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May 9, 2014

HarborNotes Weekly

Five Things to Know About USF St. Petersburg

Dear readers,

This will be our last weekly issue of HarborNotes until classes resume in the fall. Be on the watch, however, for special editions in June and July. If you have story ideas, please don't hesitate to let us know. Thank you for subscribing and enjoy the weeks of summer! -- J. Blais

More Than 300 Walk at USFSP Commencement

Mahaffey Theater was a packed house last weekend as 329 of 480 new USFSP graduates walked at Commencement. Among those walking were King O'Neal Scholars Katherine Audrey van Dommelen and Christine Bruzek, two Psychology seniors who received the Alumni Association award for maintaining a 4.0 GPA. The award honors charter graduates Lucas King and Evelyn O'Neal.



From left: Erik Richardson, Katherine Audrey van Dommelen and Christine Bruzek. Photo: GradImages

Each Commencement, the Alumni Association also recognizes an Outstanding Graduate, a student who embodies leadership, school spirit, community service, character and scholarship. This year's recipient is Erik Richardson, who among many other accomplishments, founded USFSP's PreMed Club. Richardson is currently studying for his Medical College Admission Test.

"The hard work that brought you to this point will never really leave you," Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska told the Class of 2014. "The drive and determination you showed during your time with us will stay with you forever. Whatever path you choose, the experiences you had at USF St. Petersburg will guide you along the way."

Faculty Receive Research Awards

Thirteen USFSP faculty members have been selected to receive internal grants for research. Faculty will explore a variety of topics, everything from human rights in war (Dr. Thomas Smith, Government & International Affairs) to the effect of brand, retailer and price on consumer evaluation of luxury goods (Dr. Michael Lockett, Marketing) to how children with HIV navigate childhood (Dr. Tiffany Chenneville, Psychology).

"These internal awards align directly with the University's strategic plan and our commitment to engage in important and meaningful research," said Frank Biafora,

Ph.D., dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "In seeding new research we underscore a commitment to faculty excellence and scholarship."



Dr. Tiffany Chenneville presented on Pediatric HIV during a recent TEDxTampaBay event.

College of Education to Host Series of Events

The USFSP **College of Education** (COE) will host three events in the coming weeks, the first of which takes place on campus this weekend:

STEM Expo Saturday, May 10

Want to see what Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) look like in Pinellas County Schools? The district is holding its first-ever STEM Expo for students in elementary and middle school grades. The event will showcase more than 150 STEM projects and educational vendors, to demonstrate how their business supports STEM in local classrooms.

African-American Male Summit Friday, May 16

Together with Pinellas County Schools (PCS), USFSP will host its first African-American Male Summit, inviting 50 students from Florida's Broward County to meet with students from all 17 Pinellas County High Schools.

"The Broward County school district has done an exceptional job with increasing the graduation rate while decreasing the out-of-school suspension and arrest rate," said Valerie Brimm, Ph.D., director of strategic partnerships for PCS. "Our goal is to listen to students' concerns and develop a course of action to improve the status of the African-American males in Pinellas and Broward."

Teachers As Leaders Institute June 5 and 6

The COE is preparing for its annual Teachers as Leaders Institute, once again inviting practicing teachers to learn leadership skills to facilitate and support teaming and intellectual sharing within a school environment. This year, nationally known speakers will present on instructional approaches to increase math achievement among K-12 students.

"We as a College and University are very pleased to host these events which feature our relationships with the Pinellas County Schools, their students, teachers and leaders," said Bill Heller, Ph.D., dean of the College of Education. "The Teachers As Leaders Institute is an opportunity to celebrate teachers, and in the process, help them become leaders in their respective schools throughout the region and the state."



From the College of Education, Dr. Olivia Hodges and Dean Bill Heller

Last year's event drew more than 150 teachers from Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough counties. Registration is free, but space is limited. The event is open to the public. For more information or to register, please visit <http://www.usfsp.edu/education/teachers-as-leaders/>

Accounting Students Wrap Up IRS Internship

As Tax Filing Day closed this year, USFSP Accounting students once again reached lofty goals for civic engagement. Under the supervision of James Fellows, Ph.D., CPA, professor of Accountancy, 25 students - 16 MBA students and 9 undergrads - completed an internship with the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Following training in tax law and tax preparation software, each internship student then completed a minimum of 75 hours of field work at various sites throughout Pinellas County preparing tax returns for low and moderate income taxpayers.



From left to right: Colin Del Degan, Meleny Pla, Dr. Fellows, Irena Krasteva, Meghan McTavish, Sarah Smith, Marcella Butz, and Maria Babajanian

"USFSP has been participating in this program for seven years," said Dr. Fellows. "The program is particularly effective for students because it provides them not only the chance to serve their greater community, but also 'real world' experience in preparing tax returns and working with clients."

This year's students completed nearly 2,000 hours of tax preparation work, generating millions of dollars of tax refunds for the local community. For more information about the VITA program and the internship at USFSP, please contact Professor James Fellows, fellows@mail.usf.edu

Alumni Enjoy Sunset Sail

The USFSP Alumni Society recently hosted its first Sunset Sail, selling out what organizers hope will be the first of many such events. More than 20 alums gathered for a social at the Grind before heading out on a two-hour tour.

"The event was so well received that we hope to do it again in the fall, possibly on a bye week during the football season," said Sue Porter, 1st vice chair of the Society Board. "Everyone who participated was so pleased with the event and impressed by our Recreation staff."

For more information about Alumni Society events, please visit www.usfsp.edu/alumni/

Photo: More than 20 alums enjoyed a Sunset Sail from USFSP's Haney Landing.



HarborNotes publishes weekly during the fall and spring semesters. To suggest a story, contact the editor:

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