

SFSC student-athletes recognized for academic excellence

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COURTESY SFSC



AVON PARK — Each year, the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the Florida College System Activities Association (FLCSAA) honor student-athletes for their academic excellence. Among those recognized this academic year were South Florida State College (SFSC) student-athletes who participated in cross country, volleyball, softball and baseball.

“I’m very proud of the Panther student-athletes who achieved these marks, and grateful to our outstanding faculty and staff and all those who support the academic process here at SFSC,” said Rick Hitt, athletic director and head baseball coach. “This has been a challenging year for everyone, and we are greatly appreciative for the measures that have been taken to help ensure academic accountability at our institution. Obviously, a great deal of time was put into this by the student-athletes and all who support them.”

The NJCAA names student-athletes to its Academic All-American team. First team members have achieved a 4.0 GPA, and second team members must earn a GPA between 3.8 and 3.99. The 11 Panther student-athletes who were named to the first team are: Kelsey Herring, volleyball; Karla Rodriguez, volleyball; Danielle Boyd, softball; Taylor Currie, softball; Hannah Eden, softball; Baileigh Ehrlich, softball; Corrin Flajole, softball; Baylee Haggard, softball; Janea Mobley, softball; Leeandro Alfonzo, baseball; Myles Caba, baseball; and Tate Hansen, baseball.

The student-athlete named to the second team is Panther baseball player, Egdar Castillo.

The FLCSAA names student-athletes who achieve a GPA of 3.3 or higher to its Academic All-State team, and those who have achieved a 3.0 GPA or higher to its All-Conference team.

The 26 Panther student-athletes named to FLCSAA’s All-State team are: Jessica Hayes, cross country; Abigail Liddle, cross country; Kelsey Herring, volleyball; Meghan Oliver, volleyball; Karla Rodriguez, volleyball; Danielle Boyd, softball; Gracyn Cunningham, softball; Taylor Currie, softball; Hannah Eden, softball; Baileigh Ehrlich, softball; Corrin Flajole, softball; Baylee Haggard, softball; Payton Pilon, softball; Angela Shope, softball; Keily Ulatowski, softball; Leeandro Alfonzo, baseball; Casey Asman, baseball; Myles Caba, baseball; Egdar Castillo, baseball; Carter Dahl, baseball; Tate Hansen, baseball; Jack Keeler, baseball; Shane Magrann, baseball; Deven Tedders, baseball; and Tyler Tipton, baseball.

The 38 Panther student-athletes named to FLCSAA’s

All-Conference team are:

Jessica Hayes, cross country; Abigail Liddle, cross country; Jenasea Moyle, cross country; Kareli Plata, cross country; Kelsey Herring, volleyball; Meghan Oliver, volleyball; Karla Rodriguez, volleyball; Maria Rodriguez, volleyball; Samantha Singleton, volleyball; Emily Vickers, volleyball; Danielle Boyd, softball; Gracyn Cunningham, softball; Taylor Currie, softball; Haley Day, softball; Hanna Eden, softball; Baileigh Ehrlich, softball; Corrin Flajole, softball; Alexandra Garcia, softball; Trinity Girovasi, softball; Baylee Haggard, softball; Tiare Kong, softball; Janea Mobley, softball; Payton Pilon, softball; Angela Shope, softball; Skyler Theodorson, softball; Keily Ulatowski, softball; Casey Asman, baseball; Leeandro Alfonzo, baseball; Myles Caba, baseball; Egdar Castillo, baseball; Carter Dahl, baseball; Truman Fields, baseball; Connor Gleeson, baseball; Tate Hansen, baseball; Jack Keeler, baseball; Shane Magrann, baseball; Deven Tedders, baseball; and Tyler Tipton, baseball.

SFSC Student Awarded Performing Arts And Culture For Students Stipend

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) student, Erika Cruz, was recently awarded a \$300 SFSC Performing Arts and Culture for Students (PACS) educational stipend.

PACS is a partnership between the SFSC Division of Arts and Sciences and the Cultural Programs Department and funded by the SFSC Foundation.

The PACS project was established to promote SFSC students' awareness, experiences, and a deep appreciation of the diverse cultural landscape in Florida. Student participants are asked to attend at least three arts or cultural activities at museums, theaters, art festivals, cultural landmarks, or concert venues anywhere within Florida. They are then asked to submit photos of themselves at the venue, along with a two-page reflection paper about their experiences at the venues.

At the end of each College term, qualifying students are entered into a lottery to win a \$300 stipend.

"This voluntary program for SFSC students introduces them to the arts and culture in our community—its value and meaning," said Cindy Garren, director of SFSC Cultural Programs. "We hope to ignite a student's interest in the arts, enhance their critical thinking skills, and foster attendance at cultural events."

The \$300 PACS stipend can be used in any way a student chooses. Cruz plans to use her stipend on supplies, books, or testing fees she may have next fall term. She would like to save the remainder and use it toward moving expenses after she graduates from SFSC with her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BSEE) in May 2021.

Cruz credits Art Professor Karla Respress' course in "Integrating the Arts in Elementary School" with her growing interest in the arts.

"Throughout the course, my instructor in-

formed me and my classmates of any upcoming art-related events," Cruz said. "I took advantage of as many opportunities as I could, especially since I have been eager to try new things that encourage bliss and positivity."

For the PACS project, Cruz's art and cultural journey took her to Bok Tower Gardens in Winter Haven, Fla. for a tour of this landscaped masterpiece that features the 1930s-built Pinewood Estate mansion and the Singing Tower carillon.

She visited the Florida Art and Heritage Festival in Avon Park, which presented a cornucopia of wood carvings, handmade jewelry, photography, paintings, and other works of art inspired by Florida's ecosystem, agriculture, and beaches. The Avon Park Depot Museum in Avon Park, took her back in time to see an early typesetting machine, telephone switchboard, and photographs of the town's points of historical interest. To add to her Florida cultural experience, Cruz stopped for homemade orange ice cream at Maxwell's House of Fruit in Avon Park, which has orange groves and started an Old Florida-style country store over 84 years ago.

"I would encourage other students to participate in the PACS project, because a lot can be taken from the experience," Cruz said. "Participants learn about different art-related events that require them to get out of their comfort zone and think outside of the box. It's also a great opportunity to learn about the community and get to know local artists. Most importantly, participants engage in something positive that could have a great impact on their lives." For details about the PACS project or to participate, SFSC students should email PACS@southflorida.edu.

Deborah Bell Latter is the coordinator of internal communications at South Florida State College and can be reached at 863-784-7251 or Deborah.Latter@southflorida.edu.



COURTESY PHOTO

Erika Cruz, a student at South Florida State College, at a visit to Bok Towers Gardens.

SFSC Performing Arts Awarded South Arts Grant

By **DEBORAH BELL
LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College's (SFSC) Performing Arts was recently awarded a \$3,700 Performing Arts Touring Grant from South Arts, an organization that supports artists and arts presenters in nine Southern states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

SFSC Performing Arts has been awarded grants from South Arts in the past, includ-

ing last year's Artist Series performance of "The Nutcracker," presented by the South Carolina Ballet.

The recent grant will be used to book "Sail On: The Beach Boys Tribute" from Nashville, Tenn. for the Matinee Series in March 2021.

"SFSC Performing Arts is thrilled to be awarded one of these limited and competitive grants from South Arts," said Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Programs. "It helps us present Southern artists to our community."

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SFSC Cultural Programs Garners \$10,000 NEA Grant

By **DEBORAH BELL
LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College's Cultural Programs Department was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) initiative called Grants for Arts Projects.

According to the NEA, Grants for Arts Projects supports "artistically excellent projects that celebrate our creativity and cultural heritage, invite mutual respect for differing beliefs and values, and enrich humanity."

Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Programs, indicated that the grant was written to focus on local residents. "A lot of performances are available in our community December to March, but not a lot during the summer months. We need to focus on local residents—the people who live here year-round. Garren would like to hold two free performances next fall and two the following spring."

"A large part of our community is not served by the arts," Garren said. "We would bring in diverse Florida artists and offer free performances. I'm talking to an African-American

steel band from Miami—Lee Boys—and a dance company from India that's based in Tampa. We can also show films through this grant."

Garren said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, offering performances is difficult. But she has a plan—she would like to stage outdoor performances on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park. "We would be able to accommodate social distancing—we have lots of outdoor spaces, and we have plenty of parking."

"This grant will enable SFSC Performing Arts to bring non-traditional artists that reflect the cultural diversity of our community to our stage with free performances and workshops," Garren said. "It's our effort to provide arts for all and reach out to outstanding artists that speak to other cultures, art forms, and viewpoints. These performances will be some of the most interesting and exciting of the season."

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SFSC Launches Construction, Utility Trades Programs

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

Through its Corporate and Community Education Department, South Florida State College (SFSC) is launching a Construction and Utility Trades program in July.

To gain skills for the construction industry or public works, SFSC is offering in-depth, eight-week certificate programs in basic carpentry and roofing, basic masonry, basic construction plumbing, and basic construction electrical.

Also available are Wastewater Class C Certification State of Florida Preparation, Water Treatment Class C Certification of Florida Preparation, and the EPA 608 Refrigerant Exam for the HVAC technician.

"In our local community, our state, and across the country, construction trade employees are in demand," said Tina Gottus, director, SFSC Corporate and Community Education. "Construction workers are retiring faster than those entering these career fields. Our local workforce has shared these concerns with us. Employers want employees who have a sound work ethic and who demonstrate initiative. Earning a certificate is a great way to show employers that initiative. SFSC is so excited to launch these new programs and help our students and our local contractors bridge these employment gaps."

For detailed information about any of the courses, see the Construction and Utility Trades catalog at southflorida.edu/corpedschedule, call 863-201-7195, or email corporatetraining@southflorida.edu.

To register for any of the Construction and Utility Trades courses, call 863-784-7405.

Funding opportunities for the Construction and Utility Trades programs are available. Scholarships for job training are provided through funds made available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

To learn about scholarships for job training, consider attending a "WIOA" Orientation at a CareerSource Heartland location in Highlands, Hardee, DeSoto, or Okeechobee County. For information, call Joann Pacheco at CareerSource Heartland at 863-385-3672, ext. 1331.

For those age 24 or younger and unemployed or underemployed, SFSC's Panther Youth Partners (PYP) program may be a possible source of scholarship opportunities. In Highlands County, call 863-784-7161; in Hardee and DeSoto counties, call 863-784-7065; and in Okeechobee County, call 863-824-6032.

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SFSC Board approves 2020-21 budget

By MARC VALERO
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — The District Board of Trustees approved the 2020-21 South Florida State College annual budget and also voted to give all eligible employees a one-time, non-recurring salary supplement of 2% to be distributed in August.

For the eighth consecutive year, tuition and related fees will remain at the same level at SFSC.

The budget provides for one new full-time faculty position, “Instructor, Health Science Programs” and funding for equipment to initiate a Clinical Immersion Center within the current nursing program space in the Dr. Norman L. Stephens Jr. Health and Science Education Center.

Glenn Little, vice

president for administrative services at SFSC, said the budget is based on the Legislative Appropriations Bill, which is currently under consideration by Governor DeSantis.

“If cuts are made to appropriations that impact our current budget plan, the budget will need to be amended for consideration by the District Board of Trustees at a later meeting, presumably in July,” he said.

“The budget will allow the college to continue to meet the needs of students and employers within our service district (DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties) and even provide for enrollment growth, expecting that many students will choose to stay close to home due to the uncertainties related to the pandemic,” Little said.

The SFSC budget summary shows that state funding for college operations will increase by \$200,514 (1.2%), however SFSC’s share of total state funding will increase by 700,514 (4.14%) due to a special non-recurring appropriation of \$500,000 for the Clinical Immersion Center for Health Sciences.

For the second consecutive year, the added cost of mandated increases in Florida Retirement System rates was not provided within the

Florida College System Program Fund.

The revenue projections in the operating budget for 2020-21 total \$24,296,281 an increase of \$735,064 (3.12%) from the current budget.’

The personnel budget within the 2020-21 operating budget is \$18,337,539, an increase of \$12,802 from the current budget, which provides for funding for adjunct/overload sections to provide coverage for up 3% enrollment growth.