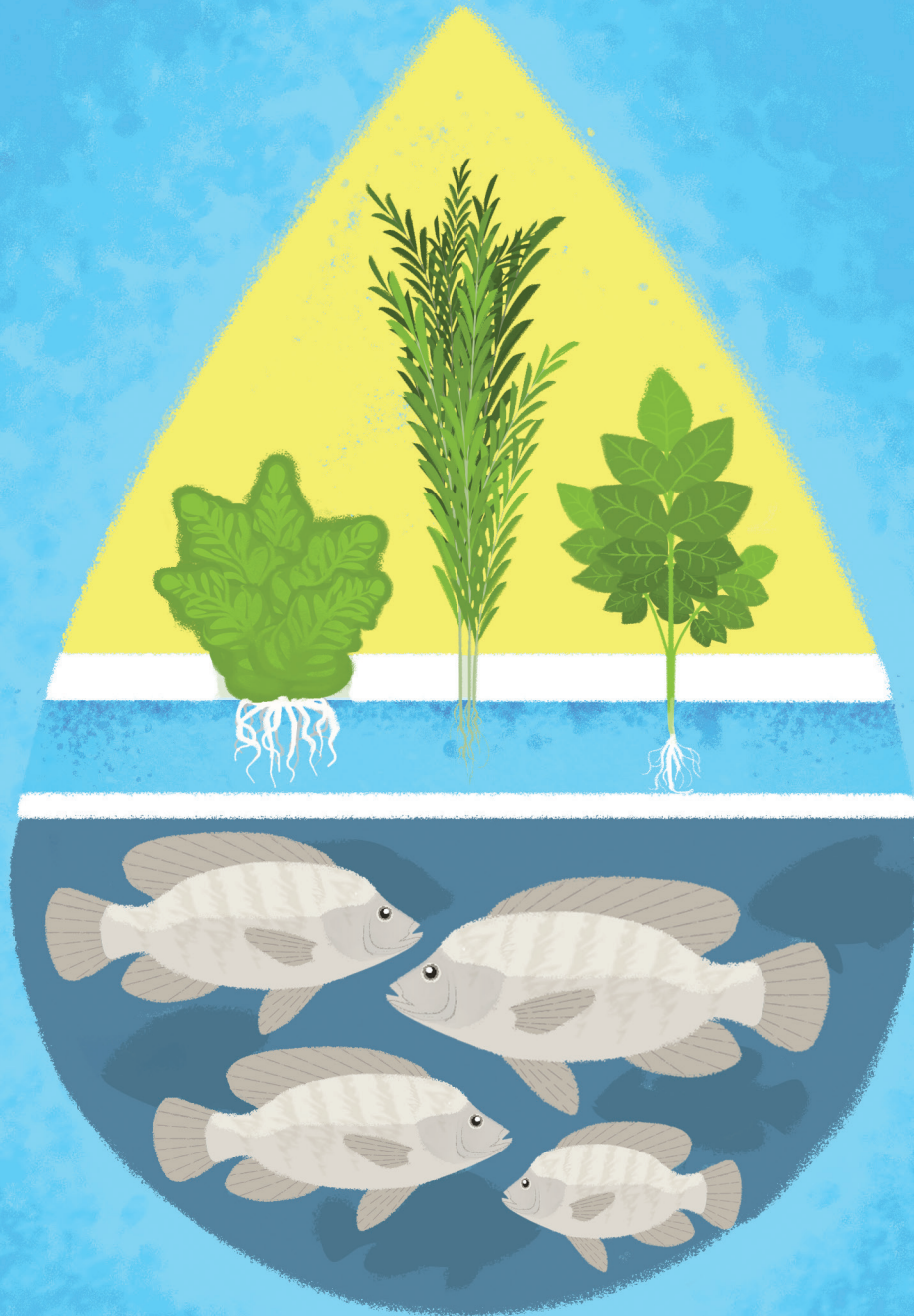


# VITAE

WINTER 2016

THE MAGAZINE OF  
VALENCIA COLLEGE



## Rooftop Agriculture

A new approach to gardening  
in West Orange County.



# VITAE

THE MAGAZINE OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

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Vitae is published biannually by Valencia's Marketing Department in coordination with Alumni Relations for approximately 66 cents an issue. Opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the official position of Valencia College or the Valencia Alumni Association.

The Valencia Alumni Association provides opportunities for lifelong personal, educational and professional growth for alumni and students of Valencia College.

Valencia College provides equal opportunity for educational opportunities and employment to all. Contact the Office of Human Resources and Diversity for information.

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### In Pictures

Members of the Central Florida Sounds of Freedom Band perform at the Pulse Memorial on West Campus.

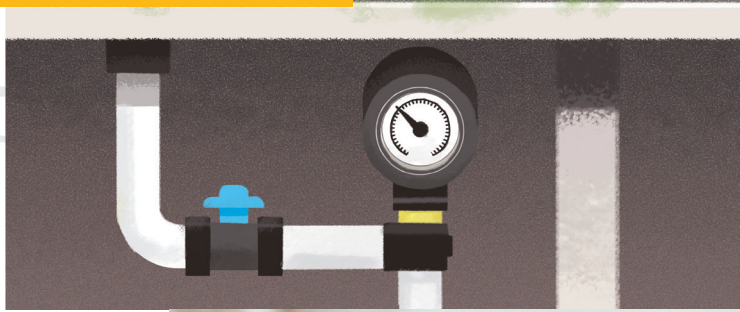
Photograph by Julie Fletcher

VALENCIA COLLEGE

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Creating a culture of success

# Construction Phase of Film, Sound and Music Building Reaches Milestone



Rendering of the new building  
Designed by architectural firm DLR Group

The “topping out” ceremony took place on November 15, and the East Campus’ state-of-the-art film, sound and music production building is one step closer to completion, set for July 2017. Currently, the arts-oriented East Campus has almost 800 students pursuing associate degrees in either film production or sound and music

technology, increasingly popular fields that music production program chair Raul Valery says can lead to “high-demand, high-wage” jobs. The new \$15 million, 30,705 square-foot building will double the capacity by introducing two professional recording studios; a 2,500 square-foot sound stage; and 125-seat

screening theater. Valencia will also become one of the first sites in the nation and the only public college in the southeast to house a Dolby-certified Atmos® immersive mixing and dubbing room.

Sound and music technology students will have the opportunity to gain real experience in the control room as professors train

them in subjects as specific as sound restoration and archiving. Students will have access to two mixing suites: one featuring Dolby-certified equipment for Virtual Reality Gaming and one for multi-channel broadcast sound. The film production and sound and music technology programs will move into the building in the fall semester of 2017.

## Valencia Ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in Number of Associate Degrees

Based on a ranking of more than 3,600 colleges and universities published in Community College Week in September, Valencia ranked 4th in associate degrees awarded. This comes after 7,625 degrees were awarded in the 2014/2015 school year, a three percent jump from the previous year. Fifty-one percent of last year’s degrees were awarded to minority students, which puts Valencia at 4th in degrees awarded to Hispanic students and 6th for degrees awarded to African-American students.

Commenting on the recent accolades, college President Sandy Shugart cited Valencia’s continued

dedication to the success of an ever-diverse student body. “For the past decade the college has targeted its efforts toward helping students from all backgrounds succeed. These rankings underscore the role that Valencia plays as the first step to college for many students in Central Florida.”

The college’s continued success in this category goes beyond the two-year mark. The DirectConnect to UCF program has contributed to Valencia’s high transfer rate—considered one of the highest in the nation—paving the path to four-year degrees for more than 36,000 students since 2006.



# College Leads Charge to Address Nursing Shortage

With the number of vacant nursing jobs climbing steadily since 2013, the state is expected to need 10,000 new registered nurses by the end of 2016. To tackle the nursing shortage, Valencia College has been part of a multi-stakeholder taskforce including local hospital systems, the University of Central Florida, Seminole State College and Lake-Sumter State College. Leading this regional initiative is former Orlando Health Administrator Anne Peach.

At a regional nursing summit held in October, the major hospitals and nursing schools in the five-county region met to identify the needs and challenges: high demand for registered nurses and even higher demand for registered nurses with

bachelor's degrees; a surplus of qualified candidates for nursing programs at local colleges and universities; and the lack of educational capacity to train all those who are interested in becoming nurses. As Rise Sandrowitz, Valencia's dean of nursing, told the Orlando Sentinel, "We can't graduate them fast enough."

While Valencia currently offers nursing students the chance to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing quickly – by taking associate-level and upper-level UCF classes concurrently – the task force is searching for additional creative solutions to the nursing shortage. These could come in the form of night and weekend courses, or in-hospital courses that would allow hospital employees to earn a nursing degree.



# Poinciana Campus Set to Open in Fall 2017

Meeting the increasing demand for higher education in the western edge of Osceola County, Valencia broke ground on its Poinciana Campus last spring. By October, construction was in full swing. When the 19-acre campus opens for classes

in Fall 2017, college officials expect to enroll 1,500 students from the Poinciana area, an estimation that factors in both existing Valencia students and aspiring ones previously deterred by long commute times to the Osceola campus.

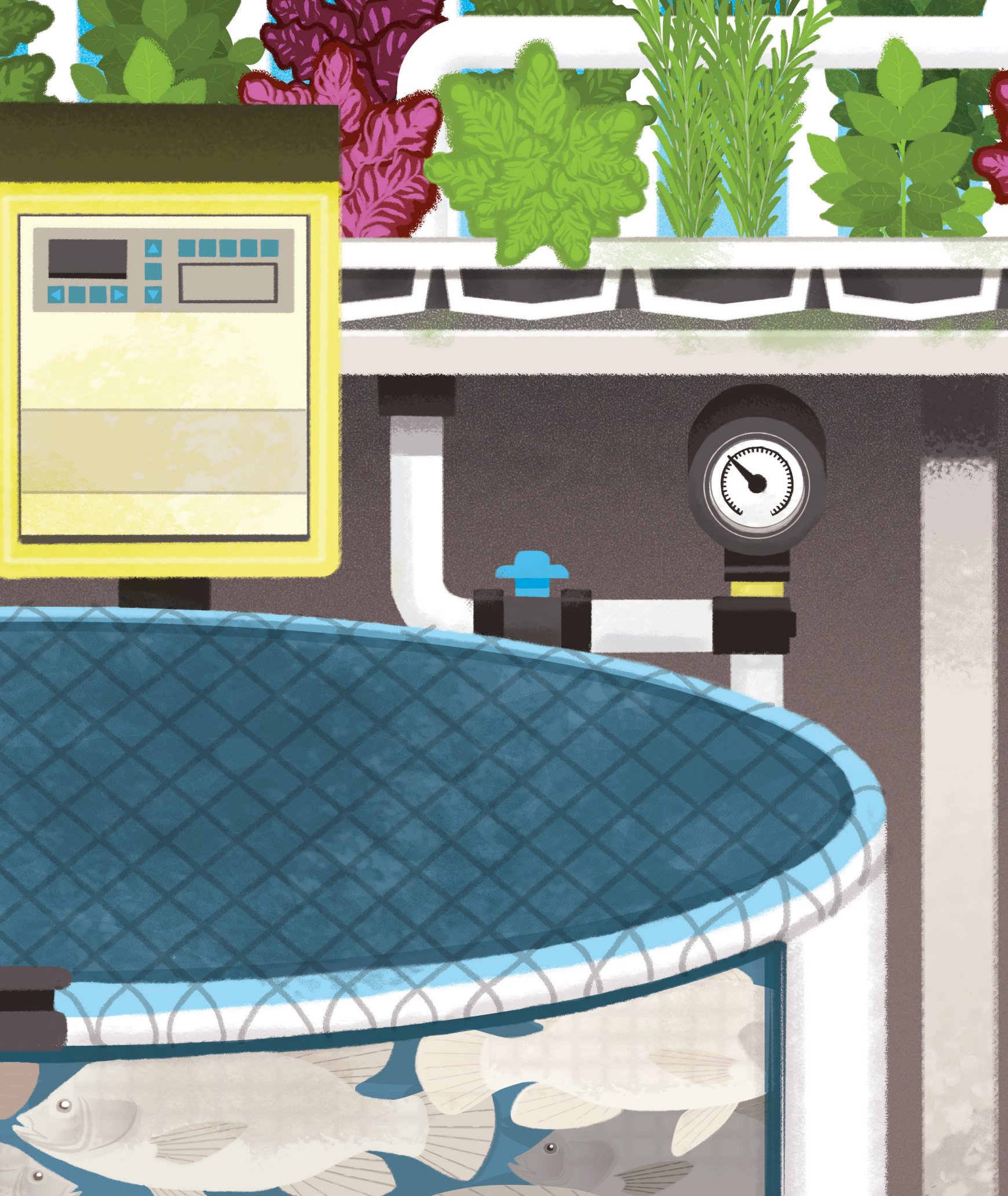
Valencia leaders first began looking at Poinciana as a possible location in 2003; they submitted a formal request to the state legislature in 2013. In Tallahassee, state legislators Rep. Mike LaRosa (R-Osceola) and Sen. Darren Soto (D-Osceola)

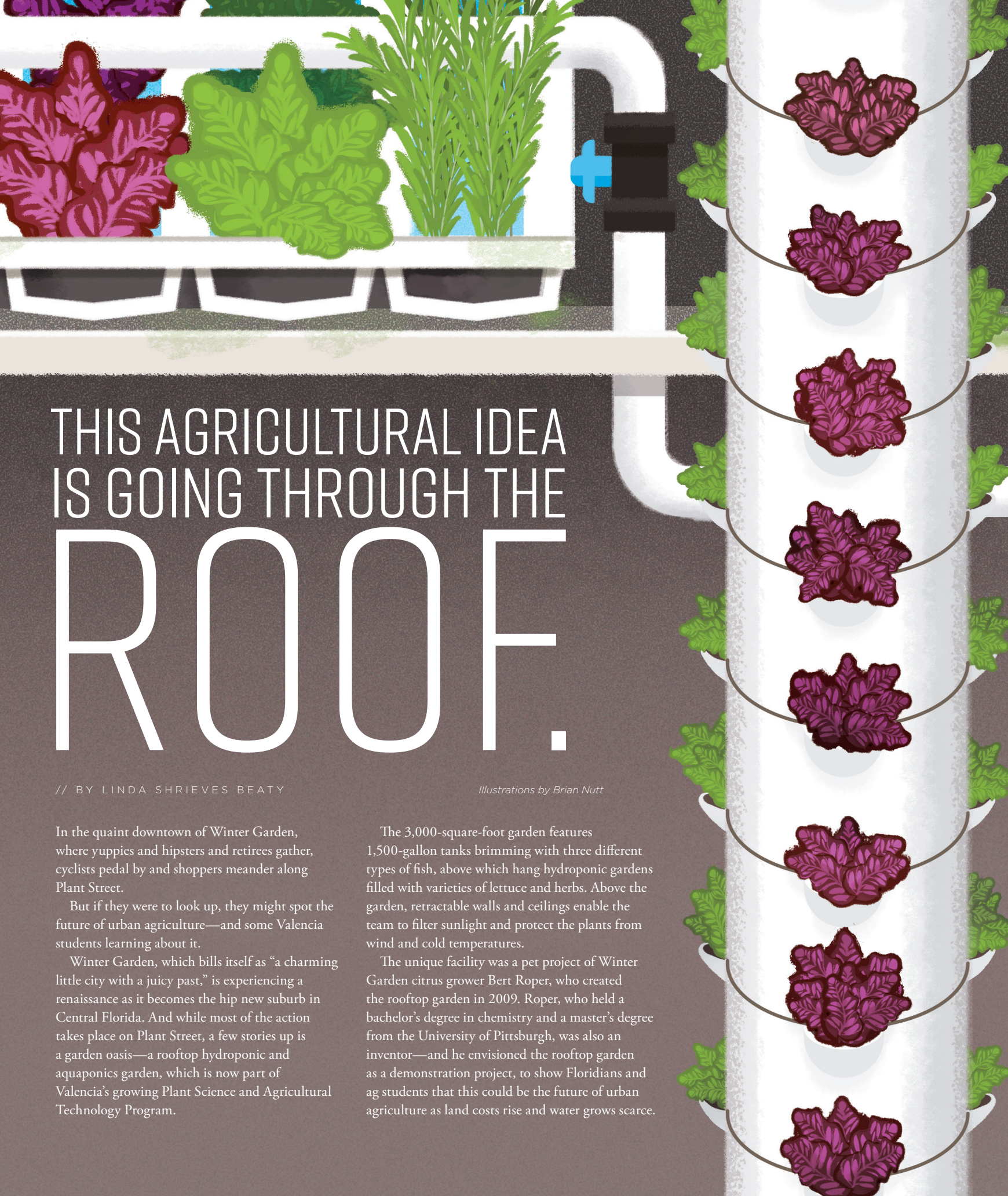
championed the effort to fund the long-awaited campus, with the strong support of Gov. Rick Scott. The final approval was made possible by the diligence of the Osceola County Commission, specifically Commissioner Brandon Arrington and County Manager Don Fisher, who facilitated the county's donation of the 19-acre site.

Once complete, the Poinciana Campus will serve as a community focal point. It will house 12 classrooms, two computer labs, a science lab and a culinary teaching kitchen, offering Associate in Science degrees in culinary management, business administration, information technology, criminal justice and office administration. The campus will also offer Associate in Arts degree courses for students seeking to transfer to bachelor's degree programs, plus short-term skills training for working adults and English-language instruction for non-native speakers.



Rendering of final campus  
Designed by architectural firm DLR Group





# THIS AGRICULTURAL IDEA IS GOING THROUGH THE ROOF.

// BY LINDA SHRIEVES BEATY

*Illustrations by Brian Nutt*

In the quaint downtown of Winter Garden, where yuppies and hipsters and retirees gather, cyclists pedal by and shoppers meander along Plant Street.

But if they were to look up, they might spot the future of urban agriculture—and some Valencia students learning about it.

Winter Garden, which bills itself as “a charming little city with a juicy past,” is experiencing a renaissance as it becomes the hip new suburb in Central Florida. And while most of the action takes place on Plant Street, a few stories up is a garden oasis—a rooftop hydroponic and aquaponics garden, which is now part of Valencia’s growing Plant Science and Agricultural Technology Program.

The 3,000-square-foot garden features 1,500-gallon tanks brimming with three different types of fish, above which hang hydroponic gardens filled with varieties of lettuce and herbs. Above the garden, retractable walls and ceilings enable the team to filter sunlight and protect the plants from wind and cold temperatures.

The unique facility was a pet project of Winter Garden citrus grower Bert Roper, who created the rooftop garden in 2009. Roper, who held a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and a master’s degree from the University of Pittsburgh, was also an inventor—and he envisioned the rooftop garden as a demonstration project, to show Floridians and ag students that this could be the future of urban agriculture as land costs rise and water grows scarce.



Valencia student Kelly Edwards checks basil plants for signs of pests or disease.

After Roper's death in 2012, the garden was operated by Aquatic Ecosystems and then by Pentair, both companies in the hydroponics/aquaponics business. Both companies used the facility as a demonstration greenhouse. But when they expanded their other facilities, they decided to stop operating the rooftop facility in Winter Garden.

So when the Roper family offered Valencia College the chance to take over the lease, Dr. Javier Garces leaped at the chance. Garces, who runs Valencia's plant science program, has been taking students to Roper's garden since he started working at Valencia in 2009. "Every semester, I take a class on a field trip there," says Garces. "I've had (Valencia) alumni working there, running the greenhouse."

The possibilities for Valencia students to use the garden are endless, he says.

And students are already lining up for the chance to take classes there—even though the facility is 10 miles from West Campus, where they take their other plant science classes.

"It's been fascinating," says Garces. "Students get up there and their jaws drop. They want to know,

'How can I spend time here? How can I get trained in this type of production?' I had concerns about it being off campus. But the reaction has been the opposite. I've had to tell students to wait another semester to take the classes."

Garces and Jose Sikaffy, a recent Valencia plant science grad who was hired to serve as the aquaponics greenhouse manager, took over operations at the facility in August 2016. With the assistance of Sikaffy and Tucker Kirkpatrick, another Valencia plant science graduate who was hired to help run the facility, Garces plans to spend the first year of the three-year lease using the garden to teach students in existing courses.

"For example, a course in greenhouse operations and management could meet there weekly as a lab session. A class on fertilizers could meet there once a semester to learn about and practice using hydroponic fertilizers. And an entomology class could go there regularly and look for "insect pests," says Garces.

But the plans go far beyond those basics. Over the next three years, Garces plans to teach students about hydroponics, aquaculture (fish farming), and aquaponics, which blends fish-farming and hydroponics by recycling the water from fish farming to hydroponically grown plants. In the coming years, students will be able to earn technical certificates in those areas—and the college will add a specialization in sustainable agriculture.

Because of the changes, Valencia has changed the name of its agriculture program and now students will earn A.S. degrees in plant science and agricultural technology.

But what's more exciting will be the variety of plants they're growing—and the many possibilities for partnerships.

For instance, Chef Ryan Freelove, who in October opened his Market to Table Restaurant on the first floor of the Roper Building, has asked Garces and his students to grow basil, parsley, rosemary, gourmet lettuce, tomatoes, bell peppers, hot peppers and eggplant.

Basil, says Sikaffy, is "a crop that's expensive to buy and hard to grow." In the hydroponic towers, Sikaffy plans to grow strawberries and edible flowers.

“**It's been fascinating. Students get up there and their jaws drop. They want to know, 'How can I spend time here? How can I get trained in this type of production?'"**

Meanwhile, lettuce grows in channels—which look remarkably like roof gutters—that hang above the fish tanks. Throughout the season, Sikaffy and Valencia students will harvest 200 heads of lettuce each week.

In addition, Garces and his students will experiment with some unusual crops—including purple cabbage, Chinese green cabbage, yellow and purple cauliflower. "Those are unique crops that



The 3,000-square-foot greenhouse sits on the roof of the historic Roper Building in downtown Winter Garden.



Tatjana Togafau clips dead leaves from a flat of basil plants.

Greenhouse lab supervisor Jose Sikaffy and Valencia student Michael Masucci examine lettuce and marigolds being grown in the aquaponics facility.



you can't find at the supermarket, but produce that a chef might want," Garces says.

The fish tanks are currently full of koi, tilapia and hybrid striped bass, a hybrid developed to survive in a southern climate in warmer water. But Garces doesn't plan to sell the fish; because Valencia doesn't have a permit to clean and gut the fish on the premises, the fish must be sold whole. And he hasn't quite figured out who would want to buy whole, rather than filleted, fish. "Honestly, what restaurant wants their kitchen staff busy cleaning and filleting fish?" says Garces.

For now, he is donating the farmed fish to charities—including the Salvation Army and the Central Care Mission—and to Valencia's culinary program, where culinary students can learn to clean and fillet the fish. In September, Garces donated 120 pounds of hybrid striped bass to chefs

Pierre Pilloud and Ken Bourgoïn, who used it to teach their students how to clean and cook the fish.

It was a great learning opportunity, says Bourgoïn. "The students who helped gut and scale the fish had a great opportunity because normally we don't buy that much fish for a class," says Bourgoïn. "Teams of two in two classes were able to filet the fish off the bone." They then learned to saute the fish in a Meunière sauce (butter and lemon), and served it with a beurre blanc (browned butter sauce) or a mousseline sauce, which is a hollandaise with whipped cream.

But the primary benefit of the fish is, frankly, their waste—which is used to fertilize the plants. The water in the fish tank, which contains ammonia, nitrites, nitrates, phosphorus, potassium and other micronutrients, is continuously pumped into a grow bed where the plants are located. The



“

**There’s a huge interest from students and the public in urban agriculture—whether it’s dirt farming or more high-tech farming, like this rooftop hydroponics.”**



Valencia student Michael Masucci nets a hybrid striped bass being raised in the tanks of the rooftop garden.

plants remove the nutrients from this water, and the clean water is then sent back into the fish tank.

“The fish provide fertilizer for the plants—but they also provide an additional source of potential revenue for us,” says Garces.

Balancing the nutrient levels to keep both plants and fish happy is tricky, says Sikaffy. “The fish like a higher pH; plants like a lower pH. We meet in the middle,” he says. That’s one reason that the previous aquaponics greenhouse operators chose to grow tilapia and koi. “They’re very forgiving,” says Sikaffy.

In the future, however, Garces may explore raising different types of fish—including baitfish, which could be sold whole to fishermen, or he may experiment with fish that live in brackish water, such as redfish or snook. The challenge with growing fish that prefer salty water, though, is finding plants that also can thrive in salty water. “We’re trying to think outside the box,” he says.

Thinking outside the box has become standard procedure for Garces. Already having built a huge cooperative garden with the Edgewood Children’s

Valencia student Keith Grant leans over a fish tank to check on new plantings of red and green lettuce.



Ranch, Garces is now trying to figure out how to make the most of this rooftop garden, so that many students can benefit.

In addition to the agriculture students, he envisions teams of business students selling Valencia produce at the weekly farmer's market in Winter Garden. And he would love to hold a regular farmer's market on West Campus, so students and faculty could buy fresh produce. Any money raised, he says, "would help keep the facility running and raise funds for the program."

In addition to raising money, business



Professor Javier Garces (center), greenhouse lab supervisor Tucker Kirkpatrick (left) and horticulture student Keith Grant examine a kohlrabi grown in the aquaponic garden.

students "could take on the whole farmer's market thing and help us keep track of the numbers," says Garces. "That would be a great experience."

As for Valencia's agriculture students, they're excited about the operation—so much so that the classes scheduled to use the rooftop garden are filling up quickly.

"There's a huge interest from students and the public in urban agriculture—whether it's dirt farming or more high-tech farming, like this rooftop hydroponics," says Garces. And for consumers and foodies, there's growing demand for locally grown produce. "Farmers markets are packed every weekend," he adds, and restaurants are clamoring for locally grown goods, as the farm-to-table movement continues to grow.

For students looking for a career in agriculture, Garces notes that this type of training opens up new opportunities. "Nationwide and throughout the world, there are big operations that need individuals who have this type of training," he says. "There's a couple of operations here

in Florida—and a huge hydroponic facility that opened recently in Milwaukee in an old, abandoned brewery."

Meanwhile, there are also jobs with companies such as Pentair—the company that once operated the greenhouse—which has clients in Saudi Arabia and around the world.

"This is part of the future of agriculture," says Garces. "This is not the silver bullet, but I do feel strongly that this is a part—and a big important part—of the future of agriculture." ▀

## JANUARY

### Kevin Haran: Paintings and Sculpture

Jan. 12 – March 3, 2017

Reception: Thursday, Jan. 12, 2017  
from 6 – 8 p.m.

*Anita S. Wooten Gallery, East Campus*

Admission is free.

[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### 3 in Motion

Jan. 27, 2017 at 8 p.m.

*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*

Valencia Dance Theater in  
conjunction with Dr. Phillips High  
School Dance Magnet Program and  
Yow Dance Company.

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10  
for students, faculty/staff, alumni and  
seniors; \$6 for children 12 and under  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)



"Ship," 2008,  
cardboard and foam  
board by Kevin Haran

## FEBRUARY

### 22nd Annual Film Celebration

Feb. 2017 (times and films TBA)

*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*

Tickets: \$7 general admission

[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### Francesco Attesti: Classical Pianist

Feb. 7, 2017 at 7 p.m.

*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*

Admission is free.

[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### The Seven Year Itch

By George Axelrod

Feb. 17, 18, 20, 24, 25, 2017

at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 19 and 26, 2017 at 2 p.m.

*Black Box Theater, East Campus*

Tickets: \$12 general admission;

\$10 for students, faculty/staff,

alumni and seniors

[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### Spring Symphonic and Jazz Band Concert

Feb. 28, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*

Admission is free.

[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

## MARCH

### Valencia Spring Dance Concert

March 24 and 25, 2017 at 8 p.m.

*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10

for students, faculty/staff, alumni and

seniors; \$6 for children 12 and under

[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)





## APRIL

### Spring Choral Concert

April 5, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.  
*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*  
 Admission is free.  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### Creation: Births of Mythology

April 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, 2017  
 at 7:30 p.m.  
 April 9 and 16, 2017 at 2 p.m.  
*Black Box Theater, East Campus*  
 Tickets: \$12 general admission;  
 \$10 for students, faculty/staff,  
 alumni and seniors  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### Valencia College 12th Annual 5K Run, Walk & Roll

April 8, 2017 at 6 p.m.  
*West Campus*  
 In honor of Pulse tragedy victims  
 and first responders.  
 Entry Fee: \$20 – \$35  
[valenciacollege.edu/alumni/events](http://valenciacollege.edu/alumni/events)

### 50th Anniversary Show

April 11, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.  
*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*  
 Admission is free.  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### House Band Concert

April 13, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.  
*Performing Arts Center, East Campus*  
 Admission is free.  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### Annual Juried Student Exhibition: Digital, Graphic and Fine Arts

April 14 – May 19, 2017  
 Reception: Friday, April 14, 2017  
 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
 Awards ceremony at 7:30 p.m.  
*Anita S. Wooten Gallery, East Campus*  
 Admission is free.  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### Spring Opera Theatre Performance

April 21 and 22, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.  
*Black Box Theater, East Campus*  
 Admission is free.  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)

### Student-Directed One-Act Festival

April 21 and 22, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.  
*Lowndes Shakespeare Center,  
 Loch Haven Park, Orlando*  
 Admission is free.  
[valenciacollege.edu/arts](http://valenciacollege.edu/arts)



Masks, Annual Juried Student Exhibition

## MAY

### Taste for Learning Celebrating Valencia's 50th Anniversary

May 20, 2017 from 7 – 10 p.m.  
*Rosen Shingle Creek Resort*  
 Tickets: \$125 per person  
[valencia.org/taste](http://valencia.org/taste)

MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE  
FOR  
STUDENTS:

THE  
VALENCIA  
FUND

//BY JOHN MOSSER

Alumni, parents, and friends of the College often ask the staff of the Valencia College Foundation, “How and where can I make a donation that can make a real difference in supporting the students of Valencia College?” The answer to this important question is The Valencia Fund. The Valencia Fund is an exciting new way for donors to make a gift that enhances the educational opportunities of all students across every campus of the College. The Valencia Fund’s sole purpose is to provide educational opportunities and support that tuition and fees alone are not able to provide. Every dollar donated to The Valencia Fund provides practical help to students, whether it be with textbook costs, travel to academic or career competitions, or emergency needs to keep students in school.

### Testing Aid

Sometimes the only obstacle to a student’s success is a test a student can’t afford.

In her first semester at Valencia, Ashley Schwarz was juggling a full-time job and four classes—and coping with dyslexia and ADHD. She needed just one test and a report from a school psychologist to qualify for the accommodations her disabilities require.

Her counselor arranged for a \$300 S.O.S. mini-grant from The Valencia Fund that paid for the test, and Schwarz, 19, is “super-grateful,” she says.

The Kissimmee student, who plans to become a veterinarian, is impressed with the support offered by Valencia.

Staff members go out of their way to guide students, she says, “a lot more than I expected any college would do.”

“

**I wouldn’t have been classified as a student with disabilities and would probably have failed miserably at any writing or mathematics course.”**

Ashley Schwarz



### S.O.S Mini-Grants

Laura Brito, 23, is in her sophomore year at Valencia. She's working on her Associate of Arts degree with plans to transfer to a university offering a bachelor's degree in sign language interpretation. "The high school I attended had a lot of deaf and hard-of-hearing students," she says. "That's when I fell in love with sign language." Her parents can't pay for college, so her financial situation has been tenuous.

"The way I started off at the College was I lived with my brother," Brito says. "Then I decided to live on my own." She had found a job as a restaurant hostess and had a steady income, but then reality hit.

"I was just starting school and had four classes," she says. "I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I didn't know how hard college was."

Unable to juggle work and school, Brito ended up losing the job—and the apartment. That's when she began a nomadic life, living with various friends while attending Valencia.

When Brito ran into an unexpected financial emergency. She was faced with needing to make a choice between paying for an unexpected bill or paying her tuition. She thought she would have to drop out of school.

She met with one of her counselors and shared her predicament. The counselor was able to arrange for a

\$1,500 S.O.S. mini-grant from The Valencia Fund that allowed her to meet a critical financial commitment and to stay in school. She also received a textbook award to help her purchase the rest of her textbooks.

"When I was in desperate need of help, Valencia has been there for me," Brito says.

She expects to graduate in this coming summer and is optimistic about the future, especially since being hired by the college as a part-time C-Print captionist.

"I provide real-time speech-to-text services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing," she explains. "Valencia has encouraged me to do so much."

None of the financial support Brito has received was a large dollar amount, but each dollar helped her to overcome an obstacle and stay in school.

“

I knew that if I left school, I wouldn't come back for a long time and I wasn't going to let that happen.”



Laura Brito

### Textbook Scholarships

Jason Hormuth is a student who received a textbook scholarship award. Jason shared with staff at the College that he was working full-time in construction and he wanted to continue his education so that he could get a better job and increase his earning power. Because he was working full-time, he knew it would be hard to go to class after working a full day of heavy physical labor. While the cost of the class was manageable, it was still a significant investment of his available discretionary income. He began to have doubts about whether he would stay in the class that he had signed up to take. He wasn't sure he would also have enough money to buy the books for his class. At the moment he was on the fence about what to do, he learned he had been selected to receive a textbook award to cover the full cost of the books for his course. The few hundred dollars Jason received was the tipping point that kept him in school. Jason shared that he is profoundly grateful for the





Jason Hormuth

**“At that moment, I knew I had run out of excuses. I was taking the class!”**

support that he received. Elvin Cruz, Coordinator of Scholarships and Special Projects at the Foundation, shared, “This is a perfect example of how even a modest gift to The Valencia Fund can have a life changing impact on the students at the College.”

The Valencia Fund is the primary source of financial support for the general scholarship fund at the Foundation. “A significant number of the Foundation’s donors understand that the College’s core mission is educating students. Making gifts to support student scholarships is one of the best ways to help keep Valencia affordable and to support our core mission,” says Dr. Geraldine Gallagher, President and CEO of The Valencia College Foundation.

Of the top five reasons students cite for dropping out of college, four are financial. This makes The Valencia College Foundation’s work of seeking financial support for The Valencia Fund especially urgent. Because many Valencia College students are working a full-time or several part-time jobs—as well as balancing family, community, volunteer and personal commitments—financial support for the scholarship program through The Valencia Fund makes a tremendous difference in their ability to attend college.

Gifts to The Valencia Fund have allowed the college foundation to make education possible for thousands of students. The power of the Valencia Fund is that no matter the size of the gift a donor makes to the Foundation, \$50, \$100, \$500, or a \$1000, the Foundation is able to combine these gifts with those of others to touch the lives of thousands of students across all of the campuses of the College. Every dollar donated to The Valencia Fund goes to support students and the teaching and learning mission of the College.

Dr. John W. Mosser, the new Chief Philanthropy Officer of the Foundation, shared, “If a donor only had one dollar to give, The Valencia Fund is the gift designation that will allow them to have the most substantial impact in helping Valencia students.” Beyond the important projects already outlined here, gifts to The Valencia Fund also provide funding for the following: undergraduate research, student attendance at conferences and academic competitions, funding for supplies and materials for service learning and community service projects. The Valencia Fund supports bringing thought leaders, nationally prominent artists, speakers, musicians and performers of all types to campus to expand the intellectual and cultural horizons of students. ▀

## THE GIFT OF EDUCATION

The Valencia College Foundation is the gift receiving agency for the College. Staff of the Foundation are dedicated to helping students succeed and thrive during their time at the College. The financial resources donated to The Valencia Fund are helping students to have access to a greatly expanded array of educational opportunities, meet unexpected financial emergencies, and access resources that help keep their educational costs affordable. To make a difference in the lives of Valencia Students we invite your support for The Valencia Fund.

To make a gift to The Valencia Fund, please send a check payable to

**The Valencia College Foundation  
1768 Park Center Drive  
Orlando, FL 32835**

Make a notation in the memo portion of the check for “The Valencia Fund.”

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# Susan Ingersoll

## Once a cancer researcher, she's now teaching students skills to become biotech lab assistants.

//BY LINDA SHRIEVES BEATY

When Susan Ingersoll was growing up, she loved hanging around her dad's medical office, looking through the microscope.

Her father was an Orlando obstetrician and, though she wasn't really interested in delivering babies, she was keenly interested in science. "Math and science were my favorite classes in school," says Ingersoll.

So it probably wasn't surprising that Ingersoll headed to the University of Florida with her eyes on medical school. But after shadowing an orthopedic surgeon and reflecting on her father's hectic schedule, Ingersoll began to rethink her career plans. Medicine, she thought, might not be a very family-friendly career.

Instead, she decided to pursue a graduate degree in genetics or microbiology, at the suggestion of her mentor, who supervised her undergraduate research. "He steered me in that direction," she says, and his suggestion clicked. "I fell in love with DNA, molecular biology and genetics."

But her passion was always in the lab. "I always loved my lab classes. That was my favorite part of all my science classes," says Ingersoll.

Although most people in her Ph.D. program headed for academic careers, Susan Ingersoll wasn't sure that was the life she wanted to lead. So instead, she married her college sweetheart, Jim Ingersoll, an Orlando native (and Valencia grad) who was a commercial mortgage banker, and the two settled in Orlando. She landed a job at Florida Hospital, where she began doing cancer research.

"There are a few hospitals that have well-known research programs, such as the Cleveland Clinic and M.D. Anderson, but I was lucky that I found the opportunity at Florida Hospital, so I wouldn't be forced to move and move and move," says Ingersoll.

At Florida Hospital, Ingersoll worked on a team that studied how tumor cells invade tissue by activating the clotting system. Five years later, she joined another research team, this time focusing on ovarian cancer.

But when Florida Hospital opted to focus its research teams on diabetes and obesity, Ingersoll faced another crossroads: Should she pursue research or teaching?







Professor Susan Ingersoll uses a Bunsen burner to sterilize lab instruments.



**When they finish this A. S. program, they will have all the tools needed to start working a lab very quickly.”**

Teaching, she realized, was what she was meant to do. “I have friends and colleagues who are professors at UCF. But running their labs and getting research grants is their priority,” she says. “I wanted teaching to be my main focus.”

So in 2014, she started teaching biology as an adjunct at Valencia’s Lake Nona Campus. Today, she’s director of the college’s biotechnology lab sciences program, where she teaches students in the two-year A.S. program the skills they need to work as research lab assistants—jobs that could help them pay their way through more college and could help them pursue graduate degrees in science or medicine.

It’s a natural fit for Valencia’s Lake Nona campus, where students coming out of the program could work as research assistants in Medical City labs or in many of the scientific labs at UCF.

“I love teaching biotechnology. This program is so hands-on. There’s very little lecture. I tell the class, here’s what we’re going to do today. Here’s the theory behind it; now let’s get to it.”

And while college graduates with a bachelor’s or master’s degree in biology learn the theory behind lab techniques, they don’t come out of college with the skills or experience to work in a research lab.

“In those classes, you learn the theory behind it. You learn the process behind it, but you don’t get to perform the procedures,” says Ingersoll. “You may do it once in the lab, but you are not proficient.”

“What sets this program apart is this: The biotech classes are very lab based. Students will be doing small research projects and they’ll be doing these procedures—pipetting, doing DNA extractions, doing PCR redactions—over and over again. So

when they finish this A. S. program, they will have all the tools needed to start working a lab very quickly.”

Now Ingersoll is trying to spread the word about the program, which Valencia started in 2015. “I want to target students who want to transfer to a four-year university in a science field or those who want to get lab experience to burnish their resumes for medical school or graduate school,” says Ingersoll.


But there’s another group she’s after—the students who are toiling

away in fast-food restaurants or retail stores to pay their way through college.

“So many of my students work in retail. Instead of working at The Gap or Tropical Smoothie, you could go through this program and make significantly more at a part-time job than you would at the mall,” she says. “This gives them an employable skill.”

And it may just shine a light on their future. **■**

 [valenciacollege.edu/susan-ingersoll](http://valenciacollege.edu/susan-ingersoll)



## The Secret Life of Valencia's Master Potter

// BY ELIZABETH MAUPIN

When Michael Galletta made his way from Orlando back to Sanford, Fla., for his 50th grade-school reunion, he realized that, at an early age, he'd been pigeonholed.

It wasn't as the altar-boy at his Catholic church. It wasn't as the boy with an Italian name whose family ran a neighborhood grocery.

"I was the kid who was designated as the artist," says Galletta. "I was always drawing."

But Galletta, the art professor and program director for ceramics, sculpture and drawing on Valencia College's East Campus, also refused to be pigeonholed too young. The serene sheen of a newly opened sketchbook wasn't what attracted him in the long run—not really.

"I played with everything that was three-dimensional," he says. "I was always digging clay out of the stream near our house. I was much more fascinated with Play-Doh than with drawing."

That little nugget of Galletta's history wouldn't surprise anyone who has seen the variety of his work in ceramics, scattered throughout the filled-to-bursting pottery studio at Valencia and also through his Winter Park home. A simple coffee mug flares out at the bottom and is marked inside and out by the heavy swirls made by his fingers in the clay. A platter is divided by colors swirling in one direction and slashing in another. A clay sculpture in the garden at Crealdé School of Art shows a beating heart covered by the flora and fauna of the southern bayou.

"I don't feel I have a particular style," he says. "It's very eclectic. I don't like to get stuck in one thing."

He finds his ideas not just in pots, but in shapes and surfaces everywhere, and he credits Picasso with the idea that genius can be found in "that obscurity of sources—the way you can put your sources together."

Those ideas wind up in pages and pages of sketchbooks, which Galletta uses as source material months and years later.

"By drawing a lot, you can make so many more pieces in your head than you can in your studio," he says. "You can cram more lifetimes into your lifetime."

Galletta started out studying to be a graphic designer—all those stained-glass windows and intriguing symbols at his Sanford church—but, after watching fellow students on the pottery wheel, switched to ceramics. "It looked like fun," he says. He studied at Florida Technological University (now UCF) with Stephen Jepson, a well-known pioneer of Central Florida's pottery community and, after getting a master's of fine arts at Wichita State University in Kansas, returned home to work at Jepson's Geneva studio.

"He gave me a space, and I bartered with my time. So I made a lot of pots for the studio, and I made my own pots."

Like most potters trying to support themselves by turning out a lot of work, Galletta learned at Jepson's to work quickly. And, looking around, he eventually found there was something else he'd rather do than production pottery. After filling in for a friend who was on sabbatical from Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Galletta discovered that he liked to teach.

"I went out to Valencia, and I found that the pottery shop was being used for storage. The kilns didn't work—well, they really did work, but they were filled with dirt daubers. This was in 1986. I needed a studio to work in, so they offered me the studio and managing the shop."



"Striding Horse,"  
2007, bronze by  
Michael Galletta

“

By drawing a lot, you can make so many more pieces in your head than you can in your studio.”



Professor Michael Galletta uses a ruler (top left) to demonstrate how students in his Drawing 1 and Drawing 2 classes can measure proportions. Students in his classes spend some time drawing still lifes (bottom left), and Galletta gives students tips on how to use perspective and proportion in their compositions (right).

He worked at Valencia as an adjunct professor and also spent two years teaching at UCF, where he met his wife, Betsy Gwinn (now executive director of the Bach Festival Society of Winter Park). Galletta then returned to teach at Valencia fulltime.

“Teaching keeps you thinking,” he says. “It’s constantly renewing. Every 14 weeks you have a new group of minds to work with.”

Along with ceramics, Galletta teaches drawing and sculpture, often to first-year students who may not be planning to major in art.

“I want to get them looking at things,” he says. “In a drawing class, because I don’t think of myself as a two-dimensional artist, teaching

keeps challenging me on how to represent a three-dimensional world in a two-dimensional reality—and in a way that’s fun. You try to think ‘What am I really doing?’ instead of giving them the standard line.”

At 63, Galletta says he has “flirted with” the notion of retirement. But, for a man who surrounds himself with sketchbooks and paper templates for making pots, giving up art isn’t going to happen.

“I always have something here I can work on,” he says, gesturing around his living room to the drawings and cut-outs that eventually will transform themselves into tactile works of clay. “I don’t think I’ll retire from being an artist—ever.”

[valenciacollege.edu/michael-galletta](https://valenciacollege.edu/michael-galletta)

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**VALENCIA**COLLEGE

The Valencia community mourned after seven former students were killed in the June 12 massacre at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. To honor all of the victims—and grieve together—the college held a series of memorials.



Students gathered on West Campus for a candlelight vigil and unity walk.



Valencia president Sandy Shugart and Professor Rudy Darden led a unity walk around Lake Pamela on West Campus. Each empty chair represented one of the 49 lost victims.



Students and staffers at Osceola Campus placed flowers in a memorial display.



Valencians wrote messages of love and healing, which were linked together in a unity chain.



Imam Muhammad Musri, president of the Islamic Society of Central Florida, spoke at the East Campus memorial service.



**IN PICTURES**

Osceola Campus students play volleyball—with one of the largest balls we've seen—on spirit day.



Lake Nona students learned how they can help out in the community at the campus volunteer fair.



Local pundits and political observers descended on West Campus in September to provide commentary and context to the first presidential debate of 2016.

Students in Valencia's short-term construction program are learning basic building skills to fill the growing need for construction workers.



**IN PICTURES**

Police and firefighters who responded to September 11 terrorist attacks in New York attended the Osceola Campus 9/11 ceremony and helped dedicate a piece of steel beam salvaged from the World Trade Center.



Students in Professor Andrew Downey's class learn the art of printmaking.



# How to Enjoy the Ride:

Speech professor Suzette Dohany shares her favorite bike trails.

//BY CYNDIE COX



Professor Suzette Dohany, who teaches speech and interpersonal communications at Valencia's Winter Park Campus, believes in the power of the pedal. Together with professors Val Woldman and Damion Hammock, they started the Winter Park Campus bicycle club three years ago.

A bicycle enthusiast since her south Orlando childhood, Dohany has a few tips for beginner cyclists. First order of business: choose the right bike. "The best thing to do is go to a local bike shop. Try out a couple of different styles, such as comfort hybrid or mountain. Find the style you like, then try different brands of that style," she said. "Don't be shy and don't rush into it. Ride three or four of the style you want to see what feels right. For example, I'm riding a men's bike because that's what I'm more comfortable with."

For longer distances, she recommends a lighter bike that will help you conserve energy, but admits they're more expensive. However, used bicycles are a great way to pick up a bargain on a premium ride.

Accessories are a must. "You definitely need to ride with a helmet," she said. "Beyond that, I found that when I rode without accessories, I was not nearly as comfortable. I bought gloves and upgraded to a very comfortable seat, and I use clip-ins (a pedal and shoe that clip together to improve pedaling efficiency)."

As far as safety goes, she recommends using lights, even during the daytime, acknowledging that drivers don't always look for or see cyclists. Follow the same rules of the road as you do when you're driving. Most important, make eye contact with drivers near you. "I want to make sure the driver knows where I am at all times," she said.

While she was happy to share her knowledge of all things bike, she noted, "I'm not an expert. I'm just passionate about it. I'm passionate about finding something that makes me happy."

**Before she pedaled away, we stopped Dohany to ask her to name her favorite biking trails.**

1. West Orange Trail (22 mi): from Winter Garden to Killarney Station (5 mi) and continue on the South Lake Trail to Clermont (9 mi) (if you want hills)
2. West Orange Trail, from Winter Garden to Apopka (13 mi) (if you want fewer hills)
3. Seminole Trail (23 mi): Start at San Sebastian Trailhead and end at Panera or Peach Valley Café in Lake Mary. Enjoy the fabulous artwork by Jeff Sonksen along the way
4. Anywhere in the Netherlands!



# Saying goodbye to the man behind the camera

//BY CYNDIE COX

Don Burlinson became Valencia's photographer in 1988, when photographs were still developed in the college darkroom. Over the next 27 years, he ushered in the era of digital photography and later, social media, where fans and followers showed an unlimited appetite for his engaging photos. Don retires in December from the Public Affairs and Marketing department.









Don captured the angst of the Valencia students who performed in "Division: The Trayvon/Jordan Project" in 2015.

In his nearly three decades working for Valencia, Don snapped away at campus events and people—capturing changing dress habits and educational trends—to chronicle the college’s history and the experiences of its students. He recalled one of his favorite shoots. “A Valencia grad had been given a job as a maintenance supervisor at Universal Studios and he was being featured in a story in the credit schedule publication,” he said. “I loved going backstage there and seeing how everything worked. That was when the Back to the Future ride was new, and we were able to look down on all the Deloreans. It was a blast.”

Don spoke about expectations that aspiring photographers have. “One of the biggest challenges in being a professional is that clients will come to you with a photograph from a major ad campaign where the shoot alone costs tens of thousands of dollars or more,” he noted. “They’ll want you to

replicate it, and there’s no way you can unless you have that kind of budget. So, you need to learn to work with the resources that are available to you and make the most of them. That’s where your creativity comes in.”

A University of Florida graduate, Don was fascinated by three-dimensional forms of expression. He said that’s an area he hopes to explore in his retirement. “I want to express my creativity in some way other than photography. Sculpture, ceramics, pottery...I’ve never had time, but now I will!”

Don will be best remembered for his talent for telling a story visually and for readily sharing a laugh with his colleagues.

Farewell, Don. Thank you for sharing your gift for so long. We wish you all the best.

Don perched on a hydraulic lift to shoot a grant human peace sign on the East campus.



Don (left) flew in a small plane above Orlando to shoot Valencia’s growing campuses in 1995.

For more images, please visit:

[valenciacollege.edu/don-burlinson](http://valenciacollege.edu/don-burlinson)

Each fall, Don captured images of students in long lines for registration.



A performance by Susan Werner.



When Valencia took over the reins of the Central Florida Fire Academy, Don shot the trainees in the "burn building."



Don went to document the makeup for the theater department's production of "Bat Boy."

Valencia student Vedda Kanglora posed with a violin that Valencia students created on a 3-D printer.



### ***Carol Palacio, '04***

When Carol Palacio was attending University High School in Orlando, she knew her parents didn't have the money to pay for college. And, because her parents hadn't attended college themselves, Palacio was facing the maze of financial aid rules and the complicated college admissions process on her own.

When her guidance counselor suggested Valencia College's Bridges to Success program, Palacio immediately recognized it as a lifeline to her future.

"I took full advantage of it," says the Colombia native, who graduated from Valencia in 2004. Palacio is now the economic development coordinator for Orange County, and credits her career achievements to the Bridges program.

"They teach life skills, anything from etiquette to future goals," she says. "One time they sat us in an auditorium and asked, 'Where do you see yourself in five years?' I had never asked myself that question. They helped me learn how to develop goals and plans, not just live in the moment day by day."

Palacio says she encourages young people she encounters to attend Valencia and take advantage of its resources, including Bridges to Success. "Find a mentor to guide you through not only the professional and academic path but also someone to guide you in life in general," she advises. "Find someone to ask you 'What are your dreams? Where do you want to go?'"

After graduating from Valencia, Palacio received her bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of South Florida and her master's in public administration from the University of Central Florida. While working in the nonprofit sector, she served on several governmental advisory boards, which sparked her interest in working for government. In her current job, Palacio focuses on international trade and business development.

And she remains thankful for her Valencia College experience.

"I'm just very grateful to Valencia College," she says. "It was kind of like my start. If you compare yourself to an entrepreneur, it was like that first investor. You always remember that first investor."

**1 Kyle Johnson, '04**

Kyle graduated magna cum laude from Rollins College in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in English. He serves as the vice president and chief sustainability officer for both Lighthouse Central Florida (LCF) and Lighthouse Works. LCF is the only private, local nonprofit providing comprehensive, vision-specific rehabilitation, education, and training to Central Floridians of every age living with low vision or blindness. Lighthouse Works is a social enterprise business working to create competitive employment opportunities for persons with low vision or who are blind. He and his wife live in Maitland with their three children, Laney, Ella and Kye.



**Jacqueline Elise Deere, '09**  
(Not pictured)

Jacqueline was recently promoted to regional vice president of Primerica, Inc., a leading financial products company. After graduating from UCF in 2010, Jacqueline earned a number of certifications, including Investment Advisor Representative, Limited Principal, Series 6 and Series 63. She lives in Boca Raton.

**4 Nikki Larchar, '11**

Recently Nikki co-founded simplyHR LLC, a human resource consulting company. She and her business partner work with small business owners, typically under 50 employees, to provide human resource guidance and partnership. They cover areas like wage and hour compliance, employee classifications, recordkeeping practices, employee



**2 Melissa Anne Radecki, '06**

After graduating from Valencia with an Associate in Science in Nursing, Melissa earned her RN, a bachelor's degree in nursing from UCF in 2010, and a master's degree in nursing from UCF in 2012. She accepted a full-time nursing instructor position at Florida Southern College, School of Nursing & Health Sciences and started August 2016. She has been accepted into the nursing education doctoral degree program at Walden University and started October 2016.

**3 Mark K Berrios-Ayala, '11**

After graduating from Valencia with an A.A., Mark earned a bachelor's degree from UCF and is currently a law student at Florida International University. Slated to graduate in May, Mark serves as the Hispanic National Bar Association's Law Student Division President of Florida.

relations, onboarding practices, and employee engagement, retention and hiring and. Nikki will graduate from Colorado State University this December with her bachelor's degree in human development and family studies. "Life has taken a crazy route for me, but Valencia has always been the biggest stepping stone," says Nikki. "I can't wait to see what the future holds!"

**5 Hana George, '13**

Hana is a graduate of the Valencia nursing program. She graduated with her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of South Florida in May 2016. Soon thereafter, she applied to work as a travel nurse and took her first assignment at a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) in Boston, Mass. Hana's calling for service does not end at patient care inside the hospital walls. For the last two years, she has dedicated part of her time to service the indigenous peoples of Tocoa, Honduras, in Central America. Hana leaves her family and friends behind for a little over a week to travel with the organization called Open Door Ministries. She hopes to tightly knit her passion for service medicine and technology as she advances her career.



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The Alumni Association can also help to spread the word! Let us know about your meetups, networking events, annual retreats, reunions and save-the-dates that your fellow alumni might like to attend or did attend with you. Whether it's getting a group together for sporting events, charity fundraisers, a day at the parks or just brunch and lunch, let us know. And if you send pictures, we might just include them in the next issue. We can share your adventures and good times with our readers, so that next time they can plan on joining in on the fun!

And don't forget: If you have an idea for a future article, please contact the Alumni Association. Send all suggestions to: [alumni@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:alumni@valenciacollege.edu)



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# The Gift of Gratitude: Valencia Grad Creates Scholarship Fund to Honor a Donor

// BY JAY HAMBURG

Eddie Coleman never forgot the Valencia Foundation board member who changed his life. He never met him or her. And 17 years later, he still doesn't know the person's name or what she or he looks like. Just the same, he never forgot.

"I always think about that person. I don't know if they know how much it meant to me throughout my life," said Coleman, who owns WavaTron, a computer software and IT consulting firm.

Without Valencia, he knows he might never have been able to work with Xerox and CenturyLink or create software solutions for electronic medical records for several Central Florida doctors. "One of my greatest accomplishments came in the form of an AA degree from Valencia College," he said. "I knew I had to pay it forward. I wanted to help others go to Valencia."

The result was the Eddie E. Coleman Scholarship Award for

graduates of Jones High School in Orlando, where he attended. The award is celebrating its 10th year.

Back in 1989, however, Coleman was simply excited to enter Valencia, hoping to become an engineer. He loved how "Valencia College fostered an environment reflective of my family values while encouraging academic excellence." But he had no idea of the setbacks he was to encounter or how an anonymous benefactor's support would guide him through a dark time.

Coleman worked while taking classes, but he needed more help. He applied for a substantial scholarship and was disappointed when not selected. "It was going to take longer to graduate," Coleman said. "But entrepreneurial spirit flowed through my veins." So he shook off the sadness and kept going.

Then came the news. An anonymous board member from the Valencia Foundation had been impressed and had set up a private fund so Coleman could buy books and college supplies.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. "I got very emotional to think that someone saw something in me and wanted to help." He lived at home, kept working and graduated in 1991 with an A.A. degree. He next stop was the University of Central Florida to study engineering.

His parents cheered him on, as he worked to become the first in the family to earn a four-year degree. His father, a Korean War veteran and longtime postal worker, was especially proud. "My father was a

huge influence. I learned at a very early age to listen to him."

Shortly before Coleman started at UCF, he and his father were taking a leisurely evening drive, talking over the future when his dad, who was sitting in the passenger seat, suddenly slumped over, suffered a massive heart attack and died.

Coleman was overwhelmed. "It traumatized me and caused me emotional setbacks," he said. "Money was running out. I didn't have enough to put gas in the car." But his father had instilled a strong sense of self-reliance, so to save costs, he drove the car only a short distance to Orlando's main downtown bus station, found a free parking place, took what could be a 90-minute ride to UCF for classes and another back, often arriving home after 11:30 p.m.

"I was working. I didn't have time to study. My grades fell. I had to retake some classes." But with prayer and his family's emotional care, he steadied himself. He also leaned on the memory of his father's support and of that unknown person from Valencia who believed in him. "I knew I couldn't stop. There were too many eyes on me."

Coleman eventually graduated UCF in 1995 with a degree in computer science, a minor in business administration and an even stronger bond with a Valencia person he never met.

"I hope they're still out there," he said. "I always thank them. Whoever they are, I hope they're happy with their return on their investment in me."



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