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USFSP MAKES 'HOUSE CALLS,' WELCOMES RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS

Twenty-one USF St. Petersburg faculty and staff and eight student resident assistants traveled door-to-door in the residence halls, welcoming new and returning students during the first week of classes.

The afternoon effort, which involved stationing small groups of volunteer faculty, staff, and students on each floor of the residence halls, was part of House Calls, a new university initiative to engage students and to promote student success and retention. About 180 residential students, ranging from freshman to seniors, were visited.

"We wanted to provide our students with an opportunity to engage with our faculty and staff outside of the classroom, in the comfort of their own rooms," said Carolina Nutt, director of Compass First-Year Experience. "Our hope is that this program builds community and connectedness amongst the USFSP community. Although the program was really targeted to first-year students, we decided to engage with all residential students regardless of their classification."



USFSP Biology freshman James Ocean shakes hands with Holly Kickliter, regional vice chancellor for Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications, alongside Dr. Susan Toler, assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, right, and Natalie Guerra, a resident assistant in Residence Hall One.

Many of the students who answered their doors were engaged and inquisitive, asking questions about a number of topics including classes, registration, and graduation.

"I really like it because it shows how open the ways of communication are between faculty and students," said Melissa Gaborik, 20, an Accounting senior in the Kate Tiedemann College of Business.

"It's good to meet the faculty and to develop a rapport with them because it's weird seeing them in the halls and not knowing the person when he could be the head of my department," said Cassandra Cariaga, 18, an Environmental Science and Policy junior.

Nutt said the House Calls event was successful. "We received great feedback from students who appreciated the faculty and staff who took the time to engage outside of their offices," she said.

The event was sponsored by Compass First-Year Experience and Housing and Residential Life. The plan is to replicate these events for Summer and Fall 2017 semesters.

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