



## **Valencia College Board of Trustees Foundation Report November 2, 2023**

### **Seneff Honors College Conference**

On October 20, 2023, Jim Seneff, Founder and Chairman of CNL Financial Group, shared his inspiring personal story and his philosophy at the second annual Seneff Honors College Conference at Valencia College's Downtown Campus.

Seneff, who was joined by his wife Martha, told the assembled students, faculty and community partners how he started from humble beginnings in Indiana and the lessons he learned during his career. In 1973, Seneff founded CNL Financial Group, which grew into a leading private investment management firm.

In 2008, Valencia renamed its honors program the Seneff Honors College in honor of Jim Seneff in recognition of a \$1 million gift from CNL Charitable Foundation. The gift supports scholarships for Seneff Honors College students.

Today, the Seneff Honors College serves 658 students – a 32% increase from fall 2022. Over the past 10 years, the honors college has served 7,259 students.

Broader, deeper and more complex than the college's standard curriculum, the honors college challenges students to address societal needs and problems, often through service learning, undergraduate research that can be compared to graduate-level research, and study-abroad trips with their professors.

Honors students also get the chance to participate in the National Collegiate Honors Conference and the Undergraduate Research Poster Showcase. They started their own honors book club, participate in community service events and are regular visitors at the Dr. Phillips Performing Arts Center, where they can see the Orlando Ballet, Broadway shows, and more.

The Seneff Honors College is the main transfer partner for UCF's Burnett Honors College, representing 71 out of 84 transfer students in spring 2022. The average UCF GPA of the 71 VC transfer students is 3.50.

Recent honors graduates from Valencia are already making their mark. Honors graduate Eric Fonseca (class of 2015) earned his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering at USF, completed his doctorate in materials science at UF and now works at NASA. Another, Sierra Westfall (class of 2016),

transferred to UCF's Burnett Honors College, where she earned her degree in health care administration. She later went on to earn her MBA from Webster University and today oversees the entire Physician Services Group East Florida Division for HCA.

Earlier this year, Seneff grad Aanchel Shah (class of 2017) graduated with her law degree from Rutgers Law School. While in law school, Aanchel was a senator for the Student Bar Association, and received the Dean's Pro Bono Publico Award for Exceptional Service. Aanchel is currently preparing to take the bar exam.