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Message from Complete Florida

At Complete Florida, we know forming a bridge between higher education and employers is vital for strengthening talent pipelines that keep our economy flourishing. Recently, we participated in the Workforce Professional Development Summit in Orlando, which was sponsored by

CareerSource. CareerSource Florida is the statewide workforce policy and investment board. As an exhibitor at the summit, we had the opportunity to meet with its employees and learn about the work of 24 workforce development boards and 100 career centers across the state. We look forward to future collaboration as we focus on extending our reach and helping more adults return to college to finish a degree in high-demand industry clusters. To share your ideas, send an email to collaborate@completeflorida.org.

Michelle Horton, Ed.D.

Director of Complete Florida



Pose Financial Aid Question to Florida Expert

Attend the **Complete Florida Networking Group meeting Oct. 23 at 11 a.m. ET** to learn central principles about financial aid and its history. During the session featured speaker Daniel Barkowitz, assistant vice president for financial aid and veterans affairs at Valencia College, will connect you to the history of financial aid and show you how the past relates to our present-day work. Please submit a question when you sign up for the webinar.

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ACHE Recognized Dr. Michelle Horton for Contributions to Continuing Ed

Dr. Michelle Horton, director of Complete Florida, will travel to Denver Oct. 14 to accept the Rising Star Award from the Association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE). More than 300 universities and organizations from across the nation were eligible for this ACHE nomination. The [ACHE conference](#) theme is "Partnerships: Innovation and Collaboration," and the award recognizes a professional who has contributed to the extension of an outstanding program related to continuing education.

In addition to accepting the award, Horton will also co-present "Unlocking the Door to Degree Completion: Key Strategies to Transform the Returning Adult Student Experience." Fellow presenters are Gini Beran from [College Board](#) and Tracy Robinson from the [University of Memphis](#).

The next ACHE conference is in [Orlando in April](#). If you are interested in submitting a proposal, the theme is "Moving Forward: Program Delivery, Administration, Marketing, Technology and Innovation."



Broward College Offers Numerous Opportunities to Earn Course Credit for What Students Already Know

Broward College, one of Complete Florida's partners, offers a recently revamped and robust Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) program. These options make it easier for adults to earn credit for training, certification and other knowledge and skills they accumulate during their professional experience. The ability to earn this kind of credit falls within the eight Broward College pathways.

"Having the support from administration and upper management has allowed us to increase Prior Learning Assessment for our students," said Claudia Alvarado, lead coordinator, CTE Credit for Prior Learning and Enrollment Services. "We realize that this program is an incentive for returning adults to enroll, as they demonstrate their knowledge to accelerate their path to completion."

The three choices for Credit for Prior Learning are:

- Credit by Exam (CLEP, DSST, Cambridge International and Excelsior)
- Prior Learning Assessment (military training, professional development, work experience)
- Articulation Agreements (industry certifications and licenses)

The college offers credit for more than 100 industry certifications and dozens of opportunities for challenge exams and portfolio reviews. Students access information about CPL mechanisms easily through the [school's website](#). Alvarado and her colleagues attend as many campus departmental and training meetings as possible to keep faculty, staff, advisors and administrators informed about alternative mechanisms to challenge courses and earn credit. Alvarado attends conferences and conducts on-going research to maintain and update articulation agreements that recognize workplace professional development as college credit.

"We don't over-promise," said Myrline Sterling, specialist, Prior Learning Assessment. "Students understand that they will need to meet with their advisor to confirm they have chosen to challenge a class that is part of their degree program. Also, they must submit their resume for us to review so that we can properly guide them. If they choose to do a portfolio, I always provide them an example."

Students who decide to challenge a class pay an assessment fee of \$30 per credit hour, and the submission and review are completed during one semester. Sterling said she encourages students to document as many skills and accomplishments as possible, including certificates of completion of training, to meet learning objectives set by program managers and deans.

"We know that Credit for Prior Learning gives returning adult students momentum. For example, a student earned 33 college credits recently using many of the mechanisms available through Credit for Prior Learning," Alvarado said.

Student Spotlight: Graduate of PBAU Teaches Middle School; Plans to Earn Certification Next

Joan, 53, of Boynton Beach is a recent graduate of Palm Beach Atlantic University. She earned a bachelor's in organizational management.

"Finishing something I have wanted to do for 20 plus years is deeply satisfying," Joan said. "Of course, I needed a four-year degree to persevere and have options in a career—no way around it—but this is something that is also very, very personal."

Joan attended college after high school but took a position at a telecommunications company before completing her degree. Later, she married and focused on being a stay-at-home mom. Through the years, Joan helped her husband run his security business, earned real-estate and insurance licenses, played a leadership role in the Parent-Teacher Association and served on the board of her daughter's charter school.

After her daughter started college, Joan landed a permanent substitute teaching position.

"I fell totally in love with middle-school students," she said. "I began thinking about finishing my degree and getting a teaching certificate."

Joan was confused about how to get started again and decided to consult Complete Florida after receiving a recommendation from Joe Sharp, an online admissions counselor, at Palm Beach Atlantic University.

"At first it seemed like Complete Florida was too good to be true," Joan said. "Free coaching and the possibility of a scholarship? I mean, how could this be?"

Joan's Complete Florida coach reviewed Joan's transcripts and determined that Joan's fastest route to graduation was to return to where she started so many years before: Palm Beach Atlantic.

"I found it exciting to be back in college courses," Joan said. "Sure, I put a little nervousness at first, but I have always had the work ethic and put in the time for whatever is required."



What We're Reading

- [Why Colleges are Struggling to Graduate More Teachers](#)
- [Education Consumers are Speaking: Policymakers, Educators, Employers Must Listen](#)

Who Are We?

Complete Florida is a high-tech, low-hassle, online program for busy adults to finish their college degree and land their dream job. We provide free concierge coaching services for students returning to college.

CompleteFlorida.org

By the Numbers

20 Partner schools

200+ Degree programs

11,405+ Students

working with a Complete Florida Coach

\$1.6 million

Awarded in scholarships from Complete Florida

1,754 Graduates



Resources Available

The Complete Florida Networking Group archives its webinars for your reference. Some subjects include:

Open Up: Finding and using open educational resources

Ten-hut: Supporting military affiliated students

Coaching to Completion: How returning adults find the finish line.



Finish Up Your College Degree

Did anyone you know attend college but leave before earning a degree? Learn how the online courses and coaches at Complete Florida can help them complete their degree during this fall's Virtual College Week.

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What Students are Saying

"In the last year, I completed my AA, and now I am working on a bachelor's degree. Complete Florida helps me feel I am not alone and others want me to succeed."

Evelynn

Florida State College at Jacksonville

"Although I have had a successful military career, I am looking to increase my knowledge and gain new experiences in a different profession. I am ready to commit to college."

Thomas

Hodges University

"Through my education, I have been given insight into the possibilities that can be accessed through technology and cybersecurity."

Bianca

Florida International University

"At the age of 54, I've decided it is finally time to complete my bachelor's degree. It's been a long time coming, and I am so ready to make myself, my children and my granddaughter proud."

~Theresa

University of West Florida

"I am currently in the management program, and my goal is to be part of a hospital team that provides safe and affordable healthcare."

Tom

Indian River State College

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