



research • communication • advocacy • support

## **MEDIA ALERT**

**FLORIDA C.A.N.!**  
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, BEH 236  
Tampa, FL 33620

### **Media Contact: Lalita Llerena**

(813) 974-8606

[lalita@usf.edu](mailto:lalita@usf.edu)

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, April 24, 2012

### **Panelists to Discuss Education Policy Trends, Setting State Goals**

*~The Florida College Access & Success Summit will feature a panel discussion on the importance of goal-setting in accelerating high-quality degree production in FL ~*

**Tampa, FL**— It's no secret Florida's labor market is demanding more high-skilled workers. As a result, the demand for graduates earning high-quality postsecondary degrees is rising in Florida and across the United States.

On May 11<sup>th</sup> in Tampa, the [Florida College Access & Success Summit](#) will feature a panel discussion titled "*Goal 2025: Setting a Degree Attainment Goal for Florida*". The session is sponsored by the [Lumina Foundation](#) and will inform attendees of national and state policy trends, and the implications for Florida setting a statewide degree attainment goal as a strategy for meeting the increased demand for college graduates.

Featured panelists include Jeanna Keller Berdel, Program Officer for Lumina Foundation, Dr. Edwin Moore, President of [Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida Inc.](#), Miguel del Valle, Chairman of the [Illinois P-20 Council](#) and Susan Pareigis, President & CEO of [The Florida Council of 100](#). Gene Marshall, Vice Chair of [NorthStar Bank](#) & Chair of [Community Foundation of Tampa Bay](#) will moderate the panel discussion.

According to a recent study by the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce, by 2018, 59% of all jobs in Florida will require a high quality postsecondary degree or credential. Yet, only 37% of working-age adults in Florida today hold a 2-year or 4-year degree.

If Florida continues to increase degree attainment at the rate it did over the last decade, the state will have a college degree attainment rate of [43-percent in the year 2025](#)—far short of the 60-percent required by Florida labor market demand estimates. This degree attainment gap

underscores the urgent need to raise awareness, build consensus across sectors, and mobilize communities to accelerate degree production in Florida.

The first step to increasing attainment is to set a specific state goal that can be used as a basis for all future decisions affecting higher education in the state. Illinois, Tennessee, Ohio, Texas, Arizona and Oregon have all set state goals for attainment. These states are already seeing a dramatic shift in the way higher education decisions are framed and addressed.

State goals lead to the alignment and mobilization of local resources and talents from different sectors to support students and institutional efforts to boost program completion and degree production rates. State goals for attainment also lead to the need for shared interim measures that help to point the way toward the eventual achievement of a state goal. The [Florida College Access Network](#) (Florida C.A.N!) is promoting the adoption of a statewide degree attainment goal for Florida of 60% by the year 2025 based on future workforce demand.

“If we say we’re serious about positioning Florida to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, then we’ve got to accelerate high-quality degree production and invest in our future talent pool,” said Braulio Colón, Executive Director of Florida C.A.N!. “Accelerating degree production requires setting a clear goal that’s aligned with future labor market demand and one that calls on all sectors to help contribute their talents and resources to help get us there,” said Colón.

The Florida College Access & Success Summit convenes leaders from all sectors for a call-to-action around an agenda to improve college & career readiness, access, and completion for all students with the big goal of significantly increasing Florida’s college degree attainment rate from 37% to 60% by the year 2025.

The summit is organized by Florida C.A.N.! and will take place on **Friday, May 11th from 9am-2pm** at the **University of South Florida’s Marshall Student Center in Tampa**. All organizations, businesses, and individuals interested in helping Florida significantly increase its college degree attainment rate are invited to participate.

The Florida College Access & Success summit’s detailed agenda, including the schedule, list of speakers, and travel accommodations can be found [here](#).

Florida C.A.N! receives support from the [Florida Department of Education](#), [Helios Education Foundation](#), [Lumina Foundation for Education](#), and the [University of South Florida](#).

###

#### **About Florida College Access Network**

Florida College Access Network’s mission is to create and strengthen a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to improve college & career preparation, access, and completion for all students. Our Big Goal is to increase the proportion of working-age adults in Florida who hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential to 60% by the year 2025. For more information, visit [www.floridacollegeaccess.org](http://www.floridacollegeaccess.org)