ABOUT

UCF Downtown, in partnership with Valencia College, brings more than 7,000 students to live, learn and work in downtown Orlando, creating a game-changing campus in the heart of our great city. As the academic anchor of Orlando’s public-private Creative Village, the campus increases access for students, provides pathways into high-demand career fields, fosters collaboration with our neighbors in meaningful ways and improve countless lives through the power of education.
Events Held with external organizations ranging from summer camps to non-profit organizations to award ceremonies and small community meetings even while limited due to the pandemic.
NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

UCF Downtown marked its one year anniversary in downtown Orlando in August 2020. A video was made in collaboration with campus partners, including UCF and Valencia students and faculty, the Parramore Community Engagement Council, and City of Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer.

The video has more than 1,500 views on YouTube and more than 10,000 views on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram combined.

Established the United to Promote Cultural Awareness (UPCA) committee. The goal is to use education as our means to drive change, create cultural awareness, and provide learning opportunities that will increase the support and inclusivity of Black members of the UCF Downtown and Valencia College Downtown campus and its surrounding community.

The committee organized canned food drives and toy drives to benefit Parramore residents, and also organized the campus' first Juneteenth celebration, which included a video tribute, social media components, a virtual meditation session and panel discussion. T-shirts, pens and tote bags were also created and distributed to downtown campus students, faculty and staff.

UCF alumna Jennifer Chocolate designed the Juneteenth logo and t-shirt.
NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Partnered with SunRail to establish free rides for the UCF Downtown campus community in August and September 2020. Through promotion of the partnership on the UCF Downtown website, social media channels and in email communication, approximately 1,250 students, faculty and staff signed up for the free passes.

UCF Downtown partnered with the Downtown Orlando Partnership to launch a series of webinars, "This is Downtown," featuring UCF experts. Two webinars were held, one featuring Sean Snaith and the second one was focused on the Talent Pipeline, Recruitment, and Partnership in Orlando. Aimed to further engage the business community, the webinars included introductions and moderation by Ross Wolf, interim assistant provost for UCF Downtown and were attended by approximately 250 individuals.

Established Downtown Market Days to increase student engagement opportunities on campus and with the downtown Orlando community. The first event was held in February 2020 and featured vendors Orlando City Soccer and Addition Financial, in addition to Registered Student Organizations and other businesses and nonprofits.

The events attract several hundred students.
Beginning in Fall 2020, seven of the UCF College of Business’ executive and professional graduate programs are now permanently located at UCF Downtown, including full- and part-time Professional MBA, Professional MSM, and Professional MS in Real Estate.

Due to the breadth of the degrees offered, the more balanced rank of faculty members and, most importantly, the global reach of the school, the Department of Health Management and Informatics received approval to become the School of Global Health Management and Informatics.

Associate Professor and Emergency and Crisis Management Academic Program Coordinator Claire Connolly Knox was featured in the new Knights Do That podcast.
UCF Faculty Member Eric Merriam was appointed as an Appellate Military Judge on the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. Merriam is an associate professor appointed to the Department of Legal Studies and the School of Political Science and serves as head coach for UCF’s Moot Court team.

Soon after the Nicholson School of Communication and Media opened a new 3,500-square-foot Games and Interactive Media Maker Space in fall 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and forced the closure of the lab at UCF Downtown. But after a quick redesign of the floor plan for the equipment, the Maker Space opened again for students during the pandemic.

Studying at UCF Downtown presents the opportunity for students to save money through our partnership with Valencia College by enrolling in co-listed courses. Students can take general education program courses – like English, math and science – with a Valencia faculty member and attend general education courses with Valencia students, all at the downtown campus. Valencia faculty who teach downtown co-listed courses receive academic credentialing by UCF, and these courses are listed in transcripts as UCF courses but are offered at the reduced state college course rate. That means more money for books and student needs!
Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) began providing peer tutoring services at UCF Downtown for students enrolled in selected Digital Media and Legal Studies courses. A total of 226 students connected with tutoring both in person and online.

The College of Community Innovation and Education downtown advising team completed 783 advising appointments and individual student interactions. Due to COVID-19, the advising team provided phone and Zoom appointments, along with a virtual help desk and Click-In Wednesday for general academic advising questions.

The Nicholson School of Communication and Media completed 2,179 advising appointments for downtown majors.

There were 597 recorded Career Services and Experiential Learning appointments with UCF students downtown, of which, 375 were with Career Services.

Additionally, more than 1,300 instances of event attendance were recorded.
Part of the reason students are excited to join the UCF Downtown community is our advantageous proximity to top employers in downtown Orlando. Advisors, faculty and staff alike frequently encourage students to take advantage of the professional community, knowledgeable network and growth opportunities right outside of their classrooms.

For that reason, in 2020 we launched Knights at Work Downtown, a campaign to help recruit employers to provide internships, jobs and mentoring to our downtown students, and entice students to share their internship and job experiences with us on social media. T-shirts and window decals were also created as part of the campaign efforts, which expose students to professional work opportunities.

Read more about the student's internship and job experiences at ucf.edu/downtown/news.
Thanks to a $100,000 gift from Electronic Arts (EA), an endowed scholarship was created to benefit students in UCF’s Nicholson School of Communication and Media. The EA Inclusion in Gaming Endowed Scholarship will encourage the pursuit of video game industry careers for students in interactive entertainment and gaming programs.

UCF Downtown was honored with the Downtown Orlando Partnership’s Golden Brick Award of Excellence. The annual awards recognize projects that positively impact downtown Orlando through extraordinary achievements and broad-reaching contributions.

The Gordon Family Giving Foundation (GF2) partnered with the UCF’s College of Community Innovation and Education to make a $300,000 donation to deliver the STEM-focused {CodeOrlando} program on the UCF Downtown campus each summer through 2025.
Thomas Bryer, a professor of public administration and program director of the Office of Downtown Community Engaged Scholarship, received more than $73,000 as a planning grant from Volunteer Florida to assist communities economically and financially impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. He will address the issues by launching an AmeriCorps program at UCF.

Downtown Student Outreach Services was selected as the recipient of a $25,000 grant from Florida Blue. This grant will be utilized to provide engagement opportunities with Jones High School as well as the OCPS Academic Center for Excellence in the local downtown community.

Opera Orlando and UCF Professor Stella Sung were awarded a prestigious grant to the tune of $10,000 as part of Opera America’s national program to promote female composers of the genre. Sung, also director of UCF’s Center for Research and Education in Arts, Technology and Entertainment (CREATE), will adapt "The Secret River," a children’s fantasy book set in Florida.

First Year Programs received $500 from Parent & Family Fund and $42,887 from HEERF for the First Time on Campus Intentional Outreach and Integration Program.

Student Outreach Services was awarded $5,500 from the Parent & Family Fund to strengthen connection and programming for the National Achievers Society alumni enrolled at UCF.

Student Services received more than $3,000 in funding to establish a student engagement plan with Addition Financial.
A team of researchers from around the world have been appointed by the Office of the Assistant Provost for UCF Downtown and are working with faculty to produce academic scholarship including academic journal articles, professional articles, books, and presentations related to volunteering, community relationships with government, and community-engaged scholarship. Researchers have already been busy working with peers at UCF Downtown and many participated in the “UCF Downtown Community Engaged Scholarship Lectures.”

VISITING APPOINTMENT INSTITUTIONS

CAMPUS COMPACT, CHICAGO, IL
EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY (UK)
KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, LITHUANIA
KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
SAVANNAH STATE UNIVERSITY
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY, SOUTH AFRICA
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN (UTAR), KAMPAR CAMPUS, MALAYSIA
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON, UK
STUDENT SERVICES

During COVID-19, Downtown Student Services established new communication platforms designed to ensure students remained engaged and up to date on resource and service information. The vehicles include a new Downtown Student Affairs website, which saw over 11,000 views and 5,000 users, a Front Desk online chat feature, and a point of service assessment for all student services areas. The assessment indicated a 97% satisfaction rate from students on the quality and access of remote services.

FIRST STOP

4,789
Total number of visits to First Stop*

5
Events held related to budgeting and retirement

134
Total number of students who participated in 34 First Stop events

VC 36.5%

UCF 63.5%

*Not all VC data is included due to their college-wide remote transition

No. 1 service provided: Financial Aid

First Stop Coaches conducted Post-Orientation Calling Campaigns for FTIC and Transfer first-time admits for the Summer, Fall and Spring orientations. 557 total students were contacted with a 51% contact rate.

Coaches answered questions regarding a myriad of different topics related to admissions, financial aid, and general campus questions.
In October 2020, a grocery shuttle program launched to provide transportation to Publix for downtown students. The shuttle makes two roundtrips to Publix every other Tuesday. In the first year of operation, the shuttle was utilized by 679 riders. The shuttle operates in partnership with Parking and Transportation Services and is sponsored by Student Government. The grocery shuttle originated out of student concerns about safe and reliable transportation to the grocery store, which were brought to Student Government by downtown campus students and leadership.
STUDENT SERVICES

First Year Student Experience held 13 downtown virtual orientations for the 2020-2021 academic year serving 488 students. In Fall 2020, Campus Locators connected with approximately 200 students.

Testing and Accessibility Services (TAS) is a partnership with UCF Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and Valencia College's Office for Student with Disabilities (OSD) and Valencia Testing and Assessment. SAS began the year with 110 UCF students approved for academic accommodations with numbers going down slightly in the spring with 96 students.

Downtown Student Engagement hosted 66 events for students, both in person and virtually. Total attendance was 2,036, with about 500 of those accounting for in-person events. Key events included:

- Glow Jam
- Creating Her Story
- Community Engagement Workshop
- Virtual Cooking Class
- Parramore Clean-Up with City of Orlando
- Voter Information event

14,592 pages were printed at free printing stations across campus from 624 students.
WELL-BEING

UCF Student Health Services Downtown provided **247 on-site COVID-19 tests** for move-in to UnionWest residents. COVID testing for Spring and Summer 2021 move-in was provided through Student Health Services via a mobile bus across from UnionWest. The goal was to make it as easy as possible for students to return to campus after the shut-down due to the pandemic.

In the months of November 2020 through April 2021, the Downtown Student Health Clinic was utilized almost exclusively for contact tracing and discharge calls to students who tested positive for COVID-19, approximately **20-30 calls per day**. These calls provided guidance for quarantine and isolation, answered all questions and sent return-to-school and work notes for students and staff. When open for appointments, the clinic had a total of **272 visits**: 226 telehealth visits and 46 direct care visits with 254 students from UCF and 18 students from Valencia College. Three separate flu vaccine clinics were also offered with a total of **67** flu shots given.

UCF Counseling and Psychological Services provided counseling services via telemental health. CAPS also offered a private space for students to reserve to have their video therapy session. CAPS continued to be available to students 24/7, with an after-hours crisis line. CAPS saw a total of **34 appointments**, working with **12 clients downtown**.

Wellness and Health Promotion Services continued to offer services to students downtown, including **120** one-on-one biofeedback and stress reduction sessions, **12** virtual meditation sessions and **4** Koru for Mindfulness virtual classes. There were also more than **300** hours of HIV testing and counseling offered, along with **24** outreach events regarding cooking classes and demonstrations, alcohol and other drug awareness, sleep habits, time management and, couponing and SNAP coaching.
Downtown Conduct and Care Services had more than 500 student meetings, supporting UCF Downtown and main campus students, and Valencia College UnionWest residents. Student issues discussed during care services meetings included hunger and homelessness, mental health concerns, academic struggles, and COVID-19-related issues. Student issues addressed during student conduct-related meetings included harmful behavior, academic misconduct, and COVID-19-related violations.

Additionally, CCS assisted in establishing a physical food storage space for the pantry pick up service for downtown students, which included a donation from Second Harvest Food Bank of over 800 pounds. CCS, in partnership with First Stop, facilitated a workshop for UnionWest Resident Assistants about how to refer residents to resources.

The RWC @ Downtown offered virtual classes through RWC+. Classes were available on Instagram and Zoom, and included a variety of formats, including bootcamp, yoga, barre, F45, and kickboxing. In Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, outdoor bootcamp, barre, yoga, and core classes were offered.

In partnership with UnionWest Student Housing, residents were offered group exercises classes on the 6th floor SkyDeck. Formats included Zumba, yoga, bootcamp, and core.

Open night climbs at Blue Swan Boulders and Urban Exploration Downtown Bike Rides were offered. In partnership with Student Government, a bike share program with daily bike rentals was available to downtown students in Spring 2021.
UnionWest at Creative Village Student Housing saw a substantial rebound following the closure of housing in Spring 2020. Occupancy rates continued to rise as the academic year went on and in-person housing tours resumed in July 2021, with 88 tours hosted prior to Fall 2021.

Residential events also resumed and moved from strictly virtual events to more in-person events. In total there were 7,426 attendees for the collective events.
UCF Downtown partnered with the State of Florida to provide COVID-19 vaccines on campus. The campus provided space to host mobile vaccine clinics and advertised the events to both the campus and local community. In total, more than 1,000 vaccines were administered from this site.

With leadership from Elizabeth Thompson, director of community engagement, the Parramore Community Engagement Council met throughout the year to provide additional public service to the local Parramore community, including hosting food distributions and mobile vaccine clinics. UCF Downtown continued to support this work by recruiting volunteers for these events, along with community clean ups, and bringing opportunities for partnership to the Council. The Council’s ongoing work also helps UCF stay abreast of emerging issues in the area and allows us to collectively come up with ways to address those issues as a community.

Students, faculty and staff at the downtown campus participated in more than two dozen community events, ranging from book drives to food distributions, to COVID testing sites, blood drives, community clean ups, and filling backpacks with school supplies for children.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In October 2020, UCF Downtown unveiled custom glass artwork that showcases the rich history of the surrounding Parramore community. The installation was produced in partnership with Parramore residents and business owners, along with UCF and Valencia College leadership and spotlights community landmarks and milestones dating back to the early 1920s.

Created by artist Nancy Gutkin O’Neil, the piece is named, "If we can truly remember, they will not forget," from poet Miller Williams’ "Of History and Hope."

The glass panels, some which are nearly 12 feet tall, feature photos of prominent Parramore leaders, landmarks, maps and excerpts from “We come from Parramore,” a spoken word poem made by youth from the Parramore Kidz Zone through UCF’s Center for Research and Education in Arts, Technology and Entertainment. The background text on all panels is from the 1960 Orlando Negro Chamber of Commerce.

Read more and watch a video of the artwork on [UCF Today](#).
Senior Overcomes Difficult Past to Reach Graduation at 64

If you ask LeRoy Langston how he describes himself, a “scrapper” might be one of the first words that comes to his mind. When reading for a leadership course earlier this semester, the 64-year-old student recognized the defining quality of a “scrapper” — the determination to push through any and every challenge — as an integral part of the former felon and drug addict’s path to graduating from UCF in Spring 2021.

UCF Student Seeks to Shine a Light on the Pandemic’s Effects on Nonprofits

Tiffany Chinwuba presented her research during UCF’s 2021 Student Scholar Symposium.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

From the Classroom to the Emergency Operations Center

When Destini Johnson arrived to escort more than 60 elementary students to after-school care on February 14, 2018, the last thing she expected was to be alerted to an active assailant at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School – less than two miles away. Johnson, a recreation aide for the City of Parkland at the time, was able to safely accompany the children to the city’s recreation center, but she says the uncertainty of the experience stuck with her and would ultimately play a big part in her career plans.

READ MORE

First-Gen Student Perseveres Through Family Struggles, Hopes to Provide Financially

Oneisha Eugene's accomplishment of completing college is a dream achieved for her immigrant parents – including her father who has been recovering from a brain injury for nearly two decades.

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