



# Connect Collaborate Innovate

A Newsletter From The Provost's Office

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## Collaboration-FSW's Superpower

I recently had an opportunity to work on a major grant application for the US Department of Labor. Targeted at strengthening community and state colleges through collaboration, preparing the application demonstrated the many strengths of our college.

Program components included lengthy sections on evidence-based design and how we would approach enhancing our current approaches to workforce development internally and externally. As result of being new to the college and the community, developing the different sections relating to our internal operations and our external constituencies was a challenge. However, I had the good fortune to partner with both internal and external team members who helped bring the application forward.

It was gratifying to work with multiple organizations within FSW. Our Institutional Research team provided great assistance as did our Finance department, Corporate Training and External Affairs leadership. Faculty and staff from the School of Education, Health Professions and Business and Technology were key partners. Working together, assembling the proposal was an exciting opportunity to consult, collaborate and propose a future focused workforce education concept.

The ACCESS (Accelerating Career Competencies Empowering Student Success), the grant emphasized the importance of collaborative relationships in every aspect of the workforce education continuum.

Key features of the proposal included enhancing articulation agreements with area technical colleges, embracing guided career pathways, and developing enhanced industry partnerships, our capacity for collaboration was a critically important factor for the proposal. The role of higher education linked to workforce development has never been more important.

Without the culture of collaboration at Florida Southwestern State College, it would, not have been possible to submit a quality proposal.

There is a unique collaborative spirit here that makes significant tasks achievable and greatly improves the final

product.

We anticipate having a decision on the grant sometime in January. While I am confident in our proposal, and anticipate a successful outcome, as a national program and our first time submitting, we can anticipate fierce competition.

Regardless of the funding decision, the relationships that were refreshed, connections forged, and partnerships explored, all in the spirit of collaboration, can continue to be leveraged to the benefit of our students and the community.

Without this key cultural competency both within our institution and in the community, workforce programming is much more difficult to develop, implement and maintain. The ability to work together toward a common goal and purpose allows us to rally in multiple



ways on behalf of the students, employers and communities we serve.

The nature of workforce education is especially reliant on collaboration and the ability to create meaningful connections internally and externally.

I have been continually impressed with the numerous innovative connections we have with the community and the capacity of our various teams to build upon these relationships as we rapidly adjusted our programming as a result of the Covid 19

pandemic.

For this issue of the newsletter, I would like to share a variety of successes from our School of Health Professions that epitomize the very best in workforce education and critical nature of collaboration. The results that are achieved are clearly result of our FSW superpower – Collaboration.

It is difficult to select which of the collaborative relationships within our School of Health Professions to highlight. However, I have enclosed a few of the many examples of success in this area.

One area that many of our college team members may not be aware of is the success in **Continuing Education for Healthcare**. For example, one of the leading healthcare continuing education programs is the FSW/Lee Health American Heart Association (AHA) program.

As a result of the pandemic shutdown in early March 2020, the prolonged closure caused a backlog of thousands of expired frontline healthcare workers certifications. Non-expired AHA cards are mandatory for nearly every discipline in healthcare.

An example of collaborative thinking and adaptive programming resulted in the creation of an alternate COVID AHA re

AHA team had to adapt classroom space, equipment, course content, and quickly develop a COVID-19 safety mindset. The plan successfully renewed over 1700 expired AHA frontline healthcare heroes.

Another area of workforce education that requires a great deal of collaboration is our **Dental Hygiene Program**. Graduates of this nationally accredited program have had a 100% pass rate on the national board dental hygiene examination for the past 24 years.

The newly renovated Dental Hygiene Clinic is located on the Lee Campus of Florida SouthWestern State College and students provide preventative dental hygiene care to over 3,000 patients per year from our surrounding communities.

This program has achieved a 100% pass rate on the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination for 25-consecutive years. Faculty and staff have developed unique relationships in providing community dental services and are also deeply networked within the community.

A particularly noteworthy success were services provided to 68 children as a part

of the Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) program at FSW. Children received free cleanings, exams and sealants by the Class of 2020 and 2021. A collaborative venture with Nursing and EMS students and local dentists, this program demonstrated a unique example of FSW's commitment to service in the community.



Over the summer, you may have seen **EMS** students and faculty practicing throughout the campus as a means of learning hands on skills critical to the profession.

Again, due to the pandemic, in July of 2020, four ambulances provided hands-on training during 12 hour days and heavily relied on the simulated emergency room in the nursing building to complete the EMT program.

Nationally accredited since 1988, FSW's EMS programs provide emergency care professionals with several career options at various levels including certificates in EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter and associate degrees in EMS and Fire Science, and baccalaureate degrees in Supervision/Management and Public Safety Administration.

The program was also successful in creating adaptive collaborations to allow students to complete their education and continue toward graduation.

By collaborating with the Nursing department as well as the Respiratory and CVT programs throughout the simulations and with connections that already exist within the community and accrediting organizations, these adaptive changes would not have been possible.

As one of the most sought-after programs in our college, FSW's **AS and BSN in Nursing** continues to expand its reach in the community to the benefit of our students. The relationship with key area healthcare providers multiple other organizations have equipped this



program for continued growth and expanded effectiveness.

Significant adaptations were required over the summer and beyond to help respond to limitations for clinical experiences at area healthcare providers. As these opportunities slowly reopen, the value of our long-term investments in these organizations will continue to benefit our students.

One of the many distinguishing qualities of our programs include the ability to create long-term and lasting relationships with area healthcare providers. These relationships are not only community-based but represent national leadership. An example of this success is the recent acceptance of the program's progress toward acceptance in Sigma Theta Tau International, the National Nursing Honor Society.

Demonstrating community leadership and scholarly research, FSW's Social and Human Services Program held their first annual conference on the topic of "Substance Exposed Newborns and Children."

Also of Note, During the 2019-2020 academic year, FSW Social and Human Services residents provided more than 2,235 hours of unpaid service to community agencies in Southwest Florida.



While these examples do not fully highlight all of the fine programming taking place in our School of Health Professions, examples included demonstrate collaboration has one of our key success factors

The ability to work together toward a common purpose is essential to workforce education. This key cultural attribute exists in abundance at FSW.

As one of our many "superpowers" in bringing high-quality education to Southwest Florida, we are well positioned for the future. In upcoming issues of the newsletter, I intend to share other examples of how workforce education is evolving how we can continue to grow and benefit our students and the community.

## Collaboration is the New Competition

John Keegan



Dr. Thomas Norman recently joined Florida Southwestern State College as the Vice Provost for Workforce Programs. Most recently, he was Dean of University Extended Education at Minnesota State University. He has a doctorate in Educational Policy Administration from the University of Minnesota with an emphasis on academic and industry partnerships. Now that he is living in Florida, he would love to try deep sea fishing.

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