New College of Florida Senior Trades Baseball Diamond for Community Leadership with Urban Edge Mentorship

Student-athlete Michael Magliocca discovers a new calling through experiential learning, bridging the generational divide in Sarasota







SARASOTA, FL, UNITED STATES, September 17, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- When Michael Magliocca arrived at New College of Florida from Amsterdam, New York, his objective was simple: play baseball. Four years later, the senior team captain has made the difficult decision to step away from the diamond to pursue a much larger calling—bringing people together through community leadership and civic engagement.

Magliocca's journey highlights the transformative power of the New College educational model, which surrounds students with the intentional mentorship and real-world experiences necessary to discover their life's purpose.

"I can't even put into words how life-changing New College has been for me," Magliocca said. "I have learned so much and been opened up to opportunities I would have never had without being a student here."

Building Leaders Through Experiential Learning

During his four years, Magliocca's collegiate experience stretched far beyond academics. He immersed himself in hands-on internships, worked with the Career Center, and utilized his role as a baseball team captain to develop strong leadership and conflict-resolution skills.

Those skills culminated in a groundbreaking community service initiative. Working alongside the nonprofit Urban Edge and the Senior Friendship Center, Magliocca helped create a specialized program connecting Sarasota High School students with local senior citizens. For two hours each week over a three-week period, the two generations came together to share stories, talk, sing, dance, and play games.

Watching the energy in the room shift as people who might never have otherwise met built genuine relationships changed Magliocca's trajectory.

"I learned this was my calling," Magliocca noted. "Bringing people together to change lives is what life is all about."

The Power of Intentional Mentorship

Magliocca credits intentional mentorship with changing the direction of his college experience, specifically identifying Dr. Mitchel Ruzek as one of his greatest influences. Meeting weekly to workshop ideas and solve problems, Ruzek provided consistent, high-level guidance.

"Every single time he has an answer and solution to put me in the best place to succeed," Magliocca said.

In May 2025, Ruzek introduced Magliocca to Hall of Fame Coach Urban Meyer. Recognizing an immediate connection, Magliocca found himself working directly alongside both men to build Urban Edge, an initiative dedicated to developing the next generation of leaders in Sarasota and Manatee counties.

A New Calling

To go "all in" on his work with Urban Edge and his future career, Magliocca made the choice to step away from baseball for his senior year. The leadership skills he forged as a team captain have not disappeared; they have simply been redirected toward a different kind of team.

After completing his undergraduate degree, Magliocca plans to remain at New College to pursue a master's degree in educational leadership—a strategic next step encouraged by his mentors to position him for long-term success.

When asked to summarize what New College of Florida has given him the opportunity to do,

Magliocca’s answer was just three words: "Chase my dreams."

Those dreams are now firmly rooted in the Sarasota community, focused less on what he can accomplish individually and more on the opportunities he can help create for others.

About New College of Florida

Founded in 1960, New College of Florida is the state’s designated public honors college. Recognized nationally for its academic excellence, rigorous inquiry, and commitment to free expression, New College offers more than 50 undergraduate majors, graduate programs in Applied Data Science, Marine Mammal Science, and a new Master's program in Educational Leadership, and a growing NAIA athletics program on a 151-acre campus on Sarasota Bay.

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