

**2024 Distinguished Faculty Award for
Liberal Arts & Sciences, Adult Education and ESOL**

Shep Shepard

Professor of English Dr. Shep Shepard is a prime example of an engaged and involved professor who makes a positive impact on his students and the FSCJ community. A student explained, "It is no coincidence that I've had three classes taught by Professor Shep Shepard; he's both extremely personable and one the most effective teachers I have ever had." Perhaps that is because, as Professor Shepard says, he strives to be three key things: organized, available and respectful. He takes these ideas out into the FSCJ community as well through involvement in activities ranging from co-chair of the Letters Council, a member of Faculty Senate, part of the FSCJ Online Advisory Council, and even a key asset to Nassau Center's AWESOME team which reviews and makes suggestions on scheduling to meet student needs. Whether in the classroom or on a committee, Professor Shepard makes a positive impact at FSCJ.

Scott Matthews

Dr. Scott Matthews, Professor of History, brings both local and global history alive. He recently developed a new course, AMH2071: The History of Jacksonville based on his goal of having FSCJ become a leader in teaching Jacksonville history, and it is the first comprehensive course offered at any school in the area on the history of Jacksonville. His proactive nature does not stop there, though. Since February 2023, he has given over 20 talks to more than 900 people to promote and teach history. In fact, he is also creating a new journal called "Moss Culture: A Journal of Jacksonville History." He not only promotes and shares his own research but also encourages his students' research pursuits and had two students present their papers at the 2023 Florida Collegiate Honors Conference. One of his students noted, "As a history major, I am forever grateful that Dr. Matthews, through his incredible abilities as a teacher, gave me the tools to think like a historian."

**2024 Distinguished Faculty Award
for Bachelors, Career & Technical Education**

Susan Amburgey

Professor of Logistics Susan Amburgey says, "From the moment I was a little girl, other than Elvis' wife, I wanted to be a teacher," and she is now, in fact, an impactful and dynamic professor who brings the subject alive for her students. She weaves

together her own experience, current events, as well as hands-on practice so that her students, as she says, “sit up, lean forward, and truly listen to the message.” One of her students said, “The work is difficult... However, the personal touch that adds flavor and color to the classes helps a person feel at ease.” She also pulls that commitment to engaging learning out to the broader community and has showcased the Logistics Lab through tours resulting in key guest speakers wanting to come to her class. She connects content to students and students to the community by making a positive impact across Jacksonville.

2024 Administrative and Professional Collaborative Exceptional Service and Initiative Award

Marc Boese

Dr. Marc Boese, Executive Director of Organizational Development, has been a key contributor to multiple strategic goals and initiatives of the College over the last several years. Examples of his contributions include chairing the Guided Pathways Pillar 4 committee, leading several VIP 2.0 initiatives aimed at enhancing student learning outcomes, and co-chairing the QEP Steering Committee, which created FSCJ’s QEP proposal that was ultimately approved by SACSCOC. One of his colleagues wrote, “His contributions to this extensive, time-consuming process were invaluable to the other members of the steering committee and to the members of the various subcommittees.” He now serves as the co-chair of the QEP Implementation team. Additionally, Dr. Boese led a Six Sigma project team to improve the faculty professional development travel application, approval and funding process. Dr. Boese also collaborated with another Six Sigma project team to create the Center 4 Credentialing Excellence at FSCJ. Dr. Boese shared, “No one department had sufficient funds or resources to support this initiative alone, but by bringing leadership to the table, I was able to provide a working solution using Canvas Credentials managed within the Training and Organizational Development department.”

2024 Career Employees’ Council Recognition of Excellence Award

Ashlie Empleo

Ashlie Empleo, Program Coordinator - H.O.P.E. Food Pantry, is widely regarded as the epitome of the ideal FSCJ employee. As a dedicated career employee of FSCJ for almost nine years, Ashlie has exceeded in her role by coordinating a student-focused food pantry program that aligns with FSCJ’s iRISE core values. Additionally, Ashlie serves on several community boards regarding food insecurity in northeast

Florida and represents FSCJ well when interacting with various community partners, such as Feeding Northeast Florida. Under Ashlie's leadership, a mobile food pantry vehicle was purchased and wrapped with FSCJ Food Pantry branding, which can be seen throughout Duval and Nassau counties when Ashlie is driving to Food Pantry drive-thru events. One of her peers shared, "When I think of an employee who has significantly contributed to strengthening and advancing the goals of the College, displays exceptional professionalism in the workplace, creates innovative resourceful approaches to challenges, excels in collaboration with team members and advances the well-being of all faculty, staff, and students, Ashlie Empleo is a shining example of one that does so."

2024 Distinguished Adjunct Faculty Award

Galya J. Taborn

Professor Taborn, Adjunct Professor of Human Services, has a wealth of experience in teaching and mentoring. She demonstrates compassion and care for her students in ways that create a culture of trust in which her students feel safe and comfortable sharing about themselves and what they think. Her students have commented, "Professor Taborn is one of the most considerate instructors I have had. She genuinely cares for each of her students and their success. She provides resources and materials to her class participants to enhance the learning experience and ensure students are not bored with the class or material. Professor Taborn is the BEST there is!!" and "Professor Taborn is an absolute angel of a professor. She cares so much about her students' success and is willing to help them achieve their goals in any way possible. I've taken her twice now, and I wish I could take her again because of how amazing she is. I appreciate having her as a professor."

2024 Integrity Award

Darci Lanaghan

Darci Lanaghan, Director of Benefits and HRIS, demonstrates honesty and integrity in her management of the Benefits and Human Resources Information System functions within the Human Resources department. As a U.S. Air Force veteran, Darci stated that she continues to uphold the USAF core values of "Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do." She executes her responsibilities with the utmost concern for data integrity and accuracy, following federal, state and College policies and procedures. According to one of her colleagues, "When she finds an issue, she does not cover it up. Rather she goes above and beyond

ensuring that the issue is corrected and that there is transparency in communicating the issue and the resolution to any affected employees." For example, she meticulously checks that employee leave data is correct and investigates any irregularities, reaching out to supervisors when necessary to ensure that they are following College policies when approving leave. Because of her integrity, high level of accountability and commitment to upholding ethical business practices, the College has been able to recover thousands of dollars that would have been lost.

2024 Respect for All Served by FSCJ Award

Kathleen Ciez-Volz

Dr. Kathleen Ciez-Volz, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Instruction, epitomizes respect for others in all that she does in her work at the College. She seeks to treat every individual with kindness, compassion and understanding. She is very intentional about listening to others, showing respect for alternative viewpoints and acknowledging people's strengths and contributions. Her colleague noted, "People who work for her and with her feel valued when they are in her presence. One way in which she goes the extra mile is taking the time to learn more about people as human beings. In an elevated position like hers, you would imagine that she has limited time to interact with people in meetings, but she always makes space to ask people about their lives and you can see in her eyes that she is really connecting and taking in what people share with her." Dr. Ciez-Volz stated, "To me, every human being matters, regardless of their background or position." In project and committee work, she always makes room for all stakeholders (students, faculty and staff) to share their perspectives and works to incorporate their feedback into resultant products. She facilitates deliberative dialogues with listening ears, an open mind and a caring heart.

2024 Innovation Award

Lance Culver

Lance "Doc" Culver, Laboratory Manager in the Urban Agriculture Initiative at Downtown Campus, is an inventor. He routinely invents and manufactures specialized parts tailored to enhance the functionality of our lab equipment. According to one of his colleagues, "He is always exploring and thinking of new ways to improve the aquaponic and hydroponic processes, assist and teach more people, and incorporate new technology." By expanding the aquaponic and hydroponic capacity, designing and creating new equipment, and partnering with

the culinary program to expand and better utilize the outdoor garden, Lance has exponentially increased the amount of food that the Urban Agriculture Initiative can grow. Additionally, Lance's use of solar panels to power the pumps in the outdoor hydroponic garden has also attracted interest from visitors from other countries. He also fosters a culture of curiosity and adaptability among his student workers, aiming to equip them with the skills needed to excel in their future employment pursuits. By staying abreast of the latest advancements in the fields of aquaponics and sustainability, he ensures that the lab remains at the forefront of scientific exploration.

2024 Student-Centered Award

Terence Wright

Terence Wright, Director of Campus Enrollment & Student Services and Kent Campus Dean, is a fierce advocate for students who creates an environment where students can thrive. He and two of his colleagues recently co-created a program called LEAP (Lift, Empower, Achieve, Persist), obtaining grant support from the Emily Balz Smith Foundation. This program targets underrepresented male students at FSCJ, providing them with engaging activities around cultural awareness, ethnic responsibility and ethical life choices. Terence also co-created a Collegewide mentoring program that paired students with faculty and staff members to connect students to someone at the College and foster a supportive relationship. As an SLS/IDS adjunct instructor for over twenty years, Terence is able to get students started on the right track. He stated, "I get to teach them all the things I wished someone had taught me when I started college." Additionally, Terence created the Completers scholarship, which allows students to complete their degree or program if they have depleted their aid. This scholarship has enabled hundreds of students to overcome financial challenges and graduate.

2024 Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Service Award

Fulton Burns

Professor Fulton Burns, Director and Professor of Theatre, ensures that his courses are always focused on student success as he provides students with a strong foundation for the universal skills associated with the craft of theater. He has successfully staged several productions, providing students with hands-on experience working in the field, and has invited several guest artists to campus to expose students to professionals in the field. Professor Burns also established and serves as the academic advisor of FSCJ's first chapter of Alpha Psi Omega (APO),

National Theatre Honor Society. He has worked to create several articulation agreements with other institutions. Through his efforts, the theatre program has seen a 50% increase in student numbers this year. Professor Burns' commitment to service is demonstrated in his participation in several committees including the General Education Core Committee with the Florida Department of Education, Chair of the FSCJ Arts Council in the FSCJ Humanities Department, Six Sigma review for FSCJ Faculty Travel, and the FSCJ Jazz Faculty search committee. He also works as a podcast performer for Bygone Jax, which helps tell the history of Jacksonville and is supported by the FSCJ Archives.