

November 2025



FSCJ Spirit Week

FSCJ students, faculty and staff came together October 20-24 to celebrate Spirit Week and show off their Manta Rays pride! Each themed day – Manta Monday, Twin Tuesday, Sports Wednesday, and Throwback Thursday – brought out some amazing creativity and school spirit.

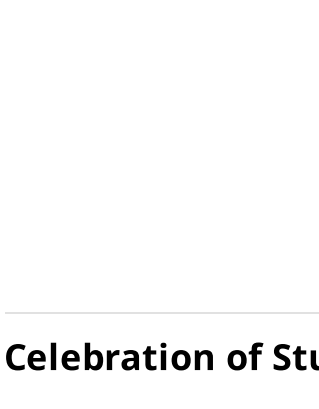
The week's excitement also included [Manta Rays Spirit Night](#) on Thursday at South Campus, where the fun kicked off with a tailgate featuring games, music and a cookout. The celebration continued inside The Reef for Manta Madness, which opened with the Athletics Hall of Fame announcement honoring former student-athlete Jeffery Gidcomb and two members of the 1982-83 National Champion Women's Cross-Country Team, Susan Ingram Rhodes and Jenny Ward Malone. The crowd then enjoyed a thrilling lineup of contests, including a 3-point shootout, knockerball, dunk contest and basketball scrimmages.

The celebration wrapped up Friday night as fans packed the stands to cheer on FSCJ Volleyball against Gulf Coast State College, ending the week on a high note of Manta Rays spirit!

[View Photos](#)

News and Updates

FSCJ Named in Top 200 Community Colleges Eligible for 2027 Aspen Prize

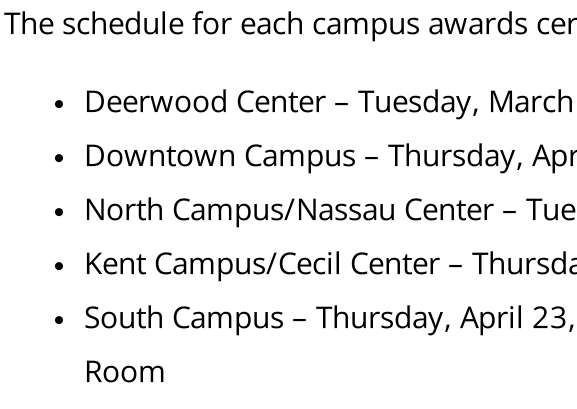


The Aspen Institute named FSCJ as one of the 200 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's premier recognition of high achievement and performance among two-year colleges. Started in 2010, this is the ninth cycle of the Aspen Prize.

"Being recognized once again as one of the top community colleges among such a distinguished group of institutions is an honor for FSCJ," said College President John Avendano, Ph.D. "This continued recognition reaffirms the unwavering dedication and commitment of our faculty, staff and administrators to the success of our students, both within and beyond the classroom."

[Read More](#)

Celebration of Student Success



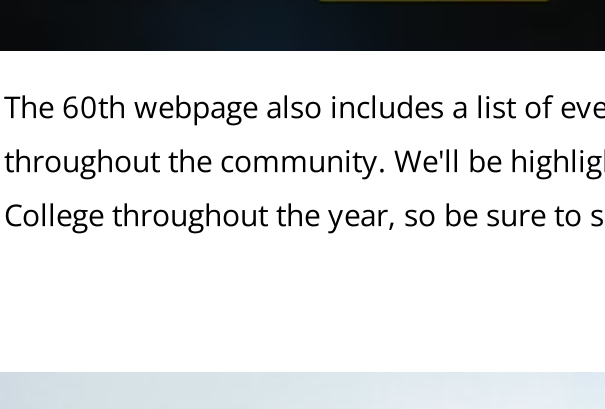
It's time to select deserving students for commendation at our annual Celebration of Student Success ceremonies. Faculty and staff are invited to select one to three students from their courses, academic programs, student organizations or workplace for recognition. Students may be selected from the Summer 2025, Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 Terms 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

Nominations may be submitted by completing the online form. Nomination deadlines are two weeks before the date of your preferred campus award ceremony. Read more [here](#).

[Make a Nomination](#)

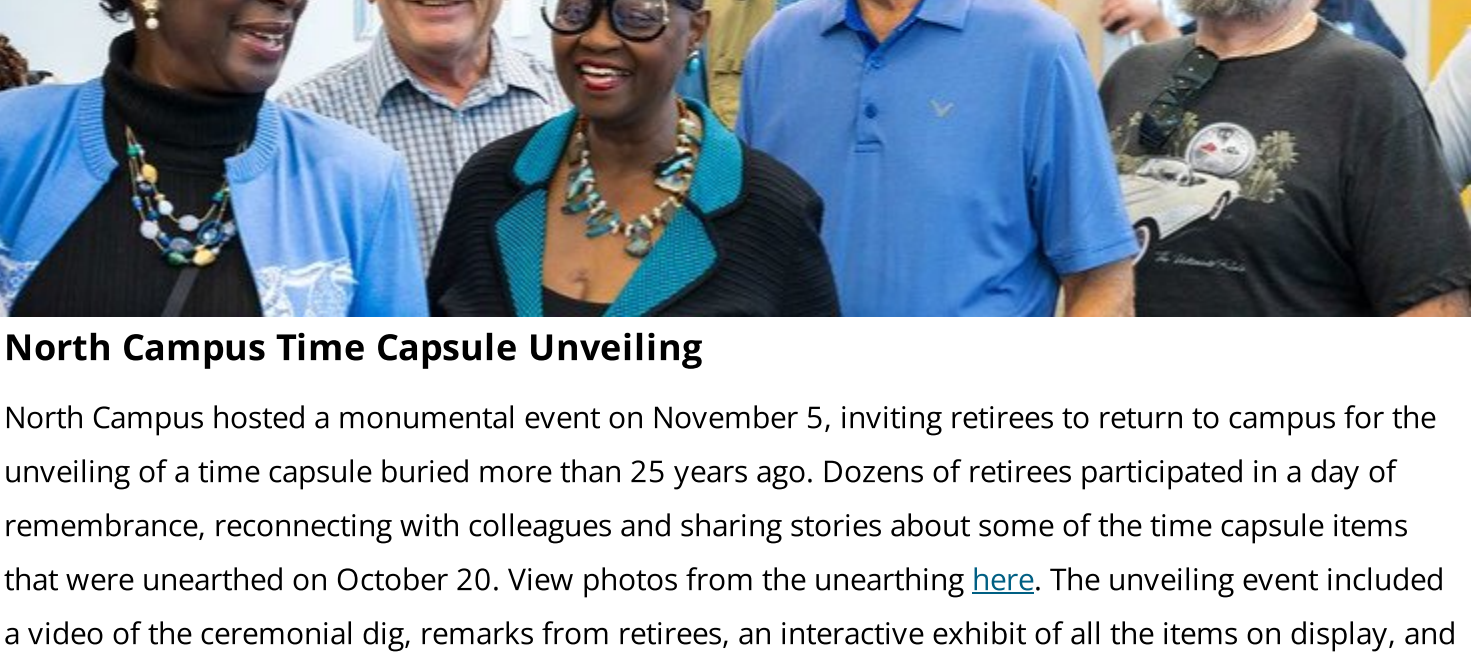


60th Anniversary Celebration Continues

Check out this 1980-85 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.

The 60th webpage also 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!

[fscj.edu/60](#)



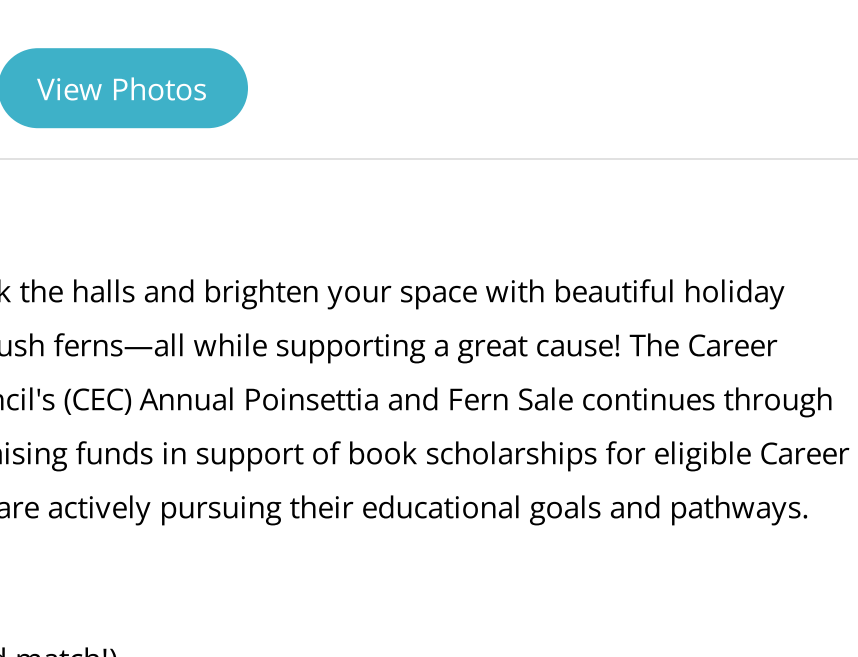
North Campus Time Capsule Unveiling

North Campus hosted a monumental event on November 5, inviting retirees to return to campus for the unveiling of a time capsule buried more than 25 years ago. Dozens of retirees participated in a day of remembrance, reconnecting with colleagues and sharing stories about some of the time capsule items that were unearthed on October 20. View photos from the unearthing [here](#). The unveiling event included a video of the ceremonial dig, remarks from retirees, an interactive exhibit of all the items on display, and concluded with a memory wall of retiree signatures, photo backdrop and refreshments.

[More Photos](#)

FSCJ Honors Recent Retirees

The College was pleased to honor recent retirees during the first-ever Retiree Luncheon held at Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club, sponsored by the FSCJ Foundation. Honorees gathered with the Executive Leadership Team, colleagues and guests in recognition of their time in service to the College and in celebration of their retirement.



Retirees in attendance (pictured from left to right): Beverly Green, Claire Rietz, Concetta Grimsley, Annette Barrineau, Donna Speegle, Jace Christovich, Chef Grigsby, Tricia May, Patricia Conway (*Pamela Williams not photographed*)

[View Photos](#)

CEC Poinsettia and Fern Sale



Get ready to deck the halls and brighten your space with beautiful holiday poinsettias and lush ferns—all while supporting a great cause! The Career Employees' Council's (CEC) Annual Poinsettia and Fern Sale continues through November 24, raising funds in support of book scholarships for eligible Career employees who are actively pursuing their educational goals and pathways.

Pricing: \$17 each, three for just \$45 (mix and match)
Final orders are due by Monday, November 24, at 5 p.m.
Orders will be delivered on Thursday, December 11, or individuals may pick up their order at Downtown Campus.

With questions or to request more information, please email cec@fscj.edu.

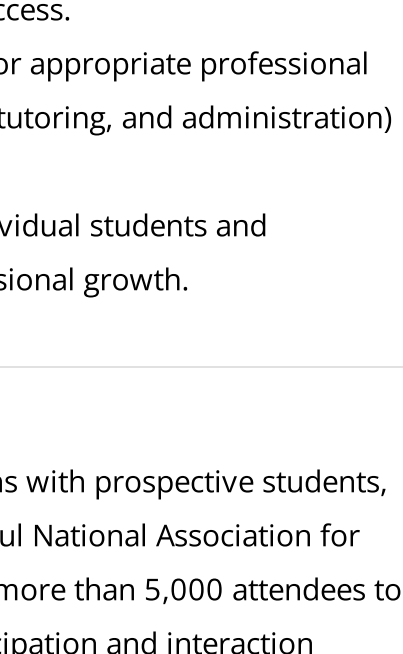
[Place an Order](#)

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments



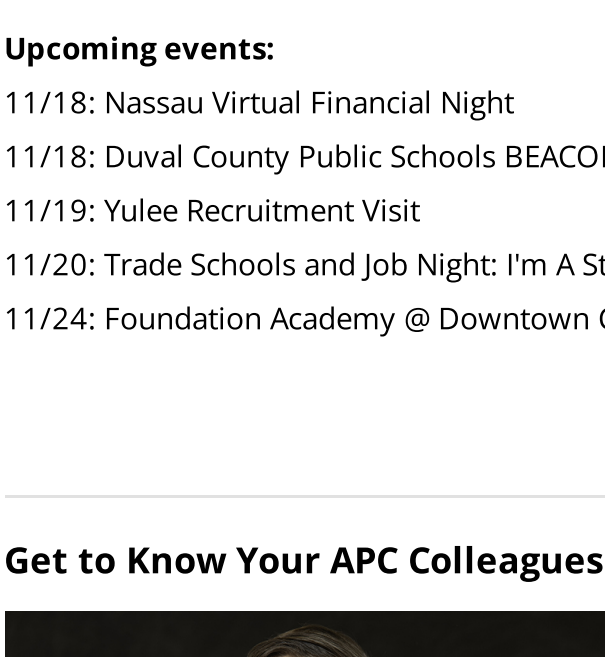
Congratulations to Dr. Milt Russos! He received the Helen Lane Founders Award during the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's 48th Annual Arts Awards. This recognition honors individuals dedicated to ensuring that arts and culture are woven into the fabric of everyday life in the community.

FSCJ's Marketing and Communications office was recognized with top awards through the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations (NCMPR). The NCMPR Medallion Awards are the premier regional competition recognizing outstanding marcom and PR achievements at community and technical colleges within NCMPR's seven districts. These prestigious awards exclusively honor the innovative work of two-year institutions across all media, celebrating the creativity and dedication of marketing and communications professionals.



FSCJ's awards are listed below:

- Gold-Interior Signage/Display for the Gym Lobby Redesign
- Gold-Television Advertising Series for "Become Irreplaceable" TV ads
- Silver-Digital Ad Series for "Become Irreplaceable" Digital Ads



Congratulations to Director of Academic Support Dr. Youlanda Henry! She received the Florida Association for Student Success (FASS) Outstanding Educator Award, honoring demonstrated excellence in the following areas:

- Work that exemplifies the philosophy of service and support for student success.
- Excellence in teaching or appropriate professional skills (e.g., counseling, tutoring, and administration) with students.
- Responsiveness to individual students and commitment to professional growth.

Recruitment Update

The Student Recruitment Office saw significant engagement and connections with prospective students, driven by new and ongoing recruitment events. Following a highly successful National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) fair in September, which attracted more than 5,000 attendees to the Prime Osborn Convention Center, the office achieved remarkable participation and interaction numbers for the month.

Upcoming events:

11/18: Nassau Virtual Financial Night
11/18: Duval County Public Schools BEACON Training
11/19: Yulee Recruitment Visit
11/20: Trade Schools and Job Night: I'm A Star Foundation
11/24: Foundation Academy @ Downtown Campus

Engagement By the Numbers:

Events: 81
Prospective Student Engagement: 1,654
Tours: 12
Attendees: 20

[Read More](#)

Get to Know Your APC Colleagues: Clay Pruitt



November's Administrative & Professional Collaborative (APC) spotlight shines on FSCJ Foundation Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement Clay Pruitt. In this role, AVP Pruitt helps oversee a dynamic team dedicated to advancing College and Foundation initiatives that impact the lives of FSCJ students. Clay provides strategic leadership in fundraising, donor engagement and resource development to support scholarships, academic programs and capital priorities across the College.

His background includes leadership roles at Samford University, where he helped secure record-breaking philanthropic support, and with the Boy Scouts of America, where he directed large-scale fundraising and volunteer engagement efforts all throughout the Southeast.

Clay is married to Allene Arnold and holds a Master of Business Administration from Samford University and a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from the University of Alabama. He is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) and an Eagle Scout.

[Read More](#)

Get to Know Your CEC Colleagues: Michael Hines



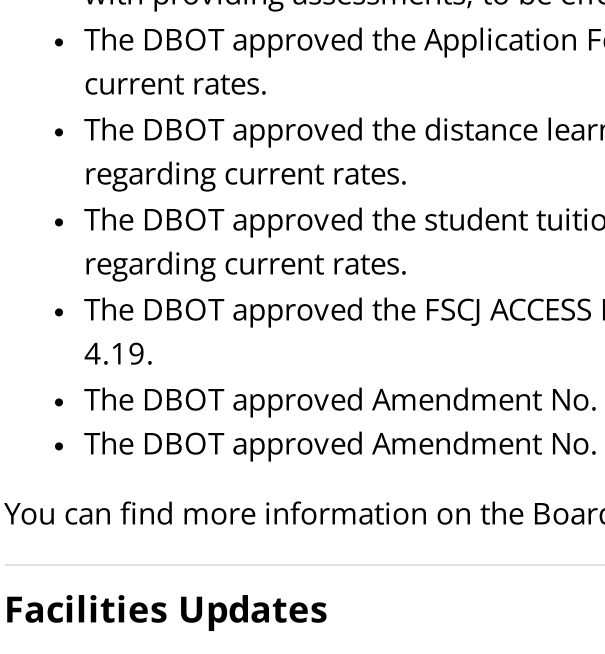
November's Career Employees' Council (CEC) spotlight features Campus Operations Coordinator Michael Hines, who has been with FSCJ since April 2023. Michael coordinates rental agreements and plans events, collaborates on facilities projects, and develops and monitors departmental budgets. He also manages the annual inventory process, oversees records management, and serves as the department's events coordinator for workshops, meetings and trainings, among other responsibilities.

His role allows him to collaborate with people across campus and throughout Jacksonville, a part of the job he finds especially rewarding. "Although much of my work is behind the scenes, I take pride in knowing it makes a positive difference in our campus community and beyond," he shares.

An FSCJ and UNF alumnus, Michael earned his Associate in Arts degree from FSCJ in 2007 before completing a Bachelor's in Health Science with a focus on Public and Community Health at UNF. He worked at UNF in the Department of Recreation and Wellness for 14 years before earning a Master in Higher Education Administration in 2021, which paved the way for his current role at FSCJ.

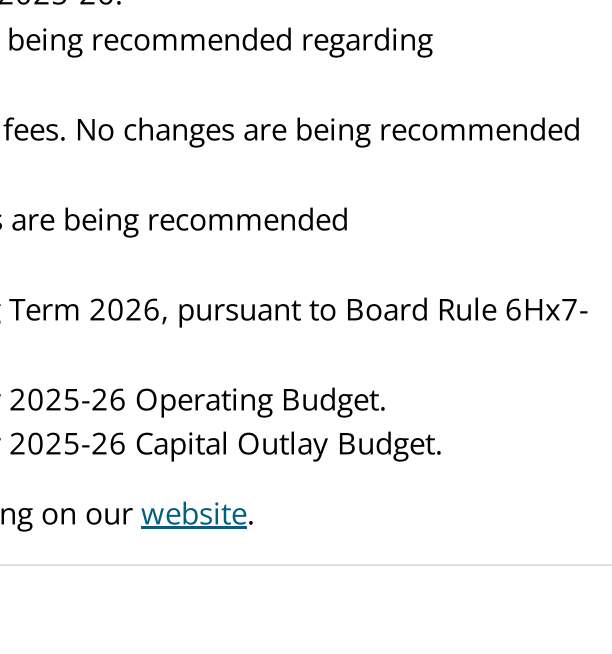
[Read More](#)

FSCJ In Action



Student Life hosted a Veterans Day Appreciation event on November 10 at Kent Campus to honor veterans and active-duty military. Attendees had the opportunity to hear from guest speakers, including Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Service Officer Glen Newbins, who served as the keynote speaker. Additionally, there were multiple resource tables for students to connect with organizations that support veterans and their families.

The Legal Studies Association (LSA) held their October meeting and welcomed Deputy General Counsel Regina Ross as the guest speaker.



Board Highlights

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

- The DBOT authorized the College Administration to negotiate and enter into a contract for purchase of property located at Cecil Center North, Site 8.
- The DBOT approved changes to the current testing fees to ensure partial recovery of costs associated with providing assessments, to be effective Spring Term 2025-26.
- The DBOT approved the Application Fee. No changes are being recommended regarding current rates.
- The DBOT approved the distance learning and transcript fees. No changes are being recommended regarding current rates.
- The DBOT approved the student tuition fees. No changes are being recommended regarding current rates.
- The DBOT approved the FSCJ ACCESS Program for Spring Term 2026, pursuant to Board Rule 6Hx7-4.19.
- The DBOT approved Amendment No. 2 to the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operating Budget.
- The DBOT approved Amendment No. 1 to the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Capital Outlay Budget.

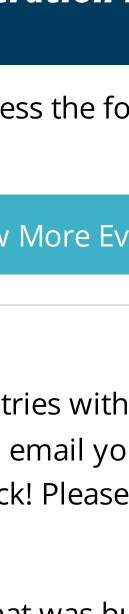
You can find more information on the Board of Trustees meeting on our [website](#).

Facilities Updates

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

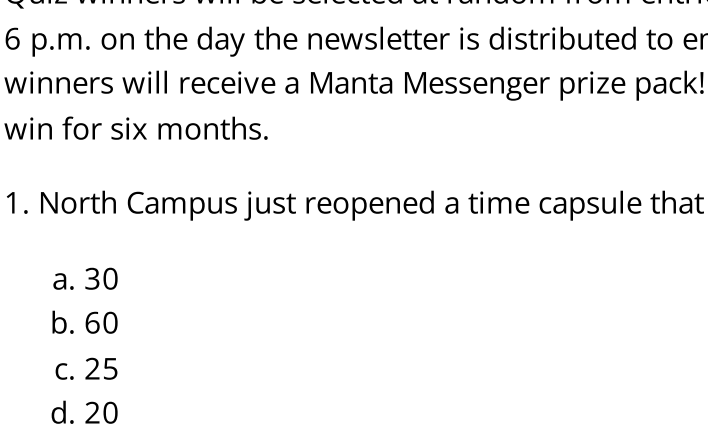
Recently completed	Downtown Campus:	In planning
- Nassau Center - Maintenance Vehicle/Equipment Storage Building - North Campus - Classroom Chairs/Stools	- Elevator Modernization - ADA Signage - Fire Alarm System Replacement - Parking Lot Lighting	- Cecil Center: - Driving Track Lighting - Deerwood Center: - Parking Garage Joint Repair - Repurpose Bookstore Space - Downtown Campus: - Warehouse Building - VERC Renovation - Jr. Achievement Building and Career Job Placement Center Expansion - ATC Boiler Replacement - Kent Campus: - Repurpose Bookstore Space - South Campus: - Wilson Center Architect Assessment - Security Renovation
In progress	Kent Campus:	
Ongoing Collegewide: - Door Access Control Upgrades - Elevator Door Lock Monitoring Systems - Emergency Responders Radio Communications System - Fire Alarm Replacement - Scan/Digitize Facilities Plans - Science Lab & Classroom Renovations - Wayfinding, Monument Signs - Memorial Benches/Legacy Walk - Energy Initiatives - Classroom USA Flag Replacement	- Barbershop Renovation - Auditorium Seating - Art Lab Furniture	
Cecil Center: Chiller Replacement, Bldg A	Nassau Center: - Fire Alarm Replacement North Campus: - Student Services Renovation - Allied Health Program Renovation - Signage - Boiler Replacement - Athletics Renovation - Tower Stairwell Paint South Campus: - Door Access Control Upgrades - Elevator Modernization - Lighting Controls Upgrade - Fire Alarm System Replacement - Men's Locker Room Renovation - Gymnasium Bleachers	
Deerwood Center: - Conference Center Renovation - Stairs, Curtainwall and Balcony Repair		

Upcoming Events

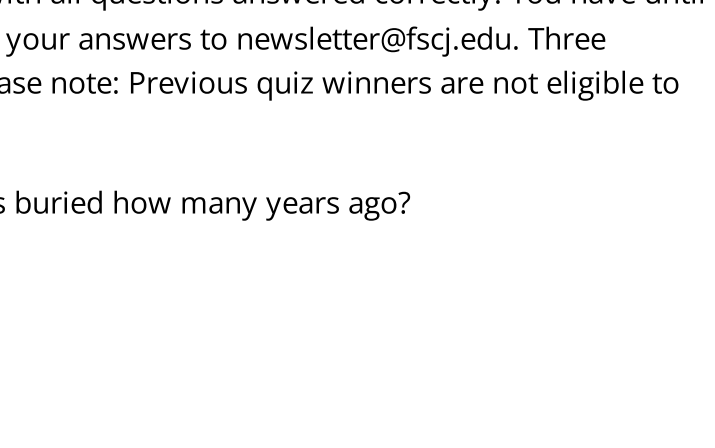


PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY
UPFLON ETS CHAPTER

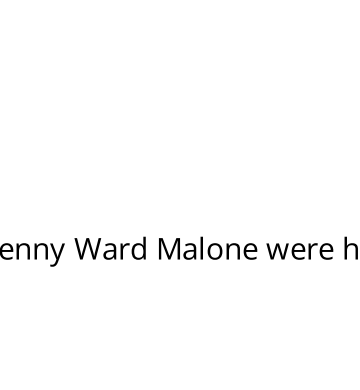
INDUCTION CEREMONY
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2025 • 6-7:30 P.M.
FSCJ KENT CAMPUS, AUDITORIUM, F-128



10TH ANNUAL
FSCJ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY
10 Years of Growth and Moving Forward
Friday, January 9, 2026



Next Call:
November 19, 2 p.m.
Call notes available at [myFSCJ OnPoint Quick Link](#)



Stay a Manta Ray!

Spring 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.

- North Campus just reopened a time capsule that was buried how many years ago?
 - 30
 - 60
 - 25
 - 20
- Fill in the blank. The Aspen Institute recently named FSCJ as one of the ____ institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
 - 150
 - 200
 - 40
 - 500
- Susan Ingram Rhodes and Jenny Ward Malone were honored during the Hall of Fame announcement as part of what team?
 - Volleyball
 - Cross Country
 - Basketball
 - Softball
- Dr. Youlanda Henry received the FASS Outstanding Educator Award. What does FASS stand for?
 - Florida Association for Student Success
 - Florida Association for Successful Students
 - Florida Arts and Sciences Society
 - Florida Achievement and Success Society
- Which of the following is not an awards category for the Celebration of Student Success?
 - Academic Achievement
 - Outstanding Student Worker
 - Outstanding Student Leadership
 - Outstanding Involvement