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For Immediate Release

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USF Sarasota-Manatee to host financial aid workshop

SARASOTA, Fla. (Oct. 10, 2018) – Local nonprofit UnidosNow is partnering with United Way Suncoast, the Manatee Community Foundation and other organizations to offer free workshops for future college students seeking financial aid.

The first of those workshops is set for Friday from 3 to 6:30 p.m. at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, 8350 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, room A205.

Open to all high school seniors, the workshops are intended to guide students through the often complicated financial aid process. Students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and families must bring their 2017 tax and income information.

Billions in federal dollars are awarded yearly to college students seeking funds under the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. However, many students are

unaware of the program, miss the filing deadline or simply fail to correctly apply for the aid. As a result, millions of dollars in student aid goes unclaimed each year.

At the workshops, students and parents will be able to complete their FAFSA applications at computer terminals with financial aid personnel and volunteer experts on hand to offer assistance and advice. For the first workshop, staff from USF Sarasota-Manatee's Office of Admissions will provide support.

Luz Corcuera, executive director of UnidosNow, says students must not delay in sending in their applications as states and colleges have financial aid deadlines of their own. Florida's deadline is May 15, 2019. Also, many grants under FAFSA are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

"The first step to debunk the myth that college is not affordable is to submit the FAFSA application," said Corcuera. "Taking that step could earn a student more than \$5,000 in free money, since it does not count as a grant or loan toward their college tuition. In the past two years, Sarasota and Manatee has left behind more than \$2 million in unclaimed Pell grant funds because students did not complete their FAFSA applications."

Students can visit www.fafsa.gov to learn more. For more about the workshops, contact Juan Arcila, associate director of education initiatives at UnidosNow, at juan@unidosnow.org or call 941-777-5184.

The workshop schedule is as follows:

- Oct. 12, 3 to 6:30 p.m., USF Sarasota-Manatee, 8350 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, room A205.
- Oct. 16, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Palmetto High School, 1200 17th St. W., Palmetto.
- Oct. 18, 3 to 8 p.m., Sarasota High School, 2155 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota.
- Oct. 23, 2:30 to 7:30 p.m., Booker High School, 3201 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota.
- Oct. 25, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Manatee High School, 902 33rd St. Ct. W., Bradenton.
- Nov. 14, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Lakewood Ranch High School, 5500 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Bradenton.

- Nov. 28, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Bayshore High School, 5401 34th St. W., Bradenton.

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About USF Sarasota-Manatee (USFSM)

USF Sarasota-Manatee is a regional campus of the University of South Florida system, offering the prestige of a nationally ranked research university with the convenience of a hometown location, including classes in Manatee and Sarasota counties, Venice and online. USFSM is ideal for those interested in pursuing a baccalaureate or master's degree, professional certification, or continuing education credit in a small, personal setting with distinguished faculty and a dynamic curriculum of more than 40 academic programs. Website: www.usfsm.edu.

Communications & Marketing

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This letter is an electronic communication from the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee.