SCF president aces her test

Probstfeld took on a difficult role, but she was equal to the challenge

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The selection of Carol Probstfeld as president of State College of Florida wasn't the result of an ideal process.

We wrote those words in January, following her elevation to president from chief budget executive at SCF.

On Friday, nearly 10 months later, Probstfeld was ceremoniously inaugurated -- and it was clear that, despite flaws in the selection process, the results are positive.

Probstfeld replaced Lars Hafner, who moved the community-based college forward under a former board, but at times without adequate buy-in from the community. After Hafner departed, the current board launched a national search for a successor but abruptly abandoned that effort and appointed Probstfeld.

It was critical, we wrote in January, for the community and government to provide Probstfeld with support, constructive criticism and funding. But Probstfeld did not sit back and wait for the help to come to her.

She reached out to colleagues at other academic institutions and, most important, looked inward -- to professors and students alike -- for ideas and counsel. Students and faculty members recently
interviewed told Herald-Tribune reporter Katy Bergen that they have been impressed by Probstfeld's engagement and the sincerity of her effort.

For her part, Probstfeld -- who was at first reluctant to take the job -- appears to relish her new role, freed from the constraints of a numbers-driven job.

It's always encouraging when leaders, especially those in academia, are willing to learn from others. By engaging the campus and the community, Probstfeld has not only gained input but valuable knowledge -- all the while setting a positive example for everyone at SCF.