



FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE

WORKFORCE EDUCATION

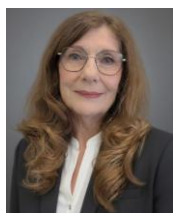
AY 26-27, Fall Term Issue 1

FSW is starting the 2026-2027 academic year strong, with enrollment up 7.5% over last fall. FSW's School of Allied Health experienced the greatest gains with double-digit enrollment growth, while the School of Nursing has surpassed 1,000 students. Enrollment at FSW's Hendry/Glades Center is also on the rise, increasing 5.7% and expanding opportunities for students with new courses in agriculture.

This edition of FSW's Workforce Education newsletter highlights the programs, partnerships, and people helping prepare Southwest Florida's workforce for the future. Read on to learn about summer successes and discover how FSW is expanding educational opportunities, responding to workforce needs, and preparing students for in-demand careers across our region.

Newsletter Features:

- Radiologic Technology Celebrates 24 Graduates and 100% Success
- Respiratory Care Celebrates 12 Consecutive Years of Excellence
- 75 Graduates, One Critical Mission: Serving Southwest Florida
- A Milestone in Motion: PTA Achieves 100% Retention and Graduation of Inaugural Class
- Rooted in Service: Cassie Billian Named as Associate Dean of Allied Health
- FSW Celebrates First Advanced Medical Assisting Graduates
- Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Dahye Kim Brings AI Expertise to the Digital Arts Classroom
- School of Education Students Connect at "Meet the Dean" Event
- FSW and Lee Health Expand Partnership to Advance Hands-On Health Care Training
- FSW Cultivates New Opportunities with Agriculture Courses at Hendry/Glades Center
- A Decade of Collaboration: FSW and FGCU Students Learn Together to Support Patient Accessibility
- FSW Leaders Join Regional Leadership Mission to Explore Innovation and Workforce Development



**Dr. Judith
Bilsky**



**Dr. Cathy
Faust**



**Dr. April
Fleming**



**Dr. Susan
Holland**



**Dr. Martin
McClinton**



**Dr. Brian
Page**



**Whitney
Rhyne**



**Dr. Libby
Schott**

FSW is an equal access, equal opportunity organization. More: www.fsw.edu/equity.

Radiologic Technology Celebrates 24 Graduates and 100% Success

FSW's Radiologic Technology program is celebrating an outstanding achievement. All 24 graduates from the program's summer 2026 graduating class passed the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) certification examination on their first attempt, achieving a 100% success rate.



The ARRT Radiography examination assesses the knowledge and cognitive skills needed for responsible practice in diagnostic imaging including patient care, radiation safety, image production, and radiographic procedures. FSW students build these competencies through classroom instruction, laboratory learning, and clinical experiences.

The 24-for-24 achievement highlights FSW's commitment to preparing the next generation of healthcare practitioners.



Respiratory Care Celebrates 12 Consecutive Years of Excellence

FSW's Respiratory Care program has once again been recognized for outstanding student success, earning the Distinguished Registered Respiratory Therapist Credentialing Success Award from the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care for the 12th consecutive year.

Respiratory care requires a combination of patient assessment, critical thinking, diagnostic interpretation, disease management, patient education, and the ability to provide and evaluate respiratory therapies.

Professional competencies also emphasize effective communication and collaboration as respiratory therapists work alongside other members of the healthcare team.

Twelve consecutive years of recognition demonstrate FSW's sustained commitment to developing the knowledge, clinical skills, and professional competencies needed to provide safe and effective respiratory care.



75 Graduates, One Critical Mission: Serving Southwest Florida

FSW's Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program celebrated its largest summer graduating class in more than 10 years, with 75 graduates.

The milestone demonstrates strong interest in emergency medical careers and FSW's role in preparing students for critical positions serving Southwest Florida communities. Through classroom instruction and hands-on training, students develop the knowledge and practical skills needed for the fast-paced environment of emergency medical services.

The increased demand is creating additional opportunities for students, as FSW works to increase capacity with a third EMT cohort to broaden access to education and training.

The record graduating class and additional cohort highlight the continued growth of FSW's EMS education and its responsiveness to students and workforce demand.



A Milestone in Motion: PTA Achieves 100% Retention and Graduation of Inaugural Class

FSW's Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program is celebrating an impressive milestone, achieving 100% retention and graduation rates for its inaugural class.

The achievement reflects the hard work of FSW's PTA students and the commitment of faculty, program leadership, and clinical partners supporting their educational journey. Through academic preparation, hands-on laboratory instruction, and clinical experiences, students develop skills for a career focused on helping patients improve movement, function, and independence. The milestone demonstrates FSW's continued commitment to student success while preparing skilled healthcare professionals to serve Southwest Florida communities.



Rooted in Service: Cassie Billian Named as Associate Dean of Allied Health



Cassie Billian
Associate Dean
School of Allied Health

FSW is pleased to have Cassie Billian as the new Associate Dean of the School of Allied Health. Cassie brings 12 years of experience at the College to the role.

Cassie began as an Instructional Assistant in the EMS department, working behind the scenes to support students and faculty. She later moved into Academic Advising, then served as a Director before stepping into her new role. Along the way, Cassie helped EMT applicants work through admission requirements, encouraged students facing personal challenges to keep going, and led a department through a difficult period by building a cohesive, growth-focused team.

"Looking back, I can clearly see how each role helped prepare me for the next," Cassie said. "Each role has given me a true sense of fulfillment, regardless of title."

As Associate Dean, she looks forward to serving the School of Allied Health more broadly and drawing on what she has learned to support faculty, staff, and students across its programs. She credits students as a driving force in her own development.

"I have the opportunity to bring together my passion for learning, serving, supporting others, and leaving every role better than I found it," she said. "More than anything, I am excited to be in a position where I can serve, listen, build meaningful relationships, and help others succeed."

Please join us in congratulating Cassie on her new role.

FSW Celebrates First Advanced Medical Assisting Graduates

FSW is proud to celebrate the first graduating cohort of its Advanced Medical Assisting (AMA) program. The program prepares students with the clinical and administrative skills needed to support physicians and patients in today's fast-paced healthcare settings. Students built expertise in areas such as patient care, phlebotomy, EKG, medical office procedures, and electronic health records. Graduates earned multiple industry certifications and enter a field with strong local demand. This first cohort marks an important step in connecting students to meaningful opportunities and strengthening Southwest Florida's healthcare workforce.



Pictured above: Cassandra Allbritten, AMA Program Director (left) celebrating with program graduates and faculty.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Dahye Kim Brings AI Expertise to the Digital Arts Classroom



Dr. Dahye Kim

Professor of Digital Arts
& Visual
Communication

Dr. Dahye Kim, Professor of Digital Arts and Visual Communication at FSW, continues to expand the boundaries of where art and technology meet. This summer, Dr. Kim completed a Professional Certificate in Artificial Intelligence through MIT, an experience she says will directly shape the learning experience of FSW students.

"One of the most rewarding aspects has been the opportunity to engage with computer scientists and engineers," Dr. Kim said. "I plan to apply my learning directly to my curriculum, especially in my AI course."



Dr. Kim teaches in FSW's Digital Arts and Multimedia Production program, where her courses include Electronic Art, Web Design, Digital Video and Sound, Artificial Intelligence, and the Digital Arts Capstone. Her teaching focuses on new approaches to visual art education that bring together fine art, design, and technology, preparing students for creative careers that increasingly depend on digital fluency.



Her influence extends beyond the classroom. Dr. Kim delivered a keynote presentation on artificial intelligence at the Global Conference on Education and Research (GLOCER), where she also served as a paper reviewer.

She plans to share insights from the conference with fellow faculty through professional development sessions, helping colleagues across the College explore how AI can strengthen teaching and learning.

An interdisciplinary artist, researcher, and educator, Dr. Kim creates work that explores time, memory, environment, and scientific theory through digital and experimental intermedia, using color, light, graphic design, movement, and installation. She received the Myers Art Prize for her video installations at Columbia University in 2016, 2018, and 2019. She has also curated contemporary exhibitions and educational events, including a 2018 collaborative event at Columbia University on studio art teaching and pedagogy, and a 2019 technology-infused art exhibition and symposium on art, technology, and education in the 21st century.

Dr. Kim holds a Doctor of Education in Art and Art Education from Columbia University, a Master of Fine Arts from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, and a bachelor's degree from the University of California. Before joining FSW, she taught at Columbia University's Teachers College, Ball State University, Georgia Southern University, and Hudson County Community College in New Jersey.

Through her research, creative practice, and commitment to innovative teaching, Dr. Kim is helping ensure FSW students are ready to create, and lead, in an AI-driven world.

School of Education Students Connect at "Meet the Dean" Event

FSW's School of Education students recently spent an afternoon connecting with School of Education Dean Dr. April Fleming, along with faculty and staff, at the school's "Meet the Dean" event.

The gathering offered students a relaxed, welcoming setting to learn more about the opportunities available through the School of Education. Over refreshments and conversation, students asked questions, shared their goals, and got to know the leaders and educators who support them on their path to the classroom. The result was an afternoon of genuine connection and community building among FSW's future teachers.



Students also received a sneak peek at an exciting opportunity on the horizon: a Spring Break 2027 service and education experience in Italy. The trip will give future educators the chance to expand their perspectives, serve others, and see teaching and learning through a global lens.

Events like "Meet the Dean" reflect the School of Education's commitment to helping future educators connect, explore, and discover what's

possible, both inside the classroom and beyond. That commitment is captured in the School of Education's theme for the year: Teach. Inspire. Transform. By building relationships early and opening doors to new experiences, the School of Education is preparing students not just to teach, but to lead and make a lasting impact in their communities.



FSW and Lee Health Expand Partnership to Advance Hands-On Health Care Training

Florida SouthWestern State College and Lee Health are deepening their longstanding partnership through a new facility use agreement approved by the FSW Board of Trustees in September. The agreement opens FSW's operating room (OR) suite and simulation lab to Lee Health for training physicians, nurses, interns, and residents, creating a shared learning space where students and practicing professionals train side by side.

Lee Health will have access to FSW's OR equipment and simulation resources, including an anesthesia machine and medical mannequins. In return, Lee Health is bringing its own simulation equipment to campus, where it will remain, giving FSW students more opportunities to practice on the same equipment they'll use in hospital settings.



"This mutually beneficial partnership gives FSW students the opportunity for greater utilization of simulation technology, gaining the hands-on experience that will prepare them for their careers," said FSW President Dr. Jeff Allbritten.



The collaboration grew out of a series of conversations after Lee Health recognized the value of the learning environment FSW has built. "This is exactly the kind of collaboration that strengthens our nursing program while helping advance health care education and workforce development across Southwest Florida," said Dr. Susan Holland, Dean of the School of Nursing.

For students, the impact will extend into clinical rotations. "This will change the way FSW nursing students will be trained at Lee Health," said Tony Wright, MSN, RN, CNE-CL, Supervisor of Nursing Professional Development-Corporate at Lee Health. "The students will work with our doctors and nurses while they are students in clinical rotations."



Why it matters: As the largest supplier of nursing students to Lee Health, FSW plays a central role in building the region's health care pipeline. By connecting classroom learning, simulation, and clinical practice more closely, this partnership helps ensure graduates enter the workforce ready for the realities of patient care, and strengthens the talent pipeline Southwest Florida's growing healthcare sector depends on. As FSW Trustee Danny Nix put it, "This elevates who we are."

FSW Cultivates New Opportunities with Agriculture Courses at Hendry/Glades Center

FSW is growing its agriculture education offerings at the Hendry/Glades Curtis Center, creating new opportunities for students to develop skills connected to Southwest Florida's agricultural industry.

This fall, 23 students are enrolled in two new courses: SWS 1000C: Introduction to Soil Science-Southwest Florida, which combines classroom learning with laboratory and field experiences focused on the region's soils, and AEB 2102: Principles of Agribusiness Management, which introduces students to planning, leadership, technology, problem solving, and strategic management within agribusiness.

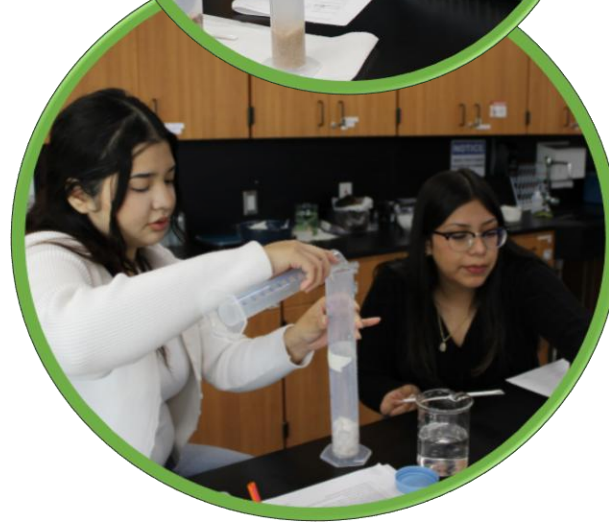
FSW is further expanding its agriculture curriculum with new courses in precision agriculture, geographic information systems (GIS), farm profitability, and a Southwest Florida farm tour that will provide students with firsthand exposure to agricultural operations across the region.

Together, the courses blend science, technology, business, and hands-on learning, helping students gain a broader understanding of modern agriculture while preparing for educational and career opportunities in the industry.

"Agriculture is the backbone of the Hendry-Glades economy, and our students deserve an education that reflects that. These courses give them the chance to study the soils, technologies, and business practices that drive farms right here in Southwest Florida, and to see a real future for themselves in this industry."

Dr. Henry Akwah, Program Director, Agricultural Tech & Supply Chain Management

The expanded offerings demonstrate FSW's commitment to developing responsive education that reflects the unique industries and economic needs of the Hendry-Glades community and Southwest Florida.



Principles of Agribusiness Management



Intro to Soil Science – SWFL



A Decade of Collaboration: FSW and FGCU Students Learn Together to Support Patient Accessibility

For the past 10 years, FSW's Dental Hygiene students and FGCU's Occupational Therapy students have come together for hands-on training focused on providing accessible, patient-centered care for individuals with disabilities and special needs.

Through the collaborative learning experience, students practice techniques for safely assisting patients who use wheelchairs and walkers, including positioning, transfers, mobility support, and the use of gait belts. The training gives dental hygiene students practical experience addressing accessibility considerations they may encounter while caring for patients in a clinical setting.

Students also explore strategies for supporting patients with autism and other sensory or developmental needs. The training addresses approaches for maintaining patient engagement and comfort while considering environmental factors, such as lighting and other potential sensory concerns.



By bringing students from two healthcare disciplines together, the partnership allows participants to learn from one another while strengthening communication, adaptability, and patient-centered care skills.

After a decade of collaboration, the initiative continues to demonstrate the value of interprofessional education and hands-on learning in preparing future healthcare professionals to provide thoughtful, accessible care to all members of the community.



FSW Leaders Join Regional Leadership Mission to Explore Innovation and Workforce Development

At the start of the fall semester, Whitney Rhyne, FSW Assistant Vice President of Workforce Education, and Anna Haney-Withrow, Director of the Institute of Innovation & Emerging Technology, joined community leaders from across Southwest Florida for the 2026 Leadership Mission to Polk County, hosted by the Lee County Economic Development Office and Horizon Foundation Lee County.



The mission provided an opportunity to connect with leaders in Polk County and explore how education, economic development, and industry are collaborating to advance innovation and strengthen the regional workforce. During the visit, participants toured SunTrax, a research and development facility supporting emerging transportation technologies, visited Assure Infusion, and met with leaders at Florida Polytechnic University to learn more about the university's approach to technology, innovation, and partnerships.

"Leadership missions like this give us an opportunity to step outside our region, see innovative approaches firsthand, and bring new ideas back to Southwest Florida. The connections between education, industry, and economic development are essential to preparing the talent our communities will need for the future."

Whitney Rhyne, Assistant Vice President of Workforce Education

FSW appreciates the Lee County Economic Development Office and Horizon Foundation Lee County for bringing regional leaders together and the Polk County organizations that shared their expertise, initiatives, and vision with the group.



Connect . Collaborate

Make a Difference!



Ready to Learn!

Connect with **FSW's Office of Admissions** and take the first step toward becoming a student.

Admissions@fsw.edu



Ready to Partner!

Connect with **FSW's Division of Workforce Education** to explore workforce programs and opportunities for collaboration.

Workforce@fsw.edu



Ready to Make a Difference!

Connect with **FSW's Foundation** to learn how you can support students and FSW's mission.

Foundation@fsw.edu



FLORIDA
SOUTHWESTERN
STATE COLLEGE
WORKFORCE EDUCATION