



Contact: Madison Fantozzi  
863.298.6872/954.594.9808  
[mfantozzi@polk.edu](mailto:mfantozzi@polk.edu)  
[polk.edu](http://polk.edu)

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Polk State College to host three graduation ceremonies May 6 & 7

**Wednesday, April 14, 2021** — Polk State College will host three graduation ceremonies on May 6 and May 7 at the RP Funding Center in Lakeland to celebrate graduates of the spring 2021, fall 2020, and spring 2020 classes.

#### Polk State College's 124th Commencement Ceremonies

RP Funding Center, 701 W. Lime St., Lakeland  
Thursday, May 6, 2021 | 10 a.m.  
Thursday, May 6, 2021 | 6:30 p.m.  
Friday, May 7, 2021 | 10 a.m.

*Masks and social distancing are required.*  
*Ceremonies will be livestreamed online at*  
[www.polk.edu/academics/graduation](http://www.polk.edu/academics/graduation).

Graduates are asked to check their Polk State emails for information specific to them, their assigned ceremony, and tickets for their guests. It is important to note that capacity will be limited as the College and RP Funding Center adhere to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Social distancing and mask wearing will be required.

The ceremonies will feature remarks from Polk State President Angela Garcia Falconetti; Spring 2021 Distinguished Alumnus Dan Dorrell, member of the Polk State District Board of Trustees; and 2020 Distinguished Alumnus T. Michael Stavres, Deputy City Manager of Winter Haven.

“Polk State is thrilled to hold in-person commencement ceremonies and we are grateful for the ability to convene safely in celebration of our graduates,” Falconetti said. “I could not be prouder of our grads, especially those over the last year who have overcome great adversity to reach this milestone accomplishment.”

Polk State conferred a total of 2,713 degrees and certificates in 2020. These graduates were celebrated in a variety of remote ways including virtual graduation ceremonies. They were then surveyed in January and February to help the College in planning the upcoming in-person graduation ceremonies that will accommodate graduates from the earlier classes as well as the latest class of spring 2021. The College plans to host approximately 320 graduates at each of the three ceremonies.

The spring 2021 graduating class is comprised of 1,271 students. Of those:

- 89 percent are Polk County residents, with graduates also residing in Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.
- 234 will receive degrees from one of Polk State's six baccalaureate degree programs.

- 136 will receive the Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management
- 13 will receive the Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Sciences
- 36 will receive the Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- 24 will receive the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice
- 20 will receive the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education
- 5 will receive the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education
- 807 will receive the Associate in Arts, which is fully transferable to any institution within the State University System.
- 167 will receive the Associate in Science or the Associate in Applied Science, which prepare students to transition directly into the workforce in fields including health sciences and engineering technology.
- 63 will receive certificates, which give them a competitive edge in the workforce.
- 76 will graduate Summa Cum Laude with grade-point averages (GPAs) of 3.9 or greater; 96 will graduate Magna Cum Laude with GPAs between 3.75 and 3.89; and
- 182 will graduate Cum Laude with GPAs between 3.5 and 3.74.
- 43 will graduate with 4.0 GPAs.
- 4 will graduate with Honors Program Distinction.
- The youngest graduate is 17 and the oldest is 69.

To further celebrate the spring 2021 graduates, Polk State is collecting pictures from students to feature on the College's billboards and to create a virtual yearbook. Spring 2020 and fall 2020 graduates were featured during their respective terms. The deadline for graduating students to submit their names and photos to [news@polk.edu](mailto:news@polk.edu) is 5 p.m. Friday, May 7, 2021. More information is available online at [www.polk.edu/academics/graduation](http://www.polk.edu/academics/graduation).

The College will also honor Spring 2021 Distinguished Alumnus Dan Dorrell and 2020 Distinguished Alumnus T. Michael Stavres.

Dorrell is a member of the College's first graduating class and has served on the Polk State District Board of Trustees since August 2011, including two terms as Vice Chair and two terms as Chair. The Lakeland High School graduate achieved his associate degree from what was then Polk Junior College in 1966 and his bachelor's degree in finance from Florida State University in 1968. He also attended the University of South Florida to prepare for the Certified Public Accountant exam. Upon passing the exam, Dorrell worked for Nunez, Collins and Touchton for several years, then purchased a practice in Sebring which he managed successfully for many years.

Stavres is Deputy City Manager of the City of Winter Haven. The Winter Haven High School graduate earned his Polk State Associate in Arts degree in 1990. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Leisure Services and Studies in 1992 and his Master of Science in Recreation and Leisure Services Administration in 1997 from Florida State University. He is a Certified Public Manager (CPM) and Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP).

### **About Polk State College**

Located in Winter Haven, Florida, and established in 1964, Polk State College is a multi-campus institution serving more than 15,000 students with Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Science, Associate in Arts, and Associate in Science degrees, as well as 9,000 individuals in a wide range of certificate and workforce training programs. The College also operates three charter high schools.

Polk State's advantages include small class sizes; hands-on learning; dedicated faculty; day and night classes; online options; affordable tuition; excellent financial aid; and a diverse community and vibrant student life, including fine arts opportunities, clubs, and intercollegiate athletics.