

# Pinnacle

FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

## MAGAZINE

SPRING 2007

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**B** Ball

Kate Schrader



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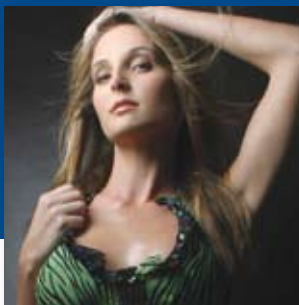
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CARLO BATTILLOCCHI



Syd Kitson discusses his growing relationship with FGCU

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Tiffany Sawyer



## Onward and upward

I can't recall which wise old philosopher said "The only thing that stays the same is change," but he or she was right on target.

It's a particularly fitting sentiment for Florida Gulf Coast University, which turns 10 years old this fall and seems to change on a daily basis.

Interim President Richard Pegnetter likes to refer to it as the University's "upward trajectory," and it's an apt description.

In just the six months since I joined the FGCU staff, a new music program and the Collegiate High School have welcomed students for the first time. The University has launched Pinnacle, its own magazine. And generous supporters have pledged money and land to create a music school and an environmental research center.

The student body is experiencing quite a growth spurt, expanding by about 15 percent this year with similar leaps expected for the next several years.

The University is in the midst of transformation itself, even as it fulfills its mission to transform the lives of the students it educates.

There's plenty of proof of both in the following pages. The Master Plan outlines the vast changes the University will experience over the next decade, predicting more and taller buildings as well as dozens more degree offerings, while steadfastly maintaining its environmental mission in the face of unprecedented growth.

Even now, students are making full use of the diverse offerings the University already offers to realize their dreams.

Aspiring space explorer Brogan Hetrick knows the odds of becoming a NASA astronaut are infinitesimal. Instead, he hopes to make it into space through the private sector. To prepare, he's working on dual degrees – marketing at FGCU and nuclear engineering at Thomas Edison

College – and enhancing his knowledge by taking advantage of opportunities such as the Mars Desert Research Program.

For Brenton Bacon, enrolling at FGCU meant he could continue playing competitive tennis while getting an education, something he couldn't do in his homeland, Australia.

As alumna and model Tiffany Sawyer struts along the runways of Europe and poses for Cosmopolitan, she carries with her a solid background in marketing that helped her develop her own Web site and will help her take charge of her career and her future.

Look at this issue's alumni notes and you'll see how other graduates have made fine use of their educations in the region and well beyond.

Perhaps the most dramatic examples of the transformative nature of education are the 400 FGCU students who are going to college, in large part, through First Generation scholarships, funded by private donations and state matching funds. The first in their families to pursue college degrees, these students strive to create brighter futures for themselves as well as their families.

These are but a few of the changes that are apparent to us today.

But keep watching: There's plenty more where that came from.

**Karen Feldman**  
Pinnacle Editor



ED CLEMENT

## Interim president strives for business as usual at University

He didn't seek the position, but Interim President Richard Pegnetter has immersed himself in the formidable task of leading the University through a period of transition.

Pegnetter, dean of the Lutgert College of Business, was appointed to the post Jan. 17, when President William C. Merwin retired.

The University's Board of Trustees is looking to Pegnetter to reassure faculty, staff, students, donors and the community as a whole that although there's been a change at the top, it's business as usual throughout the University.

He intends to do just that.

"In a way, the role of the business school dean is similar (to that of president)," he says. It requires him to be out in the community and in touch with business leaders in much the same way as a president is.

While the presidential search committee spends the next several months seeking the University's third president, Pegnetter has no intention of simply babysitting.

"My plan is to keep us moving forward," he says. "We need to make sure that (supporters) know that a promise made ...

was not just a commitment from the president, it was a commitment from the University."

During his first few weeks in the position, Pegnetter made the rounds of the university's leadership teams, including the Student Government and Faculty Senate, making sure everyone felt comfortable with the direction in which the University is headed.

One area he intends to focus on is expanding partnerships FGCU has forged with universities in Europe and Asia, bringing more of their

students here and encouraging FGCU students to study abroad.

"Bringing (foreign) students into our classrooms will allow our students to sit next to someone from New Zealand or China," he says. "It helps them understand there are more ways of doing business than just the American way."

Pegnetter believes that our ability to see the larger picture is a vital component of a college education.

He also believes the University will continue to enjoy strong support because of FGCU's long history of responsiveness to community needs.

"We're growing at 14 or 15 percent a year," Pegnetter says, "and we will keep that up for four or five more years."

That gives FGCU an advantage over older institutions, which are at capacity and must wait until a faculty member retires or leaves in order to change the makeup and focus of a department.

When the business commu-

nity says Southwest Florida needs a particular specialty, however, University officials can meet that need fairly quickly because new faculty are hired each year.

"It puts us in a unique position," he says.

He also believes that because of that growth, the

positive relationship the University has with the community and the generous financial support that comes with it, FGCU "should be very attractive to presidential candidates."

– Karen Feldman

– Richard Pegnetter

**"My plan is to keep us moving forward."**



PHOTOS BY ED CLEMENT

Interim President  
Richard Pegnetter





Mark Coetzee, director for The Rubell Family Collection, discusses "L.A. Grau," an oil work by artist Eberhard Havekost.

## Art gallery hosts Havekost exhibit

While it may be less well-known than many Southwest Florida galleries, the FGCU Arts Complex has hosted some impressive exhibits, including its recent showing of works by Eberhard Havekost.

The Dresden artist's creations, which meld photography and painting into a form all its own, came from The Rubell Family Collection, considered among the world's finest collections of contemporary art. Don and Mera Rubell began collecting in the 1960s. Their children, Jason and Jennifer, joined with them some years later.

The Havekost exhibit was the third show held with the Miami-based collection.

According to Mark Coetzee, director for the Rubell collection, "Many institutions approach us and we still keep coming back to this place."

FGCU's art staff has

worked hard at maintaining a relationship with the Rubells, something the family values.

Taking the show to someplace that's out of the traditional art mainstream is a way of reaching out to people who might not otherwise see

Havekost's work.

"No artist just wants to speak to people who understand their art," Coetzee says. "It's about communication, giving us something completely contradictory to what we expect. It's not about the numbers of people you affect. Mrs. Rubell really believes that art can change lives."

Scott Snyder, gallery director and an assistant professor of art, thinks the collaboration with the Rubells benefits the University beyond the exhibits themselves.

"It gives the students an opportunity to shadow (a professional director of art)," he says. "That is what having a university gallery is all about."

FGCU students worked with Coetzee during the staging of the exhibit, gaining valuable insight into proper handling of artworks and how a show comes together.

Admission to the art gallery is free and parking is available in Lot 7. For details, call Snyder at (239) 590-7354 or Assistant Curator Anica Sturdivant at (239) 590-7199.

## Florida Gulf Coast University Pinnacle Magazine

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Florida Gulf Coast University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees.

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## Happenings



### Sunday, April 1

Holocaust Remembrance Concert  
FGCU Music Faculty and Professional Musicians  
3 p.m., International Design Center  
Contact Nancy Cobb-Lippens at (239) 590-7374 or ncobb@fgcu.edu

### Thursday, April 5

Guest Lecturer: Jeff Fleming  
Director of the Des Moines Art Center  
"A Humanist Sensibility in Contemporary Art"  
3 p.m., Art Complex Art Gallery  
Contact Scott Snyder at (239) 590-7354 or ssnyder@fgcu.edu

### Monday, April 9

University Choir and Chamber Singers Concert  
Nancy Cobb-Lippens, Conductor  
7:30 p.m., Student Union Ballroom  
Contact Nancy Cobb-Lippens at (239) 590-7374 or ncobb@fgcu.edu

### Wednesday through Sunday, April 11-15 and 18-22

"Woyzeck" by Georg Büchner, directed by Barry Cavin  
Theatre Lab  
Arts Complex 110 - Black Box Theater  
April 11, 5 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
opening reception  
Curtain at 8 p.m. Wednesdays - Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays  
Contact Barry Cavin at (239) 590-7183 or bcavin@fgcu.edu

### Wednesday, April 11, through Friday, April 27

FGCU Student Art Exhibition  
Senior Project Exhibition  
Arts Complex Art Gallery  
Contact Scott Snyder at (239) 590-7354 or ssnyder@fgcu.edu

### Tuesday, April 17

FGCU Board of Trustees meeting  
8:30 a.m., Student Union Ballroom  
Contact Susan Evans at (239) 590-1057 or sevans@fgcu.edu

### Thursday, April 19

String Orchestra and Wind Orchestra Concert  
Rod Chesnutt, Conductor  
7:30 p.m., South Fort Myers High School auditorium  
Contact Rod Chesnutt at (239) 590-7188 or rchesnut@fgcu.edu

### Friday, April 20

Research Day/Celebration of Excellence  
Alico Arena  
11 a.m. Research Day;  
3:30 p.m. Celebration of Excellence  
Contact Thomas Roberts at (239) 590-7021 or troberts@fgcu.edu

### Wednesday, April 25

Workshop - "Success Strategies for Administrative Assistants"  
8:30 a.m., Student Union ballroom  
Contact FGCU Florida Institute of Government at (239) 590-7815

### Saturday, April 28

Commencement Ceremony  
9 a.m. & 2 p.m., Alico Arena  
Contact University Registrar at (239) 590-7980

### Thursday, May 3

Workshop - "Leading from the Mind and Heart"  
8:30 a.m., Student Union ballroom  
Contact FGCU Florida Institute of Government at (239) 590-7815



The popular vodka luge returns this year to Wanderlust.

## Auction benefits FGCU resort/hospitality program

Hospitality companies from Lee and Collier counties will once again join forces to stage the Wanderlust travel auction and dining extravaganza, a benefit for the University's resort and hospitality program.

The 18<sup>th</sup> annual event takes place on Thursday, April 26, at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples beach resort.

This year's theme is "Around the World in 80 Days" and will afford adventurous guests the chance to bid on travel packages to many destinations visited by Phileas Fogg in the Jules Verne work of the same name.

Wanderlust will feature more than 100 live and silent auction items, including a \$15,000 cruise, a seven-night stay on Waikiki Beach, year-long golf memberships to the Club at Mediterra and Tiburon Golf Club and chef's tables for eight at the Bonita Bay Club and Artisans in the Dining Room at The Ritz.

Sherie Brezina, associate professor and director of Resort & Hospitality Management, says previous auctions have raised more than \$600,000. The money raised goes toward salaries for professors and instructors as well as future scholarships.

This year, "the industry's goal is to raise a quarter-million dollars in support of the resort and hospitality management program at FGCU," Brezina says.

Tickets are \$250 per person or \$3,500 for a corporate-sponsored table of 10. For reservations or information, call (239) 277-3963. For details on FGCU's resort and hospitality management program, call Brezina at (239) 590-7710 or the Office of Admissions at (239) 590-7878.





Come celebrate with us! Florida Gulf Coast University will be 10 years old in August and will commemorate this important milestone with a year-long celebration.

A Community Day Open House is the main event and everyone is invited. Mark your calendar for Saturday, Oct. 27, to visit the campus for a day that will feature historical exhibits, live music, mini lectures, art exhibits, dramatic presentations, college admission information, scholarship and financial aid information, academic and athletic competitions, Sesame Street characters and something for everyone.

Visit the campus and meet faculty, deans and students. Expand your knowledge of all the University has to offer and learn how to access resources such as the library, art galleries, speakers, and environmental and other experts. Experience campus life and tour the popular apartment-style campus residences located at lakeside.

The history of Florida Gulf Coast University is a success story populated with a nationally recruited and talented faculty and staff, intellectually curious students and a generously supportive community. Collectively we are proud of the University's outstanding progress in its first decade and we invite the community to share the excitement and the joy of our 10th anniversary celebration.

*— Audrea Anderson, FGCU associate vice president for Community Relations and Marketing, chairs the 10th Anniversary planning committee.*



## 10th Anniversary Celebration Community Day Open House Saturday, Oct. 27 FGCU Campus

[www.fgcu.edu/10thanniversary](http://www.fgcu.edu/10thanniversary)  
*Your source for anniversary information*

## Sneak Peek 10th Anniversary Events

### • Welcome Back

The Welcome Back event launches the year-long celebration. On Tuesday, Aug. 14, in Alico Arena, faculty and staff will ignite the celebration with an historical video, the president's state of the University address, topped off with a grand birthday party replete with favors and cake for all.

### • Founding Faculty and Staff Tribute

They developed the initial curriculum and programs, designed labs, smart podiums and other educational facilities; penned policies and best practices; created forms and procedures that established the foundation for the institution. These pioneers will be acknowledged for their contributions to the development of FGCU.

### • Community Day Open House

On Saturday, Oct. 27, FGCU will host its signature event in celebration of the 10th anniversary, an open house for the public. See details on the opposite page.

### • Exhibits

Historical exhibits will be on display at the University's library and at the Margaret Sugden Welcome Center.

### • Mementos

Special 10th anniversary merchandise will be sold in the University Bookstore throughout the year.

### • Alumni Class Reunions

The inaugural class reunion honoring the Class of '98 is set for May 2-4, 2008. All classes are invited to return to campus and celebrate with an alumni dinner, campus tours, live music, and other family activities.



MASCOT PHOTO BY BRIAN TETZ





# Once upon a time...

## DIGITAL STORYTELLING brings new dimensions to reading, writing and more

BY KAREN FELDMAN

Combine the age-old tradition of storytelling with the latest technology and the result is a compelling tool that motivates students to read more and write better.

The technique is called digital storytelling, and Danilo M. Baylen, FGCU College of Education assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, has been teaching a wide array of people to use it.

It's no secret that many students resist reading textbooks and struggle with writing.

Baylen, however, believes all of them can and should know how to express themselves through words and that each has a story to tell.

"What they are thinking they can write," he maintains. Employing cutting-edge technology helps motivate them.

"If you use a digital story to deliver material or ask your students to engage in creating a digital story, really you're looking at it in terms of how one impacts their learning ... not only in terms of the content or context of particular material,

but also in terms of improving reading comprehension, writing skills and media literacy."

It's far more involved than merely writing a story.

"They have to know how to use the technology, how to clean up pictures, how to record their sounds," he says. "They have to choose appropriate effects to communicate certain feelings, a certain mood and pull them all together. They use digital cameras, scanners, microphones and different kinds of software."

This year's students produced all manner of works. Topics included: autobiographies, dating, America's role in Iraq, how water evaporates and the pain of being abandoned by a parent.

Baylen's burgeoning program began through his involvement as technology liaison for the National Writing Project at the Invitational Summer Institute at FGCU, a four-week program in which teachers of writing get together to hone their own writing skills and share techniques they can use to help students improve. (See accompanying story.)

"Kids are using the Internet to play games," Baylen says. "I wanted them to utilize technology to do something creative yet supportive of their learning. We are doing digital storytelling because I believe it's the best example of what you can do with technology integration. You can pull together digital images, digital text, digital sound effects and make it

support all sorts of disciplines."

FGCU sophomore Dawn Peck was a technology neophyte when she took Baylen's "Introduction to Computers in Education" class last fall.

"I probably hadn't e-mailed 10 people before that class," says the Montana native.

Nonetheless, she and classmates Michelle Williams and John Finch collaborated to create a digital story that addresses the causes of, and ways to prevent, AIDS.

First, students wrote a basic



story and created a storyboard, using pictures – often taking their own photographs – to illustrate their words. Next, they recorded their stories. Then they put the recorded words and images together on the screen, adding music, titles and credits.

Initially, "he taught us how to do our own e-books and to use (the Windows program) Movie Maker," she says of Baylen. "One of the most important things we learned was how to navigate around these programs. If I got a new program now, I could probably



Danilo Baylen, above left and below, works with first graders at Pinewoods Elementary School on digital storytelling. From left: Patricia Poon, Emily Thorton, Alexis Valone and Brooke Klinker. Above, the title page of one child's story.



figure it out.”

That sort of knowledge and confidence is vital in today’s technologically sophisticated workplace, according to the International Society for Technology in Education. The organization currently is revamping the standards it recommends for what K-12 students need to know about technology to succeed in the classroom and on the job.

To that end, tomorrow’s teachers must be equally savvy



Pinewoods first-grade teacher Sara Kohlhauff coaches student Sasha Spada-O'Neill as the youngster develops her first digital story.

about technology.

Williams, a sophomore, thinks being able to use digital storytelling will give her an edge as an elementary school teacher.

“It’s more interesting for people,” she says. “Some don’t like to read.”

Peck hopes to teach social sciences at the secondary level.

“It’s wonderful to have all kinds of media at our fingertips because students learn in all kinds of ways,” she says.

Finch found value in the process, too.

“Because of my experience in the school environment

FGCU education students Robert White and Megan Trainor discuss their storyboards in an Introduction to Computers in Education class.

already, I am not afraid of the technological tools that will be available to me ... It was rewarding to see the final project, which motivated me to get started on the next project.”

### Unlimited variations

The range of potential projects makes it a technique that can be used with children as young as 6 on up to adults, as Baylen demonstrated this year.

Students in Sara Kohlhauff’s first-grade class at Pinewoods Elementary School in Estero began with a drawing of a squiggly line on newsprint that they had to amplify by creating a picture from it and writing a basic story.

Baylen scanned their drawings into computers and the children then got their first lessons in typing by copying their stories onto the screen. They had to break their stories into components, placing one thought on each of four pages. The result was a short, simple illustrated story created using PowerPoint.

Story subjects included autumn leaves, missing diamonds, an orange snake, a big shark, and a farm in Mexico.

“There are little kids who haven’t ever worked with technology at this level,” Baylen says. “The outcome is not always about the product.”

Anna Bowe tried it out on her French honors class at Lely High School in Naples. The students were 15 to 18 years old and of varying ethnicities.



“Initially the students were perplexed. They had never written a poem in any language the least so in French and with limited vocabulary,” she says. “Students chose their favorite colors, thought of any natural phenomena, animals, objects, whatever they could connect with their specific colors.”

She then supplied them with a list of adjectives that they combined with nouns and eventually crafted rudimentary poems. Then they went to the lab, where she showed them how to use Movie Maker.

“Their reaction went from tentative to very positive,” she says. “They seemed proud of what they were able to pull together into their products.”

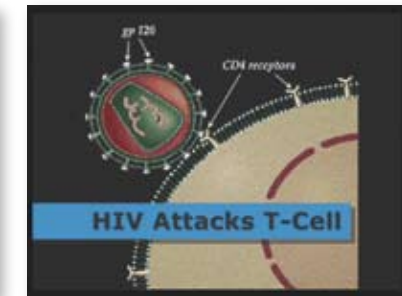
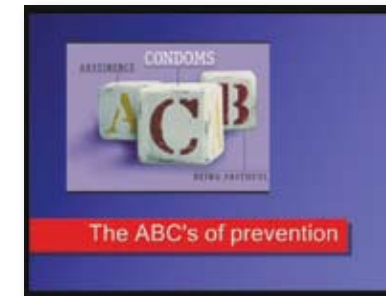
The process also brought a diverse class together. Bowe says she subsequently saw one of the more reserved students start regularly offering to help others.

“As a teaching tool, digital storytelling has revealed its potential,” she says. “It enables me to create a genuine community of learners, where the language of the written word is embedded and enriched by visual images and aural elements

(music or voice), so catchy for today’s students. They never mumbled at the idea of editing and re-editing, because their product is real and they see the reason why it should look good, sound good and feel good.”

Although there were a few technological stumbles along the way that caused some frustration, Bowe says she absolutely will use digital storytelling again.

In an ambitious digital storytelling project of her own, retired Lee County teacher Hazel Geier has been chronicling the use of the technique in local high schools. After taking part in the 2004 National Writing Project at FGCU, she hired on to work with others at the 2005 and 2006 sessions.



From there, she took up Baylen’s request to document the project with a movie that was to be shown at a spring conference about digital storytelling.

She thinks the technique helps develop abilities that go

well beyond writing. Although students in the three high schools – Lely, Estero and Bishop Verot – vary in culture and academic skills, “students at all schools have embraced this new approach to writing,

learned new technology skills, demonstrated creativity and critical thinking and have developed social skills that involve supporting one another, listening, evaluating and appreciating one another’s efforts,” she says.

She sees applications of this process for all areas of curriculum.

“The push in education is to teach reading and



FGCU students John Finch, left, Michelle Williams and Dawn Peck work together on a digital project about AIDS.

At left: four frames from a digital story about AIDS by FGCU students Dawn Peck, John Finch and Michelle Williams.





Baylen works with FGCU sophomores Marisa Proietto and Erin Moser as they complete their storyboards.

writing across the curriculum, and I believe this gives teachers another tool for doing just that," she says.

### Literacy and life lessons

Bambi Fischer teaches Even Start, a family literacy and parenting education program at Three Oaks Elementary School. She works with immigrants to increase literacy and teaches adults skills such as parenting, budgeting and buying a home.

Although the group's language abilities ranged widely, she used digital storytelling by providing questions to which participants wrote answers, crafted them into paragraph or story form, then recorded and

matched them to photos.

Fischer used the technique because "I felt that digital storytelling was a unique and progressive way for the adults to learn. Because of the process of writing and speaking, it was a winner in promoting the acquisition of language skills."

Jo Stahl found similar enthusiasm at Estero High School in her 10<sup>th</sup>-grade English class that included gifted, regular and English as a Second Language students.

She believes digital storytelling proved quite effective.

"I think it has made them enjoy writing because they are writing about what they know and like," she says.

In her sophomore and senior classes at Bishop Verot High School, English teacher Stacey Elmeer saw tangible results that digital storytelling improves writing.

"We started off the year with the project and I feel like it allowed me to address

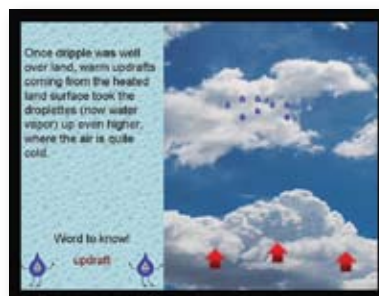
many of the basics up front," says Elmeer, who learned the technique at a summer session of the National Writing Project at FGCU. "I often shortchange the basics like voice and organization because I am too busy getting the literature students to digest the large thematic concepts of whatever novel we are studying. Once you take the novel out of the equation, you will be surprised at how much students will grow as writers."

Students had to show their finished works to the rest of their class and their peers evaluated them, picking out such aspects as elements of exposition and how well the creator communicated the main points. They were also asked to provide constructive criticism, adding yet another dimension to the learning experience.

There's no question that the process involves a lot of work on the part of the teachers as well.

Elmeer recalls staying up until 4 a.m. making CD copies of the videos for herself, some teacher friends and Baylen.

"A few of my students had made videos on almost cliché topics like 'love' and 'happiness,'" she says. "I was so touched by what I saw, even in these simple pieces, that I got all weepy. I felt like the students, in their movies, very willingly showed you the inside of their hearts, and you do not always see that when someone is writing an essay on 'Ethan Frome.'"



Four frames from a digital story about water evaporation by John Finch

## Writing project sparks excitement for teachers, students alike

Twenty-one teachers of writing took part in the National Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute held at the University last June.

Patricia Wachholz, associate dean of the College of Education and co-director of the National Writing Project at FGCU, says the



Patricia Wachholz

program provides a forum in which teachers can exchange ideas in an effort to excite their own students about learning.

"This is really important work that teachers are doing on our campus so they can become better

teachers of writing and teaching leaders within their own school communities," Wachholz says. "Too many people think that teachers spend all their summer vacationing. I can tell you that these teachers are working very hard to be the best they can be for their students, their colleagues and their schools."

During last summer's institute, participants trained in digital storytelling, producing a digital movie, thereby learning to use computer programs that will enable them to teach the technique to their students.

Stacey Elmeer, who teaches English at Bishop Verot High School in Fort Myers, was among the participants and immediately recognized digital storytelling's potential.

"Once I saw it in action, I could not wait to try it," she says.

Elmeer used it in two sophomore honors classes and two Advanced Placement literature

classes. The younger students were assigned five-minute movies about themselves, while seniors created five-minute movies about a specific word.

She found that focusing on composition, rather than the content of a complicated novel, allowed students more opportunity to grow as writers.

And, because students tend to be more technologically savvy than their teachers, "the students end up teaching you a thing or two about how the media works and that authentic exchange is priceless...it gives you so many ways to engage the students," Elmeer says.

The National Writing Project at Florida Gulf Coast University, based in the College of Education, is a grant-funded partnership and cooperative effort between the University and Southwest Florida schools. It is affiliated with the National Writing Project, a collaborative university-school staff development program to improve the teaching and learning of writing in the nation's classrooms.

Begun in 1973 as the Bay Area Writing Project at the University of California at Berkeley, the National Writing Project has grown into an international network of projects reaching some 83,000 teachers a year.

For details, contact Wachholz at (239) 590-7808 or visit the National Writing Project at FGCU Web site at <http://coe.fgcu.edu/fgcwp/>.

— Karen Feldman

"In traditional cultures, the intermingling of personal stories, communal stories, myths, legends and folktales not only entertained but created a powerful empathetic bond between ourselves and our communities.

"Like the environmental process where we are now attempting to recover the forests that were swept away by industrial logging methods, we are facing a painful but critical process to find ways to integrate story back into our lives."

— Joe Lambert, "Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community" Digital Diner Press, Berkeley, CA





# The play's the thing

## Retiring professor carved environmental trail with sense of fun

BY ROGER WILLIAMS

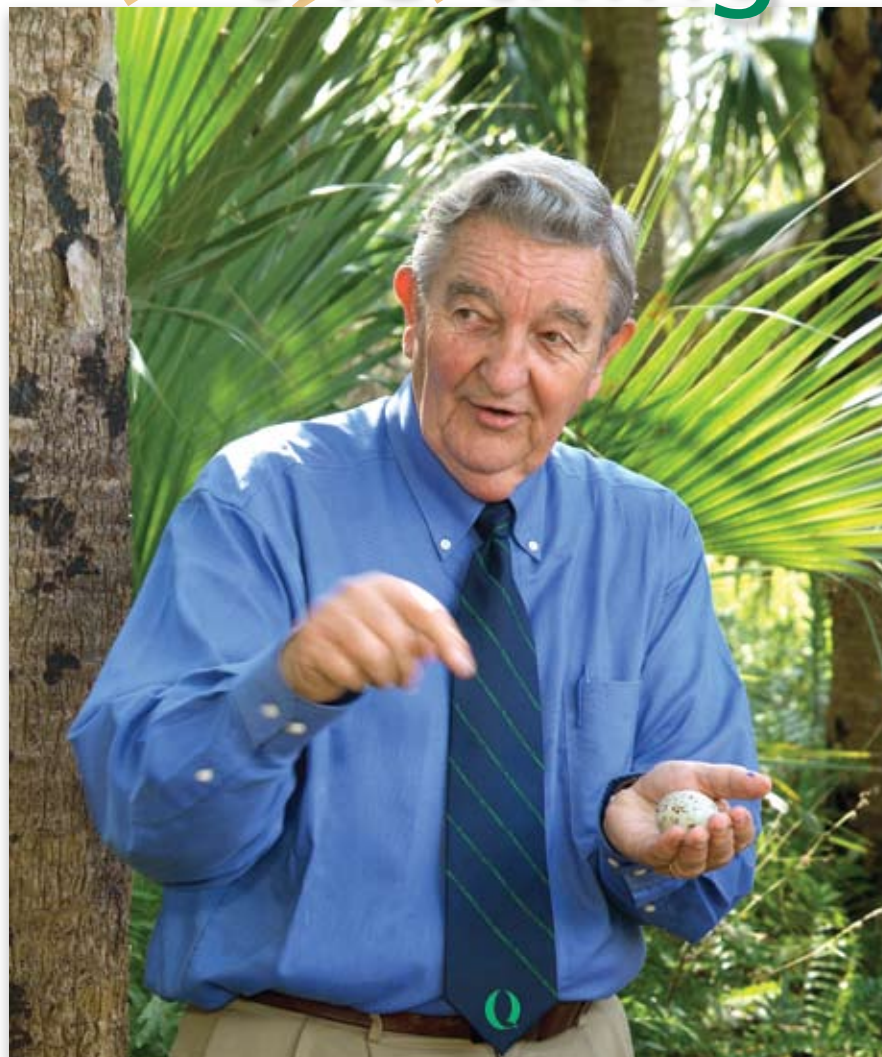
Like countless people before him, when Bill Hammond crossed the Florida line riding a southbound Greyhound bus in the spring of 1961, he was fleeing, along with his wife, Rosemarie.

A medical condition required her to find warmer weather than New York could afford. Earlier that year, President John F. Kennedy had exhorted Americans to “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”

Hammond had already answered that famous question for himself: He would teach. So teach he did, for 47 years — students, government officials, fellow teachers, developers and environmentalists, serving the last decade as assistant professor of ecological and marine sciences at FGCU.

This spring, as he turns 69, Hammond will retire.

As he puts it, “I have to deinstitutionalize myself,” a line he delivers with the merry little whinny of a newly unbridled horse.



“I always think of him as a Master Teacher,” says his friend and colleague, Win Everham, a professor in the Division of Ecological and Marine Sciences. “When I get a chance to see him work, I watch carefully what he’s doing and how he’s doing it, and I learn from it. Then I steal it.”

### A new direction

Hammond was 23 when his life changed course. He grew up on New York’s Staten Island, wandering the still undeveloped woods and marshes of Hudson Bay. He graduated from the State University at Cortland, and taught for two years in a nearby high school. His New

PHOTOS BY ED CLEMENT



York City boyhood, in a family that long ago helped found the Salvation Army, defies any contemporary conception of the place. That’s fitting: Hammond’s adult life also runs counter to conventional notions.

“I’ve pretty much invented every job I ever had,” he says, “and that’s true of this one, too.” He’s exercised that inventiveness at FGCU, surprising many who drifted into his orbit.

Their surprise springs not only from Hammond’s now well-known playbook of the unusual, but from his intense charisma, say students and colleagues — a magnetic charm he aims through his brown eyes straight into the hearts and minds (or the left brains and right brains, as he more precisely describes it) of each person.

“He’s empathetic. He’s caring. He has a sensitive nature, and he really does attend to each person he talks to,” says Rick Tully, coordinator of Science and Environmental Education for Lee County’s public schools, where Hammond taught and which he helped shape for 32 years before moving to FGCU. “He’s always used education not as a platform to indoctrinate, but to open students to issues

Left and right: Through role playing, Hammond’s students learn how availability of food, water and shelter affects deer populations.

and encourage them to do things about those issues.”

Hammond’s charisma might be no more substantial than cotton candy if it weren’t part of the rising tide of disciplined thought and inquiry that runs through his life.

In the mid-1990s, for example, after several false starts while he and his wife raised their four children, Hammond earned a Ph.D. in environmental studies from Simon Fraser University in British

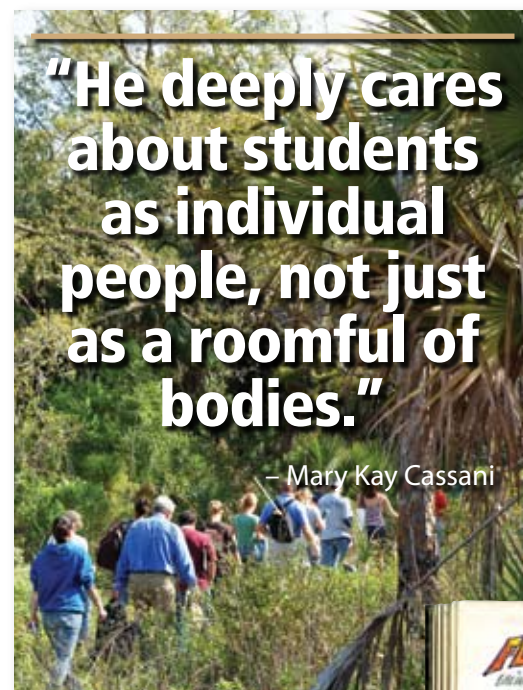
Simon Fraser. The two still teach each summer as adjunct faculty members at Royal Roads University on the Canadian pacific coast, and they’ve become friends.

“Bill is a renaissance man, a voracious lifelong learner involved in all kinds of stuff, from building a pond, to refitting a sailboat, to whatever. He just likes to learn,” McClaren says.

### Fun at work

In the name of learning his students have found themselves following their dapper piper straight off the boardwalk and into the sternum-deep swamp. He’s led such spontaneous adventures in characteristic style, dressed in a pressed, long-sleeved shirt, knotted tie, and boardroom trousers, his petite pompadour neatly

Pages from one of Hammond’s many journals



“He deeply cares about students as individual people, not just as a roomful of bodies.”

— Mary Kay Cassani

Columbia.

“We were delighted to have him as a student — he was more mature, more experienced,” recalls Milton McClaren, Hammond’s adviser and now an emeritus professor of environmental studies at







"Nature has been around for millions of years so watch how it works," Hammond tells his class.

pointing his full head of silver hair toward a higher principle or an oak hammock.

Or his students have taken to doodling, drawing and "playing" while he lectures, all at the professor's delighted insistence. (Hammond himself is rarely without a journal, often writing, drawing or painting his way through his daily duties.)

He spreads that zeal to his colleagues, too.

"He said something that was important for me to hear at a critical time in my life," says Mary Kay Cassani, an FGCU instructor in marine and biological sciences. "He said, 'It's easier to play when you don't have to make straight As, Mary Kay. Let yourself play.' He deeply cares about students as individual people, not just as a roomful of bodies."

First he gets his students to play. Then he teaches.

"He was the first I ever heard say, 'Think of leaves as solar cells,'" Everham recalls. "It's brilliant, it's a perfect analogy. I have no idea where he got it, but I use it."

That's not all he uses. "Whenever I take new students out into the campus, I always repeat what Bill tells them: 'If you go to a party and you don't know anyone when you walk in, you don't feel like you belong. But if you see somebody you know by the door, and

somebody else you like over there in the corner, you feel like you're part of that party. If you walk down a boardwalk and all you see is this undifferentiated mass of green, you don't feel you belong, either.'"

Hammond wants people to feel engaged, part of the greater whole, because he believes that saving the beleaguered environment is not an environmental problem, but an economic and therefore human one.

"Eco comes from the Greek word 'oikos,' meaning house and grounds," he says. "So economics is the management of house and grounds. There's

an economy in nature, too, a natural capital, the human and the ecological."

### Sphere of influence

By the time Hammond left the Lee public schools in 1992, he was gaining a reputation and a wide circle of noteworthy acquaintances. He knew trailblazing environmentalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas, who wrote "Everglades: River of Grass." He knew U.S. Sen. Bob Graham and Gov. Claude Kirk. He knew Jacques Cousteau, the great marine scientist and underwater researcher. He could talk with

ease to developers, politicians, environmentalists, those on the left or the right.

"He teaches in a different way. He incorporates history and his own life experiences in the classroom, and he's not afraid to jump into any arena," says his onetime student and teaching assistant, Brenda Brooks-Solveson, now an environmental educator at the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW), which Hammond helped create as 60,000 acres of protected public space. "But the most profound thing I've learned from him is this: You always have to realize there are two sides, and there is always compromise."

Hammond applied his eloquence and his growing status like a local Henry Clay (the 19th-century "Great Compromiser"), ladling out hearty doses of caring and understanding as he tried to protect natural places, the mangroves, the cypress sloughs, the water itself. He learned that from his father, an engineer and businessman, who worked in a plant the size of a city block.

"When I asked, he always took me into the plant," recalls Hammond. "He knew everybody and their family, from the floor sweepers to the top guys.



That was an important lesson to me — you build relationships, not just hierarchies."

The results have been life-altering in Lee County, and beyond.

### Lasting impact

He created marine and environmental science education in Lee schools, once securing an old school bus, equipping it with 25 microscopes and the latest water-testing equipment, and helping students take precise data from the Caloosahatchee. The data is still used by the Environmental Protection Agency as a baseline for river study. He formed The Monday Group for disgruntled high school students, and led them to create the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve (nine future Ph.D.s emerged from the first Monday Group in the late 1960s, and many other accomplished men and women have followed).

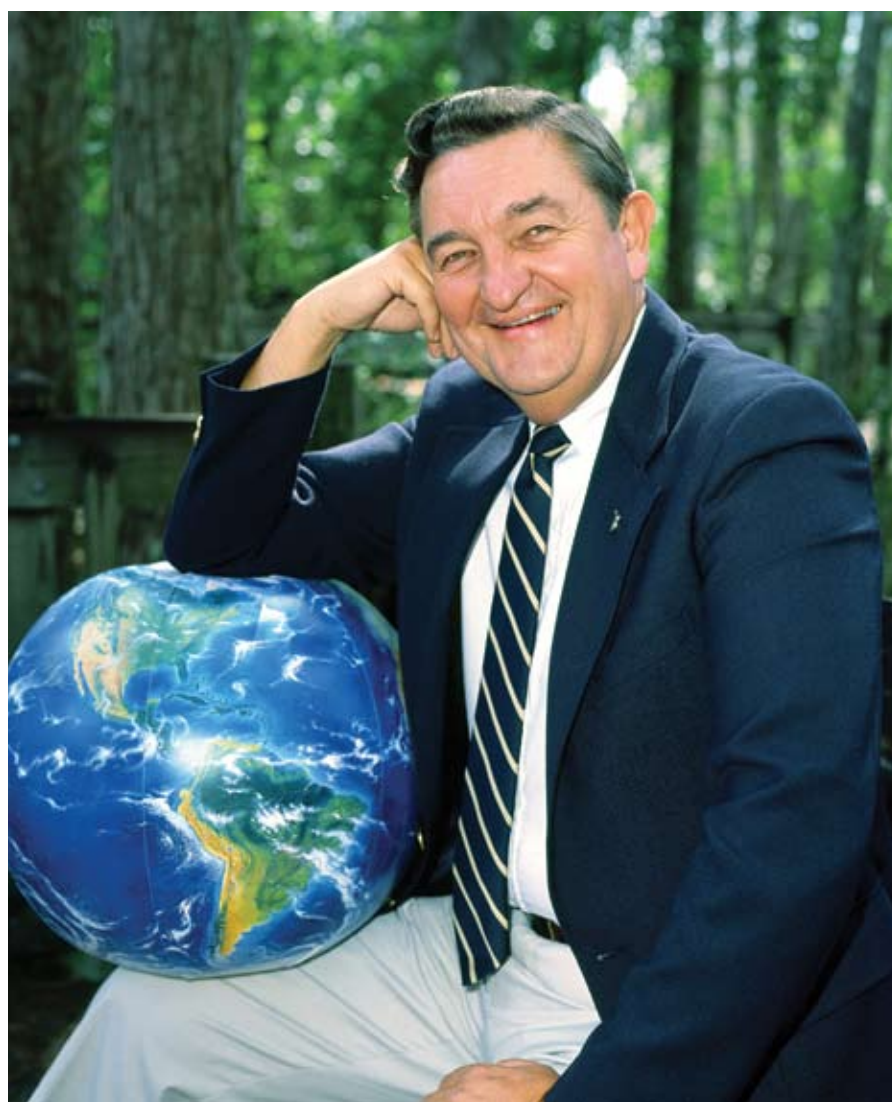
He helped save the mangroves from near annihila-

tion, so that now Lee County possesses one of the most intact mangrove systems in the state. He was instrumental in creating CREW on the western flank of the Everglades. He recognized early that officials would protect their coasts (in large part for economic reasons), so he helped hammer out the Lee County Conservation 20/20 program, which preserves thousands of acres, along with various parks and nature centers.

Hammond sat on the South Florida Water Management Board and helped preserve the drinking and living water on which nearly a million people in a five-county area rely. He sat on the editorial board of Project WILD, served on the advisory board of the American Institute of Architects and chaired the National Council on Environmental Education.

He also led Lee County teachers on a long and difficult walkout when then-Gov. Kirk diverted education funds into hyacinth control and other programs. At one point he had no salary, but

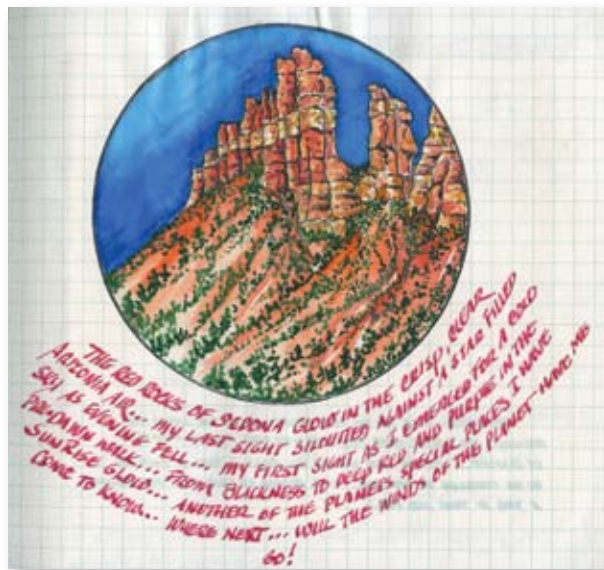
In an oak hammock on campus, Hammond guides students in how to inventory the flora and fauna in a specified zone.



Hammond in 1987 at the Calusa Nature Center in Fort Myers







A page from one of Hammond's journals

he did have a new house, four young children and a heavy dependence on colleagues who dropped bags of produce at his front door at night, while he was out cast netting for food. Hammond and several hundred teachers resigned and were later rehired in that 1967 showdown. The money eventually came back into the schools, and into his beloved science program. "That's something I wouldn't want to do again," he says.

To the relief of his colleagues and friends, his wife, Rosemary, promises the couple won't buy one-way tickets out, on a bus or any other conveyance, anytime soon. Their long Florida ride isn't over yet.

"He's always had the passion for teaching, and it's become much stronger," she says. "The more he's gotten involved, the stronger it's become. It's been his life for all these years. I know he's going to miss it when he retires, but as he says, 'I'm always learning something new.'"

Or saving something old. Once again Hammond has surprised those who know him by doing something

unexpected: Taking paid work with a developer. And not just any developer, but one of the most high-profile developers in Florida, Syd Kitson, who is set to develop the vast, 90,000-acre Babcock Ranch on the Lee-Charlotte County border — in part by preserving the most pristine 74,000 acres as a public domain.

Hammond's helping him. He explains his move simply: "Years ago when this came up I began to think about my grandkids, and I wondered, 'How can we control this development?' I decided that Syd Kitson was serious about creating a model sustainable community that set a new standard for development. Already I've learned a great deal from him, and I'm convinced we can be one of the 'greenest' sustainable communities in the country over the next 20 years."

He pauses to consider what more he might add. The conclusion is a blockbuster: "Kitson gave me veto power over anything that might happen on Babcock."

Unheard of as that is, what does it actually mean?

"Well, the first time I tested it, there were seven golf courses in the plans, and the wildlife corridor was about 800 yards wide, so we compromised." Hammond smiles. "Now the wildlife corridor is almost two miles wide, and we're down to two golf courses."

And only one Bill Hammond.

—Roger Williams is a freelance writer who lives in Alva.



## Hammond helped shape nature of University

Before he ever stepped into a classroom at FGCU, Bill Hammond played the part of a large-animal vet assisting in a difficult birth.

In this case, the animal was a University facing odds none of the state's other 10 had ever encountered. "People don't understand, FGCU was the first in Florida to go through a full permitting regimen, as if we were a big developer," he explains.

Roadblocks came up that were new to the State University System.

The reason, in part, sprang from the fact that the University was to be built in the Estero River watershed, and everything that happens on its 760-acre campus becomes part of the Estero basin, ultimately flowing into Estero Bay. "The growth management folks filed a lawsuit to stop the University, and they were correct. The issue was, how do you resolve it? It would have taken years in court," Hammond recalls.

Working with local politicians, University officials such as then-president Roy McTarnaghan and others, he helped form the Estero Bay Management Committee, an ongoing force today, whose purpose was to avoid the problems careless development could create in the Estero Bay and basin.

At the University, he joined faculty members Win Everham and Greg Tolley to create a program that required students to learn by examining the

campus ecosystem and Estero River watershed. It was classic Hammond, a case of doing well by doing good, and it permanently

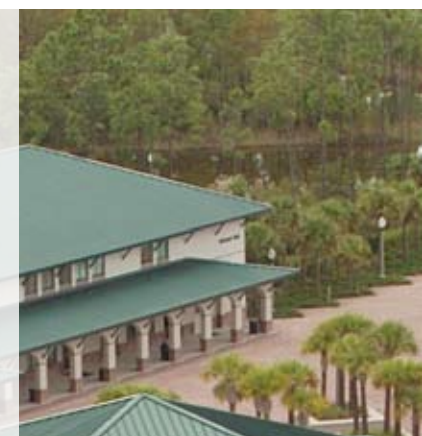
shaped education in the marine and ecological sciences at FGCU.

"So, all of our field research was aimed at gathering information, at determining how things were oriented," Hammond says. "Whether in ecology or issues classes, we built that into our program."

FGCU had set a new standard for development. Hammond, meanwhile, helped draft courses in styles and ways of learning, another that called upon students to use their experiences to bring about larger solutions in the community, and a junior-year colloquium on a sustainable Southwest Florida "where students were introduced to a sense of place, sustainability, and an ecological perspective," he says. "The core things. We require students to have an ecological perspective when they graduate. The colloquium was the place you fixed that."

He also helped design a system in which the University president was accountable for the environment in his annual review, which spawned the hiring of a full-time environmental steward at FGCU. He found the connection for funding of the marine laboratory with WCI Communities, Inc., a \$6 million project. And the campus nature trails will be part of his legacy long after his retirement.

— Roger Williams





# Mission to Mars

## Aspiring astronaut gets a taste of lifelong dream in Utah desert

BY JAY MACDONALD

Last winter, while other undergrads were returning from winter vacations at the beach or on the ski slopes, Brogan Hetrick went to Mars. OK, so maybe he didn't actually leave terra firma – yet. But rest assured that his two weeks as chief engineer on an eight-member crew living and working in a simulated Martian environment in the remote Utah desert only accelerated his personal mission to one day become an astronaut.

“Absolutely incredible” is how Hetrick sums up his adventure with Expedition Gamma, a program sponsored by the Mars Society of Canada and the Canadian Space Agency to lay the groundwork for man's first visit to the Red Planet. Crew members who graduate from the Mars Desert Research Program's training missions may advance to longer missions in such similarly foreboding vacation spots as Australia's Red Desert of Arkaroola or Devon Island near the North Pole. From there, well, the sky's the limit.

Photos provided by Brogan Hetrick/Mars planet photo from NASA

From within the Mars Desert Research program habitat, participants see a broad expanse of the Utah desert, which looks much like the Mars landscape it's meant to represent.

For two weeks, the Gamma crew lived and worked in a two-story habitat (or “hab”) about the size of a one-bedroom apartment; the lower floor houses science and engineering workstations, the upper floor a kitchen, small desk and sleeping quarters.

Gamma's mission focused on developing data collection protocols that may one day expedite sampling and analysis of the Mars surface. Hetrick and other engineers on the crew also designed and built a fueling station for the hab's three all-terrain vehicles.

The crew was required to wear space suits when venturing outside in order to maintain

simulation (or “sim”). The bulky suits presented their own engineering challenge.

“For instance, I could not push the button on my camera with the fingers of my glove to take pictures,” says Hetrick. “We would duct tape things like

nails to our suits so we could do that.”

On rare occasions, the group would “break sim” for an impromptu game of Frisbee or a field trip to a nearby geological formation.

Unlike his fellow crew members, Hetrick was no stranger to tight quarters; in fact, he found the hab downright roomy. That's because, after graduating high school in 1997, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and volunteered for submarine service as a “Right Stuff” move toward a space career.

“My reason for picking submarines was because it was so similar to what you would deal with in space flight,” he says. “My goal my whole life has always been to go into space. I figured it would be beneficial to experience that.”

For six years, he served as nuclear electrician aboard Los Angeles-class attack submarines stationed in Norfolk, VA.

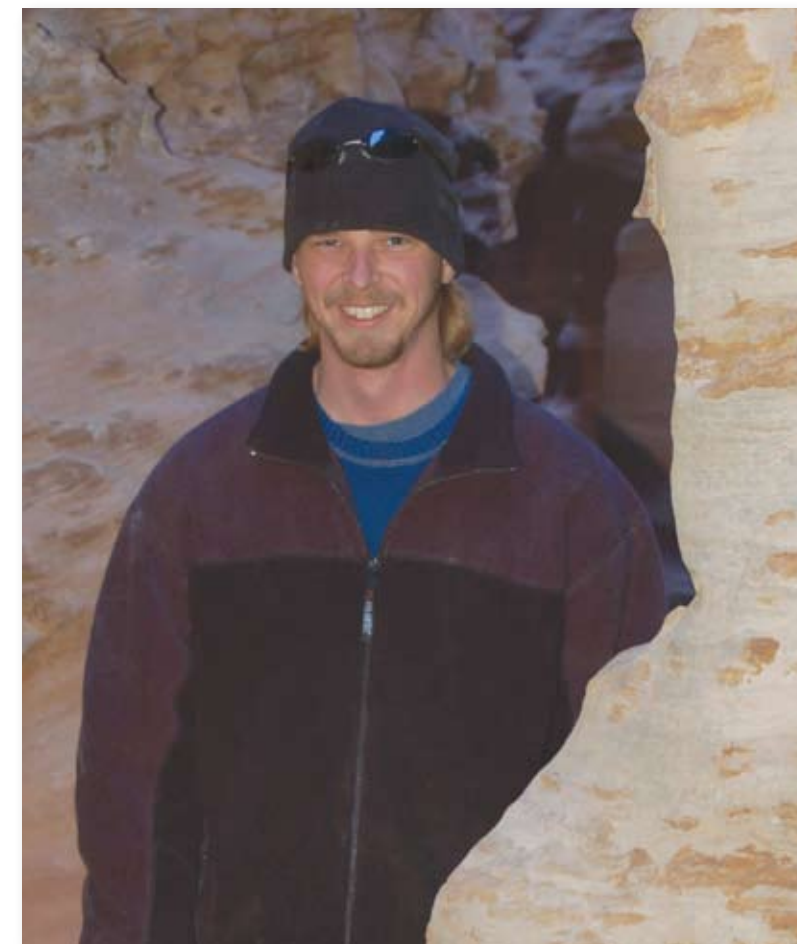
“We would typically have six-month deployments, but we wouldn't spend the entire

Brogan Hetrick, a sophomore at FGCU, explores dramatic rock formations at Little Wild Horse Canyon in Utah.



An engineer tests one of the all-terrain vehicles outside the Mars Desert Research Program habitat in a remote Utah desert.

This patch commemorates the Expedition Gamma training mission, which took place in January.





Members of the Expedition Gamma team set out on a systematic mapping and exploration foray in the desert.

# Mission to Mars

time submerged. The longest I've been underwater in one straight shot was 73 days, and that was never coming up, never communicating, total isolation. On average, it would be 50 to 60 days," he says.

To his dismay, federal funding for space exploration continued to dry up while Hetrick was submerged. But there was good news on the horizon as private enterprise began to look toward the stars.

"After having joined the

mustered out of the Navy and enrolled at FGCU. A year later, he founded the Eagle Space Society, a 30-member student space organization that works with the Whitaker Center and the Southwest Florida Astronomical Society to interest students and teachers in space sciences. He hopes to complete a bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering technology from Thomas Edison College this spring and a B.S. in marketing from FGCU in spring 2008.

Michael Fauerbach, associate professor in physics and astronomy, knew of Hetrick's space dreams and suggested he apply for Expedition Gamma. While degrees in engineering and marketing may seem incongruous, Fauerbach says the combination makes perfect sense in the emerging commercial space industry.

"There are more and more companies that want to go to space; Bigelow Aerospace plans to put a hotel in orbit and

Virgin Galactic plans to offer tourism space flights. I think Brogan's more interested in the entrepreneurship side of space," he says.

Several hurdles remain before a manned mission to Mars can become a reality. For starters, there's the travel time – six months there, six months back – and the nearly two-year wait on the Red Planet

**"I believe in my lifetime I will see some of man's mission to Mars."**

– Brogan Hetrick

before returning to allow for the differences in the orbits of the two planets. The trip also would require a new generation of spacecraft whose development could be 20 years or more away,

depending on funding.

None of which is slowing Hetrick down. Last December, he participated in the Florida Space Academy at Cape Canaveral, run by the State of Florida and the Kennedy Space Center for star-struck undergrads. This April, he'll spend a week on a space marketing independent study project at the International Space University in Strasbourg, France, with an eye toward enrolling there after he completes his studies at

FGCU.

Will he one day realize his dream of viewing Earth from outer space?

"I believe in my lifetime I will see some of man's mission to Mars," he says. "I'm very confident that we will see significant amounts of Earth orbit and lunar space missions, both private and governmental. That's really the big push now. And once industry gets involved with that, you're going to see a huge shift. Once we reduce

the costs to get into orbit, then you'll start seeing missions to Mars become like missions to the moon are today."

– Jay MacDonald is a freelance writer who lives in Austin, TX.



Hetrick, who served as chief engineer for Expedition Gamma, prepares all terrain vehicles for a scientific extra vehicular activity.

service and observing what was going on in the commercial space industry, I decided that it would be very difficult to ensure that I got into the space program; only 1 percent of 1 percent get selected, and not all of them get to fly," he says. "I want to get into space really, really bad and I don't want to take the chance that I can't, so I determined that it would be easier to go into space through private industry instead of through a government program."

Shortly after the space shuttle Columbia tragedy in February 2003, Hetrick



Hetrick checks out some petrified wood he would take back to the habitat for the crew geologist.



Above: Members of the Expedition Gamma team included, from left: Adrienne Kish, biologist; Anna Grinberg, field engineer; Brogan Hetrick, chief engineer; Ryan Kobrick, commanding officer; B. Liz Gauthier, human factors scientist; John Thaler, executive officer; Cassandra Marion, geologist; and Seth Koterba, extra vehicular activity engineer.



Hetrick heads out of the mission habitat with other crew members for their first extra vehicular activity.

See photos and videos of Expedition Gamma's Mars analog study at <http://chapters.marssociety.org/canada/expedition-mars.org/ExpeditionGamma/>



Aerial view of Florida Gulf Coast University



# NOWHERE TO GO BUT THE MASTER PLAN

## University prepares for decade of growth

BY KAREN FELDMAN

Florida Gulf Coast University faces unique challenges when it comes to planning for its future.

Founded just 10 years ago, it's growing at a breakneck pace as the region's population booms and the number of students seeking admission spirals upward. Estimates put growth at about 15 percent a year for at least the next 5 years.

But all that expansion must be delicately balanced against the need to preserve the sensitive environment that surrounds the campus.

Although the University property encompasses 760 acres, only 350 acres are available for building. The rest consists of environmentally protected land that cannot be developed.

"The university is a microcosm of Southwest Florida," says Joe Shepard, vice president for Administrative Services and Finance. "There's incredible growth juxtaposed by environmental issues."

To manage that growth and plan for the future, the University developed a master plan that it updates every 5 years in order to ensure it remains in sync with shifting needs and challenges.

Right now, with close to 8,300 students, 59 build-

ings, and 64 graduate and undergraduate degree programs, the greatest challenge comes

**"To get to 25,000, we're going to have to go more vertical – higher buildings and more of them."**

– Jack Fenwick

in finding enough space to accommodate the burgeoning student body, faculty and staff, expanding research programs, athletic facilities, housing and parking.



This rendering anticipates the University's growth over the next few years.

Land Use Plan Legend

Academic Core

Housing, Recreation and Athletics

Mixed Use Areas

Wetland Areas

Upland and Buffer Areas

Excavated Lakes

While the original plan was formulated on the idea that the total student body would reach 15,000, University officials now believe that the FGCU student population will climb to 25,000 in a decade.

"To get to 25,000, we're going to have to go more vertical – higher buildings and more of them," says Jack Fenwick, director of facilities planning.

It's going to mean more parking garages – one opened in January and another is expected to open next year.

It's going to mean academic and residential buildings will be three or four stories high instead of two.

"A lot of things were not anticipated, especially the magnitude of growth," Shepard says.

To accommodate that growth, construction has been fast and furious. Over the University's 10-year history, it's built 59 structures – that's



Stephen Eisenberg, director of the Professional Golf Management Program, takes measurements for proper golf club length for Shaun Murie, the program's internship coordinator.



JAMES GRECO

roughly six a year.

In the next year, besides the second parking garage, construction is expected to commence on Holmes Hall, which will house the U.A. Whitaker School of Engineering and Herbert Sugden Hall, which will house the Resort and Hospitality Management program.

Shepard says exactly which additional buildings will be funded by the state is up to the Board of Governors, the body that oversees the state's 11 universities.

"The Board of Governors takes our plan and those of the other 10 universities and categorizes projects that are put on a list that works within the funding available," he says.

The funding pie must be divvied up among the universities as well as the state's primary and secondary schools. The amount the state allocates, combined with the amount of community support received, will determine the pace at which future buildings are completed.

Another means of dealing with growth includes expanding beyond the confines of the main campus.

"At present, we have a presence in Collier County with our Renaissance Academy and a presence in Lee," Shepard says. "We have a secondary presence in Cape Coral and in Charlotte County. We're exploring expansion in Charlotte County

and possibly Hendry County. We also need to keep in mind education via distance education opportunities."

Degree programs have grown as rapidly as the campus itself. To date, there are 44 undergraduate degree programs and 20 master's degree programs with University officials looking ahead toward adding about half a dozen more each year, including some at the doctoral level.

**"So much of the curriculum is based on local economic needs."**

– Bonnie Yegidis

Bonnie Yegidis, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, says the specific programs have changed somewhat over the years.

"What's happened because of the tremendous growth of the institution and the demands on us to admit more and more students – and the fact that we're not fully funded by the state – (means) the timeline

on launching some of those programs has been a little bit delayed," she says.

Nonetheless, the expansion continues, with a new bachelor's program in math set to launch in the fall and proposals for five new graduate programs – master's programs in history and criminal justice, two doctoral programs in education and one in physical therapy.

"Between now and the fall it's likely that all will be approved by the Board of Trustees and the advanced (doctoral) programs will go on for approval by the (state) Board of Governors," Yegidis says.

If the state board approves all three doctoral programs, it's likely they will begin in the fall of 2009, she says. The two years in between would be when the resources, faculty and curricula are developed.

Which programs to introduce and when are determined, in part, by input from the community.

"So much of the curriculum is based on local economic needs," she says.

That was the impetus for the golf management program implemented last year and it's what's fueled plans for a spa management program as well.

And it's not just economic factors that are driving the expanding curriculum: donor interests help shape it, too.

Take the music program, for example.

"We hired a new director

last year and she has hired an outstanding faculty," Yegidis says. "We admitted 28 students this year and will surely admit the same number next year. It was fueled by the philanthropy of the Bower family."

It's likely that new programs will continue to be driven by community needs and desires.

"Every year, the colleges look both inward and outward and determine what the priorities are for the university,"

Yegidis says. "We continue to assess what the environment needs and assess our own strengths and move forward from there."

If plans go as anticipated in the current version of the Master Plan, by the year 2013, more than 70 buildings will house 100-plus degree programs in which roughly 17,000 students will be enrolled at the main campus, with still more at growing centers in Naples, Cape Coral and Charlotte County.

## What's ahead

- Housing will expand by 2,400 to 3,600 beds to allow at least 20 percent of students to live on campus.
- The main campus will develop into five segments: the core, northwest and southwest, northeast and southeast.
- Buildings will be three or more stories tall, rather than the current two, to accommodate growth.
- As the campus grows, southern and eastern access roads will be needed.
- An additional 2.4 million gross square feet of buildings will be needed (for a total of 3.6 gross square feet) to accommodate 19,000 students.
- An additional 1 million gross square feet of academic space must be added to the 600,000 gross square feet that now exist or are under construction.
- Dining and recreational facilities will be expanded and diversified.
- In keeping with the University's environmental mission, it must continue to control invasive species, protect water quality, nurture native species and limit pesticide use.

Source: FGCU Campus Master Plan (as of Sept. 12, 2006)

ED CLEMENT



Harapist Elizabeth Lilly and FGCU music instructor William Larsen perform at a fall recital.



# First Generation

## Blazing a Trail



**Scholarship recipients strive to better themselves and their families**

BY CHRIS WADSWORTH

**S**ophomore Shalonda Herndon is determined to make the most out of her college education and her life.

While studying criminal forensics and volunteering at a halfway house for troubled youths, she still has time to recognize a good deal when she sees one. She is one of the first Florida Gulf Coast University undergraduates to take advantage of the new First Generation Matching Grants Program offered this year at the state's 11 universities. Its main criteria: that the recipient's parents did not attend college.

"Getting a college education will prove to everyone in my family, young and old, and to everyone in my community that it can be done," says Herndon.

The 19 year old grew up in the shadow of the good life — the waterfront mansions, the luxury cars, the five-star restaurants of Palm Beach. It was a lifestyle she could only dream about from her neighboring community of Riviera Beach. This city of about 32,000 residents along the Atlantic coast has an unfortunate reputation for its high crime rates and poverty.

"Riviera Beach is full of violence, drug

dealers and gangs," Herndon writes in a letter of thanks to donors to the First Generation program. "Most of the people that live in the city cannot afford to move, so they are stuck. My family happens to be one of those families."

As a youngster, Herndon witnessed gunfights, police chases and worse through her apartment window.

Herndon's mother is a cook in an elementary school cafeteria. Her father is unemployed. With little money and a family of five under one roof, making ends meet is a struggle. From a young age, she knew she had to do something to change her life, not only to ensure a better future for herself, but to help her family, too.

"I want to be able to bring my family out of this environment," she says.

Not all stories are as dramatic as Herndon's, but the more than 400 students at FGCU who received First Generation funds this year all have one thing in common: They are the first of their generation, often the first in the family, to pursue a baccalaureate degree.

State and local higher education officials

say they are thrilled with the new program because it allows many Florida students to break the cycle of minimal education, low wages and lifelong struggles that impacted generations before them.

"It benefits everyone," says Linda Lehtomaa, FGCU's senior director of advancement. "We believe it is vital to our economy to make sure that these students get the education they want so they can go on and become productive members of society."

According to a study by the National Center for Educational Statistics, 59 percent of high school graduates whose parents didn't go to college enrolled in some form of postsecondary education. That rate increased to 75 percent among those with at least one parent with some college experience and jumped to 93 percent among those who had a parent with at least a bachelor's degree.

"One can easily see the impact that will carry forward from generation to generation with an investment in this generation," says Bill Edmonds, communications director for the State University System of Florida.

The First Generation Matching Grant Program came about in 2006 through a vote by the Florida Legislature. The state made an initial commitment of \$6.5 million that universities could tap in to provided they come up with matching donations.

Thanks to the generosity of alumni and community members, this was an easy feat for FGCU to accomplish.

"Donors ... want to help students who are helping themselves," Lehtomaa says.

In fact, since some universities fell short of their fundraising goals, FGCU got an additional allocation. All told, there was more than \$362,000 available for FGCU students during the 2006-2007 school year.

Department of Education officials estimate the First Generation program will



Shalonda Herndon

serve 5,000 to 7,000 Florida students each year. The average award is between \$1,700 and \$2,500.

Students can apply it to whatever they need — toward tuition, textbooks, housing — to keep their educational goals on track.

Possible changes to the program include a proposed bill to add another \$13 million in state funding, raising the state matching amount and taking steps to increase the number of students applying for and receiving grants.

That's good news for Herndon, who hopes to become a forensic document examiner.

"To anyone who qualifies for the program, do it!" says Herndon. "It's like saying 'Congratulations on being the first one in your family to go to college. Here's a thousand dollars.'"

— Chris Wadsworth is a freelance writer based in Fort Myers.

Meet three more First Generation scholarship recipients on pages 30 and 31.





To apply for First Generation Matching Grant funds, contact the FGCU Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships at (239) 590-7920.

To donate to FGCU's First Generation Matching Grant program, contact Linda Lehtomaa, senior director of advancement, at (239) 590-1071.

PHOTOS BY ED CLEMENT

## Nichole Salazar

Class Year: Freshman  
Major: Elementary Education  
Hometown: Miami

Raised by a single mom, Nichole Salazar saw how hard it was to make ends meet. She loved school, but feared money would come between her and a college education.

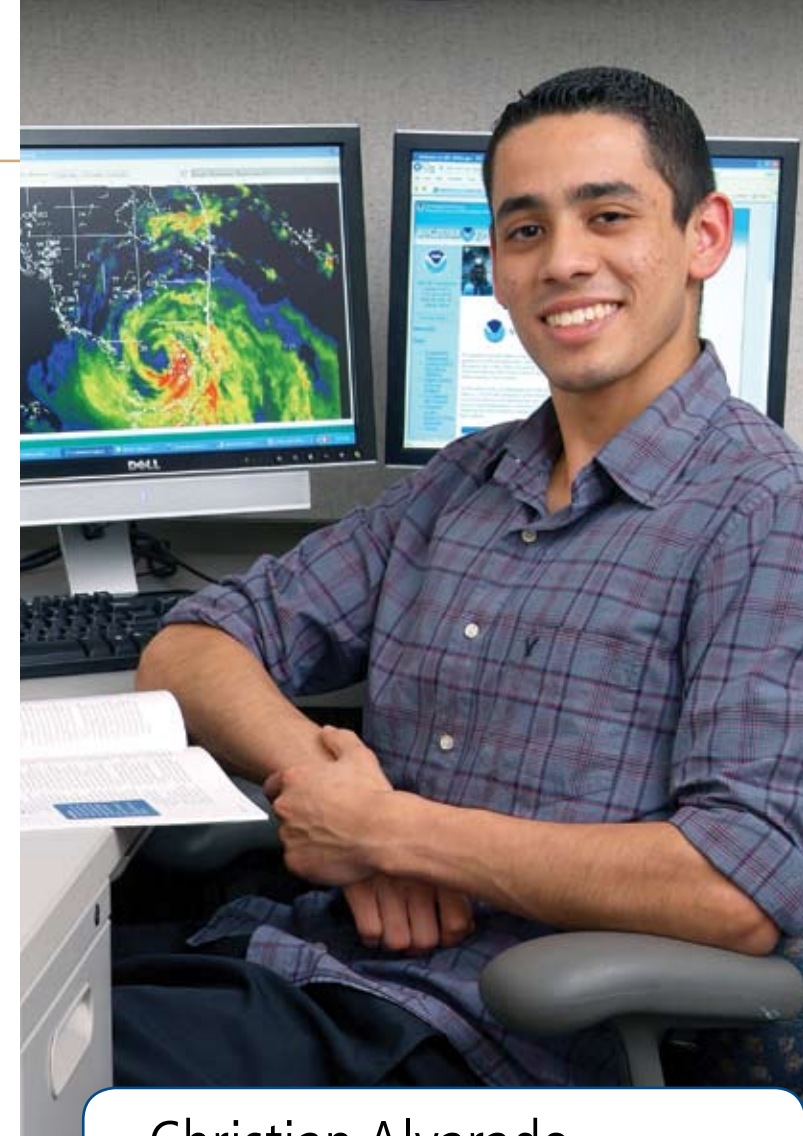
Her grandparents and parents emigrated from Cuba and Italy in the late 1950s. To get by, working became the primary focus. There was never enough time or money for her parents to go to college.

Still, Salazar and her parents wanted her to get a degree, seeing it as essential to long-term success. She received some financial aid, but still needed more. Then she heard about the First Generation program.

"This scholarship came at a perfect time," she says. "I needed to purchase my books and thought that I was not going to be able to afford them. Being able to continue with my schooling renewed my determination to do what my mother and father could not do."

Salazar's career goal: become a teacher and inspire her students to love learning as much as she does.

— Chris Wadsworth



## Christian Alvarado

Class Year: Freshman  
Major: Civil Engineering  
Hometown: Hollywood, FL

Chris Alvarado's Honduran parents came to the United States looking for a better life for their children. But with a father who didn't complete grade school and a mother who didn't finish high school, it was tough going. That's why Chris' family was so happy when he told them he was going to go to college.

Because his family's finances are limited, Alvarado says he put his faith in God that everything would fall into place.

Indeed it did. Financial aid and scholarships cover his tuition. Funds from the First Generation program help cover books and additional fees.

"It fills the huge void that my wallet has experienced this year," he says.

Alvarado loves airplanes and hopes to pursue a career in aerospace engineering. Ultimately, he wants to specialize in reconnaissance aircraft and fly the hurricane hunter planes that soar into the center of approaching storms.

— Chris Wadsworth



## Jerrica Iverson

Class Year: Freshman  
Major: Elementary Education  
Hometown: Arcadia

Jerrica Iverson saw the power of people helping people in 2004, when Hurricane Charley roared across her community in south-central Florida. Iverson and her neighbors helped friends and strangers alike clear debris, rebuild homes and support struggling businesses.

Now the FGCU community is helping Iverson achieve her dream of becoming a kindergarten teacher through funds provided by the First Generation program.

"It allows me to put more focus on my academics as opposed to my finances," she says.

Iverson says her parents didn't attend college and they know how difficult it is to succeed without a degree and are thrilled with her decision to come to FGCU. They are equally proud of her older brother, who graduated from the University of Florida and is now pursuing a master's degree.

While Iverson definitely wants to return to her beloved Arcadia, she also would like to someday teach children in Alaska and South Africa.

— Chris Wadsworth



## Looking ahead

### Syd Kitson talks about his connection to University

Kitson & Partners is a Florida company headquartered in West Palm Beach that develops, builds, markets and manages award-winning, environmentally sensitive master-planned communities. The company plans to build an environmentally conscious community on more than

17,000 acres of the Babcock Ranch, a 143-square-mile property that straddles the Lee-Charlotte County line. Last December, Kitson & Partners gave Florida Gulf Coast University 67 acres of land and \$3 million to build an environmental research center on the ranch. State matching funds will add another \$3 million. Here's what chairman, CEO and FGCU Foundation Board member Syd Kitson had to say recently about the collaborative effort:

**Question:** How did you get involved with FGCU?

**Answer:** I was initially introduced to the University through Dr. (Robert) Burns (retired senior executive director of the FGCU Charlotte Center). He explained to me that the philosophy of the University was centered on environmental studies. After talking to Bob, I immediately felt there was the potential of a synergistic relationship between the University and our company.

**Q:** How does Bill Hammond, FGCU's popular environmental professor who retires this spring, fit into the plan?

**A:** We are absolutely thrilled that Dr. Hammond has joined our team. He has a tremendous amount of respect within our organization, and is responsible for all the environmental and educational aspects of our new community. Bill is helping make certain that the environmental mission we've envisioned for the new Babcock Ranch community is fully executed. He was also intimately involved in the successful preservation of 74,000 acres (which were purchased by the state).

**Q:** What sort of educational opportunities do you envision?

**A:** Elementary schools, middle schools and high schools, as well as nature centers, will all get involved

in both the learning and the research that will be taking place at the new FGCU Research Center at Babcock Ranch. It's important to have students get involved with environmental issues at an early age. We think the FGCU Research Center can play a vital role in their education.

**Q:** Is this the first time Kitson & Partners has teamed up with an educational institution?

**A:** We've always been involved with environment awareness and educational institutions, but not to the extent we are committing to with the FGCU Research Center. For example, when we developed Ibis Golf & Country Club in West Palm Beach, the property was located next to the Palm Beach water catchment area. At that time we teamed up with the Grassy Waters Nature Preserve to enhance their education and outreach programs. We are very proud to have been a significant part of that important effort.

**Q:** What's different about the partnership with FGCU?

**A:** At Babcock Ranch we will have a 74,000-acre "living laboratory" located directly next to the FGCU Research Center. With such close proximity, we are enthusiastically looking

forward to working with the scientists to help us make Babcock Ranch a better, more environmentally sensitive community.

**Q:** Why enter into a partnership like this?

**A:** Our company prides itself on being committed environmentalists. We believe deeply in what we are doing. We want to do the right thing for the environment and set the bar high for development standards for the entire state of Florida. We view our partnership with FGCU as an integral part of our commitment to the environment.

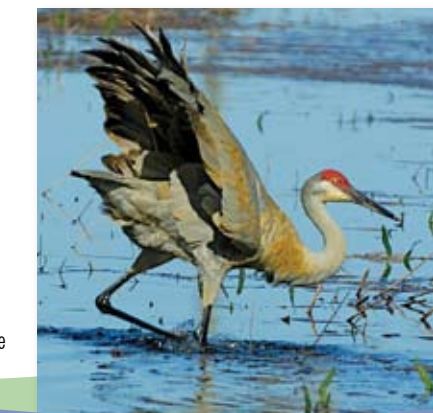
**Q:** When will development commence at Babcock?

**A:** We're going through the Development of Regional Impact process now. Once that process is completed, we'll start shortly thereafter. The FGCU Research Center is part of our first phase of construction, so we're very excited about moving the process forward. After the DRI approval it's simply a matter of when we get approvals and permits to get things started. Needless to say, Kitson & Partners is very proud of our affiliation with FGCU and we're looking forward to a long, successful relationship.

— Karen Feldman



Florida black bear



Florida sandhill crane



These are some of the listed species believed present on Babcock Ranch, according to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Florida scrub jay



Wood stork



Gopher tortoise



Architect's rendering of  
the concert theater

## FGCU conducts fundraising campaign for performance complex

Imagine a performing arts complex with three theaters, state-of-the-art practice rooms and classroom space.



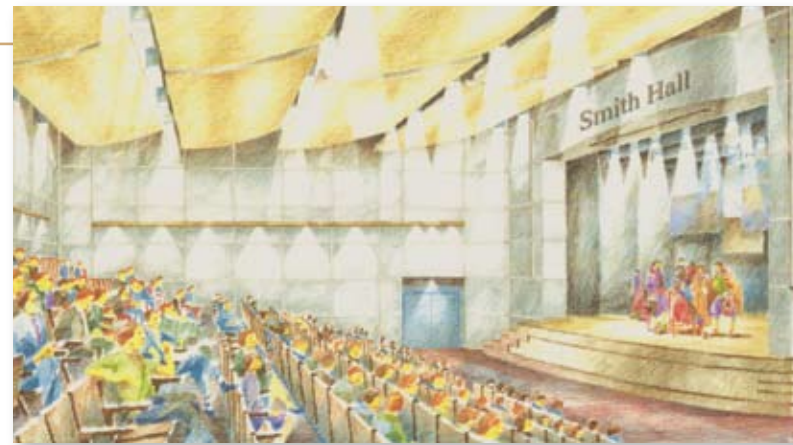
Architect's rendering of the  
proposed performance hall

That's the goal for Florida Gulf Coast University's as-yet-unnamed performance hall.

In 2006, the University's Bower School of Music sprung to life with generous community support.

It was also the year that the Florida Legislature pledged \$12.6 million to build an academic facility for the University's music and theater programs. Community support is the key to creating a first-rate performance hall to complement the academic facilities.

That support will enable the professors, student musicians and actors to learn in a prime



academic setting, but also to create a new venue in which concerts and dramatic presentations will enrich the lives of countless arts-loving Southwest Florida residents and visitors.

Among the goals of the music school and the theater arts department are to create a visiting artists program, a respected music competition and professional presentations that will enhance the academic program and entertain the public.

The hall will be built next to the Arts Complex on FGCU's main campus and will become the focal point of the University's rapidly growing visual and performing arts programs. Classrooms, soundproof laboratories, practice rooms, studios, public conference rooms and storage areas will complement three primary performance spaces: a 400-seat theater for concerts, a 200-seat recital/rehearsal hall and a 100-seat band and orchestra hall.

"With community support, this academic music hall will include a 400-seat concert

theatre with a storable shell, fly space, mechanical pit and other support space to accommodate band, orchestral and choral concerts, theater, musical theater and opera," says Steve Magiera, vice president for University Advancement.

The University also hopes to add a grand lobby and catering kitchen for intermissions, receptions and events, he says.

The scope of the facility will depend on the amount of community support, which could double through the Alec P. Courtelis Facilities Enhancement Challenge Grant Program, a state program that matches donations dollar-for-dollar.

There are many commemorative opportunities available in honor of major donors. These include the performance center, its three theatres and a studio suite.

### For details:

Contact Florida Gulf Coast University Foundation,  
10501 FGCU Blvd. S.,  
Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565;  
(239) 590-1058;  
[www.fgcu.edu](http://www.fgcu.edu)

## Friends unite to maximize their donations for scholarship

A group of friends who all wanted to support Florida Gulf Coast University decided to join forces, producing a scholarship fund that proved greater than the sum of its parts.

They accomplished that by each donating \$25,000 to create a single fund totaling \$150,000. Because the total amount exceeded \$100,000, it became eligible for state matching funds, making their gift worth \$225,000.

"Everybody is fond of the University and so to be able to take advantage of the match just made sense," says Joe Catti, chair of the FGCU Foundation Board of Directors and president and CEO of FineMark National



Bank & Trust in Fort Myers.

The group included Catti and his wife JoAnn, Jack and Shelley Blais, Tom and Lynda Case, David and Linda Lucas, Vito and Linda Manone and Frank D'Alessandro. David Lucas is on the FGCU Board of Trustees while D'Alessandro is on the FGCU Foundation board.

Linda Lehtomaa, senior director for advancement, says, "The FGCU Foundation is very pleased that this group of distinguished individuals is creating a scholarship endowment to support our students as they pursue their educational goals.

The fact that the endowment will be matched is a welcome added benefit. The Blais, Case, Catti, D'Alessandro, Lucas and Manone Families Scholarship will continue to benefit our students in perpetuity."

The amount the state contributes climbs with the size of the donation. Gifts of \$100,000 to \$599,000 are eligible for a 50-percent match. For gifts of \$600,000 to \$1 million, that increases to 70 percent, rising to 75 percent for gifts of more than \$1 million to \$1.5 million, 80 percent for gifts of \$1.5 million to \$2 million and 100 percent for larger gifts.

A group of friends pooled their donations to create a scholarship fund. Pictured, from left: Vito Manone, Linda Manone, Jan Baillargeon, Tom Case, Frank D'Alessandro, Lynda Case, JoAnn Catti, Joe Catti, Linda Lucas, David Lucas, Shelley Blais and Jack Blais.

## New Web resource aids potential donors

The Office of Planned Giving has launched a new link on the FGCU Web site that provides timely information about making deferred gifts. The link was designed by David Jaeger, FGCU director of Web,

E-Learning and Publication Services.

The Office of Planned Giving's new link from the FGCU Foundation Web site "provides timely information about making deferred gifts," says Peter Lefferts, director of planned giving.

Alumni and friends of the University may now learn about a wide range of planned gifts, read about donor recognition societies and request free litera-

ture with a click of a mouse.

"Prospective donors particularly enjoy using the free confidential planned gift calculator to create gift illustrations and model charitable tax deductions," Lefferts says.

According to Steve Magiera, vice president for University Advancement, "A deferred gift is an outstanding way for donors to support higher education and leave a family legacy."



## Engineering school garners support from local firm

Holmes Hall, the planned residence of the U.A. Whitaker School of Engineering, has received a gift to benefit the interior of the building. Hole Montes, Inc. committed \$150,000 to enhance the 96-seat lecture hall and to purchase specialized state-of-the-art equipment for classroom use



Top executives from Hole Montes, Inc. gathered to present the University with a gift that will help fund a lecture hall for the engineering school. From left: Hole Montes Senior Vice Presidents George Hermanson and Ron Benson, President and CEO Thomas Taylor, FGCU Interim President Richard Pegnetter, Hole Montes Senior Vice President Bob Murray and U.A. Whitaker School of Engineering Director Susan Blanchard.

and for research.

The six-tiered classroom will be called the Hole Montes Lecture Hall.

The gift qualifies for the one-to-one match by the state of Florida, potentially increasing its value to \$300,000.

"This gift is critical to building a first-rate quality facility," says FGCU's Interim President Richard Pegnetter. "To produce well-prepared students, we must have special facilities of top quality. The Hole Montes gift helps make this possible."

An initial supporter of the FGCU engineering program, Thomas Taylor, president and CEO of Hole Montes, Inc., welcomes the chance to support the young engineering program that will fuel the local industry.

"The engineering business is how we've made our living. If anyone is funding a program like

this, it should be engineering companies," says Taylor. "This program gives Southwest Florida the opportunity to produce its own engineers. We have been successful and we want to provide the opportunity for others to do the same."

Hole Montes, Inc. is a full-service engineering firm with offices in Naples, Fort Myers and Venice.

In addition to accommodating engineering students, the hall will be used for public events, presentations and continuing education courses for engineers to update and renew their professional licenses.

In 2005, Hole Montes, Inc. donated scholarship funds to attract the best and brightest students to the FGCU engineering program.

"Our mission is to produce community leaders," says U.A. Whitaker School of Engineering Director Susan Blanchard. "Tom Taylor and his board of directors are excellent examples of what community leaders are."

and creating a lasting tribute to her love of music and education.

That gift will create the Hans and Erna Marie Siebert Fund for Excellence to support student scholarships. With matching money from the state, the fund will exceed \$300,000.

Naples resident Elisabeth Schmidt, a long-time friend of the couple, said, "The Sieberts

were good to the public. They made numerous charitable contributions to support the community."

The couple grew up in Germany, moved to Montreal, then New York and, finally, Naples. In 1989, they were instrumental in founding the German-American Club Harmonie of Naples.

## President's Gala 2007

It was an affair fit for the gods, which was quite fortunate, because Zeus and Poseidon, along with some lesser deities, turned out for Florida Gulf Coast University's "Voyage to Olympus" on Feb. 24.

More than 440 well-dressed mortals also attended the Greek-themed President's Celebration 2007 at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples, for a royal feast, silent auction and dancing.

A highlight of the seventh annual event was the ceremony welcoming Bobby Ginn (as well as Michelle Ginn, in absentia) and Alan and Marilyn Korest into the Order of the Majestic Eagle. Their induction brings to 17 the number of sword-carrying members in this select society, which includes the University's most generous supporters.

The event raised more than \$500,000 in unrestricted funds for the University, according to FGCU Foundation Board of Directors Chair Joe Catti. That brings the total raised over the past seven years to \$3.5 million.

Interim President Richard Pegnetter said the evening's theme was fitting because "we are on a voyage of our own to greater heights of excellence."



PHOTOS BY JAMES GRECO



Members of the order of the Majestic Eagle raise their swords in unison. From left: Bobby Ginn, George Syper, Joy Arpin, Marilyn Korest, Alan Korest and Fred Pezeshkan.



Voyage to Olympus celebrants included, from left, Alan Henry, Donna Price Henry, Medusa, Susan Blanchard and Don Blanchard. At left, members of The Gordian Group perform.



Dolph von Arx and Joe Catti



Interim President Richard Pegnetter and Bob Hoel share a moment with one of the Greek goddesses who helped entertain the crowd.



# Hoop dreams

Eagle basketball program soars to new heights in last season of Division II play

BY CARL BLEICH

If anyone had doubts that Florida Gulf Coast University's women's and men's basketball teams were ready for the big leagues, their impressive final seasons in Division II should have laid those to rest.

The women had a perfect season, finishing 29-0, landing them the top spot in the rankings. After hosting and winning the NCAA Division II Southern Region Tournament, the team headed to the Elite Eight competition in Kearney, NE. (It had not yet taken place at press time.)

"I think it's great for us because we have a lot of loyal fans who (got) the opportunity to see us play in NCAA tournament competition," says women's coach Karl Smesko.

The men had a winning season, too, winding up with a 27-6 record. Despite winning 19 of their last 20 games

(and 21 of 24 South Region contests), players were bitterly disappointed when the team wasn't named to play in the eight-team South Regional competition.

Nonetheless, both teams proved formidable adversaries throughout the season.

The women's squad has seen more success this year than any other FGCU team in school history, in any sport. The team is ranked No.1 in the USA Today/ESPN Division II Top 25 Coaches Poll. It's the first team in school history in any sport to be ranked No.1, and the only team in Division II

women's basketball to remain undefeated.

Both squads carried off momentum-building victories in the National Independent Tournament held at Alico Arena in late February. The men defeated Central State 82-78 in their final while the women topped Dixie State 76-54.

The women's team has not lost a game since March 11, 2006. The Eagles have beaten all but two of their opponents by double digits this year.

However, the women athletes made their biggest statement on Feb. 2 in Cayey, Puerto Rico, when they vanquished Puerto Rico-Cayey on Cayey's home floor 105-14. The 91-point margin of victory and only 14 points allowed were both school records.

The women also top the South Region poll.

"Getting the No.1 ranking



Steffi Sorensen

©istockphoto.com/myjpolak

**"In terms of national respect and national notoriety, this team has definitely achieved new heights."**

- Karl Smesko

in the country is just another step that has definitely brought a little more exposure to the program," Smesko says.

He is reaping the benefits of his 2006 recruiting class, when he landed sensational freshmen Steffi Sorensen and Adrianne McNally. Both start regularly for the Eagles and Sorensen is

averaging more than 16 points per game.

"They have come into the program and been instant starters," Smesko says. "They are both very good players. To be that productive as freshmen is

pretty amazing."

Add these two freshmen to two reliable seniors in Kate Schrader and Alex Nelson and it's easy to see why the Eagles proved unbeatable this year.

"In terms of national respect and national notoriety, this team has definitely achieved new heights," Smesko says.

The success of the men's team has not come without some tribulation. The Eagles lost back-to-back home games for the first time in school history in December, when they lost in the FGCU Holiday Classic to Montevallo and Valdosta State.

However,

the Eagles proved unstoppable after that. FGCU has not lost to a Division II opponent since the loss to Valdosta State and won eight consecutive Division II games by double digits.

"It's been a great season," sophomore forward Landon Adler says. "We're not searching for what we need to do to win. We know what we need to do."

Sophomore guard Cecil Avant says, "This season has been a lot of fun. I think it's the chemistry. Our chemistry is amazing. It's all about having fun with each other and trusting



Landon Adler



Beau Bauer



Adrianne McNally, Kate Schrader and Amanda Pierce

PHOTOS BY BRIAN TIETZ





Brandon Dunbar



Adam Liddell



Alex Nelson



Jen Conely

each other. We do that well.”

“This group has shown a lot of maturity,” says men’s coach Dave Balza. “I have seen a lot of improvement from day one until now. I credit our senior leadership. Beau Bauer and Brandon Dunbar have done a great job.”

Bauer and Dunbar will not be around next season, but Balza believes he has found some excellent replacements in his recruiting class of 2007. Ed Rolax and Justin Stokes, both 6-foot-8, have signed letters of intent with FGCU and Balza hopes to land two more recruits for next year’s squad.

“Ed Rolax is a high-level player for us,” Balza says. “He is that kind of athlete. Justin Stokes is a tremendous student. He is going to be a really good player. We need to sign two more.”

The Eagles currently have six players that were part of a Division I program at one time.

“I think the transition to D-I is going to be smooth,” says Adler, who played at Ball State prior to coming to FGCU. “Anyone who has played will tell you the difference is just a couple inches and a couple pounds. The skill level doesn’t change that much.”

The staff and players of both teams feel they are well supported by fans.

“We get great fan support from this community,” Balza says. “We really appreciate all of their support.”

— Carl Bleich is a freelance writer and a sophomore at FGCU.

## Fabulous Fans



## Sports Calendar

For details, contact Matt Fairchild at (239) 590-7061.

### Friday, April 6

Baseball vs. Flagler  
7 p.m., FGCU Swanson Stadium

### Saturday, April 7

Baseball vs. Flagler (DH)  
1 p.m., FGCU Swanson Stadium

### Friday, April 13

Baseball vs. Palm Beach Atlantic  
7 p.m., FGCU Swanson Stadium

### Saturday, April 14

Baseball vs. Palm Beach Atlantic (DH)  
1 p.m., FGCU Swanson Stadium

### Friday, April 20

Softball vs. Florida Tech (DH)  
5 p.m., FGCU Softball Complex

### Saturday, April 21

Softball vs. Palm Beach Atlantic (DH)  
2 p.m., FGCU Softball Complex

### Tuesday, April 24

Baseball vs. Lynn  
6 p.m., FGCU Swanson Stadium



## Hockey club competes for national championship



The Florida Gulf Coast University Hockey Club was headed for the American Collegiate Hockey Association’s Division II National Championship at Epic Ice Arena in Fort Collins, CO. as this publication went to press.

The 27-game competition is significant for FGCU. The Eagles moved up from ACHA Division III to Division II this year. Of the 130 eligible teams in Division II, the top 16 earned the right to play in the National Championship Tournament by way of regional tournaments and win/loss records. FGCU finished the season 34-4-1 and was ranked No. 3 in the Southeast Region.

The official tournament Web site, [www.nocosport.com/ncsevents/achachampionships.html](http://www.nocosport.com/ncsevents/achachampionships.html), lists Eagles Justin Moore (No. 19), Allan Penney (No. 8) and Nic Williams (No.15) as the players to watch during the tournament.

“These kids pay over \$3,000 each per year to represent FGCU,” says David Kakkuri, hockey club faculty advisor and director of the FGCU Center for Leadership and Innovation.

“Student Government subsidizes some of the costs, but the players pay for the vast majority of everything,” he says. “In addition to this, there are some outstanding students in the club. One player is an engineering major who had a perfect 4.0 GPA for fall term.”

The FGCU Hockey Club is an officially recognized student organization at FGCU and a non-varsity sport.

Colorado State University, the Northern Colorado Sports Commission, and the Fort Collins Convention and Visitors Bureau hosted the tournament.

The Eagles’ competition in the national championship included: Colorado State University, Davenport University, Eastern Washington University, Grand Valley State University, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, New York University, Ohio State University, Penn State University, San Jose State University, Siena College, University of Colorado, Miami University (Ohio), University of Stony Brook and Wagner University.

For more information on the club, contact Kakkuri at (239) 225-4203 or [dkakkuri@fgcu.edu](mailto:dkakkuri@fgcu.edu).

— Kelly McCarthy



## Set for success

FGCU sophomore ranked among top college tennis players in U.S.

BY KELLY McCARTHY

Australian-born Brenton Bacon hangs his hat – er, racquet – a long way from home these days. A native of Perth, Bacon moved to the United States last year to both earn a college degree and follow his love for tennis. As the International Tennis Association's Division II Rookie Player of the Year in 2006, and a sophomore at FGCU, he's accomplishing both.

"I wanted to play college tennis and get a degree. In Australia, I would only be doing a degree and not be able to play any type of college tennis like over here," Bacon says. "At college, I play a lot more matches than I would if I was just playing tournaments back home."

However, the quarter finalist in the Australian Open Juniors Doubles has had to make a few adjustments to his playing style to be able to compete in the United States.

"The courts are a lot slower in the States than I am used to," Bacon says. "I usually play on rebound ace or faster hard

courts when I'm back home."

"It's also a bit more humid here in summer," he says.

J. Webb Horton, FGCU's head coach of both men's and women's tennis and assistant athletic director, last year wooed Bacon after his freshman year at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Mich., where he not only earned ITA's top honor last spring, but ranked No. 14 in the nation in singles and No. 2 in doubles in the Fila Division II national rankings.

"He's one of the elite players in Division II singles and doubles," Horton says. "Ferris State had some transitions last year. We worked hard to convince Brenton that FGCU was the best place to go. We are very glad he made this choice."

The 6-foot-tall lefty has had an impressive tennis career since moving to America. While in Michigan, he was named to the 2006 All-Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference First Team. He had a team best 18-5 singles record and a 30-3 doubles achievement. He earned All-America status in singles and doubles, and was chosen as Ferris State University's most valuable player.

Meanwhile, FGCU tennis is earning the right to players of Bacon's caliber. Horton has coached men's tennis since 2002 and added the women's team to his repertoire three years later.

Last year, men's and women's tennis finished the season ranked No. 14 and 15 in the nation. Horton's teams at FGCU have a combined record of 77-24, and include an NCAA tournament berth and top 10 national ranking in 2004-05. In that time, Horton believes he has coached some of the very best in tennis and that includes Bacon.

"I've been blessed to coach three of the best players, and he is one of the best singles or doubles players. He could be the best ever," Horton says. "He is a competitive player. He is a special player. I highly look forward to him being a part of what makes us successful."

Soon, Horton may not have

to look hard. Bacon moved up the rankings in November to the No. 8 spot on Fila's Division II national rankings, and the new rankings are due out this spring. FGCU began competitive play in February.

"He has the chance to move up. He will be playing the No. 1 and No. 2 players in the nation," Horton says.

Last September, Bacon was the No. 2 seed for the Wilson ITA Southeast Regional Tournament in Lakeland as an FGCU Eagle. After reaching the quarterfinals with three singles wins, he defaulted. "He had an elbow strain. I didn't want to risk a player being limited of his ability to play in the spring," Horton says. "He was a little banged up."

This spring, Bacon will be important to the Eagles, and could very well join the ranks of tennis aces Kevin Gill, Juan Osario and Richard Stemposki in the hallowed halls of FGCU sports history.

When it comes to role

models, Roger Federer is high on Bacon's list.

"He will probably win the most grand-slam tournaments ever and never looks like losing," Bacon says. "He can hit any shot at any time. It's amazing to watch."

As much as he loves the game, Bacon says professional tennis isn't for him. "When I was younger I (considered it), but when you see how many good players there are that are doing nothing and not moving up in the rankings, it seems like a pretty depressing lifestyle if you're not making it."

In his spare time, the communications major likes playing cards, going to the beach, surfing the Internet for

hours, and playing FIFA soccer on his PlayStation against his roommates.

Bacon's favorite aspect of FGCU is the ability to take classes online.

While he didn't know much about the region before he agreed to come to FGCU, he knew he'd be better off in Florida than in Michigan.

"It was way too cold there," he says.

FGCU and Horton were other reasons to move to Florida.

"I liked the campus and J. seemed pretty easygoing, which is more my style than some of the other coaches," Bacon says.

Coming off the honor of ITA's Division II Rookie of the Year, he says he felt good about winning it, and that he had a really good year in doubles and singles. "I started playing better on our trip to Florida last year when I was playing better matches against better people. That's when I play my best."

PHOTOS BY ED CLEMENT



Brenton Bacon



Bacon demonstrates his left-handed swing during a recent practice session.



Bacon and Coach J. Webb Horton



# Model student

## Alumna draws on business degree to succeed in world of high fashion

BY ALLISON ALLIE

Never mind that it's the middle of winter in southern France. Tiffany Sawyer confidently sheds her coat, revealing a wisp of a bikini as she strikes pose after pose for the cameras.

However frigid the temperature outside, the photos must give the appearance of a balmy summer day, which is when the images will appear in a European magazine.

Such is the life of a high-fashion model.

Sawyer, a lifelong Naples resident and 2003 Florida Gulf Coast University graduate, has come a long way – both literally and figuratively – since her parents signed her up for modeling lessons in hopes of easing the 14-year-old's shyness.

"They wanted to give me a new experience and to get me out of my shell," says Sawyer.

Dressed in deep purple stiletto heels, form-fitting jeans, a gauzy black shirt topped with a cropped jacket, Sawyer appears for her early morning interview as well put together as if she were going to pose for yet another photographer.

Looking at the flawless face and form, it's hard to imagine her as a shy teen. It might be easy, however, to dismiss her as simply a pretty package. But it takes only a short talk to realize that beneath the chic exterior exists a well-honed mind, one that took full advantage of her four years at FGCU.

When Sawyer entered the University in 1999, she planned to become a teacher. Her plans changed when a persistent college roommate persuaded her to meet with a modeling agency representative. Protocol Models in Naples quickly agreed to represent her. Once she started modeling for a living, she realized that a business degree would help in her career.

"I decided to pursue marketing with a concentration in advertising to take the tools taught in the classroom, as well as my creativity, to market myself as a model," says Sawyer. She has since taken that creativity and employed what she learned to design and maintain her Web site, [www.tiffanysawyer.com](http://www.tiffanysawyer.com), through which agencies all over the world can search for models.

"A Milan agency, Model Group, accessed my statistics from my Web site for a job," she says. "Due to the Web site, I spent five months modeling in Italy and the south of France during the 2006 winter and summer fashion season."

Sawyer learned about Web marketing from Ludmilla Wells, an associate professor in FGCU's College of Business. "I had four different classes taught by Dr. Wells and each class she pushed me and pushed me to strive for more," Sawyer says. "She pushed me to do a lot better for myself and I love her for that."

Wells also encouraged Sawyer to get involved with campus organizations. Sawyer became president of both AdVentures advertising club

and Phi Eta Sigma, a national undergraduate honors society. She was also a member of the Golden Key Club, an honors society, and a peer adviser.

Sawyer continues to serve as an adviser to girls preparing to compete in local pageants. That began a few years back when the Marine Industries Association of Collier County decided to have a pageant. Her father, who is a board member, suggested she coordinate it.

Sawyer took on the job and created the Miss Marine Queen Scholarship Pageant program.

is very encouraging and rewarding," says Sawyer. "Each young lady who participates will learn something about herself by having this experience and hopefully it will help to shape her life in a positive way."

She also is involved with the Miss Collier County Fair Pageant and Little Miss Country Jam. Between modeling jobs and pageant planning, Sawyer is a personal assistant for a local executive.

Sawyer's plan is to move to New York City in April.

"New York will provide more opportunities in commercial modeling," she says.

She is currently represented by five agencies including: Protocol Models, Naples; Runways, Miami; Benz Models, Tampa; Choice, New York; and Model Group, Milan.

It was the New York agency that recently got her a job modeling for Cosmopolitan magazine.

Looking toward the future, Sawyer aspires to getting still more prominent jobs and continuing to model as long as she's able.

Wells has no doubt that Sawyer's personality and business acumen will give her a competitive advantage in a highly competitive field.

"Tiffany is a thoughtful and determined young woman with an innate curiosity," Wells says. "She is gracious, talented,

and perceptive ... with just the right touch of warmth and modesty."

Before she relocates to the Big Apple, Sawyer is scheduled to model for Congress Jewelers, Bistro 41, and the Tampa Design School.

She's planning to make the most of the experiences the come her way, including a return trip to Milan this summer.

"I look forward to the opportunity to travel and to make new friends and contacts all over the world," she says. "I also want to learn as much as I can about many different industries, cultures, languages and places."

—Allison Allie is FGCU's director of alumni relations.



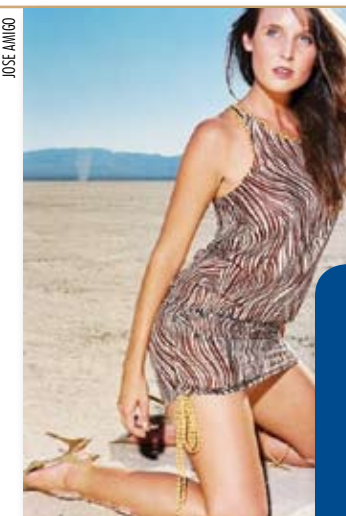
Tiffany Sawyer at work



CARLO BATTILOCCI

She's been the director and master of ceremonies for the past four years.

"To witness the girls' growth throughout the process



JOSE AMIGO

### Facts of life

- Family: Husband, Ken; two brothers, parents, and a pet Pomeranian
- Hobbies: White-water rafting, sky-diving and four-wheeling (except before a photo shoot) as well as volleyball, rollerblading, traveling and shopping
- Most painful job: While in Milan, Sawyer landed a showroom job for a shoe designer. "I had to show the new winter boot line for their clients and the sample sizes were 36, I am a 38!" says Sawyer. The job required Sawyer to wear pointed boots with stiletto heels eight hours a day for four days. It ended well, though, because the company made her a special pair of thigh-high boots.
- Web site: [www.tiffanysawyer.com](http://www.tiffanysawyer.com)



## Class Notes

### ■ Weddings, engagements and births



Ashlee (Butcher) and Eric Jordan



Joyce (Evans) and Loren Prive



Alana Marinelli and Steve Beesley

**Ashlee Butcher**, '04 (Master's, Accounting and Taxation), and **Eric Jordan**, '04 (Business Management), were married in Venice, FL on July 22.

**Michelle Carter**, '06 (Liberal Studies), and Tony Stafford are engaged. A July wedding is planned. Michelle works for the Polk County School District.

**Joyce Evans**, '05 (Marketing), and **Loren Prive**, '05 (Accounting), were married May 6, 2006. Loren works as the accounts payable coordinator for FGCU. Joyce works for FGCU as the coordinator for enrollment marketing in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. They are both pursuing their MBAs at FGCU.

**Melissa Griffith**, '04 (Liberal Studies), and her husband announced the birth of their daughter in November. They live in Naples.

**Victoria Hartman**, '05 (Accounting), and Jonathan Ellison got married on Jan. 28, in Cape Coral. Victoria is a financial analyst at Data2Logistics, a freight bill processing company.

**Brandon Hollingshead**, '05 (Communications), and Rebecca Yost, '04 (Communications), will be married in October. They live in Cape Coral.

**Alana Marinelli**, '06 (Nursing), and Steve Beesley announced their engagement on Christmas Day. They plan to marry in spring 2008. They live in Estero.

**Evan S. Pinther II**, '04 (Criminal Justice), and Kala Pappalardo have announced their engagement. A June wedding is planned.

**Catherine Place**, '05 (Business), and Jonathan Mummert were married May 2006.

**Tara Shelton**, '06 (Reading

Education), and Daniel Fredericks are engaged. They will marry Aug. 4, in Wilmington, NC. They plan to live in Arlington, VA.

### ■ Newsmakers

**'98 Crystal Drake** (Secondary Education) has been teaching at Moore Haven High School and recently took a new position as career counselor. Drake received the Teacher of the Year award twice at Moore Haven High. She is also the Glades County District Teacher of the Year and the Environmental Educator of the Year. She has been named the Glades County Social Studies Teacher of the Year three times.



John Biedenharn

**'99 John Biedenharn** (Public Administration) is the new special projects coordinator for the U.S. Territory of Guam Department of Public Works Solid Waste Division. He previously lived in North Queensland, Australia.

**'00 Katrina Fotovat** (Liberal Studies) is an attorney with the Department of State Office of Acquisitions Management, International Programs, Grants and Contracts Division. She specializes in international grants, cooperative agreements, and grants aimed at democracy, human rights, and labor programs. Fotovat was a senior research associate with the Nobel Peace Prize-nominated Public International Law & Policy Group, where she drafted legal memoranda and provided comparative analyses on issues relating to the creation of new constitutions in Iraq and Kosovo. Fotovat lives in Washington, DC with her husband and

one-year-old son, Max.

**Michelle Pescatrice** (Master's, Educational Leadership) is the new principal of Orangewood Elementary School in Fort Myers.

**'01 Janet Borchers** (Master's, Counselor Education) was named 2005-2006 Elementary School Counselor of the Year in the Lee County School District. Borchers teaches and counsels at Spring Creek Elementary in Bonita Springs. Her biography will be included in the 2007 edition of "Who's Who of American Women." Last summer, she participated as a fellow with the Florida Gulf Coast University National Writing Project in a Lewis and Clark Expeditionary Writing Intensive Institute in Syringa, ID.

**'02 Stephen Verrill** (Criminal Justice) is an assistant professor and coordinator of the criminal justice program at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Verrill's work has appeared in the Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, LAE Journal of the American Criminal Justice Association, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, ACJS Today and Police Forum.



Stephen Verrill

**'03 Patricia Buitrago** (Elementary Education) is one of the 31 Golden Apple finalists. She works at Three Oaks Elementary School.

**Eugene Hoyt** (Computer Information Systems) is the assistant director for Information Technology Coordination of Academic Affairs at Ave Maria University in Naples. He is also an adjunct professor in FGCU's College of Business.

**'04 Lindsay Clark** (Liberal Studies) has been accepted into the MBA program at Arizona State University. She works as the industry manager at jobing.com.

**Suzanne Decopain** (Liberal Studies) is in law school at Florida Coastal School of Law. She is a member of Black Law Student Association and also volunteers for Quality Life Center of Southwest Florida.

**Natalie Doyle** (Liberal Studies) is the new marketing and promotions director for The Telegraph, a New Hampshire newspaper.

**Michael Kilts** (Liberal Studies) joined the Florida Department of Education's Title I Programs and Academic Intervention as the new program specialist IV. He lives in Hosford, FL.

**Christina Moore** (Human Resources Management) has recently moved to Northern California from Fort Myers. She works as a human resources generalist II for New Wave Research.



Christina Moore

**Diana Murillo** (Computer Information Systems) was promoted to IT Performance Improvement Senior Consultant for Price Waterhouse Coopers Costa Rica. She is also ITIL and Six Sigma certified.

**'05 Cory Cartier** (Liberal Studies) is part-owner of Cartier Agency, Inc., where he sells personal lines of insurance. He was the first captain of the FGCU hockey team. He lives in Duluth, MN.

**Kimberly Costa** (Criminal Justice) is a crime scene investigator with the Collier County Sheriff's Office. She credits her success to Dr. Tony Barringer and Dr. David Lounsbury of the FGCU Division of Justice Studies,

who helped her find an internship with the Collier County Sheriff's Office. Costa lives in Naples.

**Marc Devisse**

(Marketing) has partnered with Keoni Enlow in starting a new construction business in Fort Myers, Tri-Town Construction. Tri-Town specializes in remodeling and new construction in Southwest Florida.

**Rene Jackson** (Master's, Health Science) and Alberto Righi MD published "The Death of Mammography" in March 2006. She works at Charlotte Regional Medical Center in Punta Gorda as the director of risk management.

**Stephanie Martin** (Environmental Science) is working on her graduate degree at Florida State University. She is majoring in ecology and evolutionary biology.

**Michael Wynn** (Master's, Business Administration) and family opened their sixth Sunshine Ace hardware store in Southwest Florida. He currently serves as the president of Sunshine Ace. Wynn is the eldest grandchild of third-generation owner, Don Wynn. He previously was the accountant for the business after graduating from the University of South Florida and getting a CPA license.

**'06 Erica Cotto** (Liberal Studies) is the new certified business analyst at the Economic Development Council of Collier County. She previously served as enterprise development manager there. In her new role, she will assist small businesses with growth and expansion, workforce, and accessing financial capital.

**Greg Hardin** (Sports Management) and **Ryan Frankland** (Business) raised donations for the local Toys for Tots charity drive in 2006. They collected \$2,100 worth of toys.



Marc Devisse



Erica Cotto



Ryan Frankland, left, and Greg Hardin

Due to their efforts, many children had a great Christmas.

### ■ In memoriam

*Florida Gulf Coast University expresses sympathy to the families and friends of the following alumni:*

**Zachary Wright**, '04 (Marketing), died Dec. 5, 2006 in Philadelphia. Wright was 25 years old. He worked at McKibbin Hotel Management, Inc. as a bench manager. He enjoyed scuba diving, skydiving and white water rafting. He is survived by his mother, Deborah Tracy, and his father, Howard Wright; his sisters, Tiffany, Nicole and Olivia Wright; his paternal grandmother, Virginia Wright; a step-brother, Joe Stein; and a step-sister, Jennifer Stein.

**Mary Louise Hopkins**, '00 (Master's, Elementary Education), died Jan. 25 in Cape Coral. She was 56. She was born Aug. 15, 1950 in Chicago, a daughter of the late Theodore and Jeanne Kallen Nagler. Mary was also a beloved teacher for many years at Skyline Elementary School in Cape Coral. She touched the lives of many students throughout her career in Lee County.

## Tell us where you are and what you're doing.

Alumni are encouraged to share their news about new jobs, promotions, relocations, weddings, births and other noteworthy events. Send items to the Office of Alumni Relations at [alumnirelations@fgcu.edu](mailto:alumnirelations@fgcu.edu) or mail entries to Office of Alumni Relations, Florida Gulf Coast University, 10501 FGCU Blvd. South, Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565.



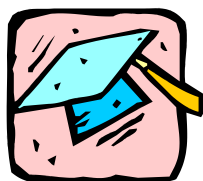
# Alumni Association Happenings

**April 9:** Alumni Board of Directors Meeting  
5:30 p.m., Student Union - Room 214  
FGCU campus, Fort Myers

**April 27:** Toast to Our Graduates  
5-6:30 p.m., Student Union - Alumni Patio  
FGCU campus, Fort Myers  
The alumni association hosts a reception in honor of new graduates. Free admission.

**April 28:** Commencement  
9 a.m. & 2 p.m., Alico Arena  
FGCU campus, Fort Myers  
Join Allison Allie, director of alumni relations, and Jennifer Sparrow, chair of the alumni association board of directors, who will induct the graduates into the alumni association.

For details contact:  
Allison Allie, director of alumni relations  
e-mail: [aallie@fgcu.edu](mailto:aallie@fgcu.edu)  
(239) 590-1016



## Reconnecting with friends

Gary Page, '99 (MBA), won a one-year membership to the Naples Tennis Club at the second Eagle Alumni Networking Night, held Feb. 22. He and his wife, Jane, left, were among the alumni and friends who enjoyed food and drink at the event held at the Naples Tennis Club.



## Fruit of the vine

Alumni association lifetime members gathered for a private wine tasting and sampling of culinary delights at "Lessons for a Lifetime" at WineStyles in Naples on Jan. 10. The event was sponsored by Morgan Keegan & Company, Inc. Pictured, from left: Rich Sparrow; alumni board member Dan Wise, '03 (Management); Mandy Riden; and alumni board chair Jennifer Sparrow, '98 (Master's, Curriculum and Instruction).



## Bridal 101

FGCU alumni and students got a chance to see some of the latest bridal gown trends during "How to Find the Dress of Your Dreams . . . or Die Trying," which was held Jan. 28. Representatives from Zola Keller presented a fashion show, bridal tips and a cake tasting. Among those who attended were FGCU sophomores, from left: DeAnna Velasquez (Human Performance), Jennifer Morales (Resort & Hospitality Management) and Ysa Pinero (Criminal Forensic Studies).



## Members for life

Alumni association lifetime members gathered for an evening of Eagle basketball in the President's Box on Feb. 7. Alumni received VIP treatment as they cheered the FGCU men's team to victory over Johnson & Wales University. Alumni Brad Phelps, '03, (Management), left, and Ryan Frost, '05 (Resort & Hospitality Management), were among those who turned out to root for the Eagles and socialize with friends.

## Capture Your Eagle Spirit Forever... FGCU Commemorative Brick Pavers

A program of the FGCU Alumni Association

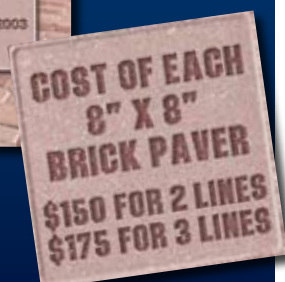
Your name, honoree or message will serve as a permanent symbol of your commitment to the University.

It's a fitting way to commemorate your lifelong connection to FGCU. Surprise a graduate. Honor a family legacy. Remember a loved one. Acknowledge a student organization.

Above all, it's an opportunity to leave your mark at FGCU in a lasting way.

Purchase now or reserve a section of pavers for your entire family or group of friends.

To order pavers, visit [www.fgcu.edu/Alumni/brick-pavers.html](http://www.fgcu.edu/Alumni/brick-pavers.html) or call (239) 590-1016.





# Social Scene

JAMES GRECO



JAMES GRECO



## President's Society Brunch

Donors who contribute unrestricted funds of \$1,000 or more become members of the President's Society. They were honored at a recent brunch. At left: Bob Shrader, Shirley Gerstenberger, Judy Sproul, Connie McIntosh and Steve McIntosh. At right: Interim President Richard Pegnetter, JoAnn Catti, Joe Catti, Lynn Knupp, Jim Knupp, Shelley Blais, Jack Blais, Linda Manone, Vito Manone, Tom Case and Lynda Case.

JAMES GRECO



## Locks of Love

Stylists from Cozmo Beauty School in Bonita Springs teamed up with FGCU students, faculty and staff to collect hair for Locks of Love, a non-profit organization that provides hairpieces for children with long-term medical hair loss.

Above, Kathleen Kadlec cuts the long tresses of FGCU junior Tiffany Campbell.

BOB KLEIN



## President's Planned Giving Brunch

Members of the Covenant Society and Heritage Society who have included FGCU in their estate plans were honored by Interim President Richard Pegnetter during the annual President's Planned Giving Brunch on Feb. 1. From left, they are: Nestor Reyes, Mary Hull, Joan Attridge, Bedford Biles, Fay Biles, Bill Attridge, Shirley Gerstenberger, Gray Ballman, Bob Shrader, Rebecca Fogg, Kathie Beeken, George Fogg, Mercedes Ballman, Betty Das, Amal Das, Keith Trowbridge and Pegnetter.

JAMES GRECO



## Rich in history

Nigerian artist Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao speaks with Lisi Lau, from the University's Department of Undergraduate Admissions, at the artist's "Vision of True Colors" exhibit held at FGCU during Black History Month.





JAMES GRECO

FGCU's undefeated women's basketball team won a berth in the NCAA Elite Eight tournament.



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