

2024-2025

Gators Unidos Final Report

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I. Research

Gators Unidos (GU) is a non-profit organization founded by University of Florida alumni in 2021, rooted in the mission of empowering Hispanic Gators through scholarships, mentorship and community-building opportunities. The organization was created to foster intergenerational connection among Latino Gator alumni and current students. GU helps in bridging the gap between past and present to ensure that future Hispanic leaders have the support they need to succeed. The Gators Unidos Scholarship provides \$2,500 financial assistance, UF Bookstore credit and personal mentorship by Latino Gator alumni to UF Hispanic students. The scholarship targets first-generation college students who have reached sophomore level, have chosen a major and are involved in serving the campus or community. With the new Florida statewide bans of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programming, initiatives such as this scholarship have never been more important. DEI bans have hindered institutional support mechanisms for underrepresented students. Independent organizations like Gators Unidos are there to fill the void and continue crafting spaces of empowerment and belonging.

Despite increased need, lack of awareness of the scholarship and low student interest continues. Based on our previous social media efforts with the client, we strategically prioritized relatable reels, student and community features and cross-campus organization collaborations. These tactics boosted brand exposure and engagement, allowing us to reach more scholarship applicants. In earlier Gators Unidos scholarship rounds, qualified students indicated they learned about the scholarship from unofficial networks as opposed to formal outlets. This demonstrates a need for more formalized promotion. Campus-based initiatives, especially through Hispanic student organizations, mentorship panels and in-person tabling, can be effective but remain untapped.

II. Planning

To broaden the Gators Unidos network, we aimed to focus on increasing awareness and applications for the scholarship. This would help increase the application pool, strengthen connections between students and alumni and boost attention for events and merchandise that support the scholarship. We also aimed to create more awareness of Gators Unidos' presence on campus and reach more undergraduate and graduate students with events and social media posts.

Objectives

- *Objective 1:* To see a 15% increase in scholarship applications compared to the previous year through strategic promotion by the scholarship deadline, Feb. 24, 2025.
- *Objective 2:* To reach 20-30 new students through in-person and social media efforts by the scholarship deadline, Feb. 24, 2025.
- *Objective 3:* To increase awareness of Gators Unidos' presence on campus by growing undergraduate student engagement by 25% through events and social media posts by the end of Spring 2025.

Generating engagement through likes, shares and comments on social media posts related to the scholarship was key to reach a wider audience and make students want to connect and be involved with Gators Unidos. Our social media plan centered around generating organic engagement of likes, comments and shares on posts promoting the scholarship application, timeline and benefits. We also created a poster to place in certain locations around campus, including the UF Graduate School and the College of Journalism and Communications.

To support these efforts, we planned to host an informational panel with a GU board member to explain the scholarship. An in-person panel event connects directly with students and gives Gators Unidos an on-campus presence, creating awareness of the scholarship. The panel also serves to answer any questions students might have on the scholarship's requirements and benefits. In addition, we planned to use social media to create awareness and engagement. Through strategic social media content, we could create organic engagement with the Gators Unidos brand and get more students interested in the scholarship. Using a mix of video and graphic content, we aimed to make engaging posts that ranged from trendy videos to informative slides that create more student interest in the organization and its work.

Tactics included organizing and promoting a Scholarship Panel Event. The panel was in an on-campus location and in collaboration with the Hispanic Student Association. Connecting with a UF organization and making the panel accessible to students created an environment where they felt comfortable asking questions and showing their interest in the scholarship.

We also created social media content, including:

- **“What is the Gators Unidos Scholarship?”**: This post summarized the requirements, benefits and instructions to apply for the scholarship in a way that was appealing and digestible for social media audiences.
- **“Meet the Previous Winners”**: This post aimed to promote the scholarship and empower previous winners by showing their success as Latino Gators who form part of the GU network.
- **“Urgency Reel”**: This reel served as a fun way to connect with students who might consider applying. It reminded them of the due date to submit their applications and encouraged them to “answer the call from their future” and apply.
- **“Scholarship Panel Event”**: This post invited students to attend the panel in collaboration with HSA to learn more about the scholarship opportunity and GU in general.
- **“Interactive quiz”**: This interactive quiz where students swipe through the carousel to answer questions showed the benefits of the scholarship.

III. Implementation

Our strategy was carried out through meticulous media planning and strong community management. Along the course of the application cycle, the Gators Unidos Instagram account had a combination of content that reminded and gave students incentives to finalize their applications.

In addition, the team put together an educational and engaging panel in collaboration with the Hispanic Student Association in order to widen our reach and increase engagement. The panel featured networking opportunities, the chance to hear from a Gators Unidos board member and fun games that celebrated Hispanic culture. It also highlighted the scholarship's benefits, the values it was founded on and the opportunities it provides to students. Participants at the panel were encouraged to stay for food, refreshments and an advanced preview of the Gators Unidos Holiday merchandise line. In order to promote attendance for this event, posters were placed in various places around campus along with social media posts in collaboration with the Hispanic Student Association to reach a wider audience.

IV: Evaluation

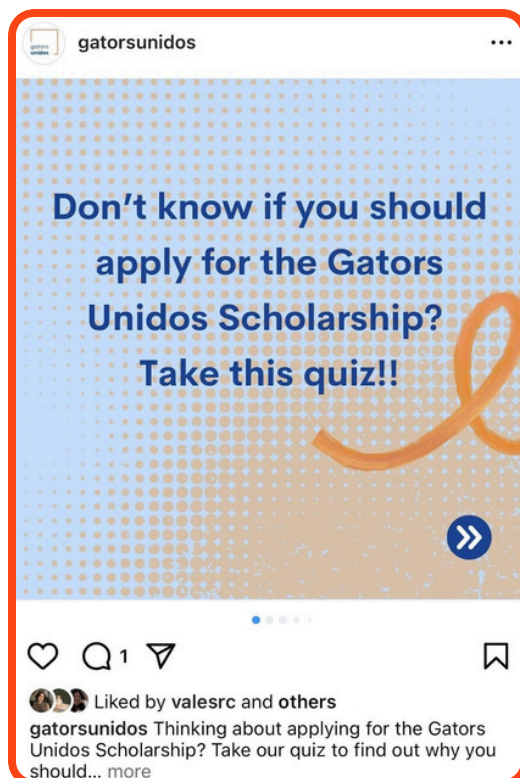
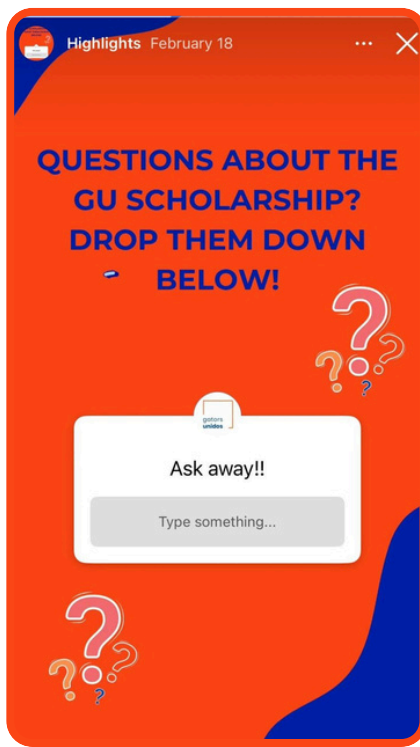
Evaluating the performance of the Gators Unidos account through analytics is crucial to understand the effectiveness in reaching and engaging our target audience. By analyzing metrics such as engagement rate, follower growth, reach and impressions, we can gain insight into what content resonates with users and what areas require improvement.

We had 25 attendees at the Scholarship Panel Event this year. Some of our most popular posts on Instagram included any promotional posts regarding our scholarship. Our campaign ran from January 29, 2025 to February 23, 2025 and generated 19,899 total views. Of those reached, 62.9% were non-followers, highlighting our ability to expand beyond our existing audience. We reached 7,406 new accounts, representing a 54.8% increase from the previous period, and gained 54 new followers during this time. In terms of interactions, we recorded 575 total interactions, with 69.6% from followers and 30.4% from non-followers, engaging over 350 unique accounts. This suggests our content not only reached a broader audience but also encouraged meaningful engagement from both new and existing followers.

In terms of scholarship applications, for the 2023-24 scholarship cycle, 30 students applied. Through our efforts to promote and increase awareness of the scholarship, we reached 35 students for the 2024-25 scholarship cycle, marking an increase of five applications and a completion of our goal. We received over 10 questions from students during our panel, particularly from people who were previously unaware of the scholarship but were now planning to apply. When speaking with the attendees, several heard about Gators Unidos through reposts by other Hispanic organizations on campus and our shared social media content. Including a 'How did you hear about us?' question in the scholarship application could help us better track the effectiveness of these outreach tactics.

This year, our team focused on media engagement and creating more relatable, casual content to draw viewers in. Ultimately, our campaign succeeded in expanding scholarship awareness, increasing applications and reaching new audiences—directly addressing Gators Unidos' goal of growing its impact across campus.

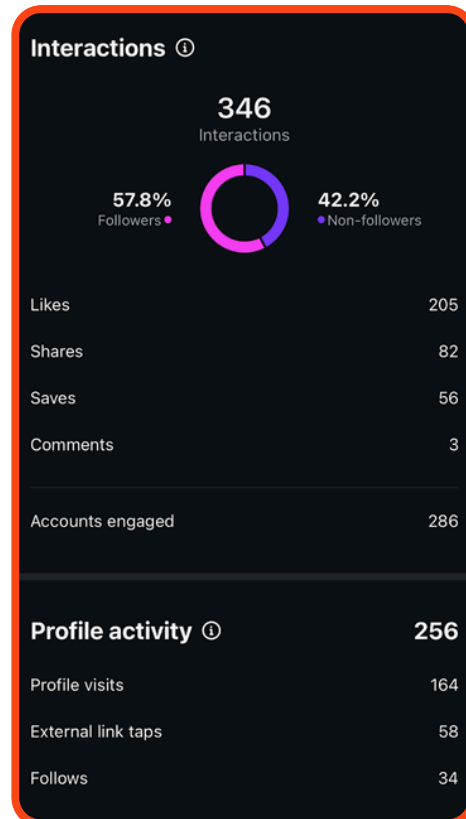
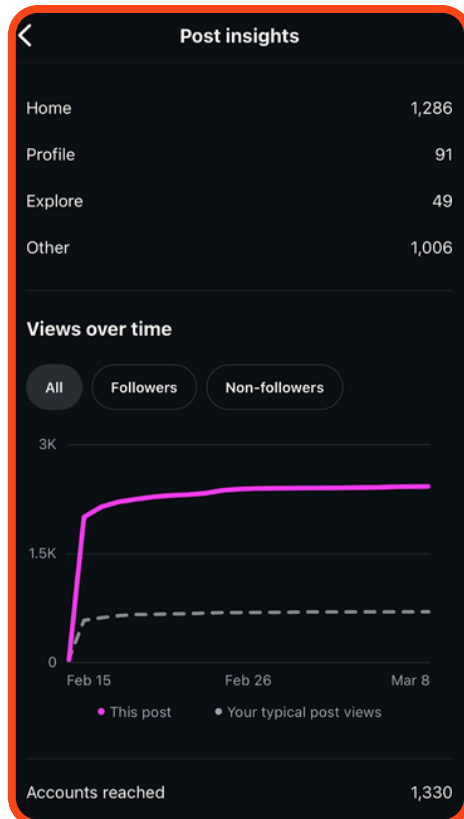
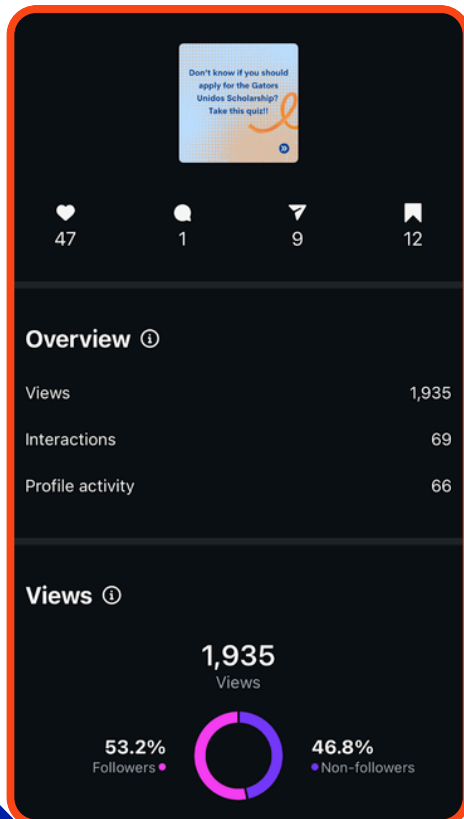
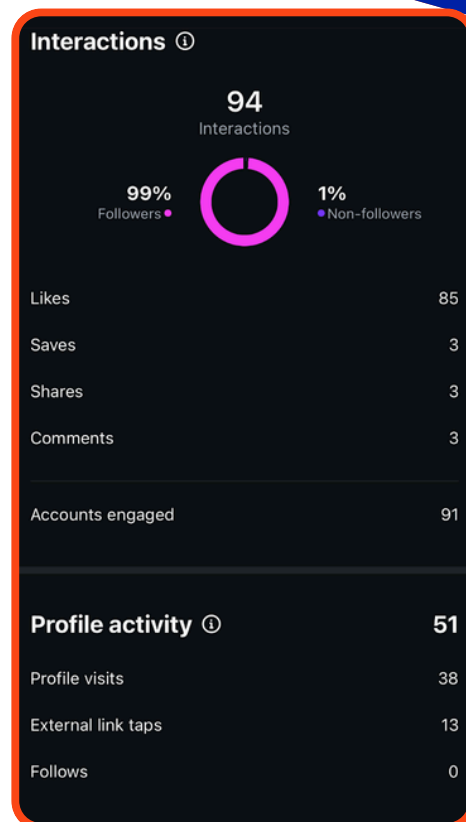
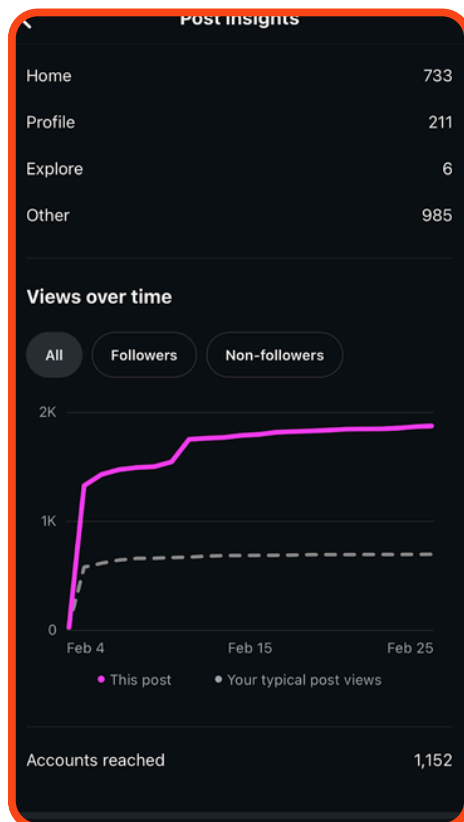
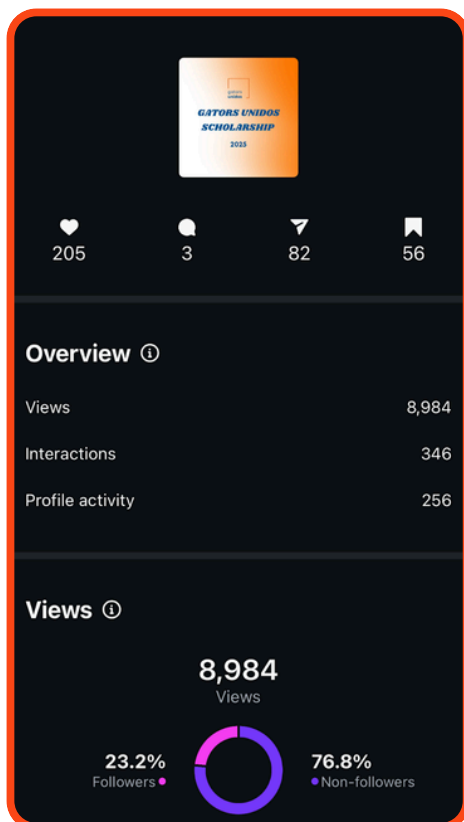
V. Samples of Work



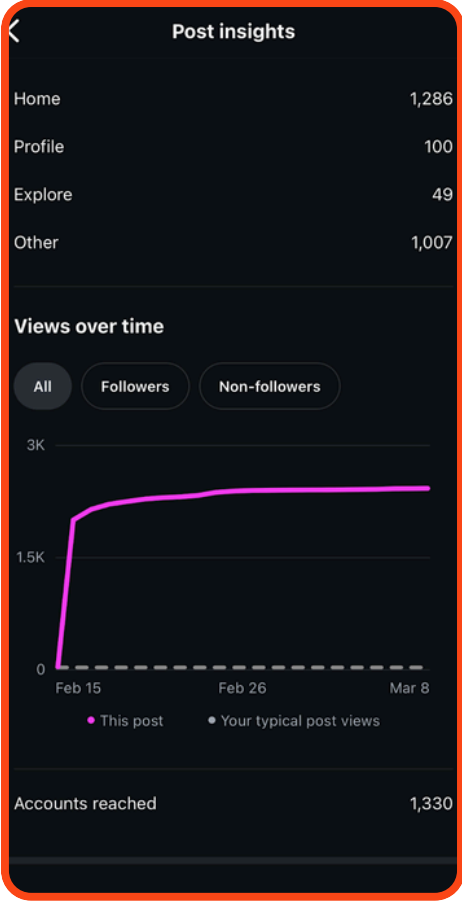
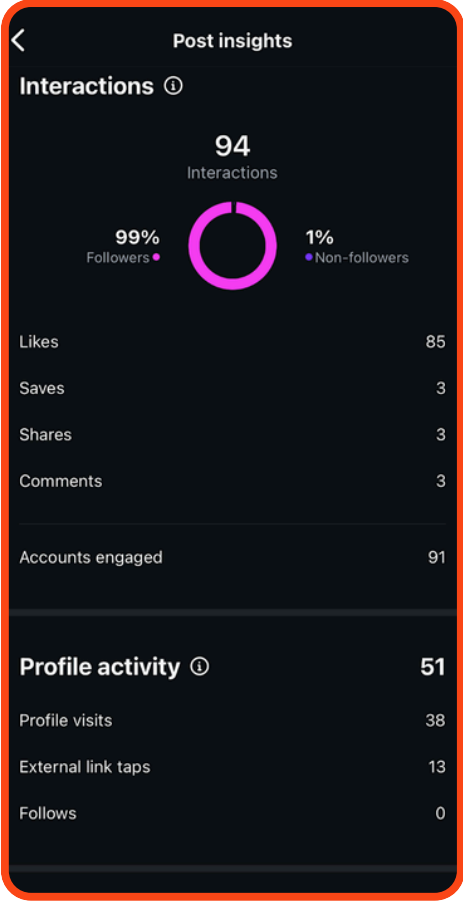
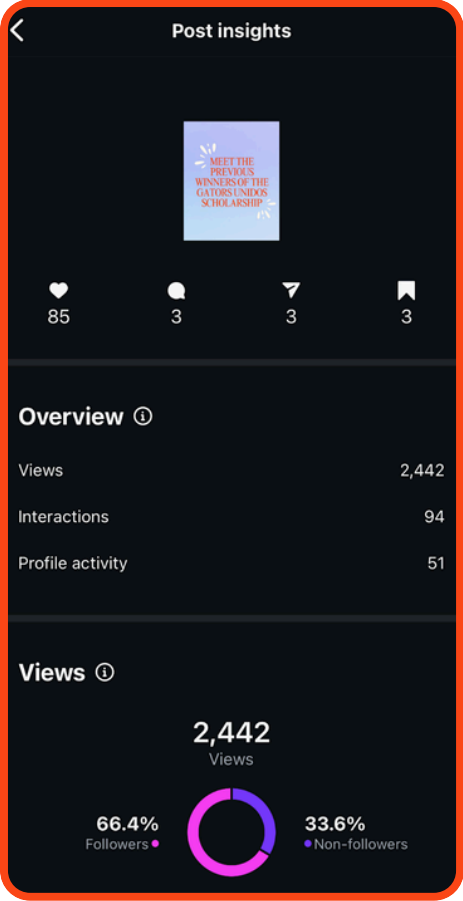
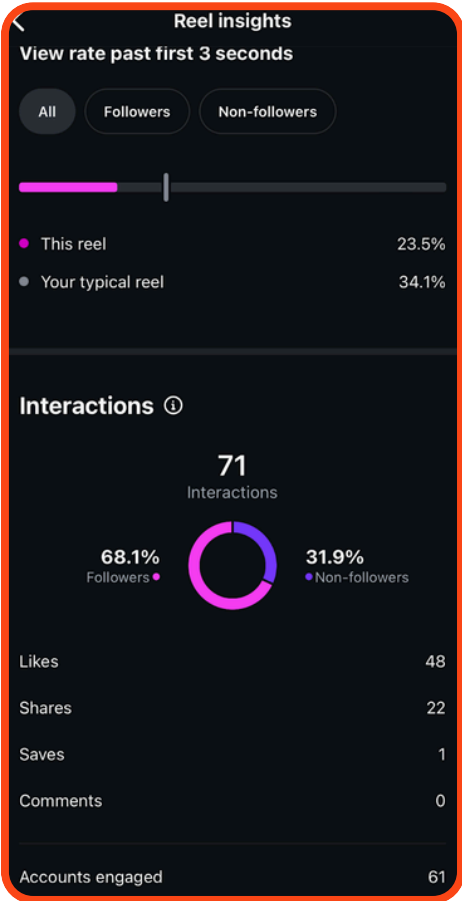
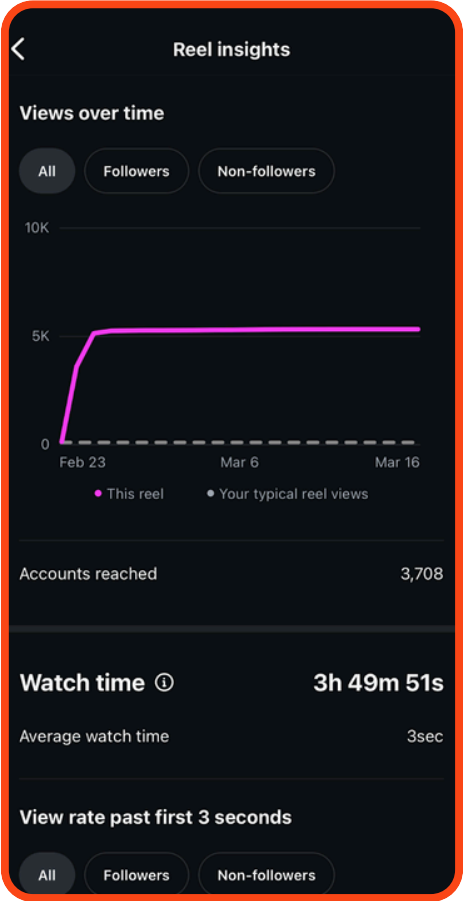
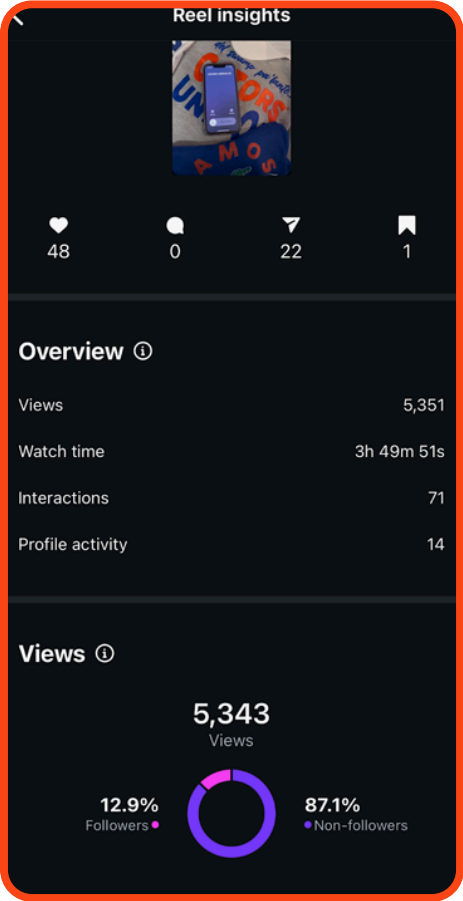
Scholarship Panel Event Photos



Social Media Analytics



Social Media Analytics



VI. 100-Word Description

As part of Alpha PR, UF's only student-run public relations firm, we partnered with Gators Unidos to create awareness and increase applications for the 2025 GU Scholarship. Our strategy included an on-campus panel sponsored by the Hispanic Student Association, strategically crafted social media updates and targeted outreach. Scholarship opportunities, alumni profiles and inspiring reels were delivered to propagate new information to potential applicants. As a result, we experienced a 15% boost in scholarship applications, increased social media engagement and improved student connections with Gators Unidos. We were successful in compensating for the lack of DEI limitations by providing necessary resources and community to underrepresented students at UF.