

SANTA FE COLLEGE

Office of the President

September 15, 2022

Alachua County Board of County Commissioners
12 Southeast 1st Street
Gainesville, FL 32601

Dear Commissioners:

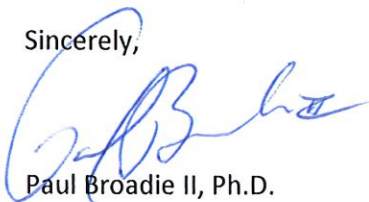
It is our pleasure to provide a letter of support and express our intent to collaborate with Alachua County on developing a Meat Processing Center. Small ranchers are experiencing bottlenecks getting meat to market as local processors are over-subscribed, and most cannot access USDA processing facilities. Existing facilities are having a hard time finding skilled employees to keep up with demand, and, at the same time, COVID-19 has increased the demand for local food across the country. USDA data shows local food sales drive agricultural job growth, increase entrepreneurship, and expand food access and choice.

Meat processing is high-skilled work, and with the combination of increased demand and efforts by our federal and local governments to expand local meat processing, there is a severe need for qualified labor. Through collaboration, Santa Fe College, UF/IFAS, CareerSource North Central Florida, and other partners can create a curriculum that will provide stepping-stones from rapid credentialing to management training and ensure we can meet the workforce needs for local processing jobs. We will also be able to fill a gap in the Southeast, where currently no such training programs are offered.

We are thrilled that developing a state-of-the-art facility will provide the needed space for production and teaching, providing hands-on learning and apprenticeship opportunities to train workers in humane and efficient processing techniques, create locally processed products, and expand value-added market opportunities.

We look forward to working with your staff and other community partners to craft workforce training and to help support vibrant, local food infrastructure for Alachua County.

Sincerely,



Paul Broadie II, Ph.D.
President