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Message from the President

It is with pride and a purpose-driven commitment that I share with you Destination 2021, South Florida State College’s strategic plan. This plan considers SFSC’s strengths, values, and capabilities while providing direction for future initiatives and priorities focused on enhancing programs and services. The plan’s development was comprehensive, inclusive, and inspired by the creation of SFSC’s new vision statement: to become a globally aware academic destination driving regional transformation through innovative collaboration. Destination 2021 represents the collective efforts of many members of the college community, including members of the SFSC District Board of Trustees, full- and part-time members of the faculty, staff, and administration, advisory committee members, and constituents of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

Destination 2021 has six equally important strategic initiatives, as follows:

- Develop exemplary student services programs that support student success
- Formulate responsive programs that meet community needs
- Provide students with an engaging learning experience within and beyond the classroom
- Create innovate joint ventures and partnerships that drive regional economic growth
- Develop and implement diverse strategies that will increase funding needed to support institutional initiatives
- Provide programs and resources that inspire employee growth/development

Each strategic initiative contains various measurable goals that provide a clear framework for ongoing evaluation of progress.

To meet the strategic initiatives and goals put forth in Destination 2021, the President’s Leader Team assumes responsibility for evaluating and documenting progress and, if necessary, recommending changes. The plan follows a rolling cycle that continually looks ahead over a five-year period and is updated annually as goals are attained and new goals are envisioned.

It is an honor to present to you Destination 2021, with gratitude and hope for the opportunity to serve and make a lasting impact in the lives of our students. We pledge to maintain our commitment to providing affordable, accessible, and world-class delivery of curriculum content to the residents of the tri-county district.

Serving with pleasure,

Thomas C. Leitzel, Ph.D.
President
Core Institutional Values

The attributes that guide our behavior as we pursue our vision are:

**Integrity**
We encourage the free exchange of ideas in an environment that embraces honesty, fairness, personal responsibility, and ethical leadership.

**Service**
We actively seek opportunities to enhance achievement and success in our local and world communities.

**Community**
We embrace cultural diversity, inclusiveness, collaboration, mutual respect, responsive and productive partnerships, and the sharing of resources.

**Learning**
We are committed to providing opportunities for students and staff to succeed in a highly competitive environment so that they can become effective lifelong learners.

**Excellence**
We seek to provide high-quality, innovative, and flexible teaching and learning opportunities in a learning-centered environment.

**Accountability**
We value personal and institutional ownership through integrated planning and assessment of all programs.

**Responsibility**
We honor our commitments in all initiatives and leadership endeavors as well as promote environmental stewardship.
Vision

South Florida State College will become … a globally aware academic destination driving regional transformation through innovative collaboration.

Mission

South Florida State College is an open-access, higher education institution dedicated to providing a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services. Working in partnerships with organizations and communities, the college provides leadership and a comprehensive range of opportunities for the educational, cultural, and economic development of the service district.

The college assists the people of its service district (DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties) regardless of economic, social, or educational background to achieve success in

- completing an associate degree in preparation for pursuing a baccalaureate or other professional degree or credential;
- completing a baccalaureate degree, associate degree, or certificate related to career and technical preparation to enter the workforce or to improve career circumstances;
- completing college preparatory programs of study including those leading to the high school diploma;
- obtaining basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and citizenship to prosper as a contributing member of society;
- gaining personal, cultural, and global awareness, appreciation, and understanding needed in a complex contemporary society;
- pursuing advanced academic preparation and credentials available through partnerships with colleges and universities; and
- participating in the social, cultural, environmental, and economic development of the communities served by the college.

We believe in the worth of each of our students and, through all of our educational programs and services, we seek to develop human potential and to create brighter futures.
Six Pillars of Excellence

Leadership
Driving regional transformation

Relevance
Keeping local focus on the global pulse

Destination
Premier academic programs that attract engaged learners

Partnership
Accelerating change through bold collaboration

Technology
Pushing the envelope of academic enterprise

Quality
Personalized education via personal excellence
Planning Assumptions

These assumptions operationally define SFSC’s present and future environment.

The South Florida State College district, comprised of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties, has unique demographics, resources, and needs. The planning assumptions listed below, developed internally and externally, pertain to the college service area as a whole.

1. The demand for higher education will increase as individuals seek to improve their circumstances in an ever-changing world.

   a. College enrollments typically respond inversely to economic cycles and this cycle will continue—people tend to work more when the economy is good and continue their education more when work is less available.

   b. Economic projections suggest that DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties will trail the state’s strong economic recovery.

   c. Postsecondary students are more likely to attend multiple institutions before earning a degree. Students are becoming increasingly mobile and more apt to pursue non-traditional degree paths.

   d. State colleges serve as a major facilitator of baccalaureate attainment. Research conducted by the National Student Clearinghouse revealed that students transferring to a four-year institution with a two-year degree or certificate were more likely to earn a baccalaureate degree than students without such academic credentials.

   e. The demand for job retraining, industry certification, upgrading employability skills, and lifelong learning will increase in the highly competitive global economy.

   f. Education and training beyond high school will increase in importance for individuals seeking high-demand, fast-growing, and new jobs in our economy. Demand for employment will increase in careers related to science, health care, information technology, business, and emerging industries.
g. The college will remain the primary institution for postsecondary educational opportunities in its service district.

h. Time limitations and family/work obligations will influence students to enroll in distance learning classes and/or classes at sites closest to their homes and workplaces.

i. Job growth and development will require qualified applicants to display critical thinking and “soft skill” competencies.

j. Nationally and state-wide, fewer high school graduates are financially and academically prepared for post-secondary education. Colleges must develop effective developmental education programs to address this growing population.

k. Alternative methods of documenting content mastery will continue to accelerate in college programs (e.g., credit for work/life experience).
Political, environmental, educational, economic, and demographic characteristics of each of the three counties in our rural service district are **diverse and unique**.

**a.** Average per capita income of the service district will remain much lower than state or national averages. This is due in some part to large numbers of retirees in Highlands county and depressed economic circumstances with low-wage and low-skill jobs throughout the district.

**b.** With the increasing number of retirees impacting the national and local economy, a sizable and increasing proportion of an older age and retiree population demands a more service-related economy with a high demand for medical, retail, and age-appropriate recreational and leisure opportunities.

**c.** Hispanic enrollments across all academic programs at SFSC have grown steadily since 2001. Hispanic students presently comprise approximately 31% of the college's student population and will continue to rise.

**d.** Florida's population growth rate will continue to increase as a result of the state's strong economic recovery.

**e.** High school completion rates in the college's service area will continue to fall below state and national averages.

**f.** Qualified adjunct faculty in many disciplines in our service district, and particularly in DeSoto and Hardee counties will remain scarce.
3 Future students will be increasingly diverse in their background, academic preparation, and demand for educational services.

a. Increasing numbers of under-prepared students, including older adults and minorities needing academic intervention and remediation, are expected.

b. The proportion of first-generation college students will remain high.

c. Statewide and local initiatives will continue to focus on collaborative intervention to decrease the number of high school students entering college with developmental education needs.

d. College students will need an increasing variety of day/time/modality offerings.

4 State and community colleges have a responsibility and role in strengthening economic development within their service area.

a. Economic growth and recovery of a region will remain highly dependent on strong collaborations between local communities, economic development agencies, and various public/private organizations such as universities, state and community colleges, school districts, and business and industry.

b. State and community college-industry partnerships support alignment between academic credentials and job requirements. Cultivating successful partnerships are recognized as an effective way to prepare and train the local workforce for emerging job opportunities.

c. The college will provide leadership and help create opportunities to facilitate innovation and economic development in the communities it serves.

d. Degrees to jobs will remain a high priority of the governor and the legislative body.
5 **Workforce education and training** as well as the demand for lifelong learning will continue to be a **major focus** of the college.

a. Economic conditions and economic development initiatives may require new or modified educational programs and training.

b. Agriculture, retail, and healthcare are economic mainstays of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands Counties.

c. Workforce projections suggest that industries in the college’s service area with the greatest projected employment growth (2014 to 2022) will include construction, education and health services, and professional and business services.

d. Because of its central location and the abundance of available land, water, and natural resources, the area should offer an opportunity for emerging industries, such as alternative energy, bio-sciences, and medical services.

e. Employees will need to continue their career and professional development to keep pace with and anticipate emerging technologies and employability skills.

f. There will be a growing emphasis on “on the job” experiences and training opportunities (e.g., co-ops, apprenticeships, and internships).

g. Short-term stackable certificates will continue to gain in popularity among law and policy makers, employers, and colleges across the country.

6 State and community colleges have an established history of providing local communities with **cultural enrichment, personal development, and non-academic professional growth** opportunities.

a. As new entertainment venues open, there will be stronger competition for audience members.

b. Arts education in our service district public schools is increasing, creating a need to establish more programs for school-aged youth.
Technology increasingly influences working, learning, and daily living.

a. Generational influences on learning with technology differ and will require changes in the delivery of educational and student services.

b. The demand for asynchronous and online learning opportunities for students will continue to increase.

c. Technology competence will continue to be required in most, if not all, workplaces.

d. The use of asynchronous and distance learning modalities will increase as their educational viability improves and becomes more common and accepted.

e. SFSC will be required to continually upgrade and enhance technology.

f. Access to high speed, broadband Internet access will remain unavailable in many rural areas.

Funding of higher education will remain limited from traditional state and federal sources.

a. Pressure will continue to increase the need to find alternative funding sources.

b. The aggressive pursuit of public and private grants will be necessary to supplement traditional funding of the college.

c. Private fundraising efforts through the college’s programs and the SFSC Foundation will grow in importance to assist students by removing financial barriers and to supplement funding for various college initiatives and operations.

d. Creating and maintaining strong private and public partnerships to share and conserve limited resources will be a continuing necessity.

e. SFSC will continue to build its unrestricted endowment.

f. Capital funding distributions will remain high competitive.

g. Industry certifications will grow in importance from a funding perspective.
Demands for institutional accountability and effectiveness will continue to increase.

a. Policy makers and policy advocates at the state and national level will continue to emphasize accountability and monitor performance-based funding for colleges. The Florida College System performance funding model will focus on key accountability measures to include student success indicators (completion and retention rates) and graduate outcomes (job placement, continuing education, and entry level wages).

b. SFSC will need to embrace innovation and continuous quality improvement efforts in academic and administrative support programs and services.

c. Information gathering and reporting will continue to be a major requirement of the college to monitor continuous improvement, cost-effectiveness, and student progress and success.

d. Accrediting agency expectations will require more documented evidence of continuous quality improvement achievements.

e. College completion will continue to be emphasized through enhanced student success, retention, and placement initiatives.

f. There will be a need for greater advocacy or lobbying efforts directed toward legislative initiatives that directly impact SFSC.

g. State performance indicators will require monitoring and internal adjustments to receive new state operational revenue.
Strategic Initiatives and Goals

The vision statement is supported by six “pillars of excellence”: Leadership, Relevance, Destination, Partnership, Technology, and Quality. Pillars of excellence serve as broad, overarching themes and provide context to the plan’s strategic initiatives, which symbolize major thrusts SFSC will pursue to achieve its collective vision. Strategic initiatives are long-term (three to five years) and serve to provide focus for more specific goals. Goals, in contrast to initiatives, are short-term (e.g., two to three years); they represent specific steps or building blocks needed to accomplish a strategic initiative.

1. Develop Exemplary Student Services Programs that Support Student Success
   a. Develop best practice intervention programs and initiatives that increase retention and graduation to include intrusive academic advising, early alert, and initiatives for specific populations
   b. Expand advising services leading to increased retention, completion rates, transfer, and employment
   c. Develop enrollment analytics to project recruitment, enrollment, and graduation
   d. Create new financial support initiatives and opportunities for students

2. Formulate Responsive Programs that Meet Community Needs
   a. Develop initiatives to include pathway connections for high school students interested in enrolling at SFSC
   b. Present performances, workshops, lecture/demonstrations, classes, in-school residencies and other performing arts programs to reach 10,000 SFSC and non-SFSC students, ages 5 and over per year
   c. Create a Florida art and culture exhibit that travels throughout the state
   d. Establish new educational partnerships that support SFSC programs
   e. Increase the number of evening, weekend, and online course offerings
3. Provide Students with an Engaging Learning Experience Within and Beyond the Classroom

   a. Implement an open educational resource (OER) plan
   b. Integrate undergraduate research at the course level

4. Create Innovative Joint Ventures and Partnerships that Drive Regional Economic Growth

   Create regional centers of excellence at all campus locations

5. Develop and Implement Diverse Strategies that will Increase Funding Needed to Support Institutional Initiatives

   a. Secure initial funding to support curriculum advancements and innovative teaching labs to include:
      1. Precision agriculture
      2. Health sciences
      3. Advanced Technology Center
   b. Complete a $10,000,000 unrestricted endowment campaign to provide alternative funding for the college in perpetuity
6 Provide Programs and Resources that Inspire Employee Growth/Development

a. Create a leadership program that will assist employees with career advancement, inspire excellence, and provide training/awareness of institutional practices, compliance issues, and personal responsibility

b. Enhance employee recognition for service, performance, and advancement

c. Institute an advanced professional development program that highlights current teaching methodologies aimed at increasing student engagement and learning