

SFSC and Warner University sign transfer agreement

Special to the Highlands News-Sun

PROVIDED BY SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

AVON PARK — South Florida State College (SFSC) and Warner University signed an articulation agreement to guarantee the seamless transfer of SFSC students who obtain an Associate in Science in Landscape and Horticulture Technology to Warner University to continue their education and pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Agricultural Studies.

"We are excited to open doors for our students to continue their education at a local institution with state-of-the-art,

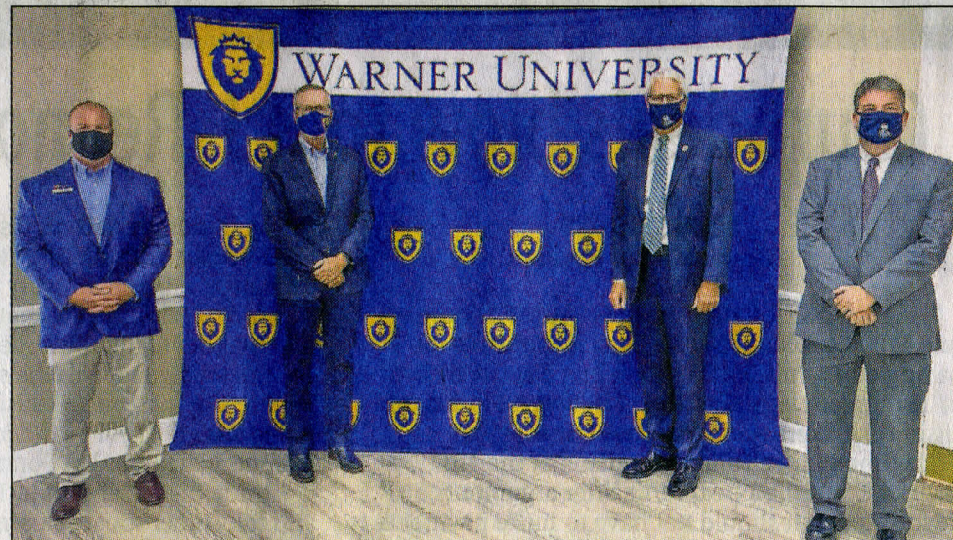
quality instruction that prepares them for work in an integral sector for our region," said Dr. Sid Valentine, vice president for academic affairs and student services at South Florida State College.

The student must earn a 2.5 GPA at SFSC and complete 18 general education credits, 20 elective credits, and 14 credits toward the agriculture major requirements to be accepted to Warner. With a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Studies, graduates work in the field as agricultural consultants, agricultural operations managers, and precision agriculture technologists.

"SFSC does a tremendous job of preparing

students for applied fields, so we know we will receive quality students into our Agricultural Studies program," says Dr. Gentry Sutton, vice president of academic affairs at Warner University. "This agreement stands to serve not only our institutions and our students but also the state of Florida, as agriculture is so vital to the state's economic prosperity. We are confident that the students who benefit from this agreement will make a positive difference in the industry."

This new academic partnership joins the other articulation agreements that SFSC has with the University of South



COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. Gentry Sutton (left), vice president of Academic Affairs, Warner University; Dr. David Hoag, president, Warner University; Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel, president, SFSC; and Dr. Sidney Valentine, vice president for Academic Affairs and Student Services, SFSC

Florida (USF) through the Fuse program; Florida Polytechnic University in electrical engineering; and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical

University (FAMU) in business, education, psychology, and social work through its Ignite program.

For more information

about the variety of programs at SFSC, call 863-453-6661, visit southflorida.edu, or email recruiter@southflorida.edu.

Radiologic Technologists Graduate From SFSC

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) honored 12 Radiography program graduates in a traditional pinning ceremony on the College's Highlands Campus on Wednesday, July 29.

Those honored were: Jesula Bellegarde, Ashley Burns, Cynthia Cespedes, Jessie Cuellar, Angelina Garcia, Jennifer Garcia, Jordan Hearn, Luisa Hernandez-Sanchez, Justin Jones, Holly Lang, Mario Lozano, and Tonya Rowe.

The graduates completed SFSC's Associate in Science (AS) in Radiography and will soon sit for their national board examinations, with an eye to start their careers. Radiologic technologists work in hospitals and clinics performing diagnostic imaging examinations, such as X-rays.

In her farewell to fellow students, Tonya Rowe, the graduating class president, spoke to her classmates about the potential challenges ahead in their careers.

"When things don't go as planned or when you're put to the test, see it for the learning op-

portunity that it is. Do not run or constantly search for the easy way out," Rowe said. "Do not spend every moment waiting and praying for it to pass, but embrace it, ask for strength and a new perspective that will help you move through it. For it is in the movement that you'll find growth. Every day is a new day, every patient is a new person whose life we impact in some way, and I hope that we all strive to make that impact a positive experience."

Upon completing SFSC's two-year Radiography program, graduates can work as certified radiologic technologies by passing the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) national examination.

For information about SFSC's Radiology program, contact Junior Gray, director of Radiography, at 863-784-7347 or grayj@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

Jesula Bellegarde (left), Jennifer Garcia, Holly Lang, Tonya Rowe, Angelina Garcia, and Jordan Hearn.



Cynthia Cespedes, Mario Lozano, Ashley Burns, Jessie Cuellar, Luisa Hernandez-Sanches, and Justin Jones.



COURTESY PHOTO

Dental Education Professor Darlene Saccuzzo with Dental Assisting students.

SFSC Dental Hygiene And Dental Assisting Graduates Honored At Pinning Ceremony

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) honored 10 graduates of its Dental Hygiene program and 12 graduates of its Dental Assisting program in a pinning ceremony in the Alan J. Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC on Thursday, July 16.

Dental Hygiene graduates receiving their pins were: Kimberly Albritton, Sarah Brock, Kristin Carlisle, Taylor Connell, Carly Earls, Benyon Liles, Kolby Lipe, Patricia Pacheco-Rahman, Francesca Pemble, and Jacqueline Perez. Dental Assisting graduates receiving their pins were: Aliyah Blas, Annetude Delomme, Julia Figueroa, Oliva Frazier, Veronica Molina, Sofia Monroy, Maria Perez, Sierra Rodriguez, Tatiana Sanchez, Bertha Sosa, Ana Toledo, and Jennifer Vargas.

To open the ceremony, Dr. Deborah Milken, chair of SFSC's Dental Education program, congratulated the graduates on behalf of herself and the faculty.

The keynote speaker for the pinning ceremony was Norine Dowd, a retired dental hygienist and current adjunct instructor at SFSC. She served as president of the Florida Dental Hygiene Association and was a member of the American Dental Hygiene Association Board of Trustees.

Dowd spoke with the graduates on the changes in infection control from when she started out in a dental practice.

"I started my dental career in 1979. We did not use any personal protective equipment (PPE). Yes, you heard me correctly—no masks, no gloves, no eye protection, and no scrubs. We had a box in the storage room labeled 'HEP-'. It contained PPE and sterile instruments to be used if a patient was a known hepatitis carrier," Dowd said.

dental office. In response, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed universal precautions and, in 1993, standard precautions.

"Now we have a new epidemic and we are learning that even more personal protection is needed," Dowd said. "And more needs to be done to protect the patients and staff from aerosols. In 32 years, when you are standing here giving the keynote speech, what will you remember of your first job during the COVID-19 pandemic?"

"I am immensely proud of the dental hygienist and dental assistants in the community," she said. "They have stepped up and worked with the dentists and office staff to implement the new guidelines and are safely serving patients in the community again. Now you will join them. Please stay safe. Keep informed and vigilant, and always advocate for the safety of all in your practice."

Upon completing the two-year Associate in Science Dental Hygiene program, graduates become dental hygienists by passing the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE) and the Florida State Clinical Licensure Examination. They can, then, work alongside a dentist as a member of a dental health care team.

After completing the 11-month Career Certificate program in Dental Assisting, graduates can work as certified dental assistants by passing the Dental Assisting National Board Examination (DANB) and qualifying for the Expanded Functions Dental Assisting Certification as well as Orthodontic Assistant Certification.

For information on SFSC's Dental Education programs, call 863-784-7027 or email healthsciences@southflorida.edu.

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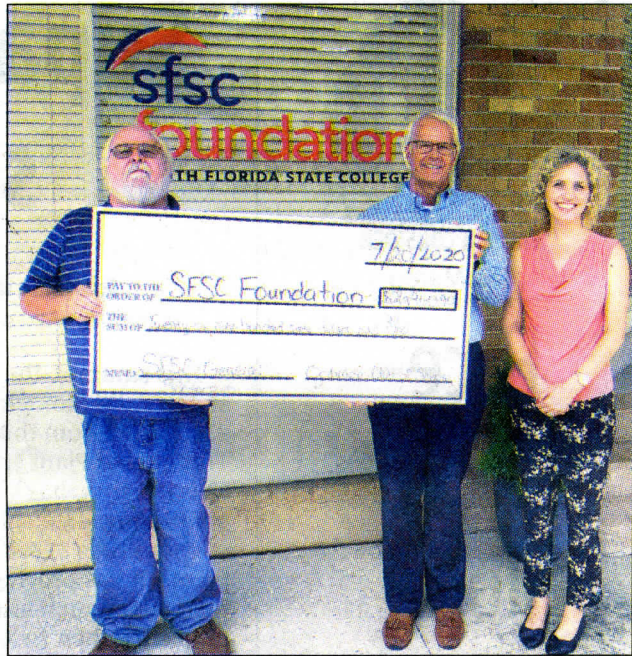
Optimist Club makes donation to SFSC Foundation

**Special to Highlands
News-Sun**

COURTESY SFSC

AVON PARK — John Byrd, on behalf of The Optimist Club of Sebring, presents Jamie Bateman, executive director of Institutional Advancement who oversees the South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation, with a check in the amount of \$26,960.90 for the Foundation's General Scholarship Fund. Through the SFSC Foundation, the General Scholarship Fund provides SFSC students with financial support to access an affordable, quality education, training, and experience.

The Optimist Club of Sebring was established in 1995 and has donated funds to the SFSC Foundation which have been awarded to Sebring, Avon Park and



COURTESY PHOTO

The Optimist Club of Sebring presents South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation with a check in the amount of \$26,960.90 for the Foundation's General Scholarship Fund.

Lake Placid high school students. The Optimist Club of Sebring puts forth an effort to bring out the

best in the youth of the community by providing hope and a positive vision.

SFSC Practical Nursing Graduates Honored In Pinning Ceremony

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) graduated 25 Practical Nursing (PN) program students in a traditional pinning ceremony on Thursday, July 30 in the Alan J. Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

During the year's ceremony, graduates, faculty, and members of the audience paid heed to the COVID-19 pandemic by donning masks and maintaining social distancing.

The graduates are Musa Najeh Abuelouf, Rigenst Alfred, Erica Alonso, Maimuna Bojang, Cassandra Byler, Mayra Cardenas, Khalaya Clarke, Rebeca Marie Cortez, Amy Davila, Jackeline DeLa Cruz, Uriel Estrada, Mayra Eugenio-Badillo, Maria I. Gonzalez, Britanya Graham, Laura Holden, Kaylon Johnson, Amy Knighton, Rebecca Lieder, Megan McCullough, Betsabet Montoya, David Rubinos, Noemi Secundino, Amber Shoemaker, Cassandra Sullivan, and Crystal Valadez.

Class president, Cassandra Sullivan, presented her farewell address to her fellow classmates.

"Many words describe a nurse. But the one word that stands out to me is, 'adaptable.' We learn early in nursing school to be adaptable. Nursing students make many sacrifices. Nursing school is not for the weak," Sullivan said. "Say goodbye to your family and social life. We spend hours studying and fall asleep studying, just to wake up to study again. Sleep, eat, study, repeat. There is information overload, and we must learn it all in 11

months. We have given 'adaptable' a whole new meaning. I believe that this is a skill that we have all conquered and will use for the rest of our careers."

Sullivan recounted the challenges of nursing school during the pandemic.

"We have Zoomed and recorded head to toe assessments that took 23 hours to upload. We did group work over the internet with practically dial-up speeds. Losing internet connection during a test or waking up to no internet connection made it challenging to complete assignments."

"We have given 'adaptable' a whole new meaning," Sullivan said. "We will always be remembered as the practical nursing class that survived quarantine."

Each year, PN graduates award the Golden Duck to someone who has served as a mentor to the students in the program. The D.U.C.K. acronym represents the foundational elements of the mentoring arrangement: Developing, Understanding, Compassion, and Knowledge.

During the ceremony, class secretary Noemi Secundino presented the 2020 Golden Duck Award to Patti Cardin, SFSC Nursing instructor.

"[She] faced many challenges during her first year as an instructor, including the change to online teaching halfway through the year. She has consistently devoted her time to support and encourage us. She has not only been an amazing instructor but someone who was always willing to lend a listening ear. We adore, admire, and respect her greatly. She has had all the patience in the world to make sure our questions were always answered even after long, eight-hour days."

The practice of pinning new graduates

has been a nursing school tradition in the United States since 1916 and, symbolically, welcomes each graduate into the nursing profession. The pin is worn prominently on a nurse's uniform throughout her or his career. One story of the ceremony's beginning goes back to 1883, when Queen Victoria awarded Florence Nightingale the Royal Red Cross on St. George's Day for her service to the sick and injured during the Crimean War. In turn, Nightingale later extended the honor to her outstanding nursing students by presenting them with a medal of excellence.

Graduates of the 11-month occupational certificate PN program become licensed practical nurses by passing the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-PN) exam. SFSC nursing graduates are usually fully employed in nursing within a few months of graduation.

SFSC offers an Associate in Science degree in Nursing (AS) program for students interested in becoming registered nurses: a two-year Generic-RN program and a one-year Transition-LPN to RN program. The College also offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

For program entry requirements, consult the SFSC College Catalog online at southflorida.edu, call 863-784-7225, or email healthsciences@southflorida.edu.

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SFSC Partners With U.S. Naval Community College

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) has entered into a contract to provide educational services for the newly formed U.S. Naval Community College (USNCC).

SFSC is one of 119 colleges across the country contracted to provide distance learning training for active duty Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen.

"We will start enrolling active duty members of our armed forces this fall for our spring term that begins in January 2021," said Erik Christensen, SFSC dean of applied sciences and technologies. "This will include online College Career Certificates and four Associate in Science degrees. Although outside the scope of this partnership, these students could also continue with SFSC and work toward two fully online bachelor's degree programs."

The programs SFSC will make available to the USNCC will be Associate in Science degrees in Network Systems Technology, Health Services Management, Business Administration, and Accounting Technology. College Credit Certificates may be obtained in Network Security, Health Care Services, Business Management, and Accounting Applications. Other programs available will be the Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Bachelor of Applied Sciences in Supervision and Management.

The USNCC will provide a college education to the enlisted force to enhance combat and deterrence effectiveness of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen will be enrolled automatically in the USNCC at the time of enlistment to demonstrate the importance of education to a naval career and to return to civilian life successfully. The program not only helps the individual Sailor, Marine, or Coast Guardsman, but provides the armed services with more technically trained members which will result in greater warfighting potential.

The main features of the USNCC include conferring transferable and recognized associate-level academic degrees and certifications, providing flexible delivery methods to account for operational demands and technological constraints of a globally distributed workforce, developing academic programs in alignment with the needs of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard as well as recognizing various forms of learning obtained through military technical and leadership training.

"We are excited about the possibilities that this partnership brings to the College," Christensen said. "Aside from the fact that this will provide an additional source of student enrollment to SFSC in our online programs, the College is honored to be able to play a role in helping to support and strengthen our country's armed forces through education. As a retired naval officer, I am thrilled at the opportunity to be able to help our nation's armed forces take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to enhance their education while they serve our great nation."

The first pilot of the USNCC will begin in January 2021 with approximately 500 active duty Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen. The second pilot will start in January 2022 with 5,000 students.

For the first year or two, students will be selected to participate in the USNCC as the concept is proven and while the Navy works to win authorization from Congress to continue and grow. Once the USNCC is up and running at scale, open enrollment will be offered to the entire enlisted force. Full-scale operations with up to 25,000 students are expected to start in January 2023.

For information on USNCC and SFSC partnership, contact Dean Erik Christensen at erik.christensen@southflorida.edu or 863-784-7424.

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SFSC Garners CARES Act, Rapid Credentialing Grant

By DEBORAH BELL LATTER

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) has been awarded special funding through Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' Emergency Education Relief (GEER) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Rapid Credentialing, to assist in educational training for residents who are unemployed, underemployed, or furloughed.

Governor DeSantis allocated a total of \$35 million to support Florida College System (FCS) institutions, such as SFSC, and district postsecondary technical centers in their ability to enroll and complete students in short-term, in-demand workforce/career and technical education (CTE) credentialing and certificate programs.

SFSC has been awarded \$292,096 with the requirement of an additional 25 percent through matching funds for a total of \$365,120. Matching dollars will come through the CARES Act Institutional funding (\$23,472) and Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2016 (Perkins V) funding (\$60,414). The Rapid Credentialing funds must be used by the end of May 2021.

"During the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and time of economic uncertainty, we are delighted to be able to enhance our program offerings and focus on helping individuals in our communities earn a short-term certificate or credential," said Erik Christensen, SFSC dean of applied sciences and technologies. "As always, our goal is to help people get a job, keep a job, or be promoted in a job, and this grant is helping us do just that."

Funds are focused on providing those unemployed, underemployed, or furloughed with training in an in-demand area of the regional

workforce board. Funds will be used to purchase necessary equipment and underwrite costs associated with administering in-demand, non-credit industry certification preparation, clock hour career certificate programs, as well as for-credit, short-term CTE courses/programs.

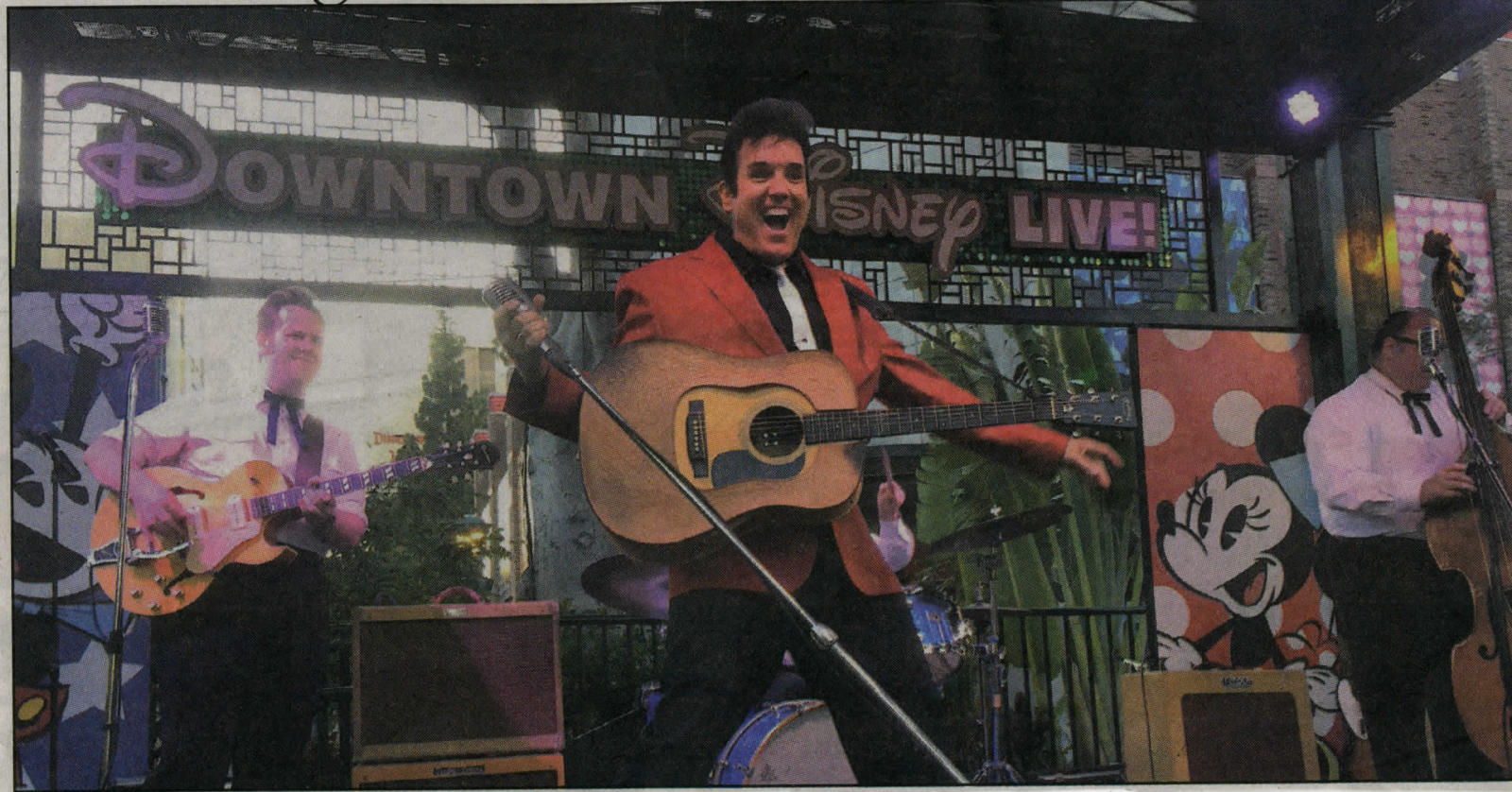
SFSC will use the funds to purchase equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), recruiting, software, and instructor salaries to enhance the student learning experience.

The Rapid Credentialing funds will support SFSC students enrolled in these programs and courses: College Credit Certificates in Automation, CNC Machinist/Fabricator, Engineering Technology Support Specialist, Lean Manufacturing, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Landscape & Horticulture Professional; Career Certificates in Firefighter I or Firefighter II, Automotive Service Technology, Correctional Officer, and Phlebotomy; Non-credit Continuing Workforce Education (CWE) Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate in Carpentry/Roofing as well as Electrical, Nursing Assistant, Real Estate, Welding, and the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Class A and B.

Scholarships toward these programs may be available through CareerSource Heartland. To learn more, visit CSH's website at career-sourceheartland.com or call one of the local CareerSource Heartland Career Centers: in DeSoto County at 863-993-1008, in Hardee County at 863-773-3474, in Highlands County at 863-385-3672, or in Okeechobee County at 863-610-6000.

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.

SFSC Performing Arts sets lineup for 2021 season



COURTESY PHOTO

Scot Bruce at Disneyland in Anaheim, California.

AVON PARK — The lineup of artists and shows is set for South Florida State College's Performing Arts program as it prepares to implement health safety measures and limit venue capacities.

At the June SFSC Board of Trustees meeting, SFSC President Thomas Leitzel reported with the appropriate six-foot distance rule, it reduced the seating in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts from 1,460 to 400.

Leitzel discussed COVID-19 precautions and reported that public use of SFSC facilities has been canceled.

Cultural Programs Director Cindy Garren reported that with appropriate COVID-19 precautions, the matinee series, jazz series, and thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts grant, four free performances would be able to happen this season.

Garren said Wednesday that the Artist Series is booked with performances including The Modern Getleman: The voices behind Franki Valli, Jan. 22, 2021.

They performed with Valli for 10 years and now they do their own show with a lot of Four Seasons songs, she said. "That is going to be fantastic."

The Gatlin Brothers, the Grammy award-winning trio of Larry, Steve and Rudy will be taking the stage on Feb. 4, 2021.

Everybody loves the Gatlin Brothers who were one of the hottest country acts in the 1970s

and 1980s, Garren said.

The Top-40 hitmakers Jay and the Americans will bring their exciting show to SFSC as a special event on Feb. 26, 2021

The group features three original members: Sandy Deanne, Howie Kane, and Marty Sanders. Jay Reincke, Jay #3 as he's referred to, was invited to join the group after a performance in Chicago.

Garren also noted another show that is going to be "fantastic," Rhythm of the Dance: The National Dance Company of Ireland, March 6, 2021.

Combining traditional music and dance with the most up to date stage technology, this two hour extravaganza takes audiences on an exhilarating and exciting, energy-packed

trip through the ages, according to the dance company.

The AdventHealth Trending Now Series kicks off the Perform Arts season on Jan. 9, 2021 with World-class Elvis impersonators Mike Albert and Scot Bruce along with the Big E Band returning to the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts to celebrate Elvis' 86th Birthday Bash.

Bruce is one of the world's finest "Young Elvis" impersonators, while Albert presents a stunningly accurate and respectful portrayal of the latter-day "Vegas" Elvis.

The college's Performing Arts program has its own website with information about the shows and ticket info at: sfscarts.org.