

UT Southern joins national effort to strengthen career-connected learning and work

PULASKI, Tenn. — March 17, 2026 —The University of Tennessee Southern has been selected as one of 16 colleges and universities nationwide to participate in [From Campus to Career](#), a national initiative supported by Lumina Foundation designed to scale career-connected high-impact practices (HIPs) and strengthen workforce outcomes for students.

Through the initiative, UT Southern will receive \$100,000 over two years, along with tailored technical assistance and cohort-based support from national higher education intermediaries to expand and strengthen career-connected learning opportunities.

High-impact practices such as internships, undergraduate research, service learning, capstone projects, and student employment are associated with increased student engagement, deeper learning, and higher completion rates. This initiative focuses on intentionally connecting those experiences to career pathways and labor market demand so that students graduate prepared to demonstrate the skills employers need.

“At UT Southern, we believe the most meaningful education connects learning directly to opportunity,” said Chancellor Melinda S. Arnold, PhD. “Being selected to participate in this national initiative affirms our commitment to ensuring that every student graduates with experiences that translate into real-world skills, meaningful careers, and lasting impact across southern Middle Tennessee.”

Grant funding will support faculty development, employer partnerships, student career readiness programming, and technology tools that strengthen career-connected learning at UT Southern. The initiative will help faculty integrate employer-valued skills into coursework, expand collaboration with regional employers, and provide students with resources to communicate their competencies. Funding will also support the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement to help the university assess student engagement and guide future improvements.

Lumina launched From Campus to Career to help institutions scale career-connected high-impact practices that strengthen the value of a bachelor’s degree.

“Too many students complete meaningful academic experiences without clear pathways to translate those experiences into career opportunities,” said Jasmine Haywood, strategy director for credentials of value at Lumina. “If a credential is going to hold value in the labor market, students must graduate with the ability to demonstrate the skills and competencies employers need. Career-connected high-impact practices are one of the most powerful tools we have to make that connection visible and real.”

The selected institutions represent a diverse cross-section of higher education, including regional public universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and large research universities. Together, they will serve as national models for integrating academic learning with career preparation.

The initiative is implemented in partnership with Excelencia in Education, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and the Center for Innovation in Postsecondary Education (CIPE), which will support participating institutions through technical assistance and collaborative learning opportunities.

About the University of Tennessee Southern

The University of Tennessee Southern is a public university located in Pulaski and the newest campus in the University of Tennessee System. Situated midway between Nashville, Tennessee, and Huntsville, Alabama, UT Southern provides a personalized learning experience that prepares students for meaningful careers and community leadership. The university serves as a catalyst for workforce and

economic development across southern Middle Tennessee while providing students with the opportunities and support to thrive.

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