

FLATE FOCUS

Spotlight on our 2026 FLATE Award Winners

June 2026



Spotlight on our 2026 FLATE Award Winners!

**19th Annual
FLATE AWARD WINNERS**

<p>Manufacturing Secondary Educator of the Year 2026</p> <p><i>Theresa Waller</i></p> <p>Charlotte Technical College Port Charlotte, FL</p>	<p>Manufacturing Post-Secondary Educator of the Year 2026</p> <p><i>Mayra Socaras</i></p> <p>Valencia College Orlando, FL</p>	<p>Manufacturing Partner Service Award 2026</p> <p><i>Carrie Meyers</i></p> <p>Florida State University InSPIRE Tallahassee, FL</p>
--	--	--

Logos at the bottom: FLATE, FloridaMakes, FAITE, JAEGER, CONNECTED ENGINEERING, Bluegrass UF, Florida Semiconductor Institute UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Congratulations to Theresa Waller 2026 Distinguished Manufacturing Secondary Educator of the Year

Congratulations to Theresa Waller, Program Planner and High School Electrical Instructor at Charlotte Technical College. With over two decades of hands-on expertise in the electrical trade and a profound commitment to workforce development, Waller stands as a leading voice for technical education in Southwest Florida. Currently serving as a lead instructor at Charlotte Technical College (CTC), she translates 20 years of field-hardened experience into a curriculum that empowers the next generation of the advanced manufacturing and construction workforce.



Theresa's contributions to manufacturing and technical education have been recognized at the highest levels of her district and industry and are defined by a 20-year foundation in the electrical trade and an unwavering commitment to workforce development at the local and state levels.

- January 2026: Top Five Finalist for Teacher of the Year for Charlotte County Public Schools
- November 2025: Teacher of the Year, Charlotte Technical College

- June 2025: CDBIA P.A.L.M. (Professionals Actively Leading and Mentoring) Award Winner, recognizing her exceptional efforts to bridge the gap between education and industry partners.
- June 2025: Fierce Women in the Trade Award

Theresa Waller believes that manufacturing education is important because manufacturing is not just about operating machinery; it is about mastering the intersection of technology, math, and physical craftsmanship to solve real-world problems. The value of this curriculum extends far beyond technical proficiency. It instills a rigorous "shop floor" work ethic characterized by humility, resilience, and a professional outlook.

[Read full article](#)

Congratulations to Mayra Socarras 2026 Distinguished Manufacturing Post-Secondary Educator of the Year

Congratulations to Mayra Socarras, Assistant Professor of Semiconductor Engineering Technology at Valencia College in Florida's High-Tech Corridor, where she leads the state's only Associate of Science (AS) program in Semiconductor Engineering Technology. Drawing on her engineering experience, Socarras is bridging critical gaps in STEM education by also teaching in the Math Department, specializing in Developmental Math to help students unlock opportunities in high-tech fields while advancing workforce development and talent pipelines essential to Florida's semiconductor industry.



Mayra Socarras has made outstanding contributions to manufacturing and engineering technology education and training through developing the curriculum for Valencia College's A.S. degree in Advancing Emerging Industries. This forward-looking program equips students with essential skills in semiconductor manufacturing, directly addressing the manufacturing sector's significant talent shortage.

Mayra has decades of engineering experience and has been a leader in robotics and engineering mentorship. She also...

- served as head coach for FIRST Lego League teams, earning the President of the United States Volunteer Service Award and
- received NASA's Return to Flight Group Achievement Award for her electrical systems review following the Space Shuttle Challenger accident, contributing to NASA's STS-26 Return to Flight mission when she was a Senior Design Engineer at The Boeing Company from 1987 to 1999, in NASA's Space Shuttle Program.

Mayra Socarras believes that manufacturing education is important because it directly helps to address the skilled talent shortage. Also, manufacturing jobs often offer competitive compensation, benefits and advancement opportunities. Therefore, manufacturing education can serve as a bridge between poverty and the middle class.

[Read full article](#)

Congratulations to Carrie Meyers 2026 Distinguished Manufacturing Partner Service Award

Congratulations to Carrie Meyers, Director of Education and Workforce talent for FSU InSPIRE at Florida State University's Learning Systems Institute (LSI)! Meyers serves to guide the educational strategy of a long-term regional initiative designed to strengthen Northwest Florida's talent pipeline for high-demand industries, including advanced manufacturing and aerospace. A veteran educator with nearly three decades of experience spanning kindergarten through college instruction, she is known for translating complex STEM concepts into classroom-ready learning that builds both technical competence and durable workforce skills.



Carrie Meyer's outstanding contributions to manufacturing and/or engineering technology education and training include the following:

- Fall 2025: Helped lead regional advanced manufacturing career awareness efforts tied to Advanced Manufacturing Month, partnering across education, industry, and statewide manufacturing networks to broaden student exposure to modern manufacturing careers and pathways.
- 2025-26 School Year: Organized and supported local school STEAM events that intentionally connected students and families with advanced manufacturing careers by bringing in industry experts and manufacturing partners.
- Summer 2025: Supported implementation of the ROBO101 summer course and strengthened educator-to-workforce pathways by inviting FloridaMakes to all InSPIRE courses. Over 300 teachers learned how to translate course experiences into student opportunities and next-step program options.
- Jan 2025: Created and delivered AIENGIN102 ("Leveraging AI Prompt Engineering for Engineering Design Pedagogy"), equipping educators to design open-ended engineering lessons using AI and Microsoft Word.
- Summer 2024: Supported launching industry-education credentials with Microsoft and FSU for teachers and students in advanced manufacturing and aerospace.

Carrie Meyers believes that manufacturing education is important because it supports equity and community resilience by providing multiple entry points into meaningful careers, including stackable credentials and industry certifications. These pathways allow learners to upskill over time as technology changes, ensuring that the workforce remains adaptable and that local communities can sustain long-term growth.

[Read full article](#)

Other FLATE News

Engineering Technology Faculty in Florida Registration is Open for the Fall 2026 ET Forum

The logo for the Forum on Engineering Technology, featuring the word "FORUM" in large, bold, black letters with a blue map of Florida inside the letter "O". Below it, the words "on Engineering Technology" are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.



Fall 2026 ET Forum
September 10, 2026 9AM - 5PM
September 11, 2026 9AM - 1PM

Palm Beach State College
Boca Raton Campus
801 Palm Beach State College Dr.
Boca Raton, FL

Free Course Development Software for the FLATE Community

PreseMaker is a software tool created by one of our FLATE professors, Dr. Ron Eaglin, that is designed to help with course development. The tool is available at the Windows App Store <https://apps.microsoft.com/detail/9mt854nv3fgf?hl=en-US&gl=US>



The App is currently free, however, if you do see a cost use the coupon FLATE for 100% off the price.

Also a handy website for anyone needing information on courses is <https://floridacourserrepo.com/> - you can find guides for hundreds of courses here (including ET courses).

Tigers to Titans Welding Program Strengthens Florida's Future Manufacturing Workforce

Eastern Florida State College (EFSC) in Brevard County has officially welcomed the second dual-enrolled welding cohort for the Tigers to Titans Welding Program, continuing to build a strong pipeline of skilled talent for Florida's manufacturing and trades industries.

This program's success would not have been possible without the leadership, vision and commitment of Art Hoelke, VP/GM/FSO at Knight's Armament Company. His dedication to workforce development and career pathway expansion has helped create life-changing



opportunities for students while addressing the growing demand for skilled welders and technical talent across the region. "This program would not have happened without Art's help" stated Dr. Andrew Lieb, Collegewide Chair, CTE: Business & Applied Technologies at EFSC.

Through this innovative dual enrollment partnership, students gain hands-on welding experience, earn college credit, and work toward industry-recognized AWS certifications before graduating high school. The inaugural cohort has already demonstrated remarkable success, with 15 of the original 16 students remaining actively engaged in the program and several students already completing AWS certification testing. Special recognition is also extended to Dr. Andrew Lieb and the EFSC team for their continued support in strengthening career and technical education pathways for Florida's future workforce. The continued growth of the program reflects the increasing need for workforce-driven education models that connect students directly to high-demand, high-wage careers. Interest has expanded beyond Cocoa High School, with students from across the community seeking opportunities to participate.

FLATE Engineering Technology (ET) Mentorship Meeting

Are you new to teaching an engineering or related manufacturing program in Florida? Are you a veteran teacher who would like to help mentor new educators? Join us for the FLATE Monthly ET Mentorship meeting, designed to help new faculty with questions about curriculum, labs, advisory committees, and much more. We also invite experienced faculty to share their knowledge. **Meetings will be held on the 2nd Friday of the month.** Please share this invitation with colleagues who may be interested.

Register here

Events & Workshops

AMTEC Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation Virtual Training June 9, 2026 - 11:00 AM CT

The Advanced Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative (AMTEC) Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation (AI3) project (NSF DUE 2350012) provides professional development opportunities to high school, 2-year technical college, and 4-year university faculty who teach manufacturing related courses in the United States. The next session is **June 9 at 11am CT – Innovating in Engineering and Welding Education - Unlock High-Value Tools for Welding & Engineering Labs**



Learn more & Register

AMTEC Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation In-Person Educator Trainings June 16-17 & October 6-7 | Owensboro, KY

AMTEC's in-person 2-day workshop offers hands-on training in Industry 4.0 technologies that instructors can bring back to their classrooms. For high school, technical college, and university faculty teaching advanced manufacturing and related courses. Click on flyer for full details. **Travel assistance and stipends** are available for instructors who meet program requirements.



Learn more & Register

STEM Solar + Storage Institute (FREE) July 21-23, 2026 - Madison, WI

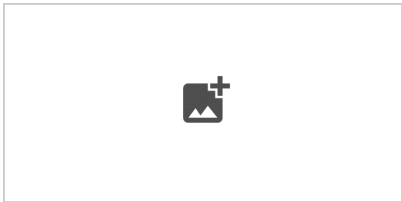
The STEM Solar + Storage Institute is designed to provide STEM educators with engaging lessons focused on solar energy and energy storage, classroom-ready equipment, and a unique hands-on learning experience to take back to their students. Funded by the CREATE Energy NSF ATE National Center, this institute supports educators in building confidence and content knowledge in renewable energy systems, grid resilience, and energy careers. Includes:

- Hotel for two nights.
- \$600 Stipend paid to each participant upon completion of the institute
- Equipment awards valued at up to \$1200 available to each participant funded by the CREATE Energy NSF ATE National Center

To apply



The National Center for Next Generation Manufacturing is offering two pre-conference sessions at HI-TEC.



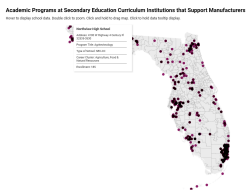
- Workshop: Incorporating Emotional Intelligence into Your Courses - A recent Manufacturing Institute report noted manufacturers across sectors indicated a need for employees with emotional intelligence because it relates to teamwork, productivity and motivation. This workshop will provide an overview of emotional intelligence, which is one's ability to understand and apply our overall emotional well-being to facilitate high levels of collaboration and productivity.
- Special Interest Group (SIG): Next Generation Manufacturing - will focus on preparing the future advanced manufacturing workforce with the skills needed by industry with a focus on advanced manufacturing and technologies including artificial intelligence.

[Click here for details on all pre-conference sessions.](#)

Register for HI-TEC by June 4 for Early Bird Rate

Resources

FLATE's Manufacturing Matters Dashboard



A tool highlighting manufacturing education, careers, industry, and their impact on Florida's economy. Search for manufacturing education programs across the state, narrow to a particular skill. Students can find a program to enter; Manufacturers can find employees with hands-on training.

Manufacturing Matters Dashboard

FLATE Webinar Series - Watch on Demand

- Insights into the Workforce of the Future (2025)
- AI & Machine Learning Workshops (2025)
- Data Analytics in Manufacturing (2024)

- Necessary Skills Now: Resources for Integrating Employability Skills into Technical Programs (2024)
- Edge Computing: A Feasible & Integrated Approach to Collecting System Data
- A Universal Programming Approach for any make of Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs)
- Best Practices for your CNC Course or Program
- Overview of AI in Manufacturing
- Overview of Teaching PLCs
- Leveraging an Open Lab to Provide Greater Access for Students in your Manufacturing Program
- Developing Local Articulations to Increase Enrollment in College Programs
- How to Create Work-based Learning Opportunities
- Recruiting Strategies Best Practices
- Robots for AI and Industry 4.0 Training and Demo
- Creating Videos using Classroom Projects and Student Success Stories
- How to Increase Student Diversity in ET Programs
- How to Develop ET Dual Enrollment or Early College Programs
- Cybersecurity for Manufacturing Series (4-part)



View Webinars on Demand



flate.org



FLATE wiki



madeinflorida.org

Florida Department of Education Resources

Florida's Workforce Education Initiative

With Career, Technical and Adult Education (CTAE), you can train for a better career quickly and affordably.

Apprenticeship programs are a proven training method benefiting job seekers and businesses.

Check Out Our Previous Newsletters:

[May 2026 Focus](#) | [April 2026 Focus](#) | [March 2026 Focus](#) | [Newsletter Archive](#)

FLATE | 201 E. Pine Street Suite 735 | Orlando, FL 32801 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!