



March 12, 2026

**TO:** THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

**FROM:** DR. KATHLEEN PLINSKE  
President

**RE:** WELDING TECHNOLOGY WITH ORBITAL SPECIALIZATION PROGRAM

The United States is experiencing a historic resurgence in aerospace innovation, and Florida's Space Coast is at the center of that growth. Major aerospace manufacturers are expanding operations and investing in next-generation production facilities, positioning Central Florida at the forefront of advanced manufacturing. Valencia College is uniquely positioned to support this momentum by preparing the highly skilled workforce required to sustain it.

Industry leaders have identified orbital welding as a critical workforce gap. In direct response to documented regional demand, the College has developed a Welding Technology with Orbital Specialization Program to prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers in the aerospace, advanced manufacturing, and defense industries.

The Welding Technology with Orbital Specialization Program is an 800-hour Accelerated Skills Training program designed to prepare students for employment in industrial and aerospace welding environments. To support implementation, Valencia College recently received a \$1.5 million Governor's Job Growth Grant from the Florida Department of Commerce. These funds will support the acquisition of advanced orbital welding systems, instructional technology, and laboratory enhancements required to meet employer specifications.

By launching this program at a pivotal moment of aerospace expansion, Valencia College reinforces its commitment to responsive, industry-aligned workforce education and strengthens the regional talent pipeline supporting Florida's aerospace and advanced manufacturing economy.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The President recommends that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College authorize the College to offer the Welding Technology with Orbital Specialization Program as a non-credit Accelerated Skills Training program, with student fees set at \$13,000, as presented.

  
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President