

Strategic Plan

2019 - 2021

Letter from the Incoming Director



Dear Friends,

As the Lastinger Center approaches its 17th year of existence and undertakes its first transition in leadership, I take this opportunity to reflect upon our past successes and challenges, take stock of our present circumstances and opportunities, and chart a course for our future efforts.

Our experience and research has led us to understand that from the earliest moments of children's lives and throughout their growth and learning at home, in educational settings, and in their communities, children take particular developmental trajectories that point eventually to their success – or difficulty - in school and life. Along these trajectories, there are key milestones that are predictive of children's later achievement, and these predictive indicators are supported by ample research evidence and enshrined in policy. At this point, it doesn't take an educator to know that if a child is ready for kindergarten, reading by 3rd grade, and proficient in algebra by the end of 9th grade, that child stands a significantly greater chance at success than a child who does not achieve these milestones.

Yet, we also know that far too many students across our state and country fail to meet these benchmarks. Over time, even in the face of increasing awareness of these shortcomings through public accountability systems, we have become desensitized to reports that only 57% of Florida's third graders read proficiently, and only 63% of Florida students pass the Algebra I End of Course exam, which is a requirement for high school graduation. What about the other, roughly 40% of students? At the Lastinger Center, we believe that it is a moral, social, and economic imperative to address these shortcomings and to cultivate a sense of naïve optimism that maybe, just maybe, this time it could be different, despite a history of educational reform efforts that might lead us to another conclusion.

Personally, I have seen these issues confront students in the South Bronx, where I began teaching at a school in which 3% of students read on grade level, which was situated in a neighborhood memorialized in Jonathan Kozol's book, *Amazing Grace*, about the abject conditions of children living in poverty. Both there and in my next assignments in Oakland and Los Angeles, California, and back home in West Palm Beach, I had middle and high school students, just teenagers, already enmeshed in the juvenile justice system, some of whom wore ankle monitors to school. I helped struggling students master basic phonics and grammar when they should have been analyzing author's purpose and bias. I helped others master basic multiplication facts when they should have been factoring polynomials. In each instance, I helped students find success in spite of circumstances. It led me to an undying belief that things can be different, that we can give all children the educational experiences that they deserve so that they can become the kind of citizens our society needs.

At this point, I have been working in education in one capacity or another for 20 years, and more than half of that has been affiliated with the Lastinger Center. During the doctoral program I completed here at the University of Florida, I began as an unpaid graduate assistant supporting faculty to do professional development in local, high poverty schools in Gainesville. At the Center, I found a group of like-minded individuals dedicated to making effective change and an inspirational

leader and mentor. Through that early work, I figured out that through working with teachers across schools and systems, I could grow my sphere of influence and improve learning environments for larger numbers of students.

Over the years, that sphere has continued to expand, and I now find myself honored and humbled by the opportunity to lead the Lastinger Center. In this next chapter of the Center's existence, I hope to live up to the inspirational challenge initiated by Allen and Delores when they founded the Center, the innovative spirit that Don Pemberton established as he started the Center, and the tremendous passion and dedication that our associates bring each day as they grow the Center. The Center could not be better poised for the next stage of its evolution, given its continually growing portfolio and its situation contributing to and benefiting from a college and university increasing in national and international recognition and prominence.

In the pages that follow, a plan for the next three years of the Lastinger Center's work is detailed. This plan was drafted in response to input from the Center's many partners internally and externally and will be refined and executed in conversation with them also. I look forward to working with all our partners to ensure that this time, things will be different – and better – for children everywhere.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Poekert', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Poekert, Ph.D.



Executive Summary

The University of Florida (UF) Lastinger Center for Learning was created in 2002 by Allen and Delores Lastinger. Since its founding, the UF Lastinger Center has blended cutting-edge academic research with practice, making meaningful improvements in education and student learning. Historically, the organization has championed the effort to track academic success via critical developmental milestones, including kindergarten readiness and proficiency in both 3rd grade reading and Algebra 1. Dedication and innovative responsiveness to these key inflection points rapidly moved the UF Lastinger Center from a lean start-up to a state and national education innovator.

The UF Lastinger Center catalyzes public/private collaborations that support significant impacts on student success, with over \$147 million in cumulative investments in its 17-year history.

The UF Lastinger Center's work has made a deep and lasting impact on education throughout the state of Florida. In more recent years, the UF Lastinger Center has expanded and deepened efforts to advance education across the nation and globally. Among the many innovations developed by the Center, those that blend cutting-edge technology, content, and practice, such as **Algebra Nation** and **Early Learning Florida**, have been most integral to success.

The demand nationally for high-quality, impactful, and scalable innovations in education continues to grow, creating even greater opportunity for the UF Lastinger Center to increase its scope. As the Lastinger Center entered into a new phase of growth, the Center's leadership undertook a strategic planning process to chart a pathway to even greater impact.

The strategic planning process began by listening and observing. Specifically, listening to existing team members, thought leaders, partners, and stakeholders and observing local, state, and national educational trends. The effort included a six week Listening Tour which included the perspectives of more than 100 parents, students, teachers, administrators, and community leaders from every region in Florida. The strategic planning team also assessed the UF Lastinger Center's previous successes and challenges as well as its value to current, past, and future clients and funders alike. The planning team then analyzed the collected data to identify key opportunities for sustained impact.

The planning team identified **four high-impact goals** for the Center to pursue:



INTEGRATE EARLY LEARNING FLORIDA INTO THE STATE'S QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS AND EXPAND INTO OTHER STATES. This includes building a scalable model for developing the educational practice of all preschool educators in Florida and becoming an exemplar for other states.



DEVELOP A STATEWIDE SYSTEM TO DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE PK-12 LITERACY. The UF Lastinger Center will offer a comprehensive suite of services that will improve literacy from the earliest years to adulthood, including advancing critical metrics such as third grade reading.



EXPAND ALGEBRA NATION TO ADDITIONAL CONTENT AREAS, GRADE LEVELS, AND STATES. The UF Lastinger Center will provide secondary mathematics content and personalized tutoring spanning the critical years from sixth grade into post-secondary education.



IDENTIFY, GROW, AND SCALE NEW INNOVATIONS. Cultivating an evergreen pipeline of innovations will improve outcomes for all children, especially those with the fewest resources to succeed.

These goals will be realized through eight high-impact strategies, articulated in this plan.

Mission

The UF Lastinger Center's mission is to **create equitable educational systems where every child and educator, regardless of circumstances, experiences high quality learning every day to support the achievement of critical milestones in children's trajectory through school that are predictive of success in life.**



Design Principles

In the design of all systems, strategies, and supports, the UF Lastinger Center will adhere to the following principles:



Providing high-quality content and resources based in current research and best practice.



Leveraging technology to disseminate resources while ensuring that every solution is cost-effective and scalable.



Designing implementation supports for teachers and students to adopt, use, and sustain effective solutions to common education challenges.



Forging the partnerships needed to effectively create, deploy, and institutionalize.

Core Values

The UF Lastinger Center will adhere to a set of core values that help define the organization's overall culture and underpin all of its work.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR CHILDREN WHO NEED IT MOST—

Children and their success are at the heart of UF Lastinger Center's work. By directly focusing on under-resourced communities, we ensure that children and families have the resources they need to succeed within systems that are often stacked against them. We consider the historical impacts and current context of race, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status and other factors in every one of our products and services. We also seek out ways to eliminate racial and socio-economic disparities to ensure equitable outcomes for all.

DEEP RESPECT FOR TEACHERS— Teachers too often feel undervalued and disempowered. Our work is about unleashing their capacity, amplifying their voices to encourage agency. We equip teachers with research-based content and the pedagogical knowledge and skills to improve their teaching, no matter their experience or current level of ability.

FOCUS ON THE KEY DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES WITH AN OUTSIZED IMPACT—

We know that some milestones have a greater impact on overall academic and life success and will focus our resources on identifying and supporting these points. Currently, our focus is on kindergarten readiness, 3rd grade reading proficiency, and Algebra 1 proficiency.

COLLABORATIVE, JOB-EMBEDDED, INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING— We believe learning should occur in context with multiple and varied opportunities to implement new strategies, analyze the outcomes, and adapt emerging understanding in real time and in community. We build the capacity of educators to reflect on and engage in seeking solutions to their needs and challenges. The resulting skill development will continuously improve their practice beyond the length of any project.

SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED, INNOVATION-DRIVEN— We are constantly seeking out new ideas, practices, and concepts, both within and outside the education landscape. We are adept at identifying those strategies most relevant to our clients and incorporating them into our work. We are not satisfied with the status quo, but instead are constantly seeking ways to make systems, products, and services more effective for improving teaching and learning. We always consider the market trends and creative technology solutions most applicable to tomorrow's educational challenges.

PURSUING CHANGE TO ECOSYSTEMS AND POLICY— We always tie our work to an imperative policy or strive to inform policy, as we view public systems as the best vehicle for implementing and scaling our work. It is through the combination of private funds to develop programs and public funds to implement and evaluate them that we have the best chance to achieve sustainable solutions to persistent challenges.

Landscape Analysis

An extensive analysis of the national, state, and regional landscape and of UF Lastinger Center Staff and supporters found a number of opportunities which could advance the UF Lastinger Center's mission over the next ten years. This effort included analyzing the broad landscape in which the UF Lastinger Center operates, interviews with key partners and staff, and a survey of all UF Lastinger Center associates. This information was analyzed by the planning team to identify the opportunities for greatest impact that are aligned with the Center's mission and strengths (for a more detailed examination of the methodology see Attachment A).



The challenge of attracting, supporting, and retaining talent has led to more sophisticated recruitment and talent management systems in the field of education. These systems build talent pipelines, offer career ladders, and have built-in opportunities for professional certification.



Technology, combined with a keener understanding of cognitive development, is leading to an age of hyper-personalized learning. Students are learning in blended environments and are more focused on project-based tasks and product creation. The role of the teacher is shifting from primarily disseminating information to coaching and facilitating learning, using real-time data to create unique experiences differentiated to student abilities and needs.



Professional development is becoming increasingly individualized and differentiated, focusing on "just-in-time" and niche needs. Micro-credentials, teacher-led professional development, and technology use are replacing the traditional practice of hiring external vendors to provide practitioner trainings.



Educational technology has moved from cutting-edge to becoming a mainstay in the classroom and is viewed by all stakeholders as critical to progress and student achievement. Key technologies, such as blockchain, augmented reality, and Application Programming Interface, which are dominating private business strategy, are still emerging in education.



The early learning field is shifting away from using Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) as the primary method for evaluating education settings, and toward a more central focus on key developmental milestones and phases. Also, in response to the movement for universal PreK, early learning providers are increasingly focused on birth through age three.



The charter school model is gaining momentum and investment from both public and private sources. The field is entering an unprecedented time for funding and regulation, particularly in Florida, which is being celebrated nationally as a trendsetter state.



Throughout the nation, programs are increasingly focused on strengthening family engagement. Practitioners are prioritizing the development of additional tools for building family capacity to supplement their student's education experience, such as parent leadership training, family-centered design solutions, and family-serving texts and apps.



As a part of one of the largest, most sophisticated post-secondary institutions in the world, the UF Lastinger Center has the opportunity to advance the University of Florida's mission singularly and even more powerfully by leveraging the vast intellectual resources of the institution.

In light of these opportunities, the Leadership Team and its associates have charted a strategic course to advance the UF Lastinger Center's mission.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

The UF Lastinger Center will realize its vision by focusing resources and efforts on five long-term goals, strategically aligned with our design principles and core values.

Goal 1: Integrate Early Learning Florida into the state's quality improvement efforts and expand into other states.



Strategy 1: Create universal access to Early Learning Florida.

Strategy 2: Develop comprehensive career advancement pathways for early childhood educators.

Goal 2: Develop a statewide system to dramatically improve language and literacy development.



Strategy 3: Expand early literacy offerings ahead of a broader expansion.

Goal 3: Expand Algebra Nation to additional grade levels and states.



Strategy 4: Expand Algebra Nation to cover all middle school years, while also expanding geographies.

Strategy 5: Explore advanced tutoring options and interactive elements to enhance personalization and student experience within the platform.

Goal 4: Identify, grow, and scale new innovations.



Strategy 6: Advance the system of innovation development.

Strategy 7: Launch the Flamingo Learning System.

Strategy 8: Scale Job-Embedded Professional Development Systems.

Goal 1: Integrate Early Learning Florida into the state's quality improvement efforts and expand into other states.

Since its inception, Early Learning Florida has experienced significant growth throughout Florida. The program is rapidly expanding the extent of its offerings and garnering interest from other states, including Georgia, Louisiana, Arizona, and California, where the Center is already doing work. Combined with the UF Lastinger Center's ability to provide specialized coaching within the early learning space, the Center can both educate teachers and ultimately transform practice toward the goal of improving children's kindergarten readiness. Nationally, the demand for higher benchmarks for early learning quality continues and the constraints of funding challenges increasingly necessitate cost-effective, technology-based solutions. Additionally, increased investment at the federal level (through a doubling of the Child Care and Development Block Grant) and expanding state and local investments further fuel demand.

In response to the current early learning landscape, the UF Lastinger Center will expand the reach of Early Learning Florida by (a) providing universal access for all educators in Florida, including Head Start, market-rate, and other providers and (b) developing and scaling a virtual coaching service (for more on this point, see Strategy 8).

STRATEGY 1: CREATE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING FLORIDA.

Rationale: Early Learning Florida has proven impact on all educators who participate and the children they serve. Further, the system is undergoing major expansion to serve as a hub for all professional learning needs for early childhood educators. Although many of the system components will be available to educators at no cost, certain premium elements, such as instructor-led courses, will still require funding for delivery. While the strategy is to secure funding for universal access, current state funding only supports coursework and training for subsidized care providers. Though this is an important achievement, many more providers, including those funded through Head Start and via private funding, could benefit significantly from access to Early Learning Florida. This necessitates the development of a business model that provides affordable training, resources, and support for these providers and the braiding together of additional funds for expansion from a variety of public and private funding sources. Though this initiative will require great effort, a program with universal access also presents the opportunity to benefit to other states, as Early Learning Florida would become a comprehensive system.



YEAR 1: 2019

- Identify and begin developing priority system components needed to build out entire statewide PD system.
- Engage community partners and stakeholders to prototype with private investments.
- Develop a business model fueled by additional public funds or a fee-for-service model that would generate value for all providers, while supporting implementation costs.
- Field test business model.



YEAR 2: 2020

- Complete build out of currently identified system elements.
- Implement universal access model, providing targeted on-the-ground support in key locations across Florida.
- Deepen implementation of system in community-based work, refining products and overall model based on stakeholder feedback.



YEAR 3: 2021

- Begin build out of newly identified system elements.
- Expand offerings for the universal access model and provide to other states and localities.
- Expand system across Florida and to other states.





STRATEGY 2: DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE CAREER ADVANCEMENT PATHWAYS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

Rationale: The UF Lastinger Center desires to professionalize the early childhood field by offering clear pathways for practitioners, directors, coaches, trainers, and other stakeholders to advance their education and careers, along with the necessary supports they need to achieve their goals. Improving the knowledge and skills of early learning educators is the critical pillar in improving the quality of early childhood experiences for young children, yet most practitioners have no more than a high school diploma and minimal training or education on how to effectively teach and care for young children. Although career ladders and various pathways do exist, they are often hard to find, confusing to follow, and cumbersome to use. Many educators do not have a clear understanding of what it takes to navigate those pathways or the financial means of undertaking them. The UF Lastinger Center is developing a mobile- and user-friendly site to host a series of pathways that will allow educators to seamlessly move through its high quality courses and PD experiences that build to state and national credentials, specializations, and even college credit. Practitioners, directors, and others will be able to set goals, track their progress, identify scholarship opportunities, and receive targeted support and mentoring from experts.

YEAR 1: 2019

- Complete career pathways that align with Early Learning Florida courses and professional development experiences to obtain the National Child Development Associate Credential, Florida Director Credential, Florida Advanced Credential, state specializations, and micro-credentials offered through Early Learning Florida.
- Develop articulation pathway and process for Early Learning Florida courses to earn college credit.
- Partner with at least one college to articulate Early Learning Florida courses to college credit.
- Launch first cohort of college degree seekers through community-based work.
- Design career pathway support resources, including in-face and virtual information webinars, documents, etc.
- Begin design of career planning and navigation tool to be housed on digital platform.

YEAR 2: 2020

- Complete build out of foundational career planning and navigation tool on platform, including linkage to the Florida state early learning registry.
- Offer career pathway packages to individuals and cohorts through digital platform.
- Offer in-person and face-to-face career pathway supports across Florida.
- Continue alignment of courses and professional development experiences to additional career pathways and colleges within Florida and other states.

YEAR 3: 2021

- Complete build out of enhanced career planning and navigation tool.
- Offer registry linkage in other states to their state early learning registries.
- Complete articulation of Early Learning Florida courses to all Florida state colleges.
- Offer articulation services to other states.



Goal 2: Develop a statewide system to dramatically improve language and literacy development.

A truism of 21st-century education is that you need to read to learn. Yet nationally, illiteracy continues to be a barrier to improving educational outcomes in the recent past. Florida was a national leader in literacy development, creating state mandates for literacy improvement and support. Recently, scores have held level, and with recognition of the need to strengthen teacher supports, the Florida Statutes were updated to designate the UF Lastinger Center as a state partner in the design of a professional development system for literacy.

In collaboration with the State of Florida, the UF Lastinger Center has created a vision for statewide, systemic literacy development based on phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and oral language. This approach targets the goal of systematically improving 3rd grade reading proficiency. Efforts include a recognition that literacy starts in the earliest years of life, including prenatally. Initially, the strategy will focus on prenatal through third grade literacy development and will expand, over time, to support literacy development through the 12th grade.

STRATEGY 3: EXPAND EARLY LITERACY OFFERINGS AHEAD OF A BROADER EXPANSION.

Rationale: The UF Lastinger Center's expansion into early literacy has been relatively rapid. In order to facilitate fundamental change to educator practice, the UF Lastinger Center will leverage funding provided from the James Patterson Literacy Challenge and the Helios Education Foundation to attract additional resources and fully build out the system. Moving forward, the Center envisions expanding the network of supports that emphasize language and literacy development to include pediatricians, parents, early learning providers, and interventionists. Once virtual coaching is available (see Strategy 7), the UF Lastinger Center can look at expanding literacy supports to include other grade-levels, with an eventual goal of developing offerings through high school completion.



YEAR 1: 2019

- Secure private funding for expansion of early literacy services and public funding to sustain it.
- Complete the development of the content library and the virtual coaching platform.
- Develop an early language and literacy framework to guide activities.
- Create and test a virtual coaching certification.



YEAR 2: 2020

- Create a system for demonstrating and certifying mastery.
- Scale the virtual coaching approach.
- Create and field test modules for pediatricians, early interventionists, parents, and early learning providers.
- Expand and deepen the use of the early language and literacy framework to guide literacy efforts.



YEAR 3: 2021

- Expand early literacy virtual coaching to other states.
- Continue to expand and deepen the use of the early language and literacy framework to guide literacy efforts.
- Begin expansion of literacy supports to other grades.



Goal 3: Expand Algebra Nation to additional grade levels and states.

Algebra Nation has rapidly grown from concept to statewide service in Florida and has now expanded to three other states (Michigan, South Carolina, and Mississippi) and one of the largest cities in the world, New York. The stellar rise of Algebra Nation is due to the combination of a high-quality, scalable product that delivers results and the growing demand for effective mathematics support for students. The momentum gained by the current Algebra Nation platform was achieved via a strong record of success and the increasing national and international demand to advance mathematics outcomes. This dynamic creates the opportunity to expand the depth and breadth of Algebra Nation in the coming years.

STRATEGY 4: EXPAND ALGEBRA NATION TO COVER ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS, WHILE ALSO EXPANDING GEOGRAPHIES.

Rationale: Mathematics is a cumulative subject, where key progress is made in middle school. Multiple states already supporting Algebra Nation have expressed an interest in the research and development of modules that span the middle school years. If developed, these modules could be easily adopted for other geographies currently using Algebra Nation and serve as a new offering for states and counties interested in replication.



YEAR 1: 2019

- Secure funding to support additional middle school modules and begin development and beta testing.



YEAR 2: 2020

- Complete development and testing of new middle school modules.
- Expand use of new modules to other existing Algebra Nation states.



YEAR 3: 2021

- Expand adoption of Algebra Nation into at least two new states or nations.

STRATEGY 5: EXPLORE ADVANCED TUTORING OPTIONS AND INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS TO ENHANCE PERSONALIZATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE PLATFORM.

Rationale: The ability to personalize resources to student needs and enhance student engagement within virtual learning environments provides strong opportunities to enhance student learning and performance in mathematics and other subjects. The Center seeks to continue innovations within the Algebra Nation platform to make an effective tool even more powerful for delivering results. Possibilities include adding tutoring bots and interactive, dynamic representations of mathematical concepts to better aid student comprehension and performance.



YEAR 1: 2019

- Explore partnership possibilities with organizations specializing in interactive elements that dynamically represent key mathematical concepts.
- Conduct a robust study of tutoring best practices to identify the interventions that are most effective for aiding student comprehension.



YEAR 2: 2020

- Incorporate interactive elements into the Algebra Nation platform.
- Develop and test a tutoring bot to incorporate into the Algebra Nation platform.



YEAR 3: 2021

- Evaluate and refine interactive elements according to engagement and performance data.
- Full launch of tutoring bot within the Algebra Nation platform.



Goal 4: Identify, grow, and scale new innovations.

UF Lastinger Center's impact in Florida and the nation is born out of the Center's ability to develop and scale on-the-ground, relevant, and impactful innovations. In 2014, the Center established a formal process for innovation that has accelerated the development of its offerings. There is an opportunity to draw off this momentum to further formalize the UF Lastinger Center's ability to generate new innovations and utilize spin-off private sector entities, which can accelerate scaling and provide the revenue needed to further expand the Center's portfolio of innovations.

STRATEGY 6: ADVANCE THE SYSTEM OF INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT.

Rationale: In the 2014 Strategic Plan, the UF Lastinger Center's Leadership Team articulated the Center's approach to innovation development (reproduced below). Additionally, a new business model was established to generate innovations within the UF Lastinger Center and to scale efforts through one or more private entities. This transition to a new way of operating has occurred over the past three years. Now, as the opportunity is realized, there are additional ways to advance this system for even greater impact.

Further, the Center's innovation pipeline could benefit from a more systematic approach to evaluating its efforts and sharing the results. A robust, ongoing internal evaluation system will allow the Center to make mid-course corrections to its strategy and implementation and get better faster. Additionally, external communication of these results will help to garner attention to the Lastinger Center's initiatives and increase its impact as a leader in the research and development of educational innovations. Partnerships with prominent institutions, such as the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and its Leadership for Learning network, as well as with educational publications, such as Professional Development in Education and Education Week, will help align the Center with the University's stated goals to internationalize its work and increase its prestige as a Top 5 Public Research Institution.

UF Lastinger Center Innovation Process



**Listening to schools
and community**



**Ideation with
network**



**Understanding
of research
& state-of-the-art**



**Prototyping/proof
of concept**



**Secure funding
and partnerships**



Piloting and refinement



Dissemination and scaling



YEAR 1: 2019

- Assess the results of the listening tour and prioritize opportunities for innovation development.
- Engage an Innovation Manager to lead cross-function innovation.
- Establish criteria to guide all innovation decisions and efforts. Specifically, for any project to support innovation it must:
 - a) have a foreseeable three-year horizon at the onset;
 - b) utilize technology to deliver content and facilitate coaching to enhance scalability and limit the amount of travel required; and
 - c) involve the possibility for both private investment for development and public investment for implementation/sustainability.
- Expand the use of the early learning project management system to become a UF Lastinger Center client success system. This protocol will be applied to all projects to ensure all deliverables and results are met.
- Initiate Communications Strategy planning.
- Co-host the Leadership for Professional Learning Symposium in Cambridge, England toward continuing a biannual international leadership convening.



YEAR 2: 2020

- Develop and launch a business model to provide independent evaluation services.
- Continue to implement and refine the Communications Strategy.



YEAR 3: 2021

- Identify, vet, and begin the development of at least two new innovations.
- Continue to implement and refine the Communications Strategy.
- Co-host international educational leadership convening in Dublin, Ireland.

STRATEGY 7: LAUNCH THE FLAMINGO LEARNING SYSTEM.

Rationale: The Flamingo Learning System is the first platform for educators that integrates the following five critical functionalities: (1) a community-based forum to connect educators; (2) a resource management system for exchanging resources; (3) a learning management system and teaching management system that allows for both guided and self-directed online learning; (4) a coaching tool for video coaching using a standard rubric; and (5) a career management tool to track progress against any credential, certification, or degree. The Flamingo Learning System will be at the core of all the Lastinger Center's work. In Year 1 of implementation, an auxiliary account will be established within the University of Florida, to enable the assessment of fees to sustain and refine the system.



YEAR 1: 2019

- Complete development of the first four components (i.e., the community forum, resource management system, LMS/TMS, and coaching tool).
- Beta test and launch the first four components.
- Initiate design and development of the career management tool.
- Explore the incorporation of artificial intelligence capabilities within the system.



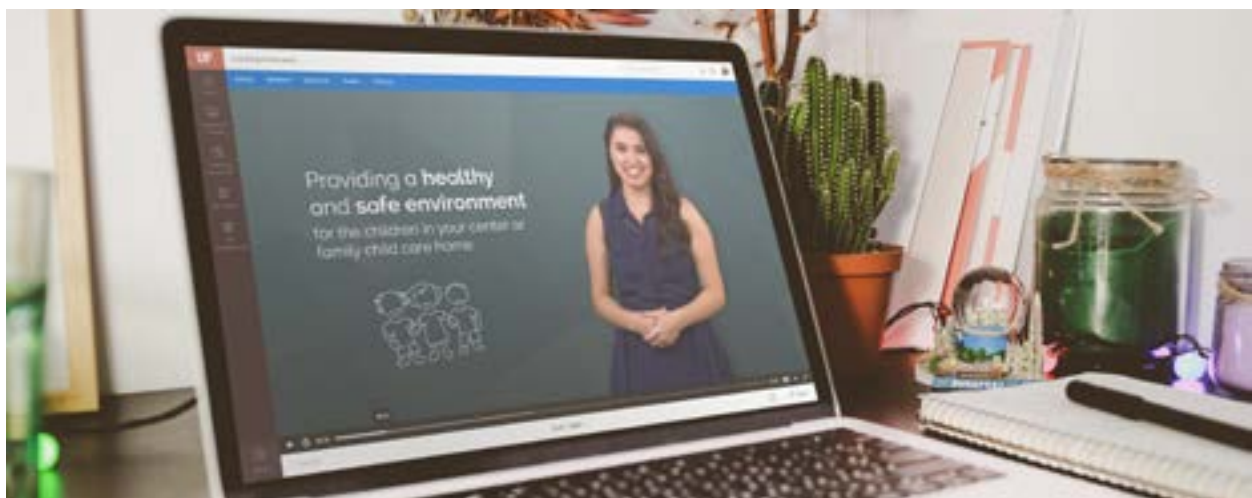
YEAR 2: 2020

- Complete development of the career management tool and artificial intelligence capabilities and finalize testing.
- Continue to develop the product roadmap and enhance the Flamingo Learning System.



YEAR 3: 2021

- Continue to develop the product roadmap and enhance the Flamingo Learning System.





STRATEGY 8: SCALE JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS.

Rationale: A core theme of the Center’s innovation portfolio have been those in job-embedded professional development. These innovations will continue into the future. Leadership will focus on scaling three of the most promising job-embedded professional development opportunities. Specifically, the Center will scale:

a) A virtual coaching model — The UF Lastinger Center’s Leadership Team has learned over the years that a coaching component is crucial for transforming practice, advancing equity and maximizing educational gains. The UF Lastinger Center’s in-person coaching model is both innovative and highly effective. Unfortunately, scaling is slow because of the costs involved. Accordingly, the Center began the development of a proprietary Virtual Coaching model, that will allow for scalable coaching anywhere in the world.

b) Offerings to advance school safety — School safety is a continuing concern for every school in Florida and the United States. In 2018, the UF Lastinger Center secured a multi-year National Institute of Justice grant to develop an online professional development and job-embedded coaching system for school resource officers. Working in partnership with the expertise of Lauren’s Kids, the UF Lastinger Center has been developing a statewide plan to increase school safety by building the capacity of school resource officers, educators, and others.

c) The Lastinger Leadership Framework — Drawing upon the latest research in instructional leadership and culturally responsive practice as well as the collective experiences of the UF Lastinger Center team, the Lastinger Leadership Framework guides the development of highly effective instructional leaders.



YEAR 1: 2019

- Complete the development of the Virtual Coaching system.
- Create and test a Virtual Coaching protocol.
- Develop the online professional development and job-embedded coaching system and begin pilot.
- Work with Lauren's Kids to build out suite of school safety resources for educators, school resource officers, and the community.



YEAR 2: 2020

- Scale the Virtual Coaching protocol.
- Develop a micro-credential approach to increase the value of using the Center's professional development systems.
- Start to scale the development and job-embedded coaching system.
- Secure funding to expand scalable offerings.



YEAR 3: 2021

- Continue to expand the use of Virtual Coaching and refine, as needed.
- Continue to refine and further scale the development and job-embedded coaching system.
- Secure funding to expand scalable offerings.



Indicators of Success

The UF Lastinger Center will measure the success of this plan using a balanced scorecard approach. The balanced scorecard is a management tool developed by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton to connect strategy with more operational, interconnected elements that span the entire organization.

The original “perspectives” of the balanced scorecard are: customer, financial, operations, and learning and growth. These perspectives were adapted to better fit the UF Lastinger Center’s mission and vision. The perspectives and the measures are presented in the Balanced Scorecard figure.

These indicators will be reviewed by the Director at least monthly and shared with the leadership team at least quarterly and at every All Associates meeting. Additionally, every Advisory Board meeting will include an update on the measures.

Balanced Scorecard	
<p>Students, Educators, and Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Early childhood quality: CLASS, Child outcomes, Kindergarten readiness ■ 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency ■ Algebra 1 Proficiency ■ Educator satisfaction (based on post-intervention surveys) ■ Principal/Mid-level manager/director satisfaction (based on post-intervention surveys) 	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Special reserve ■ Fund raising - annual and special project ■ Cash flow ■ Efficiency
<p>Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff retention ■ Staff satisfaction survey ■ Staff attendance rates ■ Average time to fill positions ■ Maintenance of the Flamingo Learning System ■ Professional development and service completion ■ Average time to execute a contract/agreement 	<p>Learning and Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning and Growth ■ Progress/key milestones on long-term initiatives ■ Percentage of staff/faculty reviewed and providing feedback ■ Number of families, students, and educators connected with for market intelligence. ■ Number of early and late stage innovations

Strategic Partners and Resources

The UF Lastinger Center has been able to expand rapidly and have a broad impact by virtue of the leadership's ability to forge mutually beneficial strategic partnership and strategically leverage funding. These partnerships will center around the development of new innovations or scaling of existing ones and could include representation on the UF Lastinger Center Advisory Board.

At the center of the UF Lastinger Center's partnerships will remain the State of Florida (including the Governor's Office, Legislature, Department of Education, and Office of Early Learning) as well as Study Edge and 42 Lines (the Center's leading technology partners). These partnerships have led to a key role for the Center in education from birth through high school completion including both formal and informal roles through support and statutory requirements. Increasingly, the Center's success has led it to create partnerships beyond Florida, most notably in the Southeast region, including South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and also further west in Arizona and California.

Core relationships that are already established will be continued and strengthened, including those with:

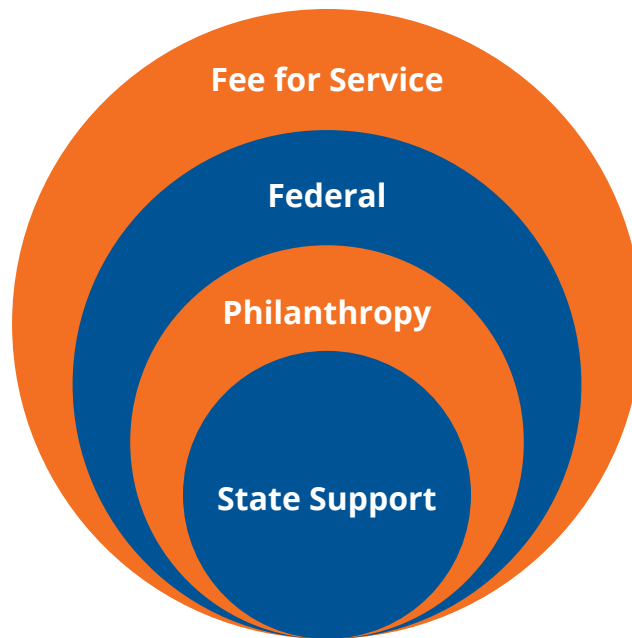
Long term funding partners, such as the Helios Education Foundation, the Jim Moran Foundation, the Stranahan Family Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Thought partners and critical friends, such as the Florida Children's Council, Florida Children's Movement, SRI International, and the Atlanta Speech School.

Networking and implementation partners: Leadership Florida, Consortium of Florida Education Foundations, the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (Charleston, SC) the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, and the *Professional Development in Education* journal.

Technology partners: Zoom, Box.com, Smartsheet, Digital Worlds Institute, Daminion, and UF Health Lifelong Learning.

In addition, the UF Lastinger Center will re-establish stronger partnerships with the University of Florida generally and the College of Education specifically, to leverage all the institution has to offer. Also, one or more artificial intelligence and augmented reality partnerships will be made to strengthen the use of this critical technology in new UF Lastinger Center innovations. Finally, considering the growing research evidence and funder support for integrated academic support and college readiness systems, the UF Lastinger Center leadership will explore a partnership with Take Stock in Children, one of the preeminent college readiness organizations in the US.



The UF Lastinger Center will continue to pursue funding that provides the ability to develop, incubate, and scale innovations while crafting business models to sustain the impact of the Center's work beyond project funding.

Financial support, from both Florida and other states, remains a central source of funding for the Center. State legislators have a vested interest in meeting the needs of the children primarily served by the Center's work, and state governments are the prime distributor of federal pass-through funds. States have seen value in the Center's innovations in past years. State funding also provides a leverage point for private funding that can further impact the UF Lastinger Center's ability to secure private funding of all kinds.

Philanthropy, through private charitable foundations, corporate foundations, and individual giving, will continue to provide vital research and development funding for the UF Lastinger Center's innovations and will remain so in the future.

The UF Lastinger Center has secured multiple prestigious and competitive federal grants. The pursuit of this funding for the development and scaling of innovations will continue. Additionally, the Center will pursue research grants to build the base of Center data and develop a reputation for being at the forefront of field research in education. Key agencies targeted for this funding include the Institute for Educational Sciences and the US Department of Education.

Finally, the Center will continue to utilize fee-for-service contracts to provide needed services to its clients based on our innovations.

Implementation and Institutionalization

The new strategic plan will need to permeate every level and activity undertaken by UF Lastinger Center staff. The move from strategic planning to implementation requires the facilitation of three distinct phases: design, launch, and implementation.

The **design phase** was completed as part of this plan development. In this phase, key internal and external actors were engaged in the planning to ensure buy-in, relevance, and practicality. Specifically, this was achieved by:

- Collecting and assessing information on the state of the organization and the landscape from a cross section of management and staff;
- Engaging selected leadership in the planning effort;
- Testing the plan as it was being crafted with UF Lastinger Center staff; and
- Engaging the advisory board in the final review and approval of the plan.

Once this plan is completed, the next phase – **the initial launch** – will be implemented within 90 days of finalization. In this phase, the UF Lastinger Center Director will review the plan and its implications with the management team.

During the **implementation phase**, the UF Lastinger Center Director will track plan progress at least quarterly with the leadership team. These sessions will review progress on implementation, evaluate the indicators of success, and identify and problem-solve implementation risks and challenges. The leadership team will be required to consider the strategic plan when making any major organizational decisions and to incorporate plan objectives in to their personal development goals at all levels. Finally, the UF Lastinger Center Director will provide an annual update on implementation, including any plan modifications, to the Center's Advisory Board.

Attachment A: Methodology

The planning process began with an assessment of the UF Lastinger Center's current and potential impact. The process culminated in an actionable set of strategies designed to realize major organizational goals, and identify the resources needed to achieve them.

The planning process was executed in three phases:

- 1. Discovery and Data Collection**— This phase of the planning process included the review of previous UF Lastinger Center plans, data, and reports. It also included an independent analysis of like-minded innovators as well as state and national education trends. To supplement the qualitative and documentary data, a total of 36 one-on-one interviews were conducted with national landscape experts; past, current, and future customers; and selected UF Lastinger Center staff.

The interview questions posed include:

- What is the UF Lastinger Center's critical value?
- What are the UF Lastinger Center's greatest strengths and vulnerabilities?
- How is the UF Lastinger Center differentiated from other education innovators in the region, state, and nation?
- What are the relevant regional, state, and national ecosystem trends that could affect the UF Lastinger Center's success and sustainability?
- What are the greatest needs the UF Lastinger Center is already serving?
- What are the most significant unmet needs?
- What is the greatest potential impact the UF Lastinger Center can have?
- What new resources are needed to achieve impact?
- How will existing resources need to evolve or be transformed to realize the desired impact?

The list of interviewees can be found at the end of this section.

- 2. Analysis, Planning, and Reporting**—The planning team analyzed the data collected during phase one and crafted a set of observations and recommendations on the most significant opportunities for outsized impact. These findings connected opportunities to national best practices and trends. The resulting "menu" of possibilities were considered and prioritized during a series of co-design and action- planning sessions undertaken by the team.

- 3. Finalization**— The content presented in this strategic plan is the result of the goals, strategies, objectives, and accompanying actions that emerged during the co-design and action-planning sessions.

The report includes:

- 1)** An explanation of the methodology used to develop the framework and action plan (including research produced and qualitative sources);
 - 2)** A set of observations and key findings based on the analysis of the data; and
 - 3)** A three-year actionable strategic plan, including costs, possible funding sources, potential for sustainability, and possible risks in execution, as determined in the planning sessions.
- 4. Socialization**— The final step of the process included opportunities for further refinement of the plan via feedback from the UF Lastinger Center Advisory Board, college and university leadership, and other Lastinger associates. Additionally, the Listening Tour was conducted to solicit stakeholder feedback from over 100 respondents in over 20 counties across Florida to further refine the plan. For more information, please reference Attachment B or the full 2018 Listening Tour report.



Interviewee & Organization*

Alyson Adams, UF School of Teaching and Learning

Vance Aloupis, Children's Movement of Florida

Robert Avossa, Former School District of Palm Beach County Superintendent

Rajeev Bajaj, Lastinger Learning Ventures

Kristin Bernhard, Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning

Michael Bileca, Florida House of Representatives

Valeria Brown, UF Lastinger Center

Stephanie Cugini, UF Lastinger Center

Helen Davis Martin, Lee County Public Schools

Ester de Jong, UF School of Teaching and Learning

Jose Dotres, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Josh Edelman, Gates Foundation

Ethan Fieldman, Study Edge

Steve Fink, Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington

Virginia Foxx, US House of Representatives

Lara Glaser, UF Lastinger Center

Jillian Hasner, Take Stock in Children

Leland Hill, UF Lastinger Center

Glenn Good, University of Florida College of Education

Diane Gullett, Orange County Public Schools

Marsha Hill, Northeast Florida Education Consortium

Holly Lane, UF School of Special Education, School Psychology, and Early Childhood Studies

Jason Lange, BloomBoard

Allen & Delores Lastinger, UF Lastinger Center

Vlad Marlowe, UF Lastinger Center

Jon Mundorf, PK Yonge Developmental Research School

Karen Ortiz, Helios Education Foundation

Don Pemberton, UF Lastinger Center

Phil Poekert, UF Lastinger Center

Paige Pullen, UF Lastinger Center

Cheryl Quarles-Gaston, Carter G. Woodson Elementary, Duval County Public Schools

Abby Thorman, UF Lastinger Center

Phil Vahey, SRI International

Will Weatherford, Weatherford Partners

Patricia Willis, Duval County Public

Comer Yates, Atlanta Speech School

*at time of interview

Attachment B: Listening Tour Executive Summary

As a responsive innovation center dedicated to working in community with others to create equitable education systems, the University of Florida Lastinger Center is deeply committed to understanding the needs and realities of those the Center seeks to serve. That is why the Director and select leadership recently embarked on a 6-week Listening Tour across Florida: to hear from more than 100 educational stakeholders ranging from preschoolers to high schoolers, from teachers to school and district administrators, from parents to agency and organization leaders to elected officials, and from rural areas to urban centers. And from conversations heartfelt and sincere, much was learned. The conversations spanned early learning, literacy, and mathematics to leadership, technology, and school safety. The trip totaled nearly 3,000 miles and 20 of Florida's 67 counties.

The goal was to do a pulse check on the educational successes and challenges cradle to career in order to guide the work ahead both for the University of Florida Lastinger Center as well as inform broader efforts for educational advancement in Florida. Themes that emerged from these conversations include:

1. Addressing students' mental health and wellbeing is an increasingly high priority for Florida stakeholders, and it must encompass evidence-based preventive strategies as well as reactive interventions.
2. There remains widespread support for standardized assessment in education, alongside growing recognition of the opportunity to reconfigure the accountability system to better incentivize evidence-based approaches to promoting healthy child development and student success.
3. Across Florida, awareness of the importance of early learning is increasing; however, achieving the appropriate balance between access and quality continues to be a challenge.
4. Increasingly, communities are recognizing the benefit of formally connecting middle and high school education to career readiness, especially those careers that align with Florida's workforce needs.
5. Educators are seeing the need for new interventions and supports for academically-challenged learners who are falling further behind.
6. Technology and data hold great promise for improving student learning, but greater capacity is needed both in schools and communities.

7. Recruitment and retention of early childhood and K-12 educators continues to hamper progress in improving systems and need new more effective solutions.
8. Superstorms, such as Hurricanes Irma, Maria, and Michael, are impacting rapid changes to Florida's educational system and are likely to have long-term effects.

Despite the power of each of the themes that surfaced from the Listening Tour, perhaps the most important lesson gleaned from this exercise is the incredible commitment, talent, and passion of the individuals in this state who serve our children. We should take great comfort and keep great hope knowing that Mr. Echevarria and Ms. Matheny are leading Fellsmere Elementary School in Indian River County, that Ms. Harding is teaching algebra at KIPP Jacksonville in Duval County, and Ms. Khrystie is caring for preschoolers at Building Blocks Enrichment Center in Suwanee County. It's incumbent on us and those with whom we partner to develop a system and supports that allow them and, most importantly, the students they serve to be successful.

For more detail on the methodology and results of the Listening Tour, please reference the UF Lastinger Center 2018 Listening Tour report.

Attachment C: Action Plan

Strategy	Year 1 (2019)	Year 2 (2020)	Year 3 (2021)
<p>GOAL 1: INTEGRATE EARLY LEARNING FLORIDA INTO THE STATE'S QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS AND EXPAND INTO OTHER STATES.</p>			
<p>Strategy 1: Create universal access to Early Learning Florida.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and begin developing priority system components needed to build out entire statewide PD system. ● Engage community partners and stakeholders to prototype with private investments. ● Develop a business model fueled by additional public funds or a fee-for-service model that would generate value for all providers, while supporting implementation costs. ● Field test business model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete build out of currently identified system elements. ● Implement universal access model, providing targeted on-the-ground support in key locations across Florida. ● Deepen implementation of system in community-based work, refining products and overall model based on stakeholder feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin build out of newly identified system elements. ● Expand offerings for the universal access model and provide to other states and localities. ● Expand system across Florida and to other states.
<p>Strategy 2: Develop comprehensive career advancement pathways for early childhood educators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete career pathways that align with Early Learning Florida courses and professional development experiences to obtain the National Child Development Associate Credential, Florida Director Credential, Florida Advanced Credential, state specializations, and micro-credentials offered through Early Learning Florida. ● Develop articulation pathway and process for Early Learning Florida courses to earn college credit. ● Partner with at least one college to articulate Early Learning Florida courses to college credit. ● Launch first cohort of college degree seekers through community-based work. ● Design career pathway support resources, including in-face and virtual information webinars, documents, etc. ● Begin design of career planning and navigation tool to be housed on digital platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete build out of foundational career planning and navigation tool on platform, including linkage to the Florida state early learning registry. ● Offer career pathway packages to individuals and cohorts through digital platform. ● Offer in-person and face-to-face career pathway supports across Florida. ● Continue alignment of courses and professional development experiences to additional career pathways and colleges within Florida and other states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete build out of enhanced career planning and navigation tool. ● Offer registry linkage in other states to their state early learning registries. ● Complete articulation of Early Learning Florida courses to all Florida state colleges. ● Offer articulation services to other states.

Attachment C: Action Plan

Strategy	Year 1 (2019)	Year 2 (2020)	Year 3 (2021)
GOAL 2: DEVELOP A STATEWIDE SYSTEM TO DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT.			
Strategy 3: Expand early literacy offerings ahead of a broader expansion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure private funding for expansion of early literacy services and public funding to sustain it. Complete the development of the content library and the virtual coaching platform. Develop an early language and literacy framework to guide activities. Create and test a virtual coaching certification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a system for demonstrating and certifying mastery. Scale the virtual coaching approach. Create and field test modules for pediatricians, early interventionists, parents, and early learning providers. Expand and deepen the use of the early language and literacy framework to guide literacy efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand early literacy virtual coaching to other states. Continue to expand and deepen the use of the early language and literacy framework to guide literacy efforts. Begin expansion of literacy supports to other grades.
GOAL 3: EXPAND ALGEBRA NATION TO ADDITIONAL GRADE LEVELS AND STATES.			
Strategy 4: Expand Algebra Nation to cover all middle school years, while also expanding geographies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding to support additional middle school modules and begin development and beta testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete development and testing of new middle school modules. Expand use of new modules to other existing Algebra Nation states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand adoption of Algebra Nation into at least two new states or nations.
Strategy 5: Explore advanced tutoring options and interactive elements to enhance personalization and student experience within platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore partnership possibilities with organizations specializing in interactive elements that dynamically represent key mathematical concepts. Conduct a robust study of tutoring best practices to identify the interventions that are most effective for aiding student comprehension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate interactive elements into the Algebra Nation platform. Develop and test a tutoring bot to incorporate into the Algebra Nation platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and refine interactive elements according to engagement and performance data. Full launch of tutoring bot within the Algebra Nation platform.

Attachment C: Action Plan

Strategy	Year 1 (2019)	Year 2 (2020)	Year 3 (2021)
GOAL 4: IDENTIFY, GROW, AND SCALE NEW INNOVATIONS.			
<p>Strategy 6: Advance the system of innovation development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess the results of the listening tour and prioritize opportunities for innovation development. ● Engage an Innovation Manager to lead cross-function innovation. ● Establish criteria to guide all innovation decisions and efforts. Specifically, for any project to support innovation it must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) have a foreseeable three-year horizon at the onset; b) utilize technology to deliver content and facilitate coaching to enhance scalability and limit the amount of travel required; and c) involve the possibility for both private investment for development and public investment for implementation/sustainability. ● Expand the use of the early learning project management system to become a UF Lastinger Center client success system. This protocol will be applied to all projects to ensure all deliverables and results are met. ● Initiate Communications Strategy planning. ● Co-host the Leadership for Professional Learning Symposium in Cambridge, England toward continuing a biannual international leadership convening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and launch a business model to provide independent evaluation services. ● Continue to implement and refine the Communications Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify, vet, and begin the development of at least two new innovations. ● Continue to implement and refine the Communications Strategy. ● Co-host international educational leadership convening in Dublin, Ireland.

Attachment C: Action Plan

Strategy	Year 1 (2019)	Year 2 (2020)	Year 3 (2021)
GOAL 4: IDENTIFY, GROW, AND SCALE NEW INNOVATIONS.			
Strategy 7: Launch the Flamingo Learning System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete development of the first four components (i.e., the community forum, resource management system, LMS/TMS, and coaching tool). ● Beta test and launch the first four components. ● Initiate design and development of the career management tool. ● Explore the incorporation of artificial intelligence capabilities within the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete development of the career management tool and artificial intelligence capabilities and finalize testing. ● Continue to develop the product roadmap and enhance the Flamingo Learning System. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to develop the product roadmap and enhance the Flamingo Learning System.
Strategy 8: Scale Job-Embedded Professional Development Systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete the development of the Virtual Coaching system. ● Create and test a Virtual Coaching protocol. ● Develop the online professional development and job-embedded coaching system and begin pilot. ● Work with Lauren's Kids to build out suite of school safety resources for educators, school resource officers, and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scale the Virtual Coaching protocol. ● Develop a micro-credential approach to increase the value of using the Center's professional development systems. ● Start to scale the development and job-embedded coaching system. ● Secure funding to expand scalable offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to expand the use of Virtual Coaching and refine, as needed. ● Continue to refine and further scale the development and job-embedded coaching system. ● Secure funding to expand scalable offerings.



The University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning is an education innovation hub that blends cutting-edge academic research and practice to transform education and accelerate learning. We work to create equitable educational systems where every child and educator, regardless of circumstances, experiences high-quality learning every day to support the achievement of critical milestones in children's trajectory through school that are predictive of success in life. Our innovations include Algebra Nation and Early Learning Florida and serve more than 500,000 students and 50,000 teachers across ten states in the nation each year.



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