  - c) Unofficial transcripts of all degrees and certificates earned. (*Official transcripts will be required of finalists.*)
  - d) At least four references with full contact information including email (*References will not be contacted without consent from applicant.*)
- 2) Submit application materials online, preferably as PDFs. **For best consideration, complete applications should be received before March 14, 2025.**

[APPLY HERE](#)

### Nominations

Submit nominations with complete contact and email information for the individual being nominated.

[NOMINATE HERE](#)

### Consultant

**Florida Polytechnic University has retained Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting** to assist the Search Committee for the Chief Development Officer in its identification and review of candidates. **Kenny Daugherty**, president of Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting, is the lead consultant for this search. **Request a conversation regarding this search at [KennyDaugherty@myersmcr.com](mailto:KennyDaugherty@myersmcr.com).**



*Florida Polytechnic University is committed to providing and maintaining a dignified environment in which all members of the University Community appreciate and respect one another by collectively sustaining a welcoming environment to work, study, live and interact with one another free from any form of unlawful discrimination. The University's expectation of its community is to maintain and foster a welcoming environment for all. The University does not discriminate in offering access to any educational programs or activities or in conducting its employment practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, marital status, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status (each hereinafter referred to as a "protected class") or any other legally protected class or basis under applicable federal and/or state laws.*