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With State-Leading Graduation Rates and Focus on In-Demand Careers, North Florida College Continues to Lead Economic Recovery

MADISON, Fla. -- In the days after Hurricane Idalia wrecked a wide swath of rural north Florida, many residents wondered what jobs would remain for those who wanted to work and live in the community they love.

As the hub of economic development in the six-county service area, North Florida College (NFC) works directly with all students to provide them with desired career opportunities.

In the year since Idalia made landfall, North Florida College has nimbly focused on ensuring employer needs are aligned with course offerings. With commercial driving and health care facing employee shortages, NFC's programs in these areas continue to grow and excel.

"Intentionally focusing on the individual student as well as employer needs are the reasons for NFC's success," said Dr. John Grosskopf, President of North Florida College. "We know students impacted by Hurricanes Idalia and Debby need extra support. Our most valuable commitment to help our community rebuild is to find good-paying careers in high-demand fields for our students. When students are working and employers are stable, our community becomes more resilient to survive any natural disaster."

With a campus-wide effort to focus on recruitment, retention, and completion, NFC experienced a 10 percent increase in overall enrollment and a 15 percent increase in full-time student enrollment during its Fall 2023 Term.

In addition to a consistent focus on student and employer needs North Florida College has achieved the highest completion rate in the Florida College System (FCS) for students in pursuit of a degree for the third reporting year in a row.

NFC, one of 28 colleges in the FCS, touts a 59.1 percent graduation rate from its most recent cohort, exceeding the state average of 42.2 percent. NFC's two previous reporting years also reflected the highest rates at 59.2 percent and 63.5 percent respectively. This

repeated success is a direct result of the College's highest-quality faculty and dedicated individual student support.

The FCS graduation rate is calculated from the percentage of students who complete a program based on an expected timeline for completion. For example, an NFC student earning an Associate in Arts degree who completes in three years or less is considered a positive outcome.

NFC career and workforce programs continue to outperform state averages as well. The most recent cohort in the NFC Associate Degree Nursing Program Traditional Students first-time test-takers had a 100 percent pass rate for the NCLEX, the licensing exam for nursing. With the state average scoring 76.75 percent and national average at 88.56 percent.

Since 2017, NFC's Commercial Driver License program boasts an overall average graduation rate of 87 percent, with 100 percent completion from its 2023 summer cohort.

The longstanding excellence of the program ensures local businesses can keep operating and growing.

For example, NFC has a long relationship with BBTS Logging, providing the business with highly trained drivers to continue operation before and after the hurricane.

"It's been a great partnership," said David Coon, Trucking and Shop Manager with BBTS Logging. "NFC is the only program in north Florida that provides the live portion of training. Without that certification, we cannot hire."

John May was an experienced truck driver who needed additional certification to explore more employment options.

He began classes at North Florida College in 2023. Not only did he get the training he needed, but he was also connected to a job at BBTS Logging.

"It's worked out excellent," said May. "I fell in love with logging the first day. It was great to be offered to do something that you can jump right into with both feet."

NFC's efforts haven't gone unnoticed. It was recently named a 2025 Aspen Institute Top 150, earned multiple spots on the list of 2024 Best Colleges by U.S. News & World Report including second Top Public School – Regional Colleges South, and was a 2023 Bellwether Finalist.

“When we recognize an obstacle that could keep a student from completing, we offer readily available resources or work to implement new opportunities where they can be successful,” said Grosskopf. “Faculty and staff genuinely invest of themselves; making sure students can confidently and effectively pursue their dreams.”

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*****For more information or to set up an interview with Dr. Grosskopf, please contact Allison Finley at FinleyA@nfc.edu or (850) 973-1613. North Florida College can provide B-roll footage and still photos for media use.*****