



# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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## INNOVATION ACROSS NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

As we soar into the new academic year, we celebrate the innovative spirit of our faculty and staff both inside and outside the classroom.

I am incredibly proud to report NWFSC's completion rate increased from 40% in 2016-17 to 58% in 2017-18, as reported by Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. This figure represents a combination of the graduation and transfer rate. Nationally, the 2-year completion rate average is 40%, making it evident our team is focused on helping students achieve progress toward their degree.

I commend the nursing faculty on their 100% pass rate for the National Counsel Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). This national exam is required before students can practice nursing in the United States or Canada. Further, I applaud Dr. Liz Robison, simulation coordinator and nursing professor, for her election to the International Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning's Board of Directors to serve as the Vice President of Finance. These distinctions demonstrate our faculty's commitment to excellence, and I know you join me in congratulating them.

Our College campus infrastructure is more than 50 years old and with waning state funding for renovations, our team researched options to address inefficient equipment and long overdue capital improvements. With support from the Board of Trustees, NWFSC entered into a contract with Johnson Controls, Inc. (JCI) to address the aging infrastructure. This agreement allowed the College to replace the

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## NWFSC NURSING PROGRAM EXCELS

Spring 2019 marked the largest graduating cohort ever for Northwest Florida State College's Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) degree, with 56 students graduating. If that was not enough good news for the ASN program at NWFSC, every student who attempted the National Counsel Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) this spring (55 of 56), passed the test and obtained their license.

"Our nursing program is a reflection of our College's goal, to be the best at what we do," said Dr. Devin Stephenson, president of Northwest Florida State College. "I am pleased to see our students and faculty members rising to the challenge and creating one of the most successful nursing programs in the country."

The NCLEX-RN is a nationwide examination for the licensing of nurses and must be passed before being licensed to practice nursing in the United States and Canada.



May of 2019 marked the largest class of graduates for the Associate of Science in Nursing degree from Northwest Florida State College with 56 students.

STRATEGIC PLAN:  
Goals 1,2 and 3



## BLACKBOARD CATALYST AWARD

The College was recently named a winner of the Blackboard Catalyst Award for Optimizing the Student Experience. Blackboard is a provider of learner success-focused technology solutions and services. Their award honors institutions whose educational and administrative innovations have markedly improved the total learner experience by leveraging technology in the areas



The NWFSC team was honored alongside other Blackboard Catalyst Award winners during BbWorld 2019, Blackboard's annual user conference held July 23-25 in Austin, TX.

of student recruitment, financial aid, enrollment, retention and assessment, graduation and beyond.

STRATEGIC PLAN:  
Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6



(continued from page 1)

25-year old central HVAC as well as air handlers for which parts are no longer available; address lighting to reinforce our commitment to safety; update water fixtures to be more efficient; and replace the hot/cold water loop on the Niceville campus, which was more than 50-years old. In addition, all roofs at the Fort Walton Beach Campus were replaced. This project represents the largest performance based contract among Florida College System institutions and cut NWFSC's \$44 million dollar deferred maintenance backlog by more than 50%. The performance based energy contract ensures accrued savings are utilized to pay JCI over a 15-year period, resulting in much needed upgrades with no bearing on the College's bottom line. Our team was asked to present about the innovative nature of this project at the Southern Association of College and University Business Officers conference and has received multiple inquiries about the project from colleges and universities across the Southeast.

I am proud to announce that NWFSC is under contract with the Triumph Gulf Coast Board for the largest grant ever in the College's history for our Walton Works project. This \$5.8 million dollar project is supported with \$2.76 million from Triumph Gulf Coast, \$1.5 million from the Walton Board of County Commissioners, and the balance from NWFSC. The project will create 10 new workforce programs at the Chautauqua Center in DeFuniak Springs providing training in cybersecurity, unmanned vehicle systems operations, building trades, and public safety. We thank the Walton Board of County Commissioners and Walton County Sheriff's Office for their partnership to expand workforce and education initiatives.

Lastly, I am pleased to introduce Dr. Deborah Kish, our new Vice President for Teaching & Learning who you will learn more about in this issue of President's Perspective. We welcome Dr. Kish as she leads innovation and advancement in learning.

Thank you for all you do to support the College and assisting us in our journey to Take Flight!

Dr. Devin Stephenson  
President

#TheBestisOurStandard

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Welcome

### **DR. DEB KISH** VICE PRESIDENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Dr. Deborah Kish was recently named Vice President of Teaching & Learning for Northwest Florida State College. Kish began teaching at Valencia College in 2002 and has worked in various roles in higher education since that time. She most recently served as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the National Division at Rio Salado College in Arizona.

Kish grew up in a teaching household, as both of her parents were teachers and school administrators. Early in her career, Kish spent more than a decade in the corporate world as an attorney while teaching as an adjunct and associate professor. She transitioned into academic administration at Aims Community College in Greeley, Colorado, where she ultimately served as the Vice President of Academic Affairs. In this role, she oversaw more than 160 credit and non-credit programs as well as led strategic planning initiatives, institutional accreditation, grant development, program development, curriculum, online learning, and budget



development. Most recently, she led the national expansion of Rio Salado College to meet the educational needs of underserved students in educational deserts.

Kish holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Social Science and Education from Florida State University, a Master of Business Administration and Juris Doctor from the University of Florida, and a Doctor of Education in Community College Leadership from The Roueche Graduate Center of National American University.

"We welcome Dr. Kish to Northwest Florida State College," said Dr. Devin Stephenson. "We believe that her background, both in the business and education, make her a distinctive and authentic fit for our College."



### **KUDOS TO** **DR. LIZ ROBISON**

Dr. Liz Robison, simulation center coordinator and professor of nursing, has been elected to the International Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) Board of Directors as Vice President for Finance.

INACSL's is focused on advancing the science of healthcare simulation and strives to be the global leader in transforming practice to improve patient safety through excellence in healthcare simulation.

Congratulations, Dr. Robison!



# CONVOCATION WELCOME BACK

Fall 2019 Convocation marked the beginning of the new academic year as Northwest Florida State College faculty and staff members gathered to kick off the school year. Dr. Stephenson recognized employee milestones for years of service, laid out priorities for the year and introduced this year's theme – SOAR – Strategic, On-Target, Accountable and to continuously be Reaching. Guest speaker Heather McGowan spoke on the future of the workplace and the importance of leadership in the quickly changing workplace environment.



(l to r) NWFSC employees with 20 plus years of service De Cook, Kathy Martin, Chris Mizel, Anne Puette, Dr. Aimee Watts, Sandy Caudill, Jack Gill, and Robin Olmstead (far right) who has served NWFSC for over 35 years.



(l to r) Major General Don Litke, Heather McGowan (keynote speaker), Dr. Devin Stephenson, Lori Kelley and Major General Rudy Wright attended Fall Convocation.

## CBA HOSTS COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

During the first week of school, Collegiate High School students teamed with Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) to take action and benefit local waterways. The students traveled to the South Walton Center where they learned about CBA's habitat restoration work, braved the 108-degree heat index to help create oyster reef building blocks out of marine limestone and traveled to one of CBA's flourishing restoration sites to study the creatures that call the newly created habitat their home.



STRATEGIC PLAN:  
Goals 4 and 6



NFSO 2019-2020  
NORTHWEST FLORIDA  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
at Northwest Florida State College  
CONCERT  
SEASON 33

# Take Flight

September 28, 2019  
7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$25 Adults/\$16 Youth  
FREE with NWFSC ID

Our season launches with Take Flight on September 28, featuring music from The Planets, Star Wars Suite 1, E.T. Adventures on Earth, and other works saluting flight, outer space and heroes of flight. NFSO welcomes Maestro Kellen Gray to open our season!

(850) 729-6000 or  
www.MattieKellyArtsCenter.org

MATTIE KELLY  
ARTS CENTER  
NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE



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100 College Boulevard, East  
Niceville, FL 32578

# FOUNDATION

STRATEGIC PLAN:  
Goals 3, 4 and 5



## BO AND CHARLOTTE ARNOLD



Bo and Charlotte Arnold

With a pledge of \$25,000, Foundation Board member Bo Arnold and wife Charlotte established the Charlotte Arnold Fine Arts Scholarship Endowment to assist students with demonstrated financial need and pursuing a visual arts concentration.

Charlotte has been painting, studying, and honing her fine art skills for over 30 years. She owned her own studio/gallery in Seaside, Florida in the 1990's. Bo has served on the Board of Directors for the Northwest Florida State College Foundation since 2016.

## CHIEF GUY J. WILLS JR



Chief Guy J. Willis Jr.

Northwest Florida State College Foundation Board Member Steve Wills and family members Kimi Wills and Guy Wills III have established the Chief Guy J. Wills Jr. Firefighter Scholarship Endowment with a combined donation of \$15,000 in memory of Chief Guy J. Wills Jr.

The endowment will provide scholarship support to NWFSC students with first preference given to those enrolled in a program designed to prepare students for entry or advancement in the fire service field.

## ETTA STEPHENSON



The Stephenson Family; Jon, Judy, JuliAnne, Etta, and Devin

NWFSC President, Dr. Devin Stephenson and his wife, Judy, have pledged \$15,000 to establish the Etta Stephenson Scholarship Endowment in honor of Dr. Stephenson's mother.

"Because of my mother's dedication to the life-changing power of education, we are creating the Etta Stephenson Scholarship Endowment," said Dr. Devin Stephenson. "Helping students succeed is our primary motivation."

# SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENTS