



**Dr. Michele
Heston**

SFSC Administrator Appointed To Florida Center For Nursing Board

Special To The Herald-Advocate

Michele Heston, Ph.D., interim vice president for academic affairs and student services at South Florida State College (SFSC), was appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis to the Florida Center for Nursing Board of Directors.

She is one of 10 recent appointees from educational institutions that offer nursing programs and hospitals throughout Florida, including Tampa General Hospital and St. Petersburg College.

The Florida Center for Nursing is a clearing house for information, research, and strategies addressing nurse workforce needs in Florida. The Center was established in 2001 by Florida statute to track nursing shortages and recommend possible solutions.

By collecting, analyzing, and reporting on the nursing workforce, the Center can help to ensure an adequate supply of providers for the health of Floridians.

The Center was closed in 2021 due to lack of funding; however, it was re-established recently to address the ongoing shortage of nurses as the result of burnout and stress from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Dr. Heston's experience as a seasoned leader in nurs-

ing education makes her an ideal choice for membership on the board," said Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel, SFSC president. "SFSC's first-time pass rates on the NCLEX rank among the state's best, a tribute to Dr. Heston's leadership together with the faculty in the Division of Health Sciences. Her commitment to the nursing profession and knowledge, both theoretical and practical, will be part of a relational framework she will bring to her service on this important board."

"It is truly an honor to receive this appointment, as nursing has been my passion for more than 40 years," Dr. Heston said. "I am grateful for the opportunity to help advance the supply of nurses and to provide a remedy for their critical shortage now and in the future."

Heston was previously dean of Health Sciences at SFSC. She is a member of the American Nurses Association, the Florida Pathways Institute, and the Florida Council of Nursing Education Administrators. She earned her bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Florida, her master's degree in Nursing from Clarkson College, and her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Higher Education from Barry University.

Electrical Lineman Program Continues To Expand

By TOM STAIK
Of The Herald-Advocate

Career training is powering up in Hardee County.

More students than ever will have the opportunity to learn how to keep the power flowing through the Electrical Lineworker Program at South Florida State College (SFSC).

The program recently received an \$82,000 grant that will be used to purchase a mini-excavator and Viper ST breaker for the program.

Christopher Yeomans, electrical distribution professor, said the purchases will expand learning opportunities and create a safer learning environment.

"This equipment will benefit SFSC's program and its students in two ways: First, the students will learn to safely and



COURTESY PHOTO/SFSC

Students work high in the air in bucket trucks as they learn skills needed to be an electrical lineman.



COURTESY PHOTO/SFSC

The Electrical Lineman Program at the Hardee County Campus of South Florida State College has some new equipment thanks to a \$82,000 grant.

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WEATHER

DATE	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
08/23	95	73	0.17
08/24	95	74	0.08
08/25	95	75	1.47
08/26	91	72	1.29
08/27	92	73	0.67
08/28	93	74	1.09
08/29	92	72	0.80

Rainfall to 08/29/2022 - 36.71

Same period last year - 41.64

Ten Year Average - 49.24

Source: Univ. of Fla. Ona Research Center



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efficiently use a mini-excavator to install and maintain primary and secondary cables for an Underground Residential Distribution (URD) system," he said.

The Viper ST breaker, it was explained, will help teach students safe techniques for installing and framing poles.

"Secondly, the students will also be able to learn the latest technology circuit protection on a distribution system," Yeomans said. "They will learn how to frame a pole for the installation of a three-phase Viper ST

breaker, execute switching orders to place a three-phase breaker in service, and execute switching orders to bypass three-phase breakers for maintenance or change out."

The grant funding was provided by the Duke Energy Foundation.

"Duke Energy is proud of our collaboration with South Florida State College and the positive outcomes of the Electrical Lineworker Program we support," said Nancy Dodd, Duke Energy Florida government and community relations manager. "We look forward to assisting

SFSC in reaching even more students and adding state-of-the-art equipment to enhance the hands-on training opportunities available to current and future students of the program."

The Electrical Lineworker Program at SFSC offers intensive, hands-on training.

The 1,500-hour program at the Hardee County campus of SFSC near Bowling Green teaches students skills to work as electric line technicians in the construction, maintenance, and repair of electric

utility overhaul and underground systems.

Deborah Bell Latter, spokesman for the college, said "students gain an understanding of electrical systems, operations, and safety while mastering competencies in electrical distribution, basic electrical theory, and underground electrical construction operations."

"They learn how to maintain electric power systems and use electrical distribution equipment," Latter added. "The program provides practice in climbing, framing, building

single and three-phase overhead lines, pole top and bucket rescue techniques, operating bucket truck and maintaining and repairing underground systems.

Successfully completion of the program results in students earning a career certificate.

For information about SFSC's Electrical Lineworker Program, contact Christopher Yeomans, electrical distribution professor, by emailing yeomansC@southflorida.edu or calling 863-784-7045.

GED Graduates Endowed Scholarship provides a pathway to college

Special to the Highlands News-Sun Provided by South Florida State College
Sep 2, 2022

AVON PARK — Students who have graduated from South Florida State College (SFSC) with their State of Florida High School diploma have even more incentive to continue their academic endeavors as the result of a newly created scholarship, the GED Graduates Endowed Scholarship.

The GED Graduates Endowed Scholarship was established by Dr. Mary Ann Lewis, an educator, through the SFSC Foundation to help students further their academic careers. The scholarship covers tuition, books, and supplies. It gives preference to graduates who participated in the General Educational Development Prep program at SFSC and passed all four required exams. Other criteria for the scholarship are that the applicant must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at SFSC, preference is given to an applicant who has committed to a minimum of 6 credits per semester with at least one class in a face-to-face classroom, and the applicant must be able to maintain academic progress with a minimum 2.0 GPA each semester.

“SFSC is all about pathways,” said Courtney Green, Adult Education director at SFSC. “Individuals in our community have various educational goals and sometimes encounter challenges that interrupt their educational journey in the K-12 system. The SFSC GED preparatory class offers students an alternative pathway to earn a State of Florida High School Diploma. Obtaining a high school diploma by passing the GED allows individuals to advance in employment or continue on to postsecondary education. I am proud that the College stays committed to offering this program. Not only does this program transform an individual but also the community.”

SFSC’s GED® Prep program is available to residents of Florida 16 years of age or older who do not have a high school diploma. Through the program, students develop skills to pass the GED exams that cover reading, writing, math, language, and science. By attending face-to-face classes, students are 75% more likely to pass the GED exam on the first try. Upon successfully completing the four subject area tests, students earn a State of Florida High School Diploma.

“This scholarship is meaningful to those of us in SFSC’s Adult Education program, because we can inform students that funding is available to help them continue their education,” said Green. “The ultimate goal is not just to get their high school diploma, but to encourage graduates on their career path to a high-skill, high-wage job, and become self-sufficient.”

Dr. Lewis’ decision to fund the GED® Graduates Endowed Scholarship came after meeting a 16-year-old girl who had dropped out of high school. “Although she dropped out of high school, she started taking classes at SFSC to prepare for the GED exams,” Dr. Lewis said. “I was really impressed with her determination. Within a few months, she took all four tests and passed all four. Now she’s enrolled at Valencia College in Orlando, studying Information Technology.”

Dr. Lewis knows, firsthand, the importance of an education. Shortly after graduating from high school in Philadelphia, she studied to become a medical technician. One year after beginning her training, she discovered that medicine and med tech were not for her. She enrolled in Pennsylvania State Teacher’s College to become a teacher. That is when she found her passion in life. She earned a bachelor’s, a master’s, and a doctoral degree. During her career in education, Dr. Lewis spent 15 years in administration in the Miami-Dade Public School System and spent 15 years teaching graduate education at

Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

“Education is the one thing in life that nobody can take away from you,” she said. “I used to tell my students at Nova Southeastern that somebody can take your house, your car, or your jewelry, but they can’t take your education. You earned it and it belongs to you.”

To learn more about the GED Prep Program at SFSC, contact the Office of Adult Education at 863-784-7441 or visit the SFSC webpage at <https://bit.ly/3KOaY81>.



Two commercial vehicle driving simulators have been installed at South Florida State College for use in the Commercial Vehicle Driving program in Avon Park. COURTESY PHOTOS

Commercial Vehicle Driving Program Installs Training Simulators

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) recently installed state-of-the-art driving simulators to assist in training its students in the Commercial Vehicle Driving program.

The purchase of driving simulators at SFSC were the result of \$415,000 allocated to SFSC last January through the governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Those funds were earmarked for the Commercial Vehicle Driver Program to help alleviate the national shortage of truck drivers.

According to the American Trucking Associations, the trucking industry may need more than 160,000 drivers by 2030.

Two simulators were recently installed at SFSC's Crews Center in Avon Park: a virtual pre-trip inspection simulator and a truck cab simulator.

"The virtual pre-trip inspection simulator station allows students to view over 100 parts on a truck that need to be inspected prior to a trip," said Joe Burke, coordinator and instructor of SFSC's Commercial Vehicle Driving program.

"Some of the parts under the hood that they would inspect are the alternator, water pump, air compressor, and power steering box. If parts have an issue, the student must identify them. While the student is inspecting the virtual truck, the instructor can watch along with him or her."

The truck cab simulator has three screens, and the virtual truck is identical to the truck cab that the program has available for final coursework. The student learns how to shift the 10-speed transmission, backing maneuvers, and how to drive on various terrains and conditions, such as in the city, in the mountains, on the interstate, in snow and ice, in darkness, and in high winds. The cab is motion-based, so the student can feel the truck moving. The student can inspect gauges on the dashboard, the windshield wipers, steering wheel, horns, all indica-

tor lights, and the defroster.

Both of the simulators can be used to practice for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) examination. The final examination is done with an actual rig at the Crews Center.

"We're excited about the truck driving simulators, because they will give our students an enhanced training experience before they get behind the wheel of the truck," said Tina Gotus, SFSC's director of corporate and community education. "The simulators will provide students with broader training opportunities and provide reports on the driver's performance to the instructor. The instructor will evaluate the reports and provide feedback to assist the student, leading to successful outcomes and experiences. The simulators also have a classroom monitor, so all students can learn from the student in the training seat. When things go wrong on the road, students will better know how to recover. Ultimately, they will become better drivers. When they make it safer on our roads, we all benefit."

SFSC's Commercial Vehicle Driving program is a four-week course that offers in-depth, hands-on truck driving experience and provides connections with future employers. The College accepts approximately 260 students into the program annually. Currently, 25 students are on its waiting list for acceptance into the program.

For information about SFSC's Commercial Vehicle Driving program, call the Corporate and Community Education Department at 863-784-7033 or email corporatetraining@southflorida.edu.



The simulators recreate the interior of a truck cab with simulator and dashboard.