



# VALENCIA COLLEGE LAKE NONA CAMPUS

**Valencia College’s Lake Nona  
Campus Celebrates 10 Years**

Opened in 2012, the Valencia College Lake Nona Campus serves over 6,000 students annually from both Orange and Osceola counties and is located in the [City of Orlando’s Lake Nona Medical City](#) — a 650-acre health and life sciences park. The Lake Nona Campus contains 18 classrooms, 2 computer labs, 6 science labs, learning support services (including tutoring, assessment services, and computer access), a campus store, a café, a library and an amazing outdoor courtyard for student events.

Lake Nona Campus is also home to the Collegiate Academy at Lake Nona High School. Developed in partnership with Lake Nona High School in 2010, the Collegiate Academy is an accelerated academic program that provides Lake Nona High School students with new educational opportunities. At present, students can experience selected college-level courses through a combination of Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment credit. Since inception, 628 students have participated in the Collegiate Academy.



With the majority of its students majoring in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), and business, the Lake Nona Campus is poised to change the lives of our current students and those of their families for generations.

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:**  
**BIOTECHNOLOGY LABORATORY  
SCIENCES A.S. DEGREE**

Established in 2015, the [Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences Associate in Science](#) (A.S.) degree at Valencia College is a two-year program that prepares students to go directly into a specialized STEM career.

Through this program, students learn the fundamentals of biotechnology, while gaining hands-on experience through lab work

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and internship experience. The Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences A.S. degree program emphasizes broad biology and chemistry concepts, basic microbiology, algebraic and statistical analysis, biohazard and safety procedures, and core biotechnical laboratory techniques.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Biotechnology is using the latest developments in genetics and molecular biology to create useful products for medicine, food, agriculture and alternative energy sources. Biotechnology technicians assist in conducting the laboratory tests, experiments and research that lead to these innovations.
- In 2018, the program partnered with Biotility — part of the University of Florida’s Center of Excellence

for Regenerative Health that provides high-quality education, training, and credentialing to facilitate growth in the biotechnology and bioscience industry. Students who complete Valencia’s A.S. degree in Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences will earn the BACE Certification upon successful completion of the BACE exam.

- Currently, there are 538 students in the Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences A.S. degree program, representing the diversity of our community.
- The Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences A.S. degree also offers two college credit certificate programs: [Biotechnology Laboratory Specialist](#) and [Biotechnology Specialist](#). These certificates provide students with a quick pathway to begin working in a STEM career, while continuing their degree.



**BIOTECHNOLOGY LABORATORY SCIENCES A.S. DEGREE**

**Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences Program Data**



**538**

Declared majors

**88**

Registered majors for Summer 2022

**153**

Registered majors for Spring 2022

**192**

Total graduates (AS and TC's) since inception (2015)

**48**

A.S.: Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences

**63**

Technical Certificate: Biotechnology Lab Specialist

**81**

Technical Certificate: Biotechnology Specialist

**POTENTIAL CAREERS**

- Biological Technician
- Cell Culture Technician
- Research Assistant
- Laboratory Technician
- DNA Fingerprinter
- Quality Control Technician
- Bio-Manufacturing Assistant

*\*Placement Rate based on the total number of individuals found employed, continuing education or in the military, according to the most recent Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) data.*

**Dual Enrollment**

**872**

Total number of Orange County Public School Dual Enrollment students who graduated with an Associate in Arts degree from Valencia College while in high school since 2012\*\* (including this year)

**187**

Total number of Lake Nona High School Dual Enrollment students who graduated with an Associates in Arts degree from Valencia College while in high school since 2012 (including this year)

*\*\*Total includes Lake Nona High School*

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

### NAIA KASIK

From the moment Naia Kasik walked through the doors of Applied Ingenuity Diagnostics, she knew exactly what she had to do as she came face-to-face with the COVID-19 virus.

She put on her personal protective equipment, her lab coat, glasses, gloves and an N-95 mask before sitting down to begin a series of testing procedures with RNA/DNA sequences.

When COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in early March 2020, millions of Americans found themselves quarantined at home in a massive national effort to reduce its transmission and save lives. What was supposed to be a week of spring break for Valencia College students, staff, and faculty to rest and recover, turned into days and weeks of uncertainty. But Naia continued to pursue her passion in this field and jumped at the chance to be part of a diagnostics team working towards solutions for our Central Florida community.

Her typical workday consisted of processing patients into the lab's computer system and extracting the RNA/DNA samples needed to begin testing for this virus. The entire process included extracting samples, uploading the information into the system, and analyzing the results with the chief laboratory and medical officer for confirmations. After the process was completed, the results were reported to those in charge of the paperwork and sent out accordingly.

Although lab safety is the company's top priority, Naia acknowledged the risks of working so closely with COVID-19 virus. The lab's safety procedures included a thorough decontamination protocol that requires strict care with their medical scrubs, washing their hands, and spraying down their personal items with 70% alcohol.



Naia credits her teachers from Timber Creek High School for being some of the first to truly inspire and cultivate her passion for the field, encouraging her to apply to Valencia's biotechnology program. Trusting their advice, she applied and was accepted into the program at the Lake Nona Campus.

“ I wanted to join the biotechnology/  
biomedical field because  
**I love medicine and science,**  
and love to help the community.  
- Naia Kasik - ”

“I wanted to join the biotechnology/biomedical field because I love medicine and science, and love to help the community,” Naia said. “I am so grateful I [applied]. If I did not make that decision, I would not be where I am today.”

Naia is also quick to note the support she has received from her Valencia College family as well. Naia credits Valencia graduate Desiree de Abreu for being a steady and hardworking partner in the lab alongside her, and Professor of Biotechnology [Susan Ingersoll](#) and Lab Supervisor [Sothy Kien](#), who have been supportive mentors during her journey at the College. Both have encouraged her to continue her work with the lab and have been accommodating with her busy schedule.

Naia graduated in December 2020 with an Associate in Arts degree and an Associate in Science degree in Biotechnology Laboratory Sciences, and transferred to the University of Central Florida to continue her education.