FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE

WORKFORCE EDUCATION

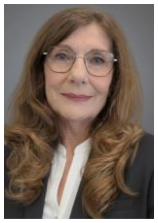
AY 26-27, Fall Term Issue 2

As fall unfolds, FSW continues to build momentum in preparing Southwest Florida's workforce.

This edition of the Workforce Education newsletter highlights students competing and learning beyond the classroom, from cybersecurity competitions in Tallahassee to drone flights on campus and shell research at the National Shell Museum. You'll also go behind the curtain with stage technology students preparing for the fall production of Antigonick, see local high school students exploring health careers, and learn about the partnerships connecting FSW with local employers and schools. Read on to see how our faculty, students, and community partners are opening doors to in-demand careers across our region.

Newsletter Features:

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- FSW Drone Club Gives Students a Head Start in the Skies
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- FSW and HCA Florida Fawcett Hospital Strengthen Nursing Partnership
- College Leaders Celebrate Local Industry at Industry Appreciation Awards
- Team Members Participate in the School District of Lee County's Fall Advisory Board
- Students Explore Their Future at FSW's Boo-ccaneer Bash



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Dr. Cathy Faust



Dr. April Fleming



Dr. Susan Holland



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Dr. Brian Page



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Dr. Libby Schott

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

Cyber Bucs Take on the State's Best in Tallahassee

FSW's Cyber Bucs went on the road in October, traveling to Tallahassee with faculty advisor Professor Rushell Hopkins to compete in the Florida College System (FCS) Cybersecurity Competition held October 19–20 at the Florida Department of Education.



Now in its fourth year, the statewide event pits teams from Florida's public colleges against one another in a virtual cyber range that simulates real-world challenges faced by industry professionals. Students from 17 FCS institutions took part, working together to identify and stop cyber threats under time pressure.

For the Cyber Bucs, the trip offered something a classroom can't fully replicate: the chance to test their skills against peers from across the state and see how their training holds up in a live, high-stakes environment.

FSW RIST CYBER INSTITUTE

"Competitions like this show our students exactly what the job will demand. They walked into that room as a team, worked through real scenarios under pressure, and came home with confidence and a clearer picture of their careers in cybersecurity."
– Rushell Hopkins, Professor of Computer Science

Over two days, teams faced a steady stream of simulated attacks, working to detect intrusions, secure systems, and respond before time expired. Success took more than technical skill. Students had to communicate clearly, divide the work, and make quick decisions as a team, which are the same qualities employers seek.



Cybersecurity professionals are in high demand across every industry, from health care and finance to government and utilities. Through FSW's Rist Cyber Institute, students build hands-on skills and prepare for industry certifications that lead to careers protecting the systems on which our region depends.

FSW Drone Club Gives Students a Head Start in the Skies



At FSW, students can learn to fly drones right on campus. The FSW Drone Club, advised by Dr. Alex Djahankhah, Professor of Computer Science Programming, gives students hands-on flight time and a path to drone licensure, plus the skills that employers across Southwest Florida increasingly need.

Members practice flying in a supervised setting on campus, learning safe operation, flight planning, and airspace rules.

For students who want to take it further, the club supports them in preparing to earn their drone license, which qualifies them to fly commercially. That opens doors in fields like construction, real estate, agriculture, emergency management, public safety, and media.

Before joining FSW's School of Business and Technology, Dr. Djahankhah served more than 16 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, leading communications and information operations, including integrating Marine forces with space-based capabilities. He holds a Doctorate in Business Administration from Florida International University, and he's an FSW alum, having earned his AA when the college was Edison State College.

"Drones are already reshaping how our region builds, farms, and responds to emergencies. This club lets students get their hands on the technology, build real skills, and walk away with a credential that employers recognize."
– Dr. Alex Djahankhah, Professor of Computer Science Programming

Students interested in joining FSW's Drone Club can contact Dr. Alex Djahankhah or stop by his office in Hendry Hall, Building K on FSW's Lee Campus.





High School Students Explore Health Careers with FSW's School of Allied Health







Local high school students got an up-close look at careers in health care when FSW's School of Allied Health opened its labs and classrooms for two days of hands-on learning. Instead of just hearing about these careers, students got to try them out. Students, faculty, and staff from seven programs led engaging, interactive activities that showed what each profession looks like day to day:

- Social and Human Services
- Radiologic Technology
- Emergency Medical Services
- Medical Assisting
- Health Information Technology
- Respiratory Therapy
- Physical Therapist Assistant



Students moved between stations, working with the same equipment and simulation tools FSW students use in their training. Along the way, they learned how each role contributes to patient care, from the first responder in the field to the professionals who manage health records, take diagnostic images, help patients breathe easier, and guide them through recovery.

For many students, it was their first chance to see the wide range of health care careers beyond doctor and nurse. Many of these careers can begin with a two-year degree or certificate and lead to in-demand, well-paying jobs right here in Southwest Florida.



"When students can put their hands on the equipment and talk with people who do this work, the career becomes real. We hope many of them will be back as FSW students and, one day, as health care professionals serving our community."
– Dr. Cathy Faust, Dean, School of Allied Health

The event reflects FSW's commitment to building pathways from K-12 to college to career, and to growing the skilled health care workforce our region needs.







Behind the Curtain: FSW Stage Technology Students Prepare for Fall Production of *Antigonick*



FSW stage technology students are working behind the scenes to finalize the technical landscape for their upcoming production of Anne Carson's *Antigonick*.

Working out of the Richard H. Rush Auditorium on the Lee Campus, student technicians and actors, supported by Show Director Brittney Brady, Professor Julie McCracken, and Theatre Program Director Stuart Brown, are bringing a full-scale theatrical production to life.

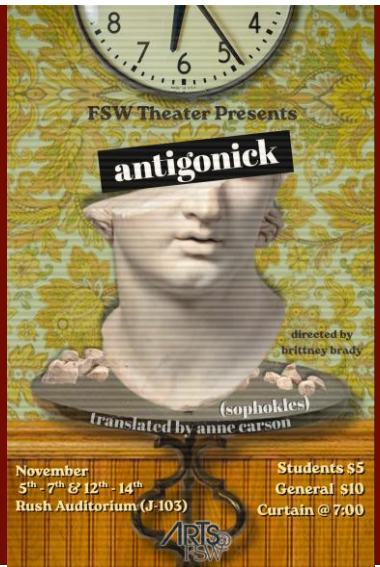
The crew is pairing standard theatrical mechanics with digital execution, blending mid-century style and modern technology.

FSW theatre students design, build, and paint the physical environment. The set features hand-painted dark wood paneling, framing a retro living room arrangement complete with a vintage television set, patterned couch, and armchair. This tight domestic architecture emphasizes the characters' psychological confinement.

The overhead grid is densely packed with spotlights and multi-directional fixtures, allowing student lighting designers to isolate performers or cast harsh, high-contrast shadows across the set.

While peer technicians manage the technical booth consoles and laptops, a student cast fills the roles on stage, translating Carson's poetic rhythm into raw physical performances.





Upcoming Performances

The community is invited! All performances are open to the public and offer an affordable night of high-quality local theatre.

Performance Dates
November 5–7 and November 12–14

Admission
$5 for students and $10 for the public

Location
FSW's Lee Campus, 8099 College Parkway, Fort Myers, FL
Richard H. Rush Auditorium (Building J)

FSW Students and Faculty Partner with the National Shell Museum to Preserve a World-Class Collection

FSW Professor of Natural Science, Dr. Michael Sauer, is lending his expertise to one of Southwest Florida's most distinctive scientific institutions. Dr. Sauer and his student research assistant are working alongside Dr. José H. Leal, Science Director and Curator of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium on Sanibel, to image, catalog, and archive the museum's shell collection.



Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium

The museum is the only one in the United States devoted solely to shells and mollusks, and its collection holds about half a million shells from around the world. Dr. Leal is a leading malacologist (a scientist who studies mollusks), and he has served at the museum since 1996. He also edits The Nautilus, a peer-reviewed journal on mollusk biology and ecology.



For the student research assistant, the work is science in action with real stakes. They learn specimen handling, precision imaging, and data management, the same skills used in museums, labs, and research institutions nationwide. High-quality images and accurate records turn a physical collection into a resource researchers anywhere can use. The museum's records feed into international biodiversity databases that help scientists track how species, habitats, and populations change over time, which matters greatly in a coastal region like ours.

> *"Our students are actively engaged in science and the technology that supports it. They ask important questions, analyze data, and create novel methods and approaches for solving complex problems. Our partnership with the National Shell Museum will provide students with an advanced skill set combining biology, software development, and photogrammetry for a unique college-level research experience."*
> – Dr. Michael Sauer, Professor of Natural Science

The partnership shows how FSW connects students with community organizations to build career-ready skills while making a lasting contribution to Southwest Florida's scientific heritage.


Forreria belcheri

Scientific Name: *Forreria belcheri*
Family: Muricidae (Subfamily: Ocenebrinae)
Geographic Range: Found in the Eastern Pacific Ocean along the west coast of North America, from Southern/Central California (USA) down to Baja California, Mexico.
Depth & Substrate: Inhabits shallow marine waters—from the intertidal zone down to depths of roughly 60 to 115 feet.
Fossil Record: The genus has a deep history, with a fossil record extending back approximately 8 million years to the late Miocene, during which time the species had a broader northern range.

Stronger Together

Partnership in Action

FSW and HCA Florida Fawcett Hospital Strengthen Nursing Partnership



FSW's School of Nursing met with leaders from HCA Florida Fawcett Hospital to strengthen and expand their partnership in support of Southwest Florida's growing need for nurses. Dr. Susan Holland, Dean, School of Nursing, and Whitney Rhyne, Assistant Vice President of Workforce Education, joined Beth Albaugh, Chief Nursing Officer, and John Secreto, Assistant Chief Nursing Officer, to explore opportunities that include expanded clinical relationships, preceptorships, guest lectures, BSN projects, and greater participation on advisory boards. Partnerships like this one between health care providers and higher education are essential to preparing highly skilled nurses and creating meaningful pathways for students from the classroom to the workforce.

FSW Leaders Celebrate Local Industry at Industry Appreciation Awards

FSW leaders joined business and community partners at this year's Industry Appreciation Awards hosted by the Horizon Council Foundation and Lee County Economic Development Office to honor the companies that drive Southwest Florida's economy. Attending on behalf of the college were Whitney Rhyne, Assistant Vice President of Workforce Education; Dr. Martin McClinton, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs; Dr. Jennifer Summary, Associate Dean of the School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; and Cassie Billian, Associate Dean of the School of Allied Health. Their attendance reflects FSW's commitment to strong employer partnerships that shape our programs and connect students with rewarding careers.



FSW Team Members Participate in the School District of Lee County's Fall Advisory Meeting



FSW team members Dr. Henry Akwah, Jennifer Baker, Brett Boreham, and Whitney Rhyne attended a School District of Lee County advisory meeting. They joined district leaders, educators, and industry partners to discuss how to better prepare students for college and careers. Partnerships like this one help FSW align its programs with local high schools and create clear pathways for students to move from the classroom to college and into the workforce.







Students Explore Their Future at FSW's Boo-ccaneer Bash

FSW added a little Halloween fun to its Fall Preview with the Boo-ccaneer Bash, welcoming prospective students and their families to explore everything the college has to offer.

All six of FSW's academic schools and the Division of Workforce Education showcased their programs:

- School of Allied Health
- School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
- School of Business and Technology
- School of Education
- School of Nursing
- School of Pure and Applied Sciences





At festive, themed tables, faculty and staff answered questions, shared program information, and helped guests imagine where an FSW degree or credential could take them.

The event gave future Bucs a chance to meet the people behind FSW's programs, from health care and education to business, technology, the arts, and the sciences, and to discover the pathway that fits them best.









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

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