

February 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 will be here soon! The event will be held on Thursday, May 7, at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena at 4 p.m.

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](https://fscj.edu/commencement) or contact [commencement@fscj.edu](mailto:commencement@fscj.edu).

[fscj.edu/commencement](https://fscj.edu/commencement)

## News and Updates

### Junior Achievement and FSCJ Partner to Create Early Learning Center



On January 20, Junior Achievement of North Florida and FSCJ announced a partnership to establish the Junior Achievement Experiential Learning Center (ELC) on our Downtown Campus. The collaboration represents a long-term investment in Jacksonville's students, workforce and regional economy.

The ELC is projected to serve more than 30,000 students annually. It will bring career-connected learning to life, allowing students to run businesses, earn paychecks, manage budgets and explore career pathways through hands-on simulations that bridge classroom learning with real-world application.

"This partnership embodies FSCJ's commitment to serving as an educational anchor for our community," said FSCJ President John Avendano, Ph.D. "By welcoming the Junior Achievement Experiential Learning Center to our Downtown Campus, we are expanding exposure and opportunity for young students across Jacksonville while strengthening the connection between early learning, college and career."

[Read More](#)

### Employee Wellness Fair

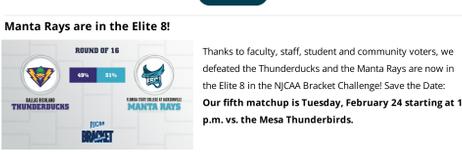
The 2026 Employee Wellness Fair will be held on Wednesday, March 11, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Advanced Technology Center. This annual event aims to promote the five health and wellness elements of the FSCJ Employee Wellness Program: Physical, Spiritual, Nutritional, Emotional/Social and Financial.



All employees are invited to attend and participate in a variety of in-person health screenings and services, exciting prizes and more.

[Learn More](#)

### FSCJ Men's Cross Country Earns #1 National Academic Ranking from USTFCCA



The U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCA) recently announced its NJCAA All-Academic Team and All-Academic Athlete Awards, recognizing excellence in the classroom alongside athletic achievement. FSCJ's men's cross country team was named the #1 performing academic team in the nation for the 2025 season, topping all NJCAA programs nationwide with a remarkable team grade-point average of 3.90.

Members of the team include Benjamin Hale, Cole Fleming, Matt Letheliser, Noah Blake Looney, and David Beasley, each of whom also earned USTFCCA All-Academic Athlete honors for maintaining a GPA of 3.60 or higher while competing at the national level.

[Read More](#)

### Manta Rays are in the Elite 8!



Thanks to faculty, staff, student and community voters, we defeated the Thunderducks and the Manta Rays are now in the Elite 8 in the NJCAA Bracket Challenge! Save the Date:

**Our fifth matchup is Tuesday, February 24 starting at 1 p.m. vs. the Mesa Thunderbirds.**

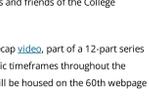
When voting opens, you have 24 hours to vote and help spread the word! Here's how:

- From [@NJCAA Instagram](#): Tap the Story bubble (around the profile image) find the FSCJ Manta Rays vs. Mesa Thunderbirds matchup and click on the button with our name.
- From [@NJCAA X Twitter](#): Click on the Fifth Round graphic pinned at the top of the page. In the replies, find the FSCJ Manta Rays vs. Mesa Thunderbirds matchup and click on the button with our name. (We'll also share it on the @FSCJ\_Official page.)

Help the Manta Rays come out on top! Click [here](#) to view the event on our calendar and add it to yours.

### Celebration of Student Success Nominations Open

Faculty and staff are invited to select one to three students from the Summer 2025, Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 Terms for recognition through the Celebration of Student Success in the following categories: Academic Achievement, Inspirational Achievement, Outstanding Student Worker and Outstanding Student Leadership.



The schedule for each campus awards ceremony is as follows:

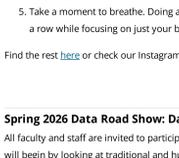
- Deerwood Center – Tuesday, March 31, 6-7:30 p.m., Academy Room, B1204
- Downtown Campus – Thursday, April 9, 4-5:30 p.m., Auditorium, A1068
- North Campus/Nassau Center – Tuesday, April 14, 6-7:30 p.m., Auditorium, C126
- Kent Campus/Cecil Center – Thursday, April 16, 6-7:30 p.m., Room D120
- South Campus – Thursday, April 23, 6-7:30 p.m., Nathan H. Wilson Center for the Arts, Lakeside Room

Nomination deadlines are two weeks before the date of your preferred campus award ceremony. Read more [here](#).

[Make a Nomination](#)

### 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 1995-99 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.

### Join the Walking Challenge

To continue the 60th celebration and promote a healthy start to 2026, the College is launching a 60 Mile Walk/Run Challenge. The first 125 employees who want to participate can track their mileage through the free version of Challenge Hound. Track your miles now through August 26, 2026.

- Click [here](#) to join.
- Click the green "Sign In to Join Challenge" button.
- Sign in to an existing Challenge Hound account, or sign up if you are new to Challenge Hound.
- Once signed in, click the green "Join Challenge" button and confirm joining.

With questions, email Bryan Stewart at [bstewart@fscj.edu](mailto:bstewart@fscj.edu).

### 60 Health Tips

Here this month, our Health Sciences team developed a list of 60 tips to set you on a path to wellness. Here are the first five:

- Incorporate protein (animal or plant protein) into each of your meals to help you feel full sooner.
- If you sit all day at a desk, set a timer to stand every two hours for 10 minutes. Movement is key for jobs that are primarily sedentary.
- If you're trying to lose weight and get a craving for something, eat the craving. You're more likely to break the diet or not continue with your goals if you deprive yourself. Do this within moderation.
- Nurture your social relationships. People who have close friends and family show improved mental health resilience.
- Take a moment to breathe. Doing a simple and slow four-count inhaling and exhaling three times in a row while focusing on just your body breathing can help reduce stress and slow your brain down.

Find the rest [here](#) or check our Instagram stories for 10 tips each week.

[fscj.edu/60](#)

### Spring 2026 Data Road Show: Data, Faculty & Supports

All faculty and staff are invited to participate in any of the Spring Data Road Shows. Each one-hour session will begin by looking at traditional and humanizing student demographic data. This will be followed by a discussion of how faculty can support students in their classes. We will wrap up with reviewing the student support services that are available for students.

The schedule for the remaining sessions is below:

- Nassau Center, T126  
February 24, 2-3 p.m.
- North Campus, E166  
February 25, 3-4 p.m.
- South Campus, G101  
March 3, 3-4 p.m.
- Downtown Campus, ATC T112  
March 4, 3-4 p.m.
- Deerwood Center, G1722  
March 10, 3-4 p.m.
- Cecil Center North, A109  
March 11, 3-4 p.m.

[Register Here](#)

### First Florida Credit Union Supports FSCJ Athletics

We were excited to welcome members of the First Florida Credit Union team who joined us at The Reef for the Men's Basketball game on Saturday, January 31. We are grateful to First Florida for their continued support of the College!



### Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

FSCJ's Marketing and Communications team has won a 2025 NCMPR Paragon Award in the Digital Advertisement category. NCMPR (National Council for Marketing & Public Relations) is the country's premier professional group for marcom and PR press at community and technical colleges. The Paragon honor colleges for producing the best creative, strategic work in the nation.

Each category awards three prizes—a gold, a silver and a bronze—and placement will be announced during the national conference, which will be held March 18-20 in Washington, D.C.

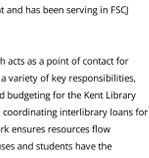
The team also received the Association of Florida Colleges (AFC) Communications and Marketing Commission 2025 Awards of Excellence for the NBA Finals TV Spot and Mascot Stuffed Animal.



Chief Investment Officer and Advancement Relations Cleve Warren was named one of Resident Community News Group, Inc.'s Circles Magazine 20 Really Good People! He was recognized on the list as "The Bridgebuilder" for his service on the Baptist Health and Baptist Health Foundation Boards. Read the full publication [here](#).

Assistant Director of Integrated Communication & Special Events Kerry Roth was inducted into the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) Hall of Fame - Student Government Division. The FCSAA Hall of Fame is comprised of Administrators, Coaches, Advisors, Officials, Students, and other nominees who have contributed a minimum of ten years to FCSAA or one of its member institutions. They have been selected by their peers on the merits of their contributions, achievements and significant accomplishments.

[Read more.](#)



FCSAA Executive Director Kelly Warren, Kerry and Current SGA State Advisor Kara Pineiro

In Executive Director Kelly Warren's speech, she shared that Kerry's service within the FCSAA exceeds that of any other advisor currently in the system.

### Recruitment Update

Instead of the traditional open house, this year, we will host Campus Discovery Days to welcome the community into the College, allowing them to engage directly with our dynamic educational programs and the dedicated staff who support student success. Attendees will be able to explore programs offered at each campus, apply to FSCJ, discover resources designed to support student success, learn how to pay for college, and get an understanding of the steps from application to enrollment.

Campus Discovery Days will be held on the following dates:

- North Campus, February 21
- Kent Campus, March 28
- Downtown Campus, April 25
- South Campus, May 30

Your support is needed, whether you wish to participate as a [program/resource representative](#) or as a [volunteer](#) to assist our prospective students. Contact the [Student Recruitment Office](#) with questions.

### Student Recruitment By the Numbers:

Student events: 49  
Student impressions: 755

[Read More](#)

### Get to Know Your APC Colleagues: Chris Lee



February's Administrative & Professional Collaborative (APC) spotlight shines on Associate Dean of Advancing the Industry (E&I) Chris Lee. In this role, he advances the instructional programs, curricula and courses of study in the E&I areas at the associate degree and certificate levels. It also allows him to directly shape the systems and processes that produce collaborative and creative work environments for faculty, which lead to effective learning outcomes for students.

Chris earned his Bachelor of Electrical Engineering and Master of Science in Electrical Engineering degrees from Georgia Institute of Technology and has worked in several industries.

After experiencing many facets of the technology landscape, he found that teaching has a special place in his heart. He is also passionate about youth STEM education and believes that early exposure and impactful experiences are key to developing and maintaining kids' interest in STEM.

Chris is very proud of his son, Jawara, a freshman studying video game programming at Florida Polytechnic University, and is trying not to be a helicopter parent by visiting just once a month.

[Read More](#)

### Get to Know Your CEC Colleagues: Daynah Delacruz



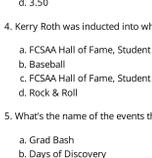
February's Career Employees' Council (CEC) spotlight features Administrative Services Support Specialist Daynah Delacruz. She's been with FSCJ since 2020, when she was a student tutor at the Downtown Library. A year later, she became a Library Assistant and has been serving in FSCJ libraries ever since.

In her current role, Daynah acts as a point of contact for library staff and manages a variety of key responsibilities, overseeing purchasing and budgeting for the Kent Library and Tutoring Services and coordinating interlibrary loans for the entire College. Her work ensures resources flow smoothly between campuses and students have the materials and support they need.

After earning her GED, she attended FSCJ before transferring to the University of North Florida, where she is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in painting and drawing. She enjoys exploring her artistic side through painting, as well as relaxing with a good book or a favorite movie.

[Read More](#)

### FSCJ In Action



Cecilia Cheng President Malia Smalls, Colleague VP Chea Lim, South Campus President Amadou Seck, and Nassau Center President Carson Watts

During the Florida College System Student Government Association (FCSGSA) Legislative Conference in Tallahassee, FSCJ Colleague Student Government Association Vice President Chea Lim received her FCSGSA Leadership Training (FLT) pin and certificate. Kent Campus FCSGA President Sebastian Bendgen and South Campus SGA Vice President Aidan Mattson were also presented with their FLT wings and certificate as they had completed their capstone course online and will be recognized at the next meeting. To earn their FLT pin and certificate, students must complete six core courses (Civic Engagement, Effective Communication, Ethical Leadership, Effective Meetings, Event Coordination, and Social Responsibility) and a Capstone session. Amadou Seck has previously earned his FLT pin and Malia needs one more course to earn hers.

"Caught in the Act" – Elevating the FSCJ Experience Spotlight: Over the past year, employees have participated in the Elevating the FSCJ Experience workshop, which has helped improve connections with those we serve. To celebrate the success, we're starting a "Caught in the Act" spotlight in the Human Resources Newsletter.

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

The DBOT meeting of the February 17, 2026, meeting of the FSCJ District Board of Trustees (DBOT):

- The DBOT approved revisions to Board Rule 6HX-4.7 – Investment of Surplus Funds under Section 4 – Finance.
- The DBOT approved Amendment No. 3 to the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operating Budget.
- The DBOT approved Amendment No. 2 to the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Capital Outlay Budget.
- The DBOT approved the Academic Calendar for 2026-27.
- The DBOT approved the inactivation of the Correctional Officer (420 clock hours) Career Certificate program, effective at the end of Summer Term 2025.
- The DBOT approved the activation of the Business Entrepreneurship Operations (18 credit hours) Correctional Certificate program embedded within the Industry Operations Management (Industrial Management Technology) Associate in Science program in effective Spring Term 2026.
- The DBOT approved the activation of the Florida Correctional Officer (Correctional Officer) (445 clock hours) Career Certificate program, effective at the beginning of Summer Term 2025.

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	Downtown Campus:	In planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Campus CJC Skid Pad Repair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADA Signage</li> <li>Fire Alarm System Replacement</li> <li>Parking Lot Lighting</li> <li>Art Murals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deerwood Center:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parkup Garage Joint Repair</li> <li>Repurpose Bookstore Space</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Ongoing Colleaguewide:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Door Access Control Upgrades</li> <li>Fire Alarm Replacement</li> <li>Scan/Digitize Facilities Plans</li> <li>Science Lab &amp; Classroom Renovations</li> <li>Wayfinding, Monumere Signs</li> <li>Memorial Bench/Legacy Walk</li> <li>Energy Initiatives</li> <li>Classroom USA Flag Replacement</li> <li>Library Master Planning</li> </ul>	<b>Kent Campus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barbershop Renovation</li> <li>Auditorium Seating</li> <li>ArtLab Furniture</li> </ul>	<b>Downtown Campus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warehouse Building</li> <li>YERB Renovation</li> <li>JT, Achievements ELC Design</li> <li>ATC Boiler Replacement</li> </ul>
<b>Cecil Center:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chiller Replacement</li> <li>Driving Track Lighting</li> </ul>	<b>Nassau Center:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire Alarm Replacement</li> </ul>	<b>Kent Campus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repurpose Bookstore Space</li> </ul>
<b>Deerwood Center:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confidence Center Renovation</li> </ul>	<b>North Campus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Services Renovation</li> <li>Allied Health Program Renovation</li> <li>Signage</li> <li>Advices Renovation</li> <li>Tower Stairwell Paint</li> </ul>	<b>South Campus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Burn Building</li> </ul>
	<b>South Campus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire Alarm System Replacement</li> <li>Men's Locker Room Renovation</li> <li>Fire Academy AHU Replacement</li> </ul>	

### Upcoming Events

OnPoint

Next Call:

March 11, 2 p.m.

Click [here](#) for more 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](https://fscj.edu/events).

[View More Events](#)

### Quiz

Quiz winners will be selected at random from entries with all questions answered correctly. We 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 Grad Bash take place?
  - May 7
  - May 2
  - May 5
  - May 6
- Where will the Junior Achievement Early Learning Center be located?
  - South Campus
  - Deerwood Center
  - Kent Campus
  - Downtown Campus
- What was the men's cross country team's GPA for the 2025 season?
  - 3.60
  - 3.90
  - 4.00
  - 3.50
- Kerry Roth was inducted into what Hall of Fame?
  - FCSAA Hall of Fame, Student Services Division
  - Baseball
  - FCSAA Hall of Fame, Student Government Division
  - Rock & Roll
- What's the name of the events that will take the place of the traditional open house this year?
  - Grad Bash
  - Days of Discovery
  - Campus Discovery Days
  - Campus Tours

