



St. Petersburg Scholarship 2025-2026 Report



STP-Advancement@usf.edu



giving.usf.edu



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA
ST. PETERSBURG CAMPUS

A Message of Gratitude

Thank you for your generous support of USF St. Petersburg students. Your investment in scholarships helps remove financial barriers, create opportunities and empower students to pursue their educational and career goals.

Because of donors like you, students can focus more fully on their studies, engage in transformative learning experiences and prepare to make meaningful contributions to their communities. Your generosity provides more than financial support. It sends a powerful message that our students' potential is recognized and valued.

On behalf of our students, faculty and staff, thank you for your partnership and commitment to student success. Your support has a lasting impact on the lives of students today and for generations to come.

Thomas W. Smith

Thomas W. Smith
Interim Regional Chancellor
USF St. Petersburg

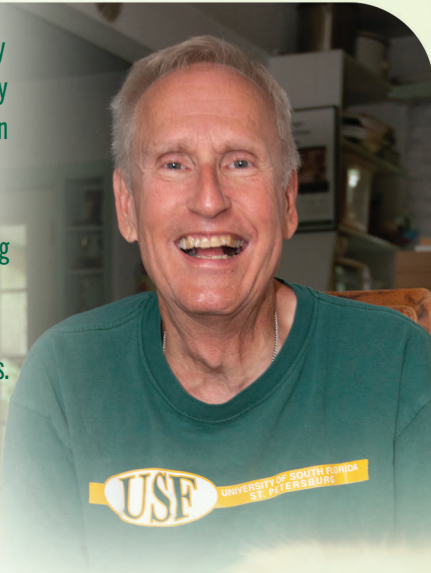
E. Howard Rutherford

E. Howard Rutherford
Associate Vice President of Development
University Advancement



A Legacy of Opportunity: The David Connelly and Joe P. Pérez First Generation Scholarship

Established in 2019 through a planned gift commitment from David Connelly, the David Connelly and Joe P. Pérez First Generation Scholarship supports first-generation students at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus. This year, the endowed scholarship received \$1.4 million from Connelly's bequest, creating a lasting legacy in honor of both Connelly and his longtime partner, Joe P. Pérez. Pérez served as the office manager of the Academic Advising Center for many years and received the Outstanding Staff Award multiple times during his tenure, reflecting his dedication to helping students navigate their educational journeys. Inspired by his own experience as a first-generation college student and by the students of USF, Connelly created the scholarship to help reduce financial barriers and expand opportunities for future generations. His connection to USF students also inspired him to teach humanities courses as an adjunct professor on the St. Petersburg campus during retirement. Connelly retired as communications director for the Museum of Fine Arts, where he was a dedicated and beloved scholar of the fine arts, and his continued work with students reflected his lifelong belief in the transformative power of education.



USF St. Petersburg Scholarships

\$1.16 M
awarded in FY26



The largest
scholarship
year on record



An increase of
15.48%
from FY25

From Five Scholarships to Nearly 50: The Impact of Bulls & Brews by the Bay



The third annual Bulls & Brews by the Bay fundraiser continued to build scholarship support for USF St. Petersburg students while bringing together alumni, faculty, staff, donors, and community partners. The 2026 event welcomed a record crowd of more than 200 attendees and highlighted the growing impact of philanthropy on student success. Since its inception in 2023, the event has raised nearly \$100,000 for the St. Petersburg General

Scholarship Fund, expanding scholarship awards from just five recipients before the inaugural event to nearly 50 students today. Through the generous support of sponsors, community partners, and attendees, Bulls & Brews by the Bay is helping remove financial barriers and create opportunities for students to focus on their academic goals while pursuing their dreams of earning a college degree.



Student Voices: The Impact of Scholarship Support



Lucas Abreu

Conservation Biology

"This scholarship represents not only financial support but also the collective belief of a community that invests in its students."



Sydney Pelletier

Education

"Scholarships provided me the opportunity to continue my college career, which would not have been financially feasible otherwise."



Victoria Phan

Biological Health Sciences

"It was not just financial assistance but a reminder that someone believed in my potential and was willing to invest in my future."



Barrett Farrell

Integrative Biology

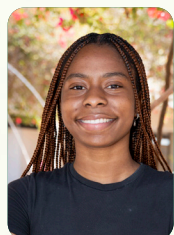
"The financial stability and freedom these scholarships provide allow me to invest my energy in leadership, academic research, and community service, which has been transformative."



Gabriela Rodriguez

Criminology

"Although it may not seem like it, a donation, whether big or small, makes an immense difference in a student's life."



Leah Jackson

Health Sciences

"I hope to honor the generosity of our donors by becoming a compassionate nurse and a strong leader who gives back to others."



This academic year, USF awarded

14,860 degrees

celebrating the achievements of Bulls who reached the finish line. Your generosity helped make these moments possible, creating opportunities that empower students to succeed today and lead tomorrow.