

April 2026

FSCJ 2026

C O M M E N C E M E N T

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026 AT 4 P.M. • VYSTAR VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA

Commencement 2026

Commencement 2026 is less than one month away! The event will take place on Thursday, May 7, at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena at 4 p.m. As a reminder, to keep costs down, faculty and event volunteers are being asked to carpool due to the arena's significant increase in parking fees. We are currently at capacity for volunteers, so many thanks to all who plan to help!

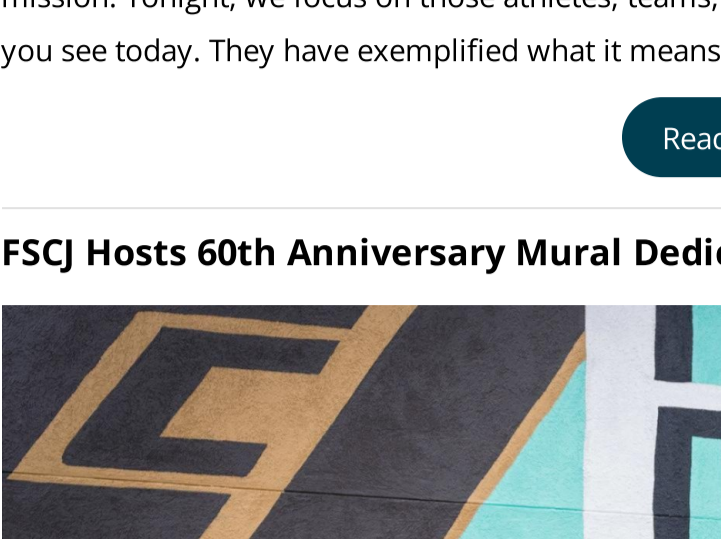
Before the in-person ceremony, we will host a single Grad Bash event on Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Deerwood Center. Grad Bash is a special way for us to connect with our graduates personally before they cross the stage at Commencement. There will be activities for graduates and their guests, entertainment and giveaways, and an opportunity for group photos with family and friends.

For more information, visit fscj.edu/commencement or contact commencement@fscj.edu.

fscj.edu/commencement

News and Updates

FSCJ Celebrates Inaugural Athletics Hall of Fame Inductees



In celebration of our 60th anniversary, FSCJ Athletics hosted its inaugural Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on April 2 at South Campus, celebrating former coaches and student-athletes who made a significant impact in their sports and on the College. Watch the recap video [here](#).

Athletics Director Jerry Thorr welcomed an audience of family, friends, teammates and College leadership to honor the eight outstanding student-athlete alumni and two legendary coaches.

"Throughout our six decades, a mainstay for our best and brightest students has been from our athletic program," said College President John Avedano, Ph.D. "Whether you are a Star, a Blue Wave, or a Manta Ray, our central focus on excellence, on the field, court or in the classroom, has been central to our mission. Tonight, we focus on those athletes, teams, and coaches on whose shoulders we have built what you see today. They have exemplified what it means to be the best."

[Read More](#)

FSCJ Hosts 60th Anniversary Mural Dedication Ceremony



On March 26, FSCJ held a ceremony to dedicate its 60th Anniversary mural at the Downtown Campus, designed and painted by renowned artist and FSCJ Professor Dustin Harewood and his students.

Inspired by FSCJ's 60 years of excellence in education and service for the community, the mural blends iconic imagery from the past and points toward the future. Professor Harewood and his Special Topics in Art students worked on painting the mural on an exterior wall since early February, contributing a combined 200-plus hours to the project.

[View Photos](#)

60th Anniversary Celebration Continues

The 60th webpage includes a list of events and stories of how FSCJ has impacted individuals throughout the community. We'll be highlighting different stories of alumni, partners and friends of the College throughout the year, so be sure to share yours!



Check out this 2005-09 recap [video](#), part of a 12-part series created to highlight specific timeframes throughout the College's history. All 12 will be housed on the 60th webpage as they are finalized.

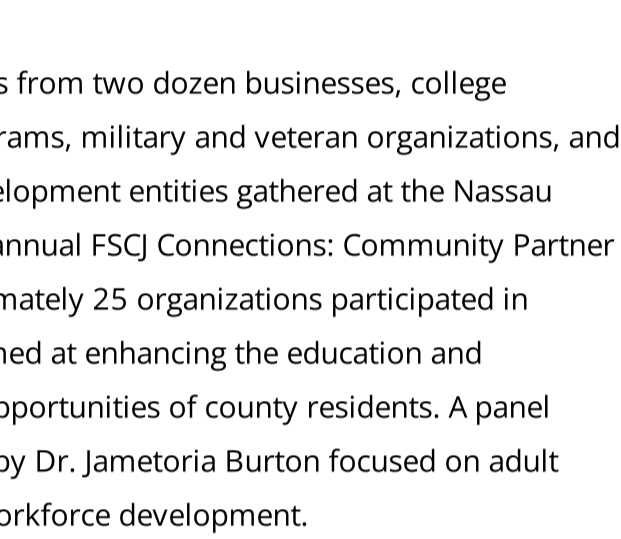
fscj.edu/60

60 Years of Impact and Inspiration in Healthcare

The 60 Years of Impact and Inspiration in Healthcare panel discussion took place on April 1 at the Advanced Technology Center. WJXT4 News Anchor Joy Purdy moderated the panel featuring:

- King Davis, FNP-BC, retired Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department Captain and current Family Nurse Practitioner (FSCJ Alum)
- Dr. Asjah Dennison, DDS Candidate, Howard University College of Dentistry (FSCJ Alum)
- Lamont A. Hogans, RRT, BBA, Education Coordinator, Respiratory Care Services, UF Health, Jacksonville (FSCJ Alum)
- Thu Phan, MBA, BSN, RN, Chief Operating Officer, Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside
- SeQoya Williams, SPT, PTA, St. Augustine, FL, Flex DPT 2027-08-X-DPT 9 (FSCJ Alum)

The panelists discussed connections that they made with faculty and staff at FJC/FCCJ/FSCJ who mentored and helped them along their journey, and how the College continues to meet the needs of the workforce by preparing students for careers in healthcare.



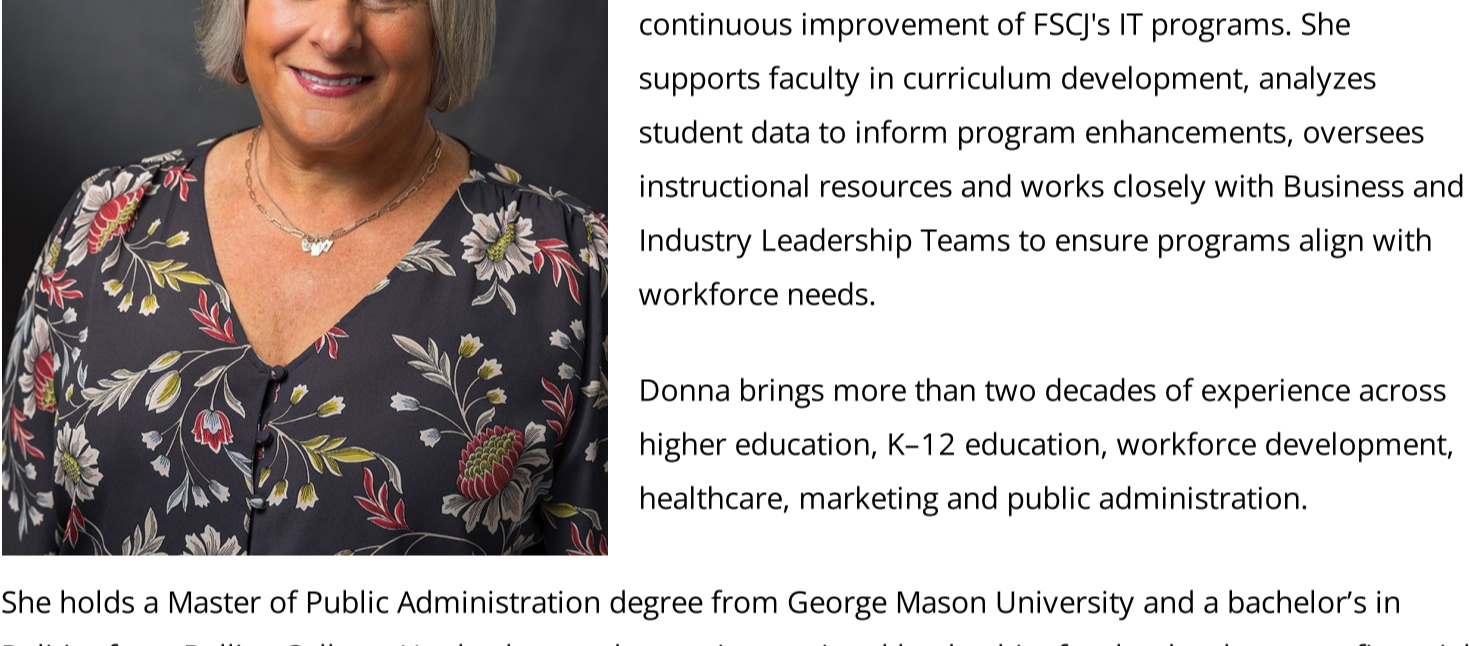
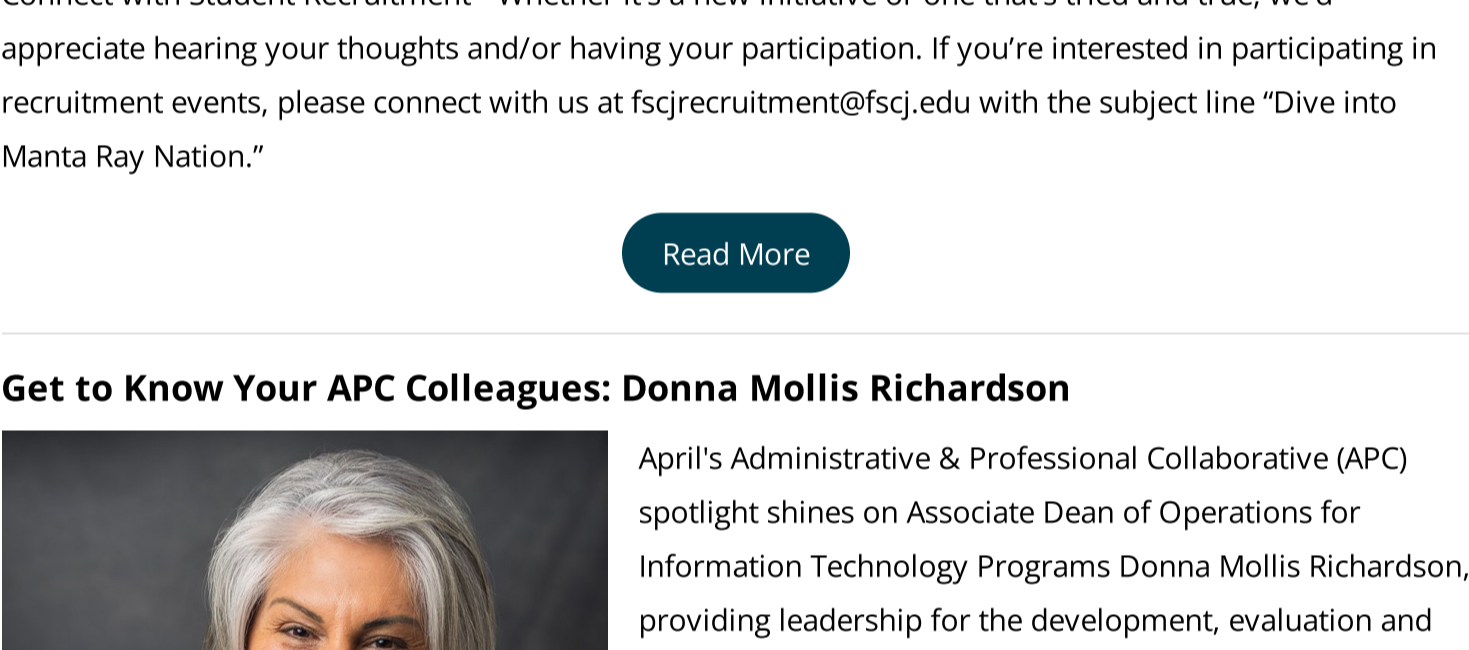
View photos [here](#). To watch the recording, click [here](#).

Faculty Continuing Contracts

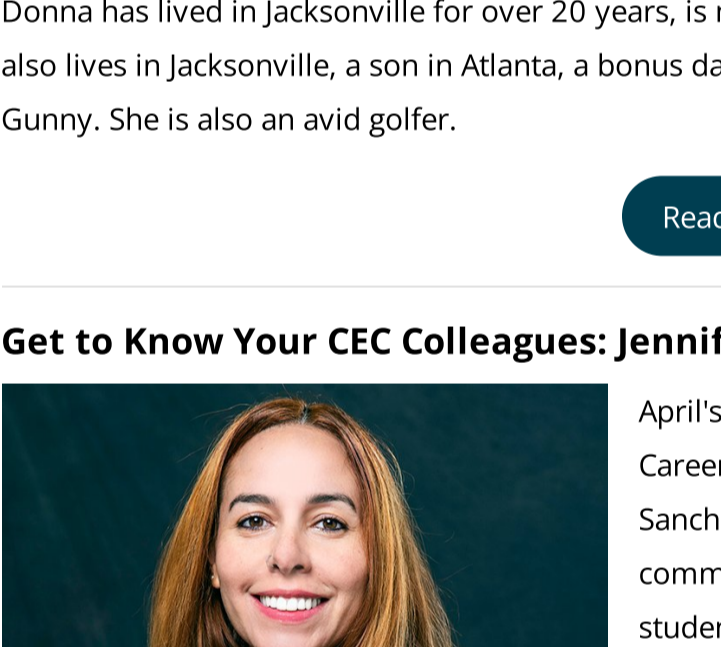
Congratulations to the faculty members who received Continuing Contract status, effective with the 2026-27 faculty contract year!

- Professor of Logistics Susan Amburgey
- Librarian Amber Arroyo
- Professor of Computer Information Technology Gerard "Gerry" Hilgenberg
- Professor of Mathematics Killy Kim
- Professor of Political Science Debidatta Mahapatra
- Professor of Mathematics Bryce Wakefield

Here's a few photos from when some of them learned the good news.



Scheidel Luncheon

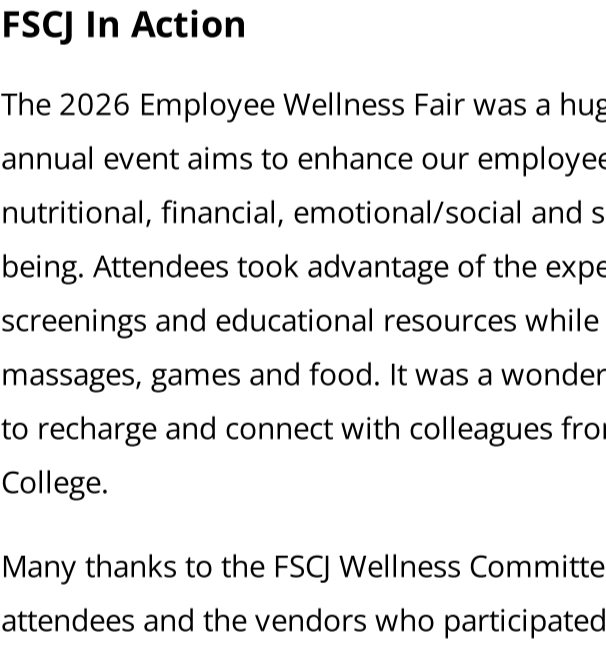


The annual Herbert W. Scheidel Leadership in Action Award Luncheon was held on March 26 to honor and celebrate our students who volunteer and support worthy causes throughout the community and across the world.

Congratulations to the 2026 Scheidel Foundation Leadership in Action Award Winner, Kanesha Boyette, and finalists Kenzi Bennett and Zainab Al Marzok! Many thanks to our wonderful partners, the Scheidel Foundation, for their commitment to service and helping our students achieve their goals.

[View Photos](#)

Recruitment Update



Representatives from two dozen businesses, college readiness programs, military and veteran organizations, and workforce development entities gathered at the Nassau Center for the annual FSCJ Connections: Community Partner Event. Approximately 25 organizations participated in discussions aimed at enhancing the education and employment opportunities of county residents. A panel discussion led by Dr. Jameatoria Burton focused on adult learners and workforce development.

FSCJ Student Estrella Croston delivering greetings to FSCJ Connections guests.

Following the launch of Campus Discovery Days at North Campus in February, this traveling event continued at Kent Campus for its second showcase of programs, services and opportunities. More than 120 prospective students, along with their families and friends, enjoyed a day of learning about what Kent Campus and the Cecil Center have to offer. Activities included forklift and flight simulations, program information sessions, application, and FAFSA labs. The remaining Campus Discovery Days will be held at Downtown Campus on April 25 and South Campus on May 30.

April Highlights:

- 4/15: Fernandina High School Multi-Campus Tour (DTC, NTH, STH)
- 4/16: College & Career Fair at Andrew Jackson High School
- 4/22: Ability Housing Community Partner Luncheon
- 4/28: Career Source 2nd Chance Job Fair

March Recruitment by the Numbers:

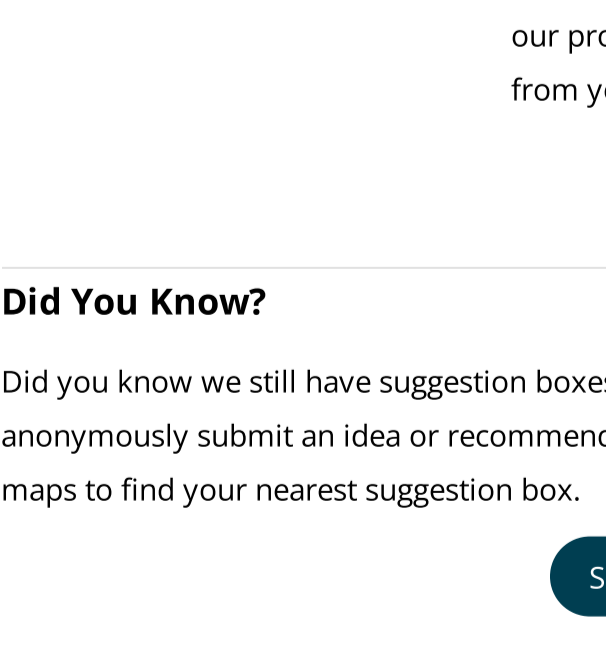
- Virtual Sessions: 5
- Student Impressions: 100
- Individual Tours: 8
- Student Impressions: 17

Tales from the recruitment trail: Student Recruiter Davion Manuel-McKenney lauded for ongoing outstanding service at Riverside High School
"Davion once again was REMARKABLE yesterday! He led the work for the FSCJ reps at our College & Career Fair, and I mean led the work! He role-modeled what reps should be doing – engaging students in conversations, directing them to the right program reps when needed, and answered at least a million questions. He is truly a fantastic representative for FSCJ!"

Connect with Student Recruitment - Whether it's a new initiative or one that's tried and true, we'd appreciate hearing your thoughts and/or having your participation. If you're interested in participating in recruitment events, please connect with us at fscjrecruitment@fscj.edu with the subject line "Dive into Manta Ray Nation."

[Read More](#)

Get to Know Your APC Colleagues: Donna Mollis Richardson



April's Administrative & Professional Collaborative (APC) spotlight shines on Associate Dean of Operations for Information Technology Programs Donna Mollis Richardson, providing leadership for the development, evaluation and continuous improvement of FSCJ's IT programs. She supports faculty in curriculum development, analyzes student data to inform program enhancements, oversees instructional resources and works closely with Business and Industry Leadership Teams to ensure programs align with workforce needs.

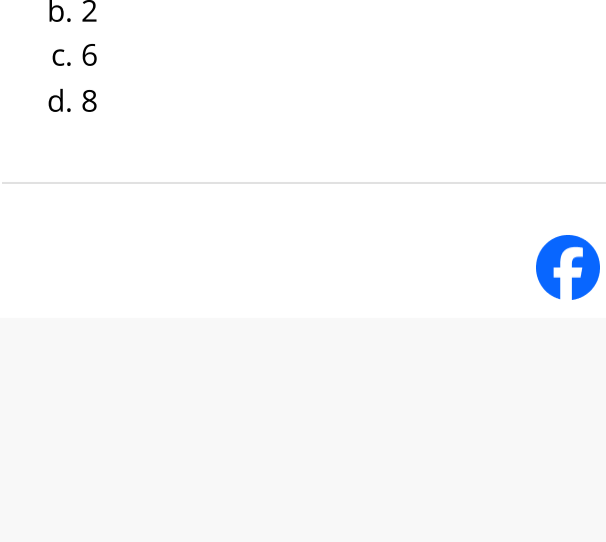
Donna brings more than two decades of experience across higher education, K-12 education, workforce development, healthcare, marketing and public administration.

She holds a Master of Public Administration degree from George Mason University and a bachelor's in Politics from Rollins College. Her background spans instructional leadership, faculty development, financial operations and community engagement, and she remains dedicated to creating meaningful pathways from education to employment for students across the region.

Donna lives in Jacksonville for over 20 years, is married to a police officer, and has a daughter who also lives in Jacksonville, a son in Atlanta, a bonus daughter in New Jersey, and a chocolate lab named Gunny. She is also an avid golfer.

[Read More](#)

Get to Know Your CEC Colleagues: Jennifer Sanchez



April's Career Employees' Council (CEC) spotlight features Career Services Student Employment Coordinator Jennifer Sanchez. She has been an integral part of the FSCJ community for a decade, dedicating her career to guiding students toward professional success.

Jennifer serves as a vital bridge between various departments, community partners and staff, connecting students with valuable on- and off-campus work-study opportunities. She also serves as an adjunct instructor in Human Services, teaching courses on counseling theories, human behavior and potential career paths in the field.

Jennifer earned an Associate in Arts from Miami Dade Honors College, a Bachelor of Science in Education and a Master of Science in Mental Health and Family/Couples Therapy from Barry University. Her credentials extend to K-6 Elementary Education and K-12 Spanish teaching certifications, along with Reading and ESOL endorsements. She has further distinguished herself professionally with Global Career Development FSCJL certification and as a Certified Professional Résumé Writer.

When not helping students realize their potential, Jennifer embraces her passion for travel. She also enjoys working out, discovering new cuisines and satisfying her sweet tooth.

[Read More](#)

FSCJ In Action

The 2026 Employee Wellness Fair was a huge success! This annual event aims to enhance our employees' physical, nutritional, financial, emotional/social and spiritual well-being. Attendees took advantage of the expert health screenings and educational resources while enjoying massages, games and food. It was a wonderful opportunity to recharge and connect with colleagues from across the College.

Many thanks to the FSCJ Wellness Committee for their work in coordinating and hosting the event, attendees and the vendors who participated, including internal partners FSCJ Athletics, Cosmetology and Dental programs, Library and Tutoring Services, Risk Management & Safety, and Urban Agriculture.

[View Photos](#)

Some of our very own students' work with the Diplomacy Lab project was recently featured in the State Department's American Spaces newsletter.

The Office of American Spaces and Educational Advising collaborated with 20 digital-media students in our Creative Digital Media Problem Solving course to create original graphic designs, videos and digital assets intended for global use in American Spaces. The student-produced content was centered on the theme of celebrating American heroes in support of the Freedom 250 Initiative.

Read the American Spaces newsletter to learn more and download all approved graphics and media assets [here](#).

"Caught in the Act" - Elevating the FSCJ Experience Spotlight: Have you witnessed a colleague in the act of elevating the FSCJ Experience for students, community members or colleagues? If yes, we want to hear about it! Selected stories will be featured in HR newsletters. Please share your stories [here](#).

Board Highlights

Review the highlights of the April 14, 2026, meeting of the FSCJ District Board of Trustees (DBOT):

- The DBOT approved the College's proposed revised Mission and Vision statements.
 - Mission: Florida State College at Jacksonville empowers students to achieve their goals by providing exceptional learning experiences that promote intellectual growth, civic engagement, and workforce connections.
 - Vision: To serve as a catalyst to transform lives, elevate communities, and inspire generations through the power of education.
- The DBOT approved continuing contract status for the following full-time faculty members, effective with the 2026-27 faculty contract year.
 - Dr. Susan Amburgey, Professor of Logistics
 - Amber Arroyo, Librarian
 - Gerard Hilgenberg, Professor of Computer Information Technology and Cyber Security
 - Killy Kim, Professor of Mathematics
 - Dr. Debidatta Mahapatra, Professor of Political Science
 - Bryce Wakefield, Professor of Mathematics
- The DBOT approved the FSCJ ACCESS Program for Summer Term 2026, pursuant to Board Rule 6Hx7-4.19.
- The DBOT accepted the Florida Auditor General's published Audit Report No. 2026-075, entitled Financial Audit for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025.
- The DBOT authorized College Administration to negotiate and execute a contract to purchase the San Jose Early College at Cecil charter school building, located at 13520 FSCJ Cecil Drive.

You can find more information on the Board of Trustees meeting on our [website](#).

Facilities Updates

Recently Completed	Deerwood Center:	In Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Art Lab Furniture • North Athletics Renovation • North Tower Stairwell Repair • North CJC Slip Pad Repair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Center Renovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking Garage Joint Repair
<h4>In Progress</h4> <p>Ongoing College-wide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door Access Control Upgrades • Fire Alarm Replacement • Scan/Digitize Facilities Plans • Science Lab & Classroom Renovations • Wayfinding, Monuments Signs • Memorial Benches/Legacy Walk • Energy Initiatives • Classroom USA Flag Replacement • Library Master Planning <p>Cecil Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiller Replacement • Driving Track Lighting 	<p>Downtown Campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA Signage • Fire Alarm System Replacement • Parking Lift Lighting • Art Murals <p>Kent Campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbershop Renovation • Auditorium Seating <p>Nassau Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Alarm Replacement • Barrier Arm Replacement <p>North Campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Services Renovation • Allied Health Program Renovation • Signage • Scoreboard Screen Framing <p>South Campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Alarm System Replacement • Men's Locker Room Renovation • Fire Academy AHU Replacement 	<p>Deerwood Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warehouse Building • VERC Renovation • JRC Achievement ELC Design • ATC Boiler Replacement <p>Nassau Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildwood Outdoor Retreat Center Renovation <p>South Campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Burn Building

Show Your Manta Rays Spirit

Get your Manta Rays merch now! In partnership with Baker's Sports, the local uniform provider for FSCJ's Athletics teams, we are pleased to offer t-shirts, hoodies, a special baseball jersey and more.

Make your selection and customize it with different designs so you can represent FSCJ and our athletics teams. You'll also be helping out our program, as FSCJ Athletics will receive a portion of the proceeds from your purchase!

[Mascot Shop](#)

Did You Know?

Did you know we still have suggestion boxes located at each campus and center? This is where you can anonymously submit an idea or recommendation for consideration. Click on the button below for the maps to find your nearest suggestion box.

[Suggestion Box Maps](#)

Upcoming Events

Next Call:
May 13, 2 p.m.

Click here for previous call notes.

They are also available via the myFSCJ OnPoint Quick Link.

Stay a Manta Ray!

Summer registration is open now!

Check out the full calendar to view more and access the form to submit your College-related events: fscj.edu/events.

[View More Events](#)

Quiz

Quiz winners will be selected at random from entries with all questions answered correctly. You have until 6 p.m. on the day the newsletter is distributed to email your answers to newsletter@fscj.edu. Three winners will receive a Manta Messenger prize pack! Please note: Previous quiz winners are not eligible to win for six months.

1. Where is the 60th Anniversary mural?
 - a. South Campus
 - b. Deerwood Center
 - c. Nassau Center
 - d. Downtown Campus
2. Which of the 60 Years of Impact and Inspiration in Healthcare panelists is not an FSCJ alum?
 - a. SeQoya Williams
 - b. Thu Phan
 - c. Lamont Hogans
 - d. King Davis
3. When is the next OnPoint call?
 - a. May 3
 - b. May 7
 - c. May 13
 - d. April 16
4. What activities does the Herbert W. Scheidel Leadership in Action Award recognize?
 - a. Volunteerism
 - b. Athleticism
 - c. Academic Excellence
 - d. Student Involvement
5. How many former student-athletes were honored during the inaugural Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony?
 - a. 4
 - b. 2
 - c. 6
 - d. 8