

**MENTORS**  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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**SENTINEL EXPERIENCE**  
HIGH SCHOOL  
DUAL ENROLLMENT

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**CAREERS**  
AND DREAMS REALIZED

*Sentinels stand together.*

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*Sentinels stand together.*



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# THE SENTINEL EXPERIENCE

## EXCITING THINGS ARE HAPPENING AT NORTH FLORIDA COLLEGE

**T**hank you for spending some time with North Florida College through this issue of *Connections*. There are so many exciting things happening that we want to share with you. In this issue you'll get to know some of our amazing dual enrollment students. NFC has the largest percentage of dual enrolled students in the entire Florida College System and this program has a tremendously positive impact on our service district. The College is providing an opportunity for qualified students to find college success while still in high school, shortening the overall time to a post-secondary degree while saving families a substantial amount of money. You will also be able to spend some time in North Florida College's Sentinel Scholars Collegiate Academy, which provides an opportunity for highly motivated students to earn an A.A. degree along with their high school diploma at the end of their 12th grade year.

Get to know some very important supporters of the College, like the family of Joe Akerman who have created a scholarship for students majoring in history in tribute of Professor Akerman who served the College for over 40 years; and Ann Vickers who is seeking to empower first-generation students by endowing a scholarship for business or accounting majors; and Norma Bailey Muller who established a scholarship in memory of her parents to make higher education possible for students from Hamilton, Jefferson, or Madison county.

Spend some time with NFC's Practical Nursing students and share the remarkable success of that program. Learn about the College's newly



NFC President John Grosskopf

established mentoring program and join us in celebrating the outstanding impact that effort has already had on the lives of historically underrepresented first-generation students as we continue to work together to eliminate barriers to access to higher education opportunities.

We're also giving you a chance to meet some of our student leaders and learn more about our Last Mile Scholarships that pave the way for students who have nearly completed their course of study. Share our pride in being recognized, once again, as one of the top 150 community colleges in the nation by the Aspen Institute.

Thank you for spending this bit of time with us. North Florida College is here for you so please don't hesitate to reach out and let us know how we can help you.

Respectfully,

JOHN GROSSKOPF  
President  
North Florida College



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NORTH FLORIDA COLLEGE

FOUNDATION

GIVING | SCHOLARSHIPS | ALUMNI

Let's Talk!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT NFC

Each contribution to the NFC Foundation, no matter the amount, represents an investment in the future of North Florida College, an investment in the communities our students represent - YOUR COMMUNITY.

The NFC Foundation, Inc. is a not-for-profit, IRS approved 501(c)(3) corporation chartered to acquire and receive gifts that support educational programs and help provide financially for the educational needs of NFC students.



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OUR MISSION: The mission of the North Florida College Foundation is to identify, acquire and manage assets with the utmost sincerity, honesty, integrity, competence, and transparency and to nurture and assist students in reaching their global, educational goals.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS

## A NOTE FROM THE NFC FOUNDATION DIRECTOR'S DESK

The NFC Foundation's catchphrase *Let's Talk* seems to have resonated for all of us on campus over the last year. Student needs and community responses have escalated with the pandemic leading to many conversations about student needs and about donors' desires to meet those needs. Open communication has fostered the Foundation's ability to rapidly respond to students as they share with us their needs for college support each semester. Your generosity has changed many, many lives this past year. Educational opportunity requires constant care and support. Let's keep talking and maintain the momentum of the responsiveness to student needs.

In the 2020-2021 academic year, the foundation set a record of 500 academic scholarships awarded while continuing additional scholarships that support other student needs with the Student Relief Fund. As we begin a new year, show your support and belief in the potential of our community members who have a *Hope for a Better Future* by contributing today [www.nfc.edu/foundation-giving/giving-opportunities](http://www.nfc.edu/foundation-giving/giving-opportunities).

Alumni from the Suwannee River Junior College (SRJC), North Florida Junior College (NFJC), North Florida Community College (NFCC) or North Florida College (NFC), please continue to be a part of the NFC community by registering as an Alumni Member at [www.nfc.edu/foundation-giving/alumni](http://www.nfc.edu/foundation-giving/alumni). Soon we will be planning Alumni activities and do not want you to miss out!



Judy Agner Lundell

NFC's motto is Sentinel's Stand Together. I challenge you to stand with us.

*Sentinels stand together. Come stand with us!*

Sincerely,

*Judy Agner Lundell*

JUDY AGNER LUNDELL  
Director of Resource Development  
North Florida College



Attending the 2022 NFC Dual Enrollment Guidance Counselor Summit are, standing left to right, NFC Professor Bill Eustace, NFC Dean of Academic Affairs Jennifer Page, James Madison Preparatory High School Principal Mark Akerman, Hamilton County High School Guidance Counselor Elizabeth Mitchell, NFC Coordinator of Dual Enrollment Mary Frances Mauldin, JMPHS Guidance Counselor Reese Fletcher, Lafayette High School Guidance Counselor Melissa Hewett, Taylor County High School Guidance Counselor Sharon Jandula, Madison County High School Guidance Counselor Khambreal Williams, Madison County District Curriculum Coordinator Robin Hill and NFC Dual Enrollment Director Windy Gamble; and, seated left to right, Suwannee High School Guidance Counselor Cindy Wiggins, Point of Grace Christian School Guidance Counselor Gena English, SHS Assistant Principal Tammy Boggus, Westwood Christian School Assistant Principal Mallory Bryant and Suwannee County District Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jennifer Barrs. Not pictured is Jefferson High School Guidance Counselor Dr. Denise Robinson.

# DUAL ENROLLMENT

## IMPORTANT PART OF THE SENTINEL EXPERIENCE FOR MANY STUDENTS

This spring, North Florida College has 387 high school dual enrolled students taking college-level courses at NFC. These outstanding Sentinels represent 16 area public and private high schools from across NFC’s six-county service district.

“North Florida College is fortunate to work with dedicated high school partners and we share a commitment to providing students a rigorous, high-quality education,” said Windy Gamble, NFC Director of Dual Enrollment. “Our partnerships allow students to earn college credit, while in high school, as they select courses that align with their educational goals. NFC considers it a privilege to provide dual enrollment to our communities.”

NFC’s dual enrollment program is an accelerated option for students in grades 6-12 (public, private, and

home education) that allows students to take college courses that simultaneously earn credit toward a high school diploma and a college certificate or degree.

Dual enrollment at NFC is available to students in Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, and Taylor counties. To be eligible, students must have an unweighted high school GPA of 3.0 for college credit course or an unweighted high school GPA of 2.0 for college certificate courses and, for college credit courses, achieve a minimum score on a common placement test, among other eligibility requirements.

Students interested in getting started with dual enrollment at NFC should contact their high school guidance office. Home education students should contact the NFC Office of Dual Enrollment at 850-973-1628 or [dualenrollment@nfc.edu](mailto:dualenrollment@nfc.edu). ▶

“ I appreciate the warm and welcoming environment. From administrators to students, they all make NFC feel like home.

Dimitri Williams  
NFC Dual Enrolled Student  
Taylor County High School

The courses I am taking at NFC are giving me a head start for my future plans. ”

Mallory McCray  
NFC Dual Enrolled Student  
Lafayette High School



## WORKING TOGETHER

### NFC GUIDANCE SUMMIT FOCUSES ON HIGH SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT

NFC welcomed guidance counselors and high school administrators from across its service district for a Guidance Counselor Summit on Feb. 11. The group, pictured above on page 6, discussed articulation agreements, video and remote learning, and dual enrollment opportunities at NFC. The summit is held each year to promote networking, facilitate communication, answer questions, and help build a unified and informed mission for student success. ▶

## DUAL ENROLLED SENTINELS

# 387

NFC SENTINELS  
DUAL ENROLLED  
IN HIGH SCHOOL  
AND NFC COURSES  
DURING SPRING  
TERM 2022

# 2,871

## CREDIT HOURS

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF CREDIT HOURS  
DUAL ENROLLED  
STUDENTS ARE  
TAKING AT NFC  
SPRING TERM 2022

# 3.37

## AVERAGED GPA

DUAL ENROLLED  
SENTINELS  
BOASTED A 3.37  
AVERAGED GPA  
FALL TERM 2021

# NEW LOCATION

## NFC OFFICE OF DUAL ENROLLMENT HOSTS OPEN HOUSE

The NFC Office of Dual Enrollment moved into a new location, NFC Bldg. 6, in 2021 and hosted an open house to show off its new digs Sept. 14-15. Students and parents were invited to tour and explore NFC Dual Enrollment office and opportunities while enjoying some tasty treats and prizes. NFC Dual Enrollment also started recognizing a Student of the Month this past fall. The 2021-2022 NFC Dual Enrollment Student of the Month features can be viewed at [www.nfc.edu/getting-started/admissions/dual-enrollment/student-of-the-month](http://www.nfc.edu/getting-started/admissions/dual-enrollment/student-of-the-month). ▶



High school dual enrollment student Jessica Hasty attends the NFC Office of Dual Enrollment Open House event in September 2021.

# SENTINEL SCHOLARS

## COLLEGIATE ACADEMY BUILDS CONNECTIONS

**N**orth Florida College began its Sentinel Scholars Collegiate Academy at Suwannee High School and Branford High School (BHS) in 2019. The program expanded to Taylor County High School (TCHS) in 2020. Participants, called Sentinel Scholars, earn both a high school diploma and an Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree at the end of their 12th grade year. Under the guidance of high school counselors and NFC advisors, Sentinel Scholars begin taking college-level courses at their high school in the spring semester (January) of 9th grade. Initially, students who meet eligibility requirements are selected from a lottery system.

To be eligible, students must be in 9th grade, have a cumulative unweighted 3.0 GPA in at least one academic high school course taken as an 8th grader, and have a specified score on the eighth grade Florida Standards Assessment for English Language Arts.

In 11th grade, students are required to take specific courses on the NFC campus in Madison, and by 12th grade, students are considered full-time NFC students with all coursework at NFC and/or online.

Brianna Amman, a 10th grader at TCHS, has been in NFC's Sentinel Scholar program for two years. Amman says she was excited to get accepted into the Academy during her freshman year. "I like how easy the process is for this academy, having the plan laid out for me helps with time and decision making." Amman is active in dance outside of high school and plans to attend Florida State University and become a pediatrician.

Laura Watson, an 11th grader at Suwannee High School, has been a Sentinel Scholar for three years.

"I was thrilled, as was my family, upon learning that I was selected to participate in the Academy," said Watson. "So far, within my three years within the Academy, I have particularly enjoyed making new connections and friendships. I believe my goals for the future are even closer than ever before."

Watson is still deciding on a career path, but says her favorite college-level class so far has been English. She is active in SHS's art club and theatre program.

Gracie Clements, also an 11th grade student at SHS, says she was honored to be selected as a Sentinel Scholar and has enjoyed "how much the teachers work



## Suwannee High School

Members of the SHS Sentinel Scholars 2019 and 2020 cohorts are, back row left to right, Benjamin Lewis, Landon Bates, Tracey Shanes, Shelby Crossno and Gracie Clements; and, front row left to right, Logan Lloyd, Cayla Anastasio, Alicia Neveils, Rachel Willis and Madison Dear.

“Many of our younger students are eager to begin dual enrollment and this Academy helps them meet that goal.”

Sonya Sadler

Taylor County High School  
Guidance Counselor



## Taylor County High School

Members of the TCHS Sentinel Scholars 2020 cohort are, left to right, Aiden Cone, Briana Amman, Anna Kay English, Salene Ni, Austin Ni, Hannah Shiver, Hayden Durham, Courtney Dyer and Jaret Fuller.

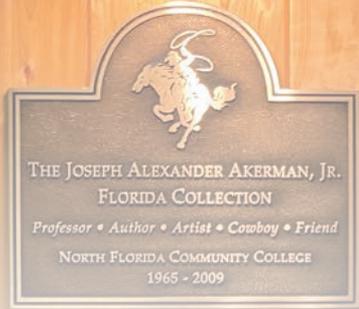
with you and how nice they are.” Her favorite NFC course has been history with NFC professor Jason Welch. Clements plans to pursue a higher education in nursing.

This term, Spring 2022, NFC is proud to have 70 total Sentinel Scholars with 21 at BHS, 19 at SHS and 30 at TCHS. The inaugural freshman class of Sentinel Scholars will be on track to graduate from NFC in Spring 2023. For more information about the NFC Sentinel Scholars Collegiate Academy visit [www.nfc.edu/getting-started/admissions/dual-enrollment](http://www.nfc.edu/getting-started/admissions/dual-enrollment).



## Branford High School

Members of the BHS Sentinel Scholars 2019 and 2020 cohorts and dual enrollment program at NFC are, left to right, Emma Clary, Cyrus Golding, Christin Taylor, Cheyenne Croft, Brice Criggall, Ariana Lane, Juan Sandoval, Dana Fout, Mika Couey, Haylee Adair and Savannah Sessions.



# JOE A. AKERMAN JR.

## *Scholarship Established*

### HONORING MEMORY OF NFC PROFESSOR, AUTHOR, ARTIST, COWBOY AND FRIEND

**T**he North Florida College Foundation is pleased to announce the creation of the Joe A. Akerman, Jr.

Scholarship, established by the Akerman Family in memory of their beloved husband, father and grandfather.

For over 40 years, Joe A. Akerman, Jr. was an integral part of the North Florida College faculty, serving as a professor of history and English. His legacy lives on at the campus, and the scholarship given in his honor will assist local students attending NFC who plan to major in history.

In 1965, Joseph Alexander Akerman, Jr. joined

the faculty at (then) North Florida Junior College and brought with him an impressive array of interests and honors.

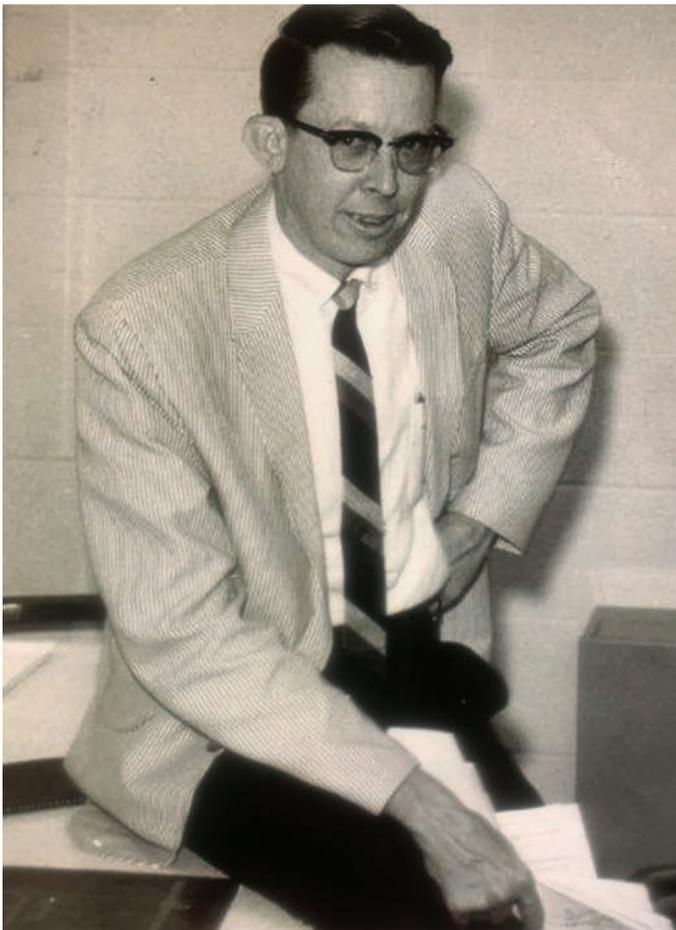
Akerman was a graduate of the University of Florida and Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. During his education, he traveled to Paris, France to study art and received a Fulbright Fellowship to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and an Institute of Southern History Fellowship to Johns Hopkins University for advanced study.

He enjoyed a successful career at the College, impacting thousands of students, until his retirement in

2009. In addition to his teaching duties, Akerman



Joe A. Akerman, Jr.



| Historic NFC photo of Joe A. Akerman, Jr. in class at the College.

authored three books on the history of the Florida cattle industry: *The Florida Cowman* (1976), *American Brahman* (1982) and a collaboration with his son Mark, Jacob Summerlin: *King of the Crackers* (2003).

His passion for researching, writing, and lecturing on early frontier life and the cattle roundups in Florida earned Akerman honors such as the Dorothy Dodd Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Historical

“It is fitting that Mr. Akerman’s legacy should continue to encourage students in their educational pursuits just as he did in the classroom for so many years.”

Judy Agner Lundell  
NFC Director of Resource Development

Society presented in 2004.

North Florida College’s Marshall W. Hamilton Library houses The Joseph Alexander Akerman, Jr. Florida Collection dedicated on April 21, 2013. The plaque dedicated in his honor describes him as a professor, author, artist, cowboy and friend.

With the establishment of the scholarship, the Akerman family will honor Joe’s life and dedication to the students at North Florida College for another generation.

“I am among the lucky students who knew Mr. Akerman during his tenure as a history professor at the College,” said Judy Lundell, NFC Director of Resource Development. “He expected much from his students and was a life-long learner himself. It is fitting that Mr. Akerman’s legacy should continue to encourage students in their educational pursuits just as he did in the classroom for so many years.”

For more information about the Joe A. Akerman, Jr. Scholarship and other scholarships available through the NFC Foundation, call 850-973-9414 or email [foundation@nfc.edu](mailto:foundation@nfc.edu). ▶



# Ann Vickers Business Scholarship

## EMPOWERS FIRST- GENERATION STUDENT TO CONTINUE EDUCATION

Since 2019, the North Florida College Foundation has been proud to award the Ann Vickers Business Scholarship established by NFC Alumna, Ann M. Vickers. This scholarship assists first-generation students from North Florida and South Georgia who are pursuing a degree in business or accounting.

Born and raised in Madison, Florida, Ann was the first in her family to graduate college with a bachelor's degree. She attended (then) North Florida Junior College to earn her Associate in Arts degree before continuing to the University of West Florida to earn her Bachelor of Arts in Accounting. Ann is the Chief Executive Officer at Charles River CFO (CRCFO) and brings 40 years of financial experience in a broad range of industry segments served by CRCFO, including life sciences and high technology. She is an entrepreneur at heart and her firm has enjoyed recognition as one of the Inc. 500's Fastest Growing Private Companies in America.

Ann recently had the opportunity to meet the 2021-2022 recipient of the Ann Vickers Business Scholarship at NFC, Ansley English. Ansley is a first-generation college student currently enrolled at NFC earning her Associate in Science Degree in Business Administration. She graduated from

Aucilla Christian Academy in 2020 and is a resident of Shady Grove. With the help of the scholarship, Ansley will soon complete her program at NFC before transferring to a university in the upcoming fall term.

Through Ann’s scholarship, students like Ansley are receiving the required financial help they need to make their higher education dreams a reality.

“We are always honored to receive alumni donations like Ann’s,” said Judy Lundell, NFC Director of Resource Development. “The scholarship that she has established at NFC is a testament to the impact that the College had on her life. Now through her generosity, a future generation of students who might not otherwise have attended college are being empowered to pursue their goals in business and accounting.”

For more information about alumni, giving, or scholarship applications, contact the NFC Foundation at 850-973-9414 or [Foundation@nfc.edu](mailto:Foundation@nfc.edu). ▶



## NFC STUDENT DESTINY WADE MEETS SCHOLARSHIP DONOR NORMA BAILEY MULLER

NFC alumna Norma Bailey Muller, right, established the Kelley and Mary (Lucas) Bailey Memorial Endowment in memory of her parents. The endowment provides scholarships for first-generation college students from Hamilton, Jefferson, or Madison counties who are attending NFC. Norma recently had the opportunity to meet Jefferson County resident Destiny Wade, the first recipient of the Bailey Memorial scholarship. Destiny, left, is preparing to graduate from NFC and hopes to transfer to a Christian university to earn a degree, which will allow her to practice marriage and family counseling. The NFC Foundation is grateful for committed alumni like Norma who enable higher education for the next generation of students. ▶

# SCHOLARSHIPS ACADEMIC YEARS 2016-2021 OVER FIVE YEARS





# PRACTICAL NURSING

| Antonia Bowen and Derrick Holt, December 2021 graduates of NFC's Practical Nursing program, work together during an IV therapy training lab.

# PROGRAM'S STRONG FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENT SUCCESS

After more than 60 years, North Florida College's practical nursing program is highly regarded in North Florida and South Georgia for training well-prepared graduates who are ready to excel at jobs in today's healthcare industry.

Established in 1960, the program was one of the College's inaugural Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, graduating its first class in 1961 with 10 students representing two counties in the NFC district, Madison and Suwannee. This past December, NFC celebrated its graduating Practical Nursing Class of 2021 with 20 graduates representing eight counties.

According to NFC Associate Dean of Nursing and Allied Health Dr. James Holland, today's program is built on a strong foundation of quality instruction and clinical partnerships. Integrating new technology and patient simulation training has been a recent focus to strengthen training and outcomes.

"Our practical nursing program is carrying on the legacy of excellence in nursing for over 60 years by keeping the patient at the center of care," said Holland.

In 2020, NFC's practical nursing graduates boasted



| Historic photo of NFC's Practical Nursing program from the 1960s.



*The NFC Practical Nursing students exhibit professional and exemplary behavior during their clinical rotations. We most recently hired two LPNs from the 2021 graduating class and they have excelled in their nursing role on the medical floor.*



**Brittany Selph**

*Chief Nursing Officer*

*Madison County Memorial Hospital*



NFC nursing instructor Ashley Bell presents the 2021 NFC Practical Nursing "Leaps & Bounds" Award to NFC graduate Cecilia Ayala.



NFC nursing instructor Stormy Waldron presents the 2021 NFC Nightingale Award of Excellence to NFC graduate Hannah Lewis.



NFC nursing instructor Ashley Bell presents the 2021 NFC Practical Nursing Academic Achievement Award to Rebecca Bowen.

an 80% pass rate on their first attempt taking the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN exam), far surpassing Florida's 67% state average. As the Class of 2021 wraps up their state boards, their first attempt NCLEX pass rate is expected to reach even higher.

Graduation rates are also impressive with 83% of students successfully completing the program in 2021. NFC students attribute their success to the small class sizes, dedicated nursing professors, networking opportunities, and the opportunity to further build successful careers in nursing through NFC's associate and baccalaureate degrees.

"What I really liked about the program here at North Florida is the class sizes," said Derrick Holt, a 2021 graduate of NFC's practical nursing program. "I plan on attending the bridge program from LPN to RN so the class sizes are going to help me a lot. I will be able to comprehend the material a little better by having the smaller class sizes versus going to a major university; and be a better nurse in the future."

"It's just a really good teamwork of nurses here to help train us all and make us the best nurses we can be," said 2021 NFC graduate Amitee Wilson.

NFC's practical nursing program is a 1,350-hour program that can be completed in 11 months. While the nursing profession offers high wages and an abundance of career opportunities, many enter the profession out of compassion and a desire to help others.

"I wanted to become a nurse because of the care I received for my son," said NFC graduate Rebecca Bowen. "I think it is important for others to get the same care, hope and peace knowing that you will have someone taking care of you and you can trust them."

NFC is proud to continue its long history of training successful nurses who make a positive impact locally, around the state and throughout the world.

"The NFC Practical Nursing students exhibit professional and exemplary behavior during their clinical rotations," said Brittany Selph, Chief Nursing Officer at Madison County Memorial Hospital. "We most recently hired two LPNs from the 2021 graduating class and they have excelled in their nursing role on the medical floor. The nurse manager speaks highly of how quickly they are learning and adapting."

For more information about NFC Nursing and Allied Health programs, visit [www.nfc.edu](http://www.nfc.edu). ▶

# The Aspen Institute Names NFC one of 150 U.S. Community College Eligible for 2023 Aspen Prize

The Aspen Institute named North Florida College one of the 150 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. The colleges selected for this honor stand out among more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide as having high and improving levels of student success as well as equitable outcomes for Black and Hispanic students and those from lower-income backgrounds.

The 150 eligible colleges have been invited to submit data and narratives as the next steps in an intensive data and practice review process, culminating in the announcement of the Prize winner in spring 2023.

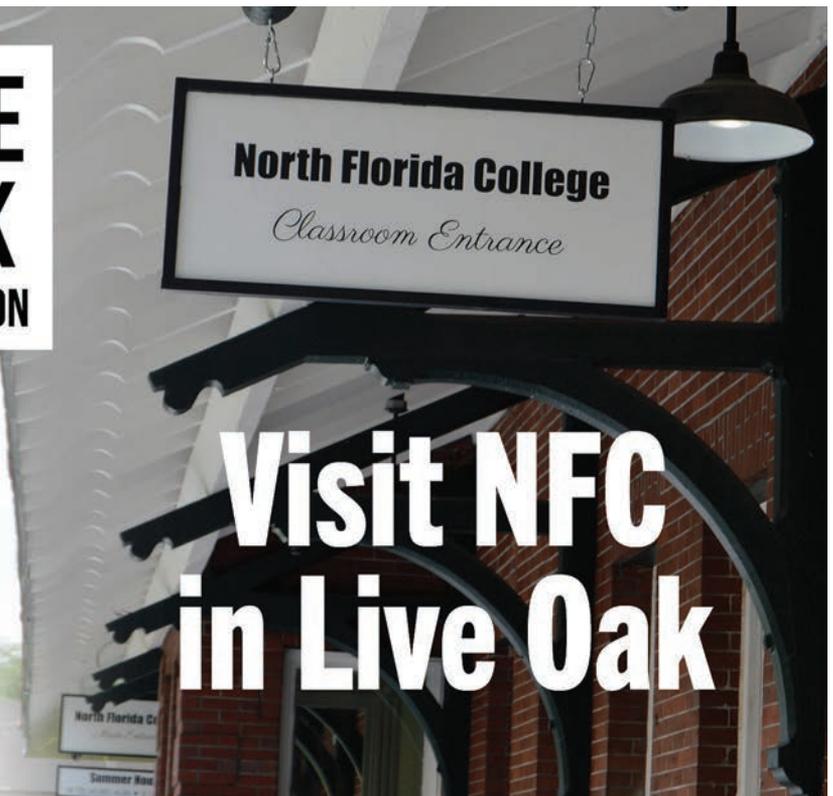
The Aspen Prize spotlights exemplary community colleges in order to elevate the sector, drive attention to colleges doing the best work, and discover and share highly effective student success and equity strategies. ▶



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in Live Oak**

**(386) 364-5093 | 210 Ohio Ave N, Live Oak | [tuckert@nfc.edu](mailto:tuckert@nfc.edu)**

HELPING STUDENTS BE SUCCESSFUL AT NFC IS TOP PRIORITY

# NFC MENTORS LEAD THE WAY

If the past few years have reiterated anything it's that connections, relationships, helping others and being part of a larger community are essential to our well-being and success.

This is true at every stage of life, but especially for high school and college students who are forging paths that will shape the rest of their life, their careers, and impact their families for years to come. North Florida College has always put student success as its top priority, but this past year the College took another step to further support its motto that "Sentinels stand together."

In early 2021, the NFC administration formed the NFC iCare Team and tasked its 11 members with creating and implementing a new mentorship program at the College. The team took on the challenge with fierce determination. When classes started in August over 30 employees had signed up and completed training to serve as NFC mentors.

Over 40 first-generation college students were invited to participate in the fall's inaugural cohort of NFC mentees. Now in its second term, Spring 2022, the program has nearly 50 NFC students connected with an NFC mentor.

"The conversation about an NFC mentoring program began while examining what the pandemic has done to learning in this country in the sense of engagement," said NFC President John Grosskopf. "The NFC iCare Team was formed to investigate how to better engage students who historically have had the most



barriers to success. From that, the team generated this fantastic mentor program where students, who typically don't have the support structures and the access to information on how to succeed in college, will have a personal assistant, a partner in success, who will work with them to navigate all the hurdles that come with post-secondary education. Someone who is going to reach out to them, treat them with dignity and make them understand that 'yes we are here for you.'

NFC mentees are offered a supportive environment, guidance and encouragement. NFC mentors may help



| NFC Academic Success Center Coordinator Elizabeth Gonzales, left, meets with NFC student and mentee Robert Navarro-Reyes.

students develop study and communication skills, learn how to set and achieve goals, learn how to effectively connect with others and build confidence, or just be there to answer questions or offer advice.

Since starting the mentor program, NFC is already seeing positive results related to higher pass rates, fewer course withdrawals and more passing grades in gateway courses such as English and math. Adding mentors to effective student support practices already in place through NFC academic advisors, professors and the NFC Academic Success Center is a win-win

situation for all involved.

“It’s been great,” said NFC Admissions and Records Specialist Debbie Thompson who is also an NFC Mentor. “Although I work in the Admissions Office it’s opened our eyes to just how much a new student doesn’t know or where they might need some guidance.”

NFC Academic Success Center Coordinator Elizabeth Gonzales is also serving as a mentor and sees first-hand how it provides another level of support for students, especially for her mentee Robert Navarro-



*“If you need help, it’s not just yourself or a one-man army thing, it’s always good to have support and I feel that’s what I get every time when I need to know something and I ask Mrs. Gonzales.”*

Robert Navarro-Reyes

*NFC Student and Mentee  
Associate in Arts*

Reyes. “Mentoring is helping students navigate the system, the transition from high school to college,” said Gonzales. “But mentoring is also about dreams. One of the first conversations I had with Robert was ‘tell me your goals’ and he started explaining about his drawing skills and how he wants to become a designer. I can see the passion in him about the dream he is working toward.”

Robert, born in the Bronx with family ties to the Dominican Republic, started his journey at NFC Fall Term 2021 right out of high school.

“When Mrs. Gonzales emailed me about if I needed extra help and assistance, I was like ‘I need that.’ I just like how it helps people who are too nervous to ask questions. Like people who are quiet, and you just need someone else to talk to. Mrs. Gonzales is that person.”

# *Student Success*



# 95%

OF YOUNG ADULTS  
FIND MENTORING  
TO BE HELPFUL.

*Source: [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)*



WATCH VIDEO



| NFC student Anaysia Bess started classes at NFC in August 2021.

| Anaysia Bess in the NFC Library with mentor Debbie Thompson.

Robert is working toward his Associate in Arts degree and excels in NFC’s painting and drawing courses. “I love art and creating things. I want to take those things that I make, like my characters, and put them into clothing lines and designs.”

The two, mentor and mentee, continue to work together this spring. “Mentoring is support and building up relationships,” said Gonzales. “Robert can come to me with any question without intimidation. I’m here to help.”

When the NFC mentor program began in Fall 2021, Thompson was paired with NFC student Anaysia Bess. It was another great mentor-mentee match at NFC.

“She (Mrs. Thompson) has guided me and she has shown me that my support system goes very, very far and that I will always have someone to lean on here,” said Anaysia. “She’s kept me up to date on a lot of things like scholarships coming up, due dates and what I should do at certain times. When one of my classes

was dropped and I was freaking out, she took me over to my advisor, we talked it out and it was all alright.”

Anaysia also started her NFC journey right out of high school. She chose NFC because it “was close to home” and she wanted to “get into the college experience” at NFC before transferring to Florida A&M University.

“I really appreciate Mrs. Debbie. She’s been helping me adapt to the college scene and being on campus. I really appreciate that because I was very nervous about coming onto campus. The mentor experience is an experience that I think all first-time students transitioning from high school to college should have.”

Anaysia plans to major in psychology at FAMU after completing an A.A. degree at NFC. She says that one of her favorite things about the College so far has been taking part in student activities. “I really like going to all the events that are being held in the Student Center. It’s very fun. It keeps me engaged on campus.”

And it’s not always the students who are nervous



| NFC student James Hagan is on track to earn an A.A. degree in May.

about new experiences. Thompson says she was initially “very, very nervous” to become a mentor, “but I have enjoyed it and it has opened our eyes to see just how much our first-year generation students need someone to connect with and help them.”

According to NFC Academic Advisor Delvin Boatman, joining the NFC iCare Team as a mentor has been extremely rewarding and he appreciates all the work his NFC colleagues have put into making the new program successful for employees and students. “Mrs. Ellie Morgan [NFC Coordinator of Library Services] has been instrumental with connecting the dots for the mentors and mentees,” said Boatman.



| James Hagan in Academic Advising with mentor Delvin Boatman.

Boatman is a mentor to NFC student James Hagan who is on track to graduate with an A.A. degree in May. James plans to become a nurse anesthetist and is planning to enroll in NFC’s Associate in Science in Registered Nursing program as his next step.

The day James and Boatman were interviewed, the two were heading off to the NFC Career and Transfer Fair to explore higher degree opportunities at the University of Florida and the University of Central Florida that will help James realize his career dream.

“I love the guidance and kindness of Mr. Boatman,” said James. “He is a really great mentor. He’s helped encourage me a lot through some of my doubts with myself and helped me become a more confident and inspired student. I’m quite familiar with NFC since I was dual enrolled here, so it’s more of moral support for me that I really appreciate from Mr. B.”

Although James was not a new NFC student when he joined the mentor program, having a mentor is helping him gain confidence and best map out his next steps toward getting a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and specialized training in nursing.

“It’s just been a journey and I’m glad to be here and to work toward a better self and I’m glad to have Mr. B guiding me and helping me,” said James.

With mentor and mentee input and measured success points, the NFC iCare Team is continuously evaluating and growing the mentorship program to best serve the needs of current and future NFC students. ➤

# HIGH SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT STUDENT GETS EARLY START EXPLORING COLLEGE AND CAREERS

Taylen Parrish-Fagin is a senior at James Madison Preparatory High School (JMPHS) and is currently dual enrolled in North Florida College's Advanced Manufacturing and Production Technology program. According to NFC professor Bill Eustace, Taylen is quickly learning the program's technology and excelling at 3D printing.

"I like this class a lot, it gets you ready for the different engineering and technology that you will be using in the future and different jobs," said Taylen. "It's just amazing the kind of things that these 3D printers can make. It's so fun to make all the different things that you enjoy or what you want to create and then, you know later on in the future, you can actually be making some very important parts that people might need."

Like many NFC dual enrolled students, Taylen will earn his high school diploma and NFC degree around the same time and be well-prepared for his next step. "North Florida College is a great college to go to, to start off with and get a good education," said Taylen. "When I get ready to transfer to a university, it'll be so much easier."

Taylen is also active in extracurricular activities at school and in the community. As a member of the Madison County High School football team, he plays offense and defense as a running back, linebacker and special teams. He is a member of the National Society of High School Scholars at JMPHS and a member of the music department at Global Prophetic Life Revival and Restoration Church where he serves as a drummer. Taylen is also a volunteer at the Compassion In Action Crusade Community Giveaway in Madison.

After completing NFC's Advanced Manufacturing and Production Technology program, Taylen will have a Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technician industry credential and be able to articulate into NFC's Associate in Science in Engineering Technology program with ease.

"One small dream can lead to the rest of your life," said Taylen. ▶



WATCH VIDEO

This class gets you ready for the different engineering and technology that you will be using in the future and for different jobs.





**Niki Brunson**

# *Called to Serve*

| NFC Public Safety Academy student Niki Brunson will graduate in May 2022 with an A.S. in Criminal Justice Technology.

“

*I was an accountant for 30 years, I was burned out, I did not want to continue to do that, but I knew that I could add value to a community in some other way. Public service is my way.*

”

**Niki Brunson**

*North Florida College, Associate in Science - Criminal Justice*

# MEET NIKI: NFC LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY RECRUIT

Niki Brunson says completing North Florida College's law enforcement recruit training was the "best choice ever." Brunson completed her A.A. degree last spring and graduated from the NFC Public Safety Academy's (PSA) law enforcement program in Summer 2021. Shortly after graduating she was hired by the Madison County Sheriff's Office and this May will complete her A.S. Degree in Criminal Justice.

"I am so proud to be a North Florida College Sentinel," said Brunson. "The burgundy and grey will course through my veins forever. This has given me more pride than anything else I have ever done."

Originally from Jacksonville, Brunson's journey to NFC began when she moved to Madison in 2019 after her father passed away. "For the first six months I just kind of floated around, just getting acclimated to the community," said Brunson. "I quickly realized that I needed to do something if I was going to be a part of this community. I needed to do something to build the community in some positive way or to add value to the community."

After seeing signs recruiting correctional officers around town, Brunson, who had been an accountant for 30 years, decided to explore a new career in public service. Soon thereafter, Brunson met Madison County Sheriff David Harper who referred her to the NFC Public Safety Academy for more information about training opportunities. At that point, joining the Madison County Sheriff's Office became Brunson's dream job.

"I called the NFC PSA Academy and picked up an application and they explained the process," said Brunson. "It was Karen Williams [NFC Instructional Coordinator of Criminal Justice Programs], meeting her, that sealed the deal that I wanted to be a part of this process. She made me feel so comfortable right away and she never made me feel like an old lady, which I did that enough on my own."

Brunson was 50 when she returned to the classroom and started law enforcement training. This May she is graduating from NFC with honors.

"I am so excited," said Brunson. "Best time of my life." ▶



## NFC Public Safety Academy Top Gun Competition Honors Law Enforcement, Education

The NFC Foundation and Sniffen & Spellman, P.A. showed appreciation for education and law enforcement by sponsoring a fun sharp shooter event at the NFC Public Safety Academy Oct. 16. After a three-round course of fire that tested competitors' control, accuracy and speed, three winners emerged to be named North Florida's Top Gun. Jarrod Lauth, left, of the Madison County Sheriff's Office won first place with a final score of 333 out of the best possible score of 350. Emily Brann, center, of the Leon County Sheriff's Office won 2nd place scoring 315 and James Fairfield, retired from the City of Tallahassee Police Department, took third place overall with a score of 309. ▶



Rob Sniffen of Sniffen & Spellman, P.A., right, presents a \$3,000 donation to NFC Dean of Academic Affairs Jennifer Page to help support officers seeking recertification courses through the College's law enforcement academy.



WATCH VIDEO



(L-R) Michael Townsend; Jonathan, Adelynn, Beckham and Natalie Ellis; London Townsend; and Carol Ann Townsend at NFC's Live Oak Location in December.

# SCHOLARSHIP HELPS

## NFC GRADUATE NAVIGATE WORLD OF CHANGES

**S**uwannee County resident Natalie Ellis graduated with her Associate in Arts degree from North Florida College in December 2021. In 2019, then Natalie Townsend, attended the grand opening of NFC's Live Oak location where she won a scholarship drawing to receive 60 paid credit hours of tuition and books from the NFC Foundation. During the

next two years, Natalie would accomplish much more than just a college degree.

Her father Michael describes the scholarship as a blessing to his family and his daughter. While Natalie was excited to receive the scholarship, she did not realize at the time how much help it would be. Over the next two years, while diligently attending college

“ I definitely recommend North Florida College. It’s a wonderful environment to go to school. ”

Natalie Ellis  
North Florida College Graduate

classes, Natalie would also battle COVID-19, marry her high school sweetheart Jonathan Ellis in May of 2020, and welcome her beautiful twins, Adelynn and Beckham, into the world in June of 2021.

Attending college through a global pandemic, wedding planning, pregnancy, and motherhood has certainly been a challenge. But Natalie’s resolve to complete her education remained true.

When asked about finding the balance of being a new parent and a student, Natalie shared, “NFC makes it super easy!” During her time at NFC, she felt well connected to the professors and staff members who were able to help her through online and in-person classes.

“Congratulations to Natalie! What an accomplishment to become independent, start a family, and earn a college degree all in a few short years,” said Judy Lundell, NFC Director of Resource Development. “It has been an honor and a privilege to see Natalie put the NFC Foundation scholarship to such good use and take full advantage of this opportunity. Her story should inspire other students that they can do it too and the NFC Foundation would be happy to help them along the way!”

Natalie is now making plans to enroll at the University of Florida to pursue a bachelor’s degree in elementary education.

For more information about scholarship and giving opportunities, contact the NFC Foundation at 850-973-9414 or [Foundation@nfc.edu](mailto:Foundation@nfc.edu). ▶



## NEARLY 500 NFC STUDENTS HELPED THROUGH NFC EDWARD K. ROBERTS SCHOLARSHIP

The NFC Foundation has been awarded \$60,000 from the Edward K. Roberts Community College Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. These scholarship funds that assist with tuition and living expenses have significantly impacted many NFC students. Since 2011, NFC’s Edward K. Roberts Scholarship has helped a total of 495 NFC students. ▶



## NFC FOUNDATION’S 2GEN SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTS STUDENTS WHO ARE ALSO PARENTS

Taneeka Barfield, center, is the first recipient of the NFC Foundation’s 2Gen Scholarship, a scholarship dedicated to helping NFC students who are also parents. Taneeka is pictured with her son Travis, left, and Danny MacQuirter of Thomasville. Danny and Kathy MacQuirter were the first donors to the 2Gen Scholarship at NFC. “This scholarship has allowed me to focus on studying by helping to relieve some of my financial concerns,” said Taneeka. “Because of this scholarship, I am able to model for my son how dedication, perseverance, determination, accountability, and hard work pays off.” ▶

# Alumni News

NATHAN HEBURN

## IT HAD TO BE CHEMISTRY



When Nathan Heburn stepped onto the North Florida College campus as a new student, he was 16 years old and extremely nervous about starting college.

“Going from being completely home-schooled into an actual college setting was very daunting at first,” said Heburn. “I was pretty nervous. Going to classes there [at NFC] really opened me up to a whole new world since I had been doing things at home and online for so long. NFC made it easy and really helped me get started on my education and what I wanted to do.”

Heburn initially planned to pursue a physics major, but after taking Introduction to Chemistry and meeting NFC Professor Dr. Manoharan Mariappan, discovered a new, exciting path in chemistry.

“Seeing his [Dr. Mariappan’s] enthusiasm and passion for the subject, he knew so much about chemistry and things I couldn’t even imagine at the time, really inspired me and captivated me; like how the whole world works together and runs on chemistry. Ever since I’ve been much more curious, wanting to learn about the subject, and decided to switch to a chemistry major. I’ve never regretted my decision.”

Graduating with an Associate in Arts from NFC in 2019, Heburn transferred to Florida State University, earning a bachelor’s degree in chemistry in 2021. He

is now working as a chemical analyst in Tallahassee and looking forward to going to graduate school in a few years.

“I’m making some good money, getting good experience on the job I have now working as a chemical analyst. It’s in the field I want to do which is wonderful. It’s a really great place right now to be and I’m excited about the future.”

NFC was a great place for Heburn to begin his college journey. He found that NFC’s small class sizes, encouraging professors, and the wide variety of opportunities to explore and

grow personally and educationally provided a strong foundation for future success.

“I just really appreciate all the people who made my experience so great there [at NFC],” said Heburn. “They inspired me so much and helped push me and made me into the person who I am today. Teachers like Dr. Mariappan and Rose Knox [Retired NFC English Professor] inspired me to learn, to go forward, and made me feel recognized and acknowledged. And I think that’s



NFC alumnus Nathan Heburn, second from right, and Dr. Mariappan, far left, at an NFC open house in March 2018.



# STUDENT LEADERS

HONORED BY FLORIDA  
COLLEGE SYSTEM

**N**orth Florida College students Destiney Jackson and Allie Wilkerson, both members of NFC's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Mu Xi Chapter, have been named to the 2022 All-Florida Academic Team. This prestigious designation recognizes student PTK members within the Florida College System for their outstanding academic achievement, leadership and service to the community. Students are nominated by their respective colleges to the All-Florida Academic Team competition sponsored by the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. This year's team of 144 students were recognized on April 1 at an awards ceremony in Orlando.

**Destiney Jackson** graduated from Lighthouse Christian Academy in 2021 where she dual enrolled at NFC for three years. She will complete her Associate in Arts degree from NFC in May and plans to further her education at the University of Central Florida studying clinical psychology.

She joined PTK this past spring and currently serves as Vice-President of NFC's PTK chapter.

"My PTK membership has allowed me to meet individuals with a common goal to help others," said Jackson. "I have learned more about working with



| NFC students Destiney Jackson, left, and Allie Wilkerson, right.

others and what it takes to make a difference in the community. I am thankful for the relationships that I have made through PTK."

**Allie Wilkerson** is a James Madison Preparatory High School senior and high school dual enrollment student at NFC. She will receive her high school diploma this year and graduate with her Associate in Arts Degree from NFC in May. She plans to continue her education at the University of Florida where she will double major in Dance and Psychology, as well as obtain certification in Dance Medicine.

"Dancing is my dream," said Wilkerson. "I would like to travel and perform straight out of UF. My long-term goal includes working in the field of dance therapy helping victims of trauma and illness."

Wilkerson is also active in NFC's Student Government Association, serving as the acting Treasurer, and works as a Peer Tutor at the NFC Academic Success Center. "I truly think NFC has prepared me to be successful in my next college venture," said Wilkerson. ▶

## NFC LAST MILE SCHOLARS

# CROSS THE FINISH LINE

The North Florida College Foundation is pleased to announce its December 2021 graduating class of Last Mile Scholars. NFC's Last Mile Scholarship assists students who are less than 12 credit hours away from completing their first college program and were not enrolled for at least one semester.

"In just two years, we have had the pleasure of assisting 31 students who overcame their challenges, returned to college, and now hold their diploma in their hands," says Director of Resource Development Judy Lundell. "Don't let an interruption in your education stop you from pursuing your goals. We are here to help!"

The NFC Foundation congratulates the following nine Last Mile Scholars who completed their Associate in Arts degrees at the conclusion of NFC's Fall Term 2021 and graduated in December.

**Laverne Smith (Madison County)** is grateful to the Last Mile program for helping her graduate and advance in her career. "The scholarship has provided the means for me to complete what I have started," said Smith. "I have been able to go to work and go to school without worrying about how I was supposed to come up with the money."

**Allysia McFarland (Madison County)** is grateful for the support of the Last Mile scholarship and plans to continue her education in the culinary arts.

**Monica Poucher (Suwannee County)** plans to continue working on her family farm in Live Oak and pursue a bachelor's degree in agriculture studies from

the University of Florida. "Thank you to the Last Mile scholarship!," said Poucher. "Completing this after all these years is a great accomplishment."

**Tanisha Johnson (Taylor County)** hopes to continue her education at NFC and eventually receive her bachelor's degree in nursing. "There is so much going on in the world today, especially with COVID on the rise," said Johnson. "This scholarship was a great relief to me and has really helped me financially."

**C'Mone Crowell (Taylor County)** plans to pursue a degree in psychology at Valdosta State University. She is grateful for the chance to complete this part of her education at NFC. "The [Last Mile] scholarship made it possible to reach one of my education goals," said Crowell. "I look forward to my future at Valdosta State University but will always be thankful for this scholarship and opportunity."

**Clayton Bush (Taylor County)** is grateful for the help of the Last Mile Scholarship saying, "It has helped my family a great deal." Clayton hopes to continue his education in the history field with a goal to teach or work in a museum.

Last Mile Scholars **Ethan Johnson** and **Carlotta Washington (Taylor County)**, as well **Anna Morgan (Jefferson County)** also graduated with their Associate in Arts degree.

If you are on the Last Mile of your degree at NFC or know someone who is, the NFC Foundation can help! Visit [www.nfc.edu/foundation-giving/scholarships](http://www.nfc.edu/foundation-giving/scholarships) or contact the NFC Foundation at 850-973-9414 or [Foundation@nfc.edu](mailto:Foundation@nfc.edu) for more information. ▶



NFC 2021 Last Mile Scholar graduates pictured at NFC's December commencement, left to right, are Clayton Bush, C'Mone Crowell, Laverne Smith, Kayla Watson, Tameria Reaves, Carlotta Washington, Monica Poucher and Tanisha Johnson.

## IT HAD TO BE CHEMISTRY *Continued from page 28*

one of the most important parts of starting at a community college level, finding the path that best suits you.”

Heburn says he was also able to improve his social skills and learn more responsibility and independence on NFC's smaller campus. “It was a very safe environment at NFC,” said Heburn. “NFC really did prepare me for most of what I would see at FSU.”

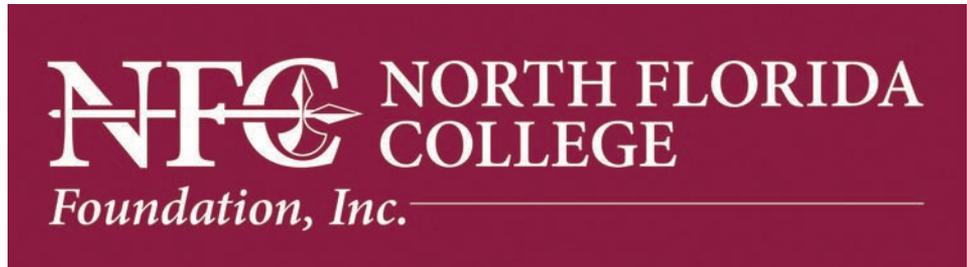
Dr. Mariappan's green organic chemistry lab at NFC also further inspired Nathan who has been a long-time supporter of sustainability. “At the company I work at now, I'm trying to help push for more energy, health-conscious and environmentally friendly products; to derive things in a manner that's more environmentally conscious. I am trying to make impacts where I can.”

At FSU, Heburn worked as a lab tech in an oceanography lab and his current job as a chemical analyst is helping him gain valuable research experience in the field of chemistry. “I'm having a wonderful time and it was all set up thanks to NFC and Dr. Mariappan.” ▶



NORTH FLORIDA  
COLLEGE

325 NW Turner Davis Dr  
Madison, FL 32340



# NFC Alumni

*You* are an important part of  
the North Florida College family

Graduates of North Florida College (NFC, NFCC,  
NFJC and SRJC), YOU are part of a growing  
network of successful NFC alumni and friends.

*Sentinels* Stand Together!

We urge you to stay connected to fellow Sentinels and  
the College by attending alumni events and programs.

Stay *Connected*

Share information and stay connected.

- **EMAIL:** Send your email address to alumni@nfc.edu so we can keep you up to date on alumni news and events.
- **MAIL:** Be sure to inform the NFC Foundation office if your home or business address changes.
- **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Let us know what's happening - new job, promotions and other milestones.



*Join* the NFC  
Alumni email list and  
receive a free keychain!



Scan with phone camera or QR  
code scanner to share your email.

[NFC.EDU/FOUNDATION-GIVING/ALUMNI](https://nfc.edu/foundation-giving/alumni)

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