I am always amazed how quickly December arrives each year. This semester has been especially busy, and I continued to be inspired by many ways faculty, staff and administrators collaborate to enact the College's mission. As we come to the close of the fall semester and move into the final exam period, you may find the level of stress among some of the students is increasing. Please take time in your interactions with students to remind them of all of the support services available to them through the Library, Office of Academic Advising, Academic Support Programs, and Office of Counseling. Visit Dedicate to Graduate to access information about these services.

This month’s issue highlights the many co-curricular events where students and faculty display their talent and share their expertise. The recent theater, music, and international education events are reminder of the ways Florida SouthWestern is a core cultural center for the southwest Florida community. Congratulations to all of the faculty and staff that led these successful endeavors.

This issue also highlights the recent recipients of the Academic Research Council (ARC) grant. The ARC Grant has been established at the College to support scholarly projects or contributions to a culture of creativity, innovation, and intellectualism that positively impacts the learning experience of students and of the College community. Please join me in congratulating this cycle's recipients, Professor Ron Feemster, Dr. George Kodsey, and Dr. Myriam Mompoint. The Spring ARC Grant submission period begins Monday, April 8, 2019 and closes Friday, July 5, 2019. For those considering submission, or wanting to learn more, Dr. van Gaalen will lead a workshop on grant funding on January 3.

The work of the many College committees continue to inform our initiatives. The Textbook Affordability Committee, led by Dr. Kathy Clark, provided recommendations to the Provost’s Office regarding professional development and other support for faculty to learn more about Open Educational Resources (OER) and to develop courses utilizing OER. In response, the College’s Academic Technology Committee led by Professor Ellie Bunting has established an OER Task Force to provide recommendations for OER course frameworks, training, development, compensation, review, and evaluation. Thanks to all the faculty who volunteered for this task force. Additionally, the College has invited Erik N. Christensen (Dean, Applied Sciences and Technologies at South Florida State College) to be the keynote speaker during the Provost/Faculty meeting in January. He will give a presentation entitled “Institutionalizing the Use of Open Education Resources,” and offer a follow-up workshop for members of the OER Task Force, Academic Technology Committee, and the Textbook Affordability Committee.

A full schedule of spring duty day events and professional development activities is forthcoming.

Best wishes as we complete the fall semester, and I wish everyone happy holidays!
The FSW Nursing Program hosted the 4th von Arx Family Foundation Southwest Florida Diabetes and Wellness Conference on the Collier Campus. The event is a combination of public and professional education and networking. Nursing Professor, Dr. Donna Johnson presented the “Importance of Nutrition and Exercise with Diabetes.” FSW offered diabetes screenings and diabetes crisis simulation throughout the day in the Allen & Marla Weiss Health Science Hall. In connection with the conference, Dr. Deborah Selman worked to get Saturday, Nov. 4 declared Diabetes Awareness Day by both the Florida Governor’s Office and Collier County. Pictured to the right is Dr. Selman with the Collier County Commissioners and the signed the proclamation.

The auditorium was rocking on Wed., Nov. 28 as FSW’s student and faculty rock ensembles took the stage for the first time. The Salty Dogs, FSW’s faculty rock and blues band featuring Mike Molloy (vocals & guitar), Russell Swanson (vocals & guitar), Leonel Mera (vocals & guitar), and Michael Joy (drums) with guest Kelly O’Neil (flute) served as the opening act for The Black Pearl Band, FSW’s student rock ensemble. The Black Pearl Band featured Liz Heath (lead vocals & keyboard), Derek Yadanza (guitar & vocals), Dylan Mikels (guitar, bass & keyboard), Ted Ross (drums & vocals), and Cody Lujan (sound engineer). Thanks to Prof. Mike Molloy for creating this opportunity for students to develop and showcase their talents.
FSW’s Theatre program presented the Florida Premiere of “Wellesley Girl.” The play is set in 2465, and it is possible to marry a robot. The country consists of just three walled-in New England towns, and the population is so small everyone is a member of Congress. Author Brendan Pelsue gives a quirky, American future that is funny, dark and alarmingly prescient. Thanks to Dr. Stuart Brown and the students who brought the script to life.

FSW celebrated International Education Week (IEW), a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education. The Center for International Education hosted a week of events. Several faculty shared personal experiences and expertise throughout the week. Dr. Myriam Mompoint and Dr. Anna Ciamparella served as panelists on the Journeys: Into the Arms of America panel discussion. Dr. Mary Schultz coordinated a session featuring former Peace Corps volunteers titled, Peace Corps and the Global Community. Dr. Russell Swanson and Dr. Elijah Pritchett led a discussion on critical global issues. International Education Week finished strong with FSW’s Annual Celebration of Diversity planned by FSW’s Diversity Alliance.

The Student Concert Series hosted by the music department held four nights of performances featuring the FSW Jazz Band, FSW Concert Band, FSW Rock Ensemble, and FSW Orchestra and Choir. Congratulations to Dr. Thomas Smith (Jazz Ensembles), Dr. Ron Doiron (Orchestra and Choir), Dr. Ken Puls (Guitar Ensemble), Rodolfo Antonio Castillo (Concert Band), William Larsen (Flute Ensemble), Gary Leone (Percussion Ensemble), George Mancini (Low Brass Ensemble), and Mike Molloy (Rock Ensemble) for their excellent work.