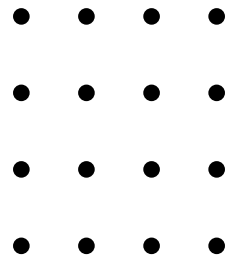
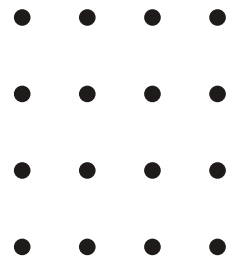


2022-23 FCSUA ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





Overview

The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA, the Center) serves as the state coordinating center to establish and support inclusive postsecondary education programs in collaboration with universities, state, and technical colleges. The overall goal is to increase independent living and competitive integrated employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Located in the College of Community Innovation and Education at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, FL., the Center was established following the passing of the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Act (the Act; F1004.6495), effective July 1, 2016. The Act charged the Center and its executive director with implementation of the Act, and meeting the accountability requirements specified therein, including submission of an annual report by October 1 each year.

This executive summary provides highlights of the Center's work and impact during the past year, from Oct. 1, 2022 – Sept. 30, 2023. There were 25 approved Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (FPCTPs). Twenty (20) were required to submit annual reports to the Center, reflecting student and program information from the 2022-23 academic year (AY). Reported student data, however, were derived from 19 FPCTPs with student enrollment. Stories from FPCTP alumni and program leaders on the impact these programs have on students, families and their communities are featured.



Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs



25 Approved programs located across 31 campuses



Universities

7

- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Florida International University
- Southeastern University
- University of Central Florida
- University of North Florida*
- University of South Florida

State Colleges

7

- Broward College
- Florida State College at Jacksonville*
- Indian River State College
- Santa Fe College
- St. Petersburg College
- Tallahassee Community College
- The College of the Florida Keys

Technical Colleges

11

- Emerald Coast Technical College*
- Lee County Technical Colleges
- Lively Technical College
- Manatee Technical College*
- McFatter Technical College
- Okaloosa Technical College
- Orange Technical College - West Campus
- Osceola Technical College*
- Pinellas Technical College*
- Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College
- Sheridan Technical College

**newly approved*



Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities
University of Central Florida





Program Data 2022-2023



Grants & Scholarships

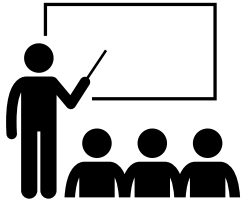


**\$16
Million**

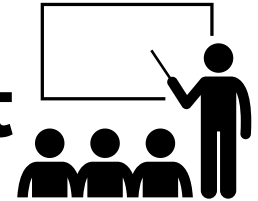
grant awards for program
implementation

**\$1.8
Million**

issued in student
scholarships



Course Enrollment



1518

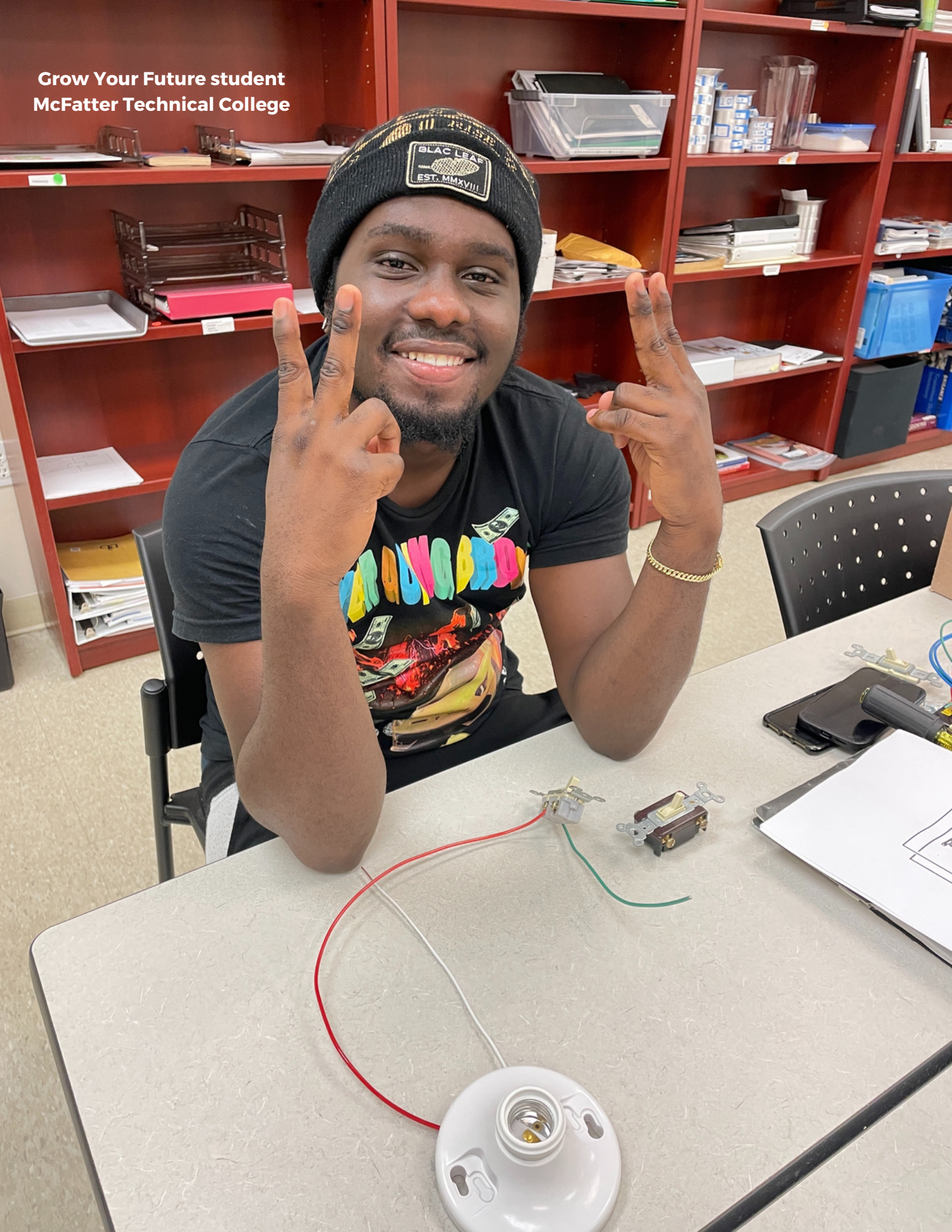
Courses students
were enrolled



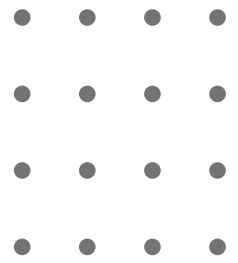
954

Inclusive courses
students were enrolled

Grow Your Future student
McFatter Technical College



“Creating a CTP provides opportunities for students to gain valuable skills...”



Brook Spires, B.A. Program Coordinator

Pathways Academy
Emerald Coast Technical College



Emerald Coast Technical College (EMTC) wanted to provide students with a new opportunity to pursue a career path that was not open to them before, which led to them becoming one of the newest FPCTP this year, developing Pathways Academy. EMTC became the 20th FPCTP in December 2022.

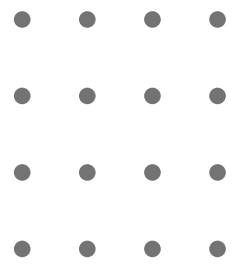
Brook Spires currently serves as the program coordinator for the newly established program and says that individuals with intellectual disabilities have limited avenues to experience postsecondary education and learn skills that can translate in the workforce in an inclusive environment. With the launch of Pathways Academy, Spires hopes that students with intellectual disabilities can now take the path toward competitive integrated employment. Pathways Academy will empower students to obtain a meaningful credential, enter various CTE pathway careers, gain independence, earn wages, and contribute to their communities upon program completion.

Not only do FPCTPs benefit students with intellectual disabilities, they also increase an institution’s ability to meet the interests and needs of a broader range of students from varied backgrounds, Spires says. This extends into the community as well, including places of employment, which opens the doors for students with intellectual disabilities, who have historically had limited work opportunities. Spires is excited to see students enroll in the program and says that, within the next year, ECTC will be ready to open its doors to the community and welcome its first cohort of students.

Project ACCESS
The College of the
Florida Keys



“When students with any disabilities are included, we have truly broken barriers...”



Linda Mussillo, M.A. Program Administrator

Project SAINT
Santa Fe College

Linda Mussillo believes that Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs are a “win-win-win” situation for college campuses. Mussillo, the program administrator for Project SAINT at Santa Fe College, believes that including individuals with intellectual disabilities on the college campus enriches the campus for students, faculty and staff.

FPCTPs prepare students to be productive members of the workforce and in their communities. Students are prepared through their enrollment in classes with their peers without disabilities and opportunities on campus, earning industry specific credentials, and learning crucial soft skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving and communication, Mussillo says.

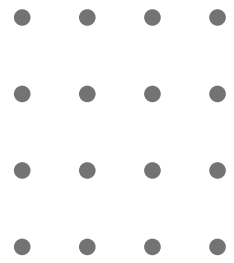
Mussillo has seen first-hand the impact of FPCTPs on students’ lives. One student, Danielle, earned a credential in the Artist and Horticulture pathway. During her time at Santa Fe, she developed her skills in photography and interned under the Santa Fe Media photography department. Danielle now is an entrepreneur and selling her photos. In addition to photography, Danielle also received her Safe Food Handling certification and secured a job working at Tropical Smoothie, where she works in food prep and gets the chance to try out the different smoothies.

Success stories like Danielle’s are possible through programs like Project SAINT, says Mussillo. She believes that a sensible, modified, supportive college experience should be available to students with intellectual disabilities, so they can learn to become more independent, follow their dreams, develop their talents and connect with others.

Academy for Community Inclusion
Florida Atlantic University



“The skills practiced and mastered during this program will empower students as they enter the workforce...”



Kelly Kearney, Ed.D, BCBA-D

Associate Director

Academy for Community Inclusion
Florida Atlantic University

Having an integrated job in the community and gaining independence through a meaningful career is a universal goal for all students who attend college, and students with intellectual disabilities are no exception. That’s the belief of Kelly Kearney, associate director for the Academy for Community Inclusion, or ACI for short, at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) - and it serves as the driving force behind her work.



Students can choose between several University-approved certificates; however, all students are required to earn the employment track certificate. The employment track encompasses coursework and internships, both on-campus and off-campus, that culminate into part-time competitive employment during the Career Internship during the final semester of the program.

Kearney knows that all of the hard work students put into the program is beneficial to them. Recently, a staff member from the FAU provost’s office went to a local grocery store and was engaged in a conversation about the FAU football team with one of the baggers - only to discover during the conversation, the bagger attended the Academy for Community Inclusion! The student is currently thriving and loves his job, where he works 30 hours a week.

Experiences such as this fuel Kearney to keep working and ensure that students with intellectual disabilities continue to have doors of opportunity opened to them to attend colleges. She believes that open and broader opportunities - which includes students with intellectual disabilities - are not only important for the students attending the FPCTPs, but for the university as a whole.



Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program



Gender



47% female students



53% male students



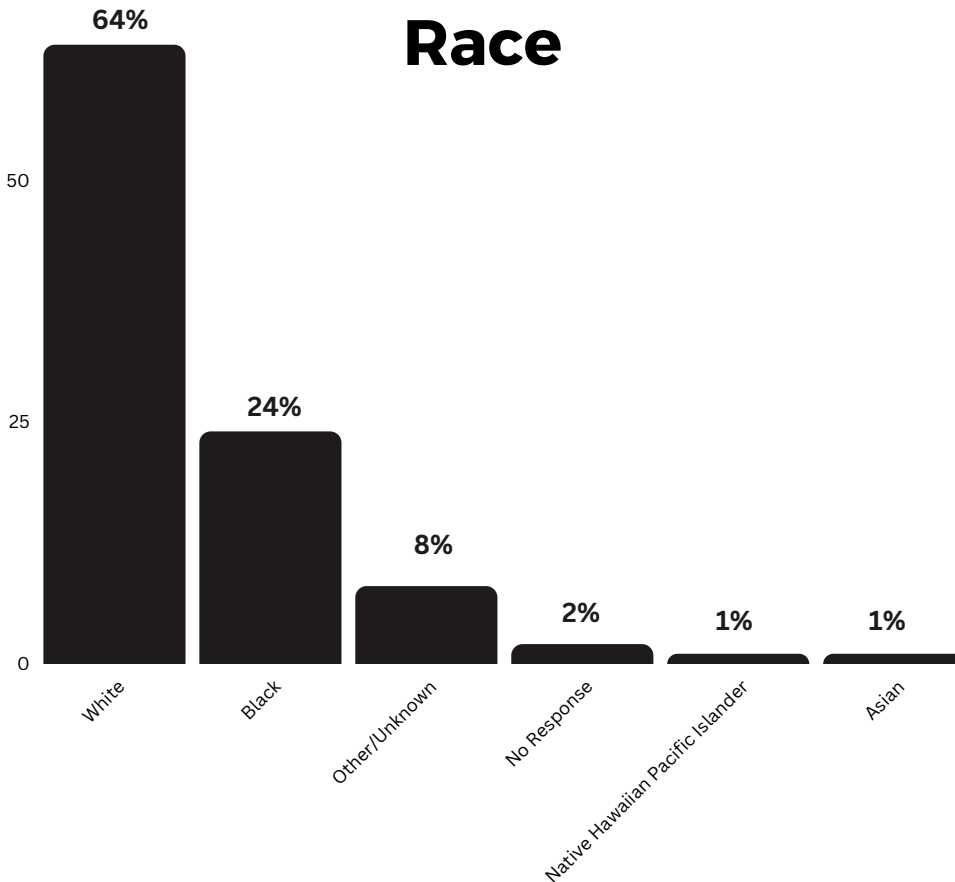
Residential



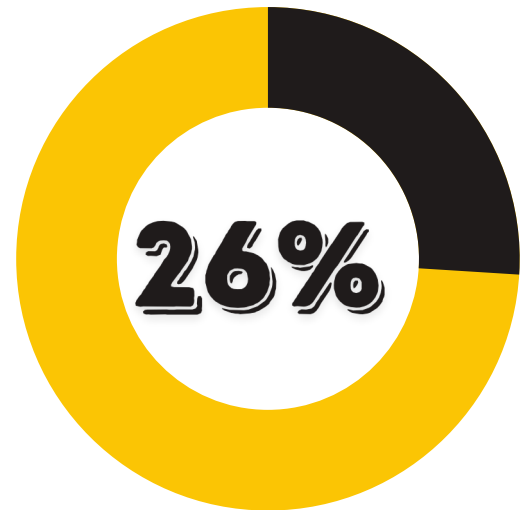
Approximately 18% of students were not living at home with their parents.

75

Race



Hispanic/Latino



Approximately 26% of students identified as Hispanic/Latino.





Student Data 2022-2023



274

Students enrolled in
FPCTPs



89%

Students who
maintained
satisfactory academic
progress

86%

Retention rate



Completers

60%

Students who gained **work
experience** in competitive,
supported, unpaid and
other settings



Top Five Employment Career Clusters



28

Marketing, Sales and
Service



23

Hospitality and
Tourism



16

Agriculture, Food and
Natural Resources



10

Education and
Training



6

Human Services





Class of 2023



University of
Central Florida

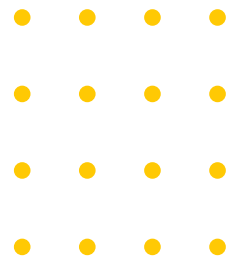


The College of
the Florida Keys



McFatter
Technical
College

“The journey has not been easy,
but it has been worth it...”



Dewon Clayton

Project TOPS

Robert Morgan Educational
Center & Technical College

After hearing a guest speaker share his passion for the culinary arts at a community event, Dewon Harvey Clayton decided that he wanted to pursue culinary arts as well. He enrolled in Project TOPS at Robert Morgan Educational Center & Technical College, with a dream to work in a Michelin-Star restaurant following program completion.

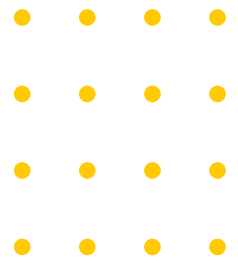


The journey to the finish line had a few obstacles for Dewon to overcome. One of the biggest challenges was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted education around the world. In addition to facing the implications of the pandemic, Dewon also was placed on academic probation during his time in Project TOPS.

Although temporarily stalled, he became even more determined to accomplish his goals. He met with his teachers, who worked with him to improve. His friendly demeanor and positive attitude made him a role model and inspiration to other new students and to staff members. He earned the Occupational Completion Points for the Baking & Pastry Arts program and enrolled in the Professional Culinary Arts & Hospitality program. He was assigned to be the assistant sous chef by Chef Montesano and hired as a part-time Deli Prep Cook for Publix - where he hopes to be promoted to a full-time employee. Dewon has also participated in the SkillsUSA's Action Skills' competition where he earned a bronze medal for his presentation of a Watermelon Feta Salad.

In addition to wanting to be a full-time Publix employee, Dewon also wants to start a food truck - all stepping stones toward his ultimate dream of working in a Michelin-Star restaurant. He says that the journey has not been easy, but it was worth it upon graduating in July 2023.

“Attending college empowered me to achieve my career goal of becoming a security guard...”



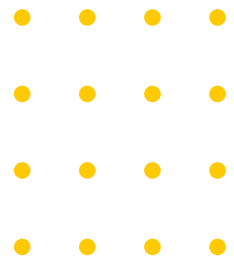
**Michael
Lincoln-McCreight**
Project STAGE
Indian River State College

Growing up, Michael had a heart to help and serve people and keep those in his community safe. He decided that becoming a security officer was the perfect fit for him, and Indian River State College was the right path for him to take in order to make his dream come true, where he graduated in 2019 with a credential in security.

Michael’s favorite quote to live by is “With great power comes great responsibility” and takes his role as a security guard very seriously. But achieving his dream of attending college also encouraged him to continue dreaming bigger. Upon completion of his program, Michael became the first lieutenant for the Fort Pierce Guardian Angels and worked in the missing persons’ unit. In this role, his desire to serve his community, coupled with his compassion for others, helped reunite numerous missing and lost individuals with their families. Michael also worked at Universal Studios Orlando as a security guard, which he described as a powerful experience, working at a theme park that he enjoyed going to as a child and seeing his favorite characters, like Shrek, the Grinch and others, up close.

Michael wants to continue to serve, protect and advocate for individuals with intellectual disabilities. He says that, thanks to Indian River State College, he feels prepared to continue moving forward with achieving his dreams and wants other individuals to believe that they can also go to college.

“Attending college has been the greatest key to my growth and success...”



Cassandra Travel

FIU Embrace Education

Florida International
University

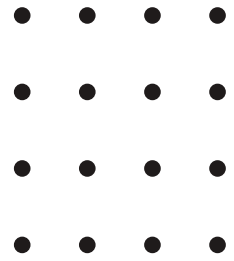
Going to college can be an exciting experience, but it can also be a challenge. For some students, it is the first time leaving home and being on their own.

This was Cassandra Travel’s experience when she entered the FIU Embrace Education program at Florida International University. She recalled being nervous about meeting new people and getting out of her comfort zone in a new environment. However, she also knew that to get the most out of her college experience, she couldn’t stay in her comfort zone. In order to grow, she was going to have to try new things and step outside of the familiar.

Every day, she pushed herself to meet someone new, or to a different experience on campus. Before long, she began to build strong relationships with her classmates, her teachers, and other students on campus. New doors of opportunities began to open for Cassandra. These opportunities included traveling with the student delegation at the State of the Art Conference in Syracuse, and participating in the South Beach Wine and Food Festival – a national, star-studded, four-day destination event working alongside some of world’s most renowned wine and spirit producers, chefs and culinary personalities.

Cassandra graduated spring 2023 with a credential in hospitality. She says that she wants to work with either young children or the elderly and currently has been placed in a post-graduation internship in the Early Childhood Center at Baptist Hospital.





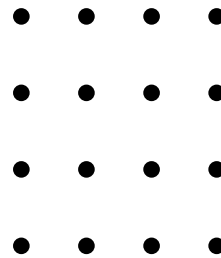
CONCLUSION

During this reporting year, FCSUA continued to implement major elements of the Act. Support to existing and newly developed FPCTPs to improve and expand opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities continued. The Center continued to maintain an active agenda of working with key partners to disseminate information to IHEs and other constituents about the Act, the FPCTPs, and available support and resources from FCSUA.

The FPCTPs maintained a steady course of providing high-quality programs to their students. They continued to implement innovative recruitment and support strategies that yielded an increase in student enrollment and program completion. More institutions of higher education (IHE) expressed interest in becoming an FPCTP, with six becoming approved programs, increasing the number of FPCTPs to 25.

Students are receiving more of their postsecondary education in all campus environments with their peers without disabilities and earning credentials that are industry-recognized. They are being prepared to exit programs and enter competitive integrated employment in career clusters of their choice. According to FPCTP program reports, increased student enrollment, program completion with earned credentials, and secure employment are expected for the next reporting year. Additionally, based on IHE responses to the Center's professional development and outreach efforts, we also expect to see another increase in the number of approved programs across the state, as was evident this year.

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Visit **fcsua.org** for more information

