The most recent past newsletter I wrote to FSW was at the close of the spring semester, and it was entitled, "Here Comes the Sun." It was dated May 5, 2021 and it focused on the ways we were beginning to hold on-campus and/or flexible participation events as the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine was becoming more widespread and the positive cases in our area were decreasing. At that point, we were all ready to take a break for the summer after a trying year, with the hope that fall would find us with additional opportunities to connect on campus. Unlike the previous summer, I was able to take a "real" vacation with my family, as well as to take some time to engage in the ethnographic research that keeps me
grounded in my discipline. I think we all in our own way were breathing a sigh of relief in June and early July.

Enter the Delta variant, along with a surge of cases across the globe, especially in areas where vaccination rates are low. We have all been watching the news reports of the rising positivity rates, and the stress on our hospital systems. Our plans for celebratory activities to open the fall semester were replaced with meetings to discuss policy and all of the information coming from the CDC, the Governor’s Office, the Florida Department of Education, and the Florida College System. We pivoted to begin our close review of the global situation on a daily basis and began revising policies and practices accordingly. I have no doubt that everyone at FSW is concerned with the opening of the fall semester. I also have no doubt that there are polarized opinions on how we should respond as a College, and that not everyone is happy with how we are proceeding. Even within the President’s Cabinet there are differing opinions; we make our cases to one another through civil discourse, and sometimes the final decisions match our own, and sometimes they do not. Regardless of the ultimate decisions, we are all on board to do our best to support continuity of academics, student service, and operations through the safest means possible.

The weight of these daily decisions has left me feeling disillusioned and weary. After the heroic efforts of many around the globe, we still find ourselves in a precarious situation. Here at this College, after tireless efforts to continue our mission despite the challenges of the global pandemic, I imagined a triumphant return this fall, celebrations, and the opportunity to thank everyone for their collaborative efforts. I also imagined the fall semester to be an opportunity for FSW to move away from emergency operations, and into the next chapter, where we could use what we learned from the past year to reimagine the achievement of our mission.
These last few weeks have been the most difficult, as it became more and more apparent that we are still living in an emergency situation. I have attempted to proceed forward in my work, aware that I was keeping my emotions bottled up. The inspiration that carried me through the past year seemed to escape me, and the days seemed very much like going through the motions. And then suddenly, as all great gifts from the universe seem to arrive, I received an email from a dear FSW colleague. She just wanted to share that she was thinking about me and about the challenges of leadership.

(who recently received his pilot’s license) as he was logging some flight hours, and they happened to fly over the campus. She had snapped a few photos, and, as stated in the message, she thought I might like one. She ended the note by saying “Keeping the FSW family in my thoughts.”

The combination of the message she wrote and the photo she included as a gift opened my emotional floodgates and I allowed myself to weep. In that moment, I was no longer a single person, alone in an

A view from above the Thomas Edison (Lee County) Campus.
Photo by Dr. Rona Axelrod, during a flight piloted by her husband, Barry.
office filled with the fear, stress, and self-doubt. I reminded that I was part of a family; the FSW family, who looked the pandemic in the eye in 2020 and early 2021 and said, “you will not stop us.” The “view from above” in the photo reminded me of the bigger picture. We are all working so hard in our individual roles, but we are part of something much grander. We are members of Florida SouthWestern State College, with a mission we subscribe to, and with a shared purpose. And our college is just such one institution that is part of a larger network of higher education institutions, transforming lives across the globe, and preparing the next generation of artists, engineers, composers, educators, computer programmers and web designers, historians, scientists, mathematicians, health care workers, politicians, business leaders, and problem solvers. We are not alone in our efforts. When you take in the “view from above” you realize the triumph of the human spirit and that we are all part of something greater than ourselves.

And from that perspective (and after a good long cry) you find inspiration, and a will to fight on.

So for this issue of Connect Collaborate Innovate, after several discarded potential themes, I am inspired to share just a few of the many initiatives that I support and admire in my view from above.

**FSW’s QEP 2022**

As part of our reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), FSW has developed a Quality
Enhancement Plan (QEP) that emerged from our ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. Our QEP, entitled *CREATIVE Connections: Breaking Barriers Across Disciplines* affirms our commitment to student achievement. The plan was developed with broad based involvement over a period of two years. Dr. Rebecca Harris, a long-term leader in this effort, was named QEP Director and officially began her administrative role in July. Dr. Angus Cameron was named QEP Lead Faculty and begins his role this fall.

The heart of the plan, developed under the leadership of Dr. Harris and Dr. Cameron, is the initiation of a A.A. capstone course, entitled *IDS 2981: CREATIVE Capstone* and will...

- focus on transdisciplinary communication and research for our second-year students.
- address a real-world problem through contextually appropriate research, mixed methods, materials, and subject matter.
- bridge the divide between traditional academic disciplines that can obscure useful solutions to real-world problems, as well as synthesize the work produced by the general education program at FSW.

The CREATIVE Capstone program at FSW will provide students with a structured opportunity to reflect on their general education coursework, apply their learning to new contexts,
and consider how flexibility and transdisciplinary approaches to most problems are required for the future. The program goals and student learning outcomes of the course can be realized through various transdisciplinary themes to be proposed by faculty from all College programs. A key component of the course will also focus on information literacy. The faculty librarians have been working on an embedded librarian program designed to assign a librarian to a specific course for more hands-on, semester long information literacy instruction, supporting the curriculum of the course in which they are embedded. In AY 21-22, Jane Charles and Arenthia Herren will pilot embedded librarians in ENC 1101 courses. The successes will help inform a similar model applied in IDS 2981 with the embedded faculty librarian serving as the main point of contact for students to receive research assistance.

In addition to finalizing the QEP over the summer, Dr. Harris and Dr. Cameron have provided updates to participants in the TLC Summer Institutes. Dr. Harris has also led presentations and Q&A sessions with leaders in Student Affairs and with FSW’s Student Government Association. Dr. Harris and Cameron also presented a draft of the QEP to Dr. Mary Kirk, SACSCOC Vice President during the College’s SACSCOC Advisory visit on June 30. Based on Dr. Kirk’s feedback, final revisions were made to the QEP which will be submitted to the On-site Committee this week, and presented to them for feedback during their visit, October 11-14.

Dr. Harris has established a number of subcommittees to operationalize the QEP. The QEP Faculty Selection and Professional Development Subcommittee has been working this summer to
develop the faculty application for the professional development program, which comes with one reassigned course. They have also begun work on developing the training. The faculty PD facilitators and leaders of the subcommittee are Katie O’Connor and Dr. Matt Vivyan; membership includes Dr. Gus Cameron, Dr. Brandon Jett, Dr. Monica Krupinski, and Anthony Valenti. The Co-Curricular Activities and Student Support subcommittee has also started doing some great work identifying co-curricular activities at the college that support the QEP, as well as developing ideas for new ones. The faculty leads are Dr. Anne Angstrom and Dr. April Ring, with committee members Gaby Cordon, Catherine Gorman, Michael Messina, Dr. Mary Ellen Schultz, Dr. Sandra Seifert, Dr. Sholondo Campbell, and Linda Johnsen. Finally, as part of the Marketing Subcommittee Dr. Harris, Dr. Cameron, and Dr. Brian Page have been working with the members of FSW’s Marketing and Media team, including Greg Turchetta and Terrace Myles, to produce marketing and “swag” for Convocation and Welcome Week, in addition to an informative video about the QEP which will air this week. Stay tuned for ways to engage with the QEP, and visit www.fsw.edu/qep for updates.

Elevate Elearning

This summer a team of 30 talented FSW faculty, staff and students joined forces under the leadership of Dr. Rozalind Jester, AVP, Online Learning to explore the impacts of COVID-19 on online students and reimagine how FSW can
enhance student access, support and achievement of learning objectives in online courses. Since May, the Elevate ELearning task force has:

- Initiated a research study to examine how COVID-19 impacted online students and faculty, and specifically to identify their perceived barriers to success in online teaching and learning.
- Completed a full review of the FSW Online resources available on our website and outlined a plan to create a richer web presence with easy access to key support resources for future, new and current students, and for faculty.

The Elevate ELearning task force engages with the broader FSW Online community as we work towards implementing these improvements over AY 2021-2022. Thanks to Dr. Jester and the full-time and adjunct faculty as well as staff involved in this effort: Dr. Julia Kroeker, Heather Olson, Dr. Sara Dustin, Alisa Callahan, Terry Zamor, Gayle Dean, Alessandro Cesarano, Ivana Ilic, Jamie Zlatkin, Jane Charles, Daniel Marulanda, Arenthia Herren, Sara Stelfox, Brian O'Reilly, Dr. Jennifer Patterson, Dr. Michael Sauer, Dr. Christy...
to focus the efforts of all college programs and activities towards providing educational access to our region and keeping students on path from enrollment to degree and credential attainment.

This past year’s efforts were guided by the Provost’s Office with the following objectives:

- Increase persistence and completion rates.
- Improve achievement of student academic and career goals as demonstrated through credential acquisition.
- Enhance processes and procedures that can be assessed, improved and replicated by the College.
- Develop cross-departmental teams to enhance a sense of community responsibility for the student experience.

Dedicate to Graduate (D2G)

In alignment with FSW’s Strategic Directions, the mission of Dedicate to Graduate (D2G) is

Smith, Jillian Patch, Steven Bianco, Dr. Janelle Christensen, Helena Kashleva, Deborah Howard, Kailee Mateika, and Nathan Lewis. Also thanks to student participants: Mia Aragon, Christofer Beingolea, Allison Hoffman, Alexis Isherwork, Emmericka Jean, and Mayra Moreno.

fsw.edu/graduate
The **D2G Enrollment Plan Development Committee** is charged with developing a comprehensive multi-year enrollment plan that includes all programs and campuses. I co-led this team with Dr. Michele Yovanovich, and the committee included Dr. Joe Van Gaalen, Toby Discenza, Dr. Martin McClinton, Dr. Roz Jester, Dr. Tom Norman, and Jason Dudley. The group spent the past year examining our FSW Strategic Plan; institutional data on enrollment, retention, and completion; workforce trends; campus space plans; and technology infrastructure to create a five-year enrollment plan that focuses on maintaining and growing programs at all sites. This concerted effort has led to setting five-year targets for additional degree offerings, personnel needs, and updates to facilities on all campuses to showcase high impact programs.

The **D2G Enrollment Improvement Process Committee** is charged with assessing and developing improved enrollment processes designed to enhance the student experience and ensure students’ educational goals are achieved. The committee is led by Dr. Christy Gilfert, and Keith Martin included Dr. Gina Doeble, Brenda Knight, Andrae Jones, Denise Swafford, Jason Dudley, Amber Redfern, Kathleen Porter, Catherine Gorman, Amber McCown, Director, Dr. Wendy Chase, Kailee Mateika, Director, and Dr. Martin Tawil.

Innovations from the past year include a new online new student orientation, a new group advising workshop model, raising awareness of guided pathways, use of QLess, automation of several testing processes, welcome aboard in-person orientation experience, advising student questionnaire, recommendations for Early Alert improvements, and a new Net Price Calculator.
The **D2G Retention and Persistence Committee** is charged with assessing and developing activities and sustainable practices designed to enhance persistence towards timely program completion and was led by Whitney Rhyne, Director, Strategic Initiatives. The committee includes Andrae Jones, Associate Director, Angie Snyder, Dr. April Ring, Dr. Christy Gilfert, Dr. Deborah Teed, Dr. George Harvey, Helen Bend, Dr. Joseph van Gaalen, Keith Martin, Kim Turano, Linda Johnson, Monica Moore, Sabine Eggleston, Dr. Thomas Rath, and Vanessa Mayse. The committee administered a student engagement survey that, along with other committee work, led to proactive outreach to students by various offices at the college. The team proactively engaged in 3,062 outbound communications. 813 of the communications were from our trigger questions related to academic preparedness, motivation, and wellness. 2249 of the communications provided information about specific FSW departments/services as requested by the student.

The **D2G Culture and Communication Committee** is charged with increasing connection, collaboration and innovation through improved communication and culture initiatives. The committee is led Susan Bronstein, and Greg Turchetta and includes Arenthia Herren, Dr. April Fleming, Adam Millis, Jackie Beard, Andrew Pierre, Mat Mason, Steve Bianco, Jessica Russell, Andy Hahn, and Dr. Sholondo Campbell. Look forward to the implementation of some of this group’s ideas to include an “Innovation Incubator,” increases in “Rewards and Recognition,” updates to the performance evaluation practices, and more student and employee-friendly features in the Portal, Web, and staff directory. Also, the team is partnering with the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (I.D.E.A) committee to ensure a focus on recruiting for diverse candidates in searches for positions at the director level and above.
International Education

In May and June of 2021, The Center for International Education (CIE) at FSW in partnership with Lorenzo de’ Medici (LdM) successfully administered a one-month study abroad program in Florence, Italy. Despite the ongoing pandemic and the challenges that traveling abroad presents at this time, 14 students and two faculty members were able to participate in the summer program after a year of closed borders and lockdowns. Our students enrolled in one FSW course (PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy with Dr. Russell Swanson or THE 1000: Theater Appreciation with Professor Stuart Brown) as well as one course offered by our partner institution, LdM.

Although study abroad looked a little different than in years past, our participating students and faculty were able to immerse themselves in the Florentine culture and participate in activities and excursions including touring the Duomo, attending lectures on renaissance art, and traveling to the ancient outdoor amphitheater in Fiesole (all while wearing masks, and practicing social distancing). The overall experience was transformative for each participant not only for the opportunity to live and learn in a new environment, but to also understand how a different country responded to a global health crisis. FSW has also continued to engage in cross-institutional activities through partnerships with Florida International University’s Kimberly Green Latin America and Caribbean Center, who continues to fund course development and research opportunities for FSW faculty and staff, with the Universidad Politécnica de Nicaragua (UPOLI) with whom we recently submitted a collaborative grant for cross-institutional program development, and faculty professional development.
Professional Development

Summer Institutes

Under the leadership of Director Gloria Kitchen, the 2021 Summer Faculty Institutes embraced the theme Reimagine ... Making Learning Better! Institutes were strategically designed to highlight faculty success, identify new trends and issues, and Reimagine our limitless possibilities as educators in higher education. Summer Institutes I & II combined presented of forty (40) sessions taught by twenty-three (23) of our esteemed FSW faculty members. The institutes included keynote addresses from Dr. Catherine “Cate” Denial, Bright Distinguished Professor of History at Knox College and Dr. Tazin Daniels, Assistant Director for the Center on Research and Teaching at Michigan State University.

Successful completion of the Summer Institutes involved FSW faculty submitting a final capstone project displaying practical applications of skillsets learned from institutes sessions and also attended and participate in Faculty Showcase.

Many thanks to the Summer Institute faculty facilitators: Dr. Anne Angstrom, Dr. Caroline Seefchak, Dr. Scott Ortolano, Dr. April Ring, Dr. Peggy Romeo, Dr. Marcela Trevino, Dr. Kelly Roy, Dr. Amy Trogan, Dr. Camille Drake-Brassfield, Kerri Keough Lampos, Dr. Monica Krupinski, Dr. Sheila Seelau, Daniel Marulanda, Leonard Owens, Arenthia Herren, Dr. Timothy Bishop, Dr. Richard Hodges, Jane Charles, and Katharine O’Connor.
Adjunct Institute

This year’s Adjunct Institute was entitled “Awareness, Community, and Inclusion” and included a Keynote address from Adrienne Davis, who is North Carolina’s State University’s Director of Bias Impact Response. Thanks to Director Gloria Kitchen for putting together an outstanding program, and thanks to all the facilitators, Dr. Jerry Connolly, Dr. Roz Jester, Steven Bianco, Dr. Janelle Christensen, Daniel Marulanda, Dr. Anne Angstrom, Dr. Vera Verga, Dr. Camille Drake-Brassfield, Dr. Monica Krupinski, Brian O’Reilly, Dr. Rebecca Harris, Dr. Angus Cameron, Brian O’Reilly, Dr. Rebecca Harris, Dr. Angus Cameron, Katharine O’Connor, Dr. Mary Ellen Schultz, and Dr. Scott Ortolano. Also thanks to Dr. Sonji Nichols and Sharon Hill for sharing their faculty showcase projects as exemplars of best practice in teaching and learning.

New Faculty Seminar

Dr. Monica Krupinski led the kick-off to a year long professional development experience for faculty new to FSW. Last week, new faculty participated in workshops and activities on campus and virtually in preparation for the fall semester. In addition, they had opportunities to meet with administrators, faculty chairs, and other faculty within their discipline and across programs. I was delighted to meet with the new faculty in workshops and at a luncheon at the end of the week. Thanks to Dr. Krupinski and all of the facilitators, Katie O’Connor, Jade Dellinger, Susan Bronstein, Jana Sabo, Adam Millis, Heather Olsen, Dr. Roz Jester,
The FSW’s Parent Support Group is a shared, member-administered resource available through Microsoft Teams. Members are invited to discuss the ups and downs of life as an academic parent. Contact Dr. Ortolano for additional information about either of these professional development opportunities.

**Academic and Career Pathways**

In 2019 FSW applied for and was accepted into the first cohort of the Florida Pathways Institute (FPI). Our acceptance was based on a demonstrated dedication to the
implementation of structured guided pathways at scale and a commitment to advance serious work on the design and implementation of guided pathways. Since then, the Provost’s Office has established a Core Pathways team that includes Dr. Christy Gilfert, Dr. Michele Yovanovich, Dr. Martin McClinton, Dr. Deborah Teed, Dr. Brian Page, Dr. Thomas Norman; Dr. Thomas Rath, Amanda Lehrian, Gail Murphy; Gloria Kitchen; Dr. Sholondo Campbell; Dr. Amanda Sterk; Dr. Amy Trogan; Andrae Jones; Brenda Knight; Ivana Ilic; Dr. Joseph Van Gaalen; Keith Martin; Dr. Martin McClinton, Dr. Martin Tawil Dana S. Roes; Donald Ransford; Dr. Peggy Romeo and Whitney Rhyne. This team has met regularly for two years as we have continued to updated and add Academic and Career Pathways to our inventory, and engaged in cross-divisional work in Academic and Student Affairs to educate all stakeholders in Academic and Career Pathways and help students benefit from identifying their own pathways.

Recent activities include Academic and Career Pathways sessions this summer at “Welcome Aboard” session at all campuses. Thanks to all the faculty, administrators and staff that facilitated Academic and Career Pathways sessions: Dr. Deborah Teed, Dr. Brian Page, Jennifer Baker, Dr. Sholondo Campbell, Dr. April Fleming, Shimul Chowdhury, Dr. Ryan Wurst, Terri Housley, Dr. Terrence Hays, Sarah Gingrich, Cassie Steves, Ivana Ilic, Al Nault, Caroline Siefert, Jessica Barnett, Chris Renda, Dr. Angus Cameron, Bill Shuluk, Amanda Lehrian, Gail Murphy, Andy Hahn, Mayo Coates, Greg Anzalone, Dr. Tom Rath, Angie Snyder, Catherine Gorman, Michael Mears, Jackie Beard, Lauren Finn, Sargent Hyson, Officer Burch, and Officer Seitz.

FSW is sending a leadership team to the Florida Pathways Institute Convening is currently scheduled to be held in-person October 19-20, 2021. This will be an opportunity to work with other Florida College System institutions to share our successes and exchange best practices.
Reflections on the View from Above

While I am in no way less concerned about the global pandemic and the safety of our community, it is helpful to step back and reflect on the view above, to remember that even in the darkest days, we still persist in our mission to inspire learning; prepare a diverse population for creative and responsible participation in a global society; and serve as a leader for intellectual, economic, and cultural awareness in the community. In the following weeks you will read about additional initiatives in Academic and Student Affairs, Online Learning, and the offices composing Team AASPIRE in future editions of Connect Collaborate Innovate authored by Dr. Jester, Dr. Yovanovich, Dr. McClinton, Dr. Norman and Dr. van Gaalen. I wish you all the best as we begin the fall semester. I encourage you to find your inspiration and take the time to reach out to colleagues to let them know that you are thinking of them. A few inspirational words may help someone more than you know.

Eileen DeLuca holds Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Florida, a Master's of Arts degree in Applied Anthropology from the University of South Florida, a Master's of Science degree in Multicultural/Bilingual Education from the College of New Rochelle, and a Bachelor's degree in English Education from the University of South Florida. She has a long and complicated history with the institution we call Florida SouthWestern State College and now sits in an office in a building where she once took classes as a student at Edison Community College.

Reach out via email: Provost@fsw.edu