

# THE MATCHUP

Welcome, Knight Nation and Gamecocks, to Acrisure Bounce House!  
UCF's "First Frost 2" opener of 2025 features the return of head coach  
Scott Frost leading the Black & Gold on the gridiron.



ORLANDO, FLORIDA

**No. 1**

Producer of Nursing Bachelor's Degrees  
in Florida's State University System

**85%**

Of UCF's 17,000+ Nursing Graduates  
Stay and Work in Florida, Combatting  
the State's Critical Shortage

**Top 5**

Most Innovative Public University  
in the Nation  
(U.S. News & World Report)



JACKSONVILLE, ALABAMA

**No. 1**

Producer of Teachers in Alabama  
(Alabama State Department of Education)

**No. 2**

College Choice of Alabama  
High School Graduates  
(Alabama Commission on Higher Education)

**No. 21**

Online Master's in Criminal Justice  
Program in the Nation —  
the Highest Ranked in Alabama  
(U.S. News & World Report)

## FEATURED FACULTY RESEARCHERS

### UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

#### LAURA BRATTAIN

*Associate Professor, College of  
Medicine*

Brattain's research integrates **biomedical artificial intelligence (AI), medical ultrasound and surgical robotics**. She's also an engineering faculty member, driven by a passion for healthcare innovation and the power of AI. For Orlando Health, she mentored student engineers who developed the [AI for Medical Surgery system](#) that keeps track of surgical staples. Students built a computer vision and coding system that enables teams to operate more efficiently and reduce waste.

### JACKSONVILLE STATE

#### LORI HENSLEY

*Department Head and Distinguished  
Professor of Biology*

Hensley is pioneering cannabinoid-based therapies for pediatric cancers, producing transformative insights in molecular oncology. The recent [CUSA Faculty Achievement Award](#) recipient's nationally recognized research is redefining cancer treatment possibilities while elevating Jax State's scientific profile. Through significant grant funding and leadership in the Cell Biology Education Consortium, she is shaping the future of cancer research and education nationwide.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

## UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



### High-Tech Nursing College Will Address Shortage

The [Dr. Phillips Nursing Pavilion](#), the new home of UCF's College of Nursing in Lake Nona, will help the university graduate **150 more newly licensed eligible nurses each year** in response to Florida's shortage.

Students will learn with the latest modeling and simulation technology, and receive unrivaled opportunities to practice patient care scenarios to prepare for careers in an increasingly high-tech field. The building has three times more state-of-the-art lab and simulation space to enhance innovation and education.

The State of Florida invested \$43 million. Founding donors include Dr. Phillips Charities, Helene Fuld Health Trust, and Zaby and Suree Vyas, plus Pegasus Partners AdventHealth, Orlando Health, Nemours Children's Health and Addition Financial.

### New Institute for AI Powers Innovation

Strengthening UCF's reputation for excellence in AI research and education, the new [Institute for Artificial Intelligence \(IAI\)](#) is a bold, university-wide initiative uniting more than two dozen world-class faculty. As experts in interdisciplinary areas like computer vision, robotics, internal medicine, finance and mathematics, **they'll leverage AI to help solve the world's greatest challenges.**

IAI will focus on research, applications-translation partnerships and education-workforce talent development, while strengthening the AI skillset of all students so they have competitive advantages when entering the workforce.

## JACKSONVILLE STATE



### Carnegie Classifications Honor Jax State

Jacksonville State University has earned [national recognition from the Carnegie Foundation](#) as one of just 135 "professions-focused" institutions in the United States — representing only 3% of colleges nationwide.

In addition, Jax State received the new Student Access and Earnings Classification, highlighting its commitment to serving high-needs populations and ensuring strong career outcomes for graduates. This prestigious honor reflects the university's mission of providing high-quality, affordable education while driving economic mobility for students and their families. The designation affirms Jax State's growing reputation as **a leader in professional education and student success on a national scale.**

### Jax State Leads FirstGen Forward

In January 2025, Jacksonville State University was named a [Network Leader in the FirstGen Forward Network](#) — a national initiative run by NASPA and The Suder Foundation to **support first-generation college students.**

This milestone recognizes Jax State's institution-wide strategies, data tools and programs aimed at improving outcomes for first-generation students. As a Network Leader, Jax State gains customized resources and expert guidance to close the achievement gap between first-generation students and their continuing-generation peers. In addition, Jax State aims to enhance enrollment, retention and overall success for first-generation students.