



UCF

# UCF Connect

REALIZING COLLECTIVE IMPACT



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



**INNOVATIVE** approaches  
*to providing access and opportunity*  
**through expanding PARTNERSHIPS,**  
**advancing TECHNOLOGIES,**  
*and discovering new methods*  
**to make a positive IMPACT**





# UCF Connect

## WHO WE ARE

UCF Connect at the University of Central Florida (UCF) is a partnership-driven unit designed to strategically extend UCF's reach to communities in and beyond Central Florida, and provides access to quality continuing and higher education for students who, because of time, distance, preference, or life circumstance, might not otherwise have the opportunity to pursue educational opportunities.

The UCF Connect system has 11 locations across Central Florida. These were developed through strong partnerships with selected Central Florida state colleges for the purpose of providing access to undergraduate and selected advanced degrees with the goal of creating a world-class workforce to serve as a major influence on the economic growth and diversification of Central Florida. UCF Connect is the leading supporter of the DirectConnect to UCF initiative and works in partnership with the state colleges to advance the successful transition of students to the University.

Partnering with the academic, business, and professional communities through the Division of Continuing Education, UCF Connect provides local, state, national, and international clients with distinctive, high-quality, and cost effective educational programs and services. Additionally, as a result of internal partnerships with University Marketing and the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL), UCF Connect offers first-class student support and success coaching to UCF Online students.

UCF Connect is recognized as the model for University and Florida college partnerships to increase access to baccalaureate and graduate degrees, workforce training and professional certification, and unsurpassed educational value for students in communities throughout Central Florida, nationally, and internationally.

## VISION

The vision of UCF Connect is to offer innovative approaches to providing access and opportunity through expanding partnerships, advancing technologies, and discovering new methods to make a positive impact on constituents' lives and learning. Through its collaborations with internal and external partners, UCF Connect challenges traditional models in order to develop sustainable growth and to maintain a commitment to excellence that transforms the lives for future generations of students.

## MISSION

Directly guided by its core activities, UCF Connect provides targeted and intentional programs and services to its constituents. UCF Connect applies its expertise in student support, program development, innovation, and partnership to ensure a quality, diverse, and inclusive experience. UCF Connect channels these into outstanding and measurable value that improves the lives and functions of students, faculty, staff, and internal and external stakeholders.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Formerly known as UCF Regional Campuses, UCF Connect was established in 2017 to better articulate and reflect the various projects, work, and influences that the division has within the University and the greater community. UCF Connect has a nearly forty-year history of extending the University's reach throughout the Central Florida community and beyond. By establishing close partnerships and collaborations, UCF Connect delivers exceptional services to traditional and non-traditional students, state college partners, and UCF's many community constituents; this level of service is most noticeably evident in the facilitation of DirectConnect to UCF, the nationally renowned pathway developed for students transferring from UCF's six state college partner institutions.

In October 2016, a strategic planning effort was launched by leadership of UCF Connect with the goals of evaluating current practices and recommending strategies for enhancing or, as needed, redefining the mission of the division. The process commenced with a meeting of the Strategic Planning Core Leadership Team and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee co-chairs, where it was determined that the initial focus areas for the strategic planning process would center on UCF Connect's current portfolio of services: DirectConnect to UCF, Professional Workforce Development, Partnerships, Academic Initiatives, and UCF Online. Five committees comprised of various internal and external stakeholders were then formed around these focus areas, and began their work to develop recommendations and strategies for long-term growth opportunities.



**DirectConnect to UCF**  
**Professional Workforce Development**  
**Partnerships**  
**Academic Initiatives**  
**UCF Online**



# Key Elements

## Throughout the process, several key elements were highlighted:

- DirectConnect to UCF and partnerships were emphasized as the greatest strengths of UCF Connect's current operations. Identified were external partnerships with state colleges, enhanced partners, and local businesses, as well as internal partnerships with academic colleges, faculty, Center for Distributed Learning (CDL), and University Marketing (UM). UCF Connect was classified as having a "spirit of collaboration and cooperation" with an "ability to connect and work well with other entities."
- UCF Connect was recognized as having leadership and staff with experience and expertise in providing exceptional access and services to students, along with having fully established structures of enrollment, advising, and student support services available to students either in-person or online for ease and access.
- UCF Connect has the opportunity to expand state, national, international, online, and workforce/industry partnerships, which would broaden access and be more inclusive in the diversity of students, especially in terms of non-traditional, cultural, socioeconomic status, and other areas. This would result in an increase in awareness of both UCF Connect and the University.
- UCF Connect has the potential to increase online learning, increase degree options for adult learners, and leverage Continuing Education for innovations in areas such as non-credit offerings, certifications, micro-learning, and various workforce projects.
- UCF Connect has the opportunity to expand state, national, international, online, and workforce/industry partnerships, which would broaden access for students—especially non-traditional students—and increase the awareness of both UCF Connect and the University.
- UCF Connect could enhance the delivery of student services, and improve and streamline the student experience while managing it at scale by creating consistency in staff roles and responsibilities, as well as integrating and consolidating technology systems.
- The opportunity to rebrand and redefine UCF Connect would result in reduced ambiguity with regard to UCF Connect's mission, thus establishing UCF Connect as a model that works in distinctive and collaborative ways with other units and external partners to continuously advance the University's mission of access and opportunities.



# Focus Areas

During the process, there was a natural discovery that the initial five focus areas were limiting, and that there were opportunities to broaden the capacity of UCF Connect and its functions to position UCF Connect as a unique, innovative, and partnership-driven unit within the University. Thus, the goals and strategies established for UCF Connect through the strategic planning effort evolved into the following areas.

## 1

### **Increase and Promote Student Access and Opportunities**

- Provide a more seamless transition to UCF from the DirectConnect to UCF partner institutions.
- Provide outstanding and consistent service to all students with whom UCF Connect interacts and supports.
- Leverage the resources of UCF Connect and Continuing Education to increase access to and support of underserved, place-bound, and nontraditional students.
- Align student support systems to ensure that all students with whom UCF Connect supports are retained and succeed at high levels.
- Align technology support systems, including a global Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, to improve efficiencies and enhance the success of all students supported by UCF Connect.

## 2

### **Strengthen and Build New Partnerships and Community Engagements**

- Maintain and strengthen UCF Connect's role as UCF's liaison for providing student services and support to regional communities.
- Develop and empower UCF Connect's staff to become ambassadors who are recognized as initiators of partnerships across the University, community, and internationally.
- Coordinate the marketing efforts of UCF Connect and Continuing Education to reflect the new Strategic Plan Initiatives, Re-branding, Engagement Strategies, and UCF Online to increase awareness throughout UCF and the community.
- Develop partnerships with educational institutions and increase the number of students from in-state and out-of-state enhanced partnerships who successfully earn a UCF degree.
- Create Education-to-Business (E2B) programs with companies seeking to invest in the educational needs and/or training enhancement of their employees.

## 3

### **Develop Opportunities to Make Global Impacts**

- Lead the University in expanding access for international students seeking to transfer to UCF.
- Develop partnerships with other colleges and universities, and increase the numbers of students from international enhanced partnerships that successfully obtain a UCF degree.
- Create and offer learning exchange and foreign learning opportunities for current UCF students, Continuing Education students, and "Learning Connection Community" members.



# 4

## **Create Pathways for Adult and Life-Long Learning**

- Partner with employers/industries, state colleges, and national organizations to design and enhance alternative learning pathways that lead to expanded opportunities and employment for students.
- Partner with employers/industries and UCF Colleges to develop for-credit degree options for Adult-Learning students seeking career advancement.
- Partner with employers/industries to develop non-credit options for Adult-Learning students seeking career advancement.
- Work with colleges to create and facilitate customized degree programs, special tuition rate graduate degree programs, and online programs that meet market and constituent demand.
- Create a partnership-focused “Learning Connection Community” for individuals residing in high impact areas, such as Celebration, Lake Nona, and The Villages, and who would be interested in the pursuit of life-long learning for personal enrichment.

# 5

## **Establish a Portfolio of Consultancies and Innovative Services**

- Serve as a consulting unit for the University and leverage the expertise of UCF faculty and staff to solve the needs of industry and community partners.
- Establish a “Life Coaching Consultancy” service that would provide life coaching to adult-learners seeking to advance or change their careers.
- Establish “Summer Institute” programs that can be offered during the summer as condensed courses of varying lengths, and delivered either in person or online.
- Utilize UCF Connect’s innovation and technological expertise to develop opportunities and platforms for student engagement.
- Position UCF Connect to serve as a “Technology Incubator” for the University.
- Position UCF Connect as the expert provider and consultant for Online Services.
- Broaden the use of UCF Connect’s facilities to function as multi-use spaces.

***Building on these goals and their corresponding strategies defines a new and innovative mission and direction for UCF Connect, and directly responds to the University’s goal of making an impact on the lives and livelihoods of constituents by expanding scale and excellence.***

While this plan provides guiding strategies for the next 3-5 years, given the ever-changing landscape of higher education, it is critical to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the evolving communities and dynamic demographics of the environment. It is with this premise that it is understood this plan to be a living, breathing document that can be adjusted to accommodate ongoing developments over time.

The following plan provides the strategies that will guide the leadership and staff of UCF Connect to accomplish their goals. Also included are the metrics by which these strategies will be measured and will assist the team leads in assessing progress of the various areas.

# *Increase and promote* **Student Access and Opportunities**

As one of the largest institutions in the nation, coupled with being a leading destination for transfer students, UCF is setting the standard for access and opportunities. UCF Connect, as a unique unit within the University, is well-positioned to be a leader in recognizing the evolving landscape of learners, and in meeting the needs of varying populations to ensure UCF's mission of access to higher education and opportunities that transform lives and livelihoods.

UCF Connect has an established history of serving traditional students, adult learners, underserved populations, place-bound students, and other constituents, and has become a model for extending access to those who might otherwise be unable to connect significantly with the University.

UCF Connect's strength in opening avenues to access and opportunity is evidenced by, among other things, its ongoing commitment to providing robust student services and support at UCF Connect locations; facilitating initiatives such as DirectConnect to UCF, Curriculum Alignment, and College Access Summit; offering continuing education and professional development opportunities to career advancers, career changers, and life-longer learners; and being the partnership conduit with UCF's state college partners, out-of-state institutions, industry, and community organizations.

UCF Connect looks to strengthen the contributions that it can make with regard to access and opportunity for all UCF constituents. While the DirectConnect to UCF program has been nationally recognized as one of the leading examples of partnership among colleges and universities, enhancing this program by aligning technology support systems and improving data efficiencies will provide a more seamless transition and increased benefits to the students who utilize this access pathway.

Through local initiatives aligned with state programs, UCF Connect will create the resources and pathways for students to earn their bachelor's and master's degrees, as well as develop opportunities that align with industry needs by establishing various alternative learning pathways, such as certification-based programs, professional development programs, and life-long learning programs.

UCF Connect will use specialized expertise in providing distributed student services and establishing additional partnerships to deliver unprecedented levels of support to students seeking affordable solutions to completing their educational goals, resulting in increased retention and completion rates, which are part of UCF's endeavors to attain preeminence status.

These initiatives will be accomplished by leveraging the resources of UCF Connect and Continuing Education, and by strengthening and expanding partnerships with state, regional, national, and international partners who understand the need for true collaboration. By harnessing the power of scale, as referenced in the University's Strategic Plan, UCF Collective Impact, these strategies will create cohesion in educational pathways for all students seeking to gain the knowledge necessary to truly feel value with and contribute to their own communities.

While UCF's UCF Connect will continue to provide relevant degree programs, it also will become a nucleus of opportunity, connecting people to education and training that fits their own personal goals and endeavors, resulting in increased access, support, and opportunities for all constituents.



## **Provide a more seamless transition to UCF from the DirectConnect to UCF partner institutions.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- In collaboration with all stakeholders, develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce ongoing challenges for students transferring from state college partner institutions, to include:
  - » Shared data systems to track and monitor student progress.
  - » Reduced duplication of processes, such as applications, fees, and transcripts.
  - » Developed entry pathways for student populations with unique needs, such as dual-enrolled students.
  - » Student preparedness through the development of common courses, taught by UCF faculty, and applicable to both partner institution and UCF degrees.
- Develop a standard communication plan between UCF advisors and state college advisors to streamline and enhance advising processes, including updates and curricular changes.

### **METRICS**

- Increase in successful completions of submitted UCF applications, admissions, and registrations.
- Decrease in system redundancy and paperwork requirements through shared data.
- Increase in student preparation for the rigor of UCF classes and professor expectations.
- Robust and consistent communication plan among UCF and state partner institutions.

## **Provide outstanding and consistent service to all constituents with whom UCF Connect interacts and supports.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Establish a standardized system of initial and ongoing training for all UCF Connect staff, including at all regional locations, within Continuing Education, and within the UCF Online Connect Center.
- Serve as a leader for how unified training can be facilitated, both physically and remotely, across regions and units.
- Develop new position descriptions and train the generalist Student Success Coaches and Associate/Assistant Directors within UCF Connect so that there is consistency in how services are provided to students.
- Provide outstanding success coaching and support to all constituents in order to increase retention, graduation, and learning satisfaction, including with alternative learning pathways.
- Develop standards of excellence for supporting the unique learners of UCF Connect, including Continuing Education and UCF Online, predicated on CAS standards.

### **METRICS**

- All UCF Connect staff are consistently trained and have a high level of performance utilizing coaching strategies.
- All UCF Connect staff have access to relevant systems and student information.
- Standards of excellence are consistently employed when meeting with students from initial contact, during the transition process, through enrollment to graduation, post-graduation, and with any continuing education or alternative learning needs.

## **Leverage the resources of UCF Connect and Continuing Education to increase access to and support of underserved, place-bound, and nontraditional students.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Increase partnerships with relevant stakeholders, such as Complete Florida, to identify and develop outreach opportunities for students with some college and no degree, and develop a pathway for these students to successfully complete their degree.
- Collaborate with academic departments and programs to provide high-level support for UCF Online students, and develop common definitions and standards regarding UCF online student policies and criteria.
- Collaborate with UCF stakeholders involved in various initiatives (e.g., Camino a UCF, Veterans, LGBTQ) to develop specific support structures that focus on the retention and completion of student populations with unique needs. For example, partner with UCF Global to identify domestic and international students at the regional campuses and develop an understanding of the particular issues these students encounter to remove obstacles and encourage degree completion.
- Work with state college partners to develop specific outreach initiatives for various student populations, such as mentoring programs, to provide support early in students' educational career, ensuring a smooth transition once they arrive to UCF.

### **METRICS**

- Better tracking systems and metrics for special population students.
- Increase in partnerships with external partners and state colleges.
- Increase in partnerships with internal partners and academic programs.
- Developed pathways and decreased barriers for special populations, resulting in increased enrollments.
- Comprehensive programs that contribute to the increased retention and graduation rates of special populations.





## **Align student support systems to ensure that all students with whom UCF Connect supports retain and succeed at high levels.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Develop strategies for a cohesive marketing, inquiry management, and student support systems for all students in which UCF Connect provides support, including for DirectConnect to UCF, UCF Online, Continuing Education, and UCF Connect students.
- Utilize systems (Education Advisory Board (EAB) – Student Success Collaborative (SSC), Campus Predictive Analytics, Reporting Data Store (RDS), etc.) to identify moderate, high-risk, and probationary students for retention efforts.
- Ensure that UCF Online students have retention and success rates at or better than all other Florida College Transfer Students.
- Collaborate with the academic departments, colleges, and the UCF Online Connect Center to establish policies and procedures to enhance the experience for UCF Online students.
- Utilize systems relevant to Continuing Education and to the success of adult and life-long learning students.
- Work with relevant stakeholders to identify and reduce barriers for students.

### **METRICS**

- Increase in retention, graduation, and learning success of all students with whom UCF Connect supports.
- Increase in student participation with Continuing Education programs and course offerings.
- Increase in student satisfaction with the student services support provided.

## **Align technology support systems, including a global CRM, to improve efficiencies, ensure consistency, and enhance the success of all students supported by UCF Connect.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Identify stakeholders for data collection and reporting needs for DirectConnect to UCF, UCF Online, and Continuing Education, and identify and form appropriate committees as needed for guidance.
- Work with relevant partners to establish a Governance Committee, requirements documentation, and an in-depth discovery process based on requirements and reporting needs, and then complete a successful implementation plan.
- Engage the following stakeholders:
  - » Relevant Student Development and Enrollment Services (SDES) units, such as Undergraduate Admissions and Registrar
  - » Institutional Knowledge Management (IKM) to discuss what is useful at an institutional level;
  - » PeopleSoft (UCF IT) and LEAP committee to determine needs from other units;
  - » Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies;
  - » Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) and Marketing to ensure collection needs are met; and
  - » EAB representatives to ensure that CRM systems are properly feeding data between systems, as appropriate, thus removing data duplication.

### **METRICS**

- A successfully implemented global CRM to centrally manage all engagement for constituents.
- Identified trends that define the student experience from inquiry through graduation and beyond.
- Improved efficiencies in coaching processes by increasing the number and satisfaction levels of constituents contacted.

*Strengthen and build*

# Partnerships and Community Engagements

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Partnership and community engagement are the greatest strengths of UCF Connect. Working with multiple partners and understanding the educational needs and trends are focal points for driving the efforts of UCF Connect operations on behalf of UCF. How UCF Connect supports the individual student, UCF, educational partners, and industry collaborators is paramount to the individual's opportunity for employment and career advancement, as well as supporting those skills necessary for the business community to flourish. As a result, these efforts create a high demand for talent in the Central Florida region, the state, and on a national and international level.

While UCF Connect thrives on relationship building, especially within the communities that we serve, we intend to strengthen its presence and role as UCF's liaison for providing services and support to constituents, state college partners, and regional communities. UCF Connect will accomplish this by enhancing marketing strategies and outreach efforts to better articulate the functions of UCF Connect and the services that are provided, and by empowering personnel to be the ambassadors for UCF Connect's mission and goals.

UCF Connect will leverage expertise to develop stronger and broader relationships with educational partners, both in-state and out-of-state, and will work cooperatively with these enhanced partners to develop pathways for traditional and non-traditional students who enter the system.

UCF Connect's established rapport in the community also make it well-positioned to create expanded opportunities for "Education-to-Business" (E2B) relationships, and to design, develop, and deliver programs that are tailored to the needs of a company, its employees, and its leadership. Thus, UCF Connect will leverage its expertise to create a bridge between education and business by developing specialized educational pathways and training programs that are specific to each company partner.

By capitalizing on proven strengths, UCF Connect will continue to provide resources and expertise tied to academic success and economic impacts, as well as enhance the services that we offer to the Florida college system, industries, communities, and internal University units with whom we partner. In doing so, UCF Connect will help to create partnerships that meet the UCF's strategic mission to amplify our academic, economic, social, and cultural impact and reputation.





## **Maintain and strengthen UCF Connect’s role as UCF’s presence in and liaison for providing student services and support to regional communities.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Redefine UCF Connect locations as “Connect Centers” to better articulate the connection and relationships that these sites provide to the communities they serve.
- Continue to provide support to the academic colleges offering strategic completion courses, gateway courses, and destination programs at specific UCF Connect locations, as well as provide services and support to the students in these courses/programs.
- Retain, maintain, and strengthen UCF’s presence in the community, and support both the community and UCF students with various services provided locally at the UCF Connect locations.
- Partner with the UCF Downtown location and provide support, as needed.
- Establish a UCF Connect Academic Programs Committee to develop criteria and processes for new and existing programs.
- Continue to support student activities that follow the mission of the University, such as Undergraduate Research, Student Government, Honor Societies, Learning Communities, and experience-based learning opportunities.

### **METRICS**

- Partner and college demand for, as well as student enrollments and success in, strategic completion courses, gateway courses, and destination programs on site.
- Student participation in academic, co-curricular, and non-academic activities that support the learning environment at the regional locations.

## **Develop and empower UCF Connect’s staff to become ambassadors who are recognized as initiators of partnerships across the University, community, and internationally.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Train and develop UCF Connect staff to serve as representatives to inform businesses and industries of alternative learning opportunities offered through UCF Connect and Continuing Education.
- Develop communication plans, implement inquiry/lead management tactics, and employ tracking methods that are utilized consistently among all staff interacting with employers and workforce education partners.

### **METRICS**

- Consistent and regular contacts among employers and partners with UCF Connect staff regarding workforce education to position UCF as a leader in meeting workforce education needs.
- Increased partnerships between UCF Connect and relevant stakeholders as a result of UCF Connect’s staff conducting outreach and relationship building.

## **Coordinate the marketing efforts of UCF Connect and Continuing Education to reflect the new Strategic Plan Initiatives, Re-branding, Engagement Strategies, and UCF Online to increase awareness throughout UCF and the community.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Identify target audiences and create differentiated marketing approaches to capture a variety of constituent groups (e.g., traditional, non-traditional, post-traditional, life-long learners, career changers, certification seekers, and employers).
- Create both external and internal marketing strategies to best articulate UCF Connect's uniqueness and offerings, including Continuing Education and UCF Online.
- Develop effective methods of communication for the catalog of offerings to prospective students and clients, particularly through online and social media campaigns.
- Establish priority audiences for engagement strategies.
- Develop tracking methods to identify the most efficient and effective marketing techniques and continuously improve outreach to various stakeholders and student populations.

### **METRICS**

- Robust marketing and communication strategies that are inclusive of all areas of the UCF Connect.
- Increased inquiries and enrollments in the variety of offerings.
- High level of success and satisfaction of students participating in offerings and experiences.

## **Develop partnerships with educational institutions and increase the number of students from in-state and out-of-state Enhanced Partnerships who successfully earn a UCF degree.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Work to establish relationships with in-state and out-of-state institutions so that they become enhanced partnerships with UCF.
- Be the liaison between the enhanced partnerships and UCF academic colleges to create educational pathways for in-state, out-of-state, and international students, to include providing support for students earning their associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees (2+2+2).
- Leverage technology and expertise to provide services and support for students from in-state and out-of-state enhanced partnerships, especially via UCF Online.

### **METRICS**

- Increase enhanced partnerships with UCF.
- High level of success and satisfaction among students from in-state and out-of-state enhanced partnerships who obtain a UCF degree, including retention and completion.



## Create Education-to-Business (E2B) programs with companies seeking to invest in the educational needs and/or training enhancements of their employees.

### STRATEGIES

- Leverage UCF Connect and Continuing Education's expertise to create a bridge between business and education by developing specialized educational pathways and training programs that are specific to each company partner.
- Develop both degree and non-credit curriculums that are designed for the company's needs, and that are uniquely tailored to the company's cohort of employee-students.
- Develop leadership certificate programs that are designed specifically for the company's leadership, and that are focused on topics such as leadership, management, supervision, human resources, and/or business-legal related issues.
- Offer discounts or reduced-fees/tuition for eligible employees and leaders from companies who participate in the program(s) while ensuring return on investment.

### METRICS

- Development of specific E2B programs for business partners.
- High student utilization of E2B pathways that contribute to their degree completion and/or employment opportunities.
- Increase in employer partnerships with the University that lead to employee-student career advancement.

**Create PARTNERSHIPS**  
*to amplify academic,  
economic, social, and  
cultural impact and  
reputation*



## *Develop opportunities to make* **Global Impacts**

UCF has progressively made dedicated efforts to increase social and cultural engagement in the community, which includes the global population of international students and educational partners. Currently, UCF Connect supports these efforts through a variety of opportunities, including expanding access for international students seeking to transfer to UCF, and developing partnerships with other colleges and universities locally, nationally, and internationally.

However, UCF Connect has the ability to leverage expertise to deepen the existing partnerships with DirectConnect to UCF institutions, as well as to develop new collaborations with enhanced partnership institutions and internal University units in an effort to partner for the recruitment of international transfer students. In doing so, UCF Connect will attract and encourage a diverse, international student body that supports the aspirations of the University.

DirectConnect to UCF partners to develop recruitment strategies and outreach initiatives that align with the missions of the state colleges and UCF. Further, UCF Connect will develop enhanced partnerships with other state, national, and international colleges, and will work with them to develop pathways that increase the numbers of international students who successfully obtain a UCF degree. In conjunction with established partnerships, UCF Connect will extend its very successful support systems to encourage continued retention and success of international students, thus meeting the components of a number of performance-based metrics.

UCF Connect also will creatively develop and deliver foreign learning programs, especially by utilizing the expertise of UCF's Continuing Education unit. Multiple opportunities exist to create foreign exchange and foreign learning programs for current UCF students, Continuing Education students, and adult and life-long learners.

UCF Connect seeks to support UCF goals to become more inclusive and diverse, and to be America's leading partnership University through initiatives focused on influencing the global ecosystem. By developing strategic partnerships and outreach on a global scale, UCF Connect can help to strengthen UCF's academic and cultural impact and reputation worldwide, thus supporting the goals in the Collective Impact.



## **Lead the University in expanding access for international students seeking to transfer to UCF.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy with all stakeholders to identify barriers and ongoing initiatives (e.g., partner institutions and UCF) for international transfer students.
- Conduct joint marketing and recruiting efforts with stakeholders and college partners.
- Develop ongoing strategies and partnerships with UCF Global, UCF Admissions, and Continuing Education.

### **METRICS**

- Developed initiatives for assisting international transfer students with the transfer process.
- Leader in the State University System in the number of successful international transfer students retaining and completing.
- Increased engagement of international students with UCF events and cultural opportunities.

## **Develop partnerships with other colleges and universities, and increase the numbers of students from International Enhanced Partnerships who successfully earn a UCF degree.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Work to establish relationships with international institutions so that they become international enhanced partnerships with UCF.
- Be the liaison between the enhanced partnerships established with international entities and UCF academic colleges to develop educational pathways for international students, to include providing support for students earning their associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees (2+2+2).
- Leverage technology and expertise to provide services and support for students from International Enhanced Partner institutions, especially via UCF Online.

### **METRICS**

- Increase international enhanced partnerships with UCF.
- High level of success and satisfaction among students from international enhanced partnerships who earn a UCF degree, including retention and completion.



### **Create and offer learning exchange and foreign learning opportunities for current UCF students, Continuing Education students, and “Learning Connection Community” members.**

#### **STRATEGIES**

- Design learning exchange curriculums with UCF Global, the academic colleges, and faculty that align with the academic and life-long learning interests of participants, and that offer unique learning and for-credit opportunities in various countries.
- Partner with UCF Global, the academic colleges, and faculty to host students from other countries interested in learning experiences at UCF.
- Establish unique international programs through Continuing Education for specific corporate and professional groups whereby foreign groups would visit local/regional businesses and industries to learn and experience on site.

#### **METRICS**

- Increased credit and non-credit opportunities and programs for foreign learning exchanges.
- High levels of success and satisfaction among students participating in learning exchange experiences.
- Increased revenue garnered via learning exchange and other developed international opportunities.

A photograph of a school hallway filled with students of various ethnicities. In the foreground, a young man in a light blue polo shirt is looking towards the right. Behind him, a group of young women wearing hijabs are smiling at the camera. One woman in the center wears a pink top and a patterned blue and white headscarf. In the background, other students are walking, including a man with a large black backpack. The ceiling is decorated with numerous international flags hanging from the lights. An 'EXIT' sign is visible above a doorway in the distance.

**Become more INCLUSIVE**  
*Be America's leading partnership University*  
**FOCUS on influencing the GLOBAL ecosystem**

## *Create pathways for* **Adult and Life-long Learning**

The University, through Collective Impact, has articulated that, “UCF chooses to be known for whom it includes, rather than whom it excludes.” To meet this challenge of inclusivity, UCF Connect is dedicated to providing access and services to non-traditional students, including those considered Adult Learners and Life-Long Learners; respectively, those adult learners seeking educational opportunities to advance or change careers, as well as those individuals that are seeking educational enrichment and personal fulfillment for life-long learning.

Through collaborations with academic colleges, industries, state college partners, and national organizations, UCF Connect will design and facilitate customized, alternative learning pathways for the adult learner, especially those needing education credentials to advance or change careers. Alternative pathways include competency-based credit programs, credit for prior learning, accelerated degrees, career-specific certifications, microlearning, digital badging, and variable-timed programs, such as weekend and shortened-term programs. By offering these alternative learning options, UCF Connect will provide increased access and opportunities for adult learners, as well as help meet performance-based and Collective Impact metrics.

UCF Connect will continue to partner with academic colleges, employers, and industries to evaluate current trends and needs, and find ways to provide standard for-credit degrees and not-for-credit completion options, along with creating and facilitating customized degree programs, special tuition programs, and online programs to meet market demand.

With a focus on life-long learning, UCF Connect will create in-community opportunities that broaden the educational umbrella available to those who pursue knowledge for personal enrichment. Populations who will benefit from UCF Connect’s efforts are varied, from working professionals and families to retired or semi-retired life-long learners who voluntarily seek educational programs for personal development and understanding, and who have an interest in sharing in educational and social experiences and connections with the University. Target communities for these strategies will initially include the high-impact areas of Celebration, Lake Nona, and The Villages, but could easily be scaled to other locations.

With UCF’s workforce and economic development partners, coupled with college and faculty partnerships, UCF Connect will provide on-demand, applicable solutions to meet the needs of all constituent groups, and create synergy for new strategies to include alternative learning options, advanced training and specializations, graduate level and customized programs, and continuing education, professional development, and life-learning packages.





## **Partner with employers/industries, state colleges, and national organizations to design and enhance alternative learning pathways that lead to expanded opportunities and employment for students.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop alternative and customized learning pathways based on students' goals and employees' needs, to include:
  - » Competency-Based Credit: Create an evaluation for competency-based credit for individual degree requirements in collaboration with individual UCF colleges, career services, experiential learning, and continuing education, as well as state college partners.
  - » Credit for Prior Learning: Work with UCF Admission and academic colleges to establish a common evaluation process and standard to accept and apply credit for prior learning.
  - » Accelerated Degree Completion: Develop variable term options for accelerated degree completion, such as multiple sessions within a single semester and week-long intensive seminar sessions, which lead to completion of for-credit programs and degrees.
  - » Career-Specific Certifications: Collaborate with industry partners to develop and deliver certifications programs designed to meet the needs of businesses, and to offer students another option for educational credentialing.
  - » Microlearning: Develop a strategy for reviewing the use of microlearning, where the content is delivered in very short units, the platform is online and/or mobile, and the pace of learning is controlled by the student.
  - » Digital Badging: Establish opportunities for students to earn digital badges to show completion of various content/programs, and to offer visual representations of continued learning and mastery of specific competencies.
  - » Weekend Programs: Partner with academic colleges to establish degree programs and/or non-credit programs that can be completed in a weekend-based schedule.
  - » Special Course Dates/Shortened Terms: Partner with relevant stakeholders to offer shortened terms, such as 7 week terms.
- Provide training to UCF Connect's staff on the differences between the need for degree attainment versus alternative learning opportunities in order to best guide students on making informed decisions toward the appropriate path to accomplish their goals.
- Develop a formal evaluation process of potential students' academic and training history to determine the best entry point and path for completion.
- Position UCF Connect as a leader in providing alternative learning pathways that meet the needs of students, and lead to their success.

### **METRICS**

- Development of alternative learning pathways.
- Student utilization of alternative learning pathways that contribute to their degree completion and/or employment opportunities.
- Movement of alternative pathway students into limited, non-degree seeking students and eventually into degree-seeking students.
- Increase in employer partnerships with the University that lead to employment of students and/or to student career advancement.

## Partner with employers and industry to develop for-credit degree options for Adult-Learning students seeking career advancement.

### STRATEGIES

- Consult with workforce and economic development entities to identify open positions, training gaps, and the talent and educational needs of local businesses and communities in Central Florida.
- Form an advisory group to assist UCF Connect and Continuing Education with identifying potential partners and the skills students will need to compete for high wage positions currently in or moving to the Central Florida area.
- Raise awareness to this population of UCF Connect's offerings by exploring marketing options, researching target populations, and offering live and online engagement opportunities to explore the return to higher education (i.e., tour, open house, on-live chats).
- Work with relevant stakeholders to develop and offer degree and/or certificate programs that address the needs of business and industry, and that will position adult learners for career advancement.

### METRICS

- Established processes that continuously identify educational and training needs, through partnerships, in the Central Florida region.
- Degree programs that directly respond to employer needs.
- Sustainable enrollments in degree/certificate programs that effectively respond to workforce and industry requirements.

## Partner with employers and industry to develop non-credit options for Adult-Learning students seeking career advancement.

### STRATEGIES

- Partner with workforce and economic development entities to identify training and skill gaps of local businesses and communities in Central Florida.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop and offer non-credit options that address the training and skill gaps needs of employers, such as professional development, test/licensure preparation, unique technological trainings, soft-skill enhancements, etc.
- Offer certifications and/or CEU for completion of these non-credit options.

### METRICS

- Established processes that continuously identify training and skill needs, through partnerships, in the Central Florida region.
- Non-credit certificates and programs that directly respond to employer needs.
- Sustainable enrollments in courses/certificate programs that effectively respond to workforce and industry requirements.

## **Work with colleges to create and facilitate customized degree programs, special tuition rate graduate degree programs, and online programs that meet market and constituent demand.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Establish an advisory board to monitor the BOG regulations and parameters for approval of customized, special tuition rate, and online programs and certificates, and develop an internal UCF process pertaining to the approval and continuous oversight of these programs.
- Promote customized degree programs and special tuition programs to UCF Colleges and external partners, including the start-to-finish process and rationale for creating these programs, and a clear overview of the role of UCF Connect in program administration.
- Develop a proposed budget model to advise colleges on how to propose profitable and sustainable customized, special tuition rate, and online programs and certificates; consider using a model that charges a tuition rate lower than out-of-state tuition rates to attract that market.
- Partner with organizations such as the Education Advisory Board (EAB), Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), and Learning Resources Network (LERN) to determine market demand for customized, special tuition, and online degree and certificate programs in both local and online markets, focusing on the adult learner.

### **METRICS**

- An established approval process and assessment parameters for customized degree programs, special tuition rate graduate degree programs, and online programs and certificates.
- An increased interest in offering customized, special tuition, and online degree programs and certificates.
- Attainable enrollment goals by program, resulting in consistency with profits returned to the college.
- Creation of new customized, special tuition rate, and online programs using EAB-suggested program areas based on market demand, and successful marketing campaigns that target students whose goals align with these programs' outcomes.





**Create a partnership-focused “Learning Connection Community” for individuals residing in high impact areas, such as Celebration, Lake Nona, and The Villages, and who would be interested in the pursuit of life-long learning for personal enrichment and other options.**

**STRATEGIES**

- Develop “Learning Connection Community” centers in high impact areas, and provide opportunities for life-long learners to engage in seminars, courses, and personal enrichment certification programs.
  - » Work with faculty and academic colleges to offer courses and programs in a variety of modalities.
  - » Design curricula and experiences for courses, workshops, peer learning, seminars, certificates, and other personal enrichment opportunities.
- Leverage technology and expertise to provide members with remote access and participation to events hosted by the “Learning and Connection Community.”
- Offer learning abroad opportunities, and provide unique and all-inclusive learning experiences for members of the “Learning and Connection Community.”
- Provide membership benefits to participants of the “Learning Connection Community,” such as reduced admission to UCF sporting and social events.
- Identify opportunities for volunteerism and develop activities best suited for the audience at hand.
- Develop a self-supporting chapter within the “Learning Connection Community” known as “ENCORE” composed of retired and semi-retired academics and professionals interested in studying, researching, and sharing their expertise in areas for which they have always had an interest.

**METRICS**

- Increased partnerships with communities offering life-long learning and related programs, including high student participation rates.
- High levels of student success and satisfaction of those participating in the “Learning Connection Community” experience.
- High levels of student success and satisfaction of those participating in the “ENCORE” experience.
- Return on investment from participation in these programs.



**Providing ACCESS and SERVICES**  
*to non-traditional students*





## *Establish a portfolio of* **Consultancies and Innovative Services**

UCF is strategically located and immersed within Central Florida, and engages with local communities in a myriad of innovative and partnership-driven ways. UCF Connect is well-positioned to serve as a primary point of contact to promote UCF's distinctive resources and, as stated in Collective Impact, "to leverage our existing strengths across disciplines, to differentiate UCF from other institutions, and to respond to the changing local, national, and global needs of society."

In order to meet the needs of its communities, UCF Connect will develop and offer expert consulting services on local, state, national, and international issues provided through a world-class, multidisciplinary research base supported by UCF Connect and UCF alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators. UCF Connect will maintain a clearinghouse of projects and faculty consultants, and establish targeted associations between the community and UCF's expert consultants.

UCF Connect also will provide consultancy services and life coaching to adult learners, and work with them to develop career, life, and educational strategies as they return to the academic environment. UCF Connect will leverage its expertise in delivering services and support to online students to become a leading consultant for online student coaching, engagement, and success.

By utilizing its dexterity, resourcefulness, and technological expertise, UCF Connect is well-suited to being a "technology incubator" for the University, and will work to generate, develop, and test new technologies and innovations, particularly those conceptualized in partnership with internal and external stakeholders.

Finally, UCF Connect will broaden the use of its physical facilities, and develop these spaces for multi-purpose, multi-modality uses to include consultancy sessions, training events, boot-camps, workshops, seminars, and evening, weekends, or summer programs.

By expanding its portfolio of services to include providing consultancy expertise, developing and employing innovative and technological applications, serving as a technology incubator, leading in online services delivery, and reimagining the use of physical facilities, among others, UCF Connect is differentiating the services typically offered by a University unit, and is positioning UCF to creatively respond to societal changes and needs.





## **Serve as a consulting unit for the University and leverage the expertise of UCF faculty and staff to solve the needs of industry and community partners.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Create a comprehensive strategy to provide individual consultancy services, ‘team consultancy’ services, and ‘hybrid consultancy’ services to external organizations that draw from a world-class, multidisciplinary research base at the University.
- Position UCF Connect to become the large-scale coordinator, or clearinghouse, for already established independent consultancies being conducted by individual faculty members from around the University; develop a database of projects and faculty consultants so as to establish more targeted partnerships between industry/community needs and UCF faculty experts. Work through this clearinghouse to both establish and monitor individual consultancy projects.
- Work with relevant stakeholders to form expert “go-teams” of consultants that would be assigned to target specific industries, such as healthcare; teams would be comprised of faculty leads and graduate students assigned to consult on particular issues or needs.
- Develop ‘hybrid consultancy’ services that would couple consultancy services with research interests into a singular project; this would provide a holistic approach to the client, as well as establish research opportunities for the faculty consultant.
- Develop an infrastructure within UCF Connect to coordinate the administrative support functions associated with consulting services (e.g., negotiating and securing competitive rates and terms, handling internal approvals, client invoicing, consultant payment and client debt collection, managing client relations, disbursement of funds, travel, IT support).
- Restructure areas of UCF Connect and Continuing Education to realign support for this initiative so that it becomes a self-sustaining entity.

### **METRICS**

- An established entity within UCF Connect that acts as the consulting unit of the University, with multiple colleges and departments collaborating in promoting consulting services to its clients, advisory boards, partners, and others.
- Database of interested faculty, staff, and administrators of varying expertise levels and areas available to serve in a consultant capacity.
- High interest and satisfaction from the internal and external community from clients utilizing consultancy services.

**STRATEGICALLY located**  
*with distinctive resources*

## **Establish a “Life Coaching Consultancy” service that would provide life coaching to adult-learners seeking to advance or change their careers.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Utilize coaching expertise to develop a customized consultancy service designed specifically to coach adult-learners for career advancement and changes.
- Develop life strategies, professional advocacy, educational support, and coaching programs to assist those returning to the educational environment, who may face barriers when advancing and/or changing careers in mid-to-late life stages.
- Offer coaching services either in-person or online to facilitate the needs of these specific individuals.
- Position UCF Connect/Continuing Education as the leader in providing services and advancing the goals of these unique populations.

### **METRICS**

- Various developed options for life coaching that offer a robust catalog for potential clients.
- Successful use of and satisfaction with consulting services by adult learners, and recognition as a principal choice in selecting coaching services.
- Increased revenue generated from coaching services.

## **Establish “Summer Institute” programs that can be offered during the summer as condensed courses of varying lengths, and delivered either in person or online.**

### **STRATEGIES**

- Establish Summer Institute programs specifically targeted at the unique populations of pre-college students and professional learners:
  - » Offer a Pre-college Summer Institute designed for advanced high school students who wish to gain for-credit, college-level experience that can then be applied to future degree programs (e.g. Architecture).
  - » Offer a College/Professional Summer Institute designed in support of local corporate/workforce needs, and delivered to go beyond the traditional classroom with topics customized for each region/market, industry need, or specific niche area.
- Form a task force of departments and faculty members interested in supporting the curriculum development and facilitation of summer institute programs.
- Create both for-credit and not-for-credit curriculum offerings, with students selecting from a menu of course offerings.
- Develop residency programs for both domestic and international audiences that attend in-person programs, and coordinate housing, if needed, for the participants.
- Establish scholarship opportunities for high performing students who may not be able to afford to attend a summer institute.

### **METRICS**

- Increase in professional training and development of UCF Connect and other relevant staff/coaches.
- High levels of success and satisfaction of online students and relevant stakeholders.
- Recognition as the lead option in providing online student services, particularly for consulting options.

## Utilize UCF Connect’s innovative and technological expertise to develop opportunities and platforms for student engagement.

### STRATEGIES

- Partner with key stakeholders to identify needs and designs for a:
  - » “UCF Virtual Student Union” that would serve as an innovative, virtual environment where students can explore and receive information and resources; gather and meet to exchange ideas; and connect with faculty, staff, and peers.
  - » “UCF Live Event” mobile app that would allow students to remotely participate in live events as they happen on campus, as well as watch archived videos of past events.
  - » “Virtual Campus Tour” that would permit students to remotely visit the UCF campus and/or UCF Connect locations.
  - » “Virtual Open House” platform that would enable students to remotely attend program specific open houses and/or events hosted by student clubs and associations.
  - » Other technologies deemed important for engaging students, especially those that are online and distance learning.

### METRICS

- Well-distributed and diverse options for student engagement specifically targeted to students participating in a virtual capacity.
- High levels of participation and satisfaction rates from students who actively engage in events that have remote/virtual options.

## Position UCF Connect to serve as the “Technology Incubator” for the University.

### STRATEGIES

- Utilize the nimbleness, resourcefulness, and technological expertise of UCF Connect to serve as an idea generator and incubator for new technologies and innovations.
- Capitalize on opportunities to conceptualize new technologies and innovations, and then to test them on smaller scales before larger-scale implementations.
- Partner with both internal and external stakeholders to design strategies in which UCF Connect will help to incubate their technologies, and then collaborate to bring them to fruition.
- Partner with businesses to research, conceptualize, and pilot new technologies to meet industry needs.
- Become the lead on behalf of the University to investigate and pilot new innovations and technologies that support student success.

### METRICS

- Development and success of new and innovative projects generated from concept through implementation.
- Active participation from internal and external partners and stakeholders.
- Return on investment from services provided to clients.



## Position UCF Connect as the expert provider and consultant for Online Services.

### STRATEGIES

- Continue to expand and refine the services provided to UCF Online students, and position UCF Connect as the expert and consultant in online student services delivery.
- Seek opportunities to provide advanced training to coaches and staff responsible for providing online student services and support.
- Investigate, test, and implement new technologies designed to best deliver online services, to elevate the coach-student relationship, and to provide an excellent student services experience.
- Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to design partnership strategies around online services delivery.
- Position UCF Connect as the leader in online student services delivery by leveraging technologies to offer the best practices in reaching and assisting students who are at a distance.

### METRICS

- Increase in professional training and development of UCF Connect and other relevant staff/coaches.
- High levels of success and satisfaction of online students and relevant stakeholders.
- Recognition as the lead option in providing online student services, particularly for consulting options.

## Broaden the use of UCF Connect facilities to function as multi-use spaces.

### STRATEGIES

- For those facilities that are joint-use and owned by UCF Connect, collaborate with state college partners to host various events and programs in these spaces. Opportunities exist to work with business leaders, high schools, government organizations, etc., to utilize these spaces for events such as conference, workshops, seminars, etc.
- For those facilities that are managed and/or occupied by UCF Connect, develop into multi-use spaces that can be used for consultancy sessions, training events, boot-camps, and evenings, weekends, and/or summer programs for Adult Learners, Life-Long Learners, and Career Changers. These facilities can also be equipped with the proper technological capabilities so as to serve as host sites that can remotely relay events that are happening elsewhere.

### METRICS

- Increased use of facilities for multi-use functions and development of a catalog of marketable events available for hosting purposes in these facilities.
- Revenue generated by events hosted in UCF Connect owned facilities.

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