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Tallahassee Community College
Valencia College

June 7, 2016

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor of Florida
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

The Degrees to Jobs Summit was an inspiring and informative two days that touched upon a cornerstone of our work: connecting students with jobs. The Florida College System continues to think about how we build upon our great track record of ensuring that our students are prepared to transfer to one of our State University System institutions or enter the workforce. At present, 9 in 10 graduates from our colleges are working or continuing their education, with an average salary for full time workers of \$40,804. While we are proud of these outcomes, we recognize more work needs to be done to ensure students graduate and get jobs after college. Toward that end, we will continue to tailor our educational offerings to the specific needs of our local workforces. Further, we will actively promote internships that provide work experiences while in college and connect students to what is being learned in the classroom. These methods have been, and will continue to be, the keys to building on the successes of our world-class system.

Your landmark legislation, Educational Access and Affordability, supports our System goal to provide every Floridian an affordable higher education. We will work together across colleges and with the Board of Governors to highlight effective practices and identify effective tactics to make college more affordable, such as exploring and enhancing existing accelerated mechanisms for completion.

While educating for the workforce is core to our mission, we also remain committed to providing an affordable, high quality pathway to a bachelor's degree. Every year the Florida College System sends more than 30,000 students to the State University System of Florida, with a grade point average equal to those students who started at a university, and saving students nearly \$150 million dollars in tuition and fees. This is due to the strong and vibrant 2+2 system in Florida. The collective impact is a university system where nearly half of its upper division student body started at a Florida College System institution.

To that end, the Department of Education, the Division of Florida Colleges and the Florida College System presidents commit to and accept the challenge to help more students *Finish in Four, Save More*. The Florida College System is hard at work to inventory the practices taking place within our colleges to set a foundational level of practice. Furthermore, we are conducting analyses to understand which practices have a positive impact on student success, and we are committed to elevating these best practices system-wide. While it is early, there are things we have already identified that we know help students.

Governor Rick Scott

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We know students benefit from intrusive advising. Our students, many of whom are first-generation college students, need the guidance and support so that they can adapt to and integrate within the college community. Students also need assistance in making course selections to ensure they lead to a credential. We will look to expand these services by leveraging technology and offering a full array of online programs.

Students need structured pathways that put them on a clear path to a job. Knowing this to be true, the System is in the process of aligning all degree programs within eight broad categories (i.e. meta-majors). This will allow students to identify a broad area of study that aligns with their interests, and then be informed of the various certificate and degree programs mapped to allow students to finish college quickly. An area for further development is how we can best integrate these structured programs into high schools for students taking dual enrollment courses.

This work will not take place in a silo as we continue to strengthen our engagement with our K-12 and university counterparts to maximize access and provide seamless educational opportunities for all Floridians.

In closing, the Florida College System would like to reaffirm our commitment to the State of Florida and each community we serve. Our colleges are the localized brokers of educational opportunity for students and economic development for business. By accepting the challenge to *Finish in Four, Save More* we commit to remain vigilant in our role as an affordable and quality pathway to the workforce and a bachelor's degree.

Sincerely,



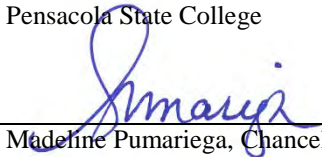
Randall Reid, Chair
Florida College System Trustee
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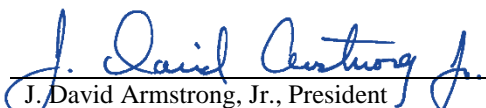
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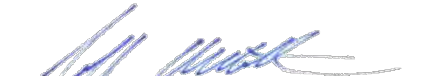

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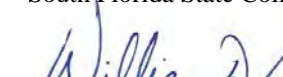

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