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Adjunct professor named St. Petersburg assistant police chief

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Assistant Police Chief Melanie Bevan

A USF St. Petersburg adjunct professor is now an assistant chief at the [St. Petersburg Police Department](#), the highest ranking woman in the agency.

Melanie Bevan, a 26-year veteran of the department, was sworn in as assistant chief last week, overseeing the Administrative Services Bureau and the Executive Operations Division. She recently served as the city's point person in planning for the Republican National Convention.

Bevan has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, a master's in public administration and a doctorate in education. She teaches a practicum course through the [Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership and Civic Engagement](#) at USFSP on community leadership, an issue she says is vitally important for young people and in her police work.

“Community involvement is key to any successful leaders,” she says. That’s especially true in the Police Department, she said.

“Relationships with the community are everything in our job. Understanding the balance between leadership and community is key,” she added.

Some of the most important parts of the course happen outside the classroom. Bevan takes students into the community to learn about the city from the grassroots, including some of the important leaders at City Hall. Each student also is required to do 30 hours of volunteer time.

“She’s an exceptional person,” said Bill Heller, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Education director of the Bishop Center. “They promoted the right person. She’s also an excellent faculty member and the students have always given her great evaluations.”

Bevin does more than teach community involvement. She lives it.

She has been involved in myriad community projects, including [Doorways Mentoring](#), Leadership St. Pete, Focus St. Pete, the Campbell Park Recreation Center and the Special Olympics Torch Run.

Her teaching at USFSP is an extension of that commitment to the community, she said. “I just love having an impact on young people’s lives.”