

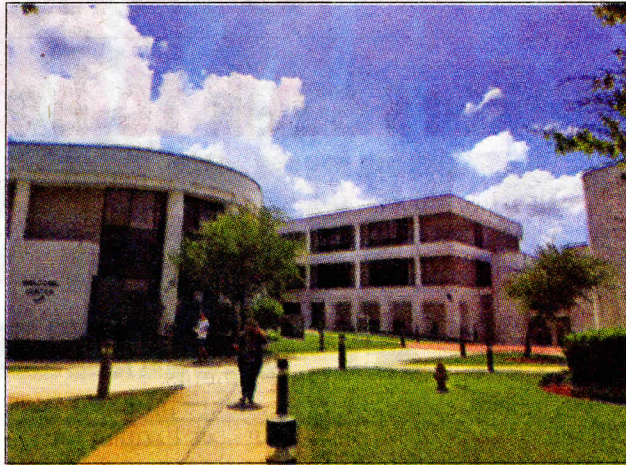
SFSC trustees set goals for 2022

By **MARC VALERO**
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — The 2022 goals for the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees include attending more student activities and begin preparing for a presidential search, though Dr. Thomas Leitzel has made no public announcement concerning his retirement or departure.

Leitzel noted that the Board of Trustees have connections in the community and they need to immerse the process and get the word out on the college's high completion rates.

"This takes a larger community to uphold what we are doing at the college," he said. "When we get that word out that when we graduate students with skills and occupations that benefits our community as



MARC VALERO/STAFF

The South Florida State College District Board of Trustees goals for 2022 includes "support the transition to new student residence halls."

well."

The SFSC District Board of Trustees goals for 2022 are:

- Become active in support of Destination 2026 (five-year strategic plan).

- Become active champions for the Quality Enhancement Plan.

- Support the college's role in resource development.

- Maintain and foster good relationships with legislators.

- Begin to prepare for a presidential search.

- Support the transition to new student residence halls.

- To be present to support student activities.

Destination 2026, the SFSC strategic plan provides directions for prioritizing future initiatives, allocating limited resources, and providing a framework for implementing the college's mission, vision and goals. The plan represents a multifaceted strategy developed by a wide cross-section of the college's faculty and staff with guidance and input from numerous stakeholders.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a document developed by the institution that includes a process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.

SFSC upgrading classrooms for remote learning

By MARC VALERO Staff Writer

Feb 3, 2022

AVON PARK — South Florida State College will be upgrading 10 classrooms for enhanced remote learning and also making significant upgrades to its Clinical Nursing Lab.

The classroom upgrades are designed to support students and faculty in a remote learning environment and enable the college to respond to future natural disasters such as hurricanes and pandemics in a more effective manner.

SFSC Vice President of Administrative Services Peter Elliott said the information technology infrastructure upgrade will provide a pathway to switch to remote learning if necessary or even to engage in a more robust technical portion of the learning.

The college engaged with CCS Presentation Systems, Orlando, to assess the classrooms and convert them into what is called a HyFlex Tech classroom, which will have a presentation camera, video displays and the ability to do both in-person and remote instruction, he explained.

The cost for this is over half-a-million dollars, so it requires approval by the Board of Trustees, Elliott noted.

The SFSC District Board of Trustees gave its unanimous approval to the project.

The funding comes from part of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) appropriated as part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

The college can use HEERF funds for any other costs for computer system upgrades that are reasonably related to “significant changes to the delivery of instruction due to the coronavirus.”

Also, the college received an appropriation of \$1 million to fund upgrades in the Clinical Nursing Lab, Elliott said.

The SFSC Clinical Immersion Center for Health Sciences Education, as funded by the Florida Legislature (2020-2021), is in the process of upgrading its current technology as well as purchasing and installing additional simulation equipment.

The equipment purchase will provide a significant portion of the transformation of the current skills laboratory space into a center wherein simulation-enhanced learning and other innovative technologies will be utilized to prepare students across the health science disciplines for contemporary healthcare settings.

The goal of the center is to strengthen the talent pipeline by providing opportunities for students and area healthcare providers to advance their level of education in an effort to achieve and maintain a high level of expertise.

The District Board of Trustees unanimously approve an agreement with Laerdal Medical Corporation to purchase equipment, maintenance and professional development services.

SFSC Foundation hosts successful golf shootout

By Special to Highlands News-Sun

COURTESY OF SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

AVON PARK – This year’s fifth annual Million Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout drew golfers to the Sun ‘N Lake Golf Club in Sebring for a chance to hit a hole-in-one and walk away with a \$1 million prize. During the three days of qualifying from Jan. 13 through Jan. 15, the South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation raised funds to support the College’s Athletic Department. SFSC fields four athletic teams: women’s volleyball, women’s cross country, men’s baseball, and women’s softball. The total amount raised was approximately \$17,700.

“I am pleased that the student athletes are respectable and that they are representing our community in a professional and courteous way,” said event sponsor Ronnie Carter, Century 21 Advanced All Service Realty, Inc.

On the evening of Saturday, Jan. 15, the 12 finalists took one shot at winning the



COURTESY PHOTO/SFSC

2022 Golf Shootout group.

\$1 million prize by making a hole-in-one at the par-3 18th hole of Deer Run. Although no one walked away with the ultimate prize, first-place finalist Steve Sortore of Plainfield, Indiana won \$750 for landing his ball 20’ 11” from the hole. Donald Bressette of Sebring claimed \$500 for second place when his ball fell 40’ 7” from the hole, and third-place Brad Crone of Estero, Florida received \$250 for getting within 50’ 7”.

“We appreciate our sponsors and the competitors who participated in this event,” said Jamie Bateman, executive

director of institutional advancement at SFSC. “The SFSC Foundation provides financial support to students, which enhances their access to the affordable, quality education, training, and experience they will need to excel as tomorrow’s leaders. This was also a fun and exciting time getting to know the golfers as they battle to get on the leaderboard.”

Thank you to this year’s sponsors:

- Event Sponsor – Century 21 Advanced All Service Realty, Inc.
- Award Sponsor – AdventHealth Sebring
- Media Sponsors – Herald Advocate and Sebring Radio
- Hitting Zone Sponsors – Dr. Deborah Fuschetti, Marmer Construction, Sun ‘N Lake Improvement District, Albritton Insurance Services, LLC, Bowen and Son Roofing, Inc., W2 Holdings, LLC, and Quality Tees & Sporting Goods
- Qualifying Sponsors – The Estrada Family; Havery Services, LLC; Tom and Nancy Leitzel; Lena Phelps; Creative Printing; Glades Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Cullen,

Mackenzie, and Emmarie Fells; Dr. David Boersma; Turner Furniture; Indy Boys; Robbins

Nursery; Twilight Glass; and Sunny South Exterminators The 2023 Million

Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout is scheduled for Jan. 12-15 at the Sun ‘N Lake Golf Club.

SFSC Athletic Director Becomes President Of American Baseball Coaches Association

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

Rick Hitt, athletic director and head baseball coach at South Florida State College (SFSC), was recently named president of the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) and, officially, took office on Friday, Jan. 7, during ABCA's annual convention in Chicago.

Hitt initially joined the ABCA Board of Directors while serving as the Junior College Division Chair before being selected by the ABCA membership to serve as ABCA fourth vice president in 2018. Since that time, he has served simultaneously on the ABCA's Board of Directors while progressing up the vice-presidential ladder. As second vice president in 2020, Hitt was tasked with arranging all of the clinic speakers for the 2021 ABCA Convention, which was held virtually.

In addition to Hitt, each of the ABCA's vice presidents moved up one seat. Jim Schlossnagle of Texas A&M University is first vice president, Matt Noone of Babson College is second vice president, and Bob Whalen of Dartmouth College is third vice president. John McCormack of Florida Atlantic University was voted by the ABCA membership in fall 2021 to serve as fourth vice president in 2022.

"I am grateful to have the opportunity to represent SFSC, Region 8 and the NJCAA in this position," Hitt said. "The ABCA organization is an outstanding group. To have been accepted as a member of the board of directors several years ago and to serve coaches worldwide is amazing. I owe a great deal of thanks and am grateful to many people for this opportunity. My father told me many years ago that if you feel you have something to offer, some talents, some tools, don't be selfish and waste them on yourself. Be willing to serve others. I have never forgotten that. I am genuinely honored to serve."

Hitt began his 24th year as the longest tenured coach in

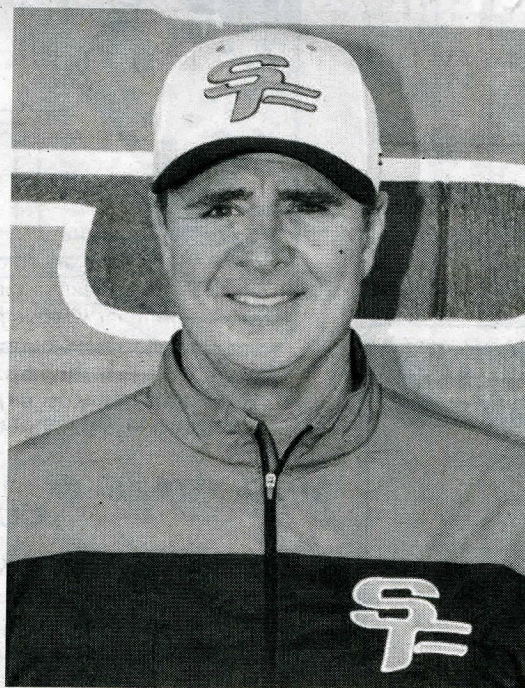
SFSC Panther Baseball history this past August. In his tenure as head baseball coach, Hitt has seen over 170 players move on to four-year schools and/or professional baseball. Hitt's expectations of the players are simple: "Dedicate yourself to being an outstanding young man and representative of SFSC daily, commit to academic accountability and graduation, and play the greatest game in the

world as hard as you can play it each day you get the chance. The growth that occurs within this process has the opportunity to stay with you as you venture on in life."

In May 2020, Hitt was selected to be inducted into the National Junior College Athletic Association's Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame, and he will be inducted in May 2022. He has been inducted into two additional Halls of Fame — the Santa Fe College Hall of Fame, as a member of the 1985 State Championship and National Tournament Team, and the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) Hall of Fame. Hitt began his coaching career 34 years ago as an assistant coach at Sebring High School.

In the past 13 years, Hitt has completed terms as the NJCAA Coaches Association secretary, vice president, and served five years as the association's president which included six years as a member of the NJCAA National Team staff. Hitt is currently the FCSAA State Baseball Chairperson for Region 8 in Florida and served 16 years on the FCSAA State Baseball Committee.

"All of SFSC is honored to share in Coach Hitt's joy," said Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel, SFSC president. "He is a nat-



COURTESY PHOTO/SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
Rick Hitt

ural leader and contributes willingly to advance academics and athletics from his platform, locally, as a director of athletics and from his positions on national organizations. His professional passion is baseball. Coach Hitt has been and continues to be an influence on countless students who play baseball for the Panthers and others who participate in Panther athletics. Rick willingly shares his experience through his daily discharge of duties that shape the lives of current athletes who will become future leaders when they graduate."

The ABCA, founded in 1945, is the primary professional organization for baseball coaches at the amateur level. Its over 13,000 members represent all 50 states and 33 countries. Since its initial meeting of 27 college baseball coaches in June 1945, Association membership has broadened to include nine divisions: NCAA Division I, II, and III; NAIA; NJCAA; Pacific Association Division; High School; Youth; and Travel Baseball.

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