

## August 2025



Please join us for Convocation 2025, "Transforming Tomorrow," on Thursday, August 21, in the South Campus Gymnasium. This annual event serves as a kickoff to our academic year and it's a great time to reconnect with colleagues and hear the latest updates from across the College.

Breakfast will be served from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and the official program will begin at 9:45 a.m. Plenary starts at 1 p.m.

This year, we are asking for your support of the Career Closet and H.O.P.E. Food Pantry. Donations to the Career Closet help students dress for success with professional attire for job interviews, internships and career fairs. Contributions to the H.O.P.E. Food Pantry ensure that all students have access to food and other essential items.

### News and Updates

#### FSCJ Bookstores Now Open

FSCJ campus stores at Downtown Campus, North Campus and South Campus are officially open again—now powered by BibliU! This exciting change brings a new look and feel to our campus bookstores, while ensuring that course materials are ready for students to purchase before the start of each term.

Pop-up stores will be available at Deerwood Center, Nassau Center and Kent Campus on two specific days at the start of the term. See schedule below:

- Deerwood Center (Building G), 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Tuesday, August 19 and Tuesday, August 26
- Nassau Center (Building A), 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Wednesday, August 20 and Wednesday, August 27
- Kent Campus (Building G), 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Thursday, August 21 and Thursday, August 28

Please note: Books not picked up by the last day the pop-up stores are open will be sent to one of the main campus stores for pickup. Deerwood Center books will be sent to South Campus, Nassau Center books will be sent to North Campus and Kent Campus books will be sent to Downtown Campus.

The campus stores will continue to offer school-branded merchandise, supplies, electronics and more. Shop online at [ShopFSCJ.com](#). The phone number to reach any of the bookstores is (904) 646-2000.

[ShopFSCJ.com](#)

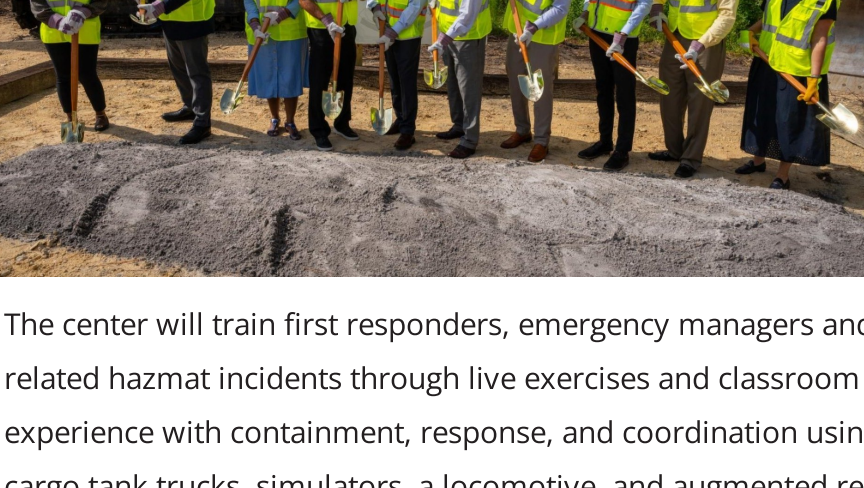
#### FSCJ Receives Grant from Lowe's Foundation for Skilled Trades

FSCJ is honored to be a recipient of a two-year Gable Grant from the Lowe's Foundation to help solve America's critical skilled trades worker shortage. The \$390,000 grant award will help FSCJ strengthen communities and improve access for aspiring electricians, construction professionals and HVAC technicians through training at community sites. The grant will also support the recruitment of skilled instructors and fund educational materials, spaces and equipment, addressing workforce needs for large construction projects throughout the service area.

"Thanks to the Lowe's Foundation Gable Grant, FSCJ will transform access to high-demand careers through an innovative construction training initiative called 'EmpowerEd by Lowe's,' which was developed to bring educational and training opportunities directly to those who need it most," said College President John Avendano, Ph.D. "This program is more than job training and workforce development; it's an opportunity to restore lives while also strengthening our community both now and far into the future."

[Read More](#)

#### CSX and FSCJ Partner to Build Nation's First Railroad-Operated Hazardous Materials Training Institute



On August 4, CSX Corp. and FSCJ announced plans to construct a state-of-the-art hazardous materials training facility located at FSCJ's Fire Academy of the South. The announcement included a groundbreaking ceremony with representatives from CSX and FSCJ, including Dr. A and District Board of Trustees Chair Wayne Young.

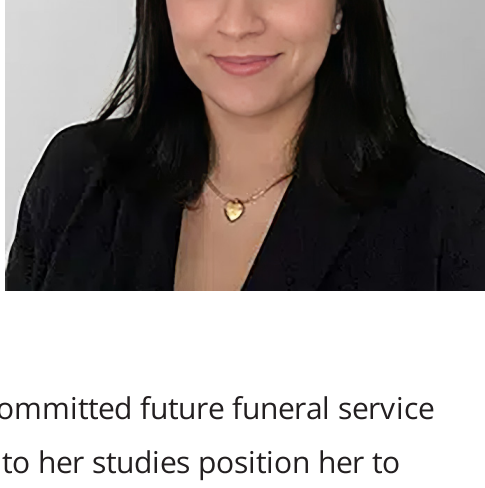
The center will train first responders, emergency managers and industry professionals to handle rail-related hazmat incidents through live exercises and classroom instruction. Students will gain hands-on experience with containment, response, and coordination using high- and low-pressure tank cars, highway cargo tank trucks, simulators, a locomotive, and augmented reality scenario planning.

"FSCJ is proud to strengthen our ongoing partnership with CSX through the development of this state-of-the-art facility dedicated to railroad emergency response training," said College President John Avendano, Ph.D. "A recognized leader in the training of first responders, FSCJ is dedicated to supporting critical needs for advanced emergency management education, which we know contributes to our region's vitality."

[View Photos](#)

#### Funeral Services Student Earns National Scholarship

Congratulations to Ms. Linda Barajas, one of our second-year Funeral Services program students! She was recently awarded the John Carmon Funeral Service Foundation Scholarship. Ms. Barajas' selection reflects her outstanding qualifications and dedication to the field.



The selection process for these scholarships is rigorous, evaluating hundreds of applicants from the 58 accredited funeral services programs across the U.S. Candidates are assessed based on their academic excellence, civic engagement and professional potential.

"Ms. Barajas exemplifies the qualities needed as a compassionate and committed future funeral service professional. Her respect for the profession and unwavering dedication to her studies position her to provide exceptional care to the families she will serve," said Funeral Services Program Director Howard Beckham, Jr. "She represents the high caliber of individuals who have chosen FSCJ and the Funeral Services program to prepare them to lead with integrity and empathy in this vital industry."

[Read More](#)

#### All FSCJ Athletics Teams Earn NJCAA All-Academic Honors

FSCJ student athletes received 33 student awards, and all eight sports teams earned the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) All-Academic designation for their dedication in the classroom during the 2024-25 school year. Teams with a minimum average GPA of 3.0 or higher were recognized as 2024-25 NJCAA All-Academic Teams. This included the FSCJ Baseball, Men's Cross Country, Women's Cross Country, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Softball, Beach and Indoor Volleyball teams. Student athletes who have achieved a minimum GPA of 3.60 were eligible for the NJCAA All-Academic honors. The FSCJ baseball team led the department with nine honorees in this category.

In addition, the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) recognized student-athletes who earned a 3.30 cumulative GPA or higher as FCSAA All-Academic Team members. This year, FSCJ Athletics earned 67 spots on the team.

"We are very proud of our student-athletes for balancing rigorous coursework with the demands of varsity sports," said Jerry Thor, FSCJ Director of Athletics. "We're equally grateful to our faculty and academic support staff, whose guidance and encouragement play a vital role in helping our students reach their full potential."

[Read More](#)

#### New FSCJ Fact Book and Student Success Report Now Available

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness recently published the 2023-24 Fact Book. You can find it on the Data Library SharePoint.

The 2025 Student Success Report is also in the Data Library. Check them out!

[Data Library](#)

#### Submit Alumni Nominations for Anniversary Celebration

FSCJ's 60th Anniversary begins this month! As part of our celebration, we'll be celebrating our alumni. We are collecting nominations for alumni features throughout the year. Please nominate alumni including fellow employees, yourself, retirees and anyone you can think of from the past six decades. Submit a nomination [here](#).

#### Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

Congratulations to the Leading From Where You Are (LFWYA) program graduates!

Jamaiah Bowman, Administrative Assistant I	Jerry Morgan, Case Manager/Career Specialist
Kasyapa Chitta, Professor of Biotechnology	Devon Novik, Academic and Career Advisor
Angela Davis, Student Engagement Advisor II	Shannon Reid, Student Success Navigator
Mary Jamison Dee, Financial Aid Advisor II	Hector Rodriguez, Financial Aid Advisor II
Kelly Herndon, Director of Program Development	Jody Taylor, Engineer II Multimedia
Shainee Kerns, Human Resources Coordinator	Lacrecia Underwood, IT Call Center Rep II

#### Recruitment Update

The Student Recruitment Office would like to extend a heartfelt thank you as we close one recruitment cycle and look forward to the new opportunities and events that the upcoming year will bring. We are extremely grateful for your partnership in engaging prospective students, their supporters and influencers. Some of these events and initiatives are noted below.

- Fall**
- Organized: Community Partner Event (Duval)
  - Collaborated: NACAC National College Fair
  - Supported: First Year Experience Conference

- Spring**
- Organized: Community Partner Event (Nassau)
  - Collaborated: Dual 2 Degree Program
  - Supported: Duval County Public Schools BEACON Program

- Summer**
- Organized: College Open House
  - Collaborated: Level Up Program
  - Supported: Genesys Works Program

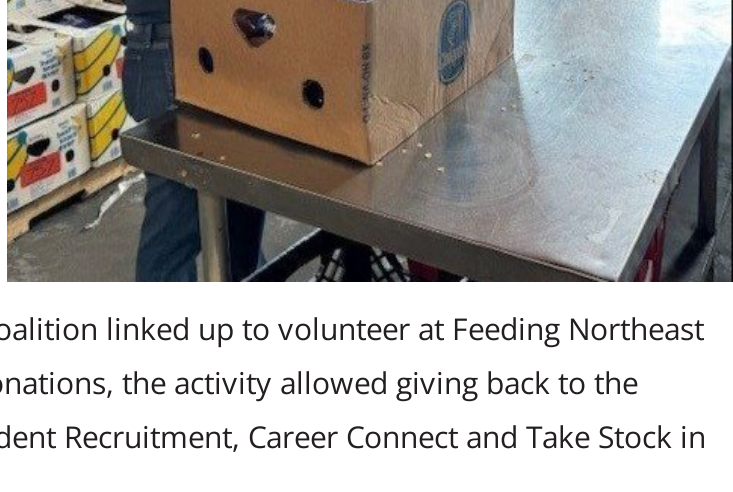
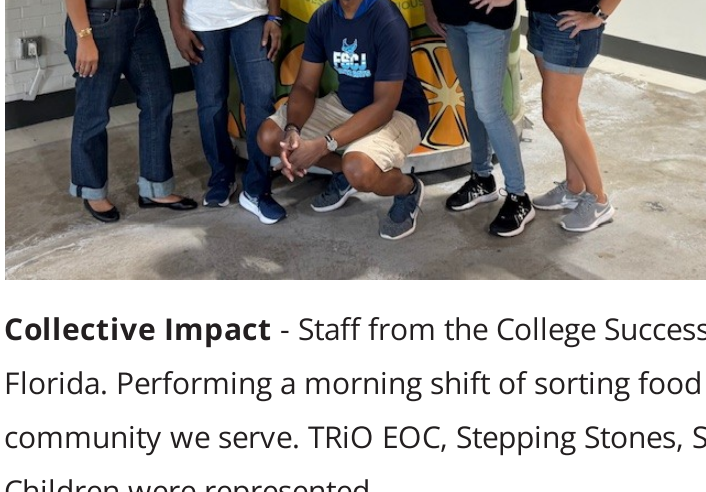
This academic year, we would like to further enhance our outreach for virtual information sessions. If you are interested in collaborating on these sessions, please contact the office at [fscjrecruitment@fscj.edu](mailto:fscjrecruitment@fscj.edu).

#### Upcoming events:

- 8/19: Baker Re-Entry Seminar
- 8/20: FSCJ with Daniel Kids Residence
- 8/25: VERTICAL Program Orientation Tour
- 8/28: Beachside High School Lunch Visit

#### Recruitment by the numbers:

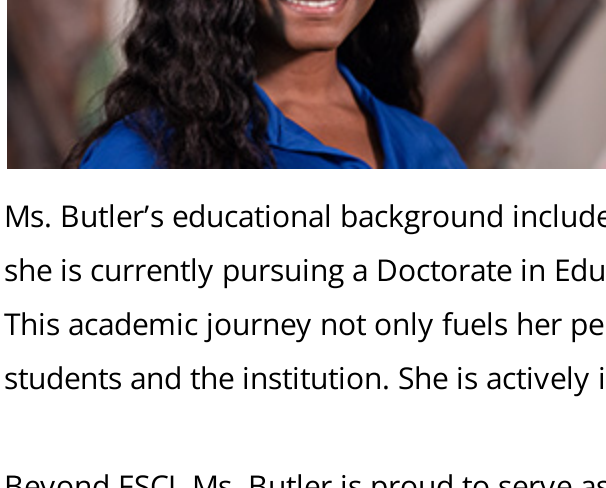
- Events: 31
- Prospective Student Connections: 901
- Individual tours: 28
- Attendees: 59



**Collective Impact** - Staff from the College Success Coalition linked up to volunteer at Feeding Northeast Florida. Performing a morning shift of sorting food donations, the activity allowed giving back to the community we serve. TRIO EOC, Stepping Stones, Student Recruitment, Career Connect and Take Stock in Children were represented.

[Read More](#)

#### Get to Know Your CEC Colleagues: Ashley Butler

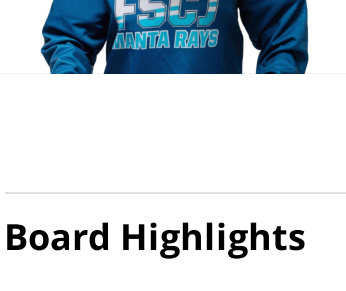


August's Career Employees' Council (CEC) spotlight features Academic and Career Advisor Ashley Butler. With nearly a decade of dedicated service to the College, Ashley is proud to work in her role, which involves guiding students through their educational journeys, helping them set and achieve goals, overcome challenges and celebrate their ultimate success—graduation day.

Ms. Butler's educational background includes a bachelor's in Psychology, a master's in Administration and she is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education. This academic journey not only fuels her personal growth but also empowers her to better support our students and the institution. She is actively involved in FSCJ's Leadership Succession Program as well.

Beyond FSCJ, Ms. Butler is proud to serve as a mentor with the Take Stock in Children program, where she helps guide and inspire the next generation. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, watching movies and spending quality moments with her family.

[Read More](#)



#### Invite Rayzor Ray to Your Event

Bring some extra excitement to your events with Rayzor Ray! Our beloved mascot is ready to make appearances that will energize the crowd and create unforgettable memories. Don't miss out—bookmark the Rayzor Ray Request Form today and secure a visit!

[Request Form](#)

#### Board Highlights

Review the highlights of the August 12, 2025, meeting of the FSCJ District Board of Trustees (DBOT):

- The DBOT approved a 3% salary increase calculated on base salary as of August 15, 2025 for all eligible full-time, non-instructional employees and a 3% increase for part-time, non-instructional employees on the Administrative, Professional and Career Salary Indexes.
- The DBOT approved the activation of the Building Construction Specialist (18 credit hours) Technical Certificate program embedded within the Industry Operations Management Associate in Science program effective Fall Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved the activation of the Child Care Center Management Specialization (12 credit hours) Technical Certificate program embedded within the Early Childhood Education Associate in Science program effective Fall Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved the activation of the Digital Media Foundations (10 credit hours) local Technical Certificate program embedded within the Career Readiness (VERTICAL) program effective Fall Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved a new Early Childhood Education (60 credit hours) Associate in Science program effective Fall Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved the activation of the Information Technology Foundations (10 credit hours) local Technical Certificate program embedded within the Career Readiness (VERTICAL) program effective Fall Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved the activation of the Office Administration Foundations (10 credit hours) local Technical Certificate program embedded within the Career Readiness (VERTICAL) program effective Fall Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved the inactivation of the Advanced Network Virtualization (34 credit hours) Technical Certificate program effective at the end of Summer Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved the inactivation of the Early Childhood Management (60 credit hours) Associate in Science program effective at the end of Summer Term 2025.
- New officers: Board Chair Rod Odom was elected and Trustee Andrew Shaw, M.D. was re-elected as vice chair for Duval County.


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

#### Facilities Updates

The Facilities Team has been hard at work, updating and upgrading spaces across the College. Check out some highlights below:

Recently completed	Deerwood Center:	South Campus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nassau Center - Door Access Control Upgrade</li><li>Downtown/North-South Bookstores</li><li>Downtown - URC Courtyard Wall Replacement</li><li>South - Legacy Walk - Benches; Dedication Plaque</li><li>South - Fire Academy Furniture</li><li>Kent - Addressable Device Upgrades</li><li>Kent - Renovation, Auditorium Dressing Room</li><li>Kent - Renovation, Student Life Common Area</li><li>North - CJC Lobby Breakroom Furniture and Pavilion</li><li>North - BDM Monitoring System (Bldgs E, F &amp; P)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Classrooms to Computer Labs Renovation</li><li>Conference Center Renovation</li><li>Stairs, Curtainwall and Balcony Repair</li><li>Multipurpose Room Renovation</li><li>Elevator Modernization</li><li>ADA Signage</li><li>Fire Alarm System Replacement</li><li>Parking Lot Lighting</li><li>Cancer Survivor's Park Lighting</li><li>Auditorium Seating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Door Access Control Upgrades</li><li>Elevator Modernization</li><li>Lighting Controls Upgrade</li><li>Fire Alarm System Replacement</li><li>Childcare Center Renovation</li><li>Men's Locker Room Renovation</li><li>Gymnasium Bleachers</li></ul>
In progress	Downtown Campus:	In planning
<p>Ongoing Collegewide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Door Access Control Upgrades</li><li>Elevator Door Lock Monitoring Systems</li><li>Emergency Responders Radio Communications System</li><li>Fire Alarm Replacement</li><li>Scan/Digitize Facilities Plans</li><li>Science Lab &amp; Classroom Renovations</li><li>Wayfinding, Monument Sign</li><li>Memorial Benches/Agency Walk</li><li>Energy Initiatives</li><li>Classroom USA Flag Replacement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Science Lab Upgrades</li><li>Bus Route Improvements</li><li>Barbershop Renovation</li><li>Hwy Water Loop Replacement</li><li>Auditorium Seating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Warehouse Building</li><li>VERC Renovation</li><li>Jr. Achievement Building and Career Job Placement Center Expansion</li></ul>
	Nassau Center:	Deerwood Center:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Science Lab Construction</li><li>Fire Alarm Replacement</li><li>Maintenance Vehicle/Equipment Storage Building</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Parking Garage Joint Repair</li><li>Repurpose Bookstore Space</li></ul>
	North Campus:	Downtown Campus:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Student Services Renovation</li><li>Allied Health Program Renovation</li><li>Signage</li><li>Boiler Replacement</li><li>Athletics Renovation</li><li>Tower Stairwell Paint</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Warehouse Building</li><li>VERC Renovation</li><li>Jr. Achievement Building and Career Job Placement Center Expansion</li></ul>
	Kent Campus:	Kent Campus:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Science Lab Construction</li><li>Fire Alarm Replacement</li><li>Maintenance Vehicle/Equipment Storage Building</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Repurpose Bookstore Space</li><li>Wilson Center Architect Assessment</li><li>Honors Program Expansion</li><li>Security Renovation</li></ul>

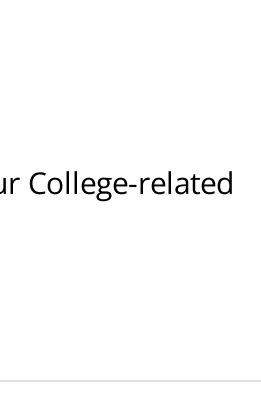
#### Upcoming Events

OnPoint


Next Call:  
September 10, 2 p.m.

Call notes available at myFSCJ OnPoint Quick Link

Stay a  
Manta Ray!



Fall registration is open now!

American Heart Association.  
**Heart Walk.**

2025 First Coast Heart Walk

Saturday, October 4

Register and learn more: [firstcoastheartwalk.org](#)

Check out the events calendar to view more events 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](mailto: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.

- When will Convocation be held?
  - Thursday, August 21
  - Thursday, August 21
  - Thursday, August 21
  - Thursday, August 21
- Where are the campus bookstores located?
  - Downtown, North and South
  - Downtown
  - Downtown, Nassau and North
  - South, Kent and North
- Where will the Hazardous Materials Training Institute be located?
  - Kent Campus
  - Fire Academy of the South
  - Nassau Center
  - Downtown Campus
- How many National Junior College Athletic Association awards were earned by FSCJ student athletes?
  - 8
  - 25
  - 33
  - 16
- When will the next OnPoint call be held?
  - August 21
  - September 10
  - September 4
  - September 22