PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY 2026

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS AND PRESENTER INFORMATION

MORNING SESSIONS

8:30 – 9 AM | BREAKFAST | UC LOBBY

Sponsored by: AFC South Florida State College Chapter

9 – 9:10 AM | WELCOME | UC AUDITORIUM

Opening Remarks | President Hawkins

9:10 – 10:30 AM | UC AUDITORIUM

Keynote Address | Tim Weisheyer
"Every Moment Matters - Building Trust and Purpose in Teams"

10:30 – 10:40 AM | BREAK

10:40 – 11:30 AM | BREAKOUT SESSION 1 | 50-MINUTES

Choose from the following sessions:
Empowered to Educate: Balancing Passion, Purpose, and Wellness | G-102
Presenter: Candra Polk | Professor, Practical Nursing Education
Educators pour their passion into their work, but sustaining that energy requires intentional balance and support. This session explores the early signs of burnout and practical strategies for maintaining wellness in today's demanding educational environment.
Objectives:
- Identify early signs of burnout in themselves and develop at least one personal wellness strategy to enhance resilience as an educator
- Implement at least one faculty- or division-level strategy to promote a supportive, balanced, and healthy work environment

Target Audience: Faculty

Are You Smarter Than a Panther? | B-112
Presenters: Sofia Ochoa | College Recruiter and Tina Gottus | Director, Corporate and Community Education

This interactive session builds confidence in professional communication, leadership, and teamwork while strengthening knowledge of campus programs and services. Participants will practice the skills needed to represent the College with professionalism during tours, orientations, and special events.

Objectives:
- Build confidence in public speaking, collaboration, and problem-solving while modeling leadership traits
- Develop a strong understanding of programs, resources, and services so ambassadors can guide visitors effectively

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

The Power of We: Redefining Collaboration in Higher Education | G-101
Presenter: Dr. Melissa Kuehnle | Director, Institutional Communications

At a time when innovation depends on teamwork and shared purpose, collaboration is no longer optional—it's essential. This session explores findings from recent research on collaboration within Florida's two-year colleges, revealing how communication, trust, and organizational learning drive institutional success. Participants will examine practical ways to break down silos, strengthen cross-departmental partnerships, and cultivate a culture of collective leadership. Through interactive discussion and real-world examples, attendees will leave with strategies to enhance collaboration that support student success and institutional growth.

Objectives:
- Identify key barriers that prevent effective collaboration within higher ed
- Apply evidence-based strategies to promote teamwork, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving
- Evaluate how collaboration contributes to organizational effectiveness and enhancement

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

5G: Leadership Communication (2.1) | UC-109
**Presenter: Asena Mott | Dean, Off-Campus Instructional Sites**

Leadership Communication focuses on the skills leaders use every day: listening, clarity, and purposeful conversations. Participants learn how to communicate across generations, set clear expectations, and engage others in ways that improve productivity and shared success.

Objectives:
- Identify specific communication practices to improve clarity, engagement, and productivity
- Practice using cross-generational communication techniques

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

11:30 – 11:35 AM | TRANSITION
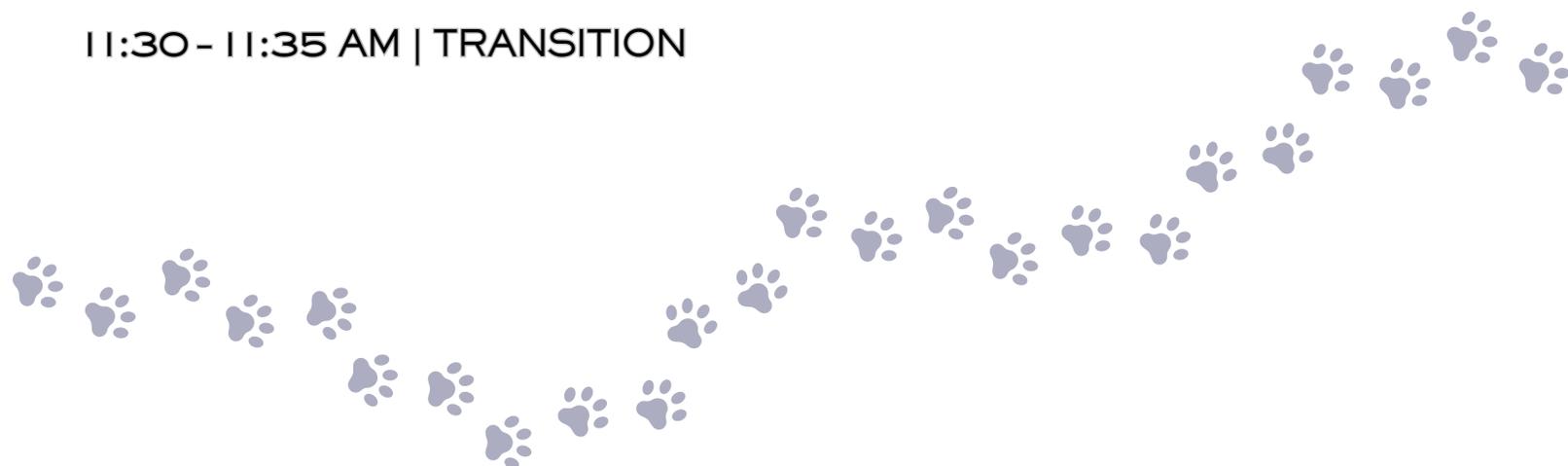
Choose from the following sessions:

The Five-Minute Connection: High-Impact Micro-Interventions | G-102
Presenter: Micaela Ford | Coordinator, OCIS, Hardee Campus

Student retention and belonging are fundamentally driven by frequent, positive interactions. This session focuses on turning everyday communication into powerful relationship-building opportunities. This quick session will equip all College employees with five high-impact, actionable "micro-interventions" (e.g., specific email templates, two-sentence reflection prompts, quick resource referrals) that build a stronger collegewide sense of connection and belonging for our students.

Objectives:
- List and articulate the purpose of the five "micro-interventions" presented, identifying how each directly contributes to student motivation and retention
- Commit to implementing at least one new communication strategy in their daily work within the next week (possibly develop a personal action plan or a SMART goal to go with it)
- Reflect on how consistent use of these micro-interventions by various departments contributes to a unified, collegewide culture of care and student success.

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Hiring Process – How Does it work? | G-101
Presenter: Don Kesterson | Director, Human Resources

This session provides a clear, end-to-end walkthrough of SFSC Procedure 5240 – Employee Recruitment and Selection. Participants will gain a practical understanding of how a position moves from initial request to employment offer, including key roles, timelines, and required steps. The session will demystify the hiring process by leading you to answer questions like "What happens when an applicant selection is made?", "When is an employment offer made?", and "What about the process for hiring Adjuncts?"

Objectives:
- Identify the key stages of the SFSC hiring process as outlined in Procedure 5240, from position initiation through employment offer
- Differentiate between the standard hiring process and the specific procedures used for hiring Adjunct faculty

Target Audience: Staff and Administrators

Regular and Substantive Interaction: Engaging Students for Success | H-110
Presenter: Carleigh Okwali | Director, Center for Innovative Teaching and
Mlisa Manning | Professor, Sociology and Student Learning Success Coordinator

This session explores the Department of Education's requirements for Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) and what they mean for faculty. We'll discuss how to demonstrate meaningful instructor-student engagement through your syllabus, communication plan, and course design. Learn how consistent interaction supports compliance, fosters student success, and reduces confusion and disengagement.)

Objectives:
- Identify the five ways instructors can regularly and substantively interact with their learners according to the Department of Education's guidance
- Develop a syllabus statement or course plan that clearly outlines the instructor's strategy for maintaining regular and substantive interaction with students

Target Audience: Faculty

Leading from Where You Are: Influence Without the Title | B-112
Presenter: June Weyrauch | Coordinator, Grants Development
You don't need a corner office or a fancy title to make an impact. Inspired by Clay Scroggins' "How to Lead When You're Not in Charge," this session explores how real leadership begins with attitude, influence, and initiative — not authority. Learn practical ways to lead up, lead across, and lead well right where you are. Whether you're coordinating projects, serving students, or supporting colleagues, you'll leave equipped to make things happen with confidence and purpose.
Objectives:
- Apply strategies to lead well within one's current role by focusing on influence, initiative, and attitude
- Connect individual daily tasks and team responsibilities to the broader College mission to enhance purpose and impact on student success

Target Audience: Faculty and Staff

NOON – 1 PM | LUNCH | PICK UP AT H BUILDING (CIT)

Sponsored by: D2L: Desire2Learn Brightspace

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

1 – 1:25 PM | BREAKOUT SESSION 3 | 25-MINUTE

Choose from the following sessions:

SPDs: I want to go to school | G-101
Presenter: Don Kesterson | Director, Human Resources
This session provides a concise overview of SFSC Procedures 5012 – Professional Development Funding for Education Coursework and 5021 – Employee Enrollment in Courses at SFSC. Participants will learn who is eligible for educational coursework funding, how to apply, and what funding, credit/contact hour, and grade limitations apply. Employee enrollment in SFSC courses and how it differs from externally funded coursework will also be discussed.
Objectives:
- Identify employee eligibility requirements for professional development funding under Procedure 5012
- Differentiate between externally funded coursework and employee enrollment in SFSC courses under Procedure 5021

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Brightspace Creator+: Make Your Course Pop! | H-110
Presenters: Whitney Williams | Manager, Customer Success, Nicole Francoeur | Customer Success Specialist, and Krystine Cullen | Account Manager for North America Higher Education
Discover how to bring your course content to life in Brightspace with interactive elements and practices that keep students clicking, exploring, and enjoying the learning experience. With Creator+, you can build polished, engaging content with no coding required.
Objectives:
- Apply Creator+ features to improve the clarity and engagement with course content.

Target Audience: Faculty and Administrators

Conversation Confidence: Little Tricks for Big Connections | B-112
Presenter: June Weyrauch | Coordinator, Grants Development
Ever wish conversations came just a little easier? Based on Leil Lowndes' bestselling book "How to Talk to Anyone," you'll discover easy, memorable ways to connect with students, colleagues, and guests. Whether you're in the office, on campus, or out in the community, this lighthearted session shares quick, practical "people skills" you can use anywhere-- from greeting students and collaborating with coworkers to networking at conferences or even chatting with your neighbor. Perfect for anyone who works with people (and that's all of us!).
Objectives:
- Apply nonverbal communication strategies to appear more approachable and engaged in group settings
- Use at least one small-talk technique to start and maintain conversations during interactions
- Demonstrate responding techniques to keep conversations flowing and build stronger relationships

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Accessible by Design: Simple Steps for Effective Materials | G-102
Presenters: Carleigh Okwali | Director, Center for Innovative Teaching and
Dr. Melissa Kuehnle | Director, Institutional Communications
Join us to learn how small design choices can make a big difference for our students. This hands-on session will cover practical tips for following WCAG 2.0 and Universal Design for Learning 3.0 guidelines and include a live demonstration of using My Media in Brightspace to generate and refine captions that enhance learning for all.
Objectives:
- Upload/record a video to Brightspace My Media
- Generate auto-captions and edit them for inaccuracies
- Apply SFSC Style Guide and WCAG 2.0 principles to revise at least one material for improved accessibility and usability

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

1:25 – 1:30 PM | TRANSITION

1:30 – 2:20 PM | BREAKOUT SESSION 4 | 50-MINUTE

Choose from the following sessions:
Moving Together: Building Teams Through Active Play | Gym
Presenter: Kathleen Cappo
Join us for a fun and collaborative team-building session bringing together participants from all divisions of the College! We'll enjoy friendly competition through a variety of games, including Pickleball, Giant Pong, Frisbee Toss, and Cornhole. Teams of two will be mixed to encourage connection across departments. At the end of each round, teams will have the chance to earn extra points by answering HLC Accreditation questions to support our Mission Alignment efforts. This session is all about laughter, fun, and just a touch of competition.
Objectives:
- Successfully complete the games to be one of the two recognized winners

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Connecting Education, Workforce, and Community | B-112
Presenter: Tina Gottus | Director, Corporate and Community Education and
Debbie Gutierrez | Coordinator, Corporate and Community Education

Discover the full scope of how Corporate and Community Education (CCE) connects South Florida State College to local businesses, community partners, and learners of all ages. This session will highlight non-credit programs and how CCE supports workforce development through customized training, grant-funded initiatives, Leadership Highlands, and more. Participants will learn how non-credit programs align with credit pathways, how departments can collaborate to strengthen student opportunities, and how CCE drives community engagement. Join us to explore the impact happening behind the scenes and how you can be part of it. We also believe it's just as important to play hard as it is to work hard, so come explore Art Lab 27 and other personal enrichment programs designed to inspire creativity and education.

Objectives:
- Identify at least three ways Corporate and Community Education (CCE) supports workforce development and community engagement through non-credit programs, partnerships, and grant-funded initiatives
- Identify at least one specific opportunity for collaboration between departments and CCE that supports student pathways, workforce readiness, or community connection

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Ensuring Integrity: Honorlock Best Practices | H-110
Presenters: Carleigh Okwali | Director, Center for Innovative Teaching and
Kimberly Pulda | Senior Technical Customer Success Manager

Learn how to make the most of Honorlock while maintaining a controlled and supportive testing environment. Representatives from Honorlock will share practical tips and answer your questions. Carleigh Okwali will review SFSC's guide and instructor resources for offering proctored testing.

Objectives:
- Identify at least two best practices for using Honorlock to maintain a secure, equitable, and student-supportive testing environment
- Finalize a proctored-testing syllabus statement for use in a distance learning course

Target Audience: Faculty, Administrators

Evaluation Process: Did you Know? | G-101
Presenter: Don Kesterson | Director, Human Resources

Why do we have employee evaluations? This session provides an overview of the employee evaluation process and its role in supporting performance, accountability, and professional growth at the College. Participants will learn why evaluations are conducted, how job descriptions and annual evaluation forms are used, and what constitutes satisfactory performance.

Objectives:
- Describe how evaluation results are linked to annual reappointment and salary increase eligibility

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

5G: 2.2 Body-Language Fluency and 2.3 Influential Writing | UC-109
Presenter: Anastasia Fuchser | Institutional Advancement and Alumni Development

In 2.2 Body-Language Fluency, there's a focus on the power of nonverbal communication. Participants learn to interpret body language, use posture and gestures intentionally, and build confidence that supports effective leadership and collaboration.

In 2.3 Influential Writing, the material focuses on purposeful written communication. Participants develop strong writing habits, understand organizational protocols, and learn to communicate clearly and effectively across emails, texts, and formal correspondence.

Objectives:
- Identify at least three common nonverbal cues that influence communication and collaboration
- Demonstrate intentional use of posture, gestures, and facial expressions to project confidence
- Apply best practices for clear, professional written communication to emails, memos, or formal correspondences

Target Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

2:20 – 2:50 PM | POSTER SESSION | UC LOBBY

Honorlock Reception
Honorlock will be on site to help you explore test proctoring and answer any of your questions.
Snacks provided by: Honorlock Online Proctoring
Drinks provided by: South Florida State College Foundation

Innovate Your Instruction: Faculty Tech Tools | John Lackey | Multimedia Technology Specialist
The Center for Innovative Teaching's tech tools for checkout will be displayed. Innovative ways to incorporate these tools into classroom use or course design will be presented.

Tell Your Grant's Story | June Weyrauch | Coordinator, Grants Development
Grants are more than funding, they're stories with purpose. This poster highlights the essential components of a compelling grant proposal: the need, the ask, project activities, evaluation, and sustainability. Explore how clearly telling your department's story can help secure funding to support your goals.

Association of Florida Colleges | June Weyrauch, SFSC Chapter President
Stop by to discover what the Association of Florida Colleges is, does, and how you can get in on the fun by joining the SFSC Chapter today!

Panther Prep | Asena Mott | Dean, Off Campus Instructional Sites
Panther Prep is a six-week summer bridge program offered at SFSC DeSoto Campus. Designed for first-time college students, the program helps reduce barriers to success, build academic confidence, and connect participants with a supportive campus team.

CWY: Talking Leaves | Angie Hjort | Student Services Data Specialist
This poster explores the Cherokee language, how it was created, and who created it.

Student Work Experiences in Remote and Virtualized Environment | Johnathan Spence | NSF SWERVE Grant Specialist
The SWERVE project at SFSC prepares students for network systems careers through virtualization training, industry partnerships, and a capstone with internship experience.

Undergraduate Research Projects
Students Anika Bhandare, Cohen Jefferies, Ardwins Alcindor, Adrian Mendoza-Perez, Isabella Salinas, Aiden Swain, Jenale Miley Alfonso Cruz, and Andy Gomez-Reyes present.

2:50 – 3:20 PM | UC AUDITORIUM

HLC Accreditation | Dr. Michele Heston

3:30 – 5 PM | DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

Reach out to your instructional supervisor for more details.