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Flexible Class Offerings Alleviate Stress, Promote Student Success

Juggling fast-paced lives, family and work responsibilities and perhaps financial uncertainty, some Santa Feans find it difficult to attend college. A growing number of students are discovering that SFCC’s flexible schedules make it possible to pursue their dreams.

Balancing work and education

Javier Gonzales, 30, works full time at Allegra Printing. The Santa Fe native faced challenges in high school and didn’t picture college in his future. After participating with the nonprofit YouthWorks, Gonzales said he realized college could become a reality.

“I discovered that you can go to college at your own pace,” Gonzales said. At SFCC, he took the majority of his classes at night or online, and his employer allowed him to take some daytime classes. When his father was diagnosed with cancer, Gonzales became determined to finish his degrees so his father could see him graduate.

“One semester I was taking 15 hours and working full time,” Gonzales said. “Dad died before I graduated, but my family was proud of my accomplishment.” He finished with two degrees: an Associate in Arts in Business Administration and an Associate in Accounting.

“I wasn’t sure if I’d like online classes, but I tried it and loved it,” Gonzales said. He will pursue a bachelor’s degree online at the University of New Mexico.

Busy mom’s online classes smooth the way

Jennifer Carranza, 43, a dental assistant instructor at CNM, had considered earning another credential for some time. SFCC’s flexible schedule for the Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary Program made it possible. She took a class online during the week, attended a lab class on Saturdays and had a practicum at La Familia Dental Clinic, on campus. It wasn’t easy with her busy schedule, but she received her certificate in December.

SFCC’s Dental Department Director Dr. Aamna Nayyar was Carranza’s professor and coordinated her practicum. “Aamna is an excellent online instructor. She is very present and presented coursework in a way that was easy to follow,” Carranza said.

Graduates are eligible to take the certifying exam. “The credential’s shining feature is the ability to place and shape restorative dental fillings. This allows dentists flexibility to accommodate patients, provide better work flow and adapt to the growing (often underserved) needs in the community,” she said.
Marine vet takes mix of online, in-person classes

Wayne Vigil (Nambé), 46, served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1991 to 1995. He then worked for 20 years in the gaming industry. Today, he is the head ranger at Nambé Falls & Lake Recreation Area. The father of six enjoys his job, and is eager to learn new skills to earn better pay. His wife and his tribe are encouraging. “Without their support, this would definitely be harder,” he said.

“At the casinos, I maintained equipment, which are more electronic – like a computer – than mechanical. So I thought computers and information technology could be a good field to study,” Vigil said. He has received financial support from Nambé Pueblo and SFCC Foundation’s Veterans Scholarship as well as from the Workforce Solutions WIOA (Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act) program.

“It was an adjustment. I haven’t had formal classes since 1991,” he said. “It was hard at first, but I’m more comfortable. I started with in-person classes, and now I take classes online, too. It’s pretty cool. Online no one can judge you by the way you look or talk. With my job, it’s been convenient.”

He takes a mix of in-person and online classes. “The flexibility of online classes is great, but you still need to get your homework in on time,” Vigil laughed. He’s working toward an Associate in Applied Science in Computer and Information Technologies, with a concentration in Computer and Network Security.

Pursuing a master’s degree in Santa Fe

Jocelyn Hernandez, 22, earned an Associate in Arts in General Studies and an Associate in Arts in Criminal Justice from SFCC. She then received a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from New Mexico Highlands University at the Santa Fe Higher Education Center. Now, she’s pursuing a master’s degree in social work.

“Learning about domestic violence while studying criminal justice was eye-opening,” she said. “It made me want to go into social work to help people cope with these issues.”

Going to NMHU at the HEC, she can continue to earn money while pursuing her studies. She works part time at NMHU during the week, and on weekends at Olive Garden. Taking classes in Santa Fe has been great, she noted. “Honestly, if I didn’t have the opportunity to pursue my studies in Santa Fe, I’m not sure if I’d ever have gotten my bachelor’s degree,” she said.

To learn more go to sfcc.edu/flex and sfcc.edu/hec.
SFCC recently aligned its Building Sciences and Construction Technologies curriculum with the National Center for Construction Education and Research. “There is an ongoing need for a local construction workers to have the most up-to-date, industry-recognized skills for building schools, offices, hospitals and homes, said Camilla Bustamante, Ph.D., M.P.H., Dean of the School of Trades, Advanced Technologies and Sustainability. “We provide the training for those who work in this arena and who will support maintaining the aging facilities in our community.”

Instructor Joseph Montoya is enthusiastic about getting the word out that graduates can earn credentials that are recognized in the state and the nation — even internationally.

Q: What makes SFCC’s Building Sciences and Construction Technologies Program special?
Our program is recognized by the National Center for Construction Education and Research, the industry standard for training, assessment, certification and career development. The only way to get an NCCER Accredited and Training Educational Facility is to have a sponsor in place and a certified instructor. Our sponsor is Associated General Contractors of America and I am a certified instructor.

Q: Why is the NCCER affiliation important?
NCCER’s is a competency-based, written and hands-on curriculum. Once students pass the competency in an area, they have portable credentials. They get an NCCER card that is acknowledged all over the world and can show that card to an employer or an employer can go on to the NCCER’s national registry and see all of that individual’s credentials. In many states, NCCER certifications are required to work in the construction field. NCCER also drives initiatives to enhance career, recruitment and workforce development efforts.

Q: What experience do you bring to the classroom?
I’ve been in the industry for 36 years. I started out as a laborer and then got my contractor’s license. I’ve worked in construction in Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado. For many years, I knew “how” to do the work, but it’s when I started taking apprenticeship courses that I finally knew “why” building and construction was done in a particular way. I am certified in 15 areas. I’m also recognized as a Master Trainer, which means I can certify instructors to teach in specific areas.

Q: How did you get involved in teaching? What do you love about it?
One of my instructors saw that I loved the classes and asked if I would be interested in teaching. At first I thought, I can’t be a teacher. But I had taught my brothers and others how to build, so I decided to give it a shot. I found out that I love teaching. Because I worked for a long time in residential construction, I learned every aspect of building. I would always take pride in seeing my name associated with a home. Now, I take even more pride in seeing my students succeed. Whenever I run into a former student, I realize that their experiences in the classroom were life-changing. It’s a great feeling to know that.

Joseph Montoya is a long-time construction and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) training instructor. He emphasizes safety in the classroom and on the job. Classes are offered on the main campus as well as through dual credit at Santa Fe’s Early College Opportunities High School. Contact Joseph at joseph.montoya7@sfcc.edu. Learn more about the program at sfcc.edu.
Philanthropy in Action: Student Success Stories, SFCC Foundation’s annual event, honors student scholarship recipients and their supporters. Each year, students meet the special donors who have invested in them through the Foundation’s scholarship fund. Culinary Arts and Hospitality and Tourism students cater the luncheon. To help support student success, contact Director of the Annual Fund Kelly Marquez Smith, 505-428-1175 or kelly.smith@sfcc.edu. See more photos and donate online at sfcc.edu/foundation.

Photos by Melanie Metz.
NOTEWORTHY

NEW BUS ROUTES ACCOMMODATE STUDENT SCHEDULES

City of Santa Fe's Transit Division is expanding its Route 22 services between the NM599 RailRunner Station and SFCC thanks to student requests. The Transit Division learned that students who commute had to limit the courses they could take due to transportation limitations. The changes will provide transportation late morning and later in the evening from and to NM599 Station, accommodating students and employees commuting by train who start later in the day or take evening classes. These services are on a trial basis, and the Transit Division will monitor ridership to determine if the changes will become permanent.

FREE TAX HELP AT NEW LOCATION

SFCC and AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offer free income tax preparation assistance at a new location: the Santa Fe Higher Education Center, 1950 Siringo Road. Volunteering along with AARP members are SFCC accounting students who were trained specifically for the service. This is the only AARP Foundation Tax-Aide site in Santa Fe. Make an appointment Mon., Tues., 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon. Call 505-946-3615 or visit sfcc.edu/taxaide. Through April 15.

ART ON DISPLAY

confluence: direction + delineation

The Visual Arts Gallery presents artwork by students in SFCC’s Media Arts Program. The exhibition features more than 20 students from typography, Photoshop, advanced digital projects and illustrator classes. Graduates in Media Arts find a rewarding career that combines the best of the art and tech worlds. The show continues through April 12. To see more of the student artwork and learn about the program, go to sfcc.edu or contact Media Arts Chair Peter Taussig at 505-428-1887 or peter.taussig@sfcc.edu.

Katherine Contreras incorporates typography into her piece, “Frida.”
NEW SPANISH CERTIFICATE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Forty-five graduates in the inaugural class to earn a Spanish Certificate in Early Childhood Development are now trained to educate students in Spanish. SFCC’s Education Department launched the program in response to community demand. All of their classes were in Spanish.

Luz Marilyn Salas Pecorelli (left), who received her certificate with High Honors, celebrates the accomplishment with Bilingual and Dual Credit Teacher Education Coordinator Tiffany Nofield Bracamontes.

EMERGENCY EXERCISE STRENGTHENS CAMPUS SAFETY

SFCC recently coordinated a campuswide active-shooter drill, in partnership with Santa Fe County. Students, faculty, staff and visitors participated. Experts agree that drills such as this are extremely valuable in the unlikely event that an emergency happens on campus. The exercise empowered the campus community members so they will have the tools — and the practice — to better protect themselves.
April 15-16: Summer credit registration begins
April 19-21: SFCC & Higher Education Center closed for Spring Holiday
April 22-23: Fall credit registration begins
April 25: Info Night & Talent Show
April 29: SFCC Governing Board Meeting
May 18: Class of 2019 Commencement Ceremony

REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER & FALL CLASSES! Check www.sfcc.edu for the latest events.

SFCC is an equal opportunity/ADA-compliant institution. SFCC es una institución de igualdad de oportunidades en conformidad con ADA.

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