



Presents

**BEST PRACTICES TO  
PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS**

By

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## **POLK STATE COLLEGE**

### **VISION**

**Polk State College will be a world class college and Florida's leader in workforce development.**

### **MISSION**

**Polk State College is a quality-driven educational institution providing access to affordable associate and baccalaureate degrees, career certificates, and workforce development programs, delivered by diverse, qualified faculty and staff who are committed to student learning and achievement through the consistent practice of collaboration and focus on excellence.**

### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- 1. Enhance the College's contributions to Polk County through quality programs and services that ensure the highest level of student achievement.**
- 2. Expand and create partnerships with business, industry, and education that enhance the College's mission and vision.**
- 3. Recruit and retrain a diverse faculty and staff that reflect the community through a hiring, compensation, and professional development system that values all employees.**
- 4. Develop and execute a comprehensive branding and marketing plan to enhance the College's image as a world class provider of education.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Polk State College is a world class college that embraces diversity and creates an environment of understanding, acceptance, and inclusiveness. The importance of diversity is reflected in our mission statement as well as represented as one of our seven core values. PSC is committed to providing diversity enhancement opportunities for our faculty, students, and staff through memberships, professional development, leadership opportunities, and partnerships. We bring cultural enrichment and cultural awareness to the college community in many ways.**

## **COMMUNITY**

**As a world class college and Florida's leader in workforce development, PSC believes in partnerships with the community we serve as we promote diversity through community sponsorships that promote cultural awareness and cultural enrichment. Community involvement encompasses a wide array of organizations and events, including Florence Villa Community Development Corporation Annual Gala; NAACP Annual Freedom Banquet; First Missionary Baptist Church-Community Heritage Day; Chain of Lake Achiever (COLA); Community Relations Advisory Council Diversity Luncheon; Hispanic Club Lakeland Festival; Minority Achievement Council Scholarship Awards; Focus on Leadership; Black, Brown & College Bound; Polk County Diversity Partnership; National Coalition of 100 Black Women, and various community Chambers of Commerce.**

**Our partnership is also reflected in the various memberships both locally and nationally. Some of these memberships/partnerships include the National Council on Black American Affairs, Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities, Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce of Polk County, Business Leadership Network, Minority Achievement Council, Lakeland Vision Diversity & Inclusion Council, Chancellor Leadership Seminar, and various community Chambers of Commerce.**

**One notable partnership PSC is extremely proud of is co-founding the **Polk County Diversity Partnership**. The Diversity Partnership began in April, 2006 with two institutions that wanted to create diversity awareness and inclusiveness within their institution. Their goal was to develop a collaborative strategy that would maximize their diversity initiatives and resources. They began this process by involving other key organization leaders in the community who were involved in institutional diversity initiatives. These leaders came from a variety of entities—education, business, health, municipality, economic development, and public service. The group decided to begin with a small project that would help individuals leverage their competitive edge around diversity for their organization: a Multicultural Festival that featured a proclamation from the City Commissioners of Lakeland. This project proved to be a success for the collaborative group. The partnership continued to collaborate on diversity activities that supported their organizations through the year. After one year, the diversity partnership doubled its membership, and the Multicultural Festival has now turned into a week of activities that includes a diversity conference, family day, college students' cultural celebration, and education initiative.**

**While the diversity partnership works to promote county-wide inclusion, diversity has to be institutionalized to promote system change that improves education, economics, and quality of life for all Polk County residents. As the partnership has grown, its purpose has expanded to include promoting and embracing the inclusion of people of different races and cultures through collaboration, cooperation, and partnership in diversity initiatives throughout Polk and adjacent counties to enrich the community we serve. In aligning with the vision of the partnership, the objectives listed below have been adopted.**

### **Objectives**

- 1. To increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates in the education arena.**
- 2. To promote understanding and acceptance of different races and cultures.**
- 3. To provide programming and education that supports diversity, cultural awareness, and global inclusion to enrich the community we serve.**
- 4. To work together to move diversity forward by assisting organizations with programs and the implementation of diversity initiatives.**

## COLLEGE COMMUNITY

### STUDENTS

Polk State College sets a high priority on serving our students by providing world class education opportunities. We also provide world class cultural enrichment opportunities for our students as we continue to embrace diversity and create an environment of understanding, acceptance, and inclusiveness. This opportunity focuses on partnership with our Student Activities and Leadership Office (SALO) to promote cultural awareness and cultural enrichment.

SOLA encompasses all clubs, organizations, and leadership opportunities as well as social and community services activities for our students. In addition, SOLA sponsors the Multicultural Programming opportunities presented at PSC. These opportunities include:

- ❖ **Student Involvement: Various Clubs and Organizations**
  - Black Student Union
  - International Business Club
  - International Circle
  - PSC Equity
  - SHOUT
  - Student Government-WH
  - Student Government-LK
  - Student Community Alliance
  - Psi Beta
  - Phi Theta Kappa
- ❖ **Student Activities and Event Planning**
- ❖ **Community Service**
- ❖ **Intramural Sports**
- ❖ **Health and Wellness Education**
- ❖ **Educational and Multicultural Workshop**
- ❖ **Leadership Seminars and Retreats**
- ❖ **Serving on College-Wide Committees**

PSC's **Trio** Student Support Services program has been instrumental in providing students with the academic and personal support necessary to complete their studies at PSC. Participants are first-generation college students and students with physical, mental, or learning disabilities. Services include:

- ❖ **Developing a success plan for each student**
- ❖ **Creating a transition plan for each student**
- ❖ **Providing mentoring opportunities with faculty or staff**
- ❖ **Providing individualized needs assessments**

**COLLEGE COMMUNITY:  
FACULTY & STAFF**

**MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMMING**

Polk State College's commitment to promoting diversity is reflected in its sponsorship of cultural enrichment opportunities through multicultural programming. These events promote cultural awareness both in the College and in the community we serve. Events and activities include:

- ❖ **Martin Luther King Celebration - JANUARY**
- ❖ **Black History Month - FEBRUARY**
- ❖ **Women's History Month - MARCH**
- ❖ **Diversity Awareness Month – APRIL**
- ❖ **Community Multicultural Festival Celebration - SEPTEMBER**
- ❖ **Hispanic Heritage Month -SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER**
- ❖ **Disabled Awareness Month -OCTOBER**

**LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

PSC's Educational Leadership Enhancement Program is referred to as **ELITE - EXCEPTIONAL LEADERS W/ INNOVATIVE TALENTS & EXCELLENCE**

**What is the ELITE Leadership Program?**

In 2006, Polk (Community) State College made a formal commitment to establish the **ELITE** Educational Leadership Enhancement Program. **ELITE** was created to provide professional development and leadership opportunities for minorities and females who want to advance their careers in higher education. This goal is accomplished through networking with partnering institutions and seasoned professionals who share their knowledge with the participants. Participants work closely with senior administrators who serve as their mentors; learn about PSC from senior management; attend regular scheduled meetings with **ELITE** partners at PSC; and expand their horizons and knowledge by participating in assigned readings and discussions, individual projects, conferences, and leadership retreats.

**What is the benefit of participating in the ELITE Leadership Program?**

This leadership program gives participants an opportunity to strengthen their professional preparation for leadership positions, work in a new area, and find new strengths and skills to be successful administrators in higher education. In addition, **ELITE** alumni are diplomats for the program and share the benefits of the program with future inductees.

## **What can I expect as an ELITE Leadership Ambassador?**

**Participants (called Ambassadors) are required to take part in leadership-building opportunities that will enhance their professional and personal skills:**

- ❖ **Attend monthly ELITE sessions.**
- ❖ **Select a mentor for a minimum one-year mentor/mentee ELITE partnership.**
- ❖ **Develop and implement a project that has institutional impact.**
- ❖ **Attend a three-day personal and professional development workshop during the fall and spring. (October 28 – 30, 2009; June dates TBA).**
- ❖ **Meet with the mentor monthly.**
- ❖ **Attend District Board of Trustees (DBOT) monthly meetings.**
- ❖ **Travel to Tallahassee to see the Legislative session in action. (March/April).**
- ❖ **Meet with and benefit from the experiences of PSC ELITE Alumni.**
- ❖ **Secure a responsible position on a committee or task force in an area of interest.**

## **What happens after the program ends?**

**At the conclusion of the program, ELITE Ambassadors:**

- ❖ **Can build on their experiences through participation in the Leadership Program and continue their partnership with their mentors.**
- ❖ **Can participate in future ELITE leadership opportunities.**
- ❖ **Can receive information pertaining to their career advancement.**
- ❖ **Will commit to the continuation of the ELITE Leadership Enhancement Program by sharing with future Ambassadors through teaching, mentoring, and presentations**
- ❖ **Will provide a written report to President's Staff about this leadership experience and how this experience will be used within their careers at PSC.**

**These are just a select few of the best practices to promote diversity and inclusiveness at Polk State College. Polk State College will continue its leadership role in promoting diversity and creating an environment of inclusiveness. We respect it as part of our past, our present, and our future.**