



FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE

# WORKFORCE EDUCATION



As the year draws to a close, we're thrilled to bring you the December edition of our newsletter, packed with highlights that showcase the vibrancy and success of Workforce Education programs over the past month.

This page showcases a few photos from our recent Business Partners Lunch, a dynamic gathering that brought together key members of our Business Advisory team. It's a time to celebrate the strength of our connections and the shared commitment to enhancing the talent pipeline in southwest Florida.

Here's to a joyful holiday season and a promising new year filled with continued success and collaboration!



**Whitney Rhyne**  
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Workforce Education  
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# RADIOLOGY TECHNOLOGY



Jessica Merilus  
Radiologic Technology Student

Passionate, dedicated, and professional all describe Jessica Merilus. Jessica's diligence and attention to detail have helped her excel as a student in FSW's Radiologic Technology (AS) Program.

A gymnastics trick that lead to a broken foot and the TV show *Bones* ignited an interest in Jessica, which set her on the trajectory to study Radiologic Technology.

Jessica notes, "When I first started, I thought I would just have to do X-rays, and I did not consider the special procedures that we would get to perform." She was intrigued to obtain skills such as capturing dynamic angulations through fluoroscopic exams and injecting contrast into the gastrointestinal system.

She reflects that the clinical experiences and the hands-on opportunities have helped me build my career. I have developed relationships with patients at the local hospital, performed procedures, and learned from trained professionals on the job.

The Radiologic Technology Program at FSW is a significant commitment that requires exceptional communication skills and time management. Consequently, Jessica is extremely grateful for the professional techs who have helped guide her as a student.

Jessica advises aspiring radiologists that it is okay to make mistakes while you are learning and have the support of your peers, professors, and clinical instructors.

Graduates of the program can apply for the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) to be nationally certified in the radiology field, demonstrating a mastery of professional standards in medical imaging.

After graduation, Jessica plans to start work as a Radiologic Technologist and will continue her education to specialize in Magnetic Resonance Imaging.



## FSW Hosted High School Students to Showcase STEAM Programs in Partnership with Heartland Educational Consortium

FSW hosted high school students from Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties for a STEAM event at the Thomas Edison (Lee) Campus. Heartland students could select a STEAM or health professions track.

Students selecting the health professions track visited instructional space and engaged in simulation activities facilitated by FSW students, faculty, and Program Directors in the Dental Hygiene, Respiratory Care, Nursing, Radiology Technology, Emergency Medical Services, and Cardiovascular Technology programs.

Students selecting the STEAM track engaged with FSW faculty for hands-on activities related to music technology, digital arts, crime scene technology, education, chemistry, engineering, logic, and dissection.

Thanks to FSW professors, Program Directors, staff and leadership who supported this event! Dr. Cheban Acharya, Alexis Augustenborg, Cassie Billian, Krissy Cabral, Meghan Carlson, Chris Clemens, Megan Davis, Dr. Susan Foster, Dr. Lisa Fox, Jessica Golda, Nathan Harper, Dahye Kim, Dr. Qin Liu, Dr. Douglas Magomo, Tommy Mann, James Mayhew, Dr. Martin McClinton, Mike Molloy, Karen Molumby, Jean Newberry, William Pappas, Ruben Olguin, Dr. Yadab Paudel, Dr. Kelly Roy, Joanne Sabo, Dr. Esmael Samaliazad, Austin Sasaki, Lena Scott, Dr. Tami Such, and Frank Vilchez





## FSW's Rist Cyber Institute Excels in Inaugural Florida College System Cybersecurity Competition

Displaying skill and determination, students in the Rist Cyber Institute, housed within FSW's School of Business and Technology, competed in the first Florida College System cybersecurity competition. The competition, which drew participants from colleges across the state, proved to be a true battleground for cyber expertise.

The competition put our students' cybersecurity skills and knowledge to the test. Isabella Carhart, Sergio Guitierrez, Connor Larsen, John Liebenguth, and Mon Navarro represented FSW in this state-wide competition. The students were coached by Rushell Hopkins, Professor of Computer Science, and Michelle Long, Engineer Principal – Product Security at Arthex.

"I appreciate the volunteer time and effort Professor Hopkins and Mike Long dedicated to this event. Our students had a great experience, and I am so proud of our student participants!" commented Dr. Mary Myers, Dean, School of Business and Technology.

The event was a testament to the hands-on, practical education provided by FSW equipping students with the skills and confidence needed to face real-world cybersecurity challenges.

This is just one facet of FSW's School of Business and Technology and the Rist Cyber Institute serve as a catalyst for innovation, preparing students for the rapidly evolving world of cybersecurity.



**Team 1:**  
Isabella Carhart  
Connor Larsen  
Mon Navarro

**Team 2:**  
Sergio Guitierrez  
John Liebenguth





## Rist Family Foundation Tours Future Home of the Rist Cyber Institute

Floors are leveled, walls are replaced, lights are installed, and final touches are being made to Hendry Hall on FSW's Thomas Edison (Lee) Campus.

Brian and Kim Rist of the Rist Family Foundation visited FSW's Thomas Edison (Lee) Campus to tour the progress of Hendry Hall, the future home of the School of Business and Technology and the Rist Cyber Institute, which embodies innovation and excellence.

While on campus, Brian and Kim met with cybersecurity students, faculty, and staff to discuss the new program. The Rist Cyber Institute's success is due in large part to the generous support of Brian and Kim Rist.

The picture to the right is a sneak peek into Hendry Hall at night, displaying some of the enhanced lighting. The Rist Cyber Lab on the first floor of Hendry Hall is equipped with state-of-the-art technology ready for students to engage in 'attack and defend' activities.





## FSW Celebrates National Career Development Day

FSW celebrated National Career Development with its first meet and greet event in the new Career Connection Center. The new Career Connection Center on FSW's Thomas Edison (Lee) Campus is located in Howard Hall, Room 225. Katy Madden and Carrie Bohling, FSW's new Career Coordinator and Internship Coordinator, respectively welcomed students, faculty, and staff to the new service location. This event not only introduced the community to the state-of-the-art Career Connection Center but also fostered a sense of engagement and collaboration, setting the stage for valuable connections and opportunities in the realm of career development.

## Exploring Careers: FSW Hosts Lee Health and NeoGenomics as Part of the Career Connection Lecture Series

Michael Wukitsch and Jennifer Thayer of Lee Health shared valuable insights into careers within and supporting the health professions. Jen Thayer shared a wonderful resource linking every workforce program of study to a position at Lee Health. 100% of participants strongly agreed and agreed with the statement, "I gained more insights into a particular career, profession, or area of study." Ben Silvia of NeoGenomics discussed working inside a lab and the many positions at NeoGenomics that support the critical work of Cancer research right here in southwest Florida.



# A Harmonious Finale: FSW's Wraps Up Semester with Stunning Concert Series



FSW Jazz Band Concert, November 21, 2023

FSW's School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences recently celebrated the culmination of another successful semester with its highly anticipated end-of-semester concert series. The event, which showcased the diverse talents within the school, unfolded in a series of captivating performances that left a lasting impression on both performers and audience members alike.

The Concert Band, conducted by Prof. Rodolfo Castillo, set the stage for the musical journey, delivering a dynamic performance. Followed by the Chamber Music Recital, under the direction of Dr. Ken Puls (Guitar), Dr. Scott Courtney (Saxophone), Prof. Rodolfo Castillo (Trumpet), and Dr. David Gomez (Vocal), provided an intimate exploration of small ensemble dynamics, displaying both technical proficiency and depth. Dr. Scott Courtney led the Jazz Band in a vibrant exploration of jazz genres, infusing the evening with the energy of this dynamic musical form. The series concluded with a final performance of the String and Choir Ensembles, skillfully directed by Professor Kayla Lisa (String), and Dr. David Gomez (Chamber Singers & Choir).

Beyond the remarkable musical performances, FSW's Concert Series served as a collaborative platform for students across programs. This semester, Audio Technology and Music Production program students applied their skills to record and master the show. Additionally, students from the Digital Arts and Multimedia Production program showcased their creativity by designing a graphical display that complemented the Jazz Band musical performance, adding a visual dimension to the overall experience. The success of the concert series is a testament to the dedication of the talented students, the guidance of the devoted faculty members, and FSW's commitment to the arts.

"The Jazz performance was an exciting and brilliant display of talent in sight and sound. The performance provided a wonderful opportunity to not only showcase the talent of FSW students, but also demonstrated how our digital arts and audio tech programs can collaborate with student musicians to create, perform, and record a memorable production that allowed students to apply their creative skills and passions in a professional setting. It was fantastic!"

- Dr. Brian Page

Associate Dean, School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

# School of Education

## Lights Up Learning with Pop-Up Play Event!



FSW's School of Education hosted a dynamic pop-up play event that brought together students, educators, and community members. Lead by Dr. Julia Kroeker, the pop-up-play event is a temporary, interactive space where participants of all ages can engage in hands-on activities, fostering creativity and exploration. These initiatives emphasize the importance of play as a valuable tool for learning and personal development.

"This type of open-ended play with loose parts, when child-initiated and child-directed, is tremendously beneficial for children's development in all developmental domains. Children must use their creativity, problem-solving skills, communication, collaboration and negotiation, fine and gross motor skills, and more! All children and adults need to play!"

– Dr. Julia Kroeker  
Professor of Education

Pop-up play encourages participants to experiment, collaborate, and problem-solve, making them a perfect fit for innovative educational settings like FSW's School of Education.



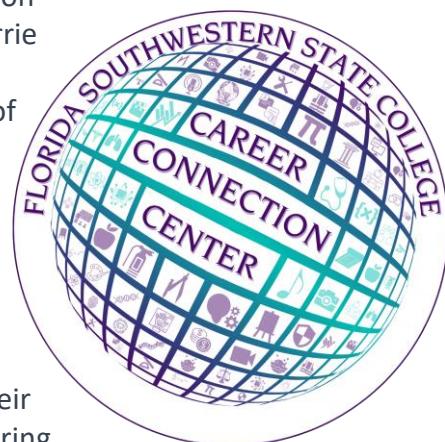
Thanks to R.T. Moore Plumbing and City Electric for the donation of materials.



# Empowering Excellence: New Additions Boost FSW's Workforce Education Initiatives

FSW's Division of Workforce Education is delighted to announce the addition of three dynamic professionals to the Career Connection Center team. Carrie Bohling, our new Internship Coordinator, brings an impressive 17 years of professional experience to her role. Katy Madden, assuming the position of Career Coordinator for both Lee and Charlotte Campuses, contributes a wealth of knowledge with an extensive 18 years in the field of education. Coleman Williamson, our Career Coordinator for Collier Campus and the Hendry/Glades Center, brings a rich background with 9 years of valuable experience.

Their expertise and dedication significantly reinforce our commitment to guiding students toward rewarding career paths. We are confident that their contributions will play a crucial role in advancing the mission of FSW, ensuring the success of our students as they navigate their professional journeys.



**Carrie Bohling**  
Internship Coordinator  
College-wide



**Katy Madden**  
Career Coordinator  
Lee & Charlotte



**Coleman Williamson**  
Career Coordinator  
Collier & H/G



[Careers@fsw.edu](mailto:Careers@fsw.edu)

[www.fsw.edu/careers](http://www.fsw.edu/careers)



FSW Career Connection Center



**Michelle Zamniak**  
Director, Corporate and  
Community Education

We welcome Michelle Zamniak as the new Director of Corporate and Community Education at FSW. With an impressive 25 years of experience in the SWFL community, Michelle is dedicated to empowering individuals to reach their full potential. In her role, she will oversee FSW's non-credit offerings in Corporate and Community Education, bringing a wealth of expertise to enhance educational opportunities for our community.



[Corporate.Training@fsw.edu](mailto:Corporate.Training@fsw.edu)

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)



Lee County's Economic Development Office awarded FSW \$1 million providing funding for select credit and non-credit workforce programs. Lee County residents who enroll into ARPA-eligible programs may qualify for funding to cover in-state tuition and fees.

- 11 CCCs and AS programs in FSW's School of Business and Technology
- EMT, CCC offered in FSW's School of Health Professions
- Several programs offered through FSW's Corporate and Community Education



## Open Door Grant



FSW received Open Door Grant funding through the Florida Department of Education. These funds will help students fast-track their success in a short-term career and technical education program.

- 45 fundable programs across FSW's five academic schools
- See complete list at [www.fsw.edu/opendoor](http://www.fsw.edu/opendoor)



## Transforming SWFL 2025



FSW was awarded \$125,000 from the Lee County Industrial Development Authority and \$100,000 from the Elsa and Peter Soderberg Charitable Foundation through the FutureMakers Coalition.

Transforming SWFL Supports:

- [GED Pathway Program](#)
- Second Look
- Last Mile & Gap Funding
- Workforce Pathways



## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



FSW was awarded \$1.98 million for its Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Grant to expand pathway to multiple in-demand industry certificates. Participants will be supported through enhanced coursework, supplemental certification test prep, and personalized advising.

### WIOA Programs

- [Information Technology Support Specialist, CCC](#)
- [Network Security, CCC](#)
- [Cybersecurity, AS](#)
- [Network Systems, AS](#)
- [Architectural Design and Construction Technology, AS](#)



Use the QR codes provided to learn more about each grant or program.

Email [Opportunity@fsw.edu](mailto:Opportunity@fsw.edu) with any questions.