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MEDIA ALERT

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For Immediate Release: Tuesday, May 1, 2012

FL House Speaker Designate To Speak On Higher Education

~ State Representative Will Weatherford will serve as keynote speaker at the Florida College Access & Success Summit on May 11th in Tampa ~

Tampa, FL—The incoming Speaker of the House for the Florida House of Representatives, Rep. Will Weatherford, will speak on the future of higher education in Florida next week at the [Florida College Access & Success Summit](#) in Tampa.

The summit will take place **Friday, May 11th from 9am-2pm** at the **University of South Florida's Marshall Student Center** in Tampa. All organizations, businesses, and individuals interested in helping Florida significantly increase its college degree attainment rate are invited to participate.

Representative Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, will serve as the keynote speaker during the summit's opening plenary session and will provide important insight from a state policy perspective on the future of higher education in Florida under the context that today more and more jobs in Florida require some form of postsecondary education.

According to a recent Georgetown study, by 2018, 59% of all jobs in Florida will require a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential. Yet, only 37% of working-age adults in Florida today hold a 2-year or 4-year degree. If Florida continues to increase degree attainment at the rate it did over the last decade, the state will have a college degree attainment rate of [43-percent in the year 2025](#)—far short of the 60-percent required by Florida labor market demand estimates.

The Florida College Access & Success Summit will address this degree attainment gap as it convenes leaders from all sectors for a call-to-action around an agenda to improve

college & career readiness, access, and completion for all students. The [Florida College Access Network](#) (Florida C.A.N.!) is organizing the summit.

“We are thrilled to have Representative Weatherford participate as our keynote speaker,” said Braulio Colón, Executive Director for Florida C.A.N.!. “It’s extremely important that our network partners have an opportunity to hear directly from state leadership on the future policy direction in higher education, especially as Florida moves toward more collaboration as a strategy for solving some of our most difficult challenges,” said Colón.

Representative Weatherford serves as Chair of the Education Policy Council and has spearheaded many important legislative issues with a particular focus on advancing school choice and improving education accountability. In addition to his state service, Representative Weatherford serves on organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Florida, Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce, Commission on Open Government, Goodwill Industries, Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce, Jobs for America’s Graduates, Pasco County Take Stock in Children Program, The Fund for American Studies, Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Housing Ventures, Inc., and Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce.

The Florida College Access & Success Summit’s detailed agenda, including the schedule, list of speakers, and travel accommodations can be found [here](#).

Florida C.A.N! receives support from the [Florida Department of Education](#), [Helios Education Foundation](#), [Lumina Foundation for Education](#), and the [University of South Florida](#).

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About Florida College Access Network

Florida College Access Network’s mission is to create and strengthen a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to improve college & career preparation, access, and completion for all students. Our Big Goal is to increase the proportion of working-age adults in Florida who hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential to 60% by the year 2025. For more information, visit www.floridacollegeaccess.org