

# THE SOUTHERN

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## FSC Dining changes under new director John Lopez

**Erin Grant & Emaretta Branham**  
*News Editor & Staff Writer*

FSC students returned to campus this fall to find some big changes in the dining services on campus. Mostly centered around Wynnee's Bistro, the changes include an allergy-friendly station, an expanded salad bar and a new and improved international menu rotation designed to bring flavors from around the world to campus.

The changes are a direct result of initiatives created by the new Food Services Director, John Lopez, who arrived at FSC after nearly 20 years in the food industry.

A majority of his background is rooted in Boston, where Lopez worked his way up from prep work to executive chef to university dining management. After moving to Florida, Lopez continued his career at the University of Tampa before transitioning to FSC. Since arriving at FSC, Lopez has been clear about his goals for on-campus dining.

"It is extremely important for me to know that the food we serve, is exciting, innovative and that we are serving the entire community and their needs. We have students with a wide range of dietary requirements, and I want to ensure we are providing options that meet those needs," Lopez said.

One of the most significant changes is the new allergy-friendly station in Wynnee's Bistro. Free from all nine main allergens, the new station will have a rotating menu featuring student favorites like superbowl and new options such as the gluten-free pasta bar.

In stepping into his new role as the director of food services, Lopez spent time this summer connecting with a variety of students and their families to

identify the needs of the student body. The biggest concern? Allergen difficulties and cross-contamination.

To address this issue, Lopez and his team created a dedicated allergy-free station that would combine new and interesting food items with safety for all FSC students. He emphasized that the goal is to create a space where every student can eat without fear.

"We wanted to go beyond just checking the box for students with allergies," Lopez explained. "Now, [students with allergies] have their own station where they can feel safe and still enjoy exciting, fresh food. Even students without allergies are choosing it because of the variety."

The salad bar at Wynnee's Bistro has also received a makeover this fall. The expanded offerings now include a wider variety of fresh vegetables, quinoa and chopped tofu.

The salad bar is expected to pair well with the new protein offerings at the flat top in Wynnee's. Previously used for stir-fry, the flat top is now being used to provide students with "clean protein" options such as chicken and tilapia.

Lopez explained that this new edition has been carefully and deliberately thought through as well.

"We have a huge number of athletes on campus. I want to make sure that they were getting the proper amount of protein that they need," Lopez said.

Wynnee's now also features an international station. The World Tour station has been offered before, but now boasts an expanded menu. Students can expect a rotating menu, once again, including popular dishes like build-your-own pasta alongside new dishes from Korean, Mexican, South American and other cultures.

Beyond the changes to the food itself,



*Photo by Emaretta Branham*

**Student customizes their meal at the new allergy friendly station in Wynnee's Bistro**



*Photos by Emaretta Branham*

**Wynnee's Bistro and its new salad bar with expanded offerings for students.**

Lopez and his team have been focusing on improving the over-all dining atmosphere of the eateries on campus. Taking cues from recent student feedback, Wynnee's Bistro has added new signage and updated displays to help students clearly identify ingredients and nutritional information.

While Wynnee's Bistro has undergone a lot of new changes in a short amount of time, Lopez wants to assure students that the changes are meant to add something new to the food at FSC, not take away from the student experience.

"We've worked hard to balance keeping the traditions students love with bringing in new and exciting flavors," Lopez said. "It's about enhancing the food experience, not taking anything away."

The cafe isn't the only place on campus that has new changes. Both TuTu's Cyber Cafe and BuckStop received overall upgrades to improve their appearance. From new food labels at TuTu's to a new pizza warmer at BuckStop, Lopez has made it clear he values appearance as well as quality.

"Everywhere we can see there is an area for improvement; we are looking to improve it. We're not going to miss the chance to make our product better, you know, every single day," Lopez said.

If students have a suggestion for how to improve the dining experience, they can provide their feedback via the surveys available at every on-campus dining location. Lopez and his team value hearing what students have to say and believe that student experience is central to their mission.

"The feedback is extremely important. I consider what students are looking for, and surveys are the perfect opportunity for them to let us know if we're meeting their expectations," Lopez said.

In the future, Lopez has one clear vision for campus dining.

"My goal is to ensure that our food is both flavorful and safe. For every student on campus, I want them to see the benefit, the value and the worth of their meal plan because the quality we provide is truly something that we pride ourselves on," Lopez said.

As the year goes on, the food services on campus will continue to adapt to student needs in any way necessary. Whether through allergy conscious meals or new foods from exciting cultures, the goal is to ensure that dining on campus is an experience that serves all students the same across the various dining locations on campus.



*Photo by Emaretta Branham*

**TuTu's Cyber Cafe now has new signs that label each food item and clearly displays its price. The new display case is now organized, so students can easily view food options.**



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The Office of Career Services has taken action to be more accessible for students.

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FSC Skate Club has grown into a club that combines friendship and skating for students.

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Riding around lakeland, its clear to see that there are some inconsistencies in city design.

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**Alumna works with lemurs**

An FSC graduate is interning this fall with The Lemur Conservation Foundation.

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**FSC Athletics using FanWord**

FSC has started using an AI software called FanWord to write FSC sports recaps.

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BRIEFS

Taco Takeover Celebration

Get ready for an ultimate taco celebration. Enjoy a wide range of food vendors, live music, drinks and more. Mark your calendar for Sept. 27 from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. The event will be at Lakeland Square Mall and is pet friendly, with free entry and parking.

Michaelmas Feast

Celebrate the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, leader of God’s army and guardian of God’s Church. The feast will take place on Sept. 29 with the Catholic Ministry. There will be a cookout dinner and lots of community fun at the Fannin Center from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

First Friday Cookie Carnival

Explore Munn Park to try new cookies and baked goods crafted by local vendors. This event is to celebrate the communities favorite bakers and their signature treats. There will even be a cookie judging contest where you can sign up to try 100 bite-sized cookie samples. The carnival will be Oct. 3 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Lakeland Food Festival

Whether you’re a foodie, a shopper, or just looking for some fun, come enjoy the second annual Taste of Lakeland Food Festival on Oct. 4 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The festival will start at 1302 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, Lakeland FL 33805.

Supermoon Stargazing

Have a look at the moon, planets and stars with Astronomy Club for the first Supermoon of the year. It will take place Oct. 6 from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Meet your peers on the Polk Science rooftop for this special event, which also counts toward the Passport Program. There will be telescopes available for use to students.

Career Services meets students where they are

Kara Simard & Erin Grant  
Staff Writer & News Editor

When students at FSC check their phones, they now may see a reminder from Career Services, a clear sign of how the department is meeting students where they are at. From text reminders to classroom visits, FSC’s Office of Career Services is more dedicated than ever to working with students and connecting with them earlier and more often. Their goal is to shift student perception that career prep is something to think about only during senior year.

For Associate Director Taylor Shook, the push for greater student visibility has been a long time coming.

“We’ve heard from students, ‘Oh, we didn’t know about that,’” Shook said. “We want to make sure they see us not just when they’re graduating, but all the time.”

Shook has been serving the FSC community for over a decade in roles ranging from academic support services to student success coaching. She stepped into her role at career services last year, right around the time the department started their rebrand, giving her a unique perspective into Career Services’ shift to be more



Photo by Erin Grant

The Career Services front desk with various resources.

approachable and student-facing.

The Office of Career Services offers a variety of services for all students, no matter their class year. Perhaps the department’s most well-known service is their individualized coaching sessions, where students can practice their interview skills, craft resumes and cover letters, and explore internship opportunities.

Beyond career coaching, Career Services has recently expanded their student resources. Whether students are in need of business attire, professional headshots, or just internship planning, the career center has them covered. The professional clothing closet allows students to borrow professional attire so they can look and feel well prepared for upcoming professional opportunities. Students also have access to a professional headshot room, where they can take their own free, high-quality headshot to use in the job search.

All of Career services’ offerings are carefully curated to ensure students have the best chance possible when entering the job market. All of the associate directors are carefully trained to ensure that students from across campus can secure competitive job offers or seats in their desired graduate school. Aside from this training, every staff member in career services is dedicated to pushing students and alumni to be the best they can be.

“The vision is listening to students and understanding what the job market is saying, then figuring out how to bring those together,” Shook said.

In addition to in-office appointments, Career Services has also expanded its digital presence to make resources more widely available for all students. Every student is automatically enrolled in a Canvas course for their school, where job and internship opportunities and other announcements are posted regularly. Platforms like Handshake, Forage and Big Interview are all available through single sign-on and give students even more opportunities to secure



Photo by Erin Grant

Shook provides student with a career planning resource.

competitive jobs and internships.

While all of these online platforms are valuable for students, Shook is particularly excited about Forage.

“Forage is especially great because it gives students mock job tasks from real companies that they can add to their resumes and LinkedIn,” Shook said.

As Career Services continues to work toward being as accessible as possible, student feedback is welcome. The department regularly evaluates how students are engaging with its programs and welcomes suggestions. Ultimately, Career Services has made it clear that the best way for students to take advantage of these resources is to attend events and meet with their assigned staff member.

“We are here to meet students wherever they are. We’re friendly and welcoming, so don’t be afraid to stop by,” Shook said.

Students can connect with Career Services by visiting the main office in Rogers. Appointments with staff members can be booked online, directly through handshake, or in person. Whether it’s a quick resume review or long-term career planning, Career Services is here for students to equip them to be successful in the next chapter following graduation.

SGA revives popular late night transportation program

Kaelyn Benoit & Kara Simard  
The Southern Editor & Staff Writer

The Student Government Association of Florida Southern College has reintroduced its Mocs Nightlife initiative, providing opportunities both on campus and off campus for students. The project returns after a launch and rapid decline at the end of the spring semester.

The introduction of this program was designed to take place the last month of the spring semester, but had to be shut down prematurely due to an unexpectedly high volume of usage, according to an email sent to all FSC students by former SGA President Zion Virgil.

“This decision was not made lightly, but it is necessary to ensure we can responsibly manage and improve the program moving forward,” Virgil wrote.

Now, nearly a month into the new academic year, Virgil’s successor has reinstated the program. Lexi Lapore-Paternostro, FSC’s 99th SGA president, sent an announcement to the student body in early September.

“The goal of these programs is to conveniently transport students back to campus housing from a variety of downtown Lakeland or North/South Lakeland locations ... these new initiatives will make nightlife more accessible and more affordable to Mocs,” Lapore-Paternostro wrote in the email.

Lapore-Paternostro also spoke to her own motivations for prioritizing the reintroduction of the program.

“I wanted to create a comfortable,

convenient way for students to spend time on campus, off campus, during the later hours. That way, they didn’t feel like the school wasn’t caring for them outside of academics or extracurriculars,” Lapore-Paternostro said.

This revival of the Mocs Nightlife initiative will create noticeable changes to campus life, especially involving transportation services such as The Squeeze. A city-funded public transit system, The Squeeze’s seven-passenger golf carts make several stops in the downtown Lakeland area and are open to anyone who wants a ride.

The Mocs Nightlife initiative has added several stops to The Squeeze’s route on FSC campus and at college-owned off-campus residences, making the service more accessible than ever for students. Students can count on The Squeeze Thursdays within a six-mile radius of campus from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., Fridays and Saturdays at Citrus Connection stops from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., and Fridays and Saturdays within a six-mile radius of campus from 2 a.m. to 4 a.m.



Photo courtesy of Logan Schultz

The Squeeze golf cart picks up Lakeland locals to take them downtown.



# FSC Skate Club builds community and friendship on wheels

Chloe Lanham  
Staff Writer

Lake laps around Lake Hollingsworth have become part of the cultural for FSC students. Now, thanks to the FSC Skate Club, those laps come with wheels. What started three years ago as a few friends skating together, has now grown into an official organization.

Today, the club is under the leadership of President Sydney White, Vice President Crimson Clawson and Secretary Summer del Valle. They were founded originally three years ago, but became SGA recognized in the spring.

“Sydney is the one who sets everything up, she’s in contact with everyone. It’s great, and we love her,” said Clawson.

Every Thursday, the Skate Club hosts its signature event: Skate Around the Lake. Open to anyone with wheels, the group gathers at 4:30 p.m. at The Sump to warm up and practice. The official lake lap begins at 5 p.m.

“As long as you can go forward, you’re good,” Clawson explained. “You’ll figure it out on the way. That’s what the lake’s for, right?”

Every Thursday at 4:30 p.m., the members learn and try out new tricks. Hosting weekly lessons is a goal for the board this year. “It’s up in the air currently on when we can do that, but we are hoping to do that this semester.”

“I’ve had some friends be like, ‘I would like to learn, but I don’t have the equipment or money for the equipment,’” Clawson said, “So I’m very grateful for the one skateboard that we do have right now.”

Their goal is to purchase more skateboards and eventually roller-skates, but sizes vary.

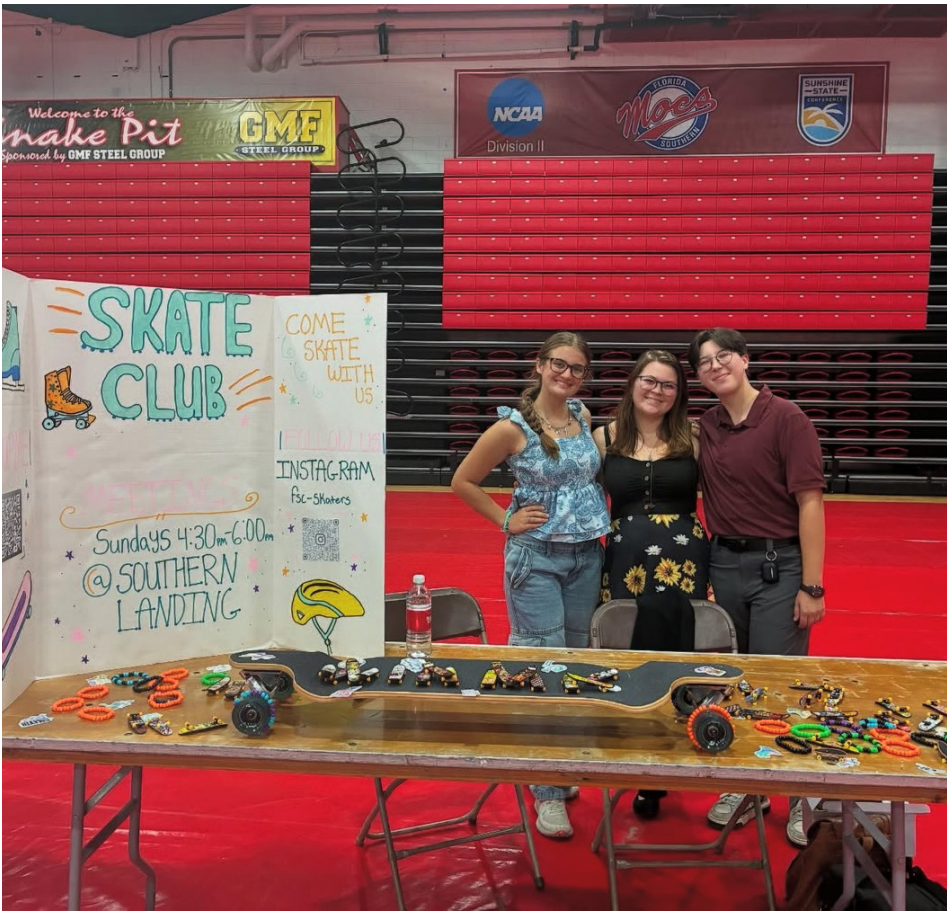


Photo courtesy of Crimson Clawson

**Executive board members tabling at Blastoff with skateboards, fingerboards and bracelets.**

The goal of the organization is to create a safe space for skaters of all levels.

“We’re hoping to host a learning night this semester to teach people the basics,” Clawson said.

A skateboard was the organization’s most recent purchase, to allow members to practice their skills.

As skating equipment is expensive, the club is working to expand their equipment offerings through fundraising. Their latest fundraiser was the Late Night

Bake Sale, featuring sweet treats such as homemade cake pops and lemonade.

Proceeds from the fundraisers will go towards funding larger events, as well as purchasing more rental equipment so that anyone can ride whether they have equipment or not.

While their weekly Skate Around the Lake is a staple event to the club, the members hope to branch out to the broader Lakeland community in the future.

“As much fun as the lake is, it’s

the same path every time,” Clawson said. “We’d love to explore more places together.” The group hopes to host events at Skate World, a popular roller rink in Lakeland. Along with Skate World, the club is looking to host events at local skate parks.

Though the group has three or four regular members, the club is eager to grow. The club hopes to grow its membership over the course of the year, as well as their leadership.

As of right now, the three executive board members are handling multiple roles at a time.

“Right now, it’s just the three of us on [the executive board] I’m hoping if we do grow our club to more than just the three or four of us that show up weekly, we can fill more exec members, so us three aren’t as busy as we are.”

Students interested in learning more about the club can follow them on Instagram at @fsc\_skaters, or join their GroupMe linked in their Instagram bio.



Photo courtesy of Crimson Clawson

**Members of the club hanging out after a Skate Around the Lake events.**

# Havin’ a good time: dance your heart away with Line Dancing Club



Photo courtesy of Jacob Smith

**Members of the Line Dancing club practicing together for a new dance.**

Anna Bialkowski  
Editor-in-Chief

On any average night, line dancing flows with the life of boots hitting hardwood floors to a punchy country tune. People gather onto the dance floor ready to dance to their favorite song. But what if you don’t know how to line dance?

Last year, McKenzie Hampton created the FSC Line Dance Club with the mission of giving FSC students the place to learn how to country line dance.

Hampton describes how in high school, she and her friends would travel to line dancing locations all over the

central Florida area, like Cowboys in Orlando, Stockyard in Tarpon Springs and Dallas Bull in Tampa.

“We would go Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. That would just be our thing,” Hampton said. “Our friend group would go, we would carpool and it was just, it was amazing.”

Although line dancing has become increasingly popular over the past few years, Hampton says that the club did not have much traction last year. She explained that most of the members were freshmen willing to learn. Now, more attendees are coming to the meetings from all levels.

Hampton says that future meetings

will be around two hours long, with the goal of teaching three line dance songs. From there, the songs learned during the meeting will be released in the GroupMe so club members can continue to learn and perfect the dance throughout the week. Finally, the club carools to a few honky tonks and dance halls in the Central Florida area, such as Wild Greg’s.

Hampton’s goal for this club is not only to teach dances, but to also inspire a level of confidence within dancers.

“I just want to inspire people to start doing [line dances], like, gaining the confidence in themselves to dance more and show their friends and get that community going,” Hampton

said. “I know how prevalent it is for people to teach their own friends in their own comfort of their own space. And just having the confidence of getting on the dance floor, like at Greg’s or something else, it just takes so much out of you. And I want to push people to do that.”

The Line Dance Club will be hosting their next two meetings in October, on Oct. 8 and Oct. 29, both from 6:30-7:30 p.m. and in the Eleanor Searle Drawing Room.

Hampton leaves all students with a reminder.

“It’s okay to be yourself,” Hampton said. “Just keep dancing.”



Photo by Jacob Smith

**Members of the Line Dance Club following Hampton’s steps as she demonstrates the dance to Alan Jackson’s “Good Time.”**



FEATURES

Lemurs and leaders: FSC graduate’s leap into lemur care

Wren Comeau  
Staff Writer

Nora Alexander, a 21 year old alumna of FSC, never thought that her degree in biology would lead to anything other than becoming a veterinarian. Nora had always been interested in pursuing a degree in animals, volunteering at her local vet office throughout the summers, and planning her path to pre-med.

“Ever since I was young, I wanted to be a vet. Even so, I didn’t like biology when I first went into college, but I knew it was the path I had to take to get to the career I wanted. But that changed and I ended up really loving it,” Alexander said.

Those first experiences would be formative to her current career and ignite a lifelong passion for working with animals. Fast forward four years later and she still is working with animals, but not the ones you might expect. She is now thriving at an internship for The Lemur Conservation Foundation: breeding, care-taking and learning about these exotic creatures while deriving a rich, educational experience that she hopes will build her portfolio for masters programs.

“I had never considered doing anything in conservation. Until you know about the job, you don’t realize it’s a possibility,” Alexander said.

She hopes to continue to work in conservation research to preserve and protect the husbandry and populations of primates.

There are many experiences that shaped Nora’s path to her current employment, but she thinks the strongest influences were the people that motivated her forward along the way.

“During Southern experience [Southern select], I remember randomly sitting next to this one girl. We got along pretty well and she eventually asked me to be her roommate.



Photo courtesy of Nora Alexander

**FSC alum Nora Alexander spends time with lemurs during her work in wildlife conservation, combining her love for animals with her degree in biology.**

I was so nervous going to a place I didn’t know without knowing anyone, so I said yes and it was nice to have somebody that was equally intimidated by new experiences and that made me feel like I belonged here on campus,” Alexander said. For her, those friendships were very important for her transition to college and helped her with the confidence of being independent.

Additionally, joining clubs and organizations helped to shape her sense of belonging on campus. She did this through her involvement in the campus cat club, the pre-vet society and her sophomore year recruitment to Gamma Phi Beta. From there, she decided to really focus on being an active member of Gamma Phi Beta, and later became a chairwoman for Gamma Phi Beta’s activity board. Within the Lakeland community, she also served at Pace, a school for at-risk or behaviorally challenged women. She would do service tasks like organizing their closets and

donating supplies.

The academic staff, and resources also had a part to play in Nora’s success in college. Specifically, she remarks on one professor that made a big impact on her choices.

“I love Dr. Wolovich. I had her spring semester of freshman year for an entry-level biology class. I think I really connected with her and her teaching style and I really love the way she speaks up for students. Then, flash forward to my senior year I took animal behavior with her, I knew I would like it, but I never thought that it would be so interesting that it would make me want to reassess my career choices,” Alexander said.

Other than in school experiences, Alexander shared some valuable advice about transitioning into new stages of life. Particularly, moving from college life into the professional world.

“I think keeping busy through change, cause life does keep moving on after you

graduate. No matter what you’re doing post-graduation, if you can just keep some momentum and routine, it makes it a lot easier to get to the next point you need to get to,” Alexander said.

Alexander’s insight can be helpful, not just for graduating seniors, but for freshmen who are also dealing with the life change of going to college. Alexander also highlighted the importance of “saying yes to new experience,” because that’s when the most enriching lessons can be learned. Alexander expressed her thoughts on what advice she would give to students that are interested in a similar career path.

“I would talk to your professors. I think I waited too long and was stuck in one mindset to accept other options or other research opportunities from professors, I feel like having an open mind to those things is more valuable than that. I would say to current students, you never really know what you want to do until you do it, so if you can say yes to as many internships or whatever else your field entails. You might find something that you never thought was possible,” Alexander said.

This advice worked well for Alexander as she relates it back to her own life by saying, “I never thought I’d be hanging out with monkeys, but you know I’m really glad I decided to take a chance on it because it was so much fun,”

Overall, Alexander’s career path shows both the challenges and unexpected turns that can come with pursuing a degree. Her time at FSC gave her opportunities to explore different interests, connect with faculty and gain experiences that helped shape her future direction. The beginning of her career shows how a college journey is rarely straightforward, but each step can contribute to growth and open new possibilities.

FSC’s Pre-Veterinary Society lends a helping paw and hand

Sheila Zapata  
Staff Writer

Established in October 2018, The Pre-Veterinary Society at FSC is an organization that brings awareness to the well being of animals. They spread their message through multiple activities and educational conventions to assist future veterinarians on their journey to help out furry companions. Current club president Elisabeth Kranek and member Melissa Rettig have shared their experiences with the club and what they plan to bring to the community this upcoming school year.

First and foremost, this society encourages and helps students get into vet-school. With 11 vet schools present in Florida, and the addition of 33 in the United States, students are able to get a good amount of education and experiences that you might not get at any other school.

They do this by attending certain events outside the school, one being called the Veterinary Meeting & Expo (VMX). A premier veterinary event held annually that showcases advancements in veterinary medicine and provides educational opportunities for veterinary professionals.

Melissa Rettig shares how her personal experiences and her current school work will affect her own career goals.

“I love animals. It’s a base you need for it, you can’t go in hating animals but it’s also a sense that I want to help the animal community,” Rettig said.



Photo courtesy of Lorna Spada

**Members of Pre-Veterinary Society learning proper protocol and procedures before interacting with animals at Dogs Inc.**

Rettig expressed how she would want to work for a smaller vet to become more connected with the pets and the people in that community. She believes that the society truly supports the message they share and the community is more like a family than anything else. It’s a big stepping stone to ease the anxiety of undergrad vet-students when it comes to applying.

“Vet school is harder to get into than med-school only because there are few vet programs compared to medical school,” Rettig said.

Rettig emphasizes the work,

responsibility and mental challenge that goes into becoming one.

“Vet school can be very mentally taxing, it takes up a lot of your time that you would need to dedicate everything to vet school, I would say if they go in there and they really really love it then go for it,” Rettig said.

Kranek, a junior biology major on the pre-vet track, highlighted why she joined the society and what it meant to her for her college experience. She joined in her freshmen year as the freshman representative on their executive board and expressed how the members aren’t

looking for a future as a vet.

“A lot of the members just share a love for animals and want to learn more about them and they want to gain knowledge that we might not be able to provide, but we can lead them to” Kranek said.

Kranek mentioned that her career goal is to be a small animal vet with a specialization in reproduction. She expressed how much she’s learned in the three years she’s been associated with the society that she wouldn’t get until grad school.

“The society has helped me find so many places that I can get service hours and even jobs that I can get to help me with my goals” Kranek said. She wants to be able to work with breeders and help them make good decisions for their animals because “the animals deserve to live the best lives they can.”

Their first official general body meeting will be Oct. 31, Some events they want to host before fall break is having a guest speaker come to campus and enlightening students with their journey through college and veterinarian school.

They will have a Paint and Sip event where they can hangout, paint some cute and spooky pets together while enjoying fun soda. This will take place in the spring semester, they will return to VMX and bring alumni back to campus to speak to the students.

Students interested in learning more about the club can follow them on Instagram at @fscpvs to be notified for all their events and meetings.



What's New

Prime Video:  
“The Girlfriend”

“The Girlfriend” is a gripping and suspenseful drama that follows Laura, a woman whose picture-perfect life begins to crumble when her son introduces his new girlfriend, Cherry. Each episode unfolds the layers of their entangled lives, shifting between perspectives to reveal hidden motives, buried secrets and the fragile nature of trust. As Laura becomes increasingly convinced that Cherry is a manipulative social climber, the line between paranoia and reality begins to blur. With themes of obsession, betrayal and vulnerability, the series explores how quickly relationships can fracture and how dangerous love can become when trust is broken.

Netflix:  
“House of Guinness”

Arthur Guinness (Anthony Boyle) leads a gripping family saga of power, ambition, and legacy. As he builds a brewing empire, rivals and scandals threaten everything he holds dear. With each choice, the stakes grow higher, can he protect the House of Guinness, or will ambition destroy it from within?

Peacock:  
“The Paper”

A spinoff of “The Office,” this workplace mockumentary trades cubicles for the fast-paced world of journalism. When a new Editor-in-Chief, Ned (Domhnall Gleeson), takes charge of a struggling local newspaper, he faces the uphill battle of reviving its reputation and readership. As absurdities of daily newsroom life collide with the serious pursuit of truth, secrets begin to unravel and powerful forces push back. The question remains: can Ned’s relentless drive to keep the paper alive lead to triumph, or will the weight of a collapsing industry bury them all?

Netflix:  
“Monster: The Ed Gein Story”

Ryan Murphy’s “Monster: The Ed Gein Story” dives into the chilling true-crime tale that inspired horror legends. Beneath small-town America’s calm lies a world of madness, obsession, and buried secrets. As investigators close in, Gein’s twisted psyche is revealed in a gripping, unsettling journey that pushes true-crime storytelling to new limits. Gripping, unsettling, and unforgettable, “Monster: The Ed Gein Story” pushes the limits of true-crime storytelling, leaving audiences eager for what comes next.

ENTERTAINMENT

Fans question the purpose of award shows

Melanie DePriester  
Staff Writer

Once September arrives, it is officially award season and with this season comes the drastic drop in viewership and disagreement among fandoms. What was once a highly anticipated celebration of artistic achievement has evolved into a commercial enterprise that often prioritizes ratings over genuine recognition. This shift has led many to question the relevance of award shows in an changing entertainment landscape.

Many fans feel that these events have strayed from their original purpose, becoming mere spectacles that cater to the entertainment industry’s bottom line rather than honoring true talent. Among those voicing this concern is Nickolas Dragowski, a senior who does not watch award shows.

“They invite a bunch of really popular people there to make the show popular, and then award someone unknown, like Best Artist of the Year,” Dragowski said.

One glaring example of disillusionment can be seen in the treatment of global superstars like BTS, who despite their massive influence and fanbase, have repeatedly been sidelined during events like the Grammy Awards. Their performances, while eagerly anticipated, often occur late in the show, leaving dedicated fans to sit through multiple hours of programming only to witness the same disappointing results. No awards. This pattern not only frustrates fans but raises significant questions about the criteria used to determine winners and the fairness of the voting process.

Mckenzie Tapias shares a similar view. “I think they tend to pick the ones that I thought were the worst options, so I don’t know who picks the awards, but I think it’s rigged, because it’s not actually the best one,” Tapias said.

Still, not every student has written off award shows completely. For Tyler Scott, a freshman musical theater major, award shows still carry weight.

“I do think that award shows are very relevant, especially in the arts industry. I feel like a lot of people tune into it, especially recently with the Emmys and the Jimmy Awards. It gives a lot of opportunities for people to be awarded for how good they are and to show off their talents,” Scott said.

Even for those who remain interested, accessibility presents another issue. With the decline of traditional cable, watching live broadcasts has become more confusing. Senior, Alisa Fine admitted she has trouble even finding where to stream them.

“I don’t even know where to watch

them anymore. I feel like everything is on streaming, so I’m just kind of like, you want me to tune in to an actual TV station? How do I do that? I guess Spectrum TV and stuff. I guess it feels inaccessible,” Alisa Fine said.

When it boils down to which award shows are still relevant and talked about, it would be the main two, such as the Grammys and Oscars, as both Fine and Tapias thought the Grammys were still relevant, leaving Scott to say that the Oscars were the most relevant and Dragowski to say none were.

While they may not be as big as they were back in the day, they are still important for new artists just starting in the business and for old ones who have always dreamed of getting an award from these prestigious events.



Photo courtesy of Julia Vorbeck

The 97th Academy Awards, Oscars 2025 Show.

Behind the spotlight: Hollywood’s ongoing battle with addiction

Julia Vorbeck & Emaretta Branham  
The Southern Editor & Staff Writer

Hollywood has always been painted as glamorous with red carpets, flashing cameras and million-dollar contracts. But behind the glitz lies a much darker truth, one that often gets brushed aside until it is too late.

Substance abuse is not just a side effect of fame, it is practically woven into the fabric of the industry. The cycle of pressure, indulgence and eventual collapse has been seen time and time again, and yet Hollywood continues to gloss over the damage it leaves behind.

Charlie Sheen’s recent documentary “aka Charlie Sheen” is proof of that. The two-part series does not sugarcoat anything. Sheen is brutally honest about his battles with drugs and alcohol, beginning with his rapid rise in the 1980s.

He was young, charming and rebellious, and fame hit him fast. With fame came the pressure and with pressure came dangerous coping mechanisms. Drugs and alcohol were not just available, they were expected, almost part of the culture.

What makes this documentary so powerful is that Sheen is not attempting to glamorize his past. Instead, he sheds light on his mental health struggles, the stardom that nearly consumed him, and the difficult path he took to sobriety. In telling his story, he also exposes a larger pattern that countless other stars have endured. His honesty makes the series relatable, even to those far removed from Hollywood, because it demonstrates that addiction does not discriminate.

The entertainment industry has a long and well-documented history of battling substance abuse. Judy Garland’s struggles

during the Golden Age of Hollywood are infamous, as are the battles faced by Robert Downey Jr., Lindsay Lohan and Demi Lovato in more recent decades.

The cycle is hauntingly familiar stars rise quickly, are put under unbearable pressure, turn to substances to cope and are then publicly shamed when their personal struggles become impossible to hide. These are talented individuals whose careers were nearly destroyed by the dangerous intersection of fame and excessive lifestyles.

Hollywood thrives on talent, but it also has a habit of consuming it. The constant demand to perform, maintain appearances and stay relevant often creates an environment where addiction becomes inevitable.

The media only intensifies this problem idolizing stars in one moment, then sensationalizing their collapse in the next. The industry builds its icons only to revel in their downfall, leaving behind broken lives and careers.

The truth is that Hollywood has a drug and alcohol problem it refuses to fully acknowledge. The culture normalizes indulgence, turning excess into a sign of success, yet when the consequences finally surface, it is quick to condemn. Sheen’s documentary does more than highlight his personal demons it forces audiences to confront the broader issue.

If the industry continues to glamorize fame without addressing the toll it exacts, Sheen will not be the last story told. He will simply be another chapter in a long and tragic pattern.

Sheen deserves recognition for speaking openly about his experiences because it is far too easy to dismiss these narratives as celebrity gossip. When so many stars continue to suffer in silence,

his willingness to confront the truth carries weight.

His honesty is a reminder that behind the fairy-tale image Hollywood projects lies a cycle of pain that cannot be ignored. The industry may thrive on happy endings, but unless it faces its own darker realities, the tragedies will only keep repeating.



Photo via Wikimedia Commons  
Charlie Sheen speaking at the 2012 FX Ad Sales Upfront.



CENTER

# A guide to Lakeland

by Amanda Parrish and Anna Bialkowski

Nestled right between iconic cities Tampa and Orlando, Lakeland invites visitors from all around the world with its inexplicable and unique charm. Home to a myriad of small food businesses, tons of weekend activities and a Smithsonian affiliate art museum, Lakeland has its own voice within Floridian culture.

One of the most well-known Lakeland activities is the local Farmers Curb Market that takes over much of downtown, closing off the roads from 10 a.m to 2 p.m. every Saturday. The market includes a unique collection of goods from food trucks to flower stands and craft vendors. The weekly event has become a defining part of the Lakeland experience. It’s a great place to spend your morning and get to know the people that contribute to the vibrant community. Many vendors will also change out their items sold weekly, so people get to experience new things each time they come.

Lakeland also puts on an event called First Friday. Similar to the Farmers Market, the markets

include an array of goods and organizations. However, this market occurs at night. The streets are filled with lights, food, music and lots of people looking for some fun.

The Joinery, Lakeland’s urban food market located on Lake Mirror, has become a staple dining option in town. The stunning lake provides not only gorgeous scenery to enjoy while eating your food, but also gives a space for families and friends to walk after dinner. If you venture far enough along the lake, you can find Hollis Garden, a formal botanical garden with 16 themed sections.

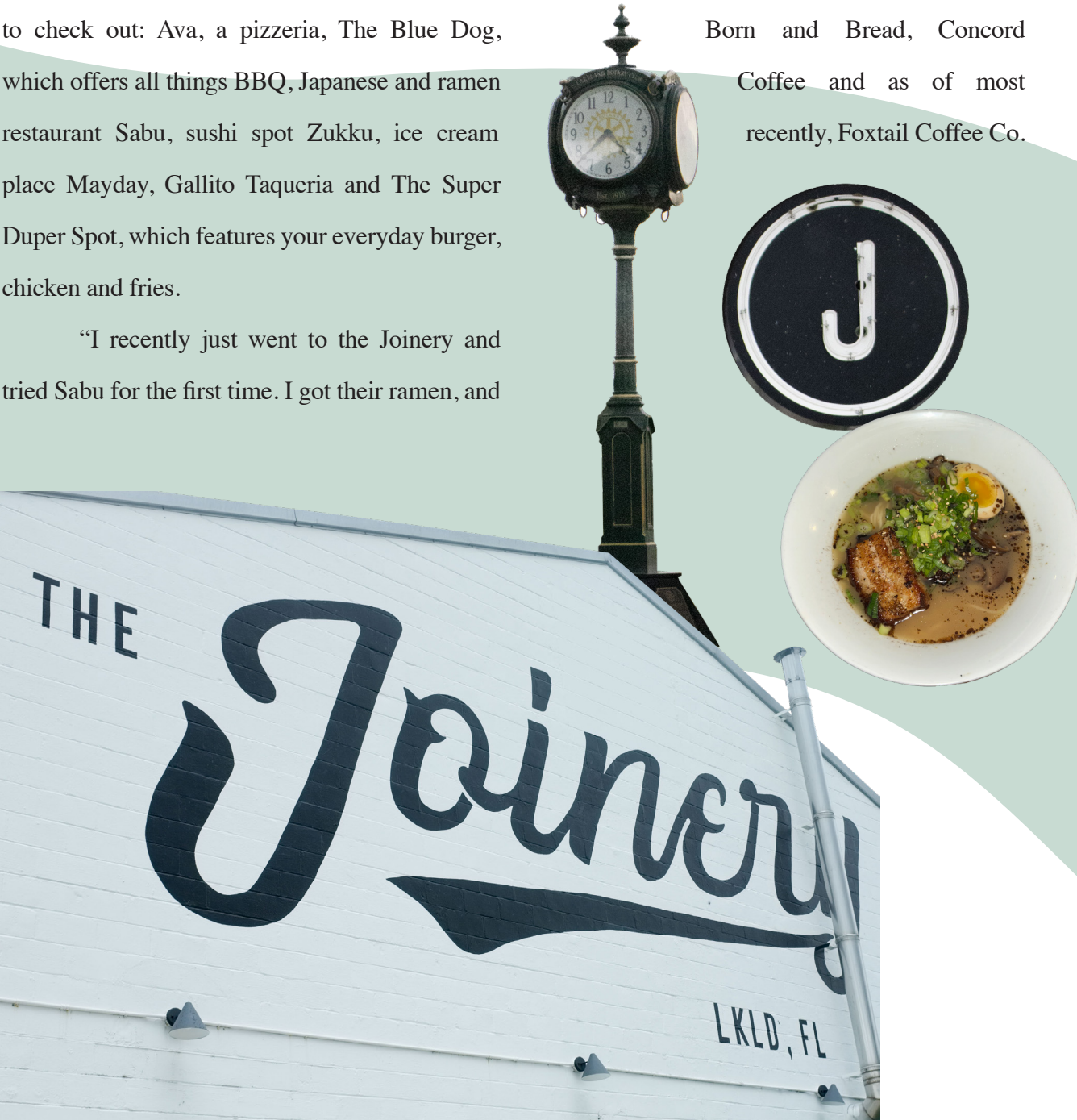
The Joinery has eight different food spots to check out: Ava, a pizzeria, The Blue Dog, which offers all things BBQ, Japanese and ramen restaurant Sabu, sushi spot Zukku, ice cream place Mayday, Gallito Taqueria and The Super Duper Spot, which features your everyday burger, chicken and fries.

“I recently just went to the Joinery and tried Sabu for the first time. I got their ramen, and

it was delicious. I will be visiting again for not only the food, but for the vibes the Joinery has to offer,” FSC student Desiree Gomez said.

If you’re a coffee lover in Lakeland, Black and Brew is a staple. With multiple locations around Lakeland including Downtown, Southside and Lake Morton, Black and Brew is a great spot to study, chat and eat. The Lake Morton location is connected to the Lakeland Public Library. This is one of many student’s favorite study spots, providing a great way to study but also treat yourself for your hard work. Lakeland has plenty of options for all the coffee lovers. There is

Hillcrest coffee, LKLD Pressed, Born and Bread, Concord Coffee and as of most recently, Foxtail Coffee Co.





CENTER



Right across from this location is the Ashley Gibson Barnett Museum of Art (AGB), Florida Southern College’s Smithsonian affiliated museum. The AGB invites members of the Lakeland community to gather and partake in conversations around art.

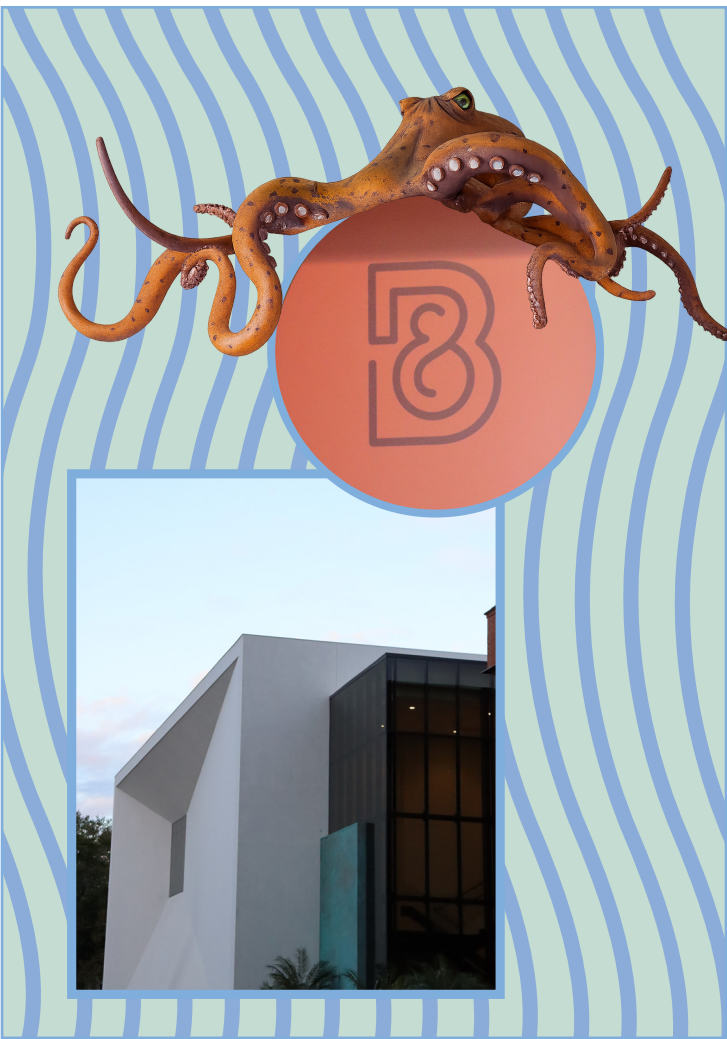
Apart from coffee shops, Lakeland has a bunch of sweet spots to keep you smiling. Born and Bread is notorious for selling out their pastries some mornings, especially during busy seasons. FSC senior Lily Soukup speaks about her experience going to Born and Bread.

“I love Born and Bread because it’s a great place to get a sweet treat and coffee in the middle of the week. I love their rotating menu and weekly cruffin flavors.” FSC student Lily Soukup said.

“It’s a croissant muffin, this week is Apple Fritter flavored. My personal favorite is their Strawberry Nutella. If you have a sweet tooth, I recommend trying these pastries!”

Lakeland has its own unique personality, expressed through its community events, artistic showcases, people and food serving as a special community filled with life and vibrancy.

Thank you to contributing photographers: Tiana Blount-Muscarella, Beatrice Fleurant, Olivia Rotella, Lillie Schwier, Alyssa Still





# Lakeland city design is confusing and inefficient

Jacob Smith  
*Opinions Editor*

When you're a student at FSC, you aren't just a member of the college community. Leaving the microcosm that is the historic Frank Lloyd Wright campus reveals the city of Lakeland. Aside from the abundance of lakes, the first thing that comes to my mind when thinking about Lakeland is the look and design of the city. The massive lawns of the modern-style homes surrounding Lake Hollingsworth and the similarly polished aesthetic of downtown paints a picture of Lakeland as being this upper-class area.

However, as soon as you get off of Florida Avenue, a contrasting picture gets drawn. The roadways and sidewalks aren't as properly maintained, an awkward set of railroad tracks cuts through a large portion of the city and the roads feel like they were smushed together. Lakeland feels like two different towns that have no relation to each other just so happen to share the same name.

Take Ingraham Avenue, for instance. This road spans from Lake Hollingsworth to Memorial Boulevard and gives me a feeling of tonal whiplash every time I drive down it. The section that cuts through FSC is paved with red brick, matching the aesthetic of the school. The brick does get replaced with

asphalt the further north you go, but the road remains high quality and easy to drive on.

Once you reach the intersection with Bartow Road, you're forced to sit through not just one, but two stop lights back-to-back. Although I haven't traveled to many places outside of Florida, I have never seen anything like this phenomena anywhere else across the handful of states and countries that I have visited.

I remember being so confused by this road design the first time I visited Lakeland for a tour of FSC and it hasn't made any more sense to me in the four years since then. After you make it across this barrier, you're met with the sights of randomly assorted businesses that lack any sense of visual cohesion before the road finally reaches its end at Memorial.

I'm not saying that this road is bad because it doesn't all look the same or because it isn't a flat, straight path. What I am saying is that it's confusing that a section of the city that is right next to a private college and the downtown area looks rundown and like it's falling apart. These areas are naturally going to draw people in, so I would figure that the city would want to spread the love elsewhere.

I don't know what the City of Lakeland's plans are, but I think one reason why the city doesn't share the same level of design quality could be

because they're unable to. Lakeland is a pretty old city, with the Downtown Lakeland website saying that "Lakeland was formally established in 1884 and incorporated as a city in 1885." As the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad was being worked on in the late 1800s, Lakeland became a major stop, which in turn brought people and business to the area. Much later on in the 1960s and 1970s, the downtown area experienced suburban development as both growth continued and the automobile became a central figure in city planning. As this development occurred and as it continued into the early 2000s, many of the city's original buildings remained and were historically preserved.

There are multiple historic districts in Lakeland that serve to protect the oldest standing buildings from either being demolished or having their original vision distorted. According to the Lakeland Government, these buildings are allowed to have certain changes made to them as long as they are "done in an architecturally appropriate manner that preserves their character."

There are seven districts in total that span a combined area of 1.42 square miles, with all but one of them being located around downtown. On the Lakeland Government's website, a map outlining each district can be found. Following Ingraham Avenue on this map shows it cutting through the East and South Lake Morton districts, as well as the Biltmore Cumberland district. The area of the road that has been properly maintained. The map also reveals the cutoff point for the historic districts to be Bartow Road, where the dreaded double stoplight is found.

So if the historic districts aren't the reason why this portion of the city looks so bad, then what is?

The Lakeland Government website says that "about 6% of Lakeland's population lives in a historic district." Why doesn't the other 94% of the population receive the same level of attention? If the area surrounding Lakeland's main claim to fame looks this inconsistent, then I can't even imagine what the farther out sections look like.

There are some plans currently in the works to mark-up certain parts of the city. One of these efforts is an Economic Development Strategy that is meant to revitalize Memorial Boulevard. The City of Lakeland's website states that the goal is "to attract investments,

strengthen the adjacent residential communities, enhance pedestrian safety, boost the local economy and increase employment opportunities" for the six-mile long corridor. This project is still in the early stages, with the most recent update being a public meeting held earlier this year on April 24.



Photo by Jacob Smith

**An abandoned fast food restaurant sits on the corner of a busy intersection on Memorial Blvd.**

While this is definitely a step in the right direction, the city's other plans are still focused on the downtown area. One of these projects is a plan to widen both the road and sidewalks from 8.5 feet to 11 feet on Florida Avenue in order to meet the Florida Department of Transportation's requirements. Other plans include making slight street adjustments to Lemon Street and Lakehurst Street, as well as improving drainage, sidewalk and driveway construction on Edgewood Drive. These are all adjustments that do need to be done, but Lakeland isn't just the downtown area.

There needs to be more attention and upkeep given to the parts of Lakeland outside of FSC and the downtown area. Not only would this improve the visual appeal, but it would also promote growth and business to other parts of the city that people may not want to visit in its current state. The rest of Lakeland doesn't need to look like downtown, but it does need to be accessible and presentable.



Photo by Jacob Smith

**The intersection of Orange Street and Ingraham Avenue is usually a slow one due to both traffic and the back-to-back stoplights.**

## Is it embarrassing to be caught using generative AI?

Melanie DePriester  
*Staff Writer*

As of 2022, ChatGPT and other AI applications have become popular among younger generations. While it is not ethical, many students have resorted to using these tools to write essays, solve math problems, create digital artwork and generally bypass assignments they deem unworthy of their time. The question at hand is whether or not it is embarrassing to be caught using these tools or simply using them at all.

Each year, a new group of students begins a college term. Some are diligent and complete their work honestly, while others attempt to slide by with the help

of AI. Luca Baker, an English major, believes that students who rely on AI to finish every assignment are doing themselves a disservice.

"If you're searching up questions and you're trying to get answers for everything, that's kind of embarrassing, because it means you can't think for yourself," Baker said. "I would never catch myself being like that."

I don't understand why someone would pay thousands of dollars for an education, let alone at a private college, just to avoid applying themselves or using their brains. If they wanted to cheat their way through life, then that begs the question of why they even bother attending college in the first place.

While students utilizing AI is a big

concern for institutions, they should also take into consideration that even the instructors are making use of AI. From using to make their lesson plans, to syllabus, even going as far as grading assignments. The entire academic structure that has been in place for years becomes cracked the second an instructor allows AI for even the smallest reason because it sends a green light to students to see just how far they can go with it.

"Back in high school, the teacher let us use AI to help us learn Spanish," Baker said. "I think if the teacher allows it and permits it and wants it to be used for specific things, then I think that's absolutely fine. But when you're just looking up answers to everything, I

don't understand the point of you being at college."

As time goes on AI is likely to play a significant role in the future of many businesses. It will be essential to know how to use it constructively because writing entire essays and articles should not be its primary purpose. Some appropriate uses of AI might include correcting grammar or creating outlines, but not composing entire assignments.

Imagining a world where students rely on AI to breeze through college is concerning, because those individuals will eventually become the new doctors, engineers, journalists and world leaders. The credibility associated with these professions will be compromised and no one would know the difference.



OPINIONS

Remembering Charlie Kirk: why this matters to Americans

Anna Bialkowski  
Editor-in-Chief

The afternoon of Sept. 10 was drenched in a fuzzy feeling of disbelief as I sat on my couch and received a haunting text message from my mom: “Anna, he’s dead.”

It didn’t feel real. It still doesn’t. I briefly met Charlie Kirk at a private Republican event that I was asked to attend as a junior in high school. We didn’t exchange words, and although I didn’t see much of an opportunity to go up to him and speak with him – even shake his hand – I truly wish I could go



Photo via Wikimedia Commons

Kirk speaking at the 2025 Student Action Summit in Tampa, Fl.

back and be brave enough to say hello. Over the next few years, Kirk grew in notoriety for debating students on college campuses. His conservative and Christian values made him a controversial figure on these campuses, bringing people from all walks of faith and belief to the microphone in front of him. That was Kirk’s mission: to inspire free speech and debate at these college campuses – where conservative values are unpopular. Kirk, without fail, was able to debate each and every student that came up to that microphone. Some exchanges were more successful than others, but Kirk always met the energy of his opponents. When I found out Kirk was shot, shock bubbled in my chest like the carbonation from an open soda can. It wasn’t long until the grueling video of his assassination came up on my Instagram feed and I just felt numb. I still had hope that he would survive. But he didn’t. I still feel a pit in my stomach. Within just minutes of his death, hateful videos and posts were flooding social media celebrating Kirk’s tragic assassination. Celebrating death – especially an assassination in our country – is incredibly wrong. I never thought that our generation would come to see an assassination with not only political motivation, but filmed and

spread across social media. John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963 and Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated only five years later. I do not think that it is appropriate to compare the lives and deaths of individuals, but I will say that both of these individuals were leaders within the political sphere and killed for what the beliefs they fought for. Kirk was no different and should be treated with the same respect as these leaders. 48 hours after Kirk’s death, his wife Erika released a 17 minute long video addressing her husband’s assassination. Her anger and hurt was palpable from the screen. I sat in my car and watched the whole video, feeling a heaviness in my heart for Erika, her family and the pain they were experiencing. I cried in my car. Kirk would not want us to stop talking, however. He would want free speech to continue in our country. There are several fine lines within the first amendment, one of them being that violence has no place within expressing your opinions, especially political ones. I was not brave enough to stand up and approach Kirk when I had the chance. But now, I feel more inspired than ever to carry on his immense legacy. We might not be able to change the world, but we can certainly make an impact within our social circles. The least we can do is be respectful of Kirk and his life, despite personal beliefs. This is the time to stand up for what we believe in and listen with compassion to others in the midst of disagreement. We must all lift each other up in compassion – even in the midst of disagreement – not hate or violence. Rest in peace, Charlie Kirk. Thank you for everything.



Photo via Wikimedia Commons

Erica Kirk speaking at her husband’s memorial service.

Running a business in Lakeland is not a guaranteed success



Photo by Jacob Smith

Since its foundation in 2014, Catapult has helped launch at least 45 businesses and awarded over \$400,000 in grants.

Alyssa Still  
Staff Writer

In 2024, the news organization Axios reported that Lakeland, Florida, is the country’s fastest-growing metro area. Some of Lakeland’s key industries are aviation, medical device packaging, healthcare and logistics, software and IT and much more. With all of the growth Lakeland has experienced in the past few years, many new businesses have opened. One major factor for the multitude of opening businesses is Lakeland’s Catapult program. The program was developed in 2014 by the Lakeland Economic Development Council to foster the growth of start-ups. The privately funded non-profit is housed in a state-of-the-art facility in downtown Lakeland. It aids start-ups by helping startups get visibility, getting companies into physical locations, connecting start-

ups with corporate communities and supplying educational opportunities. The program supports start-ups through three different incubators: a workspace, a kitchen and a maker-space. It’s thanks to these facilities that the program has been able to support over 80 start-ups. One company that utilized Catapult’s services is the Lakeland United Football Club. Founded in 2020, it is a post-grad soccer program for student-athletes all around the world. They operate an international bridge program that has allowed over 200 student-athletes to transfer to college soccer programs. The team has been the champion of the United Premier Soccer League Florida West Conference three times. This program is great because it has aided many people in expanding their businesses. Lakeland is home to many large corporations, so it is great to see smaller ones being supported. One large corporation in Lakeland is the

Detroit Tigers. They have been conducting their spring training in Lakeland for over 90 years and are contracted to continue doing so through 2044. Recently, they broke ground on a new 33 million dollar player development academy featuring new dorms, a 200-seat dining hall, recreational spaces, a large meeting room and administrative office spaces. “Having the Tigers here now for coming up on 90 seasons presently brings in about \$55 million of economic development every year to this community,” City Manager Shawn Sherrouse said to Bay News 9. Unfortunately, not all large corporations have benefited Lakeland as much as the Tigers. With Publix creating a new information technology campus in downtown Lakeland, weekday foot traffic through downtown has drastically decreased. This meant that Ax-Caliber, a local restaurant with axe-throwing lanes and a virtual gun experience that was founded in 2020, was forced to shut down in July after it lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue. “A lot of these larger businesses are great to have. We need them to sustain our city, but I think the smaller ones are the ones that keep us going,” Ax-Caliber owner Joyce Woodrow said to Bay News 9. It is devastating that a local business was taken out by a business worth over 50 billion. Although Publix may receive special treatment because it began in Lakeland, smaller businesses should not have to be fearful of being disrupted by the favoritism of Publix. Recently, a restaurant location has received a lot of attention for continuously switching businesses. In early 2024, happyfastdelicious was rebranded as Andrew’s Coffee and 5 Star Seafood took over the location this summer. The reason for the frequent changes in business have not been shared. Looking

at the Yelp reviews for Andrew’s Coffee makes the situation even more confusing, with all the reviews leading up to the business’s closure in April being five stars. The last and most recent review from April was just one star and contained a list of the user’s disappointment with the establishment, ending it off by saying “Such good concepts, poorly executed. Followed them from the happyfastdelicious days. Too many great, consistent coffee shops to deal with this spot.”



Photo by Jacob Smith

Aside from seafood, 5 Star Seafood’s menu also contains rice bowls, sandwiches, chicken wings and pasta.

While researching, I discovered the ratio of coverage on opening businesses to coverage on closing businesses by Lakeland media sources is strange. There is a large amount of coverage on businesses as they are opening and hardly any about businesses closing. It is concerning that the closure of locally owned businesses is swept under the rug. Some may say that this is to keep the publications positively aimed, but in an area with such a rich history, it is important to cover businesses that have had positive impacts on the area.



# FSC Athletics implements AI into game recaps

**Asher Gibbons**  
Sports Editor

This month, FSC Athletics announced they'd be partnering with AI software company, FanWord, to bring all postgame recaps among other storytelling devices to fans using artificial intelligence.

Unlike ChatGPT or other AI sites, FanWord "is tailored to sports communications," according to their site, with the goal to tell sports stories faster, more in depth and more accurately.

The site is primarily used by the four main staff members at athletics: Brittany Lamele, Clay Roe, Sean Forrester and Taylor Drake. Its simplicity has made their day-to-day work lives much less hectic and has allowed them to be more creative in their work.

"It'll allow us to focus our efforts on getting that specialized content out instead of a lesser engaging recap or story," Roe said. "So far this year, we have created 21 recaps in about three weeks. They estimate that we have saved 630 minutes in those 21 recaps."

During the Jet's Pizza FSC Volleyball Classic, the group was able to create recaps for every game that took place in the tournament, including the neutral site games. Without FanWord, box scores would've been displayed, but not full game recaps.

The company, despite being founded in 2019, has major partnerships with large colleges such as Nebraska, Oklahoma and Virginia Tech. Within

the past two years, colleges within the SSC like Palm Beach Atlantic have also signed on with FanWord.

In August, the CEO of FanWord, Christopher Aumueller, held an online presentation to explain what the company could do for FSC's athletics department and ultimately the group decided to sign on.



Photo courtesy of FSC Athletics Instagram @FSC\_Mocs on Instagram

How does it work? After games are played, the athletics department uploads a file of the statistics sheet and any other important information and FanWord spits out a full recap of the game within minutes.

Not only does it complete game recaps, but it also writes player biographies for the team website which was a large component of FSC's buy-in for the program.

"The biggest piece for me that was a no-brainer is FanWord Assist can write all of our student-athlete bios. In a blink of an eye," Associate Athletics Director Brad Bee stated.

"So literally, at the end of the season, we take a season XML or a season PDF, we upload it, and it'll generate their personal bios, all the information that usually goes on there, that we spend months and months writing."

Bee estimates that FanWord Assist saves days of work on player biographies alone.

"We're using AI assist to do the job because in 2025, we have so many more things we need to do. We need to do creative stuff. Social media is way more prevalent now than it ever has been," Bee said.

The department has already been taking advantage of the saved time by creating more social media content, which has reportedly had an impact on attendance.

Recently, the team has been participating in social media trends such as asking student athletes and coaches whether they're team Conrad or team Jeremiah.

The major concern with AI usage nowadays is job security, especially creative fields, yet recaps are not considered creative writing.

"We didn't cut anything. If people are wondering, we did not cut any positions



Photo courtesy of FSC Athletics  
**Florida Southern partners with FanWordAI.**

signing on with this," Bee said.

The previously mentioned four employees are not only responsible for writing the recap, but they also handle the sport management side of FSC athletics, which is the reason FanWord is so crucial to free time for the staff.

Student writers were also hard to come by because of the lack of creativity involved in the writing.

"If you find somebody that writes, let them write. And what we've tended to find out is a lot more people want to be more creative. They don't want to write," Bee said.

The department inked a three year deal for the usage of FanWord, where they'll then evaluate whether or not it's worth the price for the future.

"I sit back and I look at what we save in resources, what we can focus our attention on. It's almost a no-brainer," Bee said.

## Women's soccer striking down preseason expectations

**Karl van Gelder**  
Staff Writer

Women's soccer is entering their matchup versus Saint Leo as the best women's soccer team since the seniors on the team entered kindergarten. Through their first five games they sit with a 3-0-2 record, the longest unbeaten streak to start a season since 2014 when the Mocs began the season 4-0-1. But, what the Mocs have done thus far is even more historic.

The season from the Mocs began with low expectations from those around the conference as they were projected in the preseason coaches poll to finish last in the conference after a disappointing 2024 campaign that saw a 1-5-4 SSC record. It wasn't all doom and gloom for the Mocs last year as glimpses of hope appeared through and specifically in their lone conference win over No. 25 Embry-Riddle who the Mocs hadn't beaten in Daytona Beach since 1998. With last year's shortcomings the Mocs understood that a bounceback was needed.

"Our team's expectations going into the season were to turn around the results from last fall and ultimately to win the conference this year," senior starting centreback Allie Draper said.

The coaches seemed to understand that too, bringing in a fresh group of players both from the transfer portal and high school ranks to bolster the roster back into one looking to compete in arguably the best conference in Division II.

One of those transfers was Draper who came to the Mocs by way of Middle Tennessee State University. Draper is one of four Division I transfers that came to FSC this year with three out of the four starting every game this season in Draper, Sammie Markey and Isabella Payne.

These three are among the eight Mocs to



Photo courtesy of FSC Athletics

**Jasmin Adames passing to the center in hopes of an assist.**

start every game so far this season with four of the eight in their first year with the Mocs, the other being sophomore Aliya Roberts who came from UNC Asheville. The four returners that have started every game have been major contributors too with 2024 All-SSC third team member Rilee Hasegawa being one of them.

The player that has made the biggest jump so far this year though has been Carly Brodsky who came to the Mocs last year from Rollins College. Last year Brodsky was a mainstay in the Mocs goal, starting 10 games over the opening two months of the season, but struggled to find her stride. In her 11 games played she had 20 saves allowing 1.42 goals a game and saving just below 60% of shots on goal faced.

Brodsky has taken a major step, or three, in goal this season. Through five games she's only allowed two goals, with both coming in the opener at Point Park, and since then has had four straight shutouts - the longest streak of her career and in program history. Additionally, she racked up a career-high seven saves against the preseason No. 2 team

in the country, at the time No. 18 Columbus State, to help secure the Mocs first win against a top 20 ranked team since Oct. 18, 2023 when they beat, at the time, No. 3 Embry-Riddle 1-0.

"Carly's performance this year has been amazing! As a defender, it gives me assurance that she's behind me making big saves and always communicating with the backline. She has been a big part of our four shutouts so far," said Draper.

Brodsky's performance against No. 18 Columbus State and in the 3-0 win over Georgia College two days later secured her first ever SSC Defensive Player of the Week award.

After the win over No. 18 Columbus State the Mocs received the honor of regaining two major letters of recognition in RV (receiving votes) beside Florida Southern for the first time since the Aug. 1, 2023 preseason poll and for the first time in the regular season since Nov. 1, 2022.

Draper said, "Receiving votes for our team is huge! As a team we were very excited to see our name climbing up there.

This really shows how much of a change we are making and what a threat our team is this year. This is also fueling our confidence to continue to work hard so that we will be in the top 25 soon."

Mocs offense has helped with the heavy lifting, flexing their muscles when needed by helping dominate the possession of every game outside of the Columbus State matchup, the only game where an opponent had more shots than the Mocs. They're able to dominate possession because of their adherence to head coach Gerry Lucey's vision: constant pressure from the midfield and forwards to force errors and allow the Mocs to strike.

The Mocs offense, like its defense, is defined by the sum of its part with five players finding goals this year with Bria Weldon and Breena Harrigan leading the team each with two despite both mainly coming off the bench.

Weldon found both her goals against Georgia College in the 3-0 win with Breena Harrigan scoring the equalizing goal in the opener, and the biggest goal so far this season, with her second goal of the year being the game-winner versus Columbus State.

"When Breena scored in the first half it was a big confidence boost for us," Draper said in regards to the win over Columbus State.

The Mocs will head back to Berend Field looking to extend their four game unbeaten streak against the Lions and further add to their already historic campaign. The match versus Saint Leo was played during the printing of the paper and results can be found on fsmocs.com.

They will take on Eckerd College in St. Petersburg for their first away conference matchup of the year Oct. 1. The Mocs will look to find their first win against the Tritons since their storied 2022 season when the Mocs won their lone regular season SSC title.



SPORTS

From horses to heavy weights: sophomore finds success in bodybuilding

Tiana Blount-Muscarella  
Staff Writer

Paris Karastury, a 19-year-old sophomore from Northwestern, Pennsylvania who is on Florida Southern's Equestrian team, traded out her riding helmet and boots for heels, diving into the world of competitive body building, achieving successes and awards in the process.

She received second place in Debut, third place in Novice and fourth place in Open in the Battle of the Great Lakes Naturals in Cleveland, Ohio.

In order to achieve her goals to compete in August, Paris hired her coach Erin and joined OCD (The Organization of Competitive Bodylifting) with her other coach Kim, to help her train, diet and stay accountable to control her physical and mental growth throughout this process.

This process consumed her lifestyle because she had to balance and constrain food restrictions, hydration, lifting, number of steps and recovery. While doing all of this, Paris had to bulk up throughout the months of January to the end of March hitting up to a max calorie intake of 2,300 calories and by August cutting all the way down to 1,300 calories a day with the goal of losing half a pound every week to hit peak leanness.

On Aug. 23, a day before travelling back to FSC, Paris stepped on stage to compete in her first bodybuilding competition, in not one, but three different categories. Despite the nerves, anxiety and shakiness she felt backstage, Paris displayed her powerful confidence and skills and placed in all three categories.

She received second place in Debut, third place in Novice, and fourth place in Open.

"It was very rewarding to see all the progress pay off and realize that this



Photo courtesy of Paris Karastury  
Left; Paris horseback riding, Right; Paris posing on stage in Cleveland, Ohio.

could be something serious and official in my future. When I was on stage I felt so much love and care from not only family but from my competition as well," Karastury said.

According to Karastury, she would not have been able to achieve this amazing victory without her support system.

Her friends and coaches showed her the as much support she could imagine, but the love and sacrifice her family gave her went above and beyond as they helped with her meals, paying for things, dealing with irritable emotions and overall, went out of their way to

help her reach her goals.  
Paris did not always compete in bodybuilding and horseback riding. Rather, she was originally a gymnast. As she continued the sport as an adolescent, she kept getting irritated and injured, ultimately making her fall out of love with the sport.  
She then picked up the interest in horse riding at the age of ten. The sport became an instant passion for Paris. Paris developed that interest in lifting when she picked it up from her dad in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic.  
In January, she committed to the goal

to compete on stage in a bodybuilding competition.  
The biggest take away from this whole experience from Paris was, "You can do more than you believe, life is short — go for everything and anything possible".  
She emphasized for anyone who plans on going through this same journey to never get discouraged with any of your downfalls, as most of the experience requires an open and positive mental state.  
Karastury said that it's important to understand that most body builders are also going through the same issues that you are and have also faced setbacks with injuries and instead of being worried, face it head on and keep moving forward.  
She also faced challenges mentally, as previously mentioned, becoming irritable at times and sometimes she never felt like enough or doubted herself.  
All of this negativity, however, disappeared when she stepped on the stage because she was more than the nerves running through her head.  
Paris plans to compete again in the future, but until then she is going to continue her love with equestrian and also work with her coaches to recover from the demanding hormonal changes from the competition and maintain a healthy lifestyle and balance.  
At FSC, Karastury is not only an equestrian, but is also an active member in the student body being involved in intramural sports, campus ministries and Director of Sisterhood in Zeta Tau Alpha.  
Paris's journey demonstrates how passion, discipline and resilience can drive powerful transformation. Her story reminds us that growth often comes from challenges we don't anticipate. In the end, she proved that determination can turn the unexpected into something extraordinary.  
If you want to continue to learn more and follow Paris on her journey, you can follow her Instagram handle @lifting.with.paris.

The vitality of team chemistry through struggles

Asher Gibbons  
Sports Editor

Although wins and losses are often the main topics to talk about when covering a sports team, the underlying chemistry that brings that team together through such events is much more important.  
According to head coach Ashley Holmes, the men's soccer team has participated in multiple events as simple as a morning at church and as competitive as bonding together over a top golf showdown. Holmes shared that these events are vital for the team to come together and see that the coaches aren't robotic beings.

"I'm very relationship driven. I want the players to be comfortable talking to me about anything, soccer, life ... I'm not just a soccer coach, you know, I'm a human being as well," Holmes said.

Such events have an extreme impact on the team's ability to bond because of the amount of new faces. Eight freshman and a handful of transfer students such as Paul Hansen, Ryan Fitzgerald and Tim Baierlin.

Baierlin, an exciting addition from Pitt, has already proven himself as a key part of the Mocs offense, scoring three goals in the first three games while picking up an assist to boot.

"I was excited when we signed Tim from Pitt ... We've got two goal scorers now, which I think is something that we've never

really had as a program," Holmes said.  
Over the past week, the men's soccer team embarked on a four game away stint. At this time, the Mocs have dropped two of the four games, one to Flagler and the other against the reigning national champion Lynn University Fighting Knights.  
It wasn't all disappointing, however, as the two aforementioned transfer students Hansen and Fitzgerald posted their first goals as Mocs.  
Additionally, both were special for each player with Hansen's coming against his former squad and Fitzgerald's being the first of his collegiate career.  
Holmes' previous sentiment on the


team's identity will remain the same.  
"So we did a lot of work in preseason on that defensive aspect. And I think the guys are bought into it, understand the need for us to be that blue collar, hardworking team," Holmes said.  
"You know, we've run our luck a little bit, but I think we've created our own luck as well. So we're just going to make sure that we don't forget that's kind of our bread and butter. That's who we are."  
The Mocs will look to bounce back against SSC rival St. Leo in a game that has already been played. To check the results and keep up with the team visit fscmocs.com.



Photo taken by Lucas BuShea  
Florida Southern celebrating a win post-game.

Upcoming  
Home Schedule


9/26



Men's Hockey vs  
UTampa

10:15 p.m., Lakeland  
Ice Arena


9/27



Women's Volleyball vs  
#3 UTampa

4 p.m., Jenkins Field  
House


10/1



Men's Soccer vs Eckerd

7 p.m., Berend Field


10/4



Women's Soccer vs  
Eckerd

7 p.m., Berend Field

10/8



Men's Soccer vs Rollins

7 p.m., Berend Field