

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
FORT PIERCE DIVISION**

**VINITA PRABHAKAR,**

**CASE NO.: 2:26-cv-14274-AMC**

Plaintiff,

v.

**FRED HAWKINS**, individually and in his  
official capacity as President of South Florida  
State College,  
**SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE  
DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES,**  
**TERRY W. ATCHLEY**, in his official capacity  
as Chair of the South Florida State College  
District Board of Trustees, and  
**DERREN J. BRYAN**, in his official capacity  
as Trustee of the South Florida State College District  
Board of Trustees,  
**DEVON DONALDSON**, in his official capacity  
as Trustee of the South Florida State College District  
Board of Trustees,  
**ALISON HANCOCK**, in her official capacity  
as Trustee of the South Florida State College District  
Board of Trustees,  
**BO CONERLY**, in his official capacity  
as Trustee of the South Florida State College District  
Board of Trustees,  
**JUSTIN FUSSELL**, in his official capacity  
as Trustee of the South Florida State College District  
Board of Trustees,

Defendants.

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**AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY  
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF AND DAMAGES**

Plaintiff VINITA PRABHAKAR files this Amended Complaint pursuant to the Court's  
July 31, 2026 Order [ECF No. 11]. Plaintiff brings claims under 42 U.S.C. §1983 against

Defendant FRED HAWKINS in his individual capacity for damages arising from his retaliation against Plaintiff in violation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Plaintiff also sues HAWKINS in his official capacity for prospective declaratory and injunctive relief, including reinstatement and an injunction against future retaliation for protected academic speech. Plaintiff additionally sues Defendants TERRY W. ATCHLEY, DERREN J. BRYAN, DEVON DONALDSON, ALISON HANCOCK, BO CONERLY, and JUSTIN FUSSELL, solely in their official capacities as members of the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees, for prospective declaratory and injunctive relief, including an order requiring them to take the necessary actions within the Board's authority to approve Plaintiff's return to full-time faculty employment. Plaintiff does not seek damages against HAWKINS or the Trustees in their official capacities.

Plaintiff also brings a supplemental state-law claim against Defendant SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES under Florida's Campus Free Expression Act, §1004.097, Fla.Stat., which authorizes such suits. On that claim, Plaintiff seeks declaratory and injunctive relief as well as damages, with any monetary award payable only from nonstate funds as required by §1004.097(4)(a), Fla.Stat.

### **JURISDICTION**

1. This suit is brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983:

Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State or Territory or the District of Columbia, subjects, or causes to be subjected, any citizen of the United States or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and laws, shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress ...

2. This Court has "Federal Question" jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331 to hear cases arising under the Constitution of the United States, under 28 U.S.C. §1343(3) to redress the

deprivation under color of state law of any right, privilege or immunity secured by the Constitution and under 28 U.S.C. §1343(4) to secure equitable relief or other relief for the protection of civil rights.

3. The Court has the authority to issue declaratory judgments and permanent injunctions pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§2201 and 2202, and Rule 65, Fed.R.Civ.P.

4. This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's state law claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1367.

5. The Court may enter an award of attorney's fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1988.

6. This Complaint seeks declaratory and injunctive relief to prevent violations of the Plaintiff's rights, privileges and immunities under the Constitution of the United States and Title 42 U.S.C. §§1983 and 1988, specifically seeking redress for the deprivation under color of state statute, ordinance, regulation, custom or usage of rights, privileges, and immunities secured by the Constitution and laws of the United States. The rights sought to be protected in this cause of action arise and are secured under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

7. This action seeks a judicial determination of issues, rights and liabilities embodied in an actual and present controversy between the parties involving the constitutionality of certain policies and practices of the Defendants. There are substantial *bona fide* doubts, disputes, and questions that must be resolved concerning the Defendants' actions taken under color and authority of "state" law and procedures, in violation of Plaintiff's rights under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.

### **VENUE**

8. Venue is proper in the Southern District of Florida, Fort Pierce Division. Venue is proper in this Court under 28 U.S.C. §1391(b)(2) because a substantial part of the events giving

rise to the claim occurred in this District and Division.

### **THE PARTIES**

9. Plaintiff Vinita Prabhakar (hereinafter “Prabhakar” or “Plaintiff”) is an individual, *sui juris*, residing in Highlands County, Florida.

10. At all times material hereto, Plaintiff was a full-time faculty member in the Department of English & Humanities at South Florida State College (“SFSC”).

11. Before her affiliation with SFSC, Plaintiff was an assistant writing professor at Ithaca College in New York. She relocated to Florida to help care for her aging parents and began teaching at SFSC as an adjunct professor. Plaintiff was hired on full-time at SFSC on August 14, 2023 and served continuously in that position until February 12, 2026, when she was suspended and advised that her contract would not be renewed.

12. At the time she was suspended and terminated, Plaintiff taught ENC1102, an introductory reading and writing course.

13. ENC1102 was part of the curriculum approved by the President of SFSC and the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees. The College lists the ENC 1102 course objectives, which are “to develop your ability to read literature critically and to improve your ability to write effectively” with the expectation that students will be “exposed to various literary genres. . . reading will include authors of both genders and a variety of multicultural backgrounds.”

14. Plaintiff excelled at her job and was respected and well-liked by her peers and by her students. The SFSC Vice President of Academic Affairs invited her to serve as the Faculty Council President-elect with the expectation that she would be the President in the 2026-27 academic year.

15. Prior to the events complained of in this lawsuit, Plaintiff had never previously been subject to formal discipline during her tenure at SFSC or her previous teaching positions.

16. Plaintiff's work at SFSC represented not just a livelihood, but a career and a calling.

17. At all times material hereto, Defendant Fred Hawkins ("Hawkins") was and is the President of South Florida State College. Hawkins was the individual who terminated Plaintiff and made the decision not to renew her contract based on objections to the content and viewpoint of Plaintiff's classroom instruction. Hawkins is sued in his official and individual capacities.

18. Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees ("Board of Trustees") is the corporate and political entity which governs South Florida State College. *See*, §1004.65(1), Fla.Stat. ("Each Florida College System institution shall be governed by a district board of trustees under statutory authority and rules of the State Board of Education."); *see, also*, South Florida State College District Board of Trustees Policies – Policy No.: 2.02 ("The South Florida State College (SFSC) District Board of Trustees is a body politic and corporate entity .... The Board has been given the legal responsibility and authority over the institution to carry out all powers and perform all duties provided for in the Florida Statutes (FS) and the State Board of Education Rules ....").<sup>1</sup>

19. Defendant Terry W. Atchley is a Trustee of the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees, serving as its Chair. In that capacity, Atchley presides over meetings of the Board of Trustees. Atchley is sued only in his official capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> Accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/POL2.02-SFSC.pdf> (Last accessed 8/12/26).

20. Defendants Derren J. Bryan, Devon Donaldson, Alison Hancock, Bo Conerly, and Justin Fussell are the remaining Trustees of the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees and are sued only in their official capacities.

**COLOR OF STATE LAW**

21. As the President and Trustees of South Florida State College, Defendants are public officials. Defendants and their agents were, and are, acting under color of state law and authority.

22. Defendants' actions, taken under color of state law, violate Plaintiff's constitutional rights to engage in free speech as well as fundamental principles of academic freedom.

**FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS AS TO ALL COUNTS**

23. College classrooms are supposed to challenge students. That is especially true in a college English course, where students learn to read critically, write effectively, and engage with literature that may be unfamiliar, difficult, uncomfortable, or even unpleasant. The First Amendment protects that process because it "does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom," where truth is discovered not by "authoritative selection," but "out of a multitude of tongues." Keyishian v. Bd. of Regents, 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967) (cleaned up). This is because professors and their students "must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die." Keyishian, 385 U.S. at 603 (*quoting, in part, Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, 354 U.S. 234, 250 (1957)).

24. South Florida State College purports to support academic freedom in its policies. The College Handbook, for example, claims faculty are "free to pursue and convey knowledge in [their] area of special training and expertise, subject to College, the state of Florida, and federal policies, procedures, law, and the code of ethics for professional educators (refer to SFSC

Administrative Procedure 3011 – Academic Freedom).” South Florida State College Faculty Handbook 2025-26 (rev. Feb. 17, 2026), VII-I at 3. A copy of the South Florida State College Faculty Handbook is attached as Exhibit “1” to this Amended Complaint.<sup>2</sup>

25. Moreover, the College’s Administrative Procedure 3011<sup>3</sup> adopts the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure formulated by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors and claims that the College “is dedicated to the preservation of a college atmosphere which encourages freedom of expression on campus for faculty and students” and that “[a]ll members of the teaching faculty are entitled to academic freedom”.

26. The College’s Administrative Procedure 5070<sup>4</sup> also provides that a faculty’s “[e]xercise of academic freedom will not be the basis for nonrenewal of an instructional contract.”

27. The words of the College do not match its deeds.

### **PLAINTIFF’S CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION**

28. Plaintiff’s course curriculum for ENC 1102 was purposely challenging. Plaintiff’s purpose and intent were to encourage students to fully develop their reading and writing skills through exposure to English literature in all its myriad forms.

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<sup>2</sup> The Faculty Handbook is also accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Faculty-Handbook-2025-2026.pdf> (last accessed 8/12/26).

<sup>3</sup> SFSC Administrative Procedure 3011 – Academic Freedom; accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/3011-Academic-Freedom.pdf> (last accessed 8/12/26).

<sup>4</sup> SFSC Administrative Procedure 5070 – Reappointment and Termination Procedures for Annual Contract Employees; accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/5070-Reappointment-and-Termination-Procedures-for-Annual-Contract-Employees.pdf> (last accessed 8/7/26).

29. The SFSC Faculty Handbook and longstanding practice at SFSC encourage professors to make use of educational materials in addition to those appearing in approved textbooks. *See*, Faculty Handbook VI-A-1(f) (Suggesting that professors consider use of “Open Educational Resources (OER) as cost-effective alternatives when appropriate”) and VI-A-2(b) (Allowing use of “alternate or additional texts with[ ] the permission of the instructional supervisor or dean.”).

30. Plaintiff’s syllabus - including use of specific materials to supplement the standard textbook - was approved by her instructional supervisor as contemplated by the Faculty Handbook (VI-A-2(b)).

31. One of the techniques Plaintiff used in her classroom to develop her students’ reading and writing skills was to have them study and analyze works with a variety of narrative voices. Plaintiff found it pedagogically useful to have her students compare male and female narrative voices to get a sense of how vocabulary, viewpoint and tone might change depending upon the narrator. For what is generally considered to be a male voice, Plaintiff assigned reading from the works of Ernest Hemingway and Raymond Carver. For the female voice, Plaintiff often chose the short story *Bettering Myself* by the award-winning novelist Ottessa Moshfegh.<sup>5</sup>

32. Plaintiff considers *Bettering Myself* to be a useful instructional tool for her English class for at least six reasons, in addition to the fact that it includes a female narrator.

33. First, the narrator immediately grabs the reader’s attention because she is utterly unconventional, profane and dysfunctional, but also compelling in her own way.

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<sup>5</sup> Moshfegh won the 2013 Plimpton Prize for Fiction for writing *Bettering Myself* and another story, *Disgust*. *See, The Paris Review*, March 26, 2013 “Ottessa Moshfegh Wins Plimpton Prize”, accessible at <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2013/03/26/ottessa-moshfegh-wins-plimpton-prize-j-d-daniels-wins-terry-southern-prize-for-humor> (last accessed 8/12/26).



34. Second, presenting a deeply unsympathetic protagonist provides opportunities for critique and insight which students might miss with a more heroic or familiar narrator.

35. Third, the prose is contemporary and relevant to the lives of modern readers.

36. Fourth, students compare the female first-person voice in *Bettering Myself* with the male narrator in *Cathedral* by Raymond Carver. The narrator in *Cathedral* is also unlikable; he is rude to his wife and a character who is blind. Students compare the narrative arcs between these two characters.

37. Fifth, the short sentences and terse story are reminiscent of Hemingway's style, but the subject matter and tone are completely different. Those stark differences provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion as students compare and contrast the authors and their perspectives.

38. Sixth, the story and subject matter are *meant* to be challenging. In a college setting, challenging materials take students out of their comfort zone, expose them to new ideas and provide opportunities for growth and intellectual maturation.

39. *Bettering Myself* also expresses a particular viewpoint: that all persons have intrinsic worth; that all individuals have the capacity to become better people; and that we should reserve a degree of pity and empathy when our sisters fail—as we all do to a greater or lesser extent.

40. *Bettering Myself* is a pedagogically appropriate piece of literature for a college-level English reading and writing program. The subject matter and prose of *Bettering Myself* is well within the approved curriculum for ENC 1102.

41. Other professors, both in Florida and around the nation, have assigned *Bettering Myself* to their students for these purposes and others. Plaintiff has used this story in her own teaching without incident for nearly a decade.

42. The text of *Bettering Myself* is attached as Exhibit “2” to this Amended Complaint.

43. Plaintiff assigned *Bettering Myself* to the students of her Spring ENC 1102 class.

44. Students were expected to read the story and prepare “Reading Notes.” Reading Notes were a graded assignment consisting of a 150-word minimum memorandum, either prompted by a list of suggested questions or by a perspective the student chose for herself.

45. On the evening of Monday, February 2, 2026, one of Plaintiff’s students contacted the Plaintiff by e-mail to express some mild discomfort because of the subject matter contained in *Bettering Myself*. A paraphrasing of that communication follows:

Prof vp - the story made me a bit uncomfortable. Do I have to do the reading notes for it?

[Plaintiff’s response] Hi , I agree this can be a challenging story; why don’t we talk more about this in class tomorrow? 😊 Best, vp

46. The next day, Tuesday, February 3, 2026, the student appeared in class and participated in all associated in-class activities without incident.

47. Following class, Plaintiff went up to the student to ensure that the student remained comfortable with the classwork. The student responded (paraphrasing): “We don’t read anything in high school. I know I’m in college now, and I have to get used to it.”

48. Plaintiff reiterated that the student should feel free to discuss classroom assignments at any time. The student thanked the Plaintiff for her concern, and the class session ended unremarkably.

49. The student participated in all further class assignments and discussions without incident and without expressing any issues with the subject matter, the course, or Plaintiff's teaching style. The student attended class as usual on Thursday, February 5, 2026 and again the following week.

50. After class concluded on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, Plaintiff voluntarily contacted her Department Chair, Verna "Michelle" MacBeth, to advise her that a student had expressed discomfort about a class assignment.

51. On information and belief, the student who expressed discomfort spoke with another professor or an administrator at SFSC concerning the assignment of *Bettering Myself* in Plaintiff's class. It is not known whether the student actually complained about the assignment or merely discussed the fact that the work had been assigned reading.

52. In fact, the Chairman of Plaintiff's Department, Verna MacBeth, sent a text to Plaintiff stating "maybe the student didn't actually want to complain and maybe the student didn't authorize them [the staff member] to talk about this situation." Plaintiff has no information to the contrary.

53. On information and belief, a professor or administrator – perhaps the individual contacted by the student or perhaps another – registered a complaint with SFSC administrators about the assignment.

54. After class concluded on February 12, 2026, Plaintiff went to consult with Chair MacBeth regarding the resolution of the student's possible concerns

55. During that meeting, the Director of Human Relations, Don Kesterson, tendered a letter, dated February 12, 2026, advising Plaintiff that she was immediately suspended with pay through the end of her annual contract. The letter further advised Plaintiff that she was relieved of

her teaching responsibilities. The letter went on to advise Plaintiff that her annual contract would not be renewed. A copy of the February 12, 2026 letter is attached as Exhibit “3” to this Amended Complaint.

56. The February 12, 2026 letter does not advise Plaintiff of the substantive basis for her suspension, her removal from the classroom, or the termination of her contract.

57. The February 12, 2026 letter does not advise Plaintiff of her due process rights and does not indicate that any administrative remedies were available to her.

58. Plaintiff immediately requested that the HR Director provide her with a copy of the formal complaint which led to her discipline, as required by SFSC Procedure 1093, III-A, described below.

59. The HR Director responded that there was no written complaint and that the action had been taken on the basis of “a verbal complaint from a staff member.”

60. When further pressed on the basis for the disciplinary action, the HR Director replied that it was because “You taught a story that wasn’t in the textbook” and that “The President has the final say.”<sup>6</sup>

61. The administrators who were responsible for supervising Plaintiff and her department were unanimously supportive of Plaintiff’s abilities as a professor and her pedagogical decision to use *Bettering Myself* as an instructional tool in her ENC 1102 English class.

62. Plaintiff continues to receive support and cordiality from her colleagues and students.

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<sup>6</sup> On a personal note, the HR Director expressed his regret at Plaintiff’s termination, saying: “My daughter really liked you when you were her Professor, and you get great evaluations.”

63. The February 12, 2026 letter constitutes adverse employment action because Plaintiff was immediately suspended, removed from her classroom, and advised that her annual contract would not be renewed.

#### **SFSC DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION PROCESS**

64. South Florida State College has adopted policies and procedures for addressing complaints and grievances directed to faculty members, which are codified as the College's Administrative Procedure 1093,<sup>7</sup> a copy of which is attached as Exhibit "4" to this Amended Complaint.

65. Those policies specify that complaints and grievances are to be addressed through the administrative hierarchy, beginning with the dean of the division, who is responsible for giving written notice of the problem requiring corrective action as follows:

The dean of the division of the faculty member will notify the employee in writing of a problem which may necessitate corrective action. Copies will be sent to the faculty member's supervisor and the director, human resources. Based on consultation with the faculty member, the faculty member's dean, the director, human resources, and/or any other appropriate College and/or non-College personnel, the dean will notify the faculty member in writing of the action (if any) being taken. Any corrective action taken must be consistent with College policy/procedure and State Board of Education regulations.

Procedure 1093, II-A.

66. Procedure 1093 further envisions that the "normal steps that will be taken by the College in correcting a faculty employee's behavior" consist of progressive discipline. That discipline usually begins with counseling with a "reasonable timeline for change." *See*, Procedure

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<sup>7</sup> SFSC Administrative Procedure 1093 – Correcting the Actions of Faculty Personnel; accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/1093-Correcting-the-Actions-of-Faculty-Personnel.pdf> (last accessed 8/11/26).

1093, II-C-1. Termination is reserved only for those instances where the violation is “serious enough in nature.” Procedure 1093, II-C-4.

67. South Florida State College has also adopted Policy 5.07<sup>8</sup> and Administrative Procedure 5070, which regulate how the College offers employment agreements and renews annual contracts.

68. The College has also adopted Policy 5.24<sup>9</sup> and Administrative Procedure 5244<sup>10</sup>, which regulate how the College employs, promotes, transfers, demotes, suspends, and terminates employment agreements.

69. South Florida State College divides authority over faculty employment between the College President and the District Board of Trustees.

70. Under Board Policy 5.07, the Board “approves all full-time employment,” while the President is authorized to issue contracts and employment agreements. Full-time faculty who have not attained continuing-contract status receive annual contracts of no more than twelve months and are “subject to annual reappointment.” Policy 5.07, A-2.

71. Policy 5.07 further provides that the Board considers annual reappointments of instructional personnel. *See* Policy 5.07, F-2. Thus, an annual-contract faculty member’s continued

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<sup>8</sup> SFSC Policy 5.07 – Employment Agreements; accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/5.07-Employment-Agreements.pdf> (last accessed 8/11/26).

<sup>9</sup> SFSC Policy 5.24 – College Employees: Employment, Promotion, Transfer, Demotion, Suspension, and Dismissal; accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/5.24-College-Employees-Employment-Promotion-Transfer-Demotion-Suspension-and-Dismissal.pdf> (last accessed 8/11/26).

<sup>10</sup> SFSC Administrative Procedure 5244 – Dismissal or Suspension of Employees; accessible online at <https://www.southflorida.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/5244-Dismissal-or-Suspension-of-Employees.pdf> (last accessed 8/11/26).

full-time employment for the next academic year is accomplished through reappointment approved by the Board.

72. The College's Administrative Procedure 5070 prescribes the process leading to that reappointment decision.

73. Human Resources initiates the annual process by distributing reappointment recommendation forms for faculty in early February. *See*, Procedure 5070, II-D-2.

74. If a dean does not recommend a faculty member for reappointment, the dean must discuss the recommendation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services, who, in turn, discusses the proposed nonrenewal with the President. *See*, Procedure 5070, II-F. The President then decides whether to recommend the faculty member for reappointment; if the President decides not to reappoint, the College provides written notice of nonrenewal. *See*, Procedure 5070, II-F.

75. Conversely, faculty who are approved for reappointment are submitted to the District Board of Trustees for approval. *See*, Procedure 5070, II-J.

76. The College's policies, therefore, assign different roles to the President and the Board of Trustees in the reappointment process. The President controls whether an annual-contract faculty member is recommended for continued employment, and the College's Administrative Procedure 5070 contemplates that a presidential decision not to reappoint ends the recommendation process and results in notice of nonrenewal.

77. But the President cannot, acting alone, grant the next annual appointment because an affirmative reappointment must be submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees, consistent with Board Policy 5.07's provision that the Board approves full-time employment. And the President's discretion over nonrenewal is expressly limited in one respect particularly relevant

here: the College's Administrative Procedure 5070 provides that the "[e]xercise of academic freedom will not be the basis for nonrenewal of an instructional contract." Procedure 5070, II-G.

78. The allocation of authority is different when the College seeks to end or interrupt an employee's existing employment rather than decline to reappoint the employee for a subsequent term.

79. Board Policy 5.24 authorizes the President to suspend an employee, but provides that the President may dismiss or terminate a College employee only "with Board of Trustees approval." The College's Administrative Procedure 5244 likewise provides that the Board "may dismiss any employee upon recommendation of the president," while the President may suspend an employee with or without pay. Procedure 5244, II-A. Such dismissal or suspension must be based on "just and proper cause." Procedure 5244, II-B.

80. Accordingly, the President possesses unilateral authority to suspend an employee and to decide against recommending an annual-contract faculty member for reappointment, but dismissal during the existing employment relationship requires action by the Board.

81. A copy of Plaintiff's contract with SFSC for the 2025-2026 academic year, is attached as Exhibit "5" to this Amended Complaint,

82. Plaintiff's contract states that the "Board may suspend or dismiss the Faculty Member for cause pursuant to law and rules of the State Board of Education" and expressly incorporates "all applicable laws enacted by the Legislature and all administrative rules adopted or promulgated by the State Board of Education, the District Board of Trustees of South Florida State College and each other state or local governmental agency having jurisdiction to take action affecting the operations of this College."



**ALLEGATIONS IN SUPPORT OF INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

83. Plaintiff's free speech has been chilled now, and in the future, as she has been barred from teaching and otherwise interacting with students at SFSC, which also serves to deprive her of her very livelihood as a consequence of her speech.

84. Unless this Court enjoins the Defendants' actions, policies, and practices, Plaintiff will suffer the continuing loss of her constitutional rights.

85. Plaintiff has suffered irreparable injury and continues to suffer irreparable injury as a result of the Defendants' actions, policies, and practices.

86. Plaintiff will continue to suffer the violation of her First Amendment rights unless and until she is restored to her employment and position at SFSC.

87. Plaintiff does not have a plain, adequate, or complete remedy to protect her constitutional rights and to redress the wrongs and illegal acts complained of, other than injunctive relief.

88. Plaintiff does not have an adequate remedy at law. Deprivation of rights guaranteed under the Constitution is an irreparable injury for purposes of injunctive relief. In cases involving the loss of First Amendment rights, such as in this case, monetary damages are inadequate.

89. Plaintiff is likely to succeed on the merits of her claims.

90. The grant of injunctive relief will serve the public interest. In fact, actions such as those of Defendants disserve the public interest because they interfere with the public's rights guaranteed under the First Amendment.

91. A permanent injunction will preserve Plaintiff's civil rights and will minimize the need to award extensive compensatory damages.

**DAMAGES AND ATTORNEY'S FEES**

92. Defendants' actions have violated Plaintiff's First and Fourteenth Amendment rights, and Plaintiff faces similar and repeated violations of her rights in the future.

93. Plaintiff has suffered economic losses, including the lost income from employment she would have received but for her illegal and unconstitutional termination.

94. Plaintiff has retained Benjamin, Aaronson, Edinger & Patanzo, P.A. and the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression as her attorneys to represent her in this action. Defendants are obligated to pay Plaintiff's attorney's fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1988.

**COUNT I**

**First Amendment Violation – Retaliation**

**Against Defendant Hawkins in his individual and official capacities**

95. Plaintiff realleges the facts set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 3, 5 through 17, and 21 through 94 and incorporates those facts into this Count by reference.

96. This is an action for declaratory relief and injunctive relief brought by the Plaintiff against Defendant Hawkins under this Court's general jurisdiction and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §2201 and 42 U.S.C. §1983.

97. Plaintiff is uncertain as to her rights and remedies following the termination of her employment in apparent violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

98. Shortly before a regularly scheduled English Department meeting on Friday, February 6, 2026, Plaintiff received a text from Chair MacBeth stating that the issue with the student had "escalated," that "someone sent the story with the complaint and the president read it." The Chair opined at that time that "No one is in trouble, but it's gotta get dealt with."

99. Plaintiff met with Chair MacBeth prior to the department meeting and was advised that the Chair had met with the Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dr. James Hawker, and the Vice

President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Michele Heston, to discuss the matter.

100. Chair MacBeth informed Plaintiff that Vice President Heston told the Defendant Hawkins that Plaintiff was “an asset to the department.”

101. Chair MacBeth further informed Plaintiff that it was exceptionally unusual for the President to be involved in such a dispute, as there had been no formal complaint filed and because such matters usually proceed up the chain of command through the Department Chair, the Dean, and the Vice President.

102. The Chair requested (on behalf of Vice President Heston) that Plaintiff provide a written explanation for why she employed *Bettering Myself* in her classroom and how that lesson fit into the curriculum for that course. Plaintiff agreed to write such a statement for submission to the Chair, Dean, and Vice President by Monday, February 9th.

103. Later on that same day (February 6th), Plaintiff texted Chair MacBeth to thank her for her support. The Chair responded: “Of course! ... All your student SEI’s [Student Evaluation of Instruction] say you are a wonderful teacher.”

104. Plaintiff drafted a statement of the pedagogical rationale for assigning *Bettering Myself* in her English class and tendered it to the Chair. A copy of that written rationale is attached as Exhibit “6” to this Amended Complaint.

105. The Chair responded to Plaintiff’s rationale positively, indicating that she read the entirety of *Bettering Myself*, agreed that the story was “not intended for shock value,” and opined that “[i]t is such an interesting literary device and way of showing characterization.”

106. The Chair’s response was sent to Dean Hawker and Vice President Heston as well. The Dean told Plaintiff that he shared the Chair’s opinion that *Bettering Myself* was an appropriate pedagogical tool within the ENC 1102 curriculum.

107. On February 10, 2026, Plaintiff again met with Chair MacBeth and with Dean Hawker.

108. Dean Hawker informed Plaintiff that he and Vice President Heston had met with Defendant Hawkins and that he appeared intent on terminating Plaintiff immediately.

109. The Dean and Chair argued against termination based on Plaintiff's outstanding teaching evaluations, her contributions of the Department and College and the fact that Plaintiff was "not some political actor."

110. On information and belief, Plaintiff alleges that Vice President Heston provided Defendant Hawkins with printouts of case law supporting academic freedom and/or the First Amendment rights of public employees such as Plaintiff.

111. During the February 10th meeting with the Chair and Dean, Plaintiff asked for the opportunity to speak directly with Defendant Hawkins.

112. Chair MacBeth informed Plaintiff that a meeting had already been set for the following day.

113. Chair MacBeth further advised that she, Dean Hawker and Vice President Heston intended to offer a remedial plan to Defendant Hawkins that would include a limitation on Plaintiff's teaching to materials which appear in her textbook only.

114. Plaintiff advised the Chair that she was agreeable to such a limitation in the spirit of compromise.

115. Plaintiff met with Defendant Hawkins on Wednesday, February 11, 2026.

116. Also present during that meeting were Vice President Heston, Dean Hawker, Chair MacBeth and the Director of Human Resources.

117. Chair MacBeth opened the meeting by proposing a remedial plan under which Plaintiff would limit her teaching to the materials in the standard textbook. She also advised Defendant Hawkins that Plaintiff's syllabus had been approved by a colleague with the appropriate level of seniority consistent with the SFSC Faculty Handbook.

118. Plaintiff then spoke, describing her long teaching career, her love of her job and her students, and that she was not in the business of indoctrinating her students. She ended with an expression of remorse that her teaching assignment had generated any controversy.

119. The following colloquy then took place between the Plaintiff and Defendant Hawkins (paraphrasing):

Defendant Hawkins: I'm not hearing anything except that you're disappointed no one came to you... Do you go to the Gen Ed meetings?

Plaintiff: Yes, I go to all of them.

Defendant Hawkins: Then why is this story on here?

Plaintiff: I did write up a rationale for it -

Defendant Hawkins: I read what you wrote. You don't teach this in your online class, why is that?

Plaintiff: Because there is no opportunity for discussion. I wouldn't assign it if there couldn't be any discussion.

Defendant Hawkins: Let me be clear: I don't ever want to see this story again. I have kids, I wouldn't want my daughter reading this, and she's in college.

120. Defendant Hawkins ended the meeting with the observation that "this is political."

121. After further consultation with Dean Hawker, Plaintiff returned to the President's office on the same day to again apologize and express her remorse for the controversy surrounding her lesson.

122. Defendant Hawkins met with Plaintiff and accepted her apology but noted that he had been in contact “with Tallahassee” about the matter as well as twice that day with Defendants, “the Board of Trustees.”

123. The only objections to Plaintiff’s instruction raised by an administrator in a supervisory capacity were those of Defendant Hawkins, an individual with no academic or teaching experience,

124. Defendant Hawkins’ objections were not founded on any legitimate pedagogic concerns, but were based solely on the content of the materials taught, his personal belief that the content was morally objectionable (and not suitable for his own daughter), and his fear that Plaintiff’s instruction was somehow “political.”

125. Defendant Hawkins is Plaintiff’s ultimate supervisor, and he is the individual who actually made the decision to terminate Plaintiff in response to Plaintiff’s classroom instruction.

126. Defendant Hawkins was acting under the authority of policies and procedures adopted by the Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees and the Defendant Trustees named in this suit. Specifically, Board Policy 5.07 and the College’s Administrative Procedure 5070.

127. Defendant Hawkins terminated Plaintiff solely because he objected to the content and viewpoint of Plaintiff’s in-class instruction and for no other reason.

128. Defendant Hawkins terminated Plaintiff solely because he objected to the content and viewpoint of the short story *Bettering Myself* and for no other reason.

129. Defendant Hawkins’ decision to terminate Plaintiff was not based on any good faith belief that Plaintiff’s classroom instruction was at variance with the approved curriculum. Indeed,

Plaintiff had secured approval for her syllabus and her OER materials, including *Bettering Myself*, from her instructional supervisor in accordance with College policies and procedures.

130. Defendant Hawkins' decision to terminate Plaintiff was not based on any good faith belief that Plaintiff's classroom instruction lacked pedagogical value. As noted above, *Bettering Myself* is an award-winning story that is recognized as a useful piece of literature for instruction in college classrooms across the country.

131. At the time Plaintiff was terminated, SFSC had experienced no actual disruption in its operations and had devoted no money or resources to addressing any public fallout associated with Plaintiff's classroom instruction.

132. Defendant Hawkins' decision to terminate Plaintiff was not based on any good faith belief that Plaintiff's classroom instruction would disrupt the ability of SFSC to function in the future, upset its ability to deliver state services, or lead to dissension among faculty, staff or students.

133. Plaintiff's interest in engaging in academic speech in a college classroom necessarily outweighs Defendant Hawkins' interests in advancing content- or viewpoint-discrimination.

134. Defendant Hawkins' decision to terminate Plaintiff was in direct response to Plaintiff's protected academic speech.

135. There is a direct causal connection between Plaintiff's classroom speech and Defendant Hawkins' decision to terminate her employment.

136. Plaintiff's academic speech was the motivating factor in Defendant Hawkins' decision to take retaliatory action against Plaintiff. Defendant Hawkins terminated Plaintiff specifically because of his objections to her academic speech.

137. Defendant Hawkins' response to Plaintiff's academic speech (immediate suspension and termination) was sufficient to deter a person of ordinary firmness from continuing to engage in expressive activity.

138. Defendant Hawkins violated Plaintiff's right of Free Speech and her academic freedom – an issue of special concern for our nation.

139. Defendant Hawkins has actual knowledge that he terminated Plaintiff solely because of his personal objections to the content of her classroom instruction.

140. Defendant Hawkins has actual knowledge that he terminated Plaintiff solely because of his personal objections to the particular viewpoint expressed in the material taught in Plaintiff's classroom.

141. Defendant Hawkins took adverse action against Plaintiff – specifically, her discharge from employment, causing the loss of wages and associated benefits.

142. Defendant Hawkins' actions have chilled Plaintiff's speech.

143. Public reaction to speech is never a content-neutral basis for regulation. *See, Forsyth Cnty. v. Nationalist Movement*, 505 U.S. 123, 134 (1992). A heckler's veto is a viewpoint-based limitation on expression and is impermissible under the First Amendment.

144. The First Amendment prohibits government officials from discriminating against speech "based on the ideas or opinions it conveys." *Iancu v. Brunetti*, 139 S. Ct. 2294, 2299 (2019); *See, also, Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of Univ. of Va.*, 515 U.S. 819, 828–30 (1995) (Action taken against a speaker because of "its message" is viewpoint discrimination). Viewpoint discrimination is an "egregious form of content discrimination" and is "presumptively unconstitutional." *Rosenberger*, 515 U.S. at 829–30.



145. The law is clearly established that, when a public employee is engaging in academic speech within a public college or university classroom on a matter which is within the approved curriculum, the government cannot terminate the employee or retaliate against the employee based on the content or viewpoint of their speech. *See, e.g., Travers v. Jones*, 323 F.3d 1294, 1295–96 (11th Cir. 2003), *citing Rankin v. McPherson*, 483 U.S. 378, 383 (1987) (“The law is clearly established that an employer may not demote or discharge a public employee for engaging in protected speech.”); *Cf., Pernell v. Florida Board of Governors of the State University*, 181 F.4th 1135, 1148 (11th Cir. 2026) *quoting Bishop v. Aronov*, 926 F.2d 1066, 1075 (11th Cir. 1991) (affirming injunction of Florida’s Stop WOKE Act as violative of “the strong predilection for academic freedom as an adjunct of the free speech rights of the First Amendment”).

146. Even if the viewpoint-based discrimination at issue in this case does not categorically preclude any claim for qualified immunity, balancing the College’s interests against Plaintiff’s interests in free speech and academic freedom under *Pickering v. Bd. of Ed. of Twp. High Sch. Dist. 205, Will Cnty., Illinois*, 391 U.S. 563 (1968), and *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, 547 U.S. 410 (2006), would lead to the inevitable conclusion that Plaintiff’s discharge was unlawful.

147. Plaintiff sues Hawkins in his individual capacity for damages arising from his personal role in terminating Plaintiff. Plaintiff therefore seeks compensatory, nominal, and punitive damages against Hawkins, individually, for the economic and noneconomic injuries caused by his violation of the First Amendment.

148. Plaintiff also sues Hawkins in his official capacity for prospective declaratory and injunctive relief. Hawkins remains President of SFSC and, under Board Policy 5.24, has authority over the decision whether to offer an annual contract to a faculty member. Plaintiff therefore seeks an injunction requiring Hawkins to take the actions within his authority necessary to restore

Plaintiff to full-time faculty employment, including initiating or recommending her reappointment for any Board approval required under Board Policies 5.07 and 5.24 and the College's Administrative Procedure 5070. Plaintiff also seeks prospective relief preventing Hawkins from again suspending, removing, or denying her reappointment because of protected academic speech.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for the following relief:

- A. That this Court take jurisdiction over the parties and this cause;
- B. That this Court enter a judgment declaring that Defendant Hawkins' termination of Plaintiff's employment violated the First Amendment because it was content-based;
- C. That this Court enter a judgment declaring that Defendant Hawkins' termination of Plaintiff's employment violated the First Amendment because it was viewpoint-based;
- D. That this Court enter a permanent injunction reinstating Plaintiff's employment and restoring Plaintiff to her associated position and responsibilities;
- E. That this Court enter a permanent injunction enjoining Defendant Hawkins from disciplining Plaintiff in the future for pedagogically-appropriate academic speech in the classroom;
- F. That this Court enter a judgment for front pay in the event reinstatement is not granted;
- G. That this Court enter a judgment for compensatory damages against Defendant Hawkins, individually, to compensate Plaintiff for her lost wages and benefits;
- H. That this Court award Plaintiff nominal damages against Defendant Hawkins, individually, to compensate Plaintiff for the violation of her First Amendment rights;
- I. That this Court award punitive damages against Hawkins, individually, for his reckless disregard of Plaintiff's First Amendment rights and to deter him from violating Plaintiff's rights and other similarly situated employees in the future;

J. That this Court enter a judgment for pre-judgment and post-judgment interest against Defendant Hawkins, individually, at the highest lawful rate;

K. That this Court award Plaintiff her recoverable costs and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1988; and

L. That this Court award Plaintiff all other relief in law and in equity to which she may be entitled.

## **COUNT II**

### **First Amendment Violation - Content and Viewpoint Discrimination Against Defendants**

#### **Atchley, Bryan, Donaldson, Hancock, Conerly and Fussell in their official capacities**

149. Plaintiff realleges the facts set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 3, 5 through 16 and 18 through 94 and incorporates those facts into this Count by reference.

150. Defendants Terry W. Atchley, Derren J. Bryan, Devon Donaldson, Alison Hancock, Bo Conerly, and Justin Fussell are the current members of the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees. Plaintiff sues the Trustee Defendants in their official capacities pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983 for prospective declaratory and injunctive relief under Ex parte Young, 209 U.S. 123 (1908).

151. Atchley serves as Chair of the Board and presides over matters presented to it. Bryan, Donaldson, Hancock, Conerly, and Fussell each participate in the Board's consideration of faculty reappointments and other personnel actions.

152. On or about Wednesday, February 11, 2026, Defendant Hawkins contacted one or more members of the Board of Trustees to advise them that he had received a complaint concerning Plaintiff's classroom instruction using *Bettering Myself*, and that he intended to terminate Plaintiff on account of that instruction.

153. Upon information and belief, the Trustee Defendants ratified Defendant Hawkins' decision to terminate Plaintiff.

154. SFSC Board Policy 5.07 provides that the District Board of Trustees "approves all full-time employment" and grants the President authority to issue the resulting contracts and other employment agreements.

155. Plaintiff seeks reinstatement to full-time faculty employment through a new employment agreement. Under Board Policy 5.07, new full-time employment requires approval by the Board of Trustees.

156. The College's Administrative Procedure 5070 confirms that faculty employment decisions ultimately requiring a new annual appointment are submitted to the Board for approval. *See*, Procedure 5070, II-J. The President, therefore, has substantial authority over whether a faculty member will be recommended for employment, but the President does not possess unilateral authority to place a person into full-time faculty employment without the Board's approval, as required by Board Policy 5.07.

157. Accordingly, Plaintiff's reinstatement requires action by both Defendant Hawkins and the Trustee Defendants. Hawkins must take the actions within his authority necessary to return Plaintiff to employment, including recommending or otherwise initiating her appointment, while the Trustee Defendants must exercise the Board's authority to approve Plaintiff for full-time faculty employment. After that approval, Hawkins has authority under Board Policy 5.07 to issue the new employment contract.

158. Plaintiff, therefore, sues the Trustee Defendants in their official capacities because they possess the authority necessary to effectuate the prospective relief Plaintiff seeks. *See, Lucky v. Harris*, 860 F.2d 1012, 1015 (11th Cir. 1988). Plaintiff seeks an injunction requiring the Trustee

Defendants to take the actions within their official authority necessary to approve her return to full-time faculty employment under a new contract.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for the following relief:

- A. That this Court take jurisdiction over the parties and this cause;
- B. That this Court enter a permanent injunction reinstating Plaintiff's employment and restoring Plaintiff to her associated position and responsibilities;
- C. That this Court enter a permanent injunction enjoining Defendants Atchley, Bryan, Donaldson, Hancock, Conerly and Fussell from disciplining Plaintiff in the future for pedagogically-appropriate academic speech in the classroom;
- D. That this Court award Plaintiff her recoverable costs and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988; and
- E. That this Court award Plaintiff all other relief in law and in equity to which she may be entitled.

### **COUNT III**

#### **Violation of the Campus Free Expression Act**

#### **(§1004.097, Fla.Stat.)**

#### **Against Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees**

159. Plaintiff realleges the facts set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 4, 6 through 63 and 83 through 94 and incorporates those facts into this Count by reference.

160. This is an action for damages and declaratory and injunctive relief for violation of §1004.097, Fla.Stat., the "Campus Free Expression Act."

161. Plaintiff is uncertain as to her rights and remedies following the termination of her employment in apparent violation of the "Campus Free Expression Act."

162. Section 1004.097 of the Florida Statutes creates a private cause of action against colleges and other public institutions of higher education that infringe upon the expressive rights of professors and other individuals. A person injured by a violation of the statute may bring an action against a public institution of higher education in a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain declaratory and injunctive relief and may also recover damages, court costs, and reasonable attorney's fees, provided that any monetary award is paid only from nonstate funds. §1004.097(4)(a), Fla. Stat.

163. Section 1004.097 of the Florida Statutes creates substantive rights protecting professors and others who engage in First Amendment-protected expressive activity. The statute defines protected expressive activity to include lawful oral and written communications of ideas, including faculty research, lectures, writings, and commentary, whether published or unpublished. It further provides that a Florida College System institution or state university may not shield students, faculty, or staff from expressive activities. §§1004.097(3)(a), (f), Fla.Stat.

164. The Campus Free Expression Act prohibits a public university from denying students “access to, or observation of, ideas and opinions that they may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive.” §§1004.097(2)(f), (3)(f), Fla.Stat.

165. The Campus Free Expression Act expressly includes “faculty research, lectures, writings, and commentary” as among the sources of information that may not be restricted. §1004.097(3)(a), Fla.Stat.

166. The Campus Free Expression Act expressly includes a right to engage in expression consisting of “faculty research, lectures, writings, and commentary” without interference on the basis that the ideas conveyed may be upsetting or offensive to others. §1004.097(3)(a), Fla.Stat.

167. Plaintiff's academic speech was and is protected by the First Amendment.

168. Plaintiff's interest in engaging in academic speech in a college classroom necessarily outweighs Defendant's interests in advancing content- or viewpoint-discrimination.

169. Defendant Board of Trustees approved and ratified the termination of Plaintiff's employment because of the Board of Trustees' opposition to the content of Plaintiff's academic speech.

170. As a direct and proximate result of the Board of Trustees' actions as described above, Plaintiff is being deprived of her rights under the Campus Free Expression Act.

171. Plaintiff is entitled to a declaration that Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees unlawfully restricted her right to engage in and disseminate academic speech and instruction protected by the First Amendment and by §1004.097(3), Fla.Stat.

172. Plaintiff is entitled to injunctive relief, including but not limited to, reinstatement and an order enjoining Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees from interfering with her rights under the Campus Free Expression Act as those rights are irreparable injuries *per se*.

173. Plaintiff is entitled to an award of her costs and reasonable attorneys' fees paid from nonstate funds. *See*, §1004.097(4)(a), Fla.Stat.

174. Plaintiff has no adequate legal, administrative, or other remedy by which to prevent or minimize the continuing irreparable harm to her rights under the First and Fourteenth Amendments and under the Campus Free Expression Act.

175. Without declaratory and injunctive relief from this Court, Defendants' unlawful actions will continue, and Plaintiff will suffer irreparable harm indefinitely.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for the following relief:

A. That this Court take jurisdiction over the parties and this cause;

B. That this Court enter a judgment declaring that Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees' termination of Plaintiff's employment violates §§1004.097(3) and (4), Fla.Stat., the Campus Free Expression Act.

C. That this Court enter a permanent injunction reinstating Plaintiff's employment and restoring Plaintiff to her associated position and responsibilities;

D. That this Court enter a judgment for compensatory damages against Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees to compensate Plaintiff for those damages recoverable under §1004.097(3), Fla.Stat., the Campus Free Expression Act.

E. That this Court enter a judgment for pre-judgment and post-judgment interest against Defendant South Florida State College District Board of Trustees, at the highest lawful rate;

F. That this Court award Plaintiff her recoverable costs and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to §1004.097(4), Fla.Stat.; and

G. That this Court award Plaintiff all other relief in law and in equity to which she may be entitled.

### **JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable as a matter of right.

FOUNDATION FOR INDIVIDUAL  
RIGHTS AND EXPRESSION

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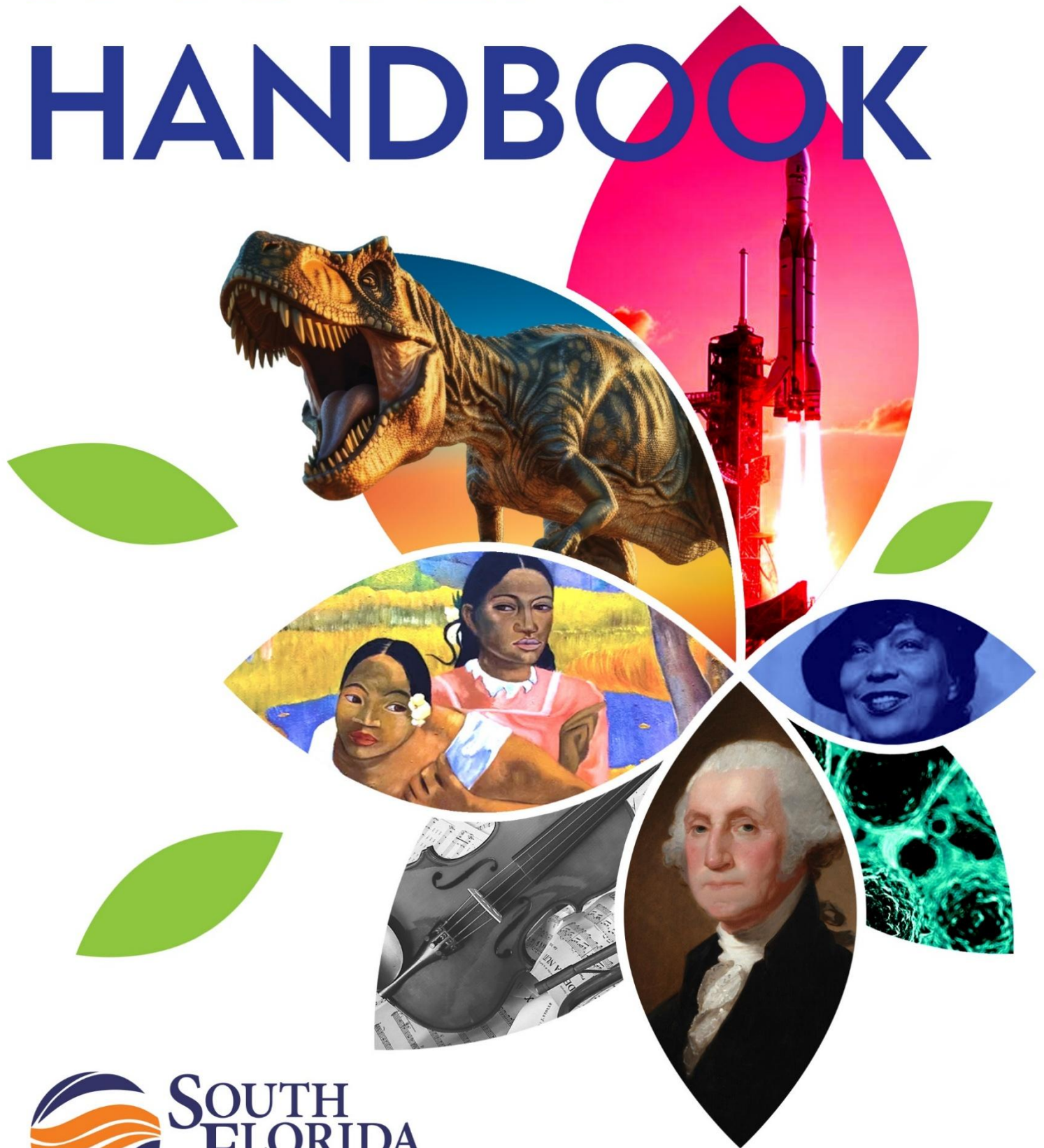


**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Amended Complaint has been forwarded FRED HAWKINS, the SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES, TERRY W. ATCHLEY, DERREN J. BRYAN, DEVON DONALDSON, ALISON HANCOCK, BO CONERLY, and JUSTIN FUSSELL, all at South Florida State College - Highlands Campus 600 West College Drive, Avon Park, Florida 33825, by U.S. Mail this 16th day of August, 2026.

/s/ Gary S. Edinger  
GARY S. EDINGER, Esquire  
Florida Bar No.: 0606812

# FACULTY HANDBOOK



## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

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## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

### I. INTRODUCTION

The SFSC Faculty Handbook serves as a valuable resource, offering essential information and strategies to support faculty in their efforts to enhance student learning outcomes. It is important to recognize that this document serves as a foundational guide, and while it may not cover every specific situation or guideline, it provides a strong starting point. We encourage both full- and part-time faculty members to consistently seek guidance from their instructional supervisors or deans and to rely on their professional judgment. You can access complete copies of the South Florida State College (SFSC) District Board of Trustees Policies and the SFSC Administrative Procedures on Panther Central and the College website, [southflorida.edu](http://southflorida.edu). We also encourage faculty members to familiarize themselves with the content of these documents, as well as the SFSC Catalog and the Student Handbook, as they contain valuable information about academic programs and student policies and procedures.

### II. THE COLLEGE

#### ***A. History of the College***

SFSC was established in 1965 by the Florida Legislature as South Florida Junior College (SFJC). The College began operation in August 1966 in temporary facilities in Avon Park. In 1984, South Florida Junior College became known as South Florida Community College (SFCC). In 2011, the Board of Trustees voted to change the name to South Florida State College (SFSC). The State Legislature approved the College as a four-year institution adding the Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Nursing, and Bachelor of Elementary Education to its degree offerings. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges approved the level change in June 2012. Today, SFSC has four campus locations that include the Highlands Campus in Avon Park, the Hardee Campus in Bowling Green, the DeSoto Campus in Arcadia, and the Lake Placid Center.

#### ***B. Mission, Vision, and Values***

##### **Mission**

South Florida State College is an open-access, higher education institution dedicated to providing a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services. Working in partnership with organizations and communities, the College provides leadership and a comprehensive range of opportunities for the service district's educational, cultural, and economic development.

The College assists the people of its service district (DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties) regardless of economic, social, or educational background to achieve success in:

- Completing an associate degree in preparation for pursuing a baccalaureate or other professional degree or credential
- Completing a baccalaureate degree, associate degree, or certificate related to a career

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- and technical preparation to enter the workforce or to improve career circumstances
- Obtaining basic skills in literacy, mathematics, and citizenship to prosper as a contributing member of society
- Gaining personal, cultural, and global awareness, appreciation, and understanding needed in a complex contemporary society
- Pursuing advanced academic preparation and credentials available through partnerships with colleges and universities
- Participating in the social, cultural, environmental, and economic development of the communities served by the College

We believe in the worth of each of our students and through all of our educational programs and services we seek to develop human potential and create brighter futures.

### **Vision**

South Florida State College will become ... a globally aware academic destination driving regional transformation through innovative collaboration.

### **Values**

Integrity, Service, Community, Learning, Excellence, Accountability, and Responsibility

## **III. ADMINISTRATION**

### ***A. Organization of the College***

Under the president, the College is organized into three areas that are headed by the vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for administrative services, and the vice president for student services. The organizational chart delineates responsibility and can be found on southflorida.edu under Administration on The College tab.

#### **Leadership at the College:**

1. **The president** is responsible for all areas of the College and specifically for Collegewide operations such as the equal access/equal opportunity (EA/EO), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Athletic Office.
2. **The vice president for academic affairs** is responsible for all academic programs, curriculum, the Learning Resource Center (LRC), College off-campus instructional sites, academic support, corporate and community education, enrollment management, Office of Educational Technology, and university relations.
3. **The vice president for administrative services** is directly responsible for overseeing the budget development and management process, facilities planning and construction activities, institutional compliance with federal and state regulations and laws, internal control of resources and business processes, and oversight of institutional support areas including accounting and finance, human resources, information technology, institutional



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effectiveness, physical plant operations and maintenance, College policies and procedures, as well as safety and security.

4. **The vice president for student services** is responsible for providing leadership and oversight for all areas related to student development and support. This includes admissions, advising and counseling, financial aid, student life, student conduct, disability services, testing and assessment, registration and records, and career services. The vice president ensures that services are accessible, student-centered, and aligned with the College's mission, fostering a supportive environment that promotes student success, retention, and completion.

### ***B. Educational Programs of the College***

The College is organized into three academic divisions, each headed by a dean: Arts and Sciences, Applied Sciences and Technologies, and Health Sciences.

1. **The Division of Arts and Sciences** includes courses leading to the Associate in Arts (AA) degree, the general education components of the Associate in Science (AS), and the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Teacher Education (BSETE). The AA degree consists of 36 college credits of General Education courses in the areas of Communication, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences, and 24 college credits of elective courses for a total of 60 college credits. At SFSC, students may complete the lower division prerequisites for most majors at a Florida public university or college. The Division also oversees library services and the Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC).
2. **The Division of Applied Sciences and Technologies** contains courses and programs that lead to the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) and the Associate in Science (AS), as well as College Credit Certificates (CCC) and Career Certificates (CC). Degrees and certificates are varied and range from Accounting/Business, Air Conditioning, Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, Electronics, and Supervision and Management. Adult Education also is included in this Division.
3. **The Division of Health Sciences** includes all levels of Dental Education, Nursing Education, Radiography, Emergency Medical and Fire Science, Health Services, Surgical Services, Medical Assisting, and Phlebotomy. Degrees and certificates are varied and range from a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to Associate in Science Degrees (AS), College Credit Certificates (CCC), and Career Certificates (CC). Health Science programs have selective admissions processes, accepting a limited number of students into their classes each year. Many programs have national and state-certifying exams to become licensed and practice in the chosen field.



## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

| <b>Division</b>                   | <b>Dean</b>         | <b>Email</b>                     | <b>Ext.</b> | <b>Office</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Applied Sciences and Technologies | Michelle Leidel     | michelle.leidel@southflorida.edu | 7424        | T12           |
| Arts and Sciences                 | Dr. James Hawker    | james.hawker@southflorida.edu    | 7329        | B211          |
| Health Sciences                   | Dr. Kathleen Cappel | kathleen.cappel@southflorida.edu | 7227        | HSEC129       |

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

## People and Resources

| Department/Office                           | Name                | Title              | Email                             | Ext      |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>ADA Student Coordinator</b>              | Charla Ellerker     | Counselor          | ellerker@southflorida.edu         | 7176     |
| <b>Admissions</b>                           | Michele Hall        | Registrar          | hallm@southflorida.edu            | 7139     |
| <b>Advising and Counseling</b>              | Charla Ellerker     | Chair              | charla.ellerker@southflorida.edu  | 7176     |
| <b>Athletic Office</b>                      | Rick Hitt           | Director           | hittr@southflorida.edu            | 7036     |
| <b>Bookstore</b>                            | Kerrie Nelson       | Manager            | 1383mgr@follet.com                | 7112     |
| <b>Business Office</b>                      | Mary Hutzelman      | Controller         | mary.hutzelman@southflorida.edu   | 7123     |
| <b>Cafeteria</b>                            | Janet Wheaton       | Manager            | wheatonj@southflorida.edu         | 7199     |
| <b>Center for Innovative Teaching (CIT)</b> | Carleigh Okwali     | Director           | okwalic@southflorida.edu          | 7018     |
| <b>Community Relations and Marketing</b>    | Dr. Melissa Kuehnle | Director           | kuehnlem@southflorida.edu         | 7379     |
| <b>Corporate and Community Education</b>    | Tina Gottus         | Director           | tina.gottus@southflorida.edu      | 7466     |
| <b>Cultural Programs</b>                    | Cynthia Garren      | Director           | cynthia.garren@southflorida.edu   | 7177     |
| <b>DeSoto Campus</b>                        | Irene Cerna         | Coordinator        | irene.cerna@southflorida.edu      | 7042     |
| <b>Financial Aid</b>                        | Marcia Conliffe     | Director           | marcia.conliffe@southflorida.edu  | 7108     |
| <b>SFSC Foundation, Inc.</b>                | Emily Dabolt        | Executive Director | emily.dabolt@southflorida.edu     | 7477     |
| <b>Hardee Campus</b>                        | Micaela Ford        | Coordinator        | micaela.ford@southflorida.edu     | 7062     |
| <b>Highlands Campus</b>                     | Switchboard         |                    |                                   | 453-6661 |
| <b>Honors Program</b>                       | Jason Fitzgerald    | Coordinator        | jason.fitzgerald@southflorida.edu | 7362     |
| <b>Human Resources</b>                      | Don Kesterson       | Director           | donald.kesterson@southflorida.edu | 7336     |
| <b>Institutional Effectiveness</b>          | Corey Wales         | Director           | corey.wales@southflorida.edu      | 7413     |
| <b>Lake Placid Center</b>                   | Dina Capuano        | Coordinator        | dina.capuano@southflorida.edu     | 7081     |
| <b>Library</b>                              | Lena Phelps         | Chair              | phelpsl@southflorida.edu          | 7304     |
| <b>Off-Campus Instructional Sites</b>       | Asena Mott          | Dean               | asena.mott@southflorida.edu       | 7041     |
| <b>Physical Plant/Maintenance</b>           | Brenda Daniels      | Director           | brenda.daniels@southflorida.edu   | 7099     |
| <b>Safety and Security</b>                  | Keith Loweke        | Director           | lowekek@southflorida.edu          | 7219     |
| <b>Student Government Association</b>       | Andy Polk           | Coordinator        | andy.polk@southflorida.edu        | 7435     |
| <b>Student Services</b>                     | Dr. Mark Bukowski   | Vice President     | mark.bukowski@southflorida.edu    | 7107     |
| <b>TLC/Writing and Math Lab</b>             | Dr. Keith Cavedo    | Coordinator        | Keith.cavedo@southflorida.edu     | 7404     |

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### ***C. Institutional Effectiveness***

SFSC is committed to a continuous process of reflecting upon and reviewing its practices' effectiveness in meeting the institution's mission. The Institutional Effectiveness Plan describes how employees of the College meet the mission of the institution through strategic planning, assessment, and continuous quality improvement of learning and services provided to its communities. The College has adopted an overall effectiveness model used for assessment purposes that illustrates the continuous nature of planning, assessment, and improvement activities.

#### **1. Strategic Plan**

The College Strategic Plan focuses on the institution's direction. Each unit of the College seeks to support the College in achieving the initiatives of the Strategic Plan. Additionally, each College unit contributes to the overall success of the College through the work that it does individually, whether it is educational or administrative. Each unit identifies its mission, outcomes, and performance measures and assesses these outcomes as to whether or not they are effective. Findings from outcomes assessment typically result in a need to improve in a specific area, modification of the target, or creation of new ways to accomplish the outcomes. New initiatives and the need for new resources are then reflected in the annual budget allocation, capital outlay requests, and Unit Action Plan activities. This cyclical process results in opportunities to establish directions, review our progress, and continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of the College.

#### **2. Educational Assessment**

##### **a) Educational Program Assessment (EPA)**

The EPA process, established by the Academic Quality Committee, ensures that students achieve the specific learning outcomes of their respective programs. Each unit defines the mission of the program, its learning outcomes, and performance measures. The process and timetable for measuring the learning outcomes are outlined in the EPA Handbook found in Panther Central under the Employee Tab, Institutional Effectiveness. This ongoing process enables members of the faculty and departmental units of the College to improve services and enhance student learning continuously. Once measurements have been analyzed, improvements can be applied to each learning situation, thus using data collection and analysis as a basis for improving learning.

##### **b) Unit Action Plans (UAP)**

UAPs allow all employees of the College, including all faculty members, to participate in goal setting, budget planning, and annual action plans that support the College's Strategic Plan. Each faculty member can participate in the process of creating goals and outcomes which will then be placed in SPOL, the College's online strategic planning database. The whole process includes not only the goals/outcomes but also

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

the methods to achieve them, resources needed, measurements and data to be collected, and the timetable for collecting the data. All budget requests must be tied to a goal or outcome. The instructional supervisor will share the plan and details with each new instructor.

### c) **General Education Assessment**

General education outcomes assessment provides a method for the institution to demonstrate its level of success on the five general education competencies identified at SFSC:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate (read, write, speak, and listen effectively).
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, synthesize, and apply knowledge.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of mathematical and scientific principles.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to find, evaluate, organize, and use information.
5. Students will be prepared to participate actively as informed and responsible citizens in social, cultural, global, and environmental matters.

The Academic Quality Committee (AQC) oversees the College's General Education Assessment. A subcommittee of the AQC facilitates the collection of the data. Data secured by the General Education Assessment process are used by faculty to facilitate data-informed decision-making, make improvements to instruction, and advance student learning and success. The AQC designated that all General Education core courses, as specified by the State of Florida, would be assessed in both the fall and spring terms.

## IV. GENERAL FACULTY INFORMATION

### ***A. Faculty Duties and Responsibilities***

Full-time faculty duties and responsibilities are defined below:

- Belong to and perform duties on at least one College committee; many faculty members serve on several committees, task forces, and projects, thus performing an invaluable service
- Attend the Convocation ceremony, graduation, and Collegewide meetings and official functions
- Maintain good relationships with community agencies and groups and participate when appropriate
- Assist in the development and implementation of assessment and planning activities of the College
- Use assessment data for planning and course or program revision

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

- Maintain currency in the discipline/program areas taught and in teaching strategies and related instructional technology
- Be responsible for the materials and equipment in the course or program taught
- Create, update, and teach the curriculum offered by SFSC
- Maintain all standards with relevant credentialing bodies
- Maintain the collegial atmosphere at SFSC while performing the collaborative and evaluative activities of each department such as textbook selection
- Establish and maintain a positive working relationship with adjunct faculty

For the full job description, please reference the instructional faculty position description found in Appendix A.

### ***B. Faculty Credentials and Professional Standards***

The College is committed to student learning and to employing faculty who are highly qualified, dedicated to the community college mission, and who will provide the highest level of collaborative and student-centered instruction. To achieve this goal, the College has established the Professional Standards for Faculty and Academic Administrators to guarantee the establishment of a qualified faculty and its continued improvement. This document describes the role that employees are expected to fulfill, competencies related to successful professional performance, policies for the selection and retention of personnel, laws, and regulations, and accreditation standards. A copy of the document is contained under the Employee tab in the Human Resources section of Panther Central.

SFSC is an equal access/equal opportunity institution (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 1100 – Equal Opportunity).

### ***C. Salary Schedule***

The SFSC Salary Schedule contains information about starting salary levels for all employees. Salary ranges for each classification, including full-time and part-time faculty, are published in the schedule, as well as rates for hourly employees hired part-time, and supplemental salary rates. A copy of the SFSC Salary Schedule is contained under the Employee tab in the Human Resources section of Panther Central.

When you complete a degree that will change your placement on the salary scale, please notify your instructional supervisor at least 60 days before the award of the degree. (Please refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 5061—Advancement of Rank of Faculty).

### ***D. Faculty Contract***

Formal contracts shall be issued to full-time faculty members who are not on continuing contract status. These contracts shall not exceed 12 consecutive calendar months and are subject to annual reappointment. A faculty contract may be renewed annually and is referred to as an “Annual Contract.”

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Full-time faculty will remain on an annual contract for a minimum of five years, provided they receive satisfactory evaluations and meet budgetary conditions each year.

According to SFSC Policy 5.07, upon the recommendation of the president and based on successful performance, demonstration of professional competence, and institutional needs, the Board may grant formal continuing contracts to full-time faculty members. These contracts are issued in accordance with Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules. Faculty members with a continuing contract may remain in their full-time position without the need for annual reappointment unless they resign, are terminated, return to an annual contract, or in cases of program consolidation, reduction, elimination, or restriction of required duties.

Upon renewal and approval for continuing contract status, faculty members may be awarded the rank of professor and placed on a “Continuing Contract” beginning in their sixth year of employment.

All adjunct teaching assignments are made by an approved Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI must be initialed by the department instructional supervisor and signed by the adjunct faculty member and the dean. Usually, the LOI is only issued after the scheduling need is certain, typically based on sufficient enrollment. Should the load requirements of a full-time faculty member necessitate it, a section may be reassigned from an adjunct member to a full-time member of the faculty at any time before the start date of the course.

### ***E. Performance Evaluation Procedures***

To help ensure the continuing emphasis on student learning and a collaborative work environment, your instructional supervisor will conduct an annual evaluation to be documented on the Instructional Faculty Performance Evaluation form (see Procedure 5040 – Evaluation of Full-time and Adjunct Faculty). This form is contained under the Employee tab in the Human Resources section under Performance Review in Panther Central.

Adjunct faculty can be evaluated at any time during the year and may be evaluated each term during their first year of employment or re-employment. Adjunct faculty are evaluated based on the terms of their Letter of Intent and relevant duties from the faculty job description.

All evaluations are based on the expectations of your role as a member of the faculty, as taken from the job description.

An adjunct faculty member has the same responsibilities regarding student learning, assessment, course organization, and implementation relative to their academic department and division. You must be available to students and/or maintain limited, posted office hours, for example, one office hour per three-credit course per week. You are invited to attend all academic functions, including department meetings.

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### ***F. Faculty Evaluation Procedures (SFSC Administrative Procedure 5040 – Evaluation of Full-time and Adjunct Faculty)***

#### **1. Instructional Supervisor Evaluation**

To ensure that every department/program works to create a student-centered, active learning environment, the instructional supervisor will perform the following duties:

- a. Visit one or more of your classes and evaluate your performance
  1. These may be unannounced visits
  2. They can occur during the fall or spring term and are due in February/March of each year
- b. Conduct an evaluation conference with you after the class visit to provide appropriate feedback
- c. Prepare corrective action memos, as necessary
- d. Hold additional meetings with you, as needed

#### **2. Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)**

Student feedback is an important component of instructional improvement and faculty evaluation. Each term, students will evaluate your courses through the College's online course evaluation system, Watermark Course Evaluations. The evaluations are administered electronically and made accessible to students via the College's learning management system.

At the close of the evaluation period, you will receive a summary report for each course, including aggregated results and student comments. These results are reviewed by you and your instructional supervisor. The appropriate academic dean will also receive a copy of your SEI results for review and discussion, as applicable.

#### **3. Annual Service Report**

Full-time faculty members should complete the Annual Service Report prior to the evaluation meeting with their instructional supervisor. With an emphasis on student learning, each faculty member should list all noteworthy activities completed during the year, e.g., courses, activities, awards, workshops, speaking engagements, committee assignments, mentoring undergraduate research, professional meetings, grant activity, new courses developed, major course revisions, community service projects, or any other project or activity that supports student learning.

Once you and your instructional supervisor have discussed the Annual Service Report, it is forwarded to the dean for review. A copy will be housed in the Human Resources Office's personnel files. The form is available in Panther Central under the Employee tab in Human Resources and under Performance Review.

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### ***G. Educational Technology Training***

You should be proficient in using D2L Brightspace, SFSC's learning management system, as each of your course sections will have an online presence. At a minimum, each section should include the course syllabus and student gradebook. You are encouraged to enhance your courses by utilizing additional D2L Brightspace tools, such as email, discussion boards, drop boxes, and quizzes. Additionally, familiarity with Panther Central, SFSC's website, Outlook email, Zoom, and other organizational and communication technologies is essential for effective instruction and engagement.

The Teaching Excellence Academy instructor training is offered fully online allowing 15 working days to complete. Upon completion, instructors may teach all modalities. This training is self-paced and focuses on best practices in teaching and Quality Matters Higher Education 7th Edition rubric, the standard for quality at SFSC. This training is required as a condition of employment and is provided by SFSC's Office of Educational Technology. Various other technology training opportunities are available through the Office of Educational Technology and the Center for Innovative Teaching (CIT).

The CIT, located in H110 and H112 on the Highlands Campus, is a place for faculty to gain access to technology training and support, professional development opportunities, and instructional design assistance. The Center includes a large training facility, a Hyflex meeting space, and a recording and podcast studio.

### ***H. Staff and Professional Development (SPD)***

SFSC values lifelong learning and is committed to supporting employees in their professional growth. Each year, the administration budgets funds to help staff and faculty enhance their skills and participate in meaningful professional activities.

Faculty members who wish to attend off-campus meetings, training sessions, or classes may request funding through the Staff and Professional Development (SPD) program. Prior approval must be obtained before enrolling in any training to ensure eligibility for funding. Faculty should apply in advance by following SFSC Administrative Procedure 5011 – Staff Development and submitting all required paperwork with the necessary signatures. Early application helps secure funding and allows for better planning.

### ***I. Orientation***

As a new employee, you are invited to attend an SFSC orientation session specifically designed for new faculty and staff. You will be introduced to many of the administrators and other colleagues important to your effectiveness as an instructor. You will also be led through several processes such as electronic access to various documents and communication channels. The orientation is typically held the first duty week before classes start.



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### ***J. Microsoft Outlook Email***

Microsoft Outlook is the provider of the College's email system. The majority of College and unit information is sent via email. You will be assigned an email address and provided with training. Contact ext. 7462 or [helpdesk@southflorida.edu](mailto:helpdesk@southflorida.edu) with any problems.

### ***K. Panther Central***

Panther Central is the portal for internal information and resources for the College. Some of the material you can access in Panther Central include:

- College Policies and Procedures (under the Home tab in the Employee Quick Links section)
- Forms (including Leave Request, SPD Funds Request, Travel and Expense Form, Room Request, Incomplete Grade Report, Employee Information Change)
- Committee Information
- Faculty Dashboard which provides access to Banner where you can get your rosters and enter grades (under the Faculty tab)
- Employee Dashboard which provides access to Banner where you can find your payroll and leave information
- D2L Brightspace
- Curriculum Support (under the Faculty tab)
- Institutional Effectiveness information including access to SPOL (Strategic Planning Online) (under the Employee tab)
- Public Relations Resources (under the Home tab)
- Educational Technology Resources (under the Faculty tab)

### ***L. Generated ID Numbers (GID)***

The GID will serve as your employee identification number instead of your Social Security number. You can obtain your picture identification card featuring the GID at the Welcome Desk located within the Student Services Office of the Catherine P. Cornelius Center Student Services and Classroom Complex (Building B).

### ***M. Parking Decals***

Full-time faculty are provided with "Reserved" decals. Parking designations are assigned by the Human Resources Office. Adjuncts will be assigned an employee/staff decal.

### ***N. Mail***

You may be assigned a mailbox. Please check your mailbox regularly. Outgoing mail is processed daily at 10 a.m. A courier delivers interoffice mail to and from the Highlands Campus and the other campuses/center on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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### ***O. Teaching Assignments***

Your load requirements and the procedures that govern load can be found in SFSC Administrative Procedure 5220 – Workload for Full-Time Instructional Faculty. Teaching loads are calculated following those procedures through the College's administrative software system (Banner).

#### **Overloads**

- a) All instructional overloads (courses taught in addition to the full-time faculty load requirements) are to be approved in advance by the instructional supervisor and the appropriate dean.
- b) Overloads are assigned on a volunteer basis; your requests for overloads may be made to your instructional supervisor and will be approved only when scheduling needs demand it.
- c) If you are full-time, you are limited to no more than two overloads per term unless approved by the appropriate dean and VPAA. When determining which courses are part of your load and which are overloads, the courses with the largest enrollments shall constitute the regular load. Courses from your regular department will count toward load before courses from another department.
- d) If you are an adjunct, you are limited to three sections unless approved by the appropriate dean and VPAA.
- e) The instructional supervisor is required to determine all departmental overloads each term and to secure the appropriate dean's approval. Failure to properly document overloads could result in your nonpayment.

### ***P. Commencement Activities***

If you are a full-time member of the faculty, you are expected to participate in the Commencement ceremonies held at the end of the fall and spring terms each year; academic regalia will be provided. Contact the Bookstore for more information regarding regalia.

### ***Q. Communication Channels***

Communication is essential to the effective operation of the College's academic divisions; therefore, the principal communication channels must be understood and used appropriately.

#### **1. Contact your instructional supervisor for any of the following situations:**

- a) In all discussions regarding course scheduling or when requesting any type of leave
- b) In initially posting office hours and in verifying your instructional teaching load (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 5220)
- c) When evaluating or providing feedback about a textbook
- d) When completing course syllabi, if making major changes in the course delivery system or technology, and making changes in the master course descriptions

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- e) In matters regarding student attendance and behavior, the College has procedures relating to attendance and disciplinary matters; the instructional supervisor is responsible for overseeing the proper execution of these procedures
  - f) In matters relating to general administrative procedures, such as registration, filing of reports, etc.
  - g) As the initial contact between you and the administration
  - h) In all discussions involving examination proceedings: both the extent and nature of the course exams
  - i) In initiating particular requests on your behalf
  - j) Regarding questions related to the College evaluation, promotion, and contract conditions
  - k) Regarding certification/professional development issues
  - l) In all matters deemed important by you with which the instructional supervisor can be of assistance
- 2. Contact the deans in all the following situations:**
- a) Questions regarding College policies or procedures after initial consultation with the instructional supervisor
  - b) When College appeal procedures require attention to a particular matter
  - c) As an arbiter in all administrative disputes between you and your instructional supervisor
  - d) When you have initiated a change of grade
  - e) In all cases when the instructional supervisor is unavailable
  - f) In questions regarding faculty evaluations
  - g) In all cases involving requests from faculty regarding professional or administrative reassignment

### ***R. Faculty Meetings***

Division and departmental faculty meetings are held regularly on the Highlands Campus or on Zoom. Should you be unable to attend faculty meetings, you should make sure to communicate with the appropriate dean and/or instructional supervisor.

### ***S. Faculty Organizations***

To foster your professional growth and advancement, the College recognizes and encourages your participation in organizations. Participation in faculty organizations is not to interfere with staffing or instructional duties.

1. The Association of Florida Colleges (AFC) is the statewide organization providing professional development activities and representation to the Florida legislature. Membership is voluntary and widespread among College employees. The College chapter of AFC annually elects officers and conducts staff development, fundraising, and social activities periodically through the fall and spring terms. A faculty commission exists within the AFC that deals with faculty issues on the state level.

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Please see the following link for additional information: [southflorida.edu/faculty-staff/afc/become-member](https://southflorida.edu/faculty-staff/afc/become-member)

2. All full-time faculty members are automatically members of the Faculty Council. Faculty Council meets as needed during the fall and spring terms and serves as a forum to discuss faculty issues, present faculty concerns, and offer recommendations to the administration.

### ***T. Committees***

As a member of the full-time faculty, you are required to serve on at least one of the College's standing committees. These committees provide the faculty with the opportunity to participate in the governance of the institution. When warranted, ad hoc committees or task forces are developed to serve a special need, and faculty may be appointed to serve on these committees as well. The Learning and Student Success (LASS) Committee serves as a clearinghouse for all proposals having to do with student learning and, therefore, as an umbrella over the rest of the academic standing committees. It coordinates with its standing committees including Academic Quality, Curriculum, eLearning, and Student Success. Certain other committees have Collegewide or task-specific responsibilities: Staff and Professional Development, Academic Appeals, and Commencement (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 2180 – College Committees). The Committee Handbook found in Panther Central lists the College committees and their functions.

Faculty participation in institutional committees is essential to the governance and advancement of the College. Serving on at least one standing committee ensures that faculty contribute to decision-making processes that impact student learning, academic quality, and institutional growth. Active engagement in committee work strengthens collaboration, enhances academic initiatives, and upholds the College's commitment to excellence.

### ***U. Safety and Security***

SFSC strives to provide a safe and secure environment for students, staff, faculty, and visitors. All members of our community contribute to the success of our College's overall safety plan. As a faculty member, please report any suspicious activity or emergency concerns to officials. In the event you are faced with a 9-1-1 emergency, please call 9-1-1 first to get fire, EMS, or the police dispatched to your location. Then, as soon as possible, contact the College security personnel and inform the College of the emergency. Security can help direct emergency responders to your exact location, provide aid, and bring additional needed resources to your location. In the event your worksite does not have security, the front office serves as the point of contact. Below please find important contact numbers. It is suggested that you program these numbers into your cellphone to ensure you have an immediate connection should an emergency arise.

#### **Contact Numbers**

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|                                        |              |
|----------------------------------------|--------------|
| Emergency Services (EMS, Fire, Police) | 9-1-1        |
| Highlands Campus – Security            | 863-453-0806 |
| DeSoto Campus                          | 863-784-7040 |
| Hardee Campus                          | 863-784-7060 |
| Lake Placid Center                     | 863-784-7080 |

When describing the incident, please convey all the requested information including, at a minimum, the five items listed below:

- Nature of the incident
- Location of the incident
- Description of the person(s) involved
- Description of the property involved
- Type of assistance needed

### **What happens in an emergency? How will I be notified?**

When an emergency notification is necessary to inform our campus community, SFSC pushes safety alerts out through multi-delivery methods to ensure redundancy. Faculty, staff, and students may receive messages via:

- Public announcement speakers around campus
- Text messages
- Email
- College’s website

### **Classroom Safety Equipment**

By the main entrance door to each classroom, you should find several valuable safety items:

- **Campus Specific Emergency Response Quick Reference Guides** – These are colorful flip charts that provide contact information and direction on handling a variety of emergencies that may be encountered (e.g., fire, chemical spills, lockdown, utility failure, evacuation and rally points, and IT issues).
- **A classroom Egress Map** – This map provides the fastest and safest exit routes from your classroom.
- **A Safety Key** – The safety key is used to secure your classroom door from the inside in the event you need to lock down/shelter in place. The key is located in a black key box by the door frame (the key should be returned to its box after use).
- Some classrooms will also have a telephone which is contained within the smart podium.

### **Safety Escorts**

SFSC offers the program “Safe Rides.” This service provides free safety escorts for both students and faculty/staff within the boundaries of the College campus/site. To request

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an escort, please contact Security or your campus' main office. Services may be temporally delayed during unsafe weather conditions (lightning).

### **After Hours Access to Campus Facilities**

Standard College operations are conducted between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Friday. The College is closed to students and visitors outside of regular business hours, except for library usage, evening and weekend classes, and special events. Staff and others wishing to access the facilities outside the normal working hours must advise Security or the applicable satellite campus/center coordinator of their intent upon arrival. Arrangements will be made to grant access. If an employee is scheduled to regularly work after hours (e.g., custodians), notification is not required.

### **Safety Concerns**

If you notice a safety concern either on campus or in your classroom, feel free to reach out to any member of the campus safety and security team or the director of safety and risk management so the matter can be promptly addressed.

### **Additional Resources**

Faculty seeking additional information on SFSC's safety plans should consult the College's Employee Safety Manual or contact the director of safety and risk management.

## ***V. Resources***

### ***A. Library Services***

Located on the second floor of the Learning Resources Center on the Highlands Campus and at each campus/center, the library provides a wide range of services including an online catalog, electronic databases, interlibrary loan, reference assistance, and instruction. Primo ([https://sfsc-flvc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01FALSC\\_SFSC:SFSC](https://sfsc-flvc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01FALSC_SFSC:SFSC)), which includes the online catalog, Library Card, and electronic databases, can be accessed from any computer with internet access. Besides the substantial print collection available at the Highlands Campus, print collections are also available at the DeSoto Campus, the Hardee Campus, and the Lake Placid Center.

You can set up appointments for library instruction sessions to increase information literacy across the College. Library instruction sessions can be in your classroom or via Zoom at any of the campuses/center. You are also encouraged to send copies of your writing practices/assignments to the reference staff so they can better serve students. Click on this link to set up a session: <https://southflorida.libwizard.com/f/SFSC-Library-Instruction-Request>.

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Library or personal items may be put on reserve for your students to use in the library or for a variety length of time. Click on this link to request a reserve:

<https://southflorida.libwizard.com/f/SFSC-Library-Reserve-Request>.

Members of the faculty are issued a College photo ID, which is also their library card, and is needed to check out materials, access the electronic databases, and use interlibrary loan services.

A quality collection is the foundation of any library. The library staff welcomes recommendations of print and electronic learning materials to add to the collection or of those materials that should be removed because they are obsolete (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedures 2062 and 2064).

### ***B. Tutoring Services***

#### **Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC)**

Unlimited free tutoring is available for all SFSC students in math (all levels), writing (all classes), and Anatomy & Physiology. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are preferred and take priority. Appointments are available in-lab (all subjects) as well as by Zoom for math and writing. In addition, email appointments are available for writing.

**Schedule an Appointment:** [libcal.southflorida.edu/appointments/sfsctutoring](http://libcal.southflorida.edu/appointments/sfsctutoring)

#### **Math Lab**

Tutoring for all math courses  
Location: Y-103, Highlands Campus  
Phone: 863-784-7204

#### **Writing Lab**

Tutoring for all courses/writing assignments  
Location: Y-105, Highlands Campus  
Phone: 863-784-7519

#### **Science Lab**

Tutoring for Anatomy & Physiology  
Location: HSEC-212, Highlands Campus  
Phone: 863-784-7204

For additional questions about SFSC tutoring, contact Dr. Keith Cavedo, TLC coordinator, at 863-784-7404 or [cavedok@southflorida.edu](mailto:cavedok@southflorida.edu).

#### **Brainfuse**

Brainfuse provides tutoring on a variety of subjects and offers two hours of free tutoring per term. A “Tutoring” link appears on the course navbar in D2L Brightspace. From the drop-down menu, students can access **SFSC Tutoring** and **Brainfuse**. Students can request additional free hours through Brightspace Support at 863-784-7017 or [BrightspaceSupport@southflorida.edu](mailto:BrightspaceSupport@southflorida.edu).



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### **C. Multimedia Support**

The Office of Educational Technology's multimedia support staff provides technical support for classroom technology and general assistance with multimedia such as audio and video production. Information Technology (IT) supports teleconferencing, web conferencing, networking (internet), and College-owned computers and laptops. If needs are networking, teleconferencing, or computer-related, IT is the contact; if needs are multimedia-related (e.g., projectors, touch-screen boards, and SMART boards), the Office of Educational Technology is the responsible department.

1. Multimedia support staff provide planning and technical support for Smart classrooms and other media needs for all sites. Classroom support includes:
  - a) Troubleshooting of podium technical components
  - b) Assistance with presentations (ensuring that the presentation can be viewed from CD, DVD, computer, or USB device)
2. Media services and instructional technology staff are available Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Hours may vary depending on need. After-hours service is only available for emergencies that may happen in scheduled classes and events. Support for after-hours events requires prior scheduling with the IT Help Desk.
3. To place a service call during normal working hours, call ext. 7462 or email the Help Desk at [helpdesk@southflorida.edu](mailto:helpdesk@southflorida.edu). You will be required to provide your name, telephone number, location, SFSC property number, and the nature of the problem.

### **D. Information Technology (IT)**

The IT Office (IT) supports a wide range of selected hardware and software, including telephones, Microsoft Office, Outlook email, Banner, Panther Central, etc. Requests for new technology must be approved by IT. IT has a list of approved hardware and software. If you have software you would like to have installed on your SFSC computer or if there is a problem with your College-issued computer or any hardware in your classroom or office, contact [helpdesk@southflorida.edu](mailto:helpdesk@southflorida.edu).

IT supports teleconferencing, web conferencing, networking (internet), and College-owned computers and laptops.

### **E. Requisition of Materials/Supplies**

1. Each department is provided with an annual budget for materials and office supplies. You should participate in the budgetary request process through your instructional supervisor when the annual budget requests are being prepared early in the spring term. Special consideration shall be given to budgetary requests that are included in the College Strategic Plan or Unit Action Plan in response to assessment findings. Departments must stay within the allocated budgets for materials and supplies. If modifications to budgets are needed, the instructional supervisor will work with the deans to identify available resources.



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2. You would purchase office supplies in departmental accounts through Office Depot or the SFSC Bookstore, though you may find that many supplies are available through your instructional supervisor or payroll liaison. SFSC has negotiated deep discounts on most office supply products through the Office Depot corporate website ([business.officedepot.com](http://business.officedepot.com)). You should coordinate your office supply needs through your instructional supervisor.
3. Follow the College's procedure for procurement for all purchases (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 4040 – Purchases of Goods and Services). The controller sets the cut-off dates for making purchases and purchasing activity is limited when the Business Office does its closing procedures.
4. If the monetary value of materials exceeds \$750 or the supplies are needed for a project, follow the capital outlay process for the funding request. This process usually requires planning before the need arises and consideration in the Unit Action Plan for funding approval. See your instructional supervisor for further information.

### ***F. Work-Study Assistance***

You may request a work-study student to assist in your teaching lab or other areas where additional support is needed to maintain a safe and productive learning environment. For more information, contact the Career Development Center at 863-784-7410.

### ***G. Counselor Assistance***

1. The Student Services Office utilizes an early alert system to facilitate communication between faculty and support services regarding students who may need additional attention. Faculty can use this tool to report any issues affecting student success and can expect a response. Serious disciplinary concerns should be referred to the vice president for student services. Faculty are encouraged to keep detailed records of any student-related issues and to communicate with their instructional supervisor as needed.
2. SFSC partners with [BayCare](#) to offer free behavioral health services **to students**. The [BayCare Student Assistance Program](#) can be utilized for free via email or phone, 24 hours a day, seven days a week by visiting BayCare's [custom online portal](#), calling 800-878-5470, or emailing [BayCareSAP@baycare.org](mailto:BayCareSAP@baycare.org).
3. Florida's Online Learning Resource Center (FLVC.org) maintains a comprehensive, interactive, system where current and prospective students, parents, faculty advisors, and other interested individuals can receive information online. Academic advising, admissions information, career resources, financial aid information, and registration/records information are available. All Florida public and post-secondary institutions have a webpage. Anyone needing assistance in accessing this information may contact the Advising and Counseling Office.

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### ***H. Testing Center***

The South Florida State College (SFSC) Testing and Assessment Center provides testing services for SFSC students and faculty, as well as other educational institutions and community members.

The SFSC Testing and Assessment Center administers make-up tests, online tests, and other special exams at the request of an instructor. Exams are administered in a quiet, safe, and secure testing environment and are closely monitored by Testing Center staff. Contact the Testing Center for any testing needs: 863-784-7214 or [Testing@southflorida.edu](mailto:Testing@southflorida.edu).

### ***I. SFSC Website***

The following resources can be found on the SFSC website: [southflorida.edu](https://southflorida.edu)

#### **1. Daily Connection**

College information is routinely shared via Daily Connection and should be checked frequently. Daily Connection can be found on the SFSC website under the Faculty and Staff Tab.

#### **2. College Calendar**

The College Calendar is found on the SFSC Website under The College tab and includes dates for registration, drop period, withdraw, first and last day of classes, deadline for grade submission, and other important dates.

#### **3. College Catalog**

You are encouraged to become familiar with the SFSC Catalog where important dates and specific academic information are located. The College Catalog is found under the Current Students tab: [southflorida.edu/current-students/college-catalog](https://southflorida.edu/current-students/college-catalog).

#### **4. Student Handbook**

Policies concerning student behavior, rights, services, and requirements are explained in the SFSC Student Handbook. Please encourage students to access a copy online. All faculty should be familiar with the contents of this document. The Student Handbook is found under the Current Students tab: [southflorida.edu/current-students/student-handbook](https://southflorida.edu/current-students/student-handbook)

## **VI. Curriculum**

### ***A. Textbook Adoption***

The instructional supervisor is responsible for selecting/adopting texts each term. Fall term book adoptions are due by April 15, spring term book adoptions are due by October 15, and summer term book adoptions are due to the Bookstore by March 15. No fewer than 30 days before the beginning of each term, text adoptions will be listed by the Bookstore manager on the Bookstore website (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 4041 – Textbook Adoption).

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1. Textbooks (electronic or print) should:
  - a) Support achievement of course learning outcomes
  - b) Be adaptable to a variety of learning styles
  - c) Be consistent with reading levels appropriate for student use
  - d) Promote high-order thinking
  - e) Provide objectivity; be free of bias and prejudicial content
  - f) Represent a good value for the student, including consideration of Open Educational Resources (OER) as cost-effective alternatives when appropriate
2. Adoption of course texts shall use the following procedures and guidelines:
  - a) Faculty will work with the instructional supervisor in selection/adoption of texts each term.
  - b) You may not select alternate or additional texts without the permission of the instructional supervisor or dean.
  - c) Adopted textbooks must conform to college-level expectations and requirements, such as readability and content.
  - d) Faculty will consider student financial concerns in adopting texts and not require excessive numbers of texts. All items that are identified as required for each class, particularly items sold as part of a bundled package, need to be used in class by all instructors.
  - e) It is the responsibility of the faculty to communicate directly to the instructional supervisor all concerns and recommendations regarding text selection, changes, and availability.
3. Concerning textbooks, follow these guidelines:

You **may**:

  - a) Receive sample copies, instructor copies, or instructional materials
  - b) Receive royalties or other compensation from sales of textbooks that include the instructor's writing or work
  - c) Receive honoraria for academic peer review of course materials
  - d) Receive fees associated with activities such as reviewing, commenting on, or preparing support materials for textbooks or related support materials
  - e) Receive training in the use of course materials and learning technologies from textbook representatives

You **may not**:

  - a) Demand or receive any payment, loan, subscription, or advance
  - b) Receive a deposit of money, service, or anything of value, present or promised, in exchange for requiring students to purchase a specific textbook for coursework or instruction
  - c) Sell any sample copies, instructor copies, or instructional materials, if they are specifically marked as free samples, not for resale
  - d) Sell academic materials, including texts, supplementary texts, and other materials directly to students

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### ***B. Turnitin.com***

Turnitin.com is an online tool that assists faculty in promoting academic integrity by checking student work for originality. It compares submissions against a vast database of academic papers, websites, and other sources to identify potential plagiarism. Turnitin also provides feedback tools to support student learning and writing development. Please reach out to Educational Technology at ext. 7017 for more information.

### ***C. Course Development and Improvement***

Course development and improvement are a continuous process at the College. You, as well as instructional supervisors, deans, and other responsible personnel, are encouraged to maintain an ongoing review of the current offerings and recommend changes or new courses to meet student and community needs and improve student learning.

- **Curriculum Developments/Revisions/Deletions**

All proposals for courses, programs, or fee developments/changes/deletions must be processed through the coordinator of curriculum support (ext. 7488) and follow the procedure outlined below:

- a) Before developing/revising/deleting courses or programs, contact the Office of Curriculum Support.
- b) The instructional supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that all Curriculum Proposals are complete, accurate, documented, and follow all applicable policies and procedures.
- c) A member of Curriculum Support will assist faculty in the development and collection of information for the course or program approval forms.
- d) When developing/revising/deleting a new course or program, the necessary Curriculum Proposal forms must be completed and submitted to the Curriculum Support Office for standardization. The proposal forms will then be forwarded to the division dean and VPAA for review and approval before submission to the Curriculum Committee for consideration.
- e) After review and approval by the division dean and VPAA, proposals/forms will be sent to the Curriculum Committee for review and approval. The Curriculum Committee may approve, ask for additional information, or deny the application. The approved curriculum made by the committee will be sent to the VPAA and for LASS Committee's approval.
- f) Proposed curriculum will be submitted to the SFSC District Board of Trustees for final approval.

- **Course Changes**

- a) Course offerings are reviewed annually and fees biannually. This is the responsibility of the instructional supervisor, who submits to the dean an annual report specifying all recommendations regarding new course offerings and current fees.

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- b) The instructional supervisor may recommend the deletion of courses that have not been offered within five years.
- c) Course development must proceed following existing articulation agreements and applicable state statutes and regulations.

- **Procedure for Fee Requests**

The instructional supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that all fee proposals are complete, accurate, documented, and follow all applicable policies and procedures. **NOTE: Fee requests can only be recommended during the biannual fee review.**

- a) All laboratory and course fees must be approved through the biannual fee review approval process and go through the instructional supervisor, dean, controller, LASS Committee, and the District Board of Trustees.
- b) All new courses and programs, major modifications, and fee changes must be based on demonstrable needs, as determined by needs assessment information and identified support resources.
- c) Course offerings and fees are reviewed annually. This is the responsibility of the instructional supervisor, who submits to the dean an annual report specifying all recommendations regarding new course offerings and current fees.

### ***D. Special/Directed Independent Study (SIS/DIS)***

Special Independent Study (SIS) and Directed Independent Study (DIS) are used at the College under special conditions. You may be asked to specially design a DIS course when no regular College course is available. This allows a student to pursue special topics within an academic discipline under the leadership of a qualified member of the faculty. DIS courses are formally scheduled as any other course within a specific term and may be scheduled on a Cooperative Education (Co-op) basis. They are usually designated by the Common Course Number 2949, for example, PSY 2949 Co-op Education Training Assignment in Psychology, or by the number 2905, for example, HIS 2905, Directed Study in Local History.

A Special Independent Study course (SIS) involves a student enrolling in a regular college course on an independent basis. This is permitted when the student is unable to register for a needed course because of one of the following reasons:

- a) Medical or other problems prevent the student from attending regular classes.
- b) The student is in his or her last term and the course(s) needed for graduation are not being offered.
- c) The course for which the student registered was canceled due to insufficient enrollment and no other section is available.
- d) The student has experienced an unexpected event or problem beyond the student's control during the course itself and wishes to transfer to SIS to complete the course.

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The following conditions govern all Independent Study courses:

- a) A maximum of 15 semester hours may be earned by a student through Independent Study.
- b) A registration form obtained from the registrar must be submitted to the department instructional supervisor who selects a faculty member and submits it to the appropriate dean for approval.
- c) If you supervise an Independent Study, you must comply with the following regulations:
  - a. Complete and have the SIS/DIS form approved
  - b. List all assignments required of the student
  - c. Describe and follow the grading policy
  - d. Note all sessions in which attendance will be required
  - e. Ensure that the course outcomes are met
  - f. Submit the grade to the registrar in the approved manner
  - g. You will be paid according to the Salary Schedule for each DIS/SIS/Co-op student supervised.

### ***E. Cooperative Education (Co-op)***

Credit through Co-op experience is available at the College. All students desiring to engage in a Co-op project must work with the Career Development Center to obtain a faculty advisor or sponsor who agrees to work with them. You will be paid the Salary Schedule rate per student upon the completion of the Co-op experience. Proper authorization and approval must be obtained by processing the appropriate forms. For additional information contact the Career Development Center at ext. 7410.

The following procedures are required for a Co-op project:

1. The student and you must establish specific project objectives that are measurable and appropriate.
2. The employer or external supervisor must agree to evaluate the student's efforts during the project.
3. You must agree to several site or project visitations.
4. The Co-op proposal will contain specific procedures as to how and when the particular objectives will be met.
5. You must assume full responsibility for assuring that all Co-op forms are properly processed, completed, and signed by the appropriate personnel.
6. Students are limited to a maximum of seven Co-op credit hours. (Co-ops may be for 1, 2, or 3 credit hours each.)

### ***F. Credit by Experience***

Students may earn college or career credit through the process of Credit by Experience (see SFSC Administrative Procedure 3112 – Awarding Accelerated/Experiential Learning Credit).

1. The registrar pre-screens the student's request to determine the student's eligibility.

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2. A full-time faculty member reviews the student's portfolio or performance demonstration.
3. The instructor determines whether the student has the competencies or knowledge/learning outcomes of an existing college course. If you determine that a student has demonstrated a course's outcomes, you will recommend the award of the appropriate credit. Instructors who perform this service for students are paid a fee according to the Salary Schedule.

Other additional available mechanisms that the College uses to demonstrate competencies or knowledge/learning are College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, the Advanced Placement (AP) test, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, DANTES, as well as business and military programs included in the American Council on Education (ACE) Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Forces.

### **VII. Classroom Management**

Learning is the essence of the educational process. The creative and successful classroom, whether face-to-face or online or any combination thereof, is necessary to the core of SFSC's mission. SFSC's primary purpose is to ensure student learning by defining measurable outcomes and then designing an active, supportive, engaging, and rigorous learning environment for students.

D2L Brightspace is the name of the course management software at SFSC, and it makes sections available to students on the first day of class every term. On the first day of class, students should be able to participate fully in the class with all the appropriate materials.

#### **A. Registration**

Class rosters and class schedules can be obtained through Banner which can be accessed through Panther Central under Faculty > Faculty Dashboard.

The College Academic Calendar for each term lists the last day to drop, the first and last day of classes, and the day grades are due. The PDF of the Academic Calendar can be found on the SFSC website under the tab, The College.

Courses during the fall and spring terms are offered in eight-, 12- and 16-week sessions. The summer term consists of 12- and six-week formats. All flex session courses are subject to the following regulations:

1. Flex session courses are scheduled by the instructional supervisor and are published online.
2. Overloads are voluntary, according to Procedure 5220 – Faculty Workload, so the instructional supervisor must find an instructor before allowing students to enroll in any section offered as an overload.



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**B. Grading and Grade Changes**

You can access your grade roster(s) through Banner in Panther Central under Faculty > Faculty Dashboard. You must enter grades into Banner each term according to the deadlines published in the SFSC Catalog and the Academic Calendar and by the Office of the Registrar.

1. The instructional faculty is responsible for issuing grades. Assign grades following the College grading policy seen below as stated in the course syllabus. The grades that you may assign are as follows:

| <u>Grade</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Definition</u> | <u>Quality Points</u> |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| A            | 90-100         | Excellent         | 4                     |
| B            | 80-89          | Good              | 3                     |
| C            | 70-79          | Average           | 2                     |
| D            | 60-69          | Passing           | 1                     |
| F            | 0-59           | Failure           | 0                     |
| I            |                | Incomplete        |                       |
| W            |                | Withdrawal        |                       |
| N            |                | Audit             |                       |
| S/P          |                | Satisfactory/Pass |                       |
| U            |                | Unsatisfactory    |                       |
| N/A          |                | Non-Attending     |                       |

2. Use the following guidelines in assigning grades:
  - a) A, B, C, D, and F Grades: Students will be assigned these grades consistent with their performance based upon the course grading policy and the quality points as noted above.
  - b) I Grades: Complete an Incomplete Grade Report for each I grade and turn it into the Records Office (available on Panther Central under Faculty Forms).
    - i. Students who have participated throughout the term but are unable to complete all course requirements (such as a term paper, project, or final exam) because of illness or other extenuating circumstances may request a grade of incomplete.
    - ii. If a student receives an I grade, they will have until the end of the next term to make up the work in the course as outlined in the Incomplete Grade Report. If a faculty member does not enter grades by the time grades are due, an "I" grade will be entered, and then the faculty member must submit an Incomplete grade form for each student with the appropriate grade posted.
    - iii. If the student does not complete the assigned work, the grade is automatically changed to an F at the end of the next term.
    - iv. Incomplete grades in competency-based programs are governed by the appropriate departmental policies.



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- c) N Grades: The grade of N is used in completely competency-based courses (normally, clock-hour occupational courses) and may not be assigned in college credit courses. The “N” signifies that the student is making progress toward completing the competencies of the course but has not reached a point at which a grade may be assigned. It is non-punitive in that it does not count against a student’s GPA. For athletic purposes only, it will be calculated as a C when determining eligibility for student athletic activities.
  - d) W Grades: A grade of W is assigned when a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the course. You may withdraw a student for academic or attendance reasons. Students may withdraw up to the Last Day to Withdraw.
    - i. Students in their third attempt in a course must be assigned a grade of A, B, C, D, or F. These students cannot be withdrawn.
    - ii. If a student has not attended a class by the last day to drop classes with a refund or change to audit status, the instructor must report the student as a No-show.
    - iii. You may withdraw a student for excessive absences. Refer to the SFSC Catalog for additional details.
  - e) X Grades: The grade of X is used as the final grade for a student who has taken the course for audit. Students may register to audit a course or may switch to audit up to the Last Date to Change from Credit to Audit published in the Academic Calendar. After this date, students will be locked into credit or audit status. You must determine the requirements for audit students. These may range from no requirements to attendance and/or ungraded assignments.
  - f) S and U Grades: “S” stands for satisfactory and “U” for unsatisfactory. These grades may only be assigned in non-credit courses such as those taught in Corporate and Community Education and certain occupational courses such as clinical experiences.
  - g) A., B., C., D., F.: Grades followed by a period are awarded in a college preparatory class.
3. Only the faculty of record is authorized to initiate changes in permanent grades (unless the faculty of record is no longer available).
- a) A grade becomes permanent once the registrar rolls it into the academic records.
  - b) Permanent grades may be changed by the faculty of record using the Change of Permanent Grade form. This form is used when 1. the grade was entered in error (if you incorrectly calculated or marked the grade) or 2. for other reasons which you carefully document in writing on the Change of Permanent Grade form. (Available on Panther Central under Faculty Forms)
  - c) All requests for changes in permanent grades must be submitted to the instructional supervisor and appropriate dean before submission to the VPAA for final approval.
  - d) The College administration reserves the right to deny requests for permanent grade changes due to insufficient or inappropriate justification.

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- e) Requests for changes in permanent grades will not be honored for providing a student an opportunity not provided to all students in the course such as retaking exams or submitting late assignments.

If you have any problems entering grades or accessing the Incomplete Grade Report, you should contact your instructional supervisor and the Registrar's Office.

### ***C. Course Syllabus***

A course syllabus represents a contract between the College and the students in the course. It is an important document that should be prepared carefully, thoroughly, and reviewed/updated every term the course is taught.

1. Your division may have a template to follow. Check with your department chair for any required elements.
2. A copy of the written syllabus must be sent to the instructional supervisor and appropriate dean every term for review.
3. Components of a syllabus may include:
  - a. The course prefix; number; title; meeting days, times, and location; the instructor's name, office location, office hours, telephone extension, and email address
  - b. All textbooks and related course materials, required or recommended
  - c. The catalog description
  - d. The class attendance policy and tardy policy
  - e. The grading and examination policy, including applicable cheating and plagiarism policies
  - f. Information detailing all class assignments and due dates
  - g. Method for evaluation assignments
  - h. A statement describing the calculation of the final grade
  - i. The College policy regarding visitors in the classroom
  - j. The College policy regarding observance of religious holidays
  - k. The students with disabilities policy
  - l. Other content as prescribed by the appropriate dean
4. There are several other optional information items that faculty may wish to include in a syllabus (or a syllabus packet)
  - a. List significant College dates for the term, e.g., holidays and last date to withdraw with a W
  - b. Explain the purpose of the course, e.g., how it fits into the student's overall education program and/or life
  - c. List important, relevant web addresses
  - d. Explain how this class prepares the student for employment
  - e. List any guest speakers
  - f. Smoking, eating, and drinking prohibitions
  - g. Lay the groundwork for Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)

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5. Announce your preferred method(s) of communication (phone, F2F, email) with contact numbers and email
  - a. Publish a communication commitment that you will respond to emails/voicemails/discussion items within 48 hours
  - b. Notify students that communication within the eLearning environment is not private
  - c. List possible consequences for inappropriate communications or online behavior
  - d. Describe how any syllabus changes will be communicated to students
  - e. Include a copyright statement on instructional materials, properly crediting the source and ensuring that all copyrighted materials are used in compliance with copyright laws. Refer to Procedure #1140 – Copyright Compliance for further guidance.

### ***D. Accessibility***

In conjunction with the disabilities specialist, instructors are called upon to make their instructional materials as accessible as possible. By utilizing the principles of Universal Design, instructors can design curriculum that gives all students an equal opportunity to succeed.

To help satisfy the requirement to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and meet College Policy 1.10 – Equal Opportunity, there are tools available to assist all instructors with meeting this critical obligation:

- D2L Brightspace is guided by the most up-to-date accessibility standards. There is an Accessibility Checker in the D2L Brightspace Editor that guides instructors on how to improve their content to meet these standards.
- The Ally accessibility tool is integrated in every course in D2L Brightspace. It provides alternative accessible formats that can be downloaded, instructor feedback which guides faculty on how to improve the accessibility of their course content, and institutional reports.
- ReadSpeaker provides text to speech in D2L Brightspace's Content, Discussions, Dropboxes, and Quizzes.
- There is an accessibility checker in Word. An information guide can be found in Panther Central under Public Relations Resources.
- Additional guides are also available in Panther Central under Faculty>Educational Technology>Instructor Tool Kit.

### ***E. Class Rosters***

You can obtain class rosters through Panther Central under the Faculty Tab > Faculty Services Home Page. Instructors should check the roster against the students present.

1. Any student present, whose name does not appear on the roster, should be directed to contact the registrar before the next class meeting. You may not allow unregistered students to attend class.

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2. If a student's name appears on the roster but the student is not in class, the student should be reported as a no-show during the appropriate no-show reporting period, typically the second week of the term.
3. No visitors are authorized to be in the classroom, including children of students.
4. You should recheck rosters after the first few weeks of class because of add/drop. For each section, ensure that the D2L Brightspace list agrees with the Banner list. Any missing or extra students must be reported both to the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Educational Technology.

### ***F. Guest Speakers***

If you plan to invite an outside lecturer or resource person to your class, approval must be obtained before final arrangements are made. Refer to Procedure 3010 – Cultural Programming Guidelines on Freedom of Expression. Refer also to Procedure 3011 – Academic Freedom.

### ***G. Classroom Access***

If you need a classroom opened on the Highlands Campus, contact Campus Security at 863-453-0806. Someone will be dispatched immediately to unlock the door. At DeSoto, Hardee, or Lake Placid, check with the campus/center coordinator for instructions.

If a key is necessary, the appropriate instructional supervisor or campus/center coordinator will request that one be issued. You will sign for the key and be responsible for it. As a keyholder, you are responsible for securing the classroom at the end of each session. You will be assessed a \$50 per key fee for any loss.

### ***H. Use of Copyright Material***

Copyrighted materials may not be published for distribution outside the educational classroom or for sale (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 1140 – Copyright Compliance).

You may author or develop materials on your own time and with your resources and retain full ownership.

Any materials or products developed in whole or in part with College resources or time may be totally or in part the property of the College. Many materials developed for the College are developed under a special contract or Letter of Intent and, therefore, become work-for-hire. If you have questions, you should consult with the vice president for administrative services and/or review SFSC Administrative Procedure 1160—Materials Produced by Employees.

All materials and substances produced by employees on campus and/or during duty hours and/or with the use of College materials and equipment shall become the property of the SFSC District Board of Trustees unless other arrangements have been made in advance with

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the College vice president for administrative services. If the materials are to be marketed, this cost, copyright fees, as well as royalties and other income will be shared according to the District Board of Trustees Policy 1.16. This Policy does not cover the daily lesson plans and educational materials developed by faculty to teach students the curriculum of their courses nor does it cover the materials that faculty generally share freely or offer to students in class or tutoring sessions and outside-of-class subject-specific teaching sessions.

### ***I. Academic Freedom***

At South Florida State College, you are free to pursue and convey knowledge in your area of special training and expertise, subject to College, the state of Florida, and federal policies, procedures, law, and the code of ethics for professional educators (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 3011 – Academic Freedom).

### ***J. Confidentiality***

You should exercise extreme caution and the utmost discretion in discussing or releasing confidential information, particularly Personally Identifiable Information (PII). The right to privacy of an employee or student is protected by federal and state laws and is addressed in SFSC Procedure 2157 – Identity Theft Prevention Program. These laws provide for the release of confidential information only when a court order is obtained.

PII, including but not limited to Social Security numbers, addresses, phone numbers, and other personal identifiers, should never be disclosed without proper authorization. When handling PII, ensure it is securely stored and transmitted, and only share it with authorized personnel when necessary for legitimate educational or administrative purposes.

For instance, your evaluations may not be shared with persons not directly involved in the evaluation process. Nor may the information be shared concerning conduct, disciplinary action, medical history, or other matters of an extremely personal nature. Unpublished telephone numbers and addresses may not be released except to the appropriate officials of law enforcement or court agencies. All other information on file is open to public inspection—applications, references, verification of employment, transcripts, placement papers, certifications and licenses, salaries, contracts, and other records related to employment.

For students, confidentiality is protected under the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Part 99 – Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, and Florida Statute 1002.22. All of these are specific about what information may or may not be released concerning a student and define “directory information” which may be unconditionally released without the prior consent of a student unless written notice is filed with the Registrar’s Office asking that this information be kept confidential. Transcripts are released only upon the written consent of the student.

Please do not release any information. All requests for student information should be referred to the Office of the Registrar (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 2154 –

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Student Records). Take care to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of all student records and PII.

Official student records, supporting documents, and other student files shall be accessed only by members of the College staff employed for that purpose. You may not disclose a student's records (grades, scores, etc.) to anyone else without approval from the student. Grades must never be publicly posted.

The Student Services Office has developed the Student Release of Information form to allow students to authorize the release of their records. If a student requests that you discuss their grades or other academic information with a third party, such as a parent, the Student Services Office can email you the form upon request.

Faculty should be aware that some students may be under the age of 18, dual-enrolled, or participating in early college programs while still living at home. Even in these cases, the Student Release of Information form must be completed before discussing a student's records with anyone other than the student.

### ***K. Shredding***

Any hard copies that include personally identifiable information (PII) must be properly disposed of. Small shredders or Crown secure boxes for shredding are located throughout each campus and center. If you have a large shredding request, a Retention Destruction Request form must be completed with the dean's signature per SFSC Administrative Procedure 2150. This form can be found in Panther Central under Forms.

### ***L. Release of Information to the Public***

All news releases for print and electronic media are produced or approved by the Office of Community Relations and Marketing. Should a reporter contact you, refer them to the director of institutional communications in the Office of Community Relations and Marketing or the Office of the President.

### ***M. Bulletin Boards and Electronic Notices***

Obtain approval in advance from the Office of Community Relations and Marketing if you wish to post information to any bulletin board or publish information on the College digital sign. Flyers, posters, and other such documents not bearing the approval stamp will be removed from the bulletin boards.

## **VIII. STUDENT ISSUES**

### ***A. Students with Disabilities***

1. Students with documented disabilities must be accommodated. You will receive official notification of any students in your sections who must receive accommodation and which accommodations they need. If you need to discuss any of these

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accommodations, contact the disability specialist in the Advising and Counseling Office.

2. The following statement should be included in all course syllabi policy statements: In keeping with the College's open-door philosophy and per Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, SFSC provides reasonable accommodations for educational and training opportunities for otherwise qualified individuals with documented disabilities. It is the responsibility of the student or prospective student to self-identify with the disabilities specialist and provide appropriate documentation. Individuals who chose not to self-identify may be ineligible for services and/or accommodations. Services include but are not limited to admission and registration assistance, orientation, note-taking, tutoring, test accommodations, readers, audiobooks, course substitutions, and assistive technology. For more information, contact the disabilities specialist through the website, [southflorida.edu](http://southflorida.edu); email at [disabilities.specialist@southflorida.edu](mailto:disabilities.specialist@southflorida.edu); voice/TDD 863-784-7176; or in person at the Catherine P. Cornelius Center Student Services and Classroom Complex (Building B), Suite B152, Highlands Campus.

### ***B. Student Discipline***

Upon registration, students are entitled to various freedoms and/or rights provided that their behavior is following College procedures and does not result in disruption or disturbance. Student rights, responsibilities, and Code of Conduct may be found in the SFSC Student Handbook under Students Rights and Responsibilities.

SFSC has established regulations to ensure an environment conducive to learning, to ensure the safety and welfare of members of the College community, to encourage students in the development and practice of good citizenship and self-discipline, and to protect the property and equipment of the College.

As a member of the faculty, you are responsible for establishing and maintaining discipline standards in your classroom that conform to the general student discipline standards for the College as outlined in the Student Handbook. Students who violate these standards are subject to the sanctions. Students are guaranteed due process rights. Every effort should be made to protect the dignity of the student whenever possible. Use good judgment and follow best practices if you have to discipline a student. Serious problems should be reported to the instructional supervisor and the vice president for student services and appropriate records maintained.

If you need assistance removing a student from the instructional area, you should call Security and/or notify the center coordinator, instructional supervisor, or dean. Phones are available on the classroom's electronic podium. Remain in the instructional area and maintain control. When it is necessary to prohibit a student with disruptive behavior from returning to the instructional area, send the student to the vice president for



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student services who is responsible for action regarding disciplinary matters. The vice president for student services will meet with you to determine the next steps.

If a student is not satisfied with your disciplinary decision, they may submit a written request for the Student Judicial Committee to review and adjudicate the case, with involvement from the instructional supervisor and the vice president for student services. Every effort should be made to resolve student issues at the lowest possible level.

### ***C. Academic Appeals***

The Academic Appeals Committee reviews requests for exceptions to the College's academic procedures, SFSC Administrative Procedure 3103 – Academic Appeals, when there are factors beyond the student's control. The Committee hears requests for waiving academic suspensions, approving tuition refunds, and approving withdrawal from a class after the deadline. Students have a maximum of six months following the completion of the class to file the appeal paperwork available from the Office of the Registrar. Students will be promptly notified of the decision.

### ***D. Student Government Association***

The College offers a variety of student activities and events governed by the Student Government Association (SGA). The student body annually elects SGA officers who plan and oversee a variety of clubs, SGA activities, and an intramural program. You may serve as an advisor to both SGA and various campus clubs.

The advisor to the Student Government Association provides leadership and guidance in the development of policies, practices, and procedures that pertain to the student body. The duties of the club advisor are to supervise and provide structure to the student club or organization, preferably in a minimal way. Students are responsible for running the clubs/organizations. The SGA pays club advisors a stipend for their services. You are encouraged to serve as club advisors and to participate in SGA-sponsored activities.

### ***E. Field Trips***

When students request to be off-campus as official representatives of the College, they may be excused from class and permitted to make up all work missed when the following criteria are satisfied (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 3285 – Students Representing the College at off-Campus Activities).

1. To sponsor a field trip, you must complete the following steps:
  - a) Complete the Student Activity Clearance Request form and submit it to the instructional supervisor and dean for approval. This form should be submitted three weeks before the proposed trip. (Forms can be found in Panther Central's Student Tab under College Life). This form must include all participating students (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 7031 – Field Trips).



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- b) Complete the Leave Request form and check the box for Temporary Duty Leave.
  - c) If a College-owned vehicle is to be used, you must request its use three weeks before the field trip. The availability of College-owned vehicles is not guaranteed (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 2073 – Use of College Vans).
2. Driving a College Vehicle – Please see the Employee Handbook for requirements
3. Communication about the Trip:
  - a) All students traveling in a College vehicle must secure and file an Off-Campus College Activities Agreement Release form per SFSC Administrative Procedure 7031 – Field Trips. The instructor or supervisor organizing the trip must file a list of the students traveling in the vehicle with the Controller’s Office and the vice president for student services.
  - b) This list should be left with your instructional supervisor/dean and/or payroll liaison, and provide your instructional supervisor/dean and/or payroll liaison with the information about your destination, purpose, departure/return times, and driver information.

## IX. PERSONNEL

### ***A. Observance of Religious Holidays***

Faculty and students are allowed to miss course time for religious observances or holidays.

- The students must notify you at least seven days in advance of the day(s) to be missed. Students are supposed to complete assignments before they go, but you have discretion on how you handle this.
- You should plan for class coverage if regularly scheduled classes are in session.
- You may have to take leave for such religious observations not scheduled as official College holidays if you are missing class or meetings; see SFSC Administrative Procedure 5220 – Workload for Full-Time Instructional Faculty.
- Information about the observance of religious holidays must be included in the course syllabus. If students believe that their religious rights have been denied, they may use the academic appeals process to state their case and seek a resolution.

### ***B. Travel Pay***

Full-time faculty are eligible for travel pay if required to travel to another location other than their designated work location. You will be reimbursed for the mileage per College policy. Travel for adjuncts is not reimbursed.

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### ***C. Leave Requests***

College policies and procedures govern all leave requests (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 5130 – Leaves of Absence). The Leave Request form is used for Assignments for Temporary Duty (official College business), Annual Leave, Sick Leave, Personal Leave, Compensatory Time, and Personal Leave (no pay). If an employee is not at work during duty time or is out of the College district on official College business, the employee must have an approved Leave Request form on file. This includes taking students on field trips or to athletic/student activities/events, participating in professional development seminars, attending meetings, etc. This also includes time spent with immediate family members who are sick at home. The approved Leave Request form for temporary duty leave ensures insurance coverage in the case of an accident. The relevant policies and procedures affecting faculty leave are as follows:

1. All leave requests are to be processed through the instructional supervisor and appropriate dean using a Leave Request form.
2. The instructional supervisor and/or the appropriate dean must look at all requests and determine if they are approved based on the needs of the division and department.
3. In all cases, you must assist in arranging for a suitable substitute, when necessary, or plan acceptable activities for the classes affected by the leave request.
4. The payroll liaison will maintain a copy of leave requests to maintain a record of faculty location in case of an emergency.
5. Instructional supervisors or payroll liaisons will ensure that all leave requests are properly documented and have been submitted promptly.
6. All full-time employees are allowed to use four days of sick leave as personal leave per calendar year.
7. The Leave Request form is utilized when you will be away from your teaching assignment, during posted office hours, or out of the College district. This includes reporting illness or personal leave, attending a workshop, seminar, meeting, or any other College-approved activity.

### ***D. Title IX***

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Sex discrimination is a continuum of behaviors ranging from sexual harassment and intimidation to sexual assault, all of which are prohibited by Title IX.

Consistent with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, South Florida State College does not discriminate against students, faculty, staff, or guests of the College based on sex in any of its programs or activities, including but not limited to, educational programs, employment, and admission.

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You can find more information regarding Title IX and the College's procedures regarding Title IX here: [southflorida.edu/community/title-ix-sexual-harassment](https://southflorida.edu/community/title-ix-sexual-harassment)

As a faculty member, you are considered a 'mandatory reporter' under Title IX, meaning you have a responsibility to report any disclosures of sexual harassment, discrimination, or misconduct made by a student. If a student shares information about such an incident with you, you are required to provide the details to the Title IX coordinator. This ensures that the College can take appropriate action to support the student and address the situation in compliance with federal law. Please call the Title IX coordinator at 863-784-7039 with any questions.

### ***E. Harassment***

SFSC policy expressly prohibits all forms of harassment. SFSC is committed to providing an educational and work environment free from harassment based on such factors as race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. The College will not tolerate harassment of its employees or students by employees, students, or vendors and will attempt to protect its students and employees from non-student or non-employee harassment when reported. The College policies related to harassment are designed to provide a safe educational environment while administrative procedures provide for the enforcement of the policies.

### ***F. Sexual Misconduct***

The College is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of sexual misconduct including sexual harassment, public indecency, voyeurism, battery, and assault. If an employee is a perpetrator of sexual misconduct, he or she is subject to termination. Victims should contact the director of human resources for assistance and support. Each employee will receive an email to participate in the online training to prevent sexual harassment. Contact the Human Resources Office for more information.

Students charged with or suspected of such behavior are sent to the vice president for student services for review of the accusations. Faculty members should direct student victims to the vice president for student services for assistance and support.

### ***G. Drug-Free Workplace and Campus***

The College is a drug-free workplace and campus. Use of illegal drugs or alcohol by students, visitors to College sites, individuals at College activities and events, and employees will not be tolerated. Additional information about the drug-free workplace/campus program is available at the Human Resources Office.

### ***H. Tobacco-Free College***

SFSC is a tobacco-free College (refer to SFSC Administrative Procedure 1170). The use, distribution, or sale of tobacco or any object or device intended to simulate that use is prohibited in all indoor and exterior areas of each campus, center, and other property

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(including vehicles) under the control of the College. College employees, students, visitors, contractors, and all others are expected to comply with this policy and the Florida Indoor Clean Air Act at all times.

Employees and students share responsibility for compliance and enforcement of the Tobacco-Free College policy. Should an employee encounter an individual who is violating the policy, please use courtesy and respect to remind them of the policy. Should an employee note individuals repeatedly violating the policy, they should notify the vice president for student services or the director of human resources as appropriate. Violation of the policy by vendors or guests should be reported to the vice president for administrative services.

Assistance is available for individuals who use tobacco products and wish to quit. The SFSC Tobacco-Free website includes links to educational materials, information on current cessation classes, and other resources at [southflorida.edu/?s=tobacco+free](https://southflorida.edu/?s=tobacco+free).

### ***I. Employee Work-Related Injuries, Accidents, and Incidences***

It is the responsibility of the **EMPLOYEE** to report any accidents/incidents to the appropriate supervisor, chair, or dean. Failure to report an accident/incident can result in disciplinary measures. If the injury does not require emergency medical treatment, please contact the Office of Security at 863-453-0806 or your campus/center coordinator to complete an accident/incident report and contact Human Resources at 863-784-7419 to receive authorization to seek non-emergency medical treatment, if needed. If the employee cannot report the accident/incident, it is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor to report to Security. Failure to handle a Workers' Compensation incident promptly can result in severe penalties for the College.

#### **IF MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY.**

1. If possible, have someone stay with the injured person until assistance (EMS) arrives.
2. Notify Security immediately at 863-453-0806 (24-hour assistance).
3. Notify the supervisor of the injured employee.
4. Notify the Human Resources Office at 863-784-7419. Appropriate staff will complete the necessary paperwork for medical treatment under Workers' Compensation.

#### **NON-EMERGENCY INJURY**

1. The employee must notify the appropriate supervisor immediately.
2. The employee must then report the injury to Security to complete an accident/incident report. **Even if medical treatment is not required, an injury must be reported to Security.**

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3. If the injury requires medical attention on a non-emergency basis, the Human Resources Office will give the employee the authorization forms to seek College-approved medical treatment.

### **WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS AFTER HOURS OR ON OTHER CAMPUSES**

Employees assigned to work in areas outside of the Highlands Campus must report all accidents to Human Resources as soon as possible at 863-784-7419.

1. If the accident takes place after 5 p.m., follow the above directions under medical treatment.
2. The Human Resources Office must be notified of the incident no later than the morning of the following business day. Notification may be made by either the employee or the employee's supervisor, depending on the circumstances.
3. Appropriate paperwork will be completed by Human Resources staff once notification is received.

All reported accidents will be investigated. After the Workers' Compensation carrier reviews the claim investigation, the claim may not be deemed work-related and could be denied.

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

### ***APPENDIX A***

#### GENERAL JOB DESCRIPTION FOR INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY

Faculty at South Florida State College are professionals whose duties and responsibilities are established following State Board of Education Regulations and Board of Trustees Policy. These duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

#### **I. INSTRUCTION**

Each instructor shall:

- a. Plan and carry out assigned instructional duties
- b. Teach the number of hours required by the faculty load procedure
- c. Supervise students and resolve classroom problems in accordance with College policies and procedures
- d. Demonstrate proficiency in the utilization of the delivery techniques appropriate to the classroom setting, subject matter, and resources available
- e. Be responsible for evaluating student learning and objective achievement
- f. Explain to the student in writing the methods and procedures of the grading process to be used in the course or program taught
- g. Provide the students with prompt feedback and interpretation of the grading methods and assessments used in the course or program taught
- h. Use assessment results for planning and course or program revision.

#### **II. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND DEVELOPMENT**

Each instructor shall:

- a. Possess appropriate credentials as required by Board Policy and/or accreditation criteria
- b. Maintain current knowledge of developments in the discipline/program areas taught
- c. Maintain current knowledge of teaching strategies and related instructional technology

#### **III. ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each instructor shall:

- a. Maintain appropriate records as prescribed by College policies and procedures
- b. Maintain regularly scheduled office hours per College procedures
- c. Adhere to and enforce the administrative policies and procedures of the College
- d. Exercise good judgment and care in the use of materials and equipment designated for use in the course or program taught
- e. Assist in the development and implementation of assessment and planning activities of the College

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

### **IV. PERSONAL CONDUCT**

Each instructor shall:

- a. Adhere to the moral and ethical standards for instructors in accordance with state regulations and College procedures
- b. Demonstrate appropriate dress and grooming standards
- c. Demonstrate good attendance and punctuality

### **V. FACULTY/COLLEGE/COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Each instructor shall:

- a. Attend Collegewide academic meetings and official functions scheduled by the administration
- b. Serve on committees as assigned
- c. Maintain good relationships with community agencies and groups and participate when appropriate

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

## APPENDIX B

### ACRONYM LIST

|       |                                                |
|-------|------------------------------------------------|
| AA    | Associate in Arts                              |
| ABE   | Adult Basic Education                          |
| ACE   | American Council on Education                  |
| ADA   | Americans with Disabilities Act                |
| AFC   | Association of Florida Colleges                |
| AHS   | Adult High School                              |
| APA   | Administrative Program Assessment              |
| AP    | Advanced Placement                             |
| APP   | Apprenticeship                                 |
| AS    | Associate in Science                           |
| BAS   | Bachelor of Applied Science                    |
| CC    | Career Certificate                             |
| CCC   | College Credit Certificate                     |
| CCSSE | Community College Survey of Student Engagement |
| CIP   | Classification of Instructional Program        |
| CIT   | Center for Innovative Teaching                 |
| CLEP  | College Level Examination Program              |
| CLT   | Classic Learning Test                          |
| Co-op | Cooperative Education                          |
| CWE   | Continuing Workforce Education                 |
| D2L   | Desire2Learn Brightspace                       |
| DAG   | Data Analysis Group                            |
| DBOT  | District Board of Trustees                     |
| DE    | Dual Enrollment                                |
| DIS   | Directed Independent Study                     |
| EA/EO | Equal Access/Equal Opportunity                 |
| EAP   | Employer Assistance Program                    |
| EL    | Electronic Learning                            |
| EPA   | Educational Program Assessment                 |
| ESOL  | English for Speakers of Other Languages        |
| FERPA | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act      |
| FLDOE | Florida Department of Education                |
| FRS   | Florida Retirement System                      |
| FWS   | Federal (College) Work Study                   |
| FWEP  | Florida Work Experience Program                |
| GED   | General Educational Development                |
| GENED | General Education                              |
| GID   | Generated Identification Number                |
| GPA   | Grade Point Average                            |
| GPS   | Guide to Personal Success (Orientation)        |



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|         |                                                                     |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GSS     | Graduate Satisfaction Survey                                        |
| HLC     | Higher Learning Commission                                          |
| HR      | Human Resources                                                     |
| IB      | International Baccalaureate                                         |
| IPEDS   | Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System                      |
| IT      | Information Technology                                              |
| LASS    | Learning and Student Success Committee                              |
| LDA     | Last Date of Attendance                                             |
| LINCC   | Library Information Network for Cooperative Content                 |
| LOI     | Letter of Intent                                                    |
| LRC     | Learning Resource Center                                            |
| MOFAC   | Museum of Florida Arts and Culture                                  |
| NCCBP   | National Community College Benchmarking Project                     |
| NACUBO  | National Association of College and University Business Officers    |
| PERT    | Postsecondary Educational Readiness Test                            |
| PSAV    | Post-Secondary Adult Vocational                                     |
| RSVP    | Retired and Senior Volunteer Program                                |
| SACSCOC | Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges |
| SAP     | Satisfactory Academic Progress                                      |
| SBE     | Small Business Exchange                                             |
| SCNS    | Statewide Course Numbering System                                   |
| SEI     | Student Evaluation of Instruction                                   |
| SENSE   | Survey of Entering Student Engagement                               |
| SIS     | Special Independent Study                                           |
| SOS     | Student Opinion Survey                                              |
| SPD     | Staff and Professional Development                                  |
| SPOL    | Strategic Planning Online                                           |
| TABE    | Test of Adult Basic Education                                       |
| TAG     | The Artists Group                                                   |
| TLC     | Tutoring and Learning Center                                        |
| UAP     | Unit Action Plan                                                    |
| UC      | University Center                                                   |
| VPAA    | Vice President for Academic Affairs                                 |
| VPSS    | Vice President for Student Services                                 |

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

## **APPENDIX C**

### **New Faculty Checklist**

#### **Office**

| Subject    | Contact                              | Status |
|------------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Location   | Dean                                 |        |
| Furniture  | Maintenance                          |        |
| Zoom Phone | IT and Educational Technology Office |        |
| Computer   | IT                                   |        |
| Printer    | Department Chair/IT                  |        |

#### **Technology Access**

| Subject                         | Contact                       | Status |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Email                           | IT                            |        |
| Panther Central/D2L Brightspace | Educational Technology Office |        |
| Mailbox                         | Business Office               |        |
| Copier                          | Division Admin. Assistant     |        |
| Podium Key                      | Educational Technology Office |        |

#### **Supplies**

| Subject                      | Contact                           | Status |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Textbook                     | Chair                             |        |
| Keys (office and classrooms) | Maintenance                       |        |
| Door Name Plate              | Business Office                   |        |
| Badge                        | Human Resources                   |        |
| Business Cards               | Community Relations and Marketing |        |
| Office Supplies              | Chair                             |        |

#### **Information**

| Subject                      | Contact                     | Status |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Syllabi                      | Chair                       |        |
| Schedule                     | Chair                       |        |
| Utilization Chart            | Chair                       |        |
| Load Sheet                   | Chair                       |        |
| Evaluations                  | Chair                       |        |
| Faculty Handbook             | Chair                       |        |
| Employee Handbook            | Chair                       |        |
| IT Usage Manual              | Chair                       |        |
| Safety and Security Handbook | Chair                       |        |
| Forms Tab                    | Chair                       |        |
| Parking Sticker              | Cashier and Human Resources |        |
| Faculty ID Card              | Registrar                   |        |
| Use of Facilities            | Chair                       |        |
| SPD                          | Chair                       |        |
| Library Access               | Librarian                   |        |
| Benefits                     | Human Resources             |        |
| Annual Service Report        | Chair                       |        |

## SFSC HANDBOOK for FULL-TIME and ADJUNCT FACULTY

### ***APPENDIX D*** **ADDITIONAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

#### **Bookstore Discount**

All employees are entitled to a 10% discount at the College's bookstore. The discount is applied manually at the register so it will not apply automatically for online purchases. Online purchases can be refunded and then charged manually at the register to receive the employee discount.

#### **Panther Card**

After the 90-day evaluation period, full-time and long-term part-time employees may apply for a Panther Spirit "charge card" which can be used at Kelly's Bistro by The Bay, dining at the Hotel Jacaranda, and the Bookstore (except for books). Charges will be deducted from your monthly pay. Applications are available in the Human Resources Office.

#### **Discount for Lunch at the Hotel Jacaranda**

Employees receive a 10% discount on meals and can use their Panther Spirit card. You can "charge" your meal against your paycheck if you get a Panther Card; see above.

#### **Cultural Series**

The College brings a broad spectrum of music, art, and drama presentations to the campus throughout the year. Contact the Box Office for performance information. Full-time employees are entitled to two tickets at half-price for selected events. If you have any further questions, contact the Box Office at 863-784-7178.

#### **Dental**

SFSC's Dental Hygiene Clinic is located in Building T on the Highlands Campus. The facility provides private treatment to the public and is handicap accessible. The clinic is primarily a teaching and learning classroom, where Dental Hygiene students practice to become competent professionals. Services are performed by students under direct supervision of a licensed dentist and licensed dental hygienists and may proceed at a slower pace than at a licensed dentist's office. Student/instructor interaction requires many stopping points but also assures your treatment meets the highest standards of care. As a patient, you should expect your appointment to take up to three hours, and it may take more than one appointment to complete needed treatment.

Service is by appointment only. For more information, call the front desk at 863-784-7020. If you must cancel for any reason, please give them a 24-hour notice so that the student can find another patient. They depend on treating a patient every session to complete graduation requirements.

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### **Cosmetology**

The Cosmetology Program offers a variety of services, including facials, at affordable prices. To schedule an appointment, call 863-784-7143. Please note that the phone is answered only during clinic hours.

### **Cashier's Office**

The Cashier's Office is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and facilitates the:

- Issuance of parking decals
- Lost and found
- Collection of payment

### **Athletic Facilities**

The Panther Fitness Center is accessible to all SFSC students and staff during operating hours Monday through Thursday each week. Entrance is contingent upon signing in with the Fitness Center monitor and showing a College ID.

Staff may use the fitness center during non-operational hours in a buddy system format with approval from the SFSC athletic director. Staff interested in this option should contact Athletic Director Rick Hitt at 863-784-7036 to gain approval and access.

## **Bettering Myself**

### **“Bettering Myself” by Ottessa Moshfegh**

My classroom was on the first floor, next to the nuns’ lounge. I used their bathroom to puke in the mornings. One nun always dusted the toilet seat with talcum powder. Another nun plugged the sink and filled it with water. I never understood the nuns. One was old and the other was young. The young one talked to me sometimes, asked me what I would do for the long weekend, if I’d see my folks over Christmas, and so forth. The old one looked the other way and twisted her robes in her fists when she saw me coming.

My classroom was the school’s old library. It was a messy old library room, with books and magazines splayed out all over the place and a whistling radiator and big fogged-up windows overlooking Sixth Street. I put two student desks together to make up my desk at the front of the room, next to the chalkboard. I kept a down-filled sleeping bag in a cardboard box in the back of the room and covered the sleeping bag with old newspapers. Between classes I took the sleeping bag out, locked the door, and napped until the bell rang. I was usually still drunk from the night before. Sometimes I had a drink at lunch at the Indian restaurant around the corner, just to keep me going—sharp wheat ale in a squat, brown bottle. McSorley’s was there but I didn’t like all that nostalgia. That bar made me roll my eyes. I rarely made my way down to the school cafeteria, but when I did, the principal, Mr. Kishka, would stop me and smile broadly and say, “Here she comes, the vegetarian.” I don’t know why he thought I was a vegetarian. What I took from the cafeteria were prepackaged digits of cheese, chicken nuggets, and greasy dinner rolls.

I had one student, Angelika, who came and ate her lunch with me in my classroom.

“Miss Mooney,” she called me. “I’m having a problem with my mother.”

She was one of two girlfriends I had. We talked and talked. I told her that you couldn’t get fat from being ejaculated into.

“Wrong, Miss Mooney. The stuff makes you thick in the middle. That’s why girls get so thick in the middle. They’re sluts.”

She had a boyfriend she visited in prison every weekend. Each Monday was a new story about his lawyers, how much she loved him, and so forth. She always had the same face on. It was like she already knew all the answers to her questions.

I had another student who drove me crazy. Popliasti. He was a wiry, blond, acned sophomore with a heavy accent. “Miss Mooney,” he’d say, standing up at his desk. “Let me help you with the problem.” He’d take the chalk out of my hand and draw a picture of a cock-and-balls on the board. This cock-and-balls became a kind of insignia for the class. It appeared on all their homework, on exams, etched into every desk. I didn’t mind it. It made me laugh. But Popliasti and his incessant interruptions, a few times I lost my cool.

“I cannot teach you if you act like animals!” I screamed.

“We cannot learn if you are crazy like this, screaming, with your hair messy,” said Popliasti, running around the room, flipping books off window ledges. I could have done without him.

But my seniors were all very respectful. I was in charge of preparing them for the SAT. They came to me with legitimate questions about math and vocabulary, which I had a hard time answering. A few times in calculus, I admitted defeat and spent the hour jabbering on about my life.

“Most people have had anal sex,” I told them. “Don’t look so surprised.”

And, “My boyfriend and I don’t use condoms. That’s what happens when you trust somebody.”

Something about that old library room made Principal Kishka keep his distance. I think he knew if he ever set foot in there, he’d be in charge of cleaning it up and getting rid of me. Most of the books were useless

mismatched sets of outdated encyclopedias, Ukrainian bibles, Nancy Drew. I even found some girly magazines, under an old map of Soviet Russia folded up in a drawer marked Sister Koszinska. One good thing I found was an old encyclopedia of worms. It was a coverless, fist-thick volume of brittle paper chipped at the corners. I tried to read it between classes when I couldn't sleep. I tucked it into the sleeping bag with me, plied open the binding, let my eyes roll over the small, musty print. Each entry was more unbelievable than the last. There were roundworms and horseshoe worms and worms with two heads and worms with teeth like diamonds and worms as large as house cats, worms that sang like crickets or could disguise themselves as small stones or lilies or could stretch their jaws to accommodate a human baby. What is this trash they're feeding children these days, I thought. I slept and got up and taught algebra and went back into the sleeping bag. I zipped it up over my head. I burrowed deep down and pinched my eyes closed. My head throbbed and my mouth felt like wet paper towels. When the bell rang, I got out and there was Angelika with her brown-bag lunch saying, "Miss Mooney, there's something in my eye and that's why I'm crying."

"Okay," I said. "Close the door." The floor was black-and-piss-colored checkerboard linoleum. The walls were shiny, cracking, piss-colored walls.

I had a boyfriend who was still in college. He wore the same clothes every single day: a blue pair of Dickies and a paper-thin button down. The shirt was western style with opalescent snaps. You could see his chest hair and nipples through it. I didn't say anything. He had a nice face, but fat ankles and a soft, wrinkly neck. "Lots of girls at school want to date me," he said often. He was studying to be a photographer, which I didn't take seriously at all. I figured he would work in an office after he graduated, would be grateful to have a real job like that, would feel happy and boastful to be employed, a bank account in his name, a suit in his closet, et cetera, et cetera. He was sweet. One time his mother came to visit from South Carolina. He introduced me as his "friend who lives downtown." The mother was horrible. A tall blonde with fake boobs.

"What do you use on your face at night?" is what she asked me when the boyfriend went to the toilet.

I was thirty. I had an ex-husband. I got alimony and had decent health insurance through the Archdiocese of New York. My parents, upstate, sent me care packages full of postage stamps and decaffeinated teas. I called my ex-husband when I was drunk and complained about my job, my apartment, the boyfriend, my students, anything that came to mind. He was remarried already, in Chicago. He did something with law. I never understood his job, and he never explained anything to me.

The boyfriend came and went on weekends. Together we drank wine and whiskey, romantic things I liked. He could handle it. He looked the other way, I guess. But he was one of those idiots about cigarettes.

“How can you smoke like that?” he’d say. “Your mouth tastes like Canadian bacon.”

“Ha ha,” I said from my side of the bed. I went under the sheets. Half my clothes, books, unopened mail, cups, ashtrays, half my life was stuffed between the mattress and the wall.

“Tell me all about your week,” I said to the boyfriend. “Well Monday I woke up at eleven-thirty a.m.,” he’d start. He could go on all day. He was from Chattanooga. He had a nice, soft voice. It had a nice sound to it, like an old radio. I got up and filled a mug with wine and sat on the bed.

“The line at the grocery store was average,” he was saying.

Later: “But I don’t like Lacan. When people are so incoherent, it means they’re arrogant.”

“Lazy,” I said.

“Yeah.”

By the time he was done talking we could go out for dinner. We could get drinks. All I had to do was walk around and sit down and tell him what to



order. He took care of me that way. He rarely poked his head into my private life. When he did, I turned into an emotional woman.

“Why don’t you quit your job?” he asked. “You can afford it.”

“Because I love those kids,” I answered. My eyes welled up with tears. “They’re all such beautiful people. I just love them.” I was drunk.

I bought all my beer from the bodega on the corner of East Tenth and First Avenue. The Egyptians who worked there were all very handsome and complimentary. They gave me free candy—individually wrapped Twizzlers, Pop Rocks. They dropped them into the paper bag and winked. I’d buy two or three forties and a pack of cigarettes on my way home from school each afternoon and go to bed and watch *Married...with Children* and *Sally Jessy Raphael* on my small black-and-white television, drink and smoke and snooze. When it got dark I’d go out again for more forties and, on occasion, food. Around ten p.m. I’d switch to vodka and would pretend to better myself with a book or some kind of music, as though God were checking up on me.

“All good here,” I pretended to say. “Just bettering myself, as always.”

Or sometimes I went to this one bar on Avenue A. I tried to order drinks that I didn’t like so that I would drink them slower. I’d order gin and tonic or gin and soda or a gin martini or Guinness. I’d told the bartender—an old Polish lady—at the beginning, “I don’t like talking while I drink, so I may not talk to you.”

“Okay,” she’d said. “No problem.” She was very respectful.

Every year, the kids had to take a big exam that let the state know just how badly I was at doing my job. The exams were designed for failure. Even I couldn’t pass them.

The other math teacher was a little Filipina who I knew made less money than me for doing the same job and lived in a one-bedroom apartment in Spanish Harlem with three kids and no husband. She had some kind of

respiratory disease and a big mole on her nose and wore her blouses buttoned to the throat with ridiculous bows and brooches and lavish plastic pearl necklaces. She was a very devout Catholic. The kids made fun of her for that. They called her the “little Chinese lady.” She was a much better math teacher than me, but she had an unfair advantage. She took all the students who were good at math, all the kids who back in the Ukraine had been beaten with sticks and made to learn their multiplication tables, decimal places, exponents, all the tricks of the trade. Whenever anyone talked about the Ukraine, I pictured either a stark, gray forest full of howling black wolves or a trashy bar on a highway full of tired male prostitutes.

My students were all horrible at math. I got stuck with the dummies. Popliasti, worst of all, could barely add two and two. There was no way my kids could ever pass that big exam. When the day came to take the test, the Filipina and I looked at each other like, Who are we kidding? I passed out the tests, had them break the seals, showed them how to fill in the bubbles properly with the right pencils, told them, “Try your best,” and then I took the tests home and switched all their answers. No way those dummies would cost me my job.

“Outstanding!” said Mr. Kishka when the results came in. He’d wink and give me the thumbs-up and cross himself and slowly shut the door behind him.

Every year it was the same.

I had this one other girlfriend, Jessica Hornstein, a homely Jewish girl I’d met in college. Her parents were second cousins. She lived with them on Long Island and took the LIRR into the city some nights to go out with me. She showed up in normal jeans and sneakers and opened her backpack and pulled out cocaine and an ensemble suitable for the cheapest prostitute on the Vegas strip. She got her cocaine from some high-school kid in Bethpage. It was horrible. Probably cut with powdered laundry detergent. And Jessica had wigs of all colors and styles: a neon-blue bob, a long blonde Barbarella-type do, a red perm, a jet-black Japanese one. She had one of those colorless, bug-eyed faces. I always felt like Cleopatra next to Opie when I went out with her. “Going clubbing” was always her request, but I couldn’t stand all that. A night under a colored lightbulb over twenty-dollar cocktails, getting

hit on by skinny Indian engineers, not dancing, a stamp on the back of my hand I couldn't scrub off. I felt vandalized.

But Jessica Hornstein knew how to "bump and grind." Most evenings she bid me adieu on the arm of some no-face corporate type to show him "the time of his life" back at his condo in Murray Hill or wherever those people lived. Occasionally I took one of the Indians up on his offer, stepped into an unmarked cab to Queens, looked through his medicine cabinet, got some head, and took the subway home at six in the morning just in time to shower, call my ex-husband, and make it to school before the second bell. But mostly I left the club early and got myself on a seat in front of my old Polish lady bartender, Jessica Hornstein be damned. I dipped a finger in my beer and rubbed off my mascara. I looked around at the other women at the bar. Makeup made a girl look so desperate, I thought. People were so dishonest with their clothes and personalities. And then I thought, Who cares? Let them do what they want. It's me I should worry about. Now and then I cried out to my students. I threw my arms in the air. I put my head on my desk. I asked them for help. But what could I expect? They turned around at their desks to talk to one another, put on their headphones, pulled out their books, potato chips, looked out the window, did anything but try to console me.

Oh, okay, there were a few fine times. One day I went to the park and watched a squirrel run up a tree. A cloud flew around in the sky. I sat down on a patch of dry yellow grass and let the sun warm my back. I may have even tried to do a crossword puzzle. Once, I found a twenty-dollar bill in a pair of old jeans. I drank a glass of water. It got to be summer. The days got intolerably long. School let out. The boyfriend graduated and moved back to Tennessee. I bought an air conditioner and paid a kid to carry it down the street and up the stairs to my apartment. Then my ex-husband left a message on my machine: "I'm coming into town," he said. "Let's have lunch, or dinner. We can have drinks. Next week. No big deal," he said. "Talk."

No big deal. I'd see about that. I dried out for a few days, did some calisthenics on the floor of my apartment. I borrowed a vacuum from my neighbor, a middle-aged gay with long, acne-scarred dimples, who eyed me like a worried dog. I took a walk to Broadway and spent some of my money on new clothes, high-heeled shoes, silk panties. I had my makeup done and bought whatever products they suggested. I had my hair cut. I got my nails

polished. I took myself out to lunch. I ate a salad for the first time in years. I went to the movies. I called my mom. "I've never felt better," I said. "I'm having a great summer. A great summer holiday." I tidied up my apartment. I filled a vase with bright flowers. Anything good I could think to do, I did. I was filled with hope. I bought new sheets and towels. I put on some music. "*Bailar*," I said to myself. Look, I'm speaking Spanish. My mind is fixing itself, I thought. Everything is going to be okay.

And then the day came. I went to meet my ex-husband at a fashionable bistro on MacDougal Street where the waitresses wore pretty dresses with white lace-trimmed collars. I got there early and sat at the bar and watched the waitresses move around so gingerly with their round, black trays of colored cocktails and small plates of bread and bowls of olives. A short sommelier came in and out like the conductor of an orchestra. The nuts on the bar were flavored with sage. I lit a cigarette and looked at the clock. I was so early. I ordered a drink. A scotch and soda. "Jesus Christ," I said. I ordered another drink, just scotch this time. I lit another cigarette. A girl sat down next to me. We started talking. She was waiting, too. "Men," she said. "They like to torture us."

"I have no idea what you're talking about," I said, and turned around on my stool.

Then it was eight o'clock and my ex-husband walked in. He spoke to the maître d' and nodded in my direction and followed a girl to a table by the window and just waved me over. I took my drink.

"Thank you for meeting me," he said, removing his jacket.

I lit a cigarette and opened the wine list. My ex cleared his voice but said nothing for a while. Then he did his usual hem and haw about the restaurant, how he'd read about the chef in whatever magazine, how the food on the plane was awful, the hotel, how the city had changed, the menu was interesting, the weather here, the weather there, and so on. "You look tired," he said. "Order whatever you want," he told me, as though I was his niece, some babysitter character.

"I will, thank you," I said.

A waitress came over and told us the specials. My ex charmed her. He was always kinder to the waitress than he was to me. "Oh, thank you. Thank you so much. You're the best. Wow. Wow, wow, wow. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

I made up my mind to order then pretend to go to the bathroom and walk out. I took off my dangly earrings and put them in my purse. I uncrossed my legs. I looked at him. He didn't smile or do anything. He just sat there with his elbows on the table. I missed the boyfriend. He'd been so easy. He'd been very respectful.

"And how's Vivian?" I asked.

"She's fine. She got a promotion, busy. She's okay. Sends her regards."

"I'm sure. Send her my regards, too."

"I'll tell her."

"Thanks," I said.

"You're welcome," he said.

The waitress came back with another drink and took our order. I ordered a bottle of wine. I thought, I'll stay for the wine. The whiskey was wearing off. The waitress went away and my ex got up to use the men's room, and when he got back he asked me to stop calling him.

"No, I think I'll keep calling," I said.

"I'll pay you," he said.

"How much money are we talking?"

He told me.

“Okay,” I said. “I’ll take the deal.”

Our food came. We ate in silence. And then I couldn’t eat anymore. I got up. I didn’t say anything. I went home. I went back and forth to the bodega. My bank called. I wrote a letter to the Ukrainian Catholic school. Dear Principal Kishka, I wrote. Thank you for letting me teach at your school.

Please throw away the sleeping bag in the cardboard box in the back of my classroom. I have to resign for personal reasons. Just so you know, I’ve been fudging the state exams. Thanks again. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

There was a church attached to the back of the school—a cathedral with great big mosaics of people holding up a finger as though to say, Be quiet. I thought I’d go in there and leave my letter of resignation with one of the priests. Also I wanted a little tenderness, I think, and I imagined the priest putting his hand on my head and calling me something like “my dear,” or “my sweet,” or “little one.” I don’t know what I was thinking. “My pet.”

I’d been up on bad cocaine and drinking for days. I’d roped a few men back to my apartment and showed them all my belongings, stretched out flesh-colored tights and proposed we take turns hanging each other. Nobody lasted more than a few hours. The letter to Principal Kishka sat on the bedside table. It was time. I checked my reflection in my bathroom mirror before I left the house. I thought I looked pretty normal. That couldn’t be possible. I put the last of the stuff up my nose. I put on a baseball cap. I put on some more ChapStick.

On the way to church I stopped at McDonald’s for a Diet Coke. I hadn’t been around people in weeks. There were whole families sitting down together, sipping on straws, sedate, mulling with their fries like broken horses at hay. A homeless person, man or woman I couldn’t tell, had gotten into the trash by the entrance. At least I wasn’t completely alone, I thought. It was hot out. I wanted that Diet Coke. But the lines to order made no sense. Most people were huddled in random patterns, gazing up at the menu boards, eyes glazed over, touching their chins, pointing, nodding.

“Are you in line?” I kept asking them. Nobody would answer me.

Finally I just approached a young black boy in a visor behind the counter. I ordered my Diet Coke.

“What size?” he asked me.

He pulled out four cups in ascending order of size. The largest size stood about a foot high off the counter.

“I’ll take that one,” I said.

This felt like a great occasion. I can’t explain it. I felt immediately employed with great power. I plunked my straw in and sucked. It was good. It was the best thing I’d ever tasted. I thought of ordering another one, for when I’d finished that one. But that would be exploitive, I thought. Better let this one have its day. Okay, I thought. One at a time. One Diet Coke at a time. Now off to the priest.

The last time I’d been in that church was for some Catholic holiday. I’d sat in the back and done my best to kneel, cross myself, move my mouth at the Latin sayings, and so forth. I had no idea what any of it meant, but it had some effect on me. It was cold in there. My nipples stood on end, my hands were swollen, my back hurt. I must have stunk of alcohol. I watched the students in their uniforms line up for the Eucharist. The ones who genuflected at the altar did it so deeply, wholly, they broke my heart. Most of the liturgy was in Ukrainian. I saw Popliasti play with the padded bar you knelt on, lifting it up and letting it slam down. There were beautiful stained glass windows, a lot of gold.

But when I got there that day with the letter, the church was locked. I sat down on the damp stone steps and finished my Diet Coke. A shirtless bum walked by.

“Pray for rain,” he said.

“Okay.”

I went to McSorley’s and ate a bowl of pickled onions. I tore the letter up.

The sun shone on.





*Director, Human Resources  
Ext. 7336*

Vinita Prabhakar  
2148 N. Olivia Dr.  
Avon Park, FL. 33825

Date: February 12, 2026

Dear Ms. Prabhakar,

This letter is your official notification that effective today, February 12, 2026 you have been placed on Administrative Leave with Pay till the end of your annual contract. This is also your official notice that your contract will not be renewed. During this period, you will not have any teaching responsibilities.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email at [kestersd@southflorida.edu](mailto:kestersd@southflorida.edu) or call me at 863-784-7336.

Thanks

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "DKJ", is written over the printed name.

Donald L. Kesterson Jr.  
Director, Human Resources

**SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**PROCEDURE NO.** 1093

**TITLE:** CORRECTING THE ACTIONS OF FACULTY PERSONNEL

**BASED ON POLICY:** 1.09 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

**OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:** VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE  
SERVICES/HUMAN RESOURCES

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I. Purpose:

To establish a system for correcting the actions of faculty employees that is uniform and progressive in nature

II. Procedure:

- A. The dean of the division of the faculty member will notify the employee in writing of a problem which may necessitate corrective action. Copies will be sent to the faculty member's supervisor and the director, human resources. Based on consultation with the faculty member, the faculty member's dean, the director, human resources, and/or any other appropriate College and/or non-College personnel, the dean will notify the faculty member in writing of the action (if any) being taken. Any corrective action taken must be consistent with College policy/procedure and State Board of Education regulations.
- B. The following factors will be considered by the dean prior to making the specific recommendation for corrective action:
  1. The seriousness and circumstances of the particular offense
  2. The past conduct record of the employee
  3. The employee's length of service
  4. The lapse of time since any last misconduct for which disciplinary action was taken
  5. Whether there are mitigating or aggravating circumstances connected with the breach of rule or offense
  6. The College's practice in similar cases in the past
- C. The normal steps that will be taken by the College in correcting a faculty employee's behavior is as follows:

1. Counseling: discussing with the employee the reported or observed behavior that is in violation of policy, procedure, etc. and advising the employee of the impact of this violation (i.e., why Board policy must be followed). Expected behavior or performance and a reasonable timeline for change should be clarified at this initial session.
  2. After a reasonable passage of time, the supervisor shall reassess the situation and perform one of the following two acts:
    - a. Assure the employee that his or her performance or behavior is satisfactory.
    - b. Tell the employee that his or her performance or behavior has not improved and that formal procedures will be initiated unless it is corrected within a specific time. A written note of this counseling shall be made and the note shall be kept by the supervisor and reviewed when completing the individual's next annual evaluation.
  3. A written reprimand by the dean or the director, human resources. A copy of the reprimand will be placed in the employee's personnel file indicating the nature of the violation, date, and supervisor's name. The employee must sign and date this document to ensure a clear understanding of the issues and consequences of further errant behavior.
  4. Termination of employment may be an alternative in the corrective actions process if the actions of the employee are serious enough in nature or improvement is not noted.
- D. In the event that a faculty member disagrees with a corrective action being taken, the employee may file a grievance in accordance with the South Florida State College grievance procedures, (see Procedure 1090).

**HISTORY: Last Revised: 11/5/19**

**Adopted:** 5/17/85

**Reviewed:** 2/28/05, 2/28/08, 6/27/12

**Revised:** 2/6/02, 11/5/19



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## CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR FACULTY

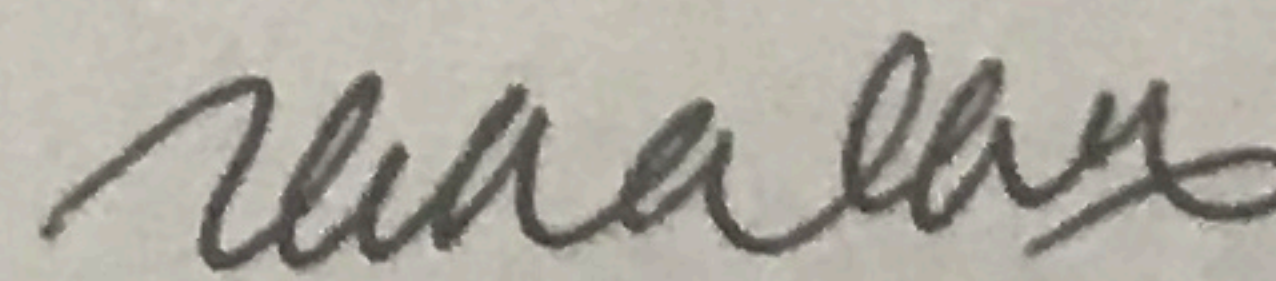
STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF HIGHLANDS} ss.

THIS CONTRACT is entered into between the District Board of Trustees of South Florida State College, Florida, hereinafter called the Board, and Vinita Prabhakar, hereinafter called the Faculty Member.

In consideration of the mutual agreements, covenants, terms and conditions herein contained, the parties hereto agree as follows:

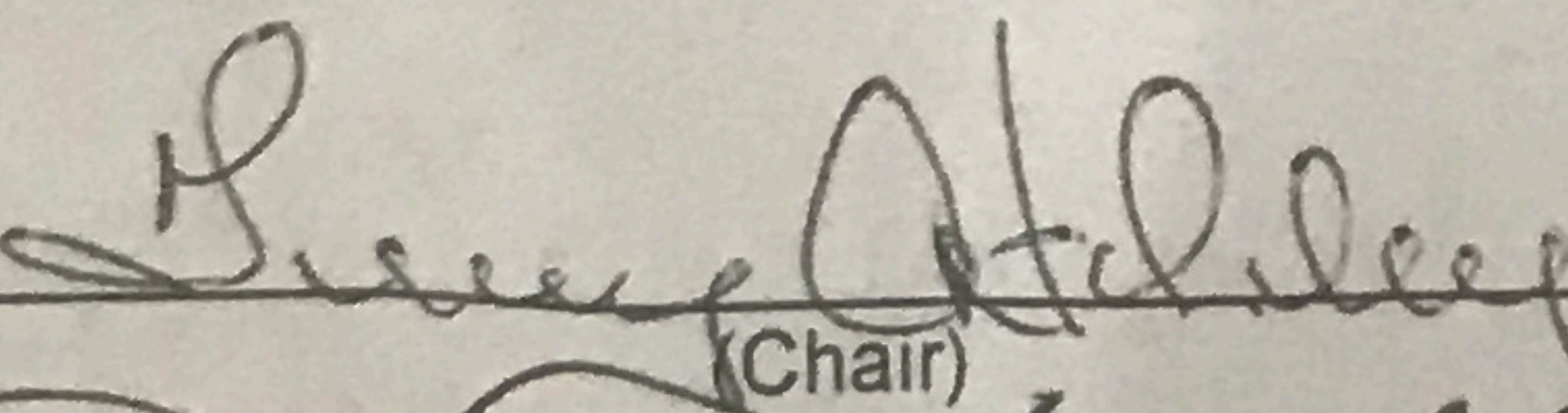
1. The Board agrees to employ the Faculty Member and the Faculty Member agrees to accept the position of Instructor, English in the South Florida State College for a period of n/a calendar months or 190 duty days beginning August 08, 2025 and ending July 31, 2026, and to pay the Faculty Member for services rendered not less than \$57,564.00 annually in monthly installments.
2. The Faculty Member is required to: maintain appropriate SFSC professional standards and perform the duties of the attached position description in a satisfactory manner.
3. The Faculty Member agrees to perform those services required for the aforementioned position in a location designated by the Board, or by the President as authorized by the Board, and not to be absent from duty without authorized leave or release from this contract by the Board. In the event prescribed services have not been completed on the final day of this contract term, the Board may withhold the last month's salary until duties have been performed.
4. The Board may suspend or dismiss the Faculty Member for cause pursuant to law and rules of the State Board of Education.
5. It is expressly understood and agreed by and between the parties hereto that neither the Faculty Member nor the Board owes any further contractual obligation to the other after the contract ending date set forth in Paragraph 1, except for the Faculty Member's obligation to perform uncompleted duties in accordance with paragraph 3. The Faculty Member understands that unless and until she shall receive a continuing contract under and by virtue of the provisions of Rule 6A-14.0411, F.A.C., she shall have probationary status and no legal cause shall be required of the Board in the event that the Faculty Member is not re-employed by the Board after July 31, 2026.
6. This contract shall include and be subject to all applicable laws enacted by the Legislature and all administrative rules adopted or promulgated by the State Board of Education, the District Board of Trustees of South Florida State College and each other state or local governmental agency having jurisdiction to take action affecting the operations of this College. Furthermore, this contract shall include and be subject to the right of such governmental bodies to lawfully make modifications, additions, and deletions to those laws, rules, regulations, policies and guidelines during the term of this contract.

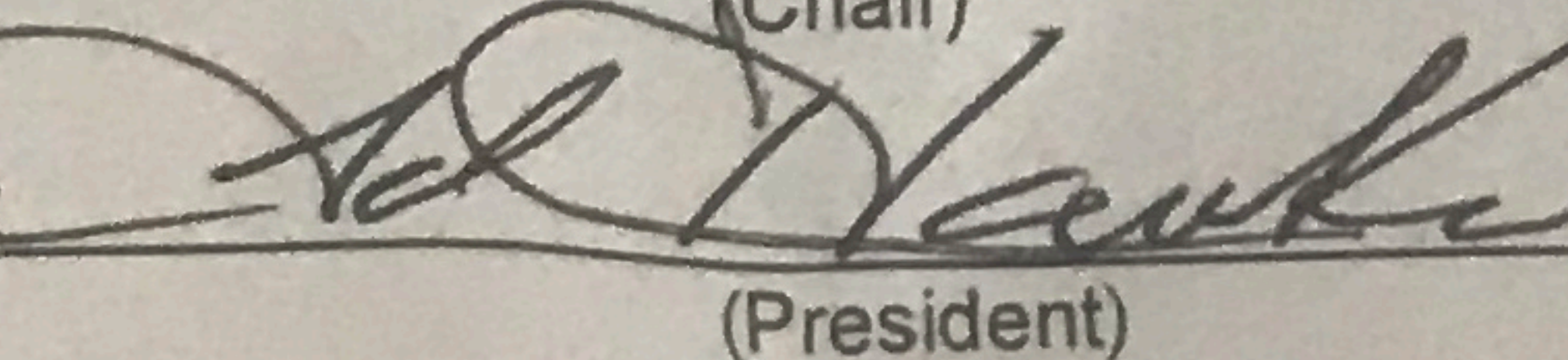
Given under our hands and seals this 27 day of August, 2025 at Avon Park, Florida.



(L.S.)  
(Faculty Member)

The District Board of Trustees of South Florida State College, Florida.

By   
(Chair)

Attest   
(President)

### SEAL OF THE BOARD

This contract form is to be executed on appointment of the Faculty Member by the Board or as soon thereafter as the Faculty member meets the aforementioned conditions of this contract. After being duly signed by the Faculty Member and representatives of the Board, one copy is to be retained by the Board and one by the Faculty Member.

This contract form must be signed and returned to the Board by not later than August 26, 2025.



Hi Michelle,

As we discussed this past Friday, I hope to provide a sense for the relevance of the story “Bettering Myself” by Ottessa Moshfegh to my ENC 1102 F2F reading list (I do not use this story for the online version of the course). Moshfegh was awarded the 2013 Plimpton Prize for Fiction, the 2016 Pen/Hemingway Award, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and a finalist for the National Critics Circle Award. I only bring up these credentials to illustrate that she has been a known entity in the world of modern short fiction.

In the first week of ENC 1102 I convey to my students that we will read a variety of stories in our Fiction Unit – many classics, some modern; some that they might dislike, and others that might challenge, discomfort, or even disturb. And to consider that we read literature to examine the nature of language, the shapes of narrative, to learn about people through characters and – perhaps most importantly – to learn about ourselves. I have great respect for my students as a whole and, in particular, their proven abilities to rise to the occasion of learning from artifacts beyond their ken, beyond the scope of their own experience.

By the time the students come to “Bettering Myself” they have already encountered the exquisite restraint of Hemingway, the controlled verbosity of Carver, and the melancholy strangeness of both Kafka and Marquez.

To prepare the students for this story, I warn that it is one that can pose real challenges: there is strong language, alcohol and drug use, scenes of exaggerated dysfunction, and the first page will likely be the most shocking for its willful bluntness. I also tell them that fiction can reward a persevering and patient reader, who makes it past that first page, resulting in a neurological ‘productive struggle’ - that crucial dopamine surge that follows overcoming academic or social hurdles. I get a lot of blank stares and cacophonous crickets in that moment. But we return to this idea in the subsequent classes.

A summary, if I may: The narrator of “Bettering Myself” is Ms. Mooney – morally flawed, ruthlessly candid, all manner of caution cast to the winds – a teacher in an East Village Catholic High School serving mostly Ukrainian immigrants, a general purpose substance abuser, obviously depressed, and even more dislocated in her life circumstances and her ability to cope with them. She has a college age boyfriend and an ex-husband who volunteers to pay her if she will just stop calling him when she’s drunk (she ultimately takes him up on the offer when it proves acceptably substantial). Not a winning formula.

The narrative is a kind of Picasso-esque portrait that asks the reader if there is any story value to be found in the unvarnished descent of a character to even further disrepair and disrepute

than the opening sequences suggest. Yet somehow the narrative finds humor (albeit dark) in this sticky seam.

Will the story ultimately deliver on the promise of its title? Will Ms. Mooney take the opportunity to *better herself* or has she become sufficiently accustomed to her situation that she cannot conceive any alteration in its static dysfunction? It turns out she does try, though not remotely in the ways we might suggest or condone. Here is a character entirely aware of her own degradation. She is meant to be repulsive. But if she also garners some small measure of sympathy from the reader, how does the story achieve this? These are some of the ideas and questions that guide our discussion. In a technical analysis, students focus on the wayward, unpredictable first-person voice and compare it to the narrator of Raymond Carver's short story "Cathedral" (male) who has proven himself – over the course of the story – to be biased against blind people, bigoted, cravenly mean to his wife, yet manages to (begrudgingly) win a reader's sympathy at the very end of the tale. How does an unlikable male narrator compare to an unlikable female narrator? The fellow from "Breaking Bad" comes up a lot when we have this discussion.

Despite the challenging nature of "Bettering Myself" (or, one could argue, because of...), class discussions around the story have always been spirited, collegial and productive, as was this semester's edition. We discussed the story on Tuesday Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> using the following in-class activities:

First, we created an idea map on the board. As a free-association activity to unearth important gut reactions, I asked the group to throw out words and phrases that came to mind when thinking about this story. Our list featured:

Crazy, Real, Vulgar, Drama, Sad, "Putting others down to make her feel better about herself", TMI, Dysfunctional, "Bad Teacher", Depressed, Icky, "Why?Why?"

We took a moment to consider the words on the board. I asked them if it was possible that we encounter these things in some form or fashion out there in the world beyond the page.

These next three activities were performed in small groups:

- 1) Draw or describe the shape of the story (is it like Hemingway's Iceberg? Does it fall off the side of a cliff? Is it a blobby paramecium? A spiral? Nesting Dolls)?
- 2) Chart the graph of the story – as something in relation to something else: what do you want the X axis to chart? The Y axis? Are you going to go super nerd and bust out a Z axis? Why not!
- 3) How does this story break the rules? Is it, in fact, a story at all?

After 15 minutes each group reported their findings (and drew their shapes and graphs on the board) and the resulting discussion was constructive in demystifying some of the “ickiness” of the initial reading, focusing on the technical choices in characterization and exterior action, and making the analysis a communal and less daunting effort. In some ways, literature is the safest place to encounter something uncomfortable and distasteful for the very first time.

There are no reading quizzes in my F2F offering of ENC 1102. So, there is no real penalty for not completing a reading. I assign what I call “Reading Notes” which contribute to a portion of the overall Grade. These are 150-300 word entries on each story, and students can either choose from a list of questions provided or can “freestyle” their response (or some combination). The goal of the reading notes is to *switch on* their thinking as opposed to shut down. I tell my students that these notes are about process rather than product, and a space for them to converse with the material (and thereby themselves) – especially when it bothers them, even if that makes it a 150 word rant.

Well, I appear to have made a long story interminable. I hope I have addressed, in some part, why I assign it—for me, shock value alone has no place in a curriculum (or in an effective story). There has to be some notable narrative engineering that surpasses it. In this case, its humanizing (or attempt to humanize) an unlikable female narrator.

If you are still with me, here among the kudzu at the end of the world, and your knuckle hairs are not grey, I have door prizes, and fruit cobbler, and much gratitude!

I am happy to discuss further and provide more information if anyone requires it. My classroom is also open for all who would like to visit.

Many thanks and all best,

Vini