

# HACKING FOR GOOD

SFSC teaching ethical side of dastardly computer deeds



ALLEN MOODY/ST

Students in South Florida State College's ethical hacking courses class gather around a computer monitor on Thursday evening.



BY ALLEN MOODY

Highlands Today

AVON PARK — More than 2,500 years ago, Chinese general Sun Tzu wrote, "Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories."

While nobody will ever claim that Tzu wasn't a bit of an optimist, his philosophies have been practiced for centuries in all walks of life.

One of the latest fields to follow the path is network security. And, in the constant battle against darker individuals of the cyber world, today's network security students are being taught the tricks of the enemy — the hackers themselves.

The network security program at South Florida State College offers two hacking courses, Ethical Hacking I and Ethical Hacking II. On Thursday, the first group of students enrolled in the ethical hacking courses finished the class and were definitely impressed with what they learned.

"It's about ethical hacking and teaches you how to work on the other side of the hacking elements so you can prevent from being hacked," said Avon Park's Andrew Protasio, who is getting a degree in network security. "It teaches you the fundamentals of penetration testing and how to exploit so you can prevent it from happening."

Instructor Brian Bohlman said there is a growing trend to teach network security students the tricks of the opposition.

"It's becoming more common in network security classes to find hacking classes," he said. "They might not always be called ethical hacking, it might be called penetration testing, but the same



# SOUTH FLORIDA State College

concept applies. It's being able to use those tools that are typically given a bad rap because they're being used by so many malicious people, that can better define the security of an organization."

While both sides may use many of the same tools, that's pretty much where the similarities end, as ethical hackers have a strict set of guidelines they must follow, such as no unauthorized access to computer networks.

"There's a good side and a bad side to everything and this class was emphasizing the good side," Protasio said. "We're ethical; we're more of the white hats."

The hacking courses are the last ones taken by network security students, giving them a chance to put many of the fundamentals they've learned into theory.

"They've had a pretty good time," Bohlman said. "I'm hoping they leave as respectable young men and go out there and do some good in the world."

People's perception of hackers may be changing a bit, as the difference between the white hat and black hat hackers is becoming



# Hacking

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more clearly defined.

"I think we may be starting to see a shift in that," Bohlman said. "A lot of that came from the movies in the early 1990s about the hackers that gave them a really bad rap. I think with it being on the news everyday, people are realizing we have to do something. There have to be some folks who can help us with this and that's what we're aiming to do is produce those types of people."



## Those who graduate

SFSC's network security program will be prepared to take the CompTIA Security+ certificate, while Bohlman said it would be great to see students keep studying and earn Certified Ethical Hacker certification.

"We do offer the Security-plus along the way and that's a good entry-level



ALLEN MOODY/STAFF

**South Florida State College's network security program is sponsored by Florida XCEL-IT.**

el certificate," he said. "There's also the Certified Ethical Hacking certificate and that would be wonderful if they would continue their studies."

Protasio said becoming a certified ethical hacker is something that would definitely interest him in the future, and the two courses were a great introduction to the subject.

"I learned quite a bit," he said. "Coming into it, I didn't have much knowledge, but walking out of it

I understand the fundamentals and understand how to get from A to B and have fun on the way.

"It's been a great class. Everyone else going forward has the opportunity to take it and they'll learn a lot going forward."

Bohlman said the first class to go through the program was a good group and he was looking forward to seeing what they do in the future.

"They can really do a lot of good if they put their

minds to it," he said. "We just want to produce honest, hard-working folks who are fighting for the good side."

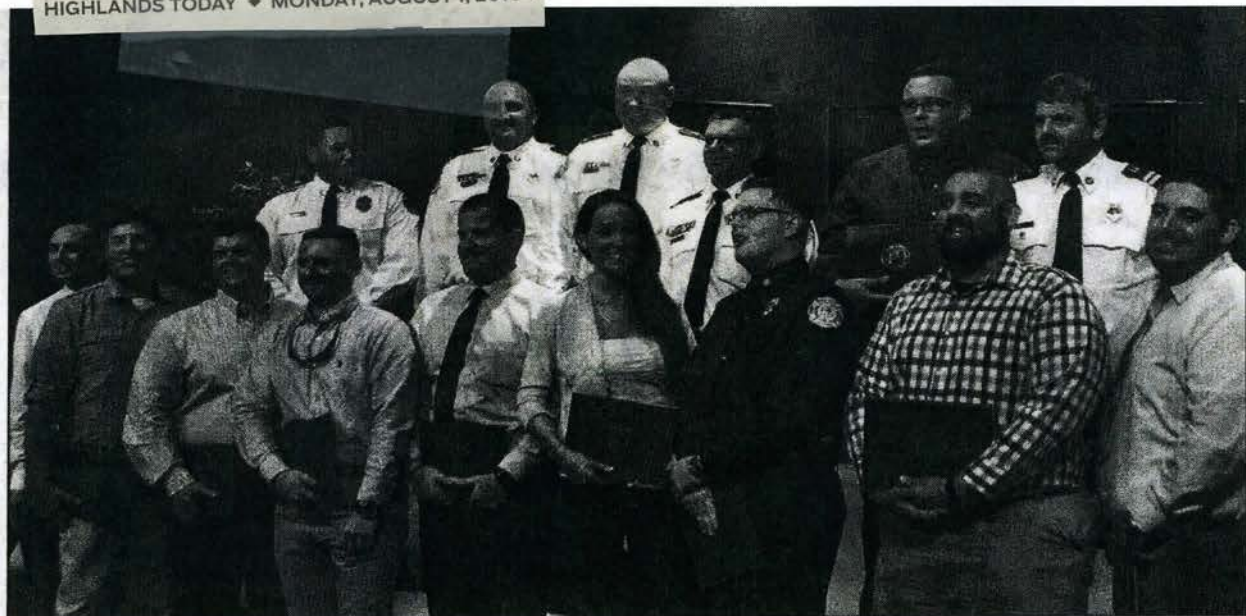
The network security program is sponsored by Florida XCEL-IT, which was made possible by a \$10 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant, which came from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

Bohlman said they are signing up students for the fall term and those interested in learning more about the network security/digital forensics offerings can contact (863) 784-7439 or email [xcel-it@southflorida.edu](mailto:xcel-it@southflorida.edu).

Those wanting an instructor's perspective are welcome to contact Bohlman at (863) 784-7443 or [bohlmanb@southflorida.edu](mailto:bohlmanb@southflorida.edu).

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COURTESY PHOTO

Graduates of SFSC's paramedic program assemble after the ceremony. Pictured, front row, from left: Mark Kinsey, Brian Johnson, Aaron Eures, Ryan Huber, Kevin Cornine, Rebecca Crews, Cody Harden, Carlos Navarrete and Danny Bailey. Back row, from left: Jacoben Jimenez, Dean Hrobar, Lance Meachum, Jeff Fussell, Jason Stroppel and Kevin Shireman.

# Fifteen graduate from SFSC's paramedic program

'There is no higher calling,' ceremony's guest speaker says

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College graduated a class of 15 paramedics during an evening ceremony at the SFSC University Center Auditorium on Wednesday.

Receiving their paramedic certificates were: Danny Bailey, Kevin Cornine, Rebecca Crews, Aaron Eures, Elvie Fussell, Cody Harden, Dean Hrobar, Ryan Huber, Jacoben Jimenez, Brian Johnson, Mark Kinsey, Lance Meachum, Carlos Navarrete, Kevin Shireman and Jason Stroppel.

The graduates had just completed an 11-month college credit certificate course offered by SFSC's Emergency Medical Services program. Paramedics work as part of an emergency response team called out to traffic accidents, fires and other life-threatening situations, the college said.

Gary Hester, who is depu-

ty manager of Polk County and oversees Polk's emergency management services, was the ceremony's guest speaker.

He praised the graduates for their willingness to serve their communities by choosing to become paramedics.

"There is no higher calling than serving your fellow humans when they are in need and danger," Hester said. "In my time managing emergency services, I've seen paramedics perform miracles in the most complex and daunting situations."

Hester noted he has observed paramedics intubate patients wedged between furniture and using flashlights gripped with their teeth for light.

"Now contrast that with an intubation performed in an emergency room and you can see just how critical it is to have skilled, dedicated paramedics serving our communities," he said.

Several of the graduates received special awards. Hrobar earned an award for the highest overall grade point average. The award for highest test scores for performance in the lab went to Bailey.

Shireman received the "Most Heart" award for his dedication to completing the course and fostering an esprit de corps among the class.

The class president, Jeff Fussell, who serves as battalion commander with Polk County Fire Rescue, presented a plaque on behalf of his classmates to Steve Ashworth, chair of the SFSC EMS and Fire Science programs, for the dedication, devotion, and guidance he has shown by his leadership at the college.

SFSC offers a 300-hour course leading to employment as an emergency medical technician. EMTs provide entry-level patient care as part of an emergency response team.

SFSC also offers a two-year associate in science degree program in Emergency Medical Services, which includes training in both EMT and paramedic programs.

Upon completing this program, graduates can work in a supervisory EMS capacity.

For more information, contact Steven Ashworth at (863) 784-7272 or ashworths@southflorida.edu.



# SFSC nursing program earns accreditation

By **MANUEL CORTAZAL**  
SFSC PUBLIC RELATIONS

South Florida State College now boasts having the only nationally accredited bachelor's degree nursing program in its service district of DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands counties.

On July 25, SFSC received word that its Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) program earned initial accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

News of the accreditation came to Dr. Michele Heston, director of nursing education, in a call from ACEN chief executive officer Marsal P. Stoll, congratulating SFSC on its achievement.

"The entire nursing department faculty and staff are extremely grateful for the collaborative work of the college and the region's health care community," Heston said.

SFSC launched its BSN program in 2014 in response to a call by the nursing profession for colleges to graduate

more baccalaureate-level nurses. The health care system has increasingly demanded nurses with higher educational achievement.

SFSC graduated its first class of BSN students in May. The inaugural class comprised 27 registered nurses who had already earned an associate degree in nursing. They completed a program of study designed to permit them to continue working while studying.

"To achieve accreditation from nationally recognized standard-setting bodies has been the goal of SFSC health science programs," said Rebecca Sroda, dean of health sciences. "This achievement nearly rounds out the accreditation of SFSC's several health sciences programs."

ACEN is one of only two accrediting bodies in the country that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The other is the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

A site evaluation team of peer experts from ACEN visited the SFSC Highlands

Campus in January to review the BSN program. The visit came after an intense period of self-preparation by SFSC's Nursing Education faculty that began in 2013.

To attain accreditation, nursing programs must demonstrate that they meet ACEN's exacting standards of quality, a process that includes years of preparation and concludes with an on-site review.

"Many employers will only hire graduates of accredited schools," Heston said. "For example the U.S. military, the entire Veterans Administration system, and many major academic medical centers will not consider nurses for employment unless they graduated from an accredited college."

Heston noted the majority of the May graduates plan to continue on to earn advanced degrees. Graduating from an accredited program is a requirement for applying to most graduate programs in Florida and beyond, she added.

"All SFSC BSN students who graduated during our candidacy period are considered to be covered under the accreditation," Heston said. "That will come as good news to the nurses who graduated in our inaugural class in May."

In a nod to the quality of SFSC's BSN program, the site visitors observed in their final report "a remarkable amount of enthusiasm, collaboration, cooperation and shared vision" among SFSC's trustees, college leadership, nursing faculty and alumni with the diverse community of health care providers.

Heston noted that while site teams strive to ensure a measure of detached analysis in their reports, this team singled out SFSC for its innovative approach to shaping its BSN program to meet not only the needs of its nurse students but the needs of the residents

they serve, with the college's particular emphasis on caring for the region's outsize population of older residents.

ACEN accreditation also opens up avenues for SFSC to apply for grants that might be used to fund resources, such as equipment for teaching labs.

"When applying for a grant, most funders want to know if your nursing program is nationally accredited," Heston said. "If not, they may not be considered for the grant."

SFSC started a traditional Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program leading to licensure as a registered nurse (RN) in 1993. SFSC has had long-standing occupational certificate practical nursing program that students can complete in one year. SFSC also offers one-year transition licensed practical nurse to registered nurse program.

In addition to its nursing programs, SFSC offers health science programs of study in dental hygiene, dental assisting, radiography, paramedic and emergency medical technician. Short-term programs offered through the Division of Health Sciences are Home Health Aide and Phlebotomy.

Heston said SFSC is still accepting applications for the fall academic term that begins on Aug. 23. BSN classes will meet only on Tuesdays, with the balance of the coursework completed online.

Applicants must have an associate degree in nursing or its equivalent with a 2.0 grade point average from an institution that is regionally and nationally accredited, hold a current unencumbered Florida RN license, and maintain current certification in Basic Life Support or higher.

For more information about these programs, call the SFSC Advising and Counseling Center at 863-784-7131 or visit [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu).



## Sebring Elks bolster SFSC scholarship fund

**AVON PARK**—The Sebring Elks just made college more affordable for students at South Florida State College.

The local lodge donated \$2,000 to the Sebring Elks Club Scholarship maintained by the SFSC Foundation. The Sebring Elks order started the scholarship fund in 2007 and have added to it every year.

The Sebring Elks Club Scholarship supports SFSC students enrolled at least half time, who are U.S. citizens, and younger than 26 years of age. Applicants for the scholarship must have at least a 3.0 grade point average.

Ronna Mason, past exalted ruler of the Sebring Elks, presented the check to Jamie Bateman, SFSC executive director for Institutional Advancement, on behalf of Sebring Elks Lodge 1529.

"The Sebring Elks recognize the importance education plays in the lives of our community's students," Mason said. "The Sebring Elks have supported a scholarship fund at the SFSC Foundation to show our commitment to the future of our community."

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is one of the leading service organizations in the United States, with nearly one million members in lodges across the country.

"We are thankful to our friends at the Sebring Elks Lodge for their generous donation to the SFSC Foundation and our students," said



**Ronna Mason presents a check for \$2,000 to Jamie Bateman on behalf of the Sebring Elks Lodge 1529.**

Bateman, who heads up the SFSC Foundation. "Our scholarships are successful because of the amazing support from our community."

The SFSC Foundation serves as an auxiliary support organization for SFSC, managing the college's endowment, awarding scholarships and encouraging giving.

For more information about the SFSC Foundation Inc., contact Bateman at (863) 784-7181 or [batemanj@southflorida.edu](mailto:batemanj@southflorida.edu).



# **SFSC nursing graduates honored in pinning ceremony**





# Chelsea Giddens honored for help as class mentor

Special to Highlands Today

**AVON PARK** — On July 28, South Florida State College graduated a class of 24 practical nurses in a traditional pinning ceremony in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC's Highlands campus in Avon Park.

The graduates were Jordan Buck, Angelica Chavez, Ruben Coronado, Stephanie Cox, Wayne Craig, Sarah Danielson, Jenna Flemer, Kathryn Flood, Rebecca Fones, Luis Garduno, Susan Henson, Casey Kopta, Tulsi Lauria, Jess Love, Yesenia Lozano, Veronica Ramos, Jonathan Robles, Brittany Rode, Peyton Sullivan, Charley Taylor, Savannah Taylor, Cristian Tellez, Jose Torres and Chelsea Vickers.

The class treasurer, Charley Taylor, introduced the guest speaker, Rebecca Schumacher, an adjunct instructor in SFSC's nursing education program, who the students had selected to give words of encouragement on their send-off to careers in hospitals, clinics and rehabilitation centers.

From the start, Schumacher injected a dose of levity into the evening's ceremony. "It was 343 days ago that you embarked on the easy task of becoming nurses," she said to the chuckles of the graduates seated on stage.

"A class with six male nurses who said 'wow, a class full of women' at the start of the program," Schumacher said. "But six male students who said 'get



COURTESY PHOTO

**Above: Graduates reciting the practical nurse pledge. Left: Chelsea Giddens, left, accepts the Golden Duck Award from Chelsea Vickers, the class secretary.**

me out of here' 343 days later."

A quip that had the graduates, all clad in white and sitting shoulder to shoulder, and the audience, erupt in laughter.

"But in all seriousness, congratulations on persevering," Schumacher said, changing her tone and looking at graduates seated to her side. "You never gave up on your dream of becoming nurses."

Before accepting their pins, the graduates took a moment to thank a mentor.

Each class of nurse graduates awards the Golden Duck Award to a fellow health care provider who served as a mentor, guiding them through to graduation. The D.U.C.K. acronym represents the foundational elements of the mentoring arrangement: Developing, Understanding, Compassion, and Knowledge.

Vickers, class secretary, pre-

sented the Golden Duck Award to Chelsea Giddens, a patient care technician at Highlands Regional Medical Center, who worked with the students during their clinical training.

"She was there to lend a helping hand to us and always with a smile on her face," Vickers said. "Her work ethic, compassion and positive attitude has made a lasting impact on us as we start our careers."

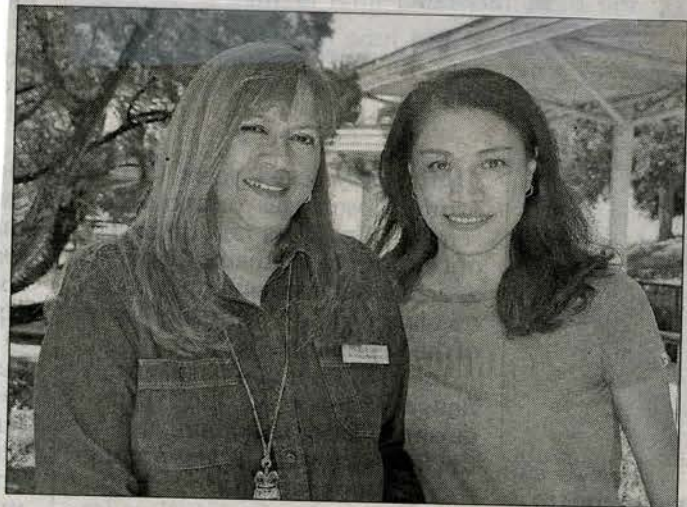
During the ceremony, the graduates accepted their nursing pins from spouses, parents and their children. The practice of pinning new graduates has been a nursing school tradition in the United States since 1916. The pin is worn prominently on a nurse's uniform throughout her or his career.

For more information, call the SFSC advising and counseling center at (863) 784-7131 or visit [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu).



# Language Link

ESOL coordinator started as student learning English



COURTESY PHOTO

**Sandra Pinzon, left, with Weili Tan Baker, an ESOL student from Shangdong, China, taking a break after class.**



**AVON PARK** — Since 2013, Sandra Pinzon has served as the coordinator of the English for Speakers of other Languages program at South Florida State College. She credits her own career success to learning English in an ESOL classroom after she arrived in the United States.

"I studied English in a university classroom in Honduras," Pinzon said. "It wasn't the kind of English I needed to get ahead in the workforce."

After boosting her English skills, Pinzon launched a career in real estate before heading up the ESOL program at SFSC. She's eager for other non-native speakers to enjoy the same advantage she gained with ESOL.

In a region where data from the U.S. Census show thousands of residents with limited English skills, Pinzon has cast a net to draw hundreds of students to SFSC ESOL classrooms in Highlands and Hardee counties.

"I went to churches, I connected with social services organizations and I visited with employers," said Pinzon, rattling off a list of some of her outreach efforts to find students who would benefit from ESOL instruction.

"We opened new class sites in Lake Placid, Sebring and Wauchula," Pinzon pointed out. "We went right to where the non-English speakers live by starting a class at a housing development mainly populated by residents who once lived in Haiti."

Monday through Friday, morning, afternoon or evening, students are studying English in an SFSC ESOL classroom.

ESOL is a national effort funded mainly by the federal government to bring English language classes to people whose native tongue is not English. SFSC offers ESOL classes on its Hardee and Highlands campuses, and at sites in Lake Placid, Sebring, Avon Park and Wauchula.

The classes meet three to four days each week, depending on the location. At the outset, instructors guide new students through a two-hour assessment to determine their level of proficiency. Then students work at their own pace learning not only English but how to adapt to American society.

"Our work does not stop with teaching students basic communication skills," Pinzon said. "Our ultimate goal is to get them fully integrated into the American way of living, and, hopefully, become U.S. citizens."

Pinzon noted that once students score in what ESOL parlance is known as the "high intermediate" level, they can start preparing for the citizenship interview.

"We work with the students on completing the application, learning U.S. history, civics and national symbols," Pinzon said. "Our aim is to see them pass [the]

citizenship test."

**Pinzon knows what** it takes to get through the entire process. She arrived in the United States in 1985, after leaving Honduras with her American husband.

"When I was a student at the University of Honduras, I became familiar with an American family that had moved to Honduras to manage a family-owned business," Pinzon said. "I wound up marrying one of the sons, and we lived in Tegucigalpa [the nation's capital city] for several years before moving to Tampa."

Pinzon recounted that she had studied English while a university student but felt overwhelmed on her arrival in Tampa. She enrolled in ESOL classes offered by the Hillsborough County school district.

She later moved to Highlands County, where she worked in real estate. But Pinzon said she always had a desire to teach and, in doing so, learn more about other cultures.

When the real estate market collapsed with the housing bust, Pinzon landed a job teaching adult education classes part-time at SFSC. But she had her sights set on working with ESOL students.

Pinzon's break came in 2013, when the then-current ESOL coordinator took another job, giving her a chance to step in and take the reins of a program.

"Carol brings a perspective and approach to her work that makes her particularly successful connecting with our students," said Benjamin Carter, director, Outreach and Academic Support at SFSC,

who works with Pinzon in the Adult Education department. Carter attributes Pinzon's experiences to her success in managing SFSC's ESOL program.

"Her background as a former ESOL student, as well as an Adult Education instructor, who knows the ups and downs of adjusting to life in the U.S., gives her an understanding and empathy for the struggles our students face each day," he said.

Pinzon prefers to strike a note of humility, giving credit to a staff of dedicated instructors and "amazing volunteers" who work with students from varied backgrounds.

"Many people have the mistaken impression that ESOL is just for Spanish-speaking people, and that's just not the case," she said. "We have students from Russia, China and Brazil, some of whom were doctors and engineers in their home countries but need to learn English to succeed here."

When she's not overseeing the SFSC ESOL program, Pinzon darts down to Fort Lauderdale on weekends to spend time with her two grandchildren.

"For me, spending time with my grandchildren is what gives me the greatest satisfaction in life," she said.

But Pinzon has dozens of photographs on her office wall that are not of her grandchildren, but of students who have learned English in SFSC ESOL classes and gone on to college or rewarding careers.

"ESOL is something I really believe in," Pinzon said. "Some people ask me why. I tell them because it's something that really works."



Wednesday, August 10, 2016 | NEWS-SUN |

# **SFSC offering software, real estate courses**



South Florida State College's Corporate Education Department is offering classes in Microsoft Word 2013 for Fall Term 2016.

In Introduction to Microsoft Word 2013, learn to create, edit, format, and print Microsoft Word documents. The workshop is designed for participants who have little or no familiarity with Microsoft Word 2013, or for experienced Word users who want to learn topics covered in the 2013 interface. The course is offered as a two-day workshop Tuesday Aug. 30, and Tuesday Sept. 6, 5:30-7:30 p.m. The cost is \$95, and the course number (CRN) is 11407.

In Intermediate Microsoft Word 2013, learn advanced formatting, how to use Word 2013 drawing tools, create and manage tables, and work with column layouts. This workshop is for participants who have basic skills in Microsoft Word 2013 and want to learn intermediate-level skills, or for Word users who want to learn topics covered in the 2013 interface. The course is offered as a two-day workshop Tuesday Sept. 13, and Tuesday Sept. 20, 5:30-7:30 p.m. The cost is \$95, and the course number (CRN) is 11408.

In Introduction to QuickBooks 2016, learn how to create a new company file, work with lists, set up items, track customers and sales, track vendors and expenses, and track sales tax. This course is offered as two-day

workshop Thursday, Sept. 8, and Thursday, Sept. 15, 7-9 p.m. The cost is \$169.99, and the course number (CRN) is 11310.

In Intermediate QuickBooks 2016, learn how to customize QuickBooks, track time, set up and use payroll, pay liabilities and taxes, purchase and manage inventory, building inventory assessment, and track sales orders and back orders. This course is offered as a two-day workshop Thursday, Sept. 22, and Thursday, Sept. 29, 7-9 p.m. The cost is \$169, and the course number (CRN) is 11311.

Register in Building B at the Highlands Campus or at any SFSC campus or center. For more information, contact Corporate Education at 863-784-7033 or by emailing [corporatetraining@southflorida.edu](mailto:corporatetraining@southflorida.edu).

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South Florida State College's Corporate Education Department is offering a Florida

Real Estate Principles, Practices, and Law course.

Florida Real Estate Principles, Practices, and Law is an eight-week course that teaches how to become a professional real estate agent, take charge of your future, direct your own business, and choose your own schedule. The course is held on Tuesdays Aug. 30 through Oct. 18, 6-10 p.m., and on Saturdays, Sept. 3, 17, and Oct. 1, 15, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., on the SFSC Highlands Campus. The cost is \$299, and the course number (CRN) is 11069. The required coursebook is, Florida Real Estate Principles, Practices and Law, 39th Edition, ISBN-13:978-1475430011.

Register in Building B on the Highlands Campus or at any SFSC campus or center. For more information, contact the Corporation Education Department at 863-784-7033 or by emailing [corporatetraining@southflorida.edu](mailto:corporatetraining@southflorida.edu).



# 4 Hardee Countians Earn Nursing Pins

South Florida State College graduated a class 24 practical nurses on July 28 in a traditional pinning ceremony in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

Four of these new nurses are from Hardee County: Jenna Flemer, Rebecca Fones, Savannah Taylor and Jose Torres.

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ers.

The class treasurer, Charley Taylor, introduced the guest speaker, Rebecca Schumacher, an adjunct instructor in SFSC's Nursing Education program, who the students had selected to give words of encouragement on their send off to careers in hospitals, clinics and rehabilitation centers.

From the start, Schumacher injected a dose of levity into the evening's ceremony. "It was 343 days ago that you embarked on the easy task of becoming nurses," she said to the chuckles of the graduates seated on stage.

"A class with six male nurses who said 'wow, a class full of women' at the start of the program," Schumacher

said, "but six male students who said 'get me out of here' 343 days later." A quip that had the graduates, all clad in white and sitting shoulder to shoulder, and the audience, erupt in laughter.

"But in all seriousness, congratulations on persevering," Schumacher said, changing her tone and looking at graduates seated to her side. "You never gave up on your dream of becoming nurses."

During the ceremony, the graduates accepted their nursing pins from spouses, parents and their children. Dr. Michele Heston, director of the SFSC Nursing Education program, introduced each person presenting their loved one with the pin, reading words of

thanks written by each graduate.

The practice of pinning new graduates has been a nursing school tradition in the United States since 1916. The pin is worn prominently on nurses' uniforms throughout their careers.

In addition to its 11-month practical nursing program, SFSC offers an Associate Degree in Nursing for students interested in becoming registered nurses, a one-year Transition-LPN to RN program, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

For more information about these programs, call the SFSC Advising & Counseling Center at (863) 784-7131 or visit [southflorida.edu](http://southflorida.edu).



COURTESY PHOTO

New nurses recite the practical nurse pledge during graduation ceremonies at South Florida State College.



# SFSC scholarly endeavor builds 'sense of home'

Project seeks to infuse Florida's history into variety of courses

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Charlotte Pressler has taught first- and second-year English and philosophy courses at South Florida State College for 14 years. But her academic interests don't stop with English composition and Plato. She's also a self-described history buff.

"I've had an interest in Florida history since I moved here — it's rich, interesting and different," she said. "A historian at Gainesville was fond of saying that 'Florida is the exception to American exceptionalism' — it's a different kind of history."

Now Pressler, who also heads up the Honors Program at SFSC, will lead a three-year scholarly endeavor to infuse Florida's exceptional history into not just standard history classes, but literature, psychology, sociology and philosophy courses.

Students at SFSC aren't the only ones who will benefit from Pressler's project. She's designed it from the start to include area high school teachers.

The effort is part of \$99,619 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded to SFSC.

Last March, SFSC scored the coveted NEH award, one of a select number earmarked for smaller colleges. SFSC is the first and only Florida college to receive the NEH grant.

The NEH is an independent

federal agency created by Congress in 1965. It is one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the United States.

Titled "A Sense of Home: From Cultural Conflict to Coexistence in Florida's Heartland," the project kicks off with a series of scholarly seminars. Experts in the history of the Heartland will visit the SFSC Highlands Campus in Avon Park to engage with college faculty and high school teachers in a scholarly discussion.

"Usually, similar projects revolve around inviting academics who deliver public lectures targeted to students and a public audience," Pressler said. "Here, we're inviting highly regarded experts in Florida Heartland history to engage with our faculty in a tightly focused setting de-

signed to build up the scholarship of the teaching faculty."

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**Pressler noted the** seminars are not an end in themselves. She explained the objective was to develop "curricular modules" — or mini courses — from the seminars for instructors to fit into existing courses.

A history instructor can use a mini course to teach students about the state of pre-Civil War Florida, while a sociology instructor can use the same module to explore race relations and slavery in 1850s Florida.

"While the students themselves won't engage with the visiting scholars," Pressler said. "they are the end beneficiary of this scholarly endeavor — build the scholarship of the faculty

first and the student second."

After the modules are completed, Pressler and the other SFSC faculty members will publish the results of their work to share it with the larger academic community.

Pressler moved to Highlands County in 2002 to teach at SFSC. She grew up in Cleveland and Canton, Ohio.

"I do sometimes reflect that Canton is just 40 miles from George Sebring's first planned town, Sebring, Ohio," she said, referring to the founder of the county's second-oldest city. "I live now in his second planned town, Sebring, Fla."

Pressler retains a fondness for the region where she grew up. "I still think of the industrial Great Lakes region as my homeland," she said.



# SFSC Foundation hires former lawmaker as a lobbyist

Board hopes investment gives college bigger voice in Tallahassee

**BY MARC VALERO**  
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Former legislator J.D. Alexander has been hired on a monthly retainer to lobby for South Florida State College in Tallahassee.

Almost every college or college foundation in Florida has a consultant or lobbyist, said SFSC

Vice President for Administrative Services Glenn Little.

"We think it is an investment as we are an integral part of our district, that will yield some positive results," he said. The lobbyist will deal with bills filed in the Legislature that may adversely impact the college.

"We have had some funding challenges and other legislative matters," Little said. "It's an important time for advocacy because other colleges have been doing it."

It has been about six years

since the college had its own lobbyist.

Little explained that around 2009-2010 a former college vice president, who stayed in Tallahassee, registered as a lobbyist and monitored legislative activity. He advocated for the college and kept staff aware of bills that would affect the college or the foundation.

The college had not had any direct advocacy since then other than SFSC President Thomas Leitzel or himself occasional-

**LOBBYIST, Page 8**



**J.D. Alexander**



# Lobbyist

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ly traveling to Tallahassee, Little said.

At the SFSC board of trustees' July meeting, Leitzel updated the board on his meeting with Sen. Denise Grimsley, which included discussion on retaining Alexander as a lobbyist.

Board of trustees members Ken Lambert, Joe Wright and Louis Kirschner agreed that Alexander would be a great lobbyist. Lambert suggested hiring Alexander on a retainer.

Lambert made a motion recommending the SFSC Foundation enter into an agreement with Alexander at a cost not to exceed \$60,000 annually. The board supported the motion unanimously.

Little said the foundation's agreement with Alexander started Monday on a month-to-month basis for \$5,000 a month.

Alexander's firm, Silver Palm Consulting LLC, is located in Lake Wales.

Little noted that Alexander's efforts for the college will not be limited to lobbying but will also include consulting and providing advice and counsel on po-

litical and developing public policy issues.

Alexander has a regional presence and knows the area well so it's a natural choice to have him as an advocate for this region, Little said.

Lambert said the board believed it was time for SFSC, as a smaller school, to have a bigger voice in Tallahassee to get favorable legislation and address proposed laws that work for larger schools but not for their smaller counterparts.

"Our mission and our population that we serve will be heard," with a lobbyist, he said. "We are giving it a try and see if it gen-

erates a benefit."

Alexander served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1998-2002 and then the Florida Senate from 2002-2012, representing District 17, which includes all of Highlands and Hardee counties.

Alexander was the state Senate's budget chairman in 2012 when he began lobbying against fierce opposition to wrest University of South Florida Polytechnic away from the multi-campus institution and create a separate Polk County university.

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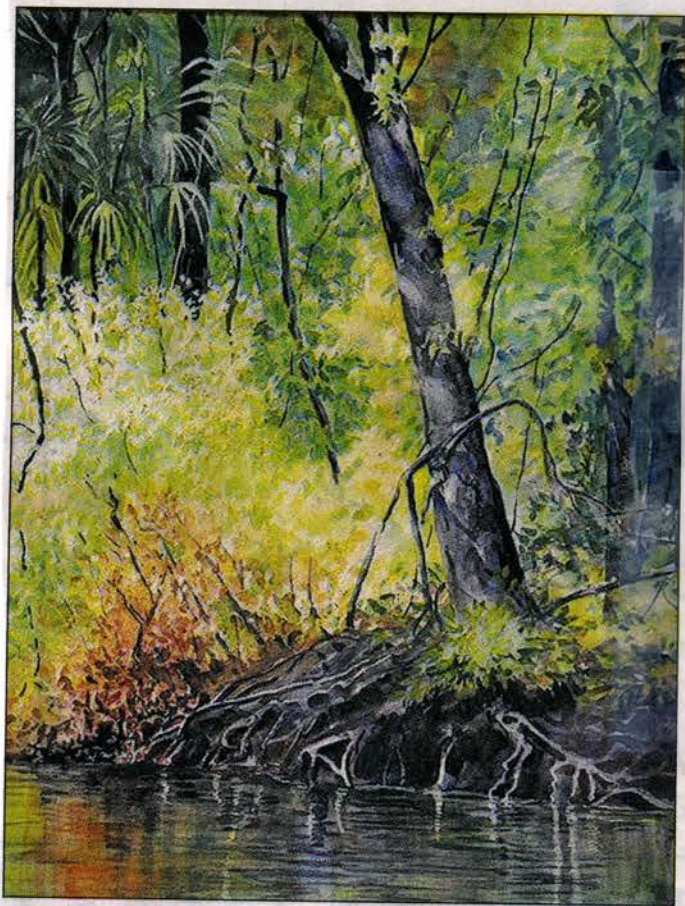


# Exhibition opens MOFAC season



**"Peace River 2" by Max Gooding.**

COURTESY PHOTO



**"Peace River with Yellow Brush and Trees" by Cathy Futral.**



AVON PARK — The Museum of Florida Art and Culture at South Florida State College will mount an exhibition in October featuring works that capture the splendor of Florida's lakes, streams and coasts.

The exhibition will open MOFAC's 2016-17 season at its gallery located in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the SFSC Highlands campus in Avon Park.

"Florida Waterworks: Friends, Teachers, Students" will be on display Oct. 5-Dec. 1 and will showcase the work of a varied group of Florida artists.

"What began as a canoeing trip among several artists evolved into this exhibition," Megan Paquette Stepe, MOFAC's curator, said. "These artists then came together to interpret through art such Florida treasures as the Peace River, Lake Istokpoga, Charlotte Harbor, and Arbuckle Creek."

Several of the artists will be familiar to regular patrons of MOFAC or admirers of an increasingly prominent cadre of Florida artists, Stepe said. The exhibition will feature works by Janet King, Jaye Whitehead, Rose Besch, Dustin Angell and Alice Hansen.

Adding their works to the exhibition are two artists with a connection to MOFAC and teaching art at SFSC that stretches back years: Mollie Doctrow and Cathy Futral.

Doctrow, who recently turned over the curatorship of MOFAC upon her retirement in June to Stepe, will display her print "Peace River Interlude."

Futral, who retired in May after teaching painting, drawing, and pottery at SFSC for 20 years, will show her painting titled "Peace River with Yellow Brush and Trees."

Stepe said the artists from the canoe trip, Doctrow and Futral, cover respectively the friends and teachers theme of the show's title. She added that an array of award-winning artists who are SFSC alumni and students will round out the exhibition.

The show will include works by SFSC alumni Max Gooding, Chase Smith, Barbara Wade and Allen McPherson, all of whom have moved on to successful careers producing art. Leighton Skipper, an award winner at the 2016 SFSC Student Art Show, will have his work on display.

"The spirit of the exhibit is one of reverence for the area waterways," Stepe said. "Each artist reveals his or her own connection to the land via a chosen medium and technique which, in turn, facilitates a similarly personal experience for the viewer."

"Florida Waterworks: Friends, Teachers, Students" marks the first of four major exhibitions of MOFAC season, with several smaller exhibitions running concurrently.

Starting Dec. 7, MOFAC will feature works by noted Florida artists Sean and Sharon Sexton during its "The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton" exhibition. On Feb. 15, MOFAC will open its galleries to show "The 20th Century Seminole Experience: Paintings from the Florida Indian Tribe Series." MOFAC will close out its season with the SFSC Annual Student Art Show.

MOFAC is located in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at 600 W. College Drive in Avon Park. The museum is open to the public on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m., or by appointment for group tours. Patrons of the Wildstein Center may visit the museum one hour prior to matinee and evening performances.

For information: contact Stepe at (863) 784-7240, email [stepem@southflorida.edu](mailto:stepem@southflorida.edu), or go to [www.mofac.org](http://www.mofac.org).



# SFSC keeping it cool and safe as semester starts

School Resource  
Deputy now on  
Avon Park campus

**BY MARC VALERO**  
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — On a hot and humid day, South Florida State College welcomed students to the fall semester Monday with free snow cones and bottled water at a greeting station near Building B.

“We just want to welcome all our students and let them know

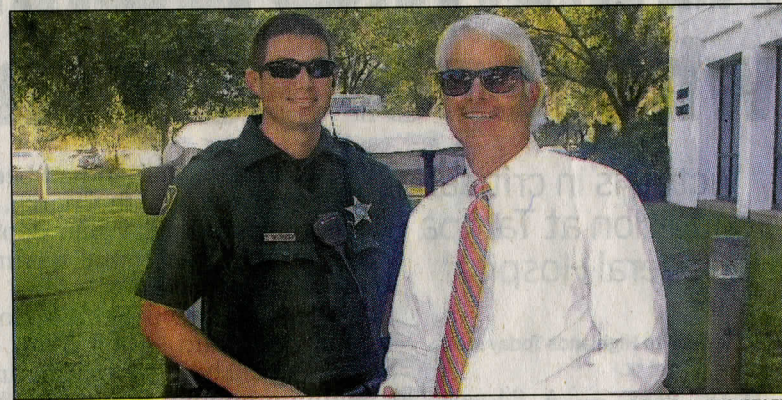
we are here to support them in the academic endeavors,” said President Thomas Leitzel.

Leitzel was flanked for a time by one of the newest additions to the campus — School Resource Deputy Zach Lehman, who was previously on road patrol.

Safety is very important, Leitzel said. The college is happy to have this relationship with the Highlands County Sheriff’s Office, he said.

As students filed in for their first classes, Leitzel said enroll-

**SFSC, Page 3**



MARC VALERO/STAFF

**SFSC School Resource Deputy Zach Lehman, left, and SFSC President Thomas Leitzel welcome students Monday.**



ment is steady, about the same as last year.

With late enrollments and dropped classes among the college's various programs, it takes some time to have a firm number on college enrollment.

Along with college staff, freshman Kody Littles welcomed his fellow students.

Littles will be studying in the Fire Science/Emergency Medical Technician program, which starts Sept. 12.

"It (Fire Science) is a year and then I am going to come back and do paramedic school and then finish up a degree," he said. "It will be at least four years before I am completely done."

Before classes, Sophomore Katlyn Vega enjoyed popcorn in Building B with her softball teammate, Raveen Gobourne.

Vega, a Seminole High School (Pinellas County) graduate, is studying psychology.

She doesn't have too far to go because all her classes are in the B or I buildings, Vega said, noting she gets enough exercise playing softball.

She plays shortstop and was ready for her first



MARC VALERO/STAFF

**South Florida State College soph0mores and softball teammates Raveen Gobourne, left, and Katlyn Vega enjoy popcorn Monday morning before their first class.**

practice Monday. The softball season starts in January.

The volleyball players are lucky because they practice in the gymnasium, Vega said.

Also, SFSC reports that its Testing and Assessment Center will soon streamline its operations with the introduction of new computer-based technology.

Within the next seven days, the center's director, Amy Hart, plans to roll out RegisterBlast, a Web-based test scheduling service. RegisterBlast

will let students go online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to register for most tests offered by the center.

"Students won't have to call in or visit, they'll just go online when it's most convenient for them to schedule a test time," Hart said.

Hart added that students can also schedule tests assigned to them by their SFSC instructors. Until RegisterBlast links up with other testing vendors, students looking to register for PearsonVUE tests, including the GED,

will continue to register directly with PearsonVUE or other vendors.

At the same time, Hart said the center will fire up Accutrack on a computer station located inside the center. The station was designed and built by the college's own maintenance department. She said rather than queue up at the receptionist's desk to sign in for a test, the Accutrack system lets students self-sign in for their visit to the center.

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# SFSC network security program gains industry recognition

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS  
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's network security program has been recognized by the networking industry leader for providing the best delivery of its Internet of Everything (IoE) curriculum. Cisco System's Networking Academy singled out SFSC for recognition from among colleges throughout the United States and Canada with computer networking programs.

The IoE, more often referred to as the "Internet of Things," describes the networking of objects — home appliances, cars, buildings, animals or humans — embedded

with computer processors, software, and sensors that enables them to collect and exchange data over the internet.

A homeowner might use the IoE to remotely control the operation of home appliances, keep tabs on grandparent's heart monitor, or exchange data with the pool service company on the water's condition.

With "if it can be connected, it will be connected" increasingly becoming the norm, analysts expect the IoE to reshape global commerce.

"In an economy where the Internet of Everything will play a greater role, IT skills will matter in more job functions," said Brian

Bohlman, instructor of networking technologies and digital forensics. "The Cisco certification serves as a stamp of approval that students coming to SFSC will leave with the skills they need to succeed in our evolving economy."

Cisco estimates the IoE will account for \$19 trillion in global economic activity over the next decade.

The annual Cisco Academy Curriculum Excellence award is presented to one institution in each region for achieving excellence in teaching a curriculum. The Cisco Networking Academy program said it uses a rigorous process to select academies for this award.



## Apply for certificate in Basic Law Enforcement

The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy is accepting applications for its next basic law enforcement course. This is the course required to become a Florida certified law enforcement officer.

Classes will be held Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., beginning Thursday, Jan. 19, for those who want to become a certified law enforcement officer in Florida.

By successfully completing 770 contact hours of training, students earn occupational certificates and are eligible to take the state certification examination for correctional officers. Students must meet the minimum requirement set by Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, and Florida Department of Law Enforcement to attend.

The CJA is located on SFSC's Highlands Campus, Avon Park. Applications can be completed online at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu).

For details, contact program

coordinator Michael Huften at (863) 784-7285 or email [michael.huften@southflorida.edu](mailto:michael.huften@southflorida.edu).

Financial aid is available to those who qualify. Additional equipment will be required after acceptance into the program.

## Concealed weapons permit course offered

The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy is offering a concealed weapons permit course, required to carry a concealed weapon in Florida.

Topics to be covered include Florida Statutes, use of deadly force, carry restrictions, and live fire exercises. The course will be held on Sept. 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The cost is \$55, and the course number (CRN) is 11501.

The CJA is located on SFSC's Highlands Campus, Avon Park. For information, contact Michael Huften, coordinator, at 863-784-7285 or visit [www.southflorida.edu/publicservice](http://www.southflorida.edu/publicservice). Register at any SFSC Campus or center; pre-registration is required.

## SFSC Briefs

### Register for fall Flex C session

Heartland residents who didn't register for the fall academic term at South Florida State College have another opportunity to jump-start their education.

Registration for SFSC's Fall Flex C Session is now open. Classes scheduled run 12 weeks, Sept. 12 to Dec. 14.

"This is a great opportunity for students who couldn't register at the start of the fall academic term to earn three or four credit hours without having to wait for the spring academic term," said Lynn MacNeill, the interim dean for the Division of Arts and Sciences.

New students can apply for admission to the college by clicking the "Apply Now" button at the top of SFSC's home page at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu). Current students can register and pay for classes through the college portal, Panther Central.

The session features introductory classes in humanities, freshman English, American history,

astronomy, and the first-year experience class. The schedule of classes is available online at [www.southflorida.edu/current-students/class-schedules](http://www.southflorida.edu/current-students/class-schedules).

"The new Flex C Session will also assist those individuals who were planning to start later in the semester," said Sidney Valentine, vice president for Academic Affairs and Student Services. "With the advent of Flex C, students can begin the fall term three weeks after the regular term has begun, which allows them to add additional classes during a second eight-week term as well."

SFSC's Advising and Counseling Center accepts walk-in registrations 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Fridays. Students can register in Building B of the Highlands Campus in Avon Park, at the Hardee Campus in Bowling Green, at the Lake Placid Center in Lake Placid, or at the DeSoto Campus in Arcadia.

Financial aid is available to those who are qualified. For information about financial assistance and scholarships, contact

the SFSC Financial Aid Office at 863-784-7134. For information about registration, call (863) 453-6661 (Highlands Campus), 773-3081 (Hardee Campus), 993-1757 (DeSoto Campus) or 465-3003 (Lake Placid Center).



## **Starting Your Business seminar offered**

AVON PARK – Ever wanted to start your own business but not sure how to get started? The Florida SBDC at University of South Florida, located at South Florida State College, will host a Starting Your Business seminar at

South Florida State College, Corporate and Community Education Room T24, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 31.

From how to determine feasibility and legal structures to the types of license you'll need, this seminar covers all the essentials that will help you get started. This seminar is customized for start-ups in DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands counties; including the cities of Lake Placid, Sebring, Avon Park, Arcadia and Wauchula.

Call 863-784-7405 to reserve a seat. Refer to CRN 11075. Cost is \$10 and includes seminar materials.

To find out more about Florida SBDC at USF no-cost business consulting and low-cost seminars, visit us online at <http://www.SBDCTampaBay.com>.



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SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SUN

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For information call 863-453-6661 (Highlands Campus), 863-773-3081 (Hardee Campus), 863-993-1757 (DeSoto Campus), or 863-465-3003 (Lake Placid Center). For information about SFSC and its programs, visit [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu).



# SFSC's online classes means college is always open

AVON PARK — Through an expanding array of online courses, South Florida State College is turning the computer into the classroom and making it possible for students to complete the first two years of college at their own pace.

SFSC students can earn an Associate in Arts degree entirely by taking online courses. It's a way of expanding educational opportunities to people who need the convenience of making their college studies revolve around their work and



family lives.

Online courses also appeal to students who have been away from the classroom and want to determine whether they are ready to commit to continuing their education.

"SFSC's online courses are ideal for students juggling the demands of family life, busy work schedules, and other circumstances which may not allow them to attend college in the traditional

setting," said Dr. Sidney Valentine, vice president for Academic Affairs and Student Services.

Students who enroll in SFSC's online courses use the same textbooks, receive the same educational content, and interact via email with SFSC instructors who teach campus courses. Online classes start and end on the same dates as SFSC's regular fall, spring, and summer terms, and the tuition for online and regular classes is the same. Most importantly, students receive

the same college credit that counts toward the completion of a degree or occupational certificate.

SFSC also offers online courses geared toward students studying for entry into an occupation. A few of those courses are Introduction to Criminal Justice for law enforcement and Introduction to Teaching Profession for prospective teachers.

Select online courses are also available to students who have been accepted into SFSC's Bachelor of

Applied Science degree in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM) and Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN) programs.

The complete list of online courses can be found at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu) under "Class Schedules."

Prospective students can get one-stop assistance by dropping by SFSC College Assistance Express Days, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 3, and Tuesday, Aug. 9. Stop by the Building B

Welcome Center on the Highlands Campus and get help filling out a college application and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in time to start fall classes.

For more information about College Assistance Express Days call recruiter Summer Miller at 863-784-7447 or email [summer.miller@southflorida.edu](mailto:summer.miller@southflorida.edu). The list of documentation students need to bring with them can be found at [www.southflorida.edu/collegedays](http://www.southflorida.edu/collegedays).



# Lady Panthers, Ellis win first one

By **CHARLES A. BAKER III**  
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — Tymesia Ellis coached her first college volleyball game Thursday night. And, it was a memorable one.

Hired as an assistant volleyball coach for South Florida State College in April, the former high school coach

helped guide the Lady Panthers to a dramatic five-set victory against Florida State College in their 2016 season-opener at the SFSC gym.

SFSC won 27-29, 25-20, 17-25, 25-20, 15-13.

"I have a total of 13 years experience coaching, this will be my 14th," Ellis said minutes before the start of the match. "It's my first as a

college coach."

Ellis said she was a volleyball coach at Santa Fe Catholic School in Lakeland last season and at Winter Haven High School for eight years prior to that.

She currently teaches Exceptional Student Education in Dundee and commutes to work

**PANTHERS | 6**



Charles A. Baker III/News-Sun

**South Florida State College's Makayla Root celebrates with team captain Emily Swenson (#5) after a winning shot Thursday against Florida State College. SFSC won the match in five sets.**



# PANTHERS

FROM PAGE 1

in Avon Park from the Auburndale area. She said an acquaintance told her about the job opening and she hit it off with SFSC head coach Kim Crawford.

Ellis will learn the college game under an experienced coach in Crawford, who now is in her 14th season with SFSC.

The Lady Panthers play around 30 games between now and late October, with a goal of making the postseason.

"That's our team goal this year, to make the playoffs," Ellis said.

Experience should help South Florida State's quest for the postseason.

Five of the 12 ladies on the team are returning from last season: team captains Emily Swenson and Brooke Westphal and sophomores Paola Castro, Kaelyn Mahoney and Mary Beth Boudrias.

Among the newcomers, Sebring's own Elizabeth Tauchen is a freshman who made the team.

On the court Thursday night, SFSC librarian Lena Phelps was honored with the first serve of the season. The 1994 SFSC graduate has been a librarian at the college for the past 20 years.

"I go to as many home games as possible," Phelps said of SFSC athletics. "If I'm not teaching, I'm at a game."

SFSC players put on a show for Phelps and the rest of the fans on Thursday. Sarah Castillo led the way with 47



South Florida State College's Kayla Wood goes up for a kill against Florida State College on Thursday. She is the second SFSC freshman from Georgia on the team this season.

assists and nine digs for the Panthers.

Also playing well for SFSC were: Leigha Reynolds, who had two aces, 12 kills, 18 serve receptions and 13 digs; Boudrias, 20 kills, 14 serve receptions and 13 digs; and Westphal, two aces, 31 serve receptions and 36 digs.



South Florida State College's Tymesia Ellis, center, coaches her first college game Thursday night. SFSC head coach Kim Crawford is standing at far left. At Ellis' right is former Sebring High star Liz Tauchen.

The Lady Panthers play at Webber University in Babson Park Wednesday.



Lena Phelps, a SFSC librarian and athletic supporter for the past 20 years, is honored with the first serve of the 2016 volleyball season on Thursday night.



Charles A. Baker III/News-Sun photos

South Florida State College's Shadaisha Summerall goes up for a kill Thursday against Florida State College. She is one of two freshmen from Georgia on the team this season.