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Message from Complete Florida

Save the date, and join us for a conversation that includes both statewide and national stakeholders. Complete Florida will host a convening during the [Florida College Access Network Annual Summit](#), on May 10 and 11 in Orlando. We invite all our partner institutions and any others who are interested to participate in a discussion called "Coaching to Completion: Improving Degree Attainment for Returning Adults." Representatives from [Complete College America](#) and [The Graduate Network](#) will share information on national efforts about this topic. Complete Florida partner institutions who would like to participate in the convening should [contact me](#) to register. I welcome all comments and suggestions.

Michelle Horton
Complete Florida Director



Complete Florida Partner Highlight: The Need for OER

Through the use of Open Educational Resources, 1,612 students at Indian River State College have saved more than \$250,000 in textbook costs during the last two semesters, according to an analysis conducted by the Virtual Campus Office at IRSC.

"At Indian River, we are very fortunate to have support from executive leadership on down," said Kendall St. Hilaire, the assistant dean of Virtual Campus. "For a project like this, you really need a lot of open-minded people from various departments."

St. Hilaire said the project started about a year and a half ago, and instructional designers and course developers in the Virtual Campus Office coordinate it. OER efforts involve librarians as well as subject matter experts from instructional departments. Right now, 21 courses use OER materials instead of traditional textbooks. Many of these offerings are general education classes.

"It's about more than offering a textbook online," St. Hilaire said. "We have professors who incorporate podcasts, videos and links to relevant websites. They also use Web 2.0 tools to generate content that features student projects, which is really exciting because it incorporates modeling into the structure."

OER content aligns with Quality Matters rubrics and is available to students through Blackboard. Departments ranging from philosophy and theater to public administration use it. The criminal justice department offers an online A.S. degree in which all courses utilize OER.

The Virtual Campus Office is currently conducting a survey to collect feedback from students who use these resources instead of traditional textbooks.

"It does take some time to develop," St. Hilaire said. "However, it is certainly doable, and the feedback we have been getting from students and faculty is overwhelmingly positive."

Challenge Issued

Because textbook costs affect student success and graduation rates, Complete Florida has issued a challenge to partner institutions to increase the use of Open Educational Resources (OER). Partners can request up to \$60,000 to develop OER. Proposals are due to [Michelle Horton](#) by May 1 and must include a one-to-two page description that explains the implementation of current or proposed plans to use OER plus a timeline and budget for the project. The OER must cover material for a general education course requirement or material specifically associated with a course in a Complete Florida degree program. Look for the announcement of the OER Challenge winners in a future edition of the Complete Florida Newsletter.

Student Spotlight

Kelly Davison, 50, of Orlando, will graduate May 3 from the University of West Florida with a bachelor's degree in Workforce and Program Development. That same day, her daughter will graduate from UWF with a degree in Sports Management, and her son will finish UWF with a Hospitality degree.

Davison and her husband have two other children besides the two who are graduating from UWF, and she works full time for a financial company where she does customer service and client interactions.

"I think my professional life has enriched my experience returning to college," Davison said. "You bring a different perspective to things when you have lived life, especially the classes required for my major."

Davison, who was the recipient of a Complete Florida scholarship, wrote this in her application essay: "This is the last semester, and I am so appreciative of the assistance I have received. I started college right out of high school in 1985 and received my AA degree but never completed my bachelor's degree and left school. I have a very busy life and everyone thought I was crazy to try to slip in being a full-time student but I've done it! I have finished six semesters at the University of West Florida with a GPA of 3.4... This scholarship has not only helped me financially, it has helped me show my children that it's never too late. If I can do it, they can do it, and they are."

What We're Reading

- [50 State Comparison: Academic Credit for Military Experience.](#)
- [Declining College Enrollment from Traditional-Age Students Will Hit Hard: Are Adult Students the Answer?](#)



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

14 Number of partner schools in the state

130+ Number of degree programs available through Complete Florida

6,100+ Number of students working with a Complete Florida Coach

\$630,000+ Amount awarded in scholarships from Complete Florida

758 Number of graduates



College is Good for Business

By 2020, 65% of jobs will require education and training beyond high school.

~Georgetown Public Policy Institute

What Students are Saying

"Complete Florida stands for what I believe in. I will be able to finally complete my college education and reach my goals."

~Thomas

"Earning this degree will give me the opportunity to move into another growing industry where I can advance my career."

~Suzanne

"With a full-time job and a family, keeping up with the pace has been challenging but also enriching and enjoyable."

~Christine

"Once I met my coach, Matt, he immediately helped me in the right direction and gave me the advice and encouragement I needed."

~Timothy

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