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# Honors Program forms first Advisory Board

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Thomas Smith

The USF St. Petersburg [Honors Program](#) recently formed an Advisory Board comprised of distinguished members of the local community.

The 13-member board is a first for the Honors Program, which is designed for academically gifted, highly motivated undergraduate students to broaden and deepen their education.

The members will help guide the program and provide mentoring to students, said Thomas Smith, Ph.D., associate professor of government and international affairs and director of the USFSP Honors Program since 2006. The members will offer ideas about the general direction of the program and public events.

“I am thrilled to have the advice and support of our new Advisory Board,” Smith said. “This program will only get better under their guidance and our students will benefit directly from their mentoring.”

The members include a former speaker of the Florida House, a career diplomat, a retired journalist, a doctor, a lawyer and an investment manager. The board held its first meeting Oct. 18.

The USF St. Petersburg Honors Program has 95 students and accepts about 20 freshmen each year in a four-year program. Transfer students are eligible for a two-year program. Each student is awarded a \$1,000 annual scholarship and must maintain a minimum 3.3 grade point average. Completing a senior thesis is required.

The program is intended to enhance the general education of students across all disciplines by challenging the students through focused seminars.

The members of the Board are:

- Susan B. Betzer, a St. Petersburg physician.
- Linda Benware, a charter school consultant and first principal of St. Petersburg Collegiate High.
- Thomas Dunn, a St. Petersburg lawyer.
- Greg Holden, a St. Petersburg investment manager.
- Robert Hooker, a retired *Tampa Bay Times* editor.
- Nancy Markoe, owner of the Nancy Markoe Gallery in Pass a Grille.
- Douglas McIlheny, a retired career diplomat and former Ambassador to Bosnia.
- Jeffrey Multer, concertmaster and first violin for the Florida Orchestra.
- Robert Noun, former communications director of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.
- Melissa Seixas, Progress Energy community relations manager.
- Peter Rudy Wallace, a St. Petersburg lawyer and former speaker of the Florida House.
- Renee Walter, a St. Petersburg educator.
- Irene Weiss, Past Board Chair of the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg.