



FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE

WORKFORCE EDUCATION

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FSW

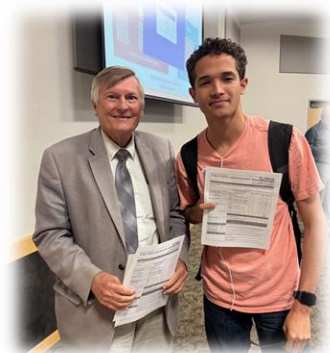


Whitney Rhyne
AVP

Workforce Education

FSW continues to set new standards in workforce development through innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and student achievement. As we build bridges between education and industry, our commitment to excellence is evident in the transformative experiences we provide our students and the lasting impact on our community. We're proud to share these recent accomplishments that demonstrate our leadership in workforce education.

- School of Health Professions reconfigured as School of Allied Health and School of Nursing
- School of Nursing, names Dr. Susan Holland as Interim Dean
- School of Business and Technology celebrates a successful grand opening featuring state-of-the-art facilities at the Frank G. Daveler Entrepreneurship Institute and Rist Cybersecurity Institute
- School of Education alumni shine with multiple Golden Apple award honorees
- Physical Therapist Assistant program achieves national accreditation success
- Firefighting graduates achieve outstanding state exam success
- Respiratory students join global healthcare leaders at AARC Congress
- FSW's Career Connection Lecture Series hosts successful Charlotte and Lee County government days
- FSW's Office of Corporate and Community Education offers free HAZMAT training and webinars in partnership with USDOT



FSW Launches School of Nursing, Names Dr. Susan Holland as Interim Dean



Dr. Susan Holland
Interim Dean
School of Nursing

Dr. Susan Holland, a proud nursing alumna of Florida SouthWestern State College (formerly Edison Community College) will serve as FSW's Interim Dean of the School of Nursing. Her nursing career spans major regional institutions, including Fort Myers Community Hospital, Lee Memorial Hospital/Health Park, the Hendry/Glades County Public Health Department, and Nova Southeastern University.

Her connection to FSW deepened while earning her Master's degree when an internship in the nursing program led to a faculty position on the Fort Myers campus. This opportunity began nearly two decades of progressive leadership. Dr. Holland has served in Faculty, Program Director, and Associate Dean roles. Dr. Holland holds a Bachelor and Master of Science from the University of Central Florida and a Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Phoenix.

As a Florida Registered Nurse, published author, and educator, Holland has presented on critical topics in nursing education, including NCLEX data analysis, teaching strategies, clinical judgment, and simulation. Her combination of clinical expertise, academic leadership, and deep community roots make her an ideal leader for shaping the next generation of healthcare professionals at FSW.

"We are happy to have Dr. Susan Holland leading our School of Nursing. Her journey from FSW nursing student to accomplished healthcare leader and educator embodies our standard of excellence. Dr. Holland's deep understanding of both our institution and community healthcare needs makes her the ideal leader for our nursing program."

Dr. Judith Bilsky, FSW Vice President of Academic Affairs

Dr. Holland leads with a data-informed approach while fostering a supportive environment for faculty and students alike. Under her leadership, the ASN program has achieved an impressive 94.47% pass rate through strategic updates to policy, curriculum, and test preparation. Her commitment to excellence is matched by her passion for accessibility in nursing education.

"We offer affordable ASN and BSN programs in a field that's always in demand," Holland notes. "Nursing is a versatile career that allows you to explore different areas of service. Critical thinking is essential, you'll build on your knowledge every day throughout your career."

Since 1968, FSW has been a cornerstone of nursing education in Florida. The program continues to attract students from across Southwest Florida and beyond, maintaining its tradition of excellence in preparing healthcare professionals for the workforce.

School of Business and Technology Grand Opening Featuring Frank G. Daveler Entrepreneurship Institute and Rist Cybersecurity Institute a Success

FSW marked a significant milestone with the grand opening of its School of Business and Technology in Hendry Hall on the Lee Campus. The celebration showcased two initiatives: The Frank G. Daveler Entrepreneurship Institute and the Rist Cybersecurity Institute.

The event opened with a welcome by Dr. Jeffery Allbritten, FSW President, and recognized West McCann and Susan McManus of the Frank G. Daveler Foundation, and Brian and Kim Rist of the Rist Family Foundation, whose generous support has been instrumental in establishing these cutting-edge institutes. The atmosphere was electric as students, faculty, and staff came together to demonstrate the school's diverse academic offerings.



Among the highlights was the preview of FSW's newest academic venture, the Entrepreneurship AS degree program, along with two certificate programs set to launch in Fall 2025. They will join the college's robust Cybersecurity AS degree program, reflecting FSW's commitment to preparing students for the evolving demands of the modern workplace.

The Frank G. Daveler Entrepreneurship Institute serves as a hub for aspiring business owners and innovators, offering hands-on experience and mentorship opportunities.

The Rist Cybersecurity Institute will continue to strengthen FSW's position as a leader in cybersecurity education, preparing students to tackle the growing challenges of digital security.



"Our new facilities and institutes represent FSW's dedication to providing students with state-of-the-art resources and innovative learning opportunities. We're building on our strong foundation while looking toward the future."

Dr. Mary Myers, Dean of School of Business and Technology

The grand opening event featured interactive demonstrations from students and faculty, highlighting the practical, hands-on approach that characterizes FSW's educational philosophy. Visitors toured the new facilities, engaged with student and faculty members, and learned about the technology and resources available to FSW students.

This expansion of FSW's School of Business and Technology represents a significant investment in Southwest Florida's educational infrastructure and economic future. By combining traditional business education with cutting-edge technology programs, FSW is positioning itself as a key player in preparing the next generation of business leaders and technology professionals.



Celebrating Excellence: FSW School of Education Shines with Golden Apple Honorees

The School of Education is thrilled to celebrate the achievements of its B.S., Elementary Education graduates, with seven alumni being recognized as Golden Apple Teachers of Distinction and Finalists by The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools. This prestigious honor highlights educators who have made an exceptional impact on students and their communities.

Golden Apple Finalists



Chelsea Chase
Bayshore Elementary



Danielle Hopkins
Hancock Creek
Elementary



Rachael Mas
South Fort Myers
High



Robyn Webber
Pelican
Elementary



Tiffany Wilke
Challenger Middle



Teachers of Distinction

Lauren Green, Three Oaks Middle
Stephanie Terwilliger, Harns Marsh Elementary

The Golden Apple nomination process invites nominations from students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the public. Finalists are selected by the Golden Apple Selection Committee, a group of community and business leaders who review applications, conduct interviews, and observe classroom teaching. From this group, six exceptional educators will be named Golden Apple Recipients at the Annual Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Banquet on Friday, April 25, 2025, at the Caloosa Sound Convention Center.

We are proud of our Bucs alumni and their positive impact on children's lives in Southwest Florida!



FSW's Physical Therapist Assistant Program Achieves Accreditation Success

Florida SouthWestern State College's new Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program has achieved a significant milestone by earning full accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). This achievement affirms the program's commitment to excellence in healthcare education and its dedication to preparing highly qualified physical therapist assistants.



"This accreditation represents countless hours of dedication from our faculty and staff" said Dr. Cynthia Vaccarino, Director of the PTA Program. "It validates our program's high standards and ensures our graduates are well-prepared to enter the healthcare workforce."

The rigorous accreditation process evaluated various aspects of the program, including curriculum design, faculty qualifications, and clinical education partnerships. The program's successful accreditation is particularly significant given the growing demand for qualified physical therapist assistants in Florida and across the nation. FSW's PTA program based at Charlotte Campus, combines intensive classroom instruction with hands-on clinical experience, preparing graduates for rewarding careers in diverse healthcare settings.

Dr. Cynthia Vaccarino
Program Director
Physical Therapy
Assistant

Dr. Judith Bilsky, Vice President of Academic Affairs noted the importance of this achievement: "Accreditation is crucial as it demonstrates our program meets the highest standards in PTA education. This accomplishment reflects our ongoing commitment to providing quality healthcare education that serves our community's needs."

Students in the program benefit from experienced faculty, newly renovated facilities, and strong partnerships with local healthcare providers. The curriculum emphasizes both technical skills and professional development, ensuring graduates are prepared for the evolving healthcare landscape. The impact of FSW's PTA program extends beyond the classroom. Local healthcare facilities benefit from a pipeline of well-trained professionals, while patients in the community receive care from skilled practitioners who completed their education at FSW.

FSW remains committed to preparing the next generation of physical therapist assistants who will play vital roles in improving patient outcomes and advancing healthcare in our community.

For more information about FSW's Physical Therapist Assistant program, visit <https://www.fsw.edu/academics/programs/asphysicaltherapy> or contact Cynthia.vaccarino@fsw.edu.



FSW Fire Academy's Latest Class Achieves 98% Pass Rate in State Exams

In a remarkable display of preparedness and skill, FSW's December firefighter class achieved near-perfect success during their state practical examination on January 6th and 7th, 2025. An impressive 98% of students successfully completed the rigorous testing, marking a significant milestone. State proctors were particularly struck by the high level of competency demonstrated across the class, offering strong commendations for the student's performance. FSW's Fire Academy Supervisor Mike Jimenez, along with his instructional team, received recognition for their instrumental role in preparing the candidates for both the demanding state examination and their future careers in emergency services.

"The graduates endured six months of physical and academic rigor, unlike any other profession," noted Heather Mazurkiewicz from North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District. "They started as individuals and ended as brothers and sisters—a team ready to embark on the greatest adventure of their lives: being firefighters.

"The achievement highlights the effectiveness of FSW's collaborative approach to firefighter education. This unified support system has proven crucial in strengthening the program's capacity to develop Southwest Florida's next generation of first responders.

"This certification represents more than just passing an exam," Deputy Chief Jimenez explained. "These graduates now carry the responsibility of upholding time-honored fire service traditions, maintaining a commitment to continuous learning, and contributing to the advancement of the firefighting profession.

"The remarkable pass rate not only validates the program's rigorous training methodology but also ensures that Southwest Florida's emergency services will be strengthened by an incoming class of well-prepared professionals. As these newly certified firefighters transition into their roles across various departments, they carry with them both the technical expertise and the values instilled during their training at FSW.





FSW Respiratory Students Take Their Learning to New Heights at the 70th International Respiratory Congress

Thanks to the support of the Rist Family Foundation, FSW's second-year respiratory therapy students expanded their professional horizons at the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) International Congress in Orlando, Florida. The annual conference, which draws respiratory care professionals and educators from around the globe, provided FSW students with unparalleled exposure to the latest innovations and practices in their field.

"Attending the AARC Congress gave our students a unique opportunity to learn directly from industry leaders and connect with professionals from across the world," said Jean Newberry, Program Director, who accompanied the students to the conference. "This kind of exposure is invaluable for their professional development."

The students participated in hands-on demonstrations of cutting-edge respiratory equipment, attended specialized lectures, and networked with potential employers and seasoned practitioners. Educational sessions covered a wide range of topics, from advanced ventilator management to emerging therapies in pulmonary care.

The conference also provided FSW students with insights into various career paths within respiratory therapy, from critical care and emergency response to sleep medicine and pediatric care. The knowledge and connections gained at the AARC Congress will serve these future respiratory therapists well.



Career Connection Lecture Series



Public Service Pathways: FSW's Local Government Week Inspires Future Leaders

FSW's multi-campus Local Government Week engaged approximately 300 students featuring key leaders from showcasing diverse career pathways in public service. In Lee County, the City of Fort Myers officials Richard Calkins, Director of IT and Jason Sciandra, Assistant Director of Public Utilities highlighted technological innovations and infrastructure management. Charlotte County representatives Jack McStravic, Deputy Building Official, and Tom Lloyd, TV Production Specialist, shared their professional journeys and current initiatives.



The featured events illuminated the intersection of technology, infrastructure, and public service while providing students with direct access to networking opportunities with government leaders. From IT solutions to utility management, students gained practical insights into the various roles that shape, serve, and protect Southwest Florida.

The event exemplifies FSW's commitment to connecting students with local leaders and employers, preparing students for impactful careers in Southwest Florida.

89%

Of survey participants agreed that attending this event encouraged me to think critically about the topic under discussion.

"Great lecture, it definitely gave me more information about government jobs and their benefits."



Free

FLORIDA
SOUTHWESTERN
STATE COLLEGE
CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

HAZMAT WEBINAR SERIES



Funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation,
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

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FEB 12



**What to Do if USDOT
Knocks on Your Door**
Presented by Peg
Carson & Ryan Paquet

JUL 02



**Fireworks and
Explosives**
Presented by
Dr. Richard Tarr

MAR 05



**GHS and
Transportation
Labeling: Navigating
Dual Compliance
Requirement**
Presented by
Barbara Lantry-Miller

AUG 06



**UN Subcommittee
Updates: Latest
Developments in
Global Dangerous
Goods Regulations**
Presented by
Ryan Paquet

APR 02



**Building a Corporate
Dangerous Goods
Compliance Plan**
Presented by
Mike Van Ort

SEP 03



**Lithium Battery
Storage- Who
Knows?** Presented
by Mike Pagel

MAY 07



**IMDG Code:
Essential Guidelines
for Maritime
Dangerous Goods
Transport** Presented
by Michael Roldan

OCT 01



**Materials of Trade-
What Can I do?**
Presented by
Paula Reavis

JUN 04



**Limited Quantities:
Maximizing
Exceptions While
Maintaining Safety**
Presented by
Mike Pagel

NOV 05



**Special Permits- Are
They Right for You?**
Presented by
Ryan Paquet

To register, visit
www.fsw.edu/ce/hazmat
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FSW is an equal access, equal opportunity organization. More: www.fsw.edu/equity

Scholarship Opportunities Workforce Programs

Articulated Credit Scholarship



Students who have earned industry certifications or articulated credit from one of FSW's five partnering technical colleges may apply for a scholarship covering first-semester courses in their aligned program of study.

- Gold Standard Articulation through earning of industry certificate
- Completion of articulated program from one of the 5 public technical colleges in SWFL



Open Door Grant



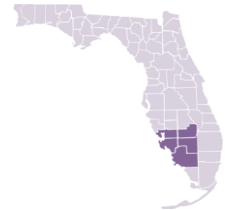
FSW received Open Door Grant funding through the Florida Department of Education. These funds will help students fast-track their success in a short-term career and technical education program.

- Numerous fundable programs across FSW's five academic schools

See complete list at
www.fsw.edu/opendoor



Transforming SWFL 2025



FSW was awarded \$125,000 from the Lee County Industrial Development Authority and \$100,000 from the Elsa and Peter Soderberg Charitable Foundation through the FutureMakers Coalition.

Transforming SWFL Supports:

- [GED Pathway Program](#)
- Second Look
- Last Mile & Gap Funding
- Workforce Pathways



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



FSW was awarded a direct allocation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding to expand pathways to multiple in-demand industry certificates.

WIOA Programs

- [Information Technology Support Specialist, CCC](#)
- [Network Security, CCC](#)
- [Cybersecurity, AS](#)
- [Network Systems, AS](#)
- [Architectural Design and Construction Technology, AS](#)
- [Logistics and Transportation Management, CCC](#)
- [Supply Chain Management, AS](#)
- [Nursing, AS](#)
- [Medical Assisting Specialist, CCC](#)
- [Advanced Medical Assisting, AS](#)



Email Opportunity@fsw.edu with any questions.

FSW is an equal access, equal opportunity organization. More: www.fsw.edu/equity.