

Assurance Argument
South Florida State College - Avon Park,
FL

Review date: 04-13-2026

Welcome Message for Review Team

Welcome to South Florida State College, a place where possibility becomes reality for thousands of students across Florida's Heartland. For more than six decades, SFSC has served students in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto counties, *transforming lives one student at a time*. What began in 1965 with the vision of the Florida Legislature and the determination of Avon Park's citizens has grown into an institution that serves every corner of its tri-county community. Today, SFSC operates from its campus in Avon Park and three additional locations, offering pathways from certificates and associate degrees to bachelor's degrees, designed to meet students where they are.

What makes SFSC effective is not just what is offered; it's how deeply the College is woven into the fabric of the communities it serves. SFSC prepares students for careers and long-term success through a range of academic and workforce programs, strengthened by partnerships with universities, healthcare systems, and industry leaders. Every program launched, every partnership established, and every investment made responds to one question: How does this serve our students and ultimately our service region?

Since SFSC's founding in 1965, South Florida State College has embraced a mission that is both ambitious and personal: *to transform lives through quality education*. Despite being among the five smallest institutions by full-time equivalency (FTE) in the Florida College System, SFSC is one of the most comprehensive community colleges in the State. From adult education and welding certificates to associate degrees and university transfer programs, SFSC offers a pathway for every aspiration and every stage of life in our tri-county rural service district.

At the heart of everything SFSC does is the College's mission: we "believe in the worth of each student and, through all educational programs and services, seek to develop human potential and create brighter futures." These are not just words on a wall; they are a commitment to our students and our communities. With the projection that 60% of Americans will need a high-quality credential beyond high school, SFSC's collegewide goals are aligned with its mission, vision, and Mission Possible strategic plan:

1. Develop exemplary student services programs that support student success
2. Formulate responsive programs that meet community needs
3. Provide students with engaging learning experiences within and beyond the classroom
4. Create innovative programs and partnerships that drive regional economic growth
5. Provide programs and resources that inspire employee growth and development

SFSC serves students at four locations across rural and underserved communities where educational attainment and economic opportunity have historically been limited. SFSC is committed to raising postsecondary credential attainment across its service district through student support, career pathways, university transfer programs, and a focus on academic quality.

At its core, South Florida State College is a community where innovation is born of necessity and where collaboration and shared governance are not ideals to aspire to; they are the way

SFSC works. Institutional effectiveness processes ensure that data-informed planning and continuous improvement are woven into everything the College does, from investments in student services and educational technology to strengthening course quality and retention. SFSC measures what matters because its students' success depends on it.

South Florida State College respectfully presents its Assurance Argument and corresponding documents to the Higher Learning Commission. In preparing for the Higher Learning Commission's Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation, SFSC's team of educators and student services professionals paused to ask the questions that matter most: What defines us as an institution? How do we tell our story in a way that captures its full meaning? What are our students saying about the difference SFSC has made in their lives? Are we, collectively, living up to our mission every day? What does the data reveal, and more importantly, who are the people behind it? The Assurance Argument represents our best and most honest answers to these questions.

As South Florida State College steps forward in its transition to accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission, it does so with respect for the values of integrity, accountability, and continuous improvement that make this process meaningful. The College is grateful for the students, faculty, staff, and community partners who make SFSC what it is. Together, they present this Assurance Argument not merely as a compliance document, but as a statement of commitment to the people and communities of SFSC's tri-county service district.

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A. Mission Alignment

The institution's educational programs, enrollment profile and scope of operations align with its publicly articulated mission.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission provides the framework for all institutional decisions, ensuring that SFSC remains student-centered, community-focused, and aligned with the educational and economic needs of its tri-county service district of Hardee, Highlands, and DeSoto counties. The defined mission appears in District Board of Trustees (DBOT) Policy 1.02, Vision, Mission, and Institutional Core Values, as it shapes every policy that follows. Section 1001.64, Florida Statutes, "Florida College System Institution Boards of Trustees; Powers and Duties" gives authority to the SFSC District Board of Trustees to create policy aligned with the SFSC mission.

The mission was established in 2013 when the College expanded its educational offerings to include baccalaureate degrees. In the December 2013 DBOT Meeting Minutes and its accompanying Exhibit F, the mission statement was reviewed, approved, and accepted as the College's compass, defining its purpose, directing its priorities, and inspiring its community. Following the initial establishment of the mission, it is reviewed and approved by the DBOT each year.

The College's mission, vision, and core values are accessible via the website, the Student Handbook, and the College Catalog, which can all be accessed by the public and the SFSC community in a digital format. The College's mission, vision, and core values are also printed and on display at the entrance to the president's office, in the boardroom, and in other physical locations throughout SFSC's campuses, including its additional locations.

As an open-access institution, SFSC welcomes and supports students of varied racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, and ability backgrounds, as evidenced by its 2024 IPEDS Data Feedback Report. SFSC enrolls approximately 3,807 students annually across its multicampus service district, which encompasses the rural and underserved communities of Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto counties. The student population includes traditional and adult learners, student-athletes, and dual-enrolled high school students, many of whom balance coursework alongside employment and family responsibilities.

With a student body that is 43% Hispanic, SFSC is recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). Black or

African American students represent 11% of the student population, and white students comprise 36%, further reflecting SFSC's commitment to serving a heterogeneous and evolving region. The College also serves a high proportion of part-time learners, who make up 59% of the student population, while 41% attend full-time, demonstrating SFSC's role in providing flexible pathways for working adults and non-traditional students.

Additionally, 60% of SFSC students receive Federal Pell Grants, indicating that the College serves a significant population of learners from low-income households. This financial aid indicator underscores SFSC's mission to expand access to higher education, support economic mobility, and provide affordable academic and workforce pathways for students who may otherwise face barriers to postsecondary attainment.

In addition, 27% of SFSC students identify as first-generation college students, meaning they are the first in their families to pursue a postsecondary degree of any type. This population often faces unique challenges navigating admissions, academic expectations, and financial aid processes without prior family experience. Through its commitment to creating and maintaining an open-access and learning-centered environment, the College offers comprehensive services to ease the financial, academic, and personal challenges of pursuing higher education for first-generation students and those who have prior experience of any kind with higher education. The SFSC Office of Student Services provides financial aid, admissions, registration, counseling, tutoring, and career guidance through the Office of Financial Aid, the Office of Admissions, Registration, and Records, the Center for Advising and Counseling, the Testing Center, the Tutoring and Learning Center, and the Career Development Center. These coordinated efforts demonstrate the College's commitment to fostering student success and ensuring that every learner has the support needed to achieve academic, personal, and career goals and develop their potential.

After admission, students are required to complete the New Student Orientation – Guide to Personal Success (GPS), an online program designed to introduce them to essential academic and support services, highlight available technology and campus resources, and equip them with the skills needed to navigate SFSC successfully. In addition, newly hired employees participate in New Hire Orientation each term. This three-hour program introduces employees to College leadership, safety and security procedures and contacts, the institutional mission and values, and the benefits and services available through the Office of Human Resources. Through these structured onboarding experiences, students and employees are welcomed into a learning-centered environment and gain the foundational knowledge necessary to contribute to SFSC's culture of excellence, student success, and community service. Orientation supports the College's mission by ensuring all members of the campus community understand the resources, expectations, and opportunities that promote academic achievement, professional growth, and access to life-changing educational pathways across SFSC's four campus locations.

From academic and workforce programs to strategic planning, budgeting, and student services, SFSC's mission is the foundation upon which institutional goals are built, as evident in Mission: Possible, the College's strategic plan. Faculty, staff, and administrators intentionally reference the mission when developing curricula, engaging with community partners, designing student support initiatives, and assessing student learning outcomes. This mission-driven approach ensures that decisions and resources directly support student

learning, access, and success.

Through collaboration with local leaders, employers, advisory councils, and community organizations, the College continuously evaluates regional needs and develops educational pathways and support services that align with its mission of advancing the social, cultural, environmental, and economic prosperity of the communities it serves. By connecting actions and policies to its mission, SFSC demonstrates a consistent commitment to serving its tri-county region while preparing students for academic achievement, meaningful careers, and engaged citizenship.

To support students inside and outside the classroom, the College's budget development process allocates funding and ensures resources are aligned with institutional priorities. Guided by Policy 4.02 – Budget and Procedure 4030 – Budget Development, SFSC uses program-specific data, student needs assessments, and academic prioritization to determine how funds are distributed to best advance student learning and institutional effectiveness. This structured process promotes fiscal responsibility and transparency, while ensuring that academic programs, student support services, and workforce initiatives receive appropriate resources. By intentionally directing funds toward instructional quality, essential student services, technology, and support programs, SFSC reinforces its mission to provide high-quality, affordable education and to prepare students for academic, professional, and personal success within the communities it serves. Strategic budget decisions reflect the College's commitment to student success, continuous improvement, and responsible stewardship of public resources within the ever-changing communities that SFSC is dedicated to serving.

When developing new academic and workforce programs, they are designed to meet the educational and economic needs of the service region. For example, in 2022, South Florida State College introduced the Drafting program to meet the expanding demand for skilled professionals in the region. College administrators engage with local business leaders to evaluate community and industry needs, and to identify strategic actions for program development and sustainability, as evidenced by the letters of support from local agencies. Upon program implementation, a Drafting advisory council was established for SFSC to collaborate with local industry partners ensuring that students receive training aligned with workforce expectations. This collaboration integrates industry-standard software and emphasizes the development of skills identified as essential by local employers setting students on a path to opportunity.

To ensure the public and community members are well-informed about the educational opportunities available to them, SFSC disseminates print and digital information through multiple communication channels and materials. In collaboration with program directors, the Office of Community Relations and Marketing maintains a comprehensive collection of brochures, rack cards, and digital resources that highlight the College's academic pathways, workforce programs, and enrichment opportunities. These efforts reflect SFSC's commitment to transparency, public communication, and open access to information, ensuring prospective and current students, as well as community partners, can make informed decisions that support their educational and career goals in alignment with the College's mission.

Sources

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- AA1.A084 SFSC Drafting Letter of Support
- AA1.A018 Lake Placid Vision and Mission
- AA4.A141 - Drafting Advisory Committee Meeting 4.3.2025
- AA4.A119 - Advisory Committee Minutes HVAC 2024
- AA4.A115 - Minutes for Spring 2025 Radiography Advisory Committee Meeting
- AA4.A002 - Mission Possible - Strategic Plan
- AA3.D020 - Student Orientation and FYE Requirements
- AA3.G004 - NCCBP Report of National Aggregate Data 2024
- AA1.A082 - Procedure 4030-Budget-Development-and-Budget-Amendment
- AA1.A120 Health Sciences Brochure
- AA1.A122 Advising and Counseling Rack Card
- AA1.A124 Cosmetology webpage
- AA2.A052 - New Employee Orientation - Schedule and Content
- AA1.A005 - Florida Statute 1001.64 - Florida College System Institution Boards of Trustees Powers and Duties
- AA1.A007- District Board of Trustees Packet December 11 2013 p. 2
- AA1.A007- District Board of Trustees Packet December 11 2013 p. 2 (page number 2)
- AA1.A009 - District Board of Trustees Minutes December 11 2013 p. 3-4
- AA1.A009 - District Board of Trustees Minutes December 11 2013 p. 3-4 (page number 3)
- AA1.A009 - District Board of Trustees Minutes December 11 2013 p. 3-4 (page number 4)
- AA1.A010 December 2013 Exhibit F
- AA1.A011 - SFSC Mission, Vision, and Core Values Webpage
- AA1.A013 - 2025-2026 Student Handbook - Mission Vision and Core Values
- AA1.A015 - 2025-2026 College Catalog - Mission Vision and Core Values
- AA1.A017 - SFSC Mission, Vision, and Values Display
- AA1.A020 - 2024 IPEDS Data Feedback Report
- AA1.A025 - 2025_HSILists
- AA1.A050 - Student Support Services
- AA1.A052 - Office of Financial Aid
- AA1.A003 - SFSC Policy 1.02 Vision Mission and Institutional Core Values
- AA1.A054 - Office of Admissions
- AA1.A056 -Advising and Counseling Center
- AA1.A058 - Testing and Assessment Center
- AA1.A060 - Tutoring and Learning Center
- AA1.A062 - Career Development Center
- AA1.A080 - SFSC Policy 4.02 Budget

1.B. Mission and Public Good

The institution's operation of the academic enterprise demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good.

Argument

South Florida State College's (SFSC) faculty, staff, and students engage in activities that advance the mission and strengthen community ties through involvement, collaboration, and service learning. SFSC's mission documents explicitly state the College's responsibility to serve its communities and contribute to their educational, economic, and cultural vitality. The mission appears in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, and on the institutional website, underscoring the College's commitment to transparency and public purpose. The mission emphasizes preparing students for workforce success, fostering lifelong learning, and advancing the prosperity and quality of life within its tri-county service district.

This community-focused mission guides program development, partnerships with local school districts and employers, outreach to rural populations and non-profit organizations, cultural and enrichment offerings, and the delivery of academic and workforce programs designed to meet regional needs.

Emphasizing its dedication to the community, the SFSC Gives Back initiative brings teams of faculty and staff together to volunteer their time and talents supporting local organizations in the advancement of their individual missions. Participants have prepared the grounds of a school for an anniversary celebration, stocked and organized food pantries, loaded supplies for an international health organization, and painted and refurbished the home of a disabled veteran, among other community service efforts. Following its inaugural year, the list of SFSC Gives Back opportunities has expanded to include additional local nonprofit organizations, reflecting the College's growing culture of service and collaboration. This initiative embodies SFSC's mission of community engagement by fostering civic responsibility, strengthening local partnerships, and demonstrating the College's ongoing commitment to improving social, cultural, and economic awareness within its service district. Our students also take the spirit of community support seriously and participate in strengthening those around them through various volunteer events, such as tutoring assistance for peers, assisting instructors in the laboratory, and implementing a book donation drive for local children.

SFSC fulfills its mission by aligning programs, partnerships, and resources with the educational and workforce needs of its service district. Through the College's budget development process, funds are allocated to enhance students' access to equipment, training, and technology. In collaboration with Commercial Truck Driving, SFSC identified the need for a truck-driving simulator to strengthen workforce preparation and to maintain safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to a request by the Florida governor to support rapid response workforce programs, the College organized its 2022 state appropriation request, detailing the need to provide students with advanced, hands-on experiences that enhance readiness for careers in commercial transportation, helping to

address the regional and statewide shortage of qualified truck drivers. The College's investment in such initiatives reflects its mission to provide high-quality workforce education and its ongoing commitment to meeting the economic and employment needs of its service district. In addition to the Commercial Truck Driving program, SFSC continues to strengthen partnerships with business, industry, and community organizations to ensure that its programs remain responsive to local workforce demands and aligned with the College's mission of fostering regional growth and opportunity.

Actualizing local business partnerships, advisory councils have been established to strengthen and sustain SFSC's workforce programs. Through biannual meetings, faculty and industry representatives collaborate to identify emerging workforce trends, evaluate program performance, and determine the best ways to enhance instruction to better serve students and the regional economy. These partnerships inform curriculum updates, promote the integration of specialized training and industry-specific technology, and ensure that students acquire the knowledge and competencies required by local and regional employers in their chosen career fields. This ongoing engagement demonstrates SFSC's commitment to aligning academic offerings with workforce needs while advancing its mission to foster economic development and student success across its service district.

One example of this collaboration is SFSC's partnership with Nucor Steel Florida, which led to the development of the Nucor Florida Mechanical Technical Academy. This program was designed in direct response to Nucor's workforce needs and provides students with specialized training in advanced manufacturing systems. Through this partnership, students gain both classroom instruction and hands-on experience that earn them an associate degree in Engineering Technology and prepare them for immediate employment upon program completion. Nucor supports participants by offering paid training opportunities and tuition assistance, while SFSC provides the academic foundation and technical instruction necessary for industry success. This partnership exemplifies how SFSC fulfills its mission by aligning education with regional economic needs, strengthening the local talent pipeline, and fostering sustainable community growth through workforce development.

Building on this model of collaborative workforce development, SFSC has also partnered with regional health care providers to address critical needs in the medical field, most notably through the AdventHealth Nursing Scholars Program. The partnership between SFSC and AdventHealth exemplifies the College's commitment to addressing regional workforce needs through collaborative education and training. The AdventHealth Nursing Scholars Program was established to expand the pipeline of qualified nurses serving local hospitals and health care facilities. Through this partnership, students receive financial support, clinical experience, and direct employment opportunities with AdventHealth upon graduation. In turn, the College provides rigorous academic preparation and simulation-based training that aligns with industry standards and patient care expectations. This collaboration not only helps alleviate the nursing shortage across the region but also advances SFSC's mission by promoting access to high-quality education while supporting student success and strengthening the health and well-being of the communities it serves. In addition, students within the Division of Health Sciences receive scholarships each year from Florida Blue Cross Blue Shield and the Florida College System Foundation, matched by the SFSC Foundation, that cover tuition, textbooks, lab fees, and childcare. Together, these partnerships demonstrate SFSC's mission by combining education, industry, and

community to meet evolving workforce demands. The College continues to evaluate and expand such collaborations through its community relationships, ensuring that program development remains responsive to employer needs, student goals, and the long-term vitality of the region it serves.

As each school year progresses, community relations events are planned to serve SFSC's students, staff, faculty, and local community. Staff and faculty attend local career fairs and expos to interact and meet local community members and answer any questions about the programs and services that the College provides. The Career Development Center hosts Career Cafés that give students and the community access to local businesses that offer career advice and job opportunities. Two Career and Transfer Fairs are planned for each school year, one in the fall and one in the spring, that bring local and regional businesses and institutions to SFSC to support the future success of its students. Students and community members receive contacts and connections at these events that can propel them into their desired careers and financial independence, ultimately creating brighter futures for all.

Sources

- AA1.B049 - Advisory Council Invite
- AA1.B040 - BAS SM Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 11.24
- AA1.B041 - Mechatronics Advisory Committee Minutes Fall 2024
- AA1.B042 - Minutes for Spring 2024 Radiography Advisory Committee Meeting
- AA1.B029 - Commercial Vehicle Driver Proposal
- AA1.B090 - 100 Years at the 100 Building Oct 18 2025
- AA1.B091 - Highlands County Career and Community Service Fair January 9 2025
- AA1.B092 - Desoto_Hardee_Sebring College Fair Aug 19 2025
- AA1.B093 - Lakeshore Mall Expo Aug 2 2025
- AA1.B094 - Back to School Bash Hardee County Aug 9 2025
- AA1.B095 - Lake Placid Career Cafe March 20 2025
- AA1.B010 - SFSC Gives Back Participation List
- AA1.B013 - Fall Pantry Contest
- AA1.B015 - Gives Back October 2025
- AA1.B017 - Gives Back September 2024
- AA1.B022 - PTK Submitted College Project 2023
- AA1.B024 - PTK Service Project supporting literacy 2024
- AA1.B026 - PTK 2025 College Project
- AA1.B028 - Service Learning Scans - Honors Program_Redacted
- AA1.B030 - Student Athlete Volunteer Activities
- AA1.B050 - Nucor Florida Mechanical Technical Academy
- AA1.B060 - AdventHealth Nursing Scholars 2022
- AA1.B062 - AdventHealth Posting About SFSC Nursing Scholars 2023
- AA1.B080 - FL Blue Health Science Scholarships
- AA1.B081 - FLBCBS Scholarships Press Release
- AA1.B100 - Career Cafe_Communications Careers Sept 17 2025
- AA1.B101 - Career and Transfer Fair Flyer_Sept 10 2025
- AA1.B102 - Career and Transfer Fair Flyer_March 26, 2025

- AA1.B900 Health Sciences Scholarship Article

1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

Rooted in its mission of open access and service to the region, South Florida State College (SFSC) strives to provide every student and employee with the tools, respect, and opportunities needed to excel. The College embraces the varied strengths and perspectives of its students, employees, and community partners to cultivate a culture of belonging, mutual respect, and shared success. At SFSC, there is active participation in a variety of initiatives that foster community-focused learning, civic engagement, and collaborative service in alignment with the College's mission.

Throughout their experience at SFSC, students engage in activities both inside and outside the classroom that promote civic responsibility, community involvement, and professional growth. To provide opportunities for students to interact with the public and apply their learning in meaningful ways, instructors and coaches organize partnership events with local organizations where students volunteer their time and expertise. For example, nursing students participated in three community health events during the academic year, including assisting Who We Play For with EKG screenings during annual sports physicals for Highlands County student-athletes. Through this initiative, students gained valuable clinical experience while reinforcing the importance of early detection and preventive health care in saving lives.

In partnership with the Children's Museum of Highlands County, a group of SFSC Nursing students hosted a Boo Boo Clinic during a Kids Night Out event that served more than 30 local children. The interactive clinic provided students with hands-on experience engaging with children of various ages and behaviors, enhancing their skills in pediatric care and communication. Three educational stations were set up throughout the Museum, each focused on a different area of health such as heartbeats and X-rays, exercise and nutrition, and personal cleanliness. The event not only helped reduce children's fear of healthcare environments but also enabled Nursing students to develop greater confidence and empathy in caring for young patients.

Nursing students also participated in a Gift of Life Bone Marrow Donor Drive on campus, demonstrating SFSC's commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility. Through their efforts, the event helped raise awareness about bone marrow donations and registered new donors for life-saving matches. Remarkably, because of this initiative, an SFSC student was identified as a bone marrow match for a 50-year-old woman with leukemia. This outcome reflects both the compassion and community-minded spirit fostered through SFSC's programs.

The Student Government Association (SGA) leads the student body in social, civic, and

professional development activities that enrich the student experience and embody SFSC's mission to cultivate learning, leadership, and service. Student organizations and clubs participate in community events that promote civic engagement and foster personal growth, cultural awareness, and social responsibility. At the end of each academic year, club members are recognized before the District Board of Trustees (DBOT), and a summary of annual activities is included in the Board's monthly meeting agenda.

Throughout the year, club advisors and members highlight a variety of impactful initiatives, which has included: the Theatre Club attending local and regional performances and presenting original sketches; the Dental Assisting Club volunteering with the Special Olympics and the Florida Mission of Mercy and attending the Florida Dental Convention; Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) organizing a Literacy Drive that collected more than 500 children's books for local daycares and the Champion for Children Foundation; the Latin Student Organization and the African American Association hosting cultural celebrations for Latin American Heritage Month and Black History Month; the Veterans Club providing mentoring and support to on-campus veterans; and Rotaract partnering with Butterfly Rising to give away hygiene kits and clothing and Hands for the Homeless to organize and deliver food to those facing poverty in Highlands County. These activities reflect SFSC's commitment to developing engaged citizens and fostering a campus culture grounded in collaboration, belonging, and community service.

SFSC's athletic teams embody the College's mission of fostering leadership, teamwork, and community engagement by volunteering their time through local events and service initiatives. The Baseball team assists annually at golf tournaments hosted by AdventHealth and local nonprofit organizations, reinforcing the College's commitment to civic involvement and partnership. Likewise, the Softball, Volleyball, and Cross-Country teams volunteered at a local elementary school fall festival, supporting youth development and strengthening ties between the College and the surrounding community.

In addition, SFSC faculty and staff demonstrate the College's mission of service and community partnership through a volunteer initiative titled SFSC Gives Back. Each year, a calendar of volunteer opportunities is developed to encourage employee participation in meaningful service projects throughout the College's service district. These opportunities allow employees to model civic responsibility and strengthen the College's connection with the communities it serves. Partner organizations have included Habitat for Humanity, local food pantries, Ridge Area ARC, Read Across America, Hands for the Homeless, and the Hardee Help Center. Since its inception, SFSC Gives Back has expanded to include additional community partners and service opportunities, reflecting the College's ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of compassion, collaboration, and civic engagement.

The SFSC community stands alongside its neighbors, recognizing shared experiences and working together to meet needs, offer support, and build a stronger region for all. This caring culture is demonstrated daily through intentional acts of service, compassion, and connection among students, faculty, and staff. Throughout the year, clubs and organizations actively stock Pete's Pantry with nonperishable food items and hygiene products to support students and employees experiencing food insecurity or unexpected hardship. At additional campus locations, a Lunch Box and Coffee Bar are available to ensure students have access to nourishment and a welcoming space, reinforcing the belief that learners are better

able to achieve and thrive when their basic needs are met. These services are made possible through the generosity of community partners who sponsor and regularly replenish the Lunch Box and Coffee Bar stations, demonstrating the shared commitment between SFSC and its regional stakeholders to support student well-being and success.

These efforts reflect the College's commitment to dignity, belonging, and shared responsibility, reminding the SFSC community that success is a collective endeavor. By extending care to one another and the community, SFSC fosters an environment where individuals feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed, both inside and beyond the classroom.

Sources

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- AA1.C004 Nurses interact with children at Boo Boo Clinic _ Highlands News-Sun _ midfloridanewspapers.com
- AA1.C006 Bone Marrow Donation Flyer
- AA1.C008 SGA DBOT 2025
- AA1.C012 Student Volunteers AdventHealth golf
- AA1.C014 Student Volunteers golf
- AA1.C016 Student Volunteers Fall Festival
- AA1.C020 Petes Pantry Raffle
- AA1.C022 Petes Pantry Salad Bar Fundraiser Flyer
- AA1.C030 - SFSC Gives Back for Spring Calendar of Events
- AA1.C042 - LunchBox APA reports
- AA1.C045 - AllFaiths Food Bank in-building Foodbank contract for students and staff

Criterion 1 Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) fulfills its mission by providing high-quality, affordable education that supports the academic, workforce, and personal goals of its students while advancing the cultural and economic vitality of its service district. The College's mission is prominently communicated and actively guides decision-making, budgeting, and planning processes. Faculty, staff, and administrators align programs, services, and community partnerships to promote access, learning, and student success. As an open-access and Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), SFSC embraces the responsibility to serve a broad and varied population, ensuring that each learner has the resources and support needed to succeed. The College fosters a caring, inclusive environment where students and employees collaborate to uplift one another and strengthen the region. Through mission-driven actions, SFSC demonstrates integrity, transparency, and a steadfast commitment to the communities it serves.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A. Integrity

Actions taken by the institution's governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) fulfills its mission *“to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services ... in partnership with organizations and communities”* by maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in all areas of operation. The College's governance, policies, and daily practices demonstrate ethical and responsible conduct in alignment with Florida Statutes, State Board of Education Rules, and Higher Learning Commission expectations.

Ethical Governance and Board Oversight

The District Board of Trustees (DBOT) provides ethical and transparent governance consistent with its statutory authority under Florida Statute 1001.64. Policy 2.02 District Board of Trustees defines the Board's fiduciary duties, oversight responsibilities, and authority to establish institutional policy. Trustees annually acknowledge adherence to ethical standards through signed Board Code of Ethics forms.

Board minutes document transparency in institutional decision-making, including approval of budgets, personnel actions, policy revisions, and mission-related initiatives. Independent financial audits, such as the 2023 SFSC Audit and 2024 SFSC Audit, confirm fiscal integrity and compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and state requirements.

Through these established governance practices, SFSC demonstrates its commitment to transparency, fiscal accountability, and responsible oversight consistent with its mission.

Institutional Integrity in Human Resources Practices

SFSC ensures that employment practices reflect transparency and merit-based selection. Procedure 5240 Employee Recruitment and Selection and Procedure 2200 Hiring Committee establish structured, equitable hiring processes emphasizing fair evaluation and diverse representation on screening committees. Policy 5.12 Employment of Relatives prevents nepotism by requiring disclosure and approval of any potential conflicts.

Professional expectations are further defined through the Professional Standards for Faculty and Academic Administrators and the Employee Handbook, which consolidates ethics,

confidentiality, compliance, and grievance procedures. Employee rights to fair and timely resolution of workplace issues are established in Procedure 1091 Career Service and Professional Staff Grievance.

Evidence of professional resolution is reflected in the SFSC Employee Complaint Summary, which shows that all employee grievances were promptly reviewed and resolved without systemic issues. Ongoing training on compliance and ethics occurs through Vector Solutions and in-person orientation programs.

Together, these processes affirm that SFSC's personnel practices uphold ethical standards and foster a professional, inclusive environment that supports its mission.

Institutional Integrity in Student Rights and Due Process

SFSC demonstrates responsible and ethical treatment of students through clear, published procedures for grievances, appeals, and disciplinary matters. The Student Handbook 2025–26 outlines the Student Code of Conduct, Judicial Procedures, and protections of due process. The College ensures a structured, multi-level grievance process for academic and non-academic concerns through the Student Grievance Process.

Formal grievance records show transparent, consistent handling of student concerns. The Summary of Student Grievances 2025 confirms few grievances filed and fair resolution consistent with Procedure 1095 as well as Title IX concerns (both employee and student), as shown in Title IX reports per SFSC Procedure 5230. Academic fairness is maintained through the Academic Appeals Committee, which processes student appeals and reviews procedures annually.

The Complaint Policy for Out-of-State Online Students ensures distance learners receive equitable recourse through established state and accreditor channels. Collectively, these mechanisms ensure ethical, fair, and transparent treatment of all students.

Compliance, Data Integrity, and Information Security

SFSC maintains integrity in handling sensitive data through detailed information security procedures. Procedure 2155 Information Systems Security and Procedure 2156 Information Security describe the College's framework for safeguarding institutional and personal data. The College adheres to the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles DAVID Use Policy, which governs lawful access to driver data, user deactivation, and quarterly compliance reviews. The College's adherence was verified by an independent CPA in the 2024 DAVID System Attestation Report and in the 2024 Q1 and 2 DAVID internal audit.

These measures confirm that SFSC's information systems maintain confidentiality, integrity, and accountability, supporting public trust in institutional operations.

Campus Safety, Security, and Emergency Preparedness

Ethical responsibility extends to the physical safety of students and employees. SFSC's Policy 7.06 National Disasters and Civil Disorders and related emergency response procedures (7032 Emergency Evacuation Plans, 7037 Campus Safety Precautions, 7060

Emergency Response Plan, and 7061 Emergency and Timely Warning Notifications) define clear expectations for campus safety and compliance with federal Clery Act requirements.

Preventive education and safety awareness are reinforced through the SFSC Safety Awareness Guide, distributed to all members of the College community. Policies addressing sexual misconduct, discrimination, and retaliation are communicated through the Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Pamphlet and Misconduct Resolution Procedures. These materials ensure that SFSC maintains a learning and working environment free of unlawful discrimination and harassment.

In January 2026, SFSC further reinforced its commitment to campus safety through a mandatory Safety Awareness and Response Workshop conducted in collaboration with local law enforcement. The training focused on situational awareness, emergency response protocols, and active assailant preparedness. Following the workshop, the College administered a Safety Awareness Survey to all participants to assess awareness, identify potential vulnerabilities, and inform continuous improvement efforts. Survey results indicate strong engagement across campuses, with a majority of respondents reporting increased discussion of emergency planning within their work areas and providing actionable feedback related to physical security, communication systems, and emergency preparedness. The findings are being reviewed by College leadership to prioritize facility improvements, communication enhancements, and future training initiatives, reinforcing SFSC's ongoing, data-informed approach to campus safety and emergency preparedness.

Shared Governance and Ethical Decision-Making

SFSC promotes participatory governance through Policy 2.18 College Committees, which authorizes the president to establish representative committees for decision-making and communication. The structure includes faculty, staff, students, and community participation to ensure that institutional decisions are mission-driven and ethically grounded.

Conclusion

Through well-documented policies, consistent application, and transparent oversight, South Florida State College demonstrates ethical and responsible conduct at all levels of operation. Governance integrity, fair employment and student practices, fiscal accountability, data protection, and safety compliance collectively illustrate the College's unwavering commitment to integrity in fulfilling its mission of providing quality, accessible education that advances the educational, cultural, and economic development of its communities.

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2.B. Transparency

The institution presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public with respect to its educational programs and any claims it makes related to the educational experience.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) is committed to transparency and accountability in all aspects of its operations. As an open-access institution, the College ensures that information about its programs, finances, and services is accurate, accessible, and aligned with its mission to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services. This commitment is reflected across the College's communication channels, publications, and community partnerships, which promote clarity and openness in support of the educational, cultural, and economic development of its service district, DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

Fiscal Accountability and Institutional Governance

SFSC clearly identifies and communicates the entities responsible for institutional leadership and fiscal oversight. Information about the District Board of Trustees, the College President, and the Vice President for Administrative Services is published on the College's website under [The College – Administration](#) and under [Trustees](#), ensuring that students, employees, and the public can easily understand who governs and manages College operations.

[Board meeting notices, agendas, and approved minutes](#) are posted on the College website and open to the public, providing ongoing visibility into [policy decisions](#), [budget approvals](#), and [institutional priorities](#). Board policies and related governance materials are also accessible online and provide clarity regarding institutional authority and oversight.

Through these publicly available resources, SFSC demonstrates transparency in leadership and responsible stewardship of public resources, consistent with its mission to support the educational and economic development of its service district.

Academic Integrity, Program Transparency, and Admissions

SFSC provides comprehensive and accurate information about its [academic programs](#), [degree requirements](#), and [admissions criteria](#) through multiple publicly accessible platforms. The [College Catalog](#) and the [SFSC website](#) serve as the primary sources of academic and admissions information, presenting comprehensive details on programs, [course descriptions](#), [academic policies](#), and [graduation requirements](#).

Each program's admissions process is clearly defined · ensuring fair access and a consistent understanding for all applicants. Program-specific webpages outline admission requirements and selection criteria for each academic area, including [health sciences](#), [education](#), and [workforce programs](#). These requirements are communicated in plain language to guide students from initial inquiry through completion, ensuring that expectations and application

processes are easy to understand.

The College Catalog defines the learning outcomes and required courses for all degree-seeking students, consistent with the statewide articulation framework under [Florida Statute 1007.25](#). These resources identify how general education courses support [communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning skills](#), ensuring that credits transfer seamlessly to other Florida institutions through the [state's common course numbering](#) and [articulation system](#). Transparency extends to the evaluation of student learning in [general education courses](#), where a well-developed assessment process of [academic rubrics](#) outlines expectations and assessment criteria.

Experiential learning expectations—such as [internships](#), clinical rotations, and [field experiences](#)—are formalized through written [affiliation agreements](#) and described in [program handbooks](#) and [evaluation rubrics](#). These resources are distributed to students through their academic programs and are available for public review upon request, providing clarity for students, faculty, and partner organizations regarding [experiential learning](#) requirements and expectations.

Through these mechanisms, SFSC ensures that its academic operations are open, consistent, and fully aligned with state standards and the institution's mission to provide quality programs and services that foster lifelong learning.

Academic Support and Student Resources

SFSC's academic and support services are presented clearly to students and the public through the College's website, printed materials, and campus communications. Free tutoring is available to all students in writing, math, and science, both in person and online, ensuring broad access to academic assistance. The [Tutoring and Learning Center](#) provides individualized and group tutoring at no cost to students, supporting both course content and study skills across disciplines. The College's partnership with [Brainfuse](#) expands this support with 24/7 virtual tutoring across disciplines, while online tutorials guide students in navigating Brightspace, the College's learning management system.

The [College Library](#) offers students robust access to learning resources across all campuses, including [databases](#), [eBooks](#), [streaming media](#), and [individualized research assistance](#). In addition, the College supports students with special needs or personal challenges through its [Advising and Counseling Center](#), [Disability Services](#), and [BayCare Student Assistance Program](#), all of which are outlined on the College website. These services provide academic guidance, mental health resources, and accessibility support to help students make the most of their educational opportunities.

Faculty-mentored [undergraduate research opportunities](#) allow students to participate in scholarly inquiry and [present their findings](#) at local and state conferences, demonstrating transparency in the academic enrichment process.

These services reflect SFSC's commitment to fostering a supportive, student-centered environment that empowers learning, academic growth, and success.

Student Engagement, Leadership, and Participation

SFSC encourages active student engagement through transparent communication about opportunities for involvement, leadership, and service. The Student Government Association (SGA) functions as the official voice of the student body and is openly recognized in college communications as a liaison between students, faculty, and administration. Numerous student clubs and organizations support varied academic, cultural, and social interests, ensuring opportunities for a wide range of student interests and academic pursuits.

The College further promotes leadership and civic responsibility through honor societies and service initiatives: Phi Theta Kappa recognizes academic excellence, while projects like SFSC Gives Back demonstrate student and employee participation in volunteer activities throughout the service district. Additionally, the College fosters student volunteerism through programs such as the Dental Hygiene community outreach and the Museum of Florida Art and Culture's (MOFAC's) volunteer opportunities .

Additionally, SFSC student-athletes contribute to campus and community life through Panther Athletics, which integrates leadership and service as part of the student experience. Each athletic team participates annually in multiple community service projects—such as local school events, veterans' commemorations, and youth programs, demonstrating the College's emphasis on civic engagement and holistic student development..

Through these transparent and accessible engagement structures, SFSC cultivates a vibrant student life experience that supports its mission to develop socially responsible and community-minded graduates.

Cultural Experiences and Community Access

The College extends its mission beyond the classroom by providing open access to cultural and artistic experiences for students and the community. The Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) offers free admission and features student and regional art exhibitions throughout the year, connecting the College's educational mission to community enrichment.

SFSC's Performing Arts Series and special events are widely promoted through brochures, websites, and social media, including information on ticket prices, seating, and sponsorships. These materials are distributed through the Office of Cultural Arts and posted on the College's public website.

These materials publicly demonstrate SFSC's collaboration with regional arts councils, schools, and community organizations, reflecting the College's ongoing commitment to cultural enrichment and community engagement. Information about performances, exhibitions, and events is broadly shared through the College's website, social media platforms, and YouTube channel, ensuring public access to cultural programming and educational opportunities.

Together, these initiatives affirm the College's role as a cultural and educational hub that promotes engagement and lifelong learning across its three-county service district.

Student and Academic Advising Transparency

SFSC communicates clearly about advising, counseling, and degree pathways to help students make informed academic and career choices. Advising services are outlined

through printed and digital materials that explain how students can plan academic goals, [register for courses](#), and [access mental health](#) or [disability support](#).

The [College Catalog](#) and [website](#) provide detailed information describing its major degree and certificate pathways, and outline the curriculum sequence, [graduation requirements](#), and [transfer](#) opportunities. The College also provides transparent information about [financial aid](#) and [Foundation-supported scholarships](#) through printed materials and the College website, helping students make informed financial decisions.

By ensuring that information is clear, accurate, and readily available, SFSC supports student persistence and success while upholding its mission of access and educational excellence.

Institutional Public Information and Accreditation

SFSC maintains open access to essential institutional information that demonstrates credibility and accountability. Faculty credentials and contact information are publicly available through the [College Catalog](#), [directory](#), [course syllabi](#), and direct email links embedded in the learning management system to ensure accessibility for all students.

The [course schedule](#), [general education options](#), and [program requirements](#) are published online and updated regularly. Accreditation information, including institutional accreditation through the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#) and programmatic accreditations in fields such as [Associate in Nursing](#), [Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#), [Dental Assistant and Dental Hygiene](#), [Radiography](#), [Surgical Services](#), [Bachelor of Science in Elementary Teacher Education](#), [Emergency Services Technician](#), and [Automotive Service Technology](#), is clearly posted on the [College's website](#) .

Students are informed on the [process](#) to file [any complaint](#) on the College's website and in the Student Handbook regarding a course experience, an academic appeal, and/or [non-course-related complaints](#). Policies outlining [academic appeals](#) and [grievance processes](#) are available in the [College Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#). In addition, the College provides a transparent [grievance process for all employees](#).

By publishing accurate and comprehensive information on its faculty, programs, and accreditation status, SFSC affirms its integrity, builds public trust, and fulfills HLC expectations for transparency and institutional accountability.

Transparency is integral to South Florida State College's identity and operations. Through clear, accurate, and accessible communication, the College demonstrates its commitment to public accountability, fiscal responsibility, and mission-centered service. Across financial practices, academic policies, student support, and community engagement, SFSC provides comprehensive information that allows students, faculty, and the public to make well-informed decisions.

This consistent commitment to openness ensures that SFSC's actions and communications reflect the integrity, accessibility, and trustworthiness expected of a publicly supported higher education institution dedicated to the advancement of learning and community well-being.

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2.C. Board Governance

In discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution's governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves.

Argument

Governing Authority and Legal Framework

South Florida State College's (SFSC) District Board of Trustees (DBOT) serves as the legally constituted governing authority for the College. The Board is recognized as a body politic and corporate entity vested with full authority to govern the institution in accordance with Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules. As defined in SFSC Policy 2.02 - South Florida State College District Board of Trustees, the Board functions as the sole policy-making body of the institution and holds responsibility for determining educational programs, assessing effectiveness, and exercising fiduciary oversight through approval of the annual budget and regular review of financial statements.

Florida Statute 1001.64 establishes that each college board of trustees is responsible for the governance, operation, and improvement of its respective Florida College System institution. The statute explicitly authorizes the board to adopt rules and policies for governance, administration, finance, curriculum, personnel, and student services, and to act independently of the president when necessary to protect institutional interests.

Together, the statute and institutional policy confirm that SFSC's Board is empowered to act autonomously, consistent with the Florida Constitution and state law, and is not subject to undue external control from political or private entities.

Institutional Independence and Ethical Safeguards

The Board's independence is reinforced by a strong ethical framework rooted in state law and College policy. SFSC Policy 1.06 – Conflict of Interest requires all trustees and employees to comply with the *Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees* as defined in Florida Statutes Chapter 112, Part III, which governs conflicts of interest, financial disclosure, and use of public office.

To prevent nepotism or favoritism, DBOT Policy 5.12 – Employment of Relatives prohibits the full-time employment of relatives of trustees or the president and restricts supervisory relationships among family members unless an exception is approved in the best interest of the College.

These policies collectively ensure impartial governance, protect against conflicts of interest, and preserve the Board's ability to act solely in the best interests of the College and its students.

Board Composition, Appointment, and Organization

Members of the SFSC DBOT are appointed by the Governor of Florida and confirmed by the Florida Senate, consistent with state statute. This process ensures public accountability, geographic representation, and diverse professional expertise across the College's service district.

The Board elects its own officers annually—chair, vice chair, and others as needed—during an organizational meeting held at the start of each fiscal year, as defined in SFSC Policy 2.02. Trustees serve without compensation but are reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the course of official duties.

Board member biographies reflect a broad range of leadership experience in public service, business, healthcare, and education, supporting a diversity of perspectives in governance and community representation. For example, Trustee Denise Grimsley, former state senator and healthcare executive, brings extensive policy expertise and regional leadership experience to the Board.

Board Duties and Fiduciary Oversight

The Board exercises its fiduciary responsibilities through consistent oversight of institutional planning, budgeting, and performance. In accordance with Florida Statute 1001.64, the DBOT adopts and approves the annual operating budget, receives and reviews periodic financial reports, and ensures that institutional resources are used efficiently and effectively to support SFSC's mission.

SFSC Policy 2.02 further charges the Board with determining which programs and services best serve district needs and assessing their effectiveness. This oversight includes reviewing the Mission: Possible Strategic Plan, approving academic program additions or modifications, and ensuring alignment of budget allocations with institutional priorities.

The Board also holds authority for the appointment, evaluation, and, when necessary, termination of the College president, ensuring that leadership performance aligns with the institution's mission and goals.

Ethical Governance and Trustee Professional Development

Ethical conduct and professional accountability are central to the Board's operations. Trustees annually acknowledge their ethical obligations under Florida law and institutional policy and conduct all business in compliance with the Florida Sunshine Law, ensuring transparency through public notice of meetings and open decision-making.

Board governance expectations are reinforced through external resources such as the ACCT Guide to Ethical Governance and the College Trustee Manual, which emphasize principles of integrity, teamwork, community engagement, and continuous learning for trustees. Trustees are encouraged to attend conferences and workshops that deepen their understanding of higher education governance.

Evidence of active engagement includes Board Chair Terry Atchley's participation in the Higher Learning Commission's 2025 Annual Conference, where he registered for the "Conversations with Presidents and Trustees" pre-conference to strengthen SFSC's

preparation for its accreditation transition and upcoming comprehensive evaluation.

Relationships with External Partners

While SFSC maintains collaborative partnerships with local employers, healthcare providers, and educational entities, ultimate authority for all agreements and institutional decisions resides with the DBOT. The Board approves all contractual relationships, memoranda of understanding, and partnership renewals, ensuring alignment with the College's mission and safeguarding against external control.

As a member institution of the Florida College System, SFSC operates within the statewide framework coordinated by the Florida Department of Education; however, the College retains full local governance through its independent DBOT, consistent with statutory provisions that preserve institutional autonomy.

Transparency and Public Accountability

All actions of the SFSC District Board of Trustees are conducted in open, publicly noticed meetings, consistent with Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law. Meeting notices, agendas, and minutes are posted on the College's website, providing transparency and public access to decision-making.

Through regular review of budgets, financial statements, and institutional reports, the Board demonstrates a sustained commitment to ethical conduct, fiduciary responsibility, and accountability to the community it serves. Board members also receive indemnification under the College's insurance policies when acting within their official capacities, further supporting responsible governance.

Summary

SFSC's District Board of Trustees exercises independent authority derived from Florida Statutes and institutional policy. Guided by a robust ethical framework, conflict-of-interest standards, and anti-nepotism policies, the Board governs with transparency and integrity. Trustees bring substantial professional expertise and engage in ongoing professional development to ensure informed, effective oversight.

Through its collective actions and adherence to law and policy, the Board of Trustees is demonstrably free from undue external influence and consistently acts in the best interests of South Florida State College and its students.

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2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The institution supports academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of knowledge as integral to high-quality teaching, learning and research.

Argument

Institutional Commitment Rooted in Mission

South Florida State College's (SFSC) mission emphasizes providing a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services and working in partnership with organizations and communities to provide leadership and a comprehensive range of opportunities for educational, cultural, and economic development. This commitment to inquiry and intellectual openness is fundamental to fulfilling that mission.

SFSC recognizes that the free exchange of ideas is essential to both the pursuit of knowledge and the preparation of students for thoughtful participation in a democratic society. The College's policies affirm the rights of faculty, staff, and students to explore ideas freely and express differing viewpoints while maintaining a culture of respect and responsibility. These expectations are embedded across institutional documents—[Policy 2.21 \(Free Expression\)](#), [Procedure 3011 \(Academic Freedom\)](#), the [Faculty Handbook \(Academic Freedom\)](#), and the [Student Handbook \(Freedom of Expression\)](#)—and are communicated to faculty, staff, and students through the distribution of official College handbooks and policy documents, ensuring consistent understanding of rights and responsibilities.

By fostering open inquiry within a respectful and inclusive learning environment, SFSC directly advances its mission to cultivate personal, cultural, and global awareness and to promote the intellectual and civic development of its service district. This foundation sets the stage for the College's demonstrated commitment to academic freedom in teaching, research, and scholarship.

Academic Freedom in Teaching and Scholarship

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of SFSC's educational mission and the foundation for high-quality instruction and scholarly inquiry. The College affirms that teaching and research flourish best in an environment where faculty and students may explore ideas freely and responsibly.

[Policy 3.01 \(Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression\)](#) and [Administrative Procedure 3011 \(Academic Freedom\)](#) incorporate the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure established by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). These guiding documents ensure that instructors may present material relevant to their disciplines, engage in scholarly research, and participate as citizens without institutional censorship or reprisal. The [Faculty Handbook](#) further reiterates that each faculty member is free to pursue and convey knowledge in their area of special training and expertise in accordance with institutional, state, and federal expectations.

SFSC operates within Florida's legislative framework while maintaining its educational mission and integrity. Oversight for the review and maintenance of institutional policies rests with the vice president for administrative services, as established in District Board of Trustees Policy 1.05 (Compliance with Policies). This structure ensures that board policies and administrative procedures remain accurate, current, and consistent with applicable state and federal requirements. The College's policies reflect alignment with Florida statutes that govern academic freedom and civic education, including Florida Statute 1004.097 (Campus Free Expression Act) and Florida Statute 1007.25 (Civic Literacy Requirements). SFSC also monitors broader state guidance, such as the Florida Department of Education's 2025 statement on federal directives and related legislation, to remain informed about evolving regulatory expectations. Within this framework, the College continues to uphold lawful academic inquiry, intellectual exploration, and balanced dialogue, principles that directly support its mission to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services.

This same principle of open dialogue extends to students. The Student Handbook affirms each student's right to freedom of inquiry and classroom expression, permitting them to examine and discuss questions of interest and to express opinions publicly and privately within lawful limits. Faculty reinforce these rights by fostering classroom environments that value respectful discourse and evidence-based reasoning. For example, POS 1041 – American Government engages students in the study of foundational documents, landmark court cases, and structured civil debates on contemporary issues. Through such experiences, students develop civic literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills that prepare them to participate thoughtfully in academic and public life, with outcomes central to SFSC's learning-centered mission.

The College's Undergraduate Research Program further exemplifies academic freedom and intellectual exploration in practice. Through this initiative, students design and conduct research projects across diverse disciplines, selecting topics that reflect their individual interests while working under the guidance of faculty mentors. This experience strengthens students' ability to question, analyze, and communicate ideas responsibly—skills central to the College's mission and its commitment to educational excellence and community leadership.

Student and Employee Rights in Action

SFSC encourages both students and employees to exercise freedom of thought and responsible expression in ways that strengthen academic freedom, civic expression, and community engagement. The Student Handbook outlines opportunities for students to participate in the governance of the College through the Student Government Association (SGA) and a wide variety of clubs and organizations that promote social, cultural, and political discourse, including College Democrats and College Republicans. In addition, SFSC actively solicits student perspectives through institution-wide surveys and planning processes, such as the 2025 Strategic Plan survey, which invited students to identify institutional strengths, challenges, and future priorities, and to volunteer for follow-up focus groups. These activities demonstrate that the College values and incorporates student expression in shaping its direction while maintaining an environment of open inquiry and mutual respect.

Faculty and staff are similarly supported through District Board Policy 1.12 (Employees Running for Office), which permits employees to seek or hold public office and to engage in civic or political activity outside of regular work hours, provided such involvement does not create a conflict of interest. Several SFSC employees currently serve in elected school board positions across the College's service district, exemplifying the institution's support for civic leadership and public service. In addition to community engagement, employees participate in institutional dialogue and decision-making through the Faculty Council, which meets monthly to discuss professional development initiatives, academic policies, and procedures affecting students and the broader college community. These structures ensure that all members of the College community can explore ideas, express their views, and contribute to both civic and institutional life consistent with democratic values, integrity, and professionalism.

Together, these rights and protections ensure open access to the public forum for College employees, students, and community members, supporting SFSC's mission to foster partnerships that promote leadership and provide educational, cultural, and economic opportunities throughout its service district.

Cultural and Civic Engagement Supporting Mission

SFSC extends freedom of expression beyond the classroom to all members of its learning community. Consistent with constitutional protections and Florida Statute 1004.097 (Campus Free Expression Act), the College affirms through District Board Policy 2.21 (Free Expression) that its outdoor areas serve as open public forums for lawful expressive activity. The policy explicitly prohibits the creation of "free-speech zones," ensuring that individuals and organizations may engage in spontaneous expression provided it does not materially disrupt College operations. This commitment reflects SFSC's mission to foster an open, respectful learning environment that promotes civic engagement, intellectual inquiry, and community leadership.

Freedom of expression is also central to SFSC's role as a cultural and educational hub for its three-county service district. Through the Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC), Cultural Programs, and Panther Athletics, the College provides inclusive venues that celebrate creativity, dialogue, and community pride. Oversight for exhibitions, performances, and guest lectures is guided by Procedure 3010 (Cultural Programming Guidelines on Freedom of Expression) and the Cultural Programs Advisory Committee, ensuring that artistic activities uphold freedom of expression while respecting community standards of appropriateness. These processes ensure that College-sponsored events align with SFSC's mission and encourage diverse perspectives and open participation throughout the service district.

This process promotes the use of College spaces for events that align with SFSC's mission while reaffirming the College's commitment to freedom of expression. These venues provide opportunities for civic dialogue, artistic performance, and community learning that reflect SFSC's mission to foster the cultural and economic vitality of its region .

SFSC's integrated policies, practices, and cultural programming sustain an environment where open inquiry, respectful dialogue, and creativity are both protected and encouraged. In doing so, the College fulfills its mission to provide a learning-centered environment that

advances the educational, cultural, and economic vitality of its region while empowering students, faculty, and staff to engage thoughtfully and responsibly within an open and collaborative community.

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2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

The institution adheres to policies and procedures that ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

Argument

Commitment to Ethical Knowledge Practices and Use of Technology Through Policy, Communication, Education, and Accountability

South Florida State College (SFSC) fosters a culture of integrity and accountability in the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. Clear and comprehensive policies define expectations for ethical academic behavior, ensuring honesty in learning, teaching, research, and creative activities. The College's mission and core values emphasize responsibility, excellence, and lifelong learning as the foundation of academic and professional conduct. Policies such as the Course Policy Statement, Control and Discipline of Students, Compliance with Copyright Law, and Use of Copyright Materials further reinforce the responsible use and dissemination of knowledge while ensuring legal and ethical compliance.

These policies are reviewed regularly through the Office of Administrative Services to ensure alignment with federal and state regulations and to address emerging topics such as artificial intelligence, academic freedom, and data privacy. Policy adherence is monitored through annual reviews and training audits that confirm all employees have completed required compliance modules.

These expectations are communicated consistently across the institution through new employee orientation, course syllabi, and student orientation programs. The Student Handbook outlines behavioral and academic standards under the Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedures, which define academic dishonesty and its consequences. The Protection of Student Information policy ensures compliance with FERPA and supports SFSC's broader ethical obligation to safeguard data and uphold student privacy.

Faculty responsibilities for promoting academic integrity are reinforced through the Employee Handbook and Faculty Handbook, which emphasize professional conduct, ethical instruction, and compliance with institutional policies. All faculty and staff participate in required educational technology and cybersecurity training via Vector Solutions and KnowBe4, with Human Resources maintaining records and annual completion reports to verify compliance. Ongoing professional development is further supported through the Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Technology Webpage Offerings, which promote pedagogical innovation grounded in ethical principles.

Students receive direct instruction on academic integrity through the Student Research Guide – Academic Integrity and related library tutorials and online resources addressing plagiarism avoidance, citation management, and style guides. Additional support is available through the Tutoring and Learning Center and Brainfuse Online Tutoring. These combined policies, educational resources, and training initiatives ensure that all members of the SFSC

community understand and apply the College's standards for honesty, fairness, and respect in the pursuit of knowledge, reflecting its mission to provide quality learning and responsible citizenship.

Academic Integrity in Practice

SFSC promotes academic integrity through education and proactive measures that prevent academic misconduct and support responsible scholarship. Students are introduced to expectations for original work through course syllabi and embedded assignments that teach proper research and citation practices. Online tutorials and library resources provide step-by-step guidance on avoiding plagiarism, citing sources correctly, and understanding the ethical use of information.

SFSC reinforces academic integrity through its academic support network, including the Tutoring and Learning Center and Brainfuse Online Tutoring, both accessible through Brightspace and the Student Quick Links dashboard. These resources, paired with course-specific research instruction, help students build responsible academic habits early in their studies.

Faculty employ several mechanisms to protect the integrity of coursework and assessment. Many use Turnitin.com to identify potential plagiarism and to teach citation and paraphrasing skills. Online proctoring through Honorlock and the Testing Center provides secure testing environments for distance learning and hybrid courses. Together, these practices ensure that all students are evaluated under consistent conditions and reinforce SFSC's commitment to honest scholarship and balanced academic opportunity.

All faculty and staff complete required professional development and compliance modules addressing technology ethics, cybersecurity, and FERPA through Vector Solutions and KnowBe4. Human Resources monitors completion each term and maintains annual training compliance reports verifying participation. Additional instructional support and innovation opportunities are offered through the Center for Innovative Teaching and Educational Technology Webpage offerings. These ongoing trainings ensure that instructors model responsible digital citizenship and reinforce academic integrity within their classrooms.

The effectiveness of these integrity measures is monitored through the Office of Academic Affairs in collaboration with the eLearning/Distance Learning Committee, which periodically reviews instructional technologies such as Turnitin, Honorlock, and Brightspace-integrated resources to ensure they meet institutional standards for reliability and instructional integrity. The Committee reviews faculty feedback and emerging technology needs to identify areas for improvement in academic honesty, testing environments, and digital ethics. Findings from these discussions inform professional development updates and the refinement of online resources and tutorials. Through this ongoing review process, SFSC maintains an environment where academic integrity is actively supported, current, and aligned with the College's mission to promote ethical learning and responsible citizenship.

Research and Scholarly Activity

SFSC encourages the responsible discovery and dissemination of knowledge through

faculty-mentored undergraduate research and professional scholarly activity. The Undergraduate Research (UGR) Program provides structured opportunities for students to design and complete original research projects under faculty mentorship and to present findings at campus, state, and regional venues. The Honors Program extends these opportunities for high-achieving students by integrating advanced research design and dissemination experiences within Honors coursework.

Student scholarship is showcased through ongoing Undergraduate Research Forums, as well as through a collection of faculty-mentored poster projects such as Global Environmental Injustice and Respiratory Health, Oral Microbiome Dysbiosis as a Mechanistic and Sociocultural Model, Microbial Masterpieces: The Symphony of Science and Creativity, E-cadherin Expression as a Prognostic Biomarker in Colorectal Cancer, Preparing Coral for the Inevitable, and From Ecuador to the United States: Evaluating the Viability of Nature's Legal Rights as a Conservation Strategy. SFSC students have also represented the College at regional and international venues, including the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF).

Faculty mentors guide students in research design, data collection, and the ethical conduct of inquiry in accordance with institutional review procedures. These activities occur under the oversight of the College's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which reviews proposals, refines procedural language, and implements member training to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

Faculty research and creative productivity are supported through institutional and Foundation funding, such as the Endowed Teaching Chair program and Procedure 5011: Professional Development Funding for Workshops and Conferences. Faculty disseminate scholarship through publications and conference presentations, with additional examples documented in Annual Service Reports.

Through these interconnected efforts—student research under ethical oversight, faculty mentorship and scholarly output, and institutional support for continued inquiry—SFSC sustains a culture of intellectual curiosity and responsible investigation consistent with its mission to provide quality learning experiences that foster critical thinking and professional growth.

Oversight and Compliance in Research

SFSC maintains a formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that all research involving human participants upholds the highest ethical standards of safety, informed consent, and confidentiality. The IRB operates under Academic Affairs and functions in accordance with federal guidance and institutional policy. Its responsibilities include reviewing faculty, staff, and student projects; classifying research as exempt, expedited, or full review; and verifying that investigators complete appropriate training prior to data collection.

The IRB committee comprises faculty and professional staff representing multiple academic disciplines. Each member completes documented orientation and compliance training using the College's IRB Committee Training Checklist. Completion of federally recognized human subjects training modules, such as NIH Protecting Human Research Participants and CITI

Program Information Privacy and Security, is verified through certification records maintained by the IRB Chair. These certificates demonstrate that all active members, including the IRB Chair, are current in required federal and institutional research and ethics credentials.

IRB meeting minutes document regular review of new and continuing protocols, approval of exempt and expedited studies, and procedural refinements designed to strengthen compliance. The February 9, April 11, and May 24, 2024, meetings addressed student research proposals in microbiology, environmental science, and social research while confirming adherence to consent and confidentiality procedures. The October 6, 2025, meeting expanded membership documentation, refined multi-year approval language, and outlined the secure storage of IRB records to improve access control and accreditation readiness. These records demonstrate active oversight, data-management integrity, and continuous procedural improvement.

Through these structures, SFSC ensures that all human subject research conducted under its auspices is reviewed, approved, and monitored in accordance with established ethical and legal standards. The IRB's systematic review process, member training verification, and documented procedural updates collectively affirm the College's commitment to responsible inquiry and to fostering a culture of integrity that safeguards the rights and welfare of research participants.

Responsible Use of Sponsored Programs and Grant Funding

SFSC demonstrates ethical stewardship of external and internal funding through structured review, approval, and accountability processes administered by the coordinator of grant development. All proposals for externally sponsored projects undergo internal vetting to confirm alignment with the College's mission, fiscal capacity, and applicable federal and state regulations. Associated procedures—Cost Principles for Federal Grants, Conflict of Interest for Grant Awards, Additional Procurement Procedures for Purchases from Federal Grants, and Affirmative Procurement Programs for Federal Grant Purchases—provide clear guidance for fiscal accountability, competitive purchasing, and ethical decision-making throughout each grant cycle.

Transparency in internal professional development funding is maintained through Procedure 5011 – Professional Development Funding for Workshops and Conferences, which defines fair access, eligibility, and documentation standards for employees seeking institutional support. The Grant Pathway Resource Guide further documents this structured process, outlining the seven-step grant cycle—from planning and proposal development through project execution and close-out—and specifying approval requirements for the coordinator of grants development and federal relations, vice presidents, and the president. The guide also details the post-award responsibilities of Grants Accounting, Human Resources, and Institutional Effectiveness, ensuring fiscal integrity, compliance monitoring, and timely close-out of all sponsored projects. Visual resources such as the Grant Pathway Poster reinforce these procedures, providing an accessible reference for faculty and staff engaged in grant development.

Ethical application of institutional funds is further exemplified through the Endowed Teaching Chair program, administered by the SFSC Foundation. These competitive awards promote

innovation, student engagement, and community relevance while maintaining fiscal transparency and accountability. Each project includes annual reporting and dissemination of results to the Foundation. For example, Dr. Mintoo Patel's project integrates molecular biology, microbiome analysis, and coral restoration research into undergraduate learning experiences. Kate Calvin's project advances plant protein extraction and applied biotechnology, providing students with laboratory experience in sustainable food science techniques. Therese Tippie's project enhances digital dentistry instruction through technology integration and hands-on practice.

Collectively, these initiatives illustrate SFSC's commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and continuous professional growth. The College's policies, procedures, and reporting practices ensure that all sponsored programs and endowed awards are managed with integrity, fully aligned with the institutional mission, and compliant with federal and state expectations for ethical conduct and responsible stewardship of resources.

SFSC's mission-driven culture promotes inquiry, creativity, and the ethical application of knowledge across disciplines. Faculty and students collaborate in research that addresses real-world challenges while advancing academic excellence and integrity. Through initiatives such as faculty-mentored undergraduate research, the Undergraduate Research Forum, the Honors Program, Endowed Teaching Chairs, and IRB oversight, the College cultivates an environment where discovery is guided by ethical responsibility. This integrated approach ensures that learning and research activities contribute to the intellectual, cultural, and economic development of its service district, reflecting SFSC's mission to provide quality programs, training, and services that prepare students to succeed and contribute responsibly to their professions and communities.

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Criterion 2 - Summary

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Argument

South Florida State College demonstrates integrity through ethical governance, transparent communication, and responsible conduct across all areas of operation. Its Board, administration, faculty, and staff act consistently with the College's mission and maintain public trust through clear decision-making processes, sound financial stewardship, and adherence to established expectations for ethical behavior. Employment and human resources practices emphasize fairness, professionalism, and respect, while student rights are safeguarded through accessible grievance, appeals, and conduct processes that ensure due process and equitable treatment. The institution protects the confidentiality and security of data through well-defined protocols and maintains safe learning and working environments through comprehensive safety planning and compliance with federal requirements. Transparent communication about academic programs, admissions, support services, and community engagement ensures that students and the public receive accurate, complete information. Collectively, these practices illustrate SFSC's strong commitment to integrity as a foundational value guiding its educational mission.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

3.A. Educational Programs

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

Argument

Introduction

South Florida State College (SFSC) fulfills its mission as an open-access, higher education institution dedicated to providing a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services. The College's programs and partnerships promote educational attainment, workforce readiness, and community development throughout its three-county service district of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

Faculty Responsibility for Academic Programs

Faculty maintain primary responsibility for the content, delivery, and continuous improvement of academic programs. Through established governance processes defined in Procedure 3020: Curriculum Development, new and revised programs or course revisions originate within academic divisions, are reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee, and receive final authorization from the District Board of Trustees. This structure ensures that all offerings, whether transfer, workforce, or upper-division, reflect SFSC's commitment to academic quality, faculty leadership, and mission alignment.

Program quality and effectiveness are continuously evaluated through annual division program reviews, programmatic accreditation, and graduate outcomes reported through the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP). These assessments demonstrate SFSC's success in preparing graduates for university transfer and for meaningful careers that contribute to the vitality of its tri-county service district.

Program Integrity and Oversight

Building on the faculty-driven curriculum development process described earlier, SFSC ensures the ongoing integrity and relevance of all academic programs through continuous

review, assessment, and improvement. Faculty use data from student learning outcomes, accreditation reports, employer feedback, and state or federal reviews to guide program modifications that sustain academic rigor and mission alignment.

Program changes are data-informed and mission-driven. For example, faculty in the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Teacher Education (BSETTE) program initiated revisions to EEX 3070 – Teaching Exceptional Students after analyzing state feedback to strengthen differentiation and instructional strategies. These revisions are currently being implemented and assessed for effectiveness. In Health Sciences and technical programs, additional updates have been made to meet revised accreditation standards and respond to employer-identified workforce needs.

Faculty also evaluate program quality through annual Division Program Reviews, which include trend analysis for enrollment, retention, completion, and licensure pass rates. This evidence informs curriculum sequencing, instructional strategies, and resource allocation to improve student outcomes.

Together, these processes, outcomes, and partnerships illustrate how SFSC provides programs that are appropriate in level and rigor, consistently reviewed for improvement, and directly aligned with the College's mission to serve as an open-access institution fostering student achievement and community development.

Compliance with Statewide Standards

SFSC develops and maintains all programs in full compliance with regulations established by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) and the State Board of Education (SBE), ensuring academic rigor, consistency, and credit-hour integrity across the Florida College System. The College adheres to the standards and procedures outlined in Florida Administrative Code 6A-14.030 (Instruction and Awards in the Community College System) and program-specific requirements defined by the FDOE Curriculum Frameworks. For workforce education programs, these frameworks specify core competencies, required contact hours, credential levels, and general-education expectations, ensuring statewide consistency in program quality. Every career and technical program offered by SFSC is based directly on an approved FDOE Framework, supporting alignment with statewide learning outcomes. Examples include the Accounting Technology A.S., Radiography A.S., Emergency Medical Services A.S., and Engineering Technology A.S. Each framework establishes measurable learning outcomes that guide curriculum design and assessment, ensuring programs remain consistent with FDOE and SBE expectations while meeting regional workforce needs.

Compliance also extends to accelerated learning opportunities through Florida Statute 1007.271 (Dual Enrollment Programs) and Rule 6A-14.064 (College Credit Dual Enrollment), which guarantee that dual enrollment courses meet college-level rigor and academic standards for both secondary and postsecondary students.

Degree and certificate requirements published in the College Catalog further demonstrate institutional transparency and adherence to FDOE and State Board of Education (SBE) standards for minimum credit hours, general education inclusion, and academic progress. The Standards of Academic Progress policy establishes consistent expectations for

satisfactory academic performance across all programs and is uniformly applied to degree-seeking and dual-enrolled students.

Program compliance is reinforced through programmatic accreditations that require demonstration of curriculum alignment and faculty credentialing consistent with national and state standards. For example, Nursing programs are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN); Dental Hygiene by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA); Radiography by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT); and Paramedic and Surgical Services programs by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Each of these accreditations confirms SFSC's adherence to professional standards of practice, student learning, and assessment rigor.

Collectively, these frameworks, statutes, and procedures confirm that SFSC's programs meet or exceed state and national standards for academic quality. This statewide alignment ensures that all degrees and credentials awarded by SFSC are recognized for transfer, licensure, and employment across Florida and beyond.

Dual Enrollment and Articulation

SFSC's dual enrollment and early college programs reflect the College mission's commitment to providing a comprehensive range of educational opportunities in partnership with local organizations and communities. These programs allow academically qualified students in grades 6–12 to earn both high school and college credit, reducing time and cost to degree completion while expanding access to higher education across DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

The program is governed by Florida Statute 1007.271 (Dual Enrollment Programs) and Rule 6A-14.064, F.A.C. (College Credit Dual Enrollment). All policies and procedures are detailed in the Dual Enrollment Parent and Student Handbook, which defines eligibility criteria, testing and GPA requirements, registration procedures, and academic standards.

SFSC's dual enrollment and early college programs primarily serve students within the College's tri-county service district but also extend access through cooperative agreements with home school students and selected schools in neighboring Polk County. Formal Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreements are established with every public school district and partner private institutions within these areas. Each agreement specifies student eligibility, instructor qualifications, approved course offerings, and cost-sharing arrangements. Tuition and textbook costs are waived in accordance with state law, allowing academically qualified students to earn college credit while completing high school. These partnerships strengthen the regional educational pipeline and support student readiness for continued postsecondary success.

The Dual Enrollment webpage provides transparent, publicly accessible information on available pathways (college-credit, technical-credit, honors, and early admission options) and contact information for program coordinators. This online resource underscores SFSC's commitment to clear communication and community partnership, aligning directly with the mission's focus on accessibility and student success.

Program rigor is ensured by aligning all dual enrollment courses with the corresponding SFSC syllabi, learning outcomes, and assessment standards. Compliance with [Florida Statute 1007.271](#) (Dual Enrollment Programs) and [Rule 6A-14.064](#) (College Credit Dual Enrollment) guarantees that these courses maintain college-level rigor and academic expectations equivalent to those offered on campus. Dual enrollment instructors meet the same credentialing requirements as all SFSC faculty, as defined in the [Professional Standards for Faculty and Administrators](#).

Admission and Progression Standards

SFSC maintains transparent, consistent, and mission-aligned admission and progression standards for all programs, ensuring that students are academically prepared for success at each credential level. [Admission criteria](#) are published in the College Catalog and on the College website, providing clear guidance on degree requirements, prerequisites, GPA thresholds, and residency documentation. These standards uphold the College's mission to provide accessible, high-quality education while maintaining academic integrity and consistency across programs.

Program Admission Requirements

Admission to each program type follows the standards defined by the Florida College System and outlined in the FDOE Curriculum Frameworks. The Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree maintains an [open-admission policy](#) consistent with the state's commitment to broad access to higher education. Selective admission programs, such as [Dental Hygiene](#), [Radiography](#), [Surgical Services](#), [Elementary Teacher Education](#), [Nursing \(R.N\)](#), [Nursing \(B.S.\)](#), and [Supervision and Management \(B.A.S.S.M.\)](#), publish detailed prerequisites, minimum GPA requirements, and admission testing criteria to ensure readiness for the academic and professional rigor of their respective fields. These requirements confirm that SFSC upholds consistent academic standards while maintaining appropriate entry criteria across all credential levels.

Degree and Certificate Requirements

SFSC's degree and certificate requirements, published annually in the College Catalog, establish the credit-hour and progression standards for each credential type, including the [A.A.](#), [A.S.](#), [B.S.](#), [B.A.S.](#), [Career Certificate](#), and [College Credit Certificate](#) programs. These publications confirm compliance with FDOE credit-hour minimums and general education mandates, ensuring that each degree level builds appropriately upon the preceding credential and remains aligned with statewide standards.

Academic Progress and Retention

Student progression across all programs is governed by the [Standards of Academic Progress \(SAP\) policy](#), which defines satisfactory performance, warning thresholds, and conditions for reinstatement. These expectations apply equally to traditional, dual-enrolled, and distance learning students, reinforcing institutional consistency. Faculty and advisors monitor progress through [early alert](#) mechanisms in [Element451](#) and provide academic interventions to support student retention.

Faculty-Driven Curriculum Quality

Professional development supports the faculty's capacity to sustain curriculum excellence. Opportunities are provided through the Staff and Professional Development Committee (SPD), and participation in Quality Matters (QM) certification workshops promotes instructional innovation, online course quality, and ongoing faculty growth. Training activities, including pedagogy-focused sessions and instructional technology workshops, help faculty remain current in disciplinary content and instructional best practices.

SFSC's mission to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services is realized through faculty-led governance, continuous assessment, and alignment with state and professional standards. Annual program reviews, general education assessments, and advisory feedback processes guide decisions that strengthen academic quality and student success. Evidence from licensure, accreditation, and employment outcomes confirms that SFSC programs consistently meet or exceed state and national expectations, demonstrating the College's ongoing commitment to educational excellence, workforce preparation, and community advancement.

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3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) provides a learning-centered environment where students engage in inquiry, analysis, communication, and creative and applied learning as part of their academic and professional preparation. Programs across all disciplines are intentionally structured so that students learn to collect, evaluate, and communicate information; engage in scholarly and creative work; and apply their learning in real-world settings. These experiences support the College's mission to provide quality educational programs and services that promote personal growth and contribute to the educational, cultural, and economic development of the service district. Through this mission-driven approach, students develop adaptable skills that prepare them for continued education, workforce success, and active engagement in their communities.

Engaging Students in Intellectual Inquiry

SFSC's curriculum framework embeds critical thinking and inquiry across all academic and workforce programs. Institutional procedures require that all courses include measurable learning outcomes emphasizing analysis, problem-solving, and communication. Procedure 3020: Curriculum Development mandates that each course or program proposal documents learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and alignment with state frameworks and institutional goals. This intentional design ensures that students learn to collect, interpret, and communicate information using disciplinary and professional methods of inquiry.

Inquiry-driven learning is evident in program capstones and field experiences. For example, the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Teacher Education (BSETE) Internship III course requires candidates to apply data-driven reflection, lesson design, and performance analysis based on the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices. Similarly, the Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM) Capstone (MAN 4900) engages students in strategic decision-making, research, and professional communication grounded in real-world scenarios.

In the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Capstone (NUR 4945C), students integrate scholarly inquiry with clinical practice. They complete research-based projects that require literature review, data analysis, and the presentation of findings through formal papers and professional posters. Through these culminating experiences, students demonstrate the ability to translate evidence into practice, communicate results clearly, and reflect on their professional role—skills that support entry and advancement in the workforce and align with the College's mission to develop human potential and create brighter futures.

Student learning outcomes are further validated through external feedback. The 2025 Employer Satisfaction Survey reported that 95% of employers rated SFSC graduates as well

or very well prepared, citing strong critical thinking, communication, and teamwork skills. These outcomes confirm that SFSC's emphasis on inquiry-based learning results in graduates who can analyze information, adapt to changing contexts, and communicate effectively in professional and community settings.

Practicing Modes of Creative and Scholarly Work

Students and faculty at SFSC engage in scholarly research and creative work that foster intellectual curiosity and innovation. The Undergraduate Research (UGR) program promotes interdisciplinary exploration across science, culture, and the arts. Student posters, such as Microbial Masterpieces: The Symphony of Science and Creativity and Preparing Coral for the Inevitable, demonstrate students' ability to design experiments, collect data, interpret findings, and communicate results through public presentation. In the Health Sciences, the BSN Capstone requires students to create and present professional research posters addressing clinical and community health topics, reinforcing evidence-based practice and scholarly dissemination. These experiences help students develop analytical reasoning, collaboration, and communication skills that are adaptable to both further study and professional practice.

Faculty mentorship plays a central role in cultivating scholarly engagement. Publications such as Dr. Joseph Velenovsky's 2025 Insect Biochemistry and Molecular Biology article and Dr. James Hawker's collaborative biomedical studies illustrate faculty commitment to research that involves students in authentic scientific inquiry. Carylann Joubert Maier's 2024 presentation at the Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists further exemplifies faculty–student partnership in environmental science research. Through these mentorship models, students gain experience applying methodological rigor, synthesizing information, and contributing to emerging knowledge within their fields.

SFSC also promotes creative expression across the humanities and arts. The Student Art Show (spring 2025) showcased works in visual design and sculpture, emphasizing conceptual thinking, aesthetic critique, and public exhibition. These scholarly and creative opportunities reflect the College's mission to provide a learning-centered environment that encourages cultural awareness, meaningful participation in community life, and the development of human potential across the service district.

Curriculum Development Supporting Inquiry

Curriculum design at SFSC ensures academic rigor, coherence, and continuous improvement. The College's learning-centered curriculum framework and Procedure 3020: Curriculum Development outline a structured process for course and program creation that includes needs assessment, learning outcome development, and review by the Curriculum Committee. All proposals must include measurable learning outcomes and assessment strategies that support intellectual engagement and effective student learning appropriate to the discipline. This intentional design ensures that students learn to gather, interpret, and apply information using discipline-appropriate methods of inquiry.

The Curriculum Committee, composed of faculty, administrators, and staff, ensures courses align with institutional learning goals, state frameworks, and evolving workforce expectations. Minutes from this committee document responsive updates to curricula,

including the integration of civic literacy and quantitative reasoning courses, reflecting adaptability to statewide educational priorities and regional needs. These systematic processes ensure that the curriculum remains current, relevant, and aligned with SFSC's mission to provide quality educational programs and support the development of human potential across the service district.

Experiential and Applied Learning

Experiential learning is a defining element of SFSC's instructional model. Each academic division integrates applied learning experiences that connect theory to practice. The BSETE Internship Program places students in partner schools across Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto counties, where they engage in reflective teaching, data-based instructional improvement, and collaborative problem-solving with mentor educators. These partnerships exemplify the College's mission to work alongside community organizations to support educational development across the service district.

The BSN Capstone requires 96 clinical and community practice hours, during which students apply research evidence to patient care and health promotion. Similarly, the BAS-SM Capstone course challenges students to develop organizational improvement projects that synthesize data, theory, and leadership practice. Through these applied experiences, students learn to evaluate real-world conditions, make informed decisions, and communicate outcomes in professional settings. Applied learning also occurs across Health Sciences and Career and Technical Education programs, where students engage in supervised clinical rotations, laboratory and simulation-based training, field experiences, and registered apprenticeships in partnership with hospitals, dental clinics, EMS agencies, public safety training centers, and regional employers.

General Education as the Foundation for Inquiry

SFSC's General Education curriculum establishes the intellectual foundation for inquiry across all disciplines. The 2025–2026 College Catalog defines five institutional learning outcomes: communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and global and civic responsibility. These outcomes cultivate the habits of analysis, interpretation, and effective communication that are essential for lifelong learning and professional adaptability in a complex society.

Curriculum Committee actions in 2024–2025, including the addition of AMH 1010: American History to 1877 to strengthen civic literacy requirements, demonstrate alignment with Florida Department of Education General Education competencies. In the same period, redesigned mathematics pathways improved access to quantitative reasoning skills and supported student progression across programs. Together, these changes reinforce SFSC's mission to provide quality educational programs that prepare students for academic success, informed citizenship, and meaningful engagement in their communities.

General Education outcomes are assessed annually through the General Education Assessment process, which is reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee. These assessments ensure that foundational skills remain central to student learning and that results inform instructional refinement and faculty professional development. Through this systematic approach, SFSC supports a learning-centered environment where all students

—regardless of background—develop the core intellectual abilities needed to succeed in further education, careers, and community life.

Continuous Improvement and Innovation

SFSC cultivates a learning environment where inquiry and reflective practice are continuously strengthened. Faculty use course- and program-level assessment results to refine assignments, instructional approaches, and applied learning experiences, ensuring that students engage actively in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. Feedback from employers, advisory boards, and students is used to adjust learning activities so that they remain relevant to real-world expectations and emerging professional contexts. For example, faculty refined reflective teaching prompts in the BSETE Internship based on advisory feedback, strengthened data interpretation criteria in the BSN Capstone poster rubric, and incorporated external audience presentations into the BAS-SM Capstone to support real-world communication skills.

Through inquiry-based instruction, creative and scholarly engagement, and experiential learning, SFSC fulfills its mission to provide a learning-centered environment that prepares students for success in life, work, and future education. Structured academic processes, faculty mentorship, and data-informed assessment ensure that every program fosters intellectual curiosity, adaptability, and reflective practice. From undergraduate research and art exhibitions to clinical placements and capstone projects, SFSC creates a cohesive learning experience that supports the development of each student's potential and contributes to the educational, cultural, and economic vitality of the service district. In doing so, the College prepares analytical thinkers, effective communicators, and lifelong learners who are equipped to engage meaningfully in their professions and communities.

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3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) ensures that its faculty and staff remain well-prepared to provide high-quality instruction and comprehensive student services that advance the College's mission to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services that foster educational, cultural, and economic development across its service district. The College's faculty and staff are appropriately qualified, equitably distributed across programs and service areas, and supported through structured evaluation and professional development systems. This collective expertise enables SFSC to deliver instruction of consistent quality, provide individualized support to students, and sustain an environment of continuous improvement.

Through intentional hiring practices, systematic credentialing review, and ongoing development opportunities, SFSC aligns its workforce with the needs of its diverse student population and the expectations of the Higher Learning Commission. The College's commitment to stability and professional excellence is further evidenced by long-term employee retention, collaborative work culture, and data-driven planning to ensure that staffing levels remain sufficient as enrollment patterns and academic offerings evolve.

Faculty and Staff Sufficiency

SFSC employs a sufficient number of qualified faculty and staff to support its mission and ensure the delivery of high-quality academic programs and student services. The College maintains appropriate staffing levels through a combination of full-time and adjunct faculty, professional staff, and administrative personnel who collectively advance student success across all campuses and instructional modalities.

According to the [SFSC Employee Classification Summary](#), the College employs approximately 45 full-time faculty, 180 adjunct faculty, 85 professional staff, 70 career service staff, and 25 part-time staff, in addition to 10–12 administrators, totaling approximately 415 employees across all operational areas. These staffing levels reflect intentional planning and resource allocation that sustain effective teaching, learning, and support functions aligned with institutional priorities. There is a balanced instructional environment with a ratio of 15:1 overall, 13:1 for face-to-face, and 19:1 for virtual courses for the Fall term 2025, ensuring individualized attention and instructional quality.

In addition to teaching faculty, SFSC employs a range of professional and academic support personnel whose specialized expertise enhances instructional effectiveness and student learning. These roles, such as department chairs, counselors, librarians, and learning center specialists, provide guidance, resources, and academic support that extend faculty capacity and promote student success. Position descriptions for the [Counselor](#), [Librarian](#), and [TLC Specialist](#) roles delineate comprehensive responsibilities for advising, academic

support, and learning resource coordination, demonstrating alignment of personnel duties with institutional effectiveness and student success objectives.

The College's commitment to long-term employment and workforce stability is evident in its annual Years of Service Awards recognition. In August 2025, SFSC honored employees reaching milestones of five to forty years of service, including several who have served more than three decades at the institution. This longevity reflects employee commitment, organizational continuity, and an institutional culture that values and retains experienced professionals.

Collectively, these data and practices confirm that SFSC maintains the faculty and staff necessary to provide effective instruction, comprehensive student support, and operational stability in direct alignment with its mission to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services that support the educational, cultural, and economic development of its service district.

Faculty and Staff Qualifications

SFSC ensures that all faculty and staff possess the qualifications necessary to support effective instruction, academic integrity, and student success. Faculty credentials are verified through a formalized review process that aligns with the expectations of the Higher Learning Commission. The Professional Standards for Faculty and Administrators outlines minimum academic and experiential qualifications for instructional and administrative positions and confirms that full-time, adjunct, and dual-enrollment faculty are subject to the same credentialing requirements.

Faculty members are credentialed at the time of hire through a structured approval process involving the academic dean and the Office of Human Resources. The Credentialing Request Form documents the review of educational qualifications and relevant professional experience before teaching assignments are approved. The College maintains an updated Credentialed Faculty List, which verifies compliance across all instructional disciplines. Faculty teaching in academic transfer programs hold master's or doctoral degrees appropriate to their teaching areas, while faculty in workforce and technical disciplines meet state and institutional standards through a combination of academic preparation, industry certifications, and verified professional experience.

Position descriptions for instructional faculty, department chairs, librarians, counselors, and learning center specialists further delineate required qualifications and demonstrate that professional staff also possess credentials and experience commensurate with their responsibilities. These established standards and documentation processes ensure that all personnel contributing to teaching and learning uphold the College's expectations for professional competence, experience, and academic excellence.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

SFSC promotes continuous improvement through systematic evaluation processes for faculty and staff that emphasize teaching effectiveness, professional growth, and alignment with institutional goals. The College's multitiered evaluation system integrates annual performance reviews, self-assessment, and professional development planning to ensure

accountability and ongoing enhancement of instructional and support services.

Each full-time faculty member completes an Annual Service Report (ASR) that documents achievements in teaching, service, and professional development, along with goals for the upcoming year. Supervisors review these reports in conjunction with the Faculty Performance Evaluation to provide formative feedback and identify professional growth priorities.

This evaluation process fosters reflection on instructional effectiveness, student learning, and service contributions while reinforcing SFSC's mission-driven culture. Supervisors and faculty use the process to identify strengths and areas for professional growth and to align individual goals with divisional priorities. The evaluation system provides a consistent framework for accountability and supports continuous improvement in teaching and service across the institution.

Professional Development and Support

SFSC demonstrates a sustained commitment to professional growth through a comprehensive range of development opportunities that advance instructional quality, innovation, and student engagement. The College encourages all employees to participate in training that enhances teaching effectiveness, supports new technologies, and promotes inclusive practices. The College also provides financial support for employee growth through the Staff and Professional Development (SPD) Committee, which allocates institutional funds for workshops, conferences, and advanced degree coursework that enhance instructional quality and student support.

Faculty and staff have access to recurring professional development initiatives such as the Monday Morning Mentor Series, which offers weekly, evidence-based teaching modules on topics including learner engagement, accessibility, and ethical use of artificial intelligence. Workshops and conferences such as QM Connect Virtual 2024, High-Impact Practices Presentations, and AI Practical Applications for Teaching and Learning extend opportunities for continuous improvement in pedagogy and assessment.

Institutional support for innovation is further demonstrated through the Heartland Pathways 2 Success Grant, which provided stipends for faculty completing Quality Matters (QM) and HyFlex Course Design certification workshops. Training in new instructional technology, including HyFlex Equipment Training, ensures faculty readiness for multimodal course delivery.

Professional development also extends to leadership and support staff, with offerings through the Center for Innovative Teaching (CIT) and divisional sessions that focus on student engagement, advising practices, and continuous improvement processes. Together, these opportunities strengthen instructional quality and institutional capacity, ensuring that faculty and staff remain current, effective, and responsive to student and community needs.

Orientation and Mission Alignment

SFSC introduces all new employees to the College's mission, vision, and core values

through a structured onboarding process designed to promote understanding of institutional goals and employee expectations. The New Employee Orientation program, held three times per year, provides an overview of the College's commitment to academic excellence, student success, and community engagement, while familiarizing new personnel with essential policies, resources, and support systems.

Orientation sessions emphasize compliance with federal and state regulations, including Title IX, FERPA, and accessibility standards, and introduce participants to the College's key operational areas such as Academic Affairs, Student Services, Human Resources, and Safety and Security. The inclusion of the College's mission and vision statements at the start of the session underscores SFSC's focus on connecting daily operations to institutional purpose.

Through this process, new faculty and staff gain an early understanding of the College's culture of accountability and service, the importance of collaboration across divisions, and the expectation that all employees contribute to continuous improvement and mission fulfillment.

Conclusion

Through its qualified personnel, structured evaluation processes, and professional development opportunities, SFSC sustains the faculty and staff capacity needed to deliver high-quality instruction and student services that contribute to the educational, cultural, and economic development of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

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3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) fulfills its mission to “provide a learning-centered environment that prepares students for success in life, work, and future education” through a coordinated, data-informed, and mission-driven system of student support and teaching resources. The College recognizes that learning extends beyond the classroom and that supporting the whole student academically, personally, and professionally requires intentional collaboration.

Support for Student Learning

SFSC provides robust academic support to help students meet their educational goals across modalities. In a single term, the Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC) provided 1,267 contact hours across over 1,000 student visits in math and science labs, reflecting the strong demand for academic support. To meet the flexible needs of remote and working students, Brainfuse online tutoring extends 24/7 academic assistance, most frequently in writing, algebra, and anatomy courses. Utilization and satisfaction data from the Tutoring and Learning Center and Brainfuse are reviewed annually through Administrative Program Assessments to identify trends and guide future staffing, scheduling, and service enhancements.

The First-Year Experience Seminar (SLS 1106) plays a central role in helping new students transition successfully into college. As part of the College’s Guide to Personal Success (GPS) initiative, it introduces academic expectations, study strategies, financial literacy, and engagement with campus resources. The course is a 1-credit-hour requirement for all new, transfer, or returning degree-seeking students with fewer than 15 earned college credits and is typically completed during the first term of enrollment. The FYE course is paired with the online GPS student orientation, a prerequisite for registration that provides an overview of College policies, student support services, and academic technology tools.

The FYE course is Quality Matters (QM) certified, ensuring that its design meets nationally recognized standards for accessibility, learner engagement, and clear alignment between learning objectives and assessments. Course modules encourage students to reflect on personal goals, create academic success plans, and become familiar with key support resources such as advising, tutoring, counseling, and the library. Together, the orientation and seminar ensure that students are equipped to navigate SFSC’s academic systems and develop essential college success habits. As a QM-subscribing institution, accessibility is at the forefront of course design and usability.

To support faculty in accessible course design and students with alternative formatting, SFSC uses Anthology Ally within the learning management system, Brightspace. SFSC's Office of Educational Technology, in collaboration with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Committee, monitors the Ally score to support continuous improvement across courses, implementing institutional accountability for accessible design and delivery. Data from the Ally Usage Report indicates 589 unique student user downloads of alternative formats took place in AY 2024-2025, further signifying the need for continuing universal design awareness and practice.

Recognizing that student well-being strengthens academic success, SFSC provides comprehensive personal and mental health support through its partnership with BayCare Behavioral Health. Quarterly reports from 2023–2025 document sustained engagement with resources that support anxiety, stress, and relationship concerns. Utilization rates remain steady across multiple SFSC locations, confirming virtual counseling options remain accessible and essential. Results from usage data, satisfaction surveys, and Administrative Program Assessments are reviewed to inform adjustments to student support services, including mental health supports, tutoring, and advising, as needed.

At the institutional level, SFSC addresses students' basic needs through initiatives like Pete's Pantry, a food, health, and hygiene pantry on the Highlands Campus, and the LunchBox food pantries at the off-campus instructional sites (Lake Placid, DeSoto, and Hardee). These efforts serve over 30 students per month and reflect a compassionate, mission-driven, student-centered approach to eliminating barriers.

To ensure that all students have access to essential technology, the SFSC Library operates a Laptop Loan Program that provides enrolled students with short- or long-term laptop checkouts each term. Students apply online through the Library's request portal and, once approved, schedule an appointment to pick up their device on the Highlands Campus or have it couriered to an additional location. The program prioritizes students who may lack personal computer access and helps remove barriers to participation in online and hybrid learning environments.

The SFSC Library provides research and information literacy instruction, citation guidance, and course-embedded resources that promote academic integrity and critical thinking. Librarians collaborate with faculty to develop course guides and support undergraduate research, ensuring that all students can access quality materials across campuses and online.

SFSC encourages student engagement and leadership through a wide range of clubs, organizations, and campus activities that complement classroom learning and foster personal growth. Students participate in academic, cultural, athletic, and service-oriented groups, including the Student Government Association (SGA), Phi Theta Kappa, the Latin Student Organization, and the Veterans Club of South Florida State College. These activities provide opportunities for teamwork, civic engagement, and campus involvement, promoting a sense of belonging that supports retention and student success.

Professional support for students is intentional and documented in the Administrative Program Assessments. The Career Development Center demonstrates a mission-aligned system that connects students directly with employers and university partners through

high-impact engagement opportunities. Each semester, Career and Transfer Fairs serve both students and community members. The events held on Sept. 30, 2024, March 26, 2025, and Sept. 10, 2025, brought together over 30 employers and universities, including Florida Gulf Coast University, University of Central Florida, Troy University, Advent Health, Nucor, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. These fairs provided students with networking opportunities, exposure to transfer options, and firsthand insight into employment pathways.

Complementing the large-scale fairs, the Career Café series provides more intimate, field-specific networking events designed to foster meaningful dialogue between students and local professionals. Held in a relaxed café-style setting, these events introduce students to practitioners in social work, mental health counseling, healthcare services, and technical trades.

SFSC's Dress for Success program provides free professional attire to students and alumni preparing for interviews, internships, and employment opportunities. Operated through the Career Development Center in partnership with the Leadership Highlands Class of 2012, the boutique offers business clothing, lab coats, and accessories donated by faculty, staff, and community members.

SFSC's Veterans Services assists military-affiliated students in navigating educational benefits, academic counseling, and career resources. Eligible veterans may receive tuition deferments and participate in specialized testing, tutoring, and credit-for-experience programs that recognize military training.

SFSC's Services for Students with Disabilities ensures equitable access to all educational programs by providing reasonable accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students self-identify and work with the disabilities specialist to arrange individualized support such as adaptive technologies, testing accommodations, or alternative formats.

SFSC promotes Undergraduate Research (UGR) as a high-impact learning practice that deepens student engagement and strengthens critical thinking and analytical skills. Opportunities are available across disciplines such as natural sciences, humanities, and art, where students collaborate with faculty mentors to design and present original research projects. Each spring, students showcase their findings at the collegewide UGR Showcase and at state and national conferences, including the Florida Undergraduate Research Conference and the Florida Academy of Sciences Annual Conference.

Student satisfaction data reinforce both the impact and the continued investment in SFSC's academic and student support services. In the 202510 Course Opinion Survey, among respondents who expressed an opinion, 95.3% were satisfied or very satisfied with Counseling and Advising, 97.4% with the Library, and 98.5% with the Career Development Center. Results from the 2025 Graduate Satisfaction Survey further confirm this strong performance, with 98.8% of graduates satisfied or very satisfied with the Career Development Center, 96.6% with Advising and Counseling, 99.6% with Disabled Student Services, 95.9% with Financial Aid, 99.3% with the Testing and Assessment Center, 99.2% with the Library, and 98.3% with the Tutoring and Learning Center. Overall, 99% of graduates said they would recommend SFSC to others.

Resources for Teaching

The [Center for Innovative Teaching](#) anchors SFSC's commitment to quality teaching and faculty development. The Center provides support, training, instructional design services, and educational technology resources that empower faculty to design engaging, high-quality courses. Faculty development is frequent, varied, and mission-aligned through opportunities for educational development. Outside resources such as [Magna's Monday Morning Minute](#) video series complement SFSC's distance learning initiatives by providing instructors with engaging and innovative strategies for teaching today's learners. Internal training opportunities are guided by federal and state requirements, [Distance Learning and Student Services Members Council](#) meetings, and [faculty expressed needs](#).

Additionally, SFSC subscribes to Quality Matters (QM), the nationally recognized benchmark for assuring the quality of online course design. Through this subscription, faculty engage in QM training courses, QM success stories webinars, and use the newest edition of the [Higher Education rubric](#) to navigate the rigorous peer-review process that focuses on course design standards to enhance student learning and success. Since subscribing to QM in 2021, [35 courses](#) have been designated by 16 faculty.

Faculty are an integral part of SFSC's strategic approach for governing and implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) use. Full-time and adjunct faculty, make up almost half of the members of the [AI Support, Implementation, and Strategy Team \(AISIST\) Committee](#) which is dedicated to assisting employees with effectively integrating AI into academic and administrative processes by integrating AI-related language into existing College procedures and using the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\) survey](#) to [guide next steps](#) in faculty, staff, and student AI training and resource development.

SFSC emphasizes academic integrity efforts through the use of [Turnitin's® authorship tool](#), which helps faculty identify student use of AI in their writing submissions, and [Honorlock's® remote proctoring service](#) for exam assessment.

The College's Data Analysis Group (DAG) and Institutional Effectiveness Office work in tandem to ensure that faculty development aligns with student learning data. DAG [meeting minutes from October 2025](#) reflect discussions about accessibility metrics, student survey results, and training needs related to AI integration and Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) between instructors and learners. These discussions are then turned into agenda items and taken to their respective committees, like the AISIST (AI) Committee and the Distance Learning Committee. The [meeting](#) minutes for both committees show professional development resources and training development in action. Through these committee structures and active collaboration, professional learning is not an isolated activity but part of a feedback loop of data-informed development and assessment cycles.

SFSC uses a systematic process of Administrative Program Assessments (APAs), institutional surveys, and external benchmarks to evaluate and improve student and teaching supports. The [Core Indicators of Effectiveness \(2025\)](#) and [IPEDS Data Feedback Report \(2024\)](#) track longitudinal metrics such as retention, graduation, and transfer rates. Student perception data are consistently reviewed alongside quantitative measures. The [CCSSE Student Services Report](#) validates and guides agenda items and committee plans, like those of the [September AI Committee meeting](#) discussion and next steps. The [APA system captures this cycle in action](#): departments report outcomes, analyze results, and

document planned improvements. Evidence from Student Services APAs demonstrates responsiveness to community and student input. For example, the DeSoto Campus expanded its LunchBox food pantry selections based on demand and increased the availability and communication of resources for placement testing and certification testing study aides.

SFSC's system of student and teaching supports exemplifies the institution living its mission daily. Through data-informed decision-making, intentional collaboration, and a culture of care, SFSC commits to creating learner-centered environments where students and faculty are empowered to thrive by expanding these efforts to ensure that every learner has the resources, support, and high-quality instruction needed to succeed in college, in the workforce, and in life.

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3.E. Assessment of Student Learning

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) maintains a comprehensive, faculty-driven system for assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. Assessment is intentionally designed to advance the College's mission to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services that promote the educational, cultural, and economic development of its service district. Faculty use assessment results to improve learning experiences and help students from all backgrounds succeed in achieving meaningful credentials and careers.

To demonstrate the systematic use of assessment results, SFSC evaluates student learning and implements improvements at multiple levels. This includes institution-wide general education assessment focused on strengthening the consistency and effectiveness of assessment practices, lower-division program assessment in high-enrollment foundational courses, and upper-division baccalaureate program assessment aligned with applied and workforce-focused outcomes. Together, these examples illustrate how assessment results are reviewed, acted upon, and monitored over time.

Clearly Stated Learning Goals

Learning goals at SFSC are clearly articulated and intentionally aligned with the College's mission to provide quality programs and training that prepare students for further education, employment, and active citizenship. The General Education learning goals establish broad institutional outcomes (communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and global and civic responsibility) that reflect the College's commitment to developing the educational, cultural, and civic capacities of the region.

Each academic program defines learning outcomes consistent with state frameworks and the College mission's emphasis on access, opportunity, and workforce preparation. For example, the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Teacher Education (BSETE) program integrates the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs), reinforcing the College's leadership in regional teacher preparation.

Learning outcomes originate with the Master Course Descriptions (MCDs), which establish official course objectives and measurable competencies approved through the Curriculum Committee and maintained by the Curriculum Support Office. These descriptions ensure alignment between state frameworks, program outcomes, and General Education learning goals, serving as the foundation for all syllabi and assessment activities across the College. Updates to MCDs are reviewed through the curriculum process to maintain consistency with institutional and state expectations.

Once approved, MCDs serve as the foundation for all subsequent instructional design.

Faculty develop course syllabi directly from the official MCDs, ensuring that course-level learning outcomes align with state frameworks and General Education goals. Each syllabus outlines measurable learning outcomes, instructional methods, assessments, and required materials as outlined in the MCD. Course outlines include topics that align directly to the stated course outcomes. Within this framework, faculty determine the specific instructional strategies, assignments, and assessment methods used to evaluate those outcomes. This process ensures that instruction across all course sections remains aligned with approved outcomes while allowing faculty flexibility in delivery and evaluation.

To further ensure clarity and transparency in course design, course maps visually align learning outcomes with assessments and instructional materials. Course maps document how each objective from the MCD is supported through assignments, learning activities, and evaluation methods, promoting measurable student achievement. For instance, the Humanities Survey II (HUM2230) course map demonstrates explicit alignment between state competencies, program outcomes, and institutional General Education goals, with the course materials, activities, and assessments supporting this course's Quality Matters (QM) designation.

Oversight of assessment occurs at multiple levels: the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) reviews program-level and General Education assessments, including Educational Program Assessment (EPA) reports, while the Curriculum Committee evaluates proposed changes to courses and programs to maintain alignment with institutional standards and the College's mission emphasis on high-quality, learning-centered instruction.

Faculty Involvement in the Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning at SFSC is a faculty-driven process involving both full-time and adjunct faculty. The Faculty Position Description identifies evaluating student learning and using assessment results for improvement as core instructional responsibilities, and the Educational Program Assessment (EPA) Handbook affirms that the assessment process is the responsibility of all faculty members. Adjunct faculty also participate through artifact submission, rubric scoring, and reflective discussion within Brightspace as part of the General Education assessment cycle, ensuring broad engagement across all instructional modes and disciplines.

Faculty fulfill these responsibilities through both individual and collective processes. They design and evaluate learning outcomes, develop rubrics, and analyze assessment data to guide course and program improvement. Faculty actively serve on the Academic Quality Committee (AQC), which reviews program-level and General Education assessment results, and on its EPA Subcommittee, which focuses specifically on program-level Educational Program Assessments (EPAs). Faculty also participate on the Learning Assessment and Student Success (LASS) Committee, which facilitates the dissemination of assessment findings and discussion of student success initiatives. The Faculty Council provides an additional venue for collaboration and feedback on academic processes, further reinforcing shared ownership of institutional effectiveness.

Faculty engagement also extends to professional development that strengthens assessment practices. The Writing Rubric Review Workshop, for example, provided faculty across disciplines with opportunities to calibrate scoring, enhance interrater reliability, and refine

General Education rubrics. This initiative illustrates how faculty collaboration supports consistent and equitable evaluation of student learning outcomes. Through these coordinated efforts, faculty at SFSC ensure that assessment is both systematic and mission-driven, directly supporting the College's commitment to providing a learning-centered environment that fosters continuous improvement

Assessment of Achievement of Learning Goals

Assessment of student learning at South Florida State College is comprehensive and systematic, encompassing course, program, and institutional levels. At the course level, faculty evaluate student mastery of stated learning outcomes through embedded assignments, examinations, projects, and performance-based activities. These results inform program-level Educational Program Assessments (EPAs) and General Education assessments, creating a cohesive structure in which evidence of student achievement is aggregated and analyzed to guide improvement across all instructional levels.

At the program level, faculty and program directors develop learning outcomes, identify performance measures, and collect and analyze results through the Educational Program Assessment (EPA) process, as outlined in the EPA Handbook. Each program identifies three to five outcomes aligned with its purpose statement and the College's mission, supported by multiple direct and indirect performance measures. Completed EPAs undergo peer review through the Academic Quality Committee's EPA Subcommittee, ensuring consistency, rigor, and alignment across all programs.

At the institutional level, the General Education Assessment process collects student artifacts across all modalities and uses standardized rubrics to evaluate communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning, skills essential for civic and economic participation in the College's service district. The General Education Handbook outlines the process, scoring rubrics, and faculty responsibilities for each phase of assessment, ensuring consistent implementation and alignment with institutional learning goals.

Program-specific assessment results demonstrate the application of these processes across disciplines. Nursing uses NCLEX pass rates and clinical evaluation rubrics; Radiography applies clinical competency checklists and job placement rates found in the Level I Program Review for Health Sciences; Automotive and industrial programs incorporate skills demonstrations; and the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Teacher Education program assesses student teaching performance and Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) results. Faculty review and analyze this evidence annually to identify improvement actions documented in the Strategic Planning Online repository (SPOL), reinforcing a culture of data-informed, mission-driven assessment.

In addition to direct measures, SFSC collects complementary indirect evidence through the Employer Satisfaction Survey. While not a measure of student learning itself, this survey validates that graduates demonstrate the competencies expected by employers (communication, problem-solving, and technical proficiency), thereby confirming the effectiveness of the institution's learning assessment processes.

Use of Assessment Results

SFSC systematically uses assessment findings to inform instructional, curricular, and institutional improvements. Improvements frequently emerge from faculty reflection on assessment results, committee discussions, and institutional analysis. For example, the General Education Assessment process has been refined to increase faculty participation and streamline data collection. The General Education Handbook was developed to clarify procedures, standardize rubrics, and set consistent expectations for artifact submission and scoring. Additionally, short instructional videos were created to guide faculty through the process of entering assessment data in Brightspace, improving both accuracy and efficiency. These refinements are reviewed in subsequent assessment cycles to evaluate their impact on faculty participation, consistency of scoring, and the quality of assessment data, and to guide further improvement.

At the lower-division level, assessment results in the Associate in Arts program informed instructional improvements in mathematics and science courses. Faculty analysis of assessment data identified challenges related to student comprehension and application of key concepts. In response, faculty implemented targeted instructional strategies, including guided notes, additional low-stakes assessments, and scaffolded problem-solving activities. These changes are reviewed through subsequent assessment cycles to evaluate their effectiveness and guide continued refinement of instructional practices.

At the upper-division level, assessment in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management program revealed that students experienced difficulty aligning analytical factors with actionable recommendations in course assignments. Faculty responded by introducing a revised alignment-focused assignment designed to strengthen students' applied analysis and decision-making skills. The effectiveness of this curricular modification is evaluated in subsequent assessment cycles to determine whether student performance demonstrates improved alignment between analysis and recommendations.

Program-level assessment results have also led to targeted improvements. The Arts and Sciences Division used results to strengthen communication of assessment expectations and improve consistency in data reporting within the General Education cycle, with results reviewed annually. Faculty in the Applied Sciences and Health Sciences divisions used findings from certification pass rates, program reviews, and advisory committee feedback to refine instructional strategies and align learning outcomes with workforce expectations. For example, the Health Sciences advisory committees, composed of local healthcare partners, recommended program, student support, and equipment updates in Dental Education and Nursing, which led to revised admissions processes, additional student support through success coaching, and upgraded simulation equipment. Likewise, BSETE program faculty used host teacher evaluations and internship assessment data to improve differentiation strategies and classroom management preparation for teacher candidates.

Employer and community feedback also inform institutional improvement. Results from the Employer Satisfaction Survey are reviewed by the Data Analysis Group (DAG) to identify trends in graduate preparedness and areas where instruction can better address workplace needs. Recent results noted strong satisfaction with graduates' technical and communication skills but suggested further emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving, findings that align with the College's renewed focus on strengthening analytical and

applied learning in General Education and workforce programs. These findings are revisited in subsequent survey cycles and program assessments to evaluate whether curricular and instructional adjustments address identified needs.

At the institutional level, the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) reviews Educational Program Assessment (EPA) reports and General Education assessment results. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness compiles reviewer feedback and returns it to program directors and faculty, and provides annual summaries to AQC. The Data Analysis Group (DAG) analyzes College-wide indicators (e.g., Employer/Graduate surveys, CCSSE/SENSE, SEI) to identify trends that inform planning. When assessment results reveal needs related to instructional practice or student support, DAG disseminates those findings to relevant committees and workgroups for coordinated action. For example, questions and themes regarding student use of artificial intelligence were forwarded to the AISIST Committee for further discussion and faculty guidance development. Updates are also shared with faculty through divisional meetings and Faculty Council discussions.

Assessment of Co-curricular and Support Programs

Assessment of student learning and development at SFSC extends beyond the classroom to include engagement in campus and community activities, as well as evaluation of academic and student support services. These activities advance the College's mission to provide a learning-centered environment that supports the educational, cultural, and economic development of its communities.

For example, in the SLS 1106 First Year Experience course Campus and Community Engagement Assignment, students participate in campus or community events and submit written reflections linking those experiences to course concepts and personal development. Faculty review these submissions as part of course assessment, providing qualitative insight into how students apply classroom learning to real-world and civic contexts.

Institutional surveys also provide key measures of co-curricular and support-area effectiveness. Results from the Graduate Satisfaction Survey and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) capture students' perceptions of the Career Development Center, Tutoring and Learning Center, and other support services. Recent analyses by the Data Analysis Group (DAG) identified a need to strengthen awareness of available mental health resources. In response, SFSC expanded communication about its BayCare partnership by presenting information to division faculty and encouraging them to include mental health resources in course materials and student discussions. To enhance the usefulness and clarity of survey results going forward, the College has revised the Graduate Satisfaction Survey and transitioned the former Course Opinion Survey into a Current Student Survey to capture broader student experiences and improve response rates. These improvements support ongoing planning and strengthen SFSC's ability to assess holistic student learning and engagement.

Through these efforts, SFSC ensures that assessment encompasses both academic and co-curricular dimensions of the student experience, supporting continuous improvement and advancing the College's mission to promote student success and community development.

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3.F. Program Review

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

Argument

South Florida State College's (SFSC) program review process is a cornerstone of its mission to "provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services" that advance the educational, cultural, and economic development of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties. Guided by Procedure 3030, the Academic Program Review Procedure, and integrated within the annual Accreditation, Assessment, and Planning Timeline (2025-26), the College ensures that every program remains relevant, effective, and aligned with community and workforce needs.

The three-level review cycle—Level I (annual), Level II (conducted as warranted), and Level III (Florida College Systemwide)—promotes continuous improvement by linking evidence-based analysis, faculty reflection, and administrative planning. Level I reviews emphasize student learning outcomes, enrollment, and completion data; Level II reviews are initiated when warranted by findings in Level I reviews or by emerging program needs and include a more detailed analysis of outcomes, resource utilization, and environmental factors; and Level III reviews are Florida College System-wide reviews of selected programs or disciplines conducted by the Division of Florida Colleges and the Division of Career and Technical Education.

This structured approach fulfills SFSC's mission by ensuring that quality instruction, student success, and community responsiveness drive curricular decision-making.

Implementation of Program Review Across Divisions

Each instructional division conducts annual Level I Program Reviews and submits findings to the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) for review and documentation as part of the College's assessment cycle. While Level I reviews primarily analyze enrollment, completion, and outcome data, the AQC's role is to confirm that the reports are complete, methodologically sound, and aligned with institutional standards for assessment and improvement. Any resulting recommendations or improvement actions are addressed within the respective divisions through faculty discussions, division meetings, and, when curriculum changes are needed, the Curriculum Committee. This process provides a structured pathway from data analysis to action, ensuring that program review results inform planning and curricular decisions across all divisions.

The 2024–25 Arts and Sciences Level I Program Review demonstrates SFSC's data-driven commitment to continuous improvement and alignment with Florida College System standards. The review documented stable or increased participation in key general education disciplines, including notable FTE growth in Biological Sciences, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences. Course-offering analysis showed strong student access across the College's regional sites and expanded online delivery, with Virtual Campus courses comprising over 43% of all offerings in fall 2024 and nearly 75% in summer

2025. These trends reflect SFSC's mission to provide flexible learning opportunities that promote access and student success throughout its service district. Outcome data confirmed that 89% of Associate in Arts graduates either continued their education or entered the workforce, and transfer students to the State University System achieved a mean GPA of 3.12, validating the College's mission commitment to academic preparation and lifelong learning.

The 2023–24 Health Sciences and 2023–24 Applied Sciences and Technologies Level I Program Reviews illustrate how SFSC operationalizes its mission through systematic evaluation and improvement of workforce programs.

- In Radiography, the program implemented a competency tracking system and strengthened clinical partner collaboration to improve completion and certification outcomes while maintaining 100% job placement and eight-year JRCERT accreditation.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Paramedic programs maintained strong enrollment through two annual cohorts, updated instructional content in trauma and cardiac care, and alignment with Florida Department of Health standards, supporting the mission's workforce development focus.
- In Automotive Technology, 2023–24 review results confirmed continued high employer engagement and local job demand, with stable enrollment and advisory participation ensuring ongoing program relevance to regional industry needs.

These improvements demonstrate the College's continuous alignment between assessment, planning, and its mission to assist the people of its service district in completing degrees, entering the workforce, and improving career circumstances.

Faculty and Stakeholder Engagement

SFSC sustains a mission-driven culture of evidence-based improvement through active engagement of faculty and external partners in program evaluation and curriculum development. Faculty are directly involved in the review and interpretation of assessment data through the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) and the Curriculum Committee, which collectively ensure that course and program changes are data-informed and aligned with institutional goals. Faculty discussions within these committees translate assessment findings and program review outcomes into actionable recommendations for improvement, ensuring that curricular and instructional decisions are informed by evidence and aligned with institutional goals. Examples include course-sequencing revisions in Nursing to support student progression, refinement of Radiography clinical competencies based on employer and clinical input, and approval of new interdisciplinary Honors courses that expand opportunities for critical thinking and creative inquiry.

External stakeholder engagement further strengthens this process. Each workforce program convenes an Advisory Committee at least annually, providing employers and community representatives an opportunity to review student outcomes, share labor market insights, and recommend curricular updates. Feedback from these committees has informed a range of program improvements—such as expanded clinical partnerships in Radiography, installation of new digital radiography equipment in Dental Hygiene, curriculum alignment in Emergency Medical Services with state and national standards, and enhanced mentor-

teacher orientation in the [BSETE program](#).

These collaborative structures exemplify the College's commitment to shared governance and continuous improvement. Faculty and community partners jointly ensure that academic programs remain rigorous, responsive, and relevant to the needs of SFSC's service district. This ongoing engagement closes the loop between evaluation, planning, and implementation, demonstrating the College's mission in action through quality programs, training, and services that foster student success.

Curriculum and Transfer Policy Alignment

South Florida State College's curriculum and transfer processes reflect the mission's emphasis on access, opportunity, and student success by ensuring that credits earned at the College are portable, transparent, and consistent with statewide academic standards.

Procedures [3110](#), [3112](#), [3113](#), and the [College Transcript Evaluation Process](#) outline how SFSC evaluates [transfer](#), [experiential](#), and noncredit learning for potential credit. These procedures ensure consistent and equitable evaluation of coursework from institutions accredited by the U.S. Department of Education–recognized agencies, as well as appropriate review of credit for prior learning and professional training.

A key component of Florida's transfer structure is the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS), established in [Florida Statute 1007.24](#). Under the SCNS, every postsecondary course offered by public colleges and universities is assigned a unique prefix and number that identifies content, level, and credit hours. When two institutions offer courses with the same prefix and number, those courses are considered equivalent for transfer purposes, guaranteeing full credit transfer among Florida public institutions. The SCNS thus eliminates course-by-course evaluation for most general education and lower-division courses, ensuring a seamless and transparent transfer pathway for students moving from SFSC to Florida's state universities or other colleges. The system also requires statewide faculty discipline committees to review new and revised courses for content alignment, providing academic oversight across institutions.

SFSC operationalizes these requirements through clear student-facing resources such as the [SFSC Catalog](#) and the [2 plus 2 Transfer Information webpage](#), which outline credit-by-exam options (AP, IB, CLEP), [articulation agreements](#), and prior-learning assessment opportunities.

These resources ensure that students are fully informed of how earned credits apply toward degree completion at SFSC or at partner universities, fulfilling the College's mission to assist the people of its service district in completing degrees and advancing their careers through quality programs, training, and services.

Integration with External Accreditation

External quality assurance is an integral part of SFSC's mission to provide "quality programs, training, and services" that prepare graduates for professional success. Each program with specialized accreditation or state approval engages in continuous monitoring and reporting that complements the College's internal program review cycle established in [Procedure 3030 – Academic Program Review Procedures](#).

The Program Accreditation List documents SFSC's standing with multiple accrediting and approving bodies, including ACEN (Nursing), JRCERT (Radiography), CODA (Dental Hygiene), CAAHEP (Emergency Medical Services and Surgical Services), ASE (Automotive Technology), and FLDOE (Teacher Education). Findings and recommendations from these agencies are incorporated into the College's divisional program review processes, where faculty document resulting actions and, when appropriate, develop curriculum updates for consideration through standard governance channels.

- **ACEN (Nursing)** – Program review findings and accreditation reporting led to the addition of a Success Coach and expansion of the Nursing Simulation Lab to strengthen clinical preparation and improve NCLEX outcomes.
- **JRCERT (Radiography)** – Radiography accreditation reporting and program review outcomes prompted implementation of a competency-tracking system and closer collaboration with clinical partners to strengthen student preparation and compliance with professional standards.
- **FLDOE (Bachelor of Science in Elementary Teacher Education)** – State-level oversight through Florida's Annual Program Performance Report (APPR) verifies candidate effectiveness and workforce impact. The 2025 APPR awarded SFSC's Elementary Teacher Education/ESOL/Reading program a summative rating of 3.7 (Effective) with Level 4 scores in Candidate Readiness and Workforce Contribution Rate and a Level 3 in Annual Evaluations. The program demonstrated a 150% Workforce Contribution Rate and 100% effectiveness ratings among evaluated completers, confirming that SFSC graduates are meeting state performance standards and fulfilling the College's mission to strengthen the regional K–12 workforce.
- **CAAHEP and ASE programs** – The Surgical Services program completed its final board review for CAAHEP accreditation in 2024, and EMS is preparing for reaffirmation to ensure continued compliance with national competency standards. In Automotive Technology, program faculty maintain alignment with ASE certification requirements and use advisory feedback to ensure instruction reflects current industry practices.

Findings from program-level accreditation reviews are maintained and acted upon within the respective academic divisions. Key outcomes or planned improvements are summarized in annual Program Review reports, which are then reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) as part of the institution's internal evaluation cycle. This indirect reporting structure allows accreditation results to inform institutional discussions on quality assurance without duplicating the accrediting agencies' documentation requirements.

Evidence of Continuous, Mission-Driven Improvement

Program review results are analyzed and applied across the institution to close the loop between planning and performance:

- **General Education:** Faculty improved the consistency and reliability of the assessment process by developing a General Education Assessment Handbook to guide instructors in selecting and submitting assignments, applying rubrics, and entering results into D2L Brightspace. The Handbook was supported by a series of instructional videos that provided step-by-step demonstrations for faculty. These tools improved the consistency and reliability of data collection, allowing the General

Education Subcommittee and Academic Quality Committee to better identify trends and make informed recommendations. Based on those analyses, faculty are revising General Education rubrics to ensure that outcomes data translate directly into course-level improvements.

- **Health Sciences:** Program review results and external accreditation findings confirm that Health Sciences programs continuously use data to improve student outcomes. Following analysis of completion and licensure performance, the Nursing program implemented targeted interventions, including the addition of a Success Coach and expanded simulation opportunities. The Radiography program used advisory and clinical feedback to adopt a competency-tracking system, strengthening student preparedness and maintaining 100% job placement, along with an eight-year JRCERT reaffirmation. These outcomes close the loop by demonstrating that evidence-based changes in curriculum and support directly enhanced student achievement and validated program quality.
- **Career and Technical Education:** SFSC's workforce programs demonstrate accountability and continuous improvement through annual Postsecondary CTE Audits and Perkins reporting, which provide retention and success benchmarks for all career programs. The 2024 audit confirmed strong student outcomes, with retention rates of 72.7% in Professional Culinary Arts, 82.1% in Cosmetology, 96.0% in Practical Nursing, and 85.7% in Radiography—each exceeding the Florida College System's 50% target. Program faculty and advisory committees review these results to identify opportunities for strengthening student support and employer collaboration. These data-driven reviews ensure that SFSC's workforce programs remain responsive to industry needs and aligned with the College's mission to provide high-quality, career-focused education and training.
- **Interdisciplinary Learning:** SFSC encourages innovation that integrates disciplines and promotes creative inquiry in support of the College's mission to foster personal and cultural development. In 2024, new Honors courses such as BioArt I and BioArt II were approved to expand opportunities for students to explore the intersection of science and art through research and creative expression. These offerings exemplify SFSC's commitment to providing enriching academic experiences that extend beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries and engage students in broader perspectives of learning.

Together, these improvement activities illustrate SFSC's culture of evidence-based decision making and its commitment to continuous enhancement of teaching, learning, and student success in direct support of the College's mission.

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3.G. Student Success Outcomes

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) demonstrates a deep and sustained commitment to tracking and improving student success outcomes through the Mission: Possible Strategic Plan, which operationalizes the College's mission to provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness coordinates longitudinal analysis of completion, retention, transfer, licensure, and employment trends through the Core Indicators of Effectiveness report, which serves as the institutional scorecard for assessing performance and guiding improvement.

Data are reviewed by the Data Analysis Group (DAG) and divisional leadership to evaluate progress toward strategic and mission-driven goals and to prioritize initiatives such as academic coaching, distance learning support, and workforce credential expansion. Peer comparisons from the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) and IPEDS Data Feedback Report provide national context for evaluating effectiveness, ensuring that the College's planning and assessment processes remain closely aligned with its mission to "provide a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services."

Through this data-informed approach, SFSC fulfills its mission to assist people of its service district, "regardless of economic, social, or educational background," in achieving academic and career success, and to partner with the community in fostering educational and economic development across DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

Benchmarking Student Success with Peer Institutions

SFSC routinely benchmarks its performance through national and state datasets, including the IPEDS Data Feedback Report, NCCBP, and the Florida Department of Education's Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP). IPEDS and NCCBP results confirm that SFSC maintains comparable or higher outcomes in student retention, transfer, and degree completion than its peer group. For example, SFSC's full-time retention rate and overall completion rates align closely with national community college medians, while transfer performance and job placement rates exceed many peer averages.

Institutional stakeholders analyze these comparative data during annual planning cycles to identify focus areas. As a result, SFSC implemented data-informed strategies such as targeted academic coaching (e.g., Nursing Success Coach) and added program support roles (e.g., Clinical Coordinator in Health Sciences), along with curriculum and equipment modernization in STEM through the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education (ATE) SWERVE project—Supporting Work Experience and Ready Virtual Environments—which expands simulation-based learning and remote lab access for students in Engineering Technology and related programs. Themes from the Graduate

Satisfaction Survey highlighted opportunities to strengthen advising communication and distance support. Following Data Analysis Group (DAG) review of these findings, additional faculty and student training on the Brightspace Pulse mobile app was implemented to improve usability and engagement. The survey results continue to inform institutional discussions related to advising communication, resource planning, and future alignment with the Mission: Possible goals.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) provide further benchmarking evidence of student success and institutional effectiveness. Results from the 2025 CCSSE Means Report show that SFSC students report engagement levels comparable to or above those of peer institutions in critical thinking, developing clearer career goals, and gaining information about career opportunities, demonstrating SFSC's commitment to providing a learning-centered environment through quality programs and services. Students also reported higher use of academic and financial-aid supports, reflecting the College's emphasis on access and student support. The CCSSE Campus Accessibility module found that 83% of students feel they belong at the College and 75% would seek help from campus services, while 2024 SENSE results highlight strong first-term engagement and faculty concern for student success.

Together, these national survey results complement the IPEDS and NCCBP benchmarks by confirming that SFSC students are not only achieving academic success but also experiencing a supportive environment that promotes persistence and completion.

Program-Level Student Outcomes

Program reviews provide a comprehensive assessment of outcomes by discipline, documenting enrollment trends, completions, FTE growth, and student achievements.

Arts and Sciences:

The 2024–25 Level I Program Review for the Associate in Arts degree confirmed that 89% of graduates were either employed or continued their education within one year of completion. FTE growth remained strong across core disciplines—Physical Sciences, Business & Management, Mathematics, Psychology, and Social Sciences—reflecting both relevant course offerings and increased dual enrollment participation. Virtual Campus offerings accounted for up to 75.5% of summer courses, enhancing accessibility for students throughout SFSC's service district. Analysis of State University System transfer data showed that 80.3% of SFSC transfers earned GPAs of 2.5 or higher, and 60.7% earned GPAs of 3.0 or higher, demonstrating academic readiness and alignment with the College's mission to help students achieve academic and career success through accessible, high-quality education.

Applied Sciences and Technologies:

Programs such as Engineering Technology and Business Administration demonstrated substantial enrollment gains, supported by active advisory committees and external funding. For example, Engineering Technology enrollment increased 73% year-over-year, aided by NSF-funded equipment modernization and scholarship support .

Business Administration completions more than doubled between 2022 and 2024 (150%), while the Electrical Lineworker and HVAC programs maintained steady demand and

integrated advisory-driven safety and equipment improvements.

Health Sciences:

Division reviews reflect exceptional outcomes and continuous improvement based on national accreditation standards. Highlights include:

- **Nursing (AS/BSN):** Job placement rates above 93%, with curriculum revisions following a consultant's review; Success Coach and Clinical Coordinator were added to support completion
- **Practical Nursing:** 100% licensure pass rate for two consecutive years and 63% completion rate; faculty implemented additional hands-on skills labs and tutoring to improve retention
- **Dental Hygiene/Assisting:** 100% pass and placement rates and an 11% increase in qualified applicants; employer feedback led to a Legislative Appropriation to modernize the Dental Clinic with digital scanners, TalEval software, and new equipment purchases
- **Radiography:** 100% completion and job placement rates; a tracking system and faculty additions strengthened competency attainment

Collectively, these reviews demonstrate that SFSC's divisions use assessment findings and advisory feedback to strengthen programs, ensuring that student outcomes and improvement efforts remain aligned with the College's mission.

Licensure and Industry Certification Outcomes

Licensure and industry certification results validate the high quality of SFSC's workforce programs. Across 2023–24, programs such as Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Radiography, and Emergency Medical Services achieved strong pass and job placement rates that meet or exceed state accountability thresholds and accreditor expectations. Applied Science programs such as Engineering Technology, HVAC, Automotive Service Technology, and Electrical Lineworker maintain alignment with Florida's Master Credential List, ensuring relevance to regional workforce needs.

Advisory boards play a critical role in identifying emerging equipment and credential requirements. Examples include the acquisition of trauma training equipment for EMS and Fire Science programs through DOL grant funding and upgrades to computer science labs via Perkins and modernization grants. These loop-closing actions illustrate how external input translates into targeted resource investment that enhances student achievement.

High licensure and certification performance reflect SFSC's mission-driven focus on "career and technical preparation that enables students to enter or advance in the workforce," ensuring that program excellence directly benefits the communities of its service district.

Graduate Outcomes and Employment

The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) provides objective, statewide tracking of graduate employment and continuing education outcomes. The 2022-23 reports show that SFSC graduates achieve exceptional results across all credential levels.

- Associate in Arts (A.A.): 57% of completers pursued further education, and 69% were employed, totaling 89% successfully placed in education or work
- Associate in Science (A.S.) and bachelor's programs: Employment rates were 91% for A.S. graduates and 93% for bachelor's graduates within a year of graduation

These strong graduate outcomes affirm SFSC's mission to "provide a comprehensive range of opportunities for the educational, cultural, and economic development of the service district" and to support students in "achieving success in employment and continued education."

Alumni and Graduate Satisfaction

The Graduate Satisfaction Survey 2024 Qualitative Analysis captured graduates' reflections on instruction, advising, and student services. Open-ended responses highlighted strengths such as faculty support, advising, career services, and distance learning flexibility. Students praised instructors for personalized attention and approachability and advisors for guidance on degree progress. The analysis identified opportunities for improvement, including advising communication, distance learning usability, and student engagement. As a result, SFSC implemented additional training to improve Brightspace and Pulse usability, while other recommendations remain under review. These recommendations are shared with the Data Analysis Group (DAG) for review, discussion, and incorporation into institutional improvement planning, ensuring that student feedback informs decision-making and closes the assessment loop.

Compliance with State Degree Requirements

SFSC ensures compliance with all Florida Department of Education and State Board of Education requirements for degree completion, including general education course requirements and civic literacy competency standards as outlined in Florida Statute 1007.25, Florida Administrative Code 6A-14.0303, and 6A-10.02413. Compliance is further supported through the A.A. Degree Planner and catalog documentation of the Civic Literacy Requirement. These materials ensure that students meet state-mandated competencies in both general education and civic knowledge prior to graduation.

This commitment to meeting and exceeding state standards reflects the College's mission to "provide quality programs and services that ensure academic rigor, civic responsibility, and preparedness for advanced study or meaningful participation in society."

Participation in Student Success Initiatives

SFSC actively engages in externally funded initiatives that advance student success goals. The ATE SWERVE Year 2 Annual Evaluation Report documented how NSF funding supported modernization of computer labs, new virtualization software, and curriculum updates that expanded remote STEM learning opportunities.

Similarly, the S-STEM Scholars Program (Emerge: Preparing Students for an Innovative Future) recruited and retained students from underrepresented backgrounds in Engineering Technology. Year 2 evaluation findings showed high scholar satisfaction and strong identification as future engineers, with participants expressing confidence in faculty support

and career goals. The report also highlighted how the program builds STEM identity and sense of belonging to improve outcomes for students from all backgrounds, including those who may face barriers to college access or completion.

Both initiatives demonstrate SFSC's ability to leverage grant funding to improve student success, employ external evaluation for accountability, and disseminate lessons learned across academic divisions. They also exemplify the College's mission of working in partnership with organizations and communities to expand access, enhance persistence, and strengthen student pathways.

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Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

Argument

South Florida State College ensures the quality, rigor, and integrity of its educational programs through faculty leadership, systematic review, and a mission-centered focus on student learning. Faculty design and oversee curricula, establish learning outcomes, and evaluate program effectiveness using assessment results, accreditation feedback, employer input, and student performance data. Programs engage students in inquiry, analysis, communication, and applied learning through capstones, internships, clinical experiences, laboratory work, and creative and research activities. General Education provides a foundation in essential skills that support success across disciplines and modalities. Dual enrollment, workforce, and baccalaureate programs maintain college-level rigor through consistent learning expectations and qualified instructors. Regular program reviews, advisory committee engagement, and clear admission and progression standards ensure offerings remain current, coherent, and responsive to regional workforce needs. These integrated processes demonstrate SFSC's commitment to high-quality instruction, equitable learning environments, and meaningful student achievement.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

4.A Effective Administrative Structures

The institution's administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) demonstrates effective and participatory administrative structures that support transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The College framework ensures that decision-making across all levels, including governance, administration, faculty, staff, students, and community partners, is guided by evidence and aligned with the mission of the College. These processes reinforce the goals of the Mission: Possible Strategic Plan, particularly in the areas of access, retention, completion, and community engagement. Evidence throughout this section shows that the College makes informed decisions that directly advance mission fulfillment.

Organizational Framework and Governance

The College operates within a clearly defined organizational framework that ensures accountability, communication, and effective oversight of mission-related priorities. The District Board of Trustees (DBOT) provides policy direction and fiduciary leadership for the institution. The Board delegates administrative authority to the president, who manages day-to-day operations through vice presidents responsible for Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Administrative Services.

The DBOT meets regularly to review data, discuss strategic initiatives, and act on recommendations that flow upward through the College's committee structure. In March 2025, the Board approved multiple curriculum revisions and new partnership agreements that originated through standing committees and academic leadership, demonstrating the proper flow of information from faculty through administration to governing authority. These processes reflect a governance model that is mission-centered, ensuring that actions directly support the Mission: Possible goals of educational quality and community collaboration.

The Committee Handbook defines the College's standing, employee, and student committees, in addition to community advisory committees that support workforce programs.

Collectively, these groups provide the structure through which data review, policy development, and continuous improvement occur.

Key committees supporting institutional effectiveness include:

- Data Analysis Group (DAG): reviews institutional performance metrics, survey data, and key performance indicators to inform planning and guide the President's Leader Team.
- Curriculum Committee: evaluates proposals for new programs, course modifications, and deletions to ensure alignment with state frameworks and the College mission.
- Academic Quality Committee (AQC) :reviews academic program assessment processes and educational improvement activities to ensure continuous quality enhancement.
- Faculty Council: serves as the representative body for faculty, providing input on policy, curriculum, and academic operations.
- Learning and Student Success (LASS) Committee: reviews student learning and success data to identify opportunities for improving retention and completion, supporting the *Mission: Possible* goals of access and student achievement.

Through these structures, SFSC ensures effective governance and alignment between data analysis, administrative leadership, and mission-driven outcomes.

Shared Governance and Constituent Engagement

Shared governance at SFSC promotes broad engagement in decision-making and ensures that diverse perspectives contribute to the advancement of institutional goals. Faculty, staff, and students participate meaningfully through standing committees and councils that connect operational functions to the College's mission.

Faculty Council plays a vital role in shared governance and academic quality. During 2024–2025, faculty members proposed and supported institutional improvements, including revision of the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) to increase question clarity and better capture instructional effectiveness, creation of an emeritus faculty nomination process, and establishment of a shared Faculty Outlook Calendar to centralize governance and instructional deadlines. Each of these initiatives enhanced faculty communication, recognition, and student learning experiences, directly supporting the mission goal of improving instructional excellence and student achievement.

Staff participation is embedded throughout the governance structure. Staff serve on committees, such as Professional Development, Safety and Security, and the Learning and Student Success Committee. Through these roles, staff contribute to decisions affecting institutional operations, compliance, and student services. For example, the Safety and Security Committee reviews campus safety protocols and Clery Act training, supporting the College's mission priority of providing a secure learning environment.

Student engagement occurs through the Student Government Association (SGA), which is established under a written constitution and provides formal student representation on committees, including Commencement, Honors Council, Curriculum, and MOFAC. Student representatives share feedback and participate in campus initiatives that strengthen

engagement and sense of belonging, reinforcing the Mission: Possible goal of fostering a supportive and actively involved learning community.

Together, these structures ensure that faculty, staff, and students share responsibility for institutional effectiveness and that their input informs actions supporting the College's mission.

Data-Informed Decision Making

The College uses data to drive improvement at every level, ensuring decisions are evidence-based and aligned with strategic priorities. The Data Analysis Group (DAG) reviews institutional metrics such as enrollment, completion, licensure, and satisfaction data to identify trends and recommend improvements. Findings are shared with academic leadership and relevant committees to inform actions that advance access, retention, and completion goals outlined in Mission: Possible.

At the program level, advisory committees and faculty use outcome data and employer feedback to guide curriculum and equipment updates:

- **Nursing:** analysis of NCLEX pass rates and retention trends led to revisions in progression policies, updated admission scoring, and expanded success coaching.
- **Radiography:** program data prompted the acquisition of Clover Learning (RadTech Boot Camp) and Trajecsys tracking software to improve board-exam readiness and clinical evaluation.
- **HVAC:** advisory feedback resulted in the adoption of A2L refrigerant training and the purchase of updated diagnostic kits through Perkins funding.
- **Automotive Service Technology:** committee recommendations led to purchases of two Robinair A/C Recovery and Recycling Machines, six transmission training simulators, and EV safety equipment totaling \$25,900.

Through this collaborative and data-informed structure, SFSC ensures that academic and operational decisions reflect evidence, stakeholder feedback, and mission-driven priorities.

External and Community Engagement

SFSC maintains strong partnerships with employers and community representatives who help ensure programs align with regional needs and workforce expectations. Each career and technical program is supported by an advisory committee that reviews curriculum relevance, graduate performance, and employer satisfaction data. Advisory feedback directly informs program updates, resource allocations, and equipment purchases.

- **Drafting:** advisory members recommended software updates and inclusion of project-based assignments using real-world design examples such as barndominiums and multifamily structures. In response, faculty implemented these changes, upgrading to BIM software and incorporating multidisciplinary projects that mirror regional construction needs. These updates support the College's mission by preparing students for meaningful employment and strengthening connections with the surrounding community.
- **Business and Accounting:** advisory feedback emphasized the need for stronger proficiency in QuickBooks and Microsoft Office applications. Faculty subsequently

embedded QuickBooks training and enhanced Office-based assignments into program coursework, and are exploring Intuit certification options to strengthen student employability. This implementation supports the College's mission by ensuring programs remain responsive to workforce needs and promote student achievement.

In addition to its workforce partnerships, the College maintains community-based committees such as the Cultural Programs Committee and the Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) Advisory Committee, which provide opportunities for ongoing collaboration with community members and local stakeholders. While these committees primarily serve an advisory role, their inclusion in the governance structure reflects the College's commitment to engaging its communities in educational and cultural development consistent with its mission.

These collaborative structures demonstrate that SFSC's external partnerships extend beyond consultation to actionable outcomes that fulfill the College's mission of providing high-quality education, supporting workforce development, and strengthening community connections.

Continuous Improvement in Governance

The District Board of Trustees (DBOT) conducts an annual planning meeting to review institutional performance, discuss strategic priorities, and evaluate progress toward mission fulfillment. These reviews allow Board members to assess how institutional operations and outcomes align with the College's mission and to identify focus areas for the upcoming year.

The Committee Handbook reflects the latest cycle of review, clarifying committee purposes, updating membership, and reaffirming student and staff representation. This periodic review ensures that governance processes remain current, representative, and mission aligned.

Additionally, during the development of the Mission: Possible Strategic Plan, SFSC conducted campuswide surveys for faculty, staff, and students to collect perceptions and priorities related to institutional direction. The disaggregated results informed planning and demonstrated a commitment to engaging internal constituencies in mission-centered improvement.

These practices reflect a culture of reflection and accountability that ensures governance effectiveness and continuous improvement.

Conclusion

South Florida State College demonstrates that its governance and administrative structures are effective, participatory, and aligned with the College's mission. Institutional decisions are informed by data, shaped through shared governance, and guided by structures that encourage collaboration among faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Advisory committees, internal councils, and the District Board of Trustees each play distinct yet interconnected roles that ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Across all levels of the institution—through faculty-led curriculum revisions, program advisory recommendations implemented into practice, and Board oversight grounded in

data—SFSC consistently demonstrates that its administrative framework supports mission fulfillment. These practices confirm that decision-making at the College is both evidence-based and purpose-driven, ensuring that planning, operations, and improvement efforts remain focused on providing high-quality education, advancing student success, and serving the communities of its district.

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4.B Resource Base and Sustainability

The institution's financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution's financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability.

Argument

South Florida State College (SFSC) maintains a stable and diversified resource base that ensures the delivery of high-quality educational programs and supports future institutional sustainability. The College demonstrates prudent fiscal management, evidence-based planning, and transparent oversight processes aligned with its mission to *transform lives through education, innovation, and cultural enrichment*. Financial practices comply with federal and state requirements, including Florida Statutes [1011.84](#) and [1013.841](#). Through ongoing internal controls, annual audits, and active governance by the District Board of Trustees (DBOT), SFSC ensures integrity, accountability, and long-term fiscal viability.

The College's integrated planning and budgeting processes provide a foundation for maintaining facilities, technology, and personnel resources across all campuses. Institutional effectiveness and financial stewardship are closely linked through participatory budgeting, unit planning, and data-driven decision-making. These structures allow SFSC to sustain operations, strengthen instructional quality, and remain responsive to changing community, workforce, and student needs.

Financial Integrity and Controls

SFSC operates within a comprehensive framework of fiscal accountability that ensures responsible management of public resources and institutional funds. Oversight mechanisms include annual independent audits, internal control reviews, state compliance monitoring, and policy-driven financial procedures. Collectively, these mechanisms confirm the College's financial integrity and adherence to legal and ethical standards.

The College receives annual external financial audits conducted by the Florida Auditor General. The audits for Fiscal Years [2022](#), [2023](#), and [2024](#) each resulted in unmodified (clean) opinions with no material weaknesses. The [Operational Audit 2023-009](#) confirmed compliance with internal control standards and state financial regulations, reinforcing that SFSC maintains sound fiscal management practices. These findings demonstrate consistent reliability in accounting, record-keeping, and financial reporting.

Internal fiscal controls are further documented through annual compliance and control reports, including the [FY 2023](#) and [FY 2024](#) Internal Control Documentation, which outline procedures for revenue reconciliation, procurement authorization, and expenditure tracking. Together, these materials demonstrate that the College's financial systems are structured to prevent error, misuse, or waste of public funds.

Fiscal policies and procedures guide all aspects of the budgeting and accounting process. [Policy 4.02](#) (Budget) and [Policy 4.15](#) (Investment of Surplus Funds), together with

Procedure 4030 (Budget Development and Amendment) and Procedure 4150 (Investment of Funds), establish institutional parameters for financial planning and investment management. The College's practices align with state accounting and budgetary standards as detailed in the Florida College System Accounting Manual 2025.

Transparency and oversight are reinforced through regular review by the District Board of Trustees. At its June 25, 2025 meeting, the Board approved the College's annual operating budget, capital outlay plan, and Foundation reauthorization. Monthly financial summaries are presented to the Board for monitoring revenues, expenditures, and fund balances, ensuring accountability at the highest governance level.

The College's financial health is further supported by consistent fiscal ratios and a stable Composite Financial Index (CFI) reflecting institutional strength. In addition, SFSC maintains a conservative fund balance consistent with Florida Statute 1013.841, which governs year-end reserves.

Overall, the College's financial control environment exemplifies integrity, compliance, and stability. These practices assure that SFSC allocates resources effectively to sustain educational quality and operational efficiency.

Investment Oversight

SFSC and the SFSC Foundation maintain well-defined investment structures that safeguard institutional assets and align financial decisions with the College's mission and fiduciary responsibilities. College investment practices are governed by Policy 4.15 (Investment of Surplus Funds) and Procedure 4150 (Investment of Funds), which outline parameters for investment diversification, liquidity, and security in accordance with Florida Statute 218.415. These procedures require prudent management of public funds through low-risk instruments and regular monitoring by the Vice President for Administrative Services.

The SFSC Foundation, a direct-support organization reauthorized annually by the District Board of Trustees, operates under its own Investment Policy and Investment Policy Statement (amended December 2018), which specifies objectives for portfolio diversification, income generation, and preservation of principal. The Foundation's investments are reviewed by its Finance and Investment Committee and are reported quarterly to the Foundation Board.

Independent audits of the Foundation (2023 and 2024) verify adherence to these policies and demonstrate strong financial performance with no material weaknesses. The 2024 audit confirmed asset growth and consistent compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Government Auditing Standards. Oversight of these funds supports student scholarships, endowed faculty positions, and community engagement initiatives, thereby ensuring mission-aligned investment of donor contributions.

At its January and March 2025 meetings, the Foundation Board reviewed and approved investment and financial reports, reaffirming transparency in the management of endowed and restricted funds.

The Foundation Investment Summary (September 2025), prepared by South Street

Advisors, confirms diversified portfolio holdings with a 65/35 equity-to-fixed-income ratio, a total portfolio value of \$11.46 million, and a 12.81% total return for the period ending September 30, 2025. The portfolio's structure and performance reflect prudent fiduciary management consistent with the Foundation's Investment Policy and annual audits.

Collectively, these structures confirm that SFSC and its Foundation exercise disciplined and ethical management of all financial resources, ensuring the long-term sustainability of programs and services that advance the College's mission.

Budget Development and Planning

Budget development at SFSC is a collaborative and mission-centered process that integrates institutional planning, assessment, and fiscal management. The College's budgeting system ensures that financial decisions are data-informed, transparent, and directly tied to educational priorities.

Procedure 4030 (Budget Development and Amendment) defines the structure and timeline of the budget process, which begins with divisional and departmental requests aligned to the Mission: Possible Strategic Plan. Units articulate resource needs through the annual Unit Action Plans (UAPs), which connect assessment findings to budget requests. These UAPs demonstrate active participation from faculty, staff, and administrators across all divisions in aligning resources with institutional goals.

Budget priorities are established by the Executive Team based on enrollment trends, legislative appropriations, and institutional effectiveness data. The Budget Memo 2026 communicates these priorities and outlines fiscal assumptions and planned allocations for the coming year. The Budget Development and Year-End Close documentation further demonstrates the College's disciplined approach to monitoring and adjusting financial activities throughout the year.

The annual Financial Shell (2024–25) provides detailed line-item tracking of revenues and expenditures, while the Financial Summary Report presented to the DBOT in October 2025 offers a mid-year analysis of budget-to-actual performance. These regular reports enable informed oversight by institutional leadership and the District Board of Trustees.

The Board's June 25, 2025 meeting minutes document approval of the College's operating budget and capital improvement plan, affirming alignment of financial planning with the mission and strategic goals.

In accordance with Florida Statute 1011.84 and institutional policy, SFSC maintains a conservative reserve that supports operational continuity and financial stability. The budget process not only ensures fiscal responsibility but also reflects the College's commitment to participatory governance and mission-driven planning.

Resource Sufficiency: Human, Physical, and Technological Resources

SFSC maintains sufficient human, physical, and technological resources to support its educational mission and to sustain the quality of instruction, student services, and operations across all campuses. Resource allocation is planned, documented, and regularly

assessed to ensure alignment with institutional goals and fiscal sustainability.

Human Resources

The College's human resources are stable and appropriately distributed across academic and administrative functions. As of Fiscal Year 2025, SFSC employs approximately 415 personnel, including administrators, full-time and adjunct faculty, professional staff, career-service staff, and part-time employees. Employee benefits, advancement opportunities, and professional support contribute to long-term retention and institutional knowledge.

Compliance and safety training is mandatory for all employees through Vector Solutions SafeColleges platforms, ensuring continued awareness of institutional policies and workplace safety. These systems confirm consistent engagement across all employment categories and reinforce a culture of accountability and ethical conduct.

Physical Resources

The College invests continuously in facilities maintenance, renovation, and expansion to support academic quality and community needs. The Educational Plant Five-Year Survey Report and Capital Improvement Budgets (2026–2029) outline planned facility enhancements and confirm that SFSC's physical infrastructure meets state standards for safety, accessibility, and program adequacy.

The Current Status of Funded Projects for 2025–26 details progress on renovation, maintenance, and modernization initiatives, including deferred maintenance, mechanical infrastructure upgrades, and safety compliance projects. Investments such as the Lineworker Bucket Truck acquisition further illustrate targeted resource allocation supporting workforce and technical programs.

All capital projects and facilities plans receive annual approval by the DBOT as part of the College's capital outlay review. These activities collectively demonstrate the College's capacity to sustain safe, functional, and technologically current learning environments.

Technological Resources and Accessibility

The College's technology infrastructure supports instructional delivery, administrative efficiency, and data security. The SFSC Technology Plan provides a comprehensive roadmap for upgrading network capacity, instructional technology, and cybersecurity while integrating accessibility standards.

SFSC affirms its commitment to equitable digital access through the Accessibility Statement, which pledges compliance with WCAG 2.0 AA standards and identifies institutional contacts for accessibility oversight. The WCAG Accessibility Committee Purpose defines the governance structure responsible for continuous review of online and digital accessibility, chaired by the director of institutional communications and reporting to the vice president for administrative services. Together, these documents demonstrate that accessibility and technology integration are institutionally embedded priorities supporting all learners.

Through sustained investment in people, facilities, and technology, SFSC provides an infrastructure that is reliable, equitable, and responsive to the evolving needs of students, faculty, and the regional workforce.

Faculty and Staff Development

SFSC fosters a culture of continuous professional learning and employee well-being that supports institutional quality and retention. Faculty and staff participate in regularly scheduled professional development events, collegewide training initiatives, and discipline-specific workshops designed to enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

The Professional Development Day (PDD) events in 2024 and 2025 offered keynote presentations, concurrent sessions, and collaborative learning experiences aligned with strategic goals. The SPD–PDD Spending Breakdown verifies institutional funding commitments to faculty and staff growth.

Complementary initiatives such as the Monday Morning Mentor Series, HyFlex Teaching Workshops, and the High-Impact Presentations 2024 series reinforce pedagogical innovation and technology adoption.

Employee wellness and engagement are prioritized through events like the 2025 Wellness Fair, open-enrollment sessions for employee benefits, and safety training participation, all of which reflect the College's holistic approach to supporting personnel.

These activities confirm that SFSC invests meaningfully in its employees as the foundation of institutional effectiveness. Professional development and wellness programming are intentionally linked to strategic priorities under Mission: Possible, ensuring that personnel growth directly enhances teaching quality, service delivery, and student success.

The College's investment in employee advancement is further illustrated by the case of Professor Philip Rizzo, whose completion of an MBA was supported through SFSC's Staff and Program Development (SPD) funds. This institutional support enabled him to pursue graduate-level studies that expanded his instructional and leadership capabilities in the Automotive Service Technology program. Upon earning his degree in May 2025, he advanced in faculty rank from Level III (bachelor's degree) to Level II (master's degree) under Administrative Procedure 5061. This example demonstrates how professional development investments directly contribute to instructional quality, faculty advancement, and alignment with institutional goals for workforce innovation and academic excellence.

Sustainability and Mission Alignment

SFSC ensures long-term financial and operational sustainability through responsible fiscal management, diversified funding sources, and mission-aligned partnerships. These practices are guided by transparent oversight from the District Board of Trustees, the SFSC Foundation, and the College's Grants Office, all of which contribute to institutional resilience and alignment with strategic priorities.

Foundation Oversight and Stewardship

The SFSC Foundation plays a central role in sustaining scholarships, endowed chairs, and cultural programming that advance the College's mission. Governance of the Foundation is clearly defined through the Foundation Bylaws and Mission Statement, which emphasize stewardship, integrity, and community engagement.

Foundation operations are governed by the Investment Policy and Investment Policy Statement (amended December 2018), which set parameters for asset diversification, liquidity, and ethical management. Annual independent audits verify compliance with these policies. The 2023 and 2024 Foundation Audits confirmed adherence to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, no material weaknesses, and continued asset growth.

The Foundation's financial stability enables consistent support for institutional priorities. The Endowed Chair Recipients Report and Scholarship Recipients Summary document significant annual investments in student aid and faculty development. In addition, the Foundation Events Yearly Golf Shootout, all of which enhance community engagement and visibility.

The Foundation's Board of Directors meets regularly to review financial performance and authorize disbursements. Minutes from January 2024 through March 2025 demonstrate ongoing fiscal oversight, mission alignment, and engagement with College leadership. At these meetings, members reviewed investment reports, approved budgets, and discussed scholarship and endowment updates.

In accordance with the SFSC Foundation Bylaws, the chair of the District Board of Trustees appoints one trustee to serve on the Foundation's Board of Directors and Executive Committee. This structural linkage ensures continuous coordination between the College's governing board and its direct-support organization, reinforcing fiscal accountability and alignment of Foundation initiatives with institutional priorities.

At its June 25, 2025, meeting, the District Board of Trustees reauthorized the Foundation as an official Direct Support Organization (DSO) and reviewed its financial performance, confirming full alignment between the Foundation and institutional priorities.

The Foundation Investment Summary (September 2025) further validates the Foundation's fiscal strength and mission alignment, demonstrating that long-term investment performance meets established benchmarks and continues to provide stable funding for scholarships, endowed chairs, and institutional priorities.

External Funding and Grants Oversight

SFSC supplements its institutional and Foundation resources with competitive and non-discretionary grants that expand educational access, workforce development, student support services, and cultural programs. SFSC manages federal, state, and private local and national foundation grants. The College's Grant Pathway Resource Guide formalizes oversight of all grant-related activity, including proposal development, fiscal accountability, and performance reporting. This process is supported by the Grants Office in coordination

with the vice presidents for academic affairs and administrative services and the controller, ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations.

The Grants FY2026 Report lists all newly awarded, active projects for the 2025–26 cycle, totaling more than \$1.99 million in external funding. In addition to annual grants, SFSC has been awarded several federal multi-year grants that it is currently managing from the National Science Foundation and the United States Department of Labor. Major initiatives include Perkins V Career and Technical Education, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, U.S. Department of Labor Farmworker Career Development Program, and the Florida Department of State Division of Arts and Culture. These grants directly support SFSC’s strategic objectives by enhancing workforce pathways, strengthening adult education, and expanding cultural programming.

The Grant Summary Report Presented to the DBOT (October 2025) provides an additional layer of accountability by documenting the current status of active awards and their alignment with the Mission: Possible strategic goals. Collectively, these materials illustrate the College’s capacity to manage and sustain diverse external revenue streams with institutional oversight and integrity.

Through sound financial controls, mission-aligned fundraising, and effective grants management, SFSC demonstrates its ability to maintain institutional stability while pursuing innovation and growth.

Summary

SFSC demonstrates a comprehensive and mature financial infrastructure that integrates integrity, transparency, and sustainability. Regular audits, participatory budget development, prudent investment practices, and continuous oversight of resources reflect the College’s commitment to its mission and to the success of its students and community. The alignment of planning, budgeting, and evaluation processes ensures that SFSC remains fiscally stable while continually improving the quality and reach of its educational programs.

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4.C Planning for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment.

Argument

South Florida State College is an open-access, learning-centered institution that advances its mission by using evidence to make decisions, implement improvements, and verify results in teaching and learning, student services, enrollment, resources, and external engagement for the people of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties. Evidence is primarily archived in Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) and corroborated through institutional repositories such as SharePoint, where meeting minutes and supporting documents are maintained, and OneDrive, which houses assessment and planning files. Together, these sources demonstrate a consistent cycle of evidence, decision, action, and follow-up. Through partnerships with organizations and communities, SFSC provides leadership and expands educational, cultural, and economic development opportunities across its service district, aligning evidence-based actions to community needs.

Mission-Aligned Planning and Integration

This evidence-based framework underpins the College's planning and assessment systems and ensures that decisions are mission-aligned, data-informed, and continuously evaluated for effectiveness. Academic programs complete an Educational Program Assessment (EPA) each year. Each program identifies three to five measurable program learning outcomes, sets the performance measures and targets for each outcome, and then documents Results, Analysis, and Improvement Activities in SPOL; EPA submissions undergo faculty peer review guided by a common review key so evaluations are calibrated and applied consistently across programs. Administrative and student support areas complete an Administrative Program Assessment (APA) on the same cadence by establishing three to five measurable unit outcomes aligned to institutional goals, defining the performance measures and targets, analyzing results, and identifying improvements to be implemented. All units submit Unit Action Plans (UAPs) in SPOL, which record the planned improvement and how it will be tracked across cycles. The UAPs encompass capital outlay, personnel requests, and strategic initiative proposals, linking identified needs to institutional planning and resource allocation.

Stakeholder input for planning is drawn from program advisory boards, faculty peer review of EPA, Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) results, and feedback collected through student-services channels, which together surface strengths, barriers, and near-term needs for programs and support units. Institutional surveys, including the Graduate Satisfaction Survey and Employer Satisfaction Survey, provide additional stakeholder perspectives that inform planning priorities and resource alignment. In parallel, the Core Indicators of Effectiveness provide multi-year trends and thresholds for persistence, completion, licensure, course success, and satisfaction that leadership uses to

set targets and judge whether planned actions are moving key measures in the expected direction.

These structures ensure that evidence from learning, services, and operations is comparable across units and actionable on a predictable cadence, so that institutional planning and improvement remain aligned with the College's mission to advance learning, promote student success, and support the educational and economic vitality of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties and actionable on a predictable cadence, with results reviewed in subsequent cycles.

Data-Informed Institutional Decision-Making

SFSC operationalizes its evidence-to-action loop through systematic review and discussion of results in cross-functional and departmental venues. Meeting minutes document assigned actions, timelines, and responsible leads, ensuring accountability and follow-through across cycles. These structured discussions connect data from assessments, surveys, and external benchmarks to institutional planning and improvement priorities.

External accountability datasets help target reviews and contextualize results. The Postsecondary CTE Audit provides program-level success and alignment indicators, and the FCS Vocational Program Placement report provides employment and wage outcomes by program. These data are referenced alongside internal indicators when programs prioritize issues for discussion and monitoring.

National and state benchmarks provide context for target setting and peer positioning, including the IPEDS Data Feedback Report, the NCCBP national aggregates, and FCS reports on retention/success and transfer.

The Data Analysis Group (DAG) serves as a cross-functional venue where minutes record indicator refinements, the modernization of Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) on Watermark, and wellness access actions that include a First-Year Experience wellness module and syllabus statements, with owners named and status reviewed at subsequent meetings. These discussions have also resulted in planned additions to faculty professional development related to accessibility practices and effective use of the Brightspace Pulse app to enhance student engagement and communication.

Student feedback is gathered through a revised Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) that replaced the separate Lecture and Online forms with a single instrument used across modalities. The SEI now includes item-level comment fields and reports the mean for each item at the instructor, department, division, and college levels, enabling benchmarking and clearer communication of findings. Results are available to instructors and supervisors within days rather than months, allowing timely feedback and earlier action.

SFSC's Graduate Satisfaction Survey was reviewed in the Data Analysis Group (DAG) with themes and concrete next steps recorded for follow-up. Positives included supportive instructors, counseling and advising, library resources, and online flexibility; improvement themes included course availability and Brightspace/Pulse usability. DAG assigned follow-up items to appropriate areas, including Brightspace/Pulse training and student communication enhancements, reinforcing a structured process for acting on stakeholder input.

External student-engagement benchmarks (SENSE 2024 for entering students; CCSSE 2025 for credit students) were reviewed in DAG alongside the Core Indicators. The group recorded observations and recommendations for the next cycle, including improving early-term orientation and communication with students, establishing clearer expectations for timely feedback, increasing in-class engagement activities, and expanding mental health awareness. Modules on AI and Campus Accessibility highlighted needs for faculty development and syllabus guidance (e.g., a red/yellow/green AI usage statement) and for training on captioning tools.

Program-level assessment results are aggregated by Institutional Effectiveness and shared with the Academic Quality Committee and leadership teams to inform planning and ensure continuity of record across cycles. Institutional effectiveness data, including assessment results, enrollment trends, and program review findings, are used to prioritize resource allocation decisions related to staffing, instructional equipment, technology, and student support services. Evidence from student learning assessment, including General Education and program-level results described in Criterion 3.E, is reviewed through the Academic Quality Committee and the Data Analysis Group and informs instructional priorities, professional development, and planning decisions. At the institutional level, the College's Core Indicators of Effectiveness—tracking persistence, completion, licensure, course success, and satisfaction—serves as a dashboard for monitoring progress. These indicators, reviewed regularly by the Data Analysis Group (DAG) alongside other internal and external datasets, help confirm that planned actions are improving key outcomes and highlight areas for further analysis or support.

To support future planning cycles, the College fielded strategic plan surveys to faculty, staff, and students to establish a baseline of perceptions and identify items for follow-up in future focus groups. Results are being retained for use in the next review cycle.

Program outcomes also receive external validation through the State Baccalaureate Accountability Review and related correspondence, which the College retains for reference in program-level discussions. The 2025 Baccalaureate Accountability Review reported no programs of concern and commended SFSC, providing an independent checkpoint that leadership references during program check-ins alongside internal indicators.

Employer perspectives are incorporated through the Employer Satisfaction Survey and advisory boards, and these inputs are routed to departments during annual planning so program outcomes and equipment decisions are aligned with workforce expectations.

Enrollment Monitoring and Forecasting

SFSC monitors enrollment using same-day, year-over-year, full-time equivalent comparisons, site and modality breakouts, and program pipelines, then adjusts schedules, modalities, and outreach to sustain access and completion. Through 2024, the Enrollment Management Committee recorded these reviews and related actions in standing minutes. In 2025, the College continued this work through leadership reviews of same-day FTE reports and leader meetings, using the same measures to guide late-term section rebalancing and modality decisions.

When enrollment signals indicate capacity or constraint, leaders act on a short timeline, for

example, adding or consolidating sections and adjusting face-to-face and online availability to meet student demand. Ongoing same-day year-over-year tracking provides checkpoints for verifying whether schedule adjustments and modality decisions are having the intended effect on enrollment.

Enrollment evidence is used to keep high-demand courses available, to support on-time completion, and to adjust delivery so students can persist in the formats that work for them.

Resource and Fiscal Alignment

Resource decisions follow Board policy and administrative procedure, so approvals, documentation, and reallocation thresholds are clear, and the state’s annual audit validates controls and financial reporting, which supports mission-aligned improvements and their sustainability over time. Federal and state career education funds are aligned to program needs and validated by employer input and state metrics, with Perkins documentation and requisitions showing funded equipment deployed to labs, congruent with defined project timelines.

The Independent Auditor issued an unmodified opinion (“presented fairly, in all material respects”) on the basic financial statements and, under Government Auditing Standards, reported no instances of noncompliance and one significant deficiency (pension reporting) that was not a material weakness.

Employer recommendations move from advisory minutes to funded purchases and scheduled instructional use. Procurement records document specifications, approvals, and funding, for example, the Airgas requisition for welding simulators and PipeWorx systems, and the Perkins Equipment Upgrade and Modernization award of \$227,120 for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) bundles, a roof-ventilation simulator, and a Class A pumper with a project period of September 3, 2025–June 30, 2026. These procurements are designated for integration into upcoming instructional activities to expand lab capacity and align with current industry practices.

Fiscal stewardship and procurement discipline translate needs into purchases, then into classrooms and labs, which underpins learning quality and program capacity for completion and workforce preparation.

Interpreting the External Environment

SFSC interprets the external environment using state population projections, regional demand lists, division reviews, and employer advisory input. Long-range context comes from the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research 2025 county projections. Program demand is referenced in division program reviews that cite the State and Regional Demand Occupations Lists when evaluating program health and openings, and these signals inform scheduling, equipment planning, and advising.

SFSC interprets workforce conditions by reviewing the Workforce Area 19 Regional Demand Occupations List, the state’s Master Credential Framework, and external performance snapshots such as the Postsecondary CTE Audit and FCS Vocational Program Placement report. These data are referenced in program reviews and

advisory board discussions to guide scheduling, equipment planning, and advising.

Advisory boards convert employer input into instructional changes across programs. In HVAC, guidance on the A2L transition and digital diagnostics led to procurement of updated training equipment for 2025–26 labs; in Electrical Lineworker, minutes document safety and credential adjustments such as Maintenance of Traffic, CPR, and OSHA-10; and in Automotive, partners emphasized realistic diagnostics and inspection practice. These actions align with state credential frameworks for planning and eligibility.

External scans and employer voices shape what and how we teach so graduates meet current regional expectations and credentials, which advances student success and local workforce vitality.

Using Assessment Results to Improve Learning

General Education learning is assessed through common rubrics and a standard artifact-collection process in Brightspace. Faculty submit student work to designated assignment folders, results are compiled and summarized in annual reports, and findings are used to refine expectations, scoring language, and faculty support. Faculty also engage in reflective discussion boards within the General Education Brightspace course, where they review aggregated results, share examples of student work, and propose strategies for improvement in subsequent cycles. In the current cycle, faculty convened a writing-rubric workshop, produced a revised rubric with clearer descriptors, and created short “how-to” videos to standardize Brightspace setup and scoring so adoption is consistent across sections and modalities. These steps emphasize calibration and reliability while keeping General Education assessment closely tied to classroom practice.

Program-level use of assessment is described earlier; here, we note one illustrative outcome. Level I Program Reviews in Health Sciences link licensure and completion signals to actions such as success coaching, tutoring cadence, and clinical coordination, with the review documenting three-year Practical Nursing results at a 100% pass rate for the NCLEX-PN and outlining strategies to lift the Associate in Science degree in Nursing (ADN) first-time pass rates and completion.

Assessment ensures that improvement is not incidental but planned and verified, so student learning advances are in step with mission goals for completion and quality. Together, these practices demonstrate a consistent evidence-to-action cycle aligned with SFSC’s mission for the residents of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

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- AA3.D218 - Administrative Program Assessment Examples Student Services
- AA3.E080 - Student Learning Outcome 1 - Writing Rubric Review
- AA3.E102 - EPA Review Key
- AA3.E103 - EPA Reviewers 2024-25
- AA3.E350 - General Education Assessment Videos
- AA3.D220- 2025 SFSC Core Indicators of Effectiveness
- AA3.G053 - 2024 SENSE_StandardReport_FrequencyDistribution
- AA4.C243 - 02.10.2025 DAG Minutes
- AA4.C245 - 01.13.2025 DAG Minutes
- AA4.C247 - DAG Meeting Minutes April 14 2025
- AA1.B040 - BAS SM Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 11.24

- AA4.C250 - Student-Evaluation-of-Instruction
- AA4.C252 - SEI Lecture
- AA4.C254 - SEI Online
- AA4.C258 - SEI Example Results
- AA4.C290 - 2025 Baccalaureate Program Review
- AA4.C405 - Purchase of equipment through PERKINS
- AA4.C450 - Florida Estimates of Population 2025
- AA4.C452 - 2025-2026 Regional Demand Occupational List WA19
- AA4.C460 - 2025_2026 Master Credential List
- AA4.C462 - 2024_Postsecondary CTE Audit _2.20.25 Retention Rate
- AA4.C464 - 2024_Postsecondary CTE Audit Success Rate
- AA4.C466 - 2024 FCS - State Vocational Program Placement Report
- AA4.A200 - Faculty-Survey-Strategic-Plan
- AA4.A202 - Student-Survey-Strategic-Plan
- AA4.A201 - Staff-Survey-Strategic-Plan
- AA4.C003 - SPOL screenshot
- AA4.C022 - EPA Review Key
- AA4.C029 - Policy 4.02 Budget
- AA4.C034 - Procedure 4030 Budget Development and Budget Amendment Procedure
- AA4.C241 - 11.11.2024 DAG Minutes
- AA3.D192 - CCSSE2025_AI Data
- AA3.D210 - DAG Meeting Minutes October 13 2025
- AA3.E110 - 2025 Employer Satisfaction Survey
- AA3.E044 - General Education Handbook

Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Argument

South Florida State College demonstrates strong institutional sustainability through effective governance, sound resource management, and mission-aligned planning. Administrative and committee structures—supported by shared governance among faculty, staff, students, and community partners—ensure transparent, data-informed decision-making. The College maintains a stable financial foundation through clean annual audits, prudent budgeting, diversified revenue sources, and rigorous internal controls. Human, physical, and technological resources are sufficient and strategically allocated, with ongoing investments in facilities, accessibility, cybersecurity, and instructional technology. Program quality and institutional improvement are advanced through systematic assessment, advisory committee input, and regular professional development. Integrated planning processes, including Unit Action Plans and the Mission: Possible Strategic Plan, ensure that resource allocation supports student success, workforce alignment, and community engagement. Collectively, these practices confirm the College's capacity to sustain high-quality education and respond effectively to future opportunities and challenges.

Sources

There are no sources.