

This is a press release from St. Petersburg College. For more information, contact [Samantha Stanich](#), Communications/PR Coordinator, at 727-341-4195 or [Lise Fisher](#), interim AVP, Marketing and Strategic Communications, at 727-341-3076.

Suncoast Credit Union Donates \$250,000 to Support Fuse Scholarship Program at SPC and USF

Fueling student success and financial access, these partnerships expand opportunity for SPC and USF.

St. Petersburg College (SPC), the University of South Florida (USF), and LEAP Tampa Bay College Access Network are celebrating a major milestone in student support and financial access, thanks to a \$250,000 gift to the Community Foundation Tampa Bay from Suncoast Credit Union.

The donation will support the Fuse Scholarship Program, established by LEAP Tampa Bay partners at the Community Foundation. Helios Education Foundation is also graciously matching this \$250,000 donation. Nearly 50 SPC students are expected to benefit from this most recent contribution as they pursue a four-year degree through the Fuse program at USF.

The Fuse program, a strategic partnership between SPC and USF, offers students a streamlined, affordable route to a bachelor's degree. Students who enroll in Fuse complete their associate degree at SPC with the guarantee of admission into select USF programs, provided academic requirements are met. The program includes structured advising, mentorship, and financial assistance to remove common barriers that often delay or derail academic progress.

"Education changes lives, and partnerships like this make that transformation possible," said Dr. Tonjua Williams, President of SPC. "Suncoast Credit Union's investment in our students removes financial barriers and creates real opportunity. Together, we're building stronger futures—not just for these students, but for our entire community."

Suncoast Credit Union's investment ensures that students in the Fuse program can access essential resources such as textbooks, transportation, and academic supplies. The scholarships are already making a profound difference for students who credit the program with providing the stability and encouragement they needed to stay on course.

"Our mission calls us to improve the communities we serve and there can be no greater investment than in the education of future citizens," said Kevin Johnson, President and CEO of Suncoast Credit Union. "This partnership will help secure the futures of promising, young scholars, which in turn strengthens the community we all share."

The donation was made through the Community Foundation Tampa Bay, further demonstrating Suncoast's longstanding commitment to student success and regional workforce development. The funding supports first-generation and underserved students, aligning with Suncoast's broader investment in educational equity and financial literacy across Florida.

"There's no more powerful path to a thriving community than education. The FUSE program is a collaborative, cost-effective approach that puts students on a clear path to a four-year degree. Along with our LEAP partners, we are proud to support this initiative through LEAP, which will coordinate scholarship distribution, and we deeply appreciate Suncoast Credit Union and Helios Education Foundation for their investment in Tampa Bay's future."

Together, SPC, USF, and Suncoast Credit Union are not just supporting students; they are transforming lives and creating a stronger, more educated community.

Key Details:

- **When:** Tuesday, Aug. 19, 10:30 a.m. (after the Board of Trustees meeting)
- **Where:** SPC EpiCenter Lobby, 13805 58th St. N., Clearwater
- **Who:** Interview opportunities available with Suncoast Credit Union, LEAP, and the Community Foundation, St. Petersburg College Board of Trustees, and community leaders

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St. Petersburg College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. For additional information, visit www.spcollege.edu/eaao.

About Suncoast Credit Union

Suncoast Credit Union is the largest credit union in the state of Florida, the 8th largest in the United States based on membership, and the 10th largest in the United States based on its \$19 billion in assets. Chartered in 1934 as Hillsborough County Teachers Credit Union, Suncoast Credit Union currently operates 78 full-service branches and serves more than 1.3 million members across Florida. As a community credit union, anyone who lives, works, attends school, or worships in Suncoast Credit Union's service area is eligible for membership. In 2021, Suncoast Credit Union's field of membership was expanded to include public K-12 teachers, college educators, and educational support staff from all of Florida's 67 counties. Suncoast is passionate about community support. Since its founding in 1990, the Suncoast Credit Union Foundation has raised and donated more than \$55 million to organizations and initiatives that support the health, education, and emotional well-being of children in the communities that the credit union serves. For more information, visit [suncoast.com](https://www.suncoast.com) or follow us on social media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

About Community Foundation Tampa Bay

Community Foundation Tampa Bay is the leading philanthropic investor in the Tampa Bay area. Founded in 1990, Community Foundation Tampa Bay connects philanthropists, nonprofits, business leaders, and community leaders to drive fundamental change in Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties. Over the past 35 years, Community Foundation Tampa Bay and its donors have fostered collaboration, sought creative solutions and invested more than \$450 million in nonprofit organizations to help our community thrive.

About LEAP Tampa Bay College Access Network

LEAP Tampa Bay is a network of over 60 community partners dedicated to transforming lives by connecting residents to education and training opportunities beyond high school. A cross-sector network convened to promote their community-wide commitment to college access and attainment, LEAP leaders utilize a collective impact model of collaboration to guide coordinated, need-based strategies among partners from across business, education, government, and nonprofits. All the work is geared at increasing attainment of high-quality college degrees and career and technical training credentials to help build Tampa Bay's workforce talent base. LEAP operates as part of the Community Foundation Tampa Bay, which was a Founding Partner.