



VALENCIA COLLEGE WINTER PARK CAMPUS

The Winter Park Campus is located in the heart of Winter Park, at the corner of Morse Boulevard and Denning Drive, steps from the popular Park Avenue shopping district and the new SunRail station. The faculty, staff, and students of the Winter Park Campus routinely engage with the community through service-based projects at multiple facilities, including the Winter Park Community Center, Winter Park Library and the DePugh Nursing Home. The Winter Park Campus offers a variety of learning opportunities – both inside and outside of the classroom – to ensure a positive and successful learning experience for our diverse community.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

THE VALENCIA COLLEGE BRAIN BOWL

Pop quiz: What is Brain Bowl?

Answer: Brain Bowl is a fast-paced, academic, trivia-style quiz competition in which Florida Community College teams of up to six players answer questions from a broad range of disciplines such as history, art, literature, science and math to win points.

In 1982, the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) launched the first Brain Bowl competition, with then Gov. Bob Graham serving as a scorekeeper at the inaugural FCSAA State Tournament. The Valencia College Brain Bowl program began shortly thereafter in the mid-80s and came to prominence in 1993 under the leadership of Chris Borglum, professor, English, at the Winter Park Campus, who serves as the program advisor and coach for the team. Since that time, our Valencia students have competed and won several state and national championships.



CCCT Teams, 2017

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BRAIN BOWL HIGHLIGHTS

- The Valencia College Brain Bowl team has won eight FCSAA titles (1994, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2017) and has earned second place seven times.
- Our Brain Bowl team is nationally renowned for its performance in both the FCSAA competitions and the Community College Championship Tournament hosted by National Academic Quiz Tournaments (NAQT) - winning the NAQT title nine times (2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2020).
- Community college teams who place in the top four of the NAQT competitions are able to compete in the Intercollegiate Tournament with four-year colleges and universities. With Valencia's top placement in the NAQT competitions, our Brain Bowl teams have had the opportunity to compete with and win competitions with freshman-sophomore teams from Cornell University, Texas A&M University, Rice University, Florida State University, and North Carolina University.
- Since its inception, Valencia College has served as the host of the FCSAA Brain Bowl six times.



Valencia Full Team, 2018 Champs



Valencia Brain Bowl CCCT Third Place Match via Zoom, 2021

BRAIN BOWL STATS: PARTICIPATION AND PLACEMENTS

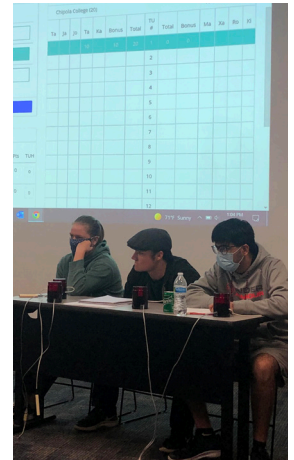
250
STUDENTS

PARTICIPATION:

Since 1993, 250 Valencia College students have participated on Brain Bowl teams



Valencia State Champs Trophy, 1997



Red State Final, 2022

PLACEMENTS:

Florida College System Activities Association Brain Bowl Competitions:

State Titles:

8

1st Place
Finishes

Runner Up:

7

2nd Place
Finishes

National Academic Quiz Tournaments - Community College Championship Tournament:

National Titles:

9

1st Place
Finishes

Runner Up:

4

2nd Place
Finishes

Third Place:

4

3rd Place
Finishes

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: NIKOLAI WOLFE

College seemed out of reach for Nikolai Wolfe until a postcard about Valencia's Honors College arrived in the mailbox. Today, this Valencia grad is studying at prestigious Williams College.

Like a lot of Valencia College students, Nikolai Wolfe's educational path was not a straight one.

Originally from Orlando, Nikolai grew up in a very religious home and was home-schooled until the Wolfe family moved to Chicago when Nikolai was a junior in high school. The family lived in Chicago for a year, then moved to Tennessee. But when Nikolai's grandfather died in the middle of senior year, Nikolai moved back to DeBary, Florida, to live with his grandmother.

After graduating from high school in Volusia County, Nikolai – who is non-binary – moved out of his grandmother's house and, as he transitioned, bounced around, moving in with friends and worked a number of jobs.

Nikolai hoped to attend the University of Central Florida (UCF) but that wasn't in the cards. "It just wasn't possible," Nikolai says. "I could barely afford rent and food, so I couldn't pay for college, too."

Then one day, a postcard about [Valencia's Seneff Honors College](#) arrived. "I thought, 'This looks interesting,' " Nikolai says. "I already knew that was the only way I was going to be able to continue with school, so I applied."

A month later, great news came. "I was accepted and I am undeniably blessed," says Nikolai.

While taking classes at the Winter Park Campus, Nikolai impressed several professors, including Professor of Humanities Paul Chapman. When finances got tight, Nikolai dropped out for a semester and reached out to Chapman to explain the situation. Because Nikolai wasn't 24 years old yet – the age at which college students are no longer considered dependents – the family income disqualified Nikolai for financial aid. Despite those hurdles, Chapman helped Nikolai navigate the financial aid process and qualify for financial aid.

At the Winter Park Campus, Nikolai also crossed paths with English Professor Chris Borglum and the two hit it off immediately. "Like me, he likes to read all the time," says Nikolai. Borglum repeatedly urged Nikolai to play on Valencia's Brain Bowl team, which Borglum coaches.



"It took me four years, but finally, in my last semester, I decided to do it," says Nikolai, "and I loved it!"

Being named a finalist for Valencia College's Mary S. Collier Distinguished Graduate Award in 2019 was an honor – and validation for Nikolai. "I'm really proud of myself, too," Nikolai said at the time. "I've been through a lot and I've endured. I think my professors are proud of me, too."

Best of all, however, have been the doors that Valencia opened for Nikolai. Today, Nikolai is studying at Williams College, a small, exclusive liberal arts college in Williamstown, Mass., majoring in psychology and religion.

Because of Covid restrictions, Nikolai wasn't allowed to leave campus for a year, staying in the dorm and taking classes remotely. Though Williams offered Nikolai and other students the opportunity to take a year off, Nikolai decided to enroll anyway. The college tested students twice a week and offered classes in both hybrid and online formats. "I think COVID would have been just as difficult anywhere else," Nikolai says. "And I personally did not defer because I needed to live on campus."

Nikolai's financial aid pays for books, classes, housing and meals, but there were still challenges for a nontraditional student like Nikolai, who at 23, is older than most of the other dorm residents. But the benefits outweigh the downsides, so this summer, Nikolai is living on campus and doing an internship remotely, doing research on positive psychology for a California startup called Run the Moon.