**BAYFIRST AND ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE ANNOUNCE NEW FINANCIAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM WITH RIBBON-CUTTING EVENT ON OCT. 13**

***“Growing in Financial Services” to Offer Three Hybrid, Six-Week Courses in Core Areas of Banking, with Real Teller Line***

**ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (Oct. 5, 2022) –** St. Petersburg College (SPC) and BayFirst National Bank will host a ribbon-cutting event at 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 13, in celebration of the launch of a new certification program. The “Growing in Financial Services” certification program is designed to provide hands-on training to those interested in starting or advancing their career in the financial services industry and aid in attracting non-traditional students and individuals to banking.

The new program will offer separate courses in three core areas of banking: Personal Banking, Teller Line Production, and Business Banking, each developed by industry experts at St. Petersburg-based BayFirst, one of the nation’s leading community banks. The curriculum for each track will be presented in a six-week course, culminating in arranged meetings with recruiters after each. The first, focused on Personal Banking, begins on Oct. 25.

“Every successful career in banking starts with a strong foundation, and as a forward-thinking community bank, it is our goal to provide the next generation of bankers the tools they need to impact the lives of their customers and advance the banking industry as a whole,” said BayFirst Community Engagement Officer Valerie Fulbright. “BayFirst is proud and excited to have found a like-minded partner in our own backyard in St. Pete College, and we look forward to contributing to the long-term growth of our community together.”

Belinthia Berry, SPC Dean of Workforce Development and Corporate Partnerships, said corporate partnerships are the key element in workforce education.

“Building economic mobility takes strong partnerships with by-in from the industry to shape our workforce education programs,” Berry said. “This financial services certificate program is one example of providing short-term training to residents in our community that leads to employment.”

Growing in Financial Services is open to all SPC students and the public. Participants must hold a high school diploma or GED. However, there are no college course prerequisites, and no banking experience is required. Each course includes one online and one in-person class per week, totaling 12 classes for each of the following courses:

* Personal Banking – Learn about money management to assist customers in reaching their financial goals, plus foundational sales and regulatory account opening knowledge and skills to engage in relationship banking.
* Teller Line Production– Learn the fundamentals of customer service using **a real teller line constructed specifically for the program,** and the skills required for front-line banking, including cash handling, transaction processing, and more.
* Business Banking – Learn about the financial needs of businesses as well as the fundamentals of commercial and Small Business Administration (SBA) lending, treasury management, deposit services, and more.

Courses will be offered at SPC’s Downtown Center, beginning Oct. 25. The cost is $1,200 each and can be completed individually or consecutively as a series. Participants may qualify for a training voucher through CareerSource Pinellas to complete the program at no cost. To learn more about how to apply for the voucher, contact 727-524-4344 or WIOAinfo@careersourcepinellas.com or visit [www.careersourcepinellas.com](http://www.careersourcepinellas.com).

For more information about the Growing in Financial Services certification program, contact Christopher Cain at [cain.christopher@spcollege.edu](mailto:cain.christopher@spcollege.edu). To register for the certification program, [visit here](https://spcollege.augusoft.net/index.cfm?method=ClassListing.ClassListingDisplay&int_category_id=2&int_sub_category_id=407&int_catalog_id=).

\*\* In celebration of the launch, a ribbon-cutting ceremony and reception will take place at 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 13 at the SPC Downtown Center, room DT-127, 244 2nd Ave. N. Please RSVP to Megan at [Megan.Brewster@BayFirstFinancial.com](mailto:Megan.Brewster@BayFirstFinancial.com) if you wish to attend.\*\*

**About BayFirst National Bank:**

Headquartered in St. Petersburg, BayFirst National Bank, the principal subsidiary of BayFirst Financial Corp. (NASDAQ: BAFN), operates eight banking centers in the Tampa Bay area and originates residential mortgages locally. In addition, BayFirst offers a broad range of retail and business banking services, including small business loans through its SBA loan division, CreditBench, and is one of the top producing SBA lenders in the country. Since it opened in 1999, BayFirst has grown exponentially without losing sight of its commitment to making an impact in the community and being Here for What’s Next® in the lives of its customers. For more information visit: [www.BayFirstFinancial.com](http://www.BayFirstFinancial.com).

**About St. Petersburg College:**

St. Petersburg College alumni rank first in the state of Florida for possessing the most valuable job skills among two-year colleges. Founded in 1927, SPC is Florida's first two-year college and the first to offer bachelor’s degrees. We offer more than 110 degree and certificate programs, including many high-demand, high-skill industry-recognized workforce certifications. Our career-focused curriculum is created with input from industry experts to give students the skills they need to meet the needs of today’s employers. For more information, visit: [www.spcollege.edu](http://www.spcollege.edu).

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