



## **Community Foundations & Impactful Partnerships: Supporting Graduation Pathways through Scholarships**

**Talent Strong Florida Summit – Florida College Access Network  
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## LEAP – One of 17 Local College Access Networks (LCANs) in Florida

Using a collective impact model of collaboration, LEAP Tampa Bay leadership guides coordinated strategies by partners to:

- Increase the number of people with high-quality college degrees and credentials
- Help meet the needs of local employers and bring more financial stability to families
- **LEAP's goal is to reach 60% of working age adults (age 25-64) in Tampa Bay holding degrees and credentials by 2025**
- This goal aligns with the state-wide "Sail to 60" initiative



# Founding Partners of "LEAP Tampa Bay"



**60%**  
of working age adults in Tampa Bay have a post-secondary degree or high-quality certificate by 2025.

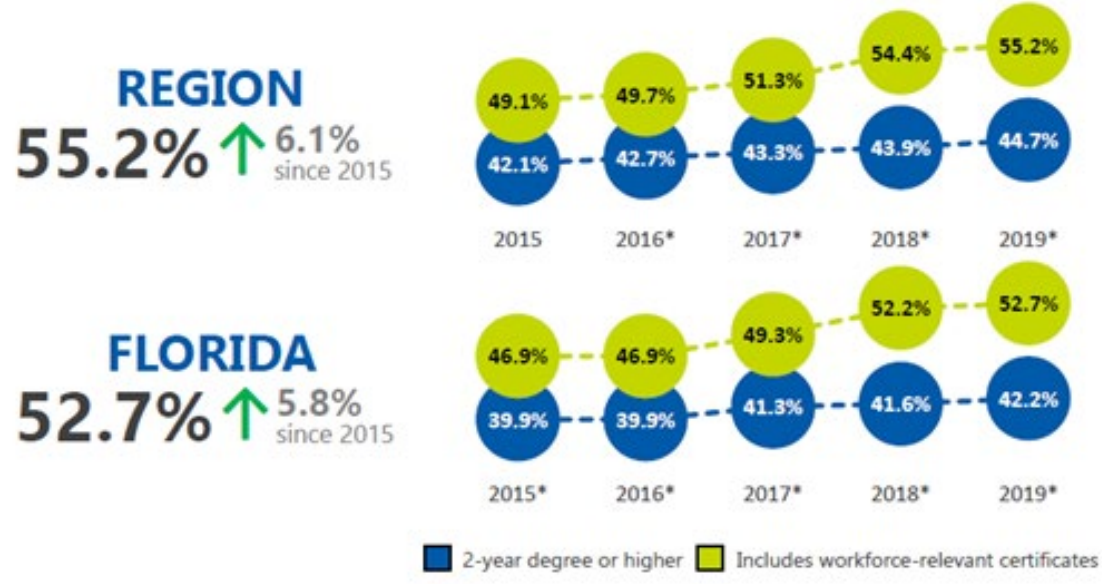
## REGIONAL ATTAINMENT

With 44.7% of Tampa Bay adults holding degrees and an estimated 10.5% a workforce-relevant certificate, Degree Attainment in the Tampa Bay region is **55.2% as of 2019**, Slightly ahead of statewide figures.

# DEGREE ATTAINMENT PROFILE

## LEAP Tampa Bay College Access Network

Residents with a high-quality degree or credential <sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>An estimated 10.5% of Florida residents hold a workforce relevant short-term credential according to the Lumina Foundation. As the Tampa Bay region is often a reasonable reflection of state data, LEAP Tampa Bay uses this information to estimate its overall attainment rate.





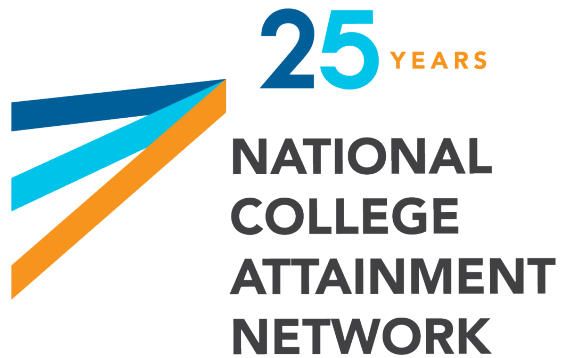
# TAMPA BAY NAMED A TALENT HUB



2019 - National leader in college completion Lumina Foundation of Indiana named **Tampa Bay one of 26 nationwide "Talent Hubs"** thanks to a focus on **Students of Color & Low-Income status as well as innovative programs like Fuse.**



# 2021 NCAN Member of the Year Award of Excellence





# FUSE PROGRAM TIMELINE

**Guaranteed Admission to University of South Florida**

- January – March 2016 =  
First Local Fuse Program Articulation Meetings
- May 2016 = First Broad Statewide Fuse Program Meeting
  - Coincided with May 16, 2016 Launch of LEAP





# DEVELOPMENT OF FUSE PROGRAM

Simultaneous to LEAP's Launch

- Initial inspiration = Institute on Engaging Latino Students on Transfer and College Completion
- HCC and USF desired a program similar to UCF's Direct Connect
- Internal data showed small proportion of transfers with degree and average of 10 terms to completion among A.A. grads
- Initial goals of Fuse = Increase timely degree completion among transfers, promote timely baccalaureate completion upon transfer
- Core of program included 3-year completion goal for A.A., minimum 2.0 GPA, and adherence to GradPath leads to guaranteed admission to program of choice at USF
- Program piloted in fall 2016 with 10 GradPaths



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## Achieving Large-Scale Change through Collective Impact Involves 5 Key Conditions for Shared Success

### Common Agenda

All participants have a **shared vision for change** including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions

### Shared Measurement

**Collecting data and measuring results consistently** across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable

### Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Participant activities must be **differentiated while still being coordinated** through a mutually reinforcing plan of action

### Continuous Communication

**Consistent and open communication** is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and appreciate common motivation

### Backbone Support

Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to **serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies**

*Collaborative  
Leadership:*

*The LEAP Network  
"Accelerates &  
Amplifies"  
our partners'  
work*



# THE “HOW CAN WE HELP?” MOMENT

**Guaranteed Admission to University of South Florida**

- During second semester of program pilot, LEAP discussion turned to supporting the partner efforts
- The answer to the above question was obvious: “Show me the money!”



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# SCHOLARSHIP DESIGN

## Based on Tenets of Fuse

- Scholarship was designed to support tenets of Fuse from the beginning – systematic progress toward a degree
- Student must complete FAFSA, be **Pell-eligible**, complete 20 hours on GradPath within first 3 terms at Hillsborough CC
- Total scholarship amount, total per institution and increments had to be negotiated, but were based on estimated student needs beyond Pell
- GPA ranking used if needed
- Complexity of performance-based scholarship made custom tracking system a necessity
- First scholarships disbursed spring 2018





# APPEAL TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## A Community-wide Scholarship

- Collective Impact calls for a Strong Backbone Organization – Community Foundation of Tampa Bay
- Asked the College Partners to allow fundraising to a neutral foundation like CFTB so community would feel like Fuse is designed to strengthen all the community's institutions
- Agreement to establish the Fuse Scholarship Fund at CFTB and LEAP as a community partner facilitates
- Gifts would be held at CFTB, but funds would be distributed through the College Foundation partners assisting with raising the dollars, writing the grants
- Original grant included some dollars for institutional indirect costs





# GROWING SOPHISTICATION

Turning Learnings Into Future Ideas

- Evaluation of both process and outcomes being supported by funders to strengthen our efforts
- Questioning ourselves on student selection, timing of scholarship payouts, etc. and how that may be influencing student outcomes
- Collaborating to understand how to improve program/initiative operations to strengthen impact





# FINE-TUNING INSTITUTIONAL TEAM

Financial Aid <-> Foundation <-> IR

- There is no Fuse Director at HCC
- Building a strong team and defining roles is key
- Institutional Research uses custom tracking system to identify scholarship recipients
- Foundation communicates with students; is conduit for funds
- Financial Aid awards students
- Check and balances are critical



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# LESSONS LEARNED

## Internal to College

- Without dedicated program staff, you need a “spiritual leader”
- Involve Financial Aid in scholarship design from Day 1
- Some system to track students is critical
- There will be many adjustments during Year 1
- Predicting who will graduate is the hardest part





# SCHOLARSHIP IMPACTS

## Positive and Negative

### Positive

- Scholarship is a strong marketing tool attracting students to great program
- Encourages FAFSA completion
- Scholarship reduces debt load for Pell-eligible students
- Attracts more community partners (Knack Peer Tutoring)

### Negative

- Disconnect between GradPaths and A.A. degree requirements
- Fuse Program isn't for everyone







# LESSONS LEARNED

## Across External Partners

- Not all partners can implement in exactly the same way – so find a contextual understanding (the “Why”) and be flexible
- Conversations and details will need to be revisited – over communicate
- Joint fund raising takes a whole new level of trust, so invest in building that very intentionally





# SCHOLARSHIPS THUS FAR

## Scholarship Support Along the Path

- Early impacts at State Colleges show Fuse students completing their AA in **as little as half the time of other AA** seekers, saving valuable time and money for the student



- **\$3 million was raised to start the Fuse Scholarship Fund at CFTB by partners, led by a matching gift from Helios Education Foundation and lead gift from Valley Bank**
- **\$2.85 million awarded to 499 students** at Hillsborough CC, St. Petersburg College, Pasco Hernando State College and USF as of Spring 2022



# Early Learnings to Guide Continued Work

## Benefits:

**Extra financial push**

**Strong mix of merit and financial need design**

**Decreasing completion time**

## Challenges:

**Sharing participant data**

**Tracking students**

**Staffing**

**Supporting students after transferring**





## Questions?

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