

Contact

FOR THE FRIENDS OF
PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

FALL 2012 | VOL. 19, No. 1

STEAMing Up Science
& Tech Futures



Checking the Vitals

Checking a patient's vital signs is one of the first skill sets taught to students in our paramedic, nursing, EMT and other health programs. Having a strong awareness and education about these vital signs provides a caretaker with the knowledge necessary to ensure that related health issues are addressed in a proper and timely manner. In a similar way, Palm Beach State College also closely monitors the vital signs of our community via needs assessments and other data-gathering methods. This information helps us determine the courses and programs that are needed to meet community needs. Providing a quick implementation of those courses and programs has been a focus at the College, despite the challenges of tighter funding and a sluggish economy.

New and returning students flocking to our campuses this fall are finding clear signs that the College is listening and responding. Perhaps most dramatic is the opening of the new Center for Bachelor's Programs, an extraordinary facility on the Lake Worth campus that houses the bachelor's degree programs and the Dr. Floyd F. Koch Honors College. Enrollment in the College's bachelor's degree programs has grown steadily since the initial program began three years ago, with a 32 percent gain recorded this summer. The Dr. Floyd F. Koch Honors College is establishing its legacy by providing opportunities for students to experience a more challenging and rigorous curriculum while completing the associate degree. Additionally, new Associate in Science degree programs in Ophthalmic Medical Technology, Business Entrepreneurship and Addiction Studies are launching this fall, reflecting our community's need for skilled professionals and our students' need for high-demand career training.

One of our greatest challenges is to continue to offer new programs and facilities to meet growing needs even as state funding is shrinking. While students nationwide have increasingly

shouldered the cost of their education in recent years, Palm Beach State's tuition still ranks the ninth lowest in the nation among four-year public colleges, according to the U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability & Transparency Center. We strive to expend state appropriations with laser-like precision in all areas of college operation so that we can continue to provide access to the affordable, high-quality education that our community has come to expect and need. Also, we work together with community and business partners to improve learning outcomes for our students and graduates.

In this issue, you will read about some of the success stories that we experience: small business owners, military veterans, students who overcome adversities to become independent professionals and more. These are the stories that invigorate us, and we hope they will inspire you.

Thank you for your interest and critical support of the College.



Dennis P. Gallon, Ph.D.
President

Palm Beach State College, founded in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, is a diverse, comprehensive institution dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County. Integrally linked to the community through strong partnerships, the College provides associate and baccalaureate degrees, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning. Palm Beach State College's mission is to create and sustain a dynamic teaching and learning environment that provides a high-quality, accessible, affordable education, preparing students to contribute and compete ethically and successfully in a diverse global community.

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EDITOR
Grace H. Truman, Ed.D.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Joyce Edelstein
Tabatha B. McDonald
Grace H. Truman
Mark Udry

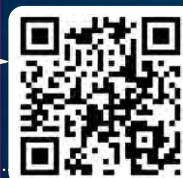
ART DIRECTOR
Kari W. McCormick

PHOTOGRAPHY
Lyn Becker
Matthew Lester
Kari W. McCormick
Gary Moo Young
Diana Pierre-Louis
John Ricksen
Mark Udry

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Your Pathway to Success



U.S. Marine Corps veteran Jesse Bergeron (second from right), uses his tablet to show fellow veteran students Mara Dean, U.S. Army Reserve; Steven Gross, U.S. Army, and Arthur Rauch, retired U.S. Air Force, how to access the College's online resources.

Helping VETERANS Transition to College

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

It is getting late in the day, and Tyrone Jenkins doesn't have much time to spare. He's been having problems with one of his tires, and he needs to get to a repair shop to get it checked out.

But at this moment the Marine Corps veteran is in academic advisor Jay Sommer's office at the Veterans Resource Center at Palm Beach State College in Lake Worth discussing the classes he needs to take

for his Associate in Arts degree. His goal is to become a law enforcement officer. When he walks out of Sommer's office, he takes a seat at one of the two computer stations and logs in to register online for his classes.

Alex Spigarelli, a student assistant who also is a Marine Corps veteran, walks over to the computer to help Jenkins register and locate information.

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In less than an hour, Jenkins is leaving the three-office center, passing a waiting area stocked with brochures on various services and events for veterans.

“I’m satisfied,” Jenkins says with a wide grin while checking his watch. “These guys go above and beyond helping you out. You don’t really feel that you’re by yourself. I grade them 10 out of 10; they do things without you asking them.”

The Veterans Resource Center was established at the Lake Worth campus in 2009 to provide a one-stop shop for veterans like Jenkins returning to school. Through this center, which moved into a larger space last year, veterans are certified for their U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs education benefits, and they receive one-on-one academic advising and referrals to other areas of the College and outside agencies. They also can apply for other forms of financial aid.

“We’ve always had the resources in place, but we’ve never had them in one place where the veterans could come,” said Mary Ellen Amason, a financial aid advisor designated as the campus VA benefits certifying official. “The students can come in and sit and talk to any one of us. We have an open door.”

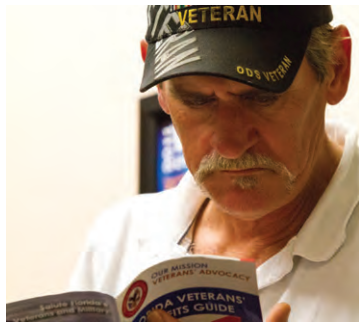
“The concept has been well received,” Sommer said. “Our veterans like the fact that they have a central place that they can go to.”

“I think our system is far better than most schools,” said Spigarelli, who served four years in the Marine Corps including a three-month tour in Iraq. “We can do the whole process of getting them admitted to college and getting their benefits activated.”

The Veterans Resource Center is one of several steps the College has taken over the last three years to prepare for and help the wave of veterans expected to enter colleges and universities nationwide under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill (Chapter 33). The bill, which became effective Aug. 1, 2009, provides increased benefits for veterans who served on or after Sept. 10, 2001. They include in-state tuition and stipends for housing and books.

Palm Beach State has seen a rise in both the number of veterans and active duty service members using education benefits in the last several years. For example, in fall 2011, 576 students across the College used eligible benefits compared to 303 in fall 2009, said Erin Jordan, Palm Beach State’s student account services manager.

The College hired staff to provide educational outreach to veterans and designated specific staff to work on veterans’ issues. Each campus has a veterans education benefits certifying official.



"We have an open door."

FROM TOP:

Marine Corps veteran Tyrone Jenkins gets advice from Mary Ellen Amason, the VA benefits certifying official at the Lake Worth campus Veterans Resource Center.

Arthur Rauch, Air Force veteran, leafs through brochures at the club office for veterans on the Boca Raton campus.

Veteran club leaders meet to share information in an atmosphere of camaraderie and connection.

Palm Beach State president Dr. Dennis Gallon congratulates Ross Fallacaro, an Iraq war veteran who served in the Air Force, during commencement in May. Fallacaro serves on the College’s Veterans Advisory Board.

A Veterans Advisory Board includes College staff, students and representatives from the VA Medical Center, the Vet Center and other workforce and support agencies that serve veterans. The College hosts special events for veterans and has created or enhanced some internal policies and workflow processes to better assist veterans.

Students who have served in the military also have created new clubs or reactivated dormant clubs for veterans. They were instrumental in getting office space for the Veterans Club on the Boca Raton campus, one of three clubs for veterans at the College. There is a Veterans Student Union at the Lake Worth campus and a Student Veterans Club, which is an affiliate of the Student Veterans of America, at the Palm Beach Gardens campus.

“The College definitely has a commitment to doing its best to adequately serve the veterans that are matriculating at Palm Beach State,” said Van Williams, director of TRIO and outreach programs and chair of the Veterans Advisory Board.

“Everybody who takes up arms in defense of this country is owed more than just ‘thank you for your service.’ I think they should be given a great deal of deference,” added Williams who also is an Army veteran.

Steven Gross, an Army veteran and outgoing president of the Veterans Club at the Boca Raton campus, said he is happy that the campus provost authorized space for the club to establish its own Veterans Resource Center. The center has a computer, and Gross and the club members keep the shelves stocked with materials about the College and services available to veterans.

Gross views the center as a place where veterans can connect, share stories, hold meetings and use the computer to look up information on their benefits. The club has about 25 active members and 60 in an email database, and for the last two years it has participated in the College’s Veterans Day Celebration.

“It’s a place where we can use military lingo. It’s kind of comfortable here where we can help people going from that structured military lifestyle into a civilian lifestyle and the college atmosphere,” Gross said. “I’m here to encourage and let them know there is a light at the end of the tunnel.”

Gross suffered a service-connected back injury. He’s in school pursuing his A.A. degree using benefits under Chapter 31, which is the vocational rehabilitation and employment program for veterans with service-related disabilities. He plans to transfer to a university to get a bachelor’s

degree in information systems with a focus on homeland security. However, while he’s at Palm Beach State he wants to do all that he can to help his fellow veterans.

“It’s been my personal mission to help veterans get the recognition they deserve. They served their country, and it’s time for the country to serve them.”

Dr. Bernadette Russell, Boca Raton campus provost, said she approved the establishment of the center at the request of two veteran students. “I knew ahead of time that we needed to be prepared for the veterans with the war ending and the new G.I. Bill,” she said.

Ross Fallacaro, an Iraq war veteran who served in the Air Force from 2000-2004, said the Veterans Resource Center on the Lake Worth campus is a step in the right direction. He enrolled at Palm Beach State College in 2010 after taking some time to get his life back on track. He graduated in the spring with his Associate in Science degree in human services.

“I couldn’t imagine being brand new and having to run all over the place. It was reassuring that I could just go to one place. I think that it would serve as a good model for the other campuses,” said Fallacaro, who also has been serving on the College’s Veterans Advisory Board for about a year and works at Faith*Hope*Love*Charity’s First Stop Veterans Resource Center. “Being a veteran and a student, I was able to bring to light a little bit more about what was going on and just bring more ideas to the table.”

The Veterans Advisory Board meets every other month to discuss upcoming events, changes to services available to veterans and information on new services. “We’re bringing resources to the students,” Williams said. “The first thing I wanted to do was make sure there is consistency in everything we do. (Veteran students) should be able to get the same level of service regardless of the campus.”

Mara Dean, an Army Reserve veteran who served in Iraq for one year, said that’s why she is working hard to get help for veterans. When she started school at the Palm Beach Gardens campus in August 2011, she realized that there was no club on campus for veterans. So, she went to work to establish the Student Veterans Club and is pushing to get more services on that campus.

“We’re trying to just give them the opportunity to come on campus and have some sense of camaraderie. We’re trying to support one another. It takes a veteran to understand a veteran.”

“Everybody who takes up arms in defense of this country is owed more than just ‘thank you for your service.’ I think they should be given a great deal of deference.”

Van Williams

Director of TRIO, Outreach Programs and Chair of the Veterans Advisory Board

For more photos:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia



Open for Business!

How Palm Beach State College became the **one-stop resource center for entrepreneurs** of all ages and stages

BY JOYCE EDELSTEIN



It's late afternoon on the Boca Raton campus. Students are packed into a classroom. They're not there for a lecture or exam, but a free workshop on how to start a business. Notepads and iPads are out, extra chairs have been brought in, but it's still standing room only. Everyone wants to be an entrepreneur.

Palm Beach State students aren't the only ones discovering what the **Center for Business and Entrepreneurship** has to offer. Members of the community — veterans, boomers, women, seniors and even teenagers — are turning to CBE for training and guidance on how to start and grow a business.

In 2009, the Small Business Development Center — Florida's state-designated provider of small business assistance — needed a new host institution after 22 years in residence at Florida Atlantic University. Dr. Dennis Gallon, Palm Beach State president, and Dr. Bernadette Russell, Boca Raton campus provost, saw not only a change of address for SBDC, but also the opportunity to build an entrepreneurship center to benefit both students and the Palm Beach County business community.

Once Palm Beach State became the home for SBDC, Russell looked for what the College, as the county's largest higher education institution, could contribute to the mission.

"We saw the need to teach our students to be entrepreneurial, to be innovative and creative," says Russell. "We also wanted to be an agent of economic change in the county and a resource for those starting a business."

Creating the Umbrella

What evolved was an umbrella of services and education options, developed by a staff fired up by the challenge. "Now entrepreneurs can find all the resources they need in one place," says Russell. "Everyone can come to CBE and fill their toolbox with knowledge and skills."

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Taking Care of Businesses

SBDC at Palm Beach State College is one of 1,100 centers nationwide (34 in Florida) started in 1976 by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

“Because of Dr. Russell, we are very much a part of the College and not simply in name only,” says Ted Kramer, SBDC regional director. “She wants us to be involved in the functions, she wants us to be part of CBE – and that’s very important to us.”

SBDC helps aspiring entrepreneurs and newly minted businesses, as well as more mature “second-stage” companies through its new Growth Acceleration Program (GAP). In addition to offering free workshops, SBDC’s certified business analysts meet one-on-one with clients at no charge, providing expertise in business planning, marketing, operations and more.

Serving thousands annually, SBDC works with people of all ages; their oldest client is 91 years young. A remarkable example is high school senior Shea Gould, the owner of Shea’s Bakery. This SBDC client turned one amazing cheesecake into a made-to-order bakery operation in Delray Beach that gives 10 percent of its profits to charity. Statewide in 2011, SBDC clients opened 1,026 businesses and created or saved 16,914 jobs.

Palm Beach State students are being helped, too. “We see 3-4 students a month,” says Phil Scruton, a certified business analyst who also leads the campus workshops. An example is A.A. student Joseph Lahuerta. After attending a workshop, Lahuerta started not one, but two businesses with Scruton’s help. “SBDC and Palm Beach State allowed me to realize my passion. This is something I’ve wanted to do since high school,” says Lahuerta.

Winning Contracts

Once up and running, many businesses turn to PTAC or the Procurement Technical Assistance Center. Established in 1985 as a specialized program of the SBDC network, PTAC works with owners of any size business interested in having the government – city, county, state or federal – as their customer.

“We are not a formal matchmaker between government agencies and businesses,” says Carole Hart, certified business analyst/procurement specialist, “but in Palm Beach County last year, our clients were awarded over \$100 million in government contracts. We know that the roadmap we are providing them is working!”

Inside CBE:

Start, Grow & Prosper

Teaching Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is on the rise and Florida ranks among the top ten states in startups over the past decade, according to the Kauffman Foundation, which is dedicated to advancing entrepreneurship. The foundation also reports that about two-thirds of U.S. colleges and universities have at least one course in entrepreneurship.

Palm Beach State is no exception. The College has launched an Associate in Science degree and College Credit Certificate in Business Entrepreneurship, with classes beginning this fall. Faculty from the Boca Raton

and Lake Worth campuses collaborated over a two-year period to build the best programs. “Even people who are not ready to start a business will find the programs worthwhile,” notes Dr. Nika Coleman-Ferrell, associate dean of academic affairs in Boca Raton. “When students learn to think in an entrepreneurial way, they become successful in whatever career they choose.”

Sharpening Skills

The Center for Business and Entrepreneurship also offers a large selection of continuing education courses for those who don’t need college credits, but do need to enhance their knowledge and skills. The short-term courses range from “Entrepreneurship: Getting Started” to classes in marketing and branding, taxation and book-keeping, hospitality and culinary arts, international trade and much more.

“We aim to offer courses not found elsewhere,” says Isabel Karimi, program director for CBE continuing education. Among Karimi’s plans: customizable training that allows students to choose from a menu of courses and receive an award of completion in entrepreneurship.

Coleman-Ferrell adds, “You simply don’t see our level of comprehensive offerings across the state of Florida. You see pieces of it, but not the whole concept housed in one college – that’s why CBE is so unique.”

energizing Careers

When the College’s Boca Raton Career Center was brought under the CBE umbrella, manager Courtney Trzcinski initiated campus SBDC workshops, which were previously held only at county libraries. She also seized the opportunity to help students find internships with entrepreneurs and promote the Career Center’s job board at CBE events. “The big workshop turnouts showed that we really had a large student interest in entrepreneurship,” says Trzcinski. “It started this whole energy going on campus.”

Starting Young


Say “goodbye” to the lemonade stand and “hello” to Lemonade.com. Today’s 8-14 year olds are embracing entrepreneurship, and Palm Beach State’s Summer Youth College is working with CBE to teach them the ropes. The first entrepreneurship camp was a big hit last summer and has been expanded to include 15-18 year olds. In addition, a Youth Entrepreneurship Conference held during spring break produced budding CEO’s like Sean, a fifth grader who plans to sell all things reptilian on his Reptile River website; Noemi, a fourth grader who calls her pet-sitting service Happiest Pet; and middle schoolers Christian and Christofer, partners in Hoops Basketball Academy. “I wish you could see these kids,” says Eileen Robinson, Summer Youth College director, “they’re ready to go!”

Networking for Everyone

This past spring, over 100 women (and men) gathered for CBE’s first Summit for Women Entrepreneurs. With Palm Beach County Commissioner Priscilla Taylor as keynote speaker, the summit offered breakout sessions with SBDC certified business analysts and women entrepreneurs. The summit is just one example of CBE forums that address the business concerns of diverse populations, including veterans, seniors, boomers and minorities.

The summit also served as the kick-off for CBE’s new Women Entrepreneurs Network, a group that meets monthly to exchange ideas and learn from experts. At a recent meeting, SBDC certified business analyst Sharon Geltner spoke about web and social media strategies, her specialty. Attendees included Geltner’s SBDC client Melinda Rosenthal, whose MinivanMadness.com guides Boca Raton parents to the best enrichment programs for kids. “Kudos to CBE,” says Rosenthal. “This meeting was phenomenal. There was so much energy in the room. Everyone is so passionate about what they’re doing and so eager to share with everybody else.”

Toby Saval, another client and owner of Saval Insurance Group, which helps individuals find health insurance, agrees. “I think the world of this College. I’m surprised more people aren’t taking advantage of all these resources right in our own backyard.”

If the folks behind CBE get their way, more and more Palm Beach County entrepreneurs – and Palm Beach State students – will take full advantage of these resources and find all the support they need. 

For more information:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/CCE
www.palmbeachstate.edu/programs/Business
www.palmbeachstate.edu/SBDC

See more photos on Flickr:
www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia



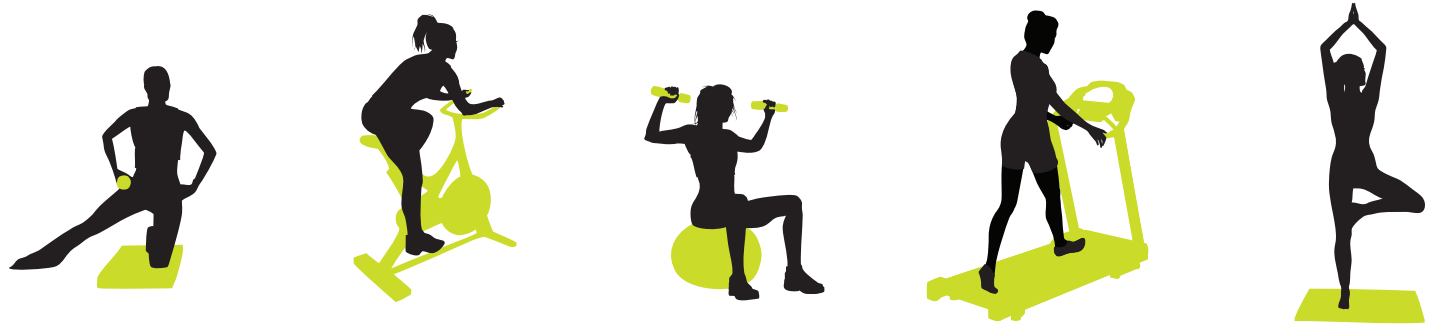
Young entrepreneurs at work: **a** Sean, **b** Christofer (seated) and Christian with instructor Ysolene Trench, and **c** Noemi.

d Courtney Trzcinski, Boca Raton Career Center manager, and student Joseph Lahuerta, discuss his new businesses, an IT consulting firm and a brokerage for marble suppliers.

e At the Summit for Women Entrepreneurs, attendees participate in workshops, including one called **f** “Do What You Love...” presented by attorney Tammy Saltzman.

g Ted Kramer, SBDC regional director, leads a business seminar.

h Shea Gould, owner of Shea’s Bakery, shares tips for starting a business with student Leila Alhalabi (left).



Lake Worth



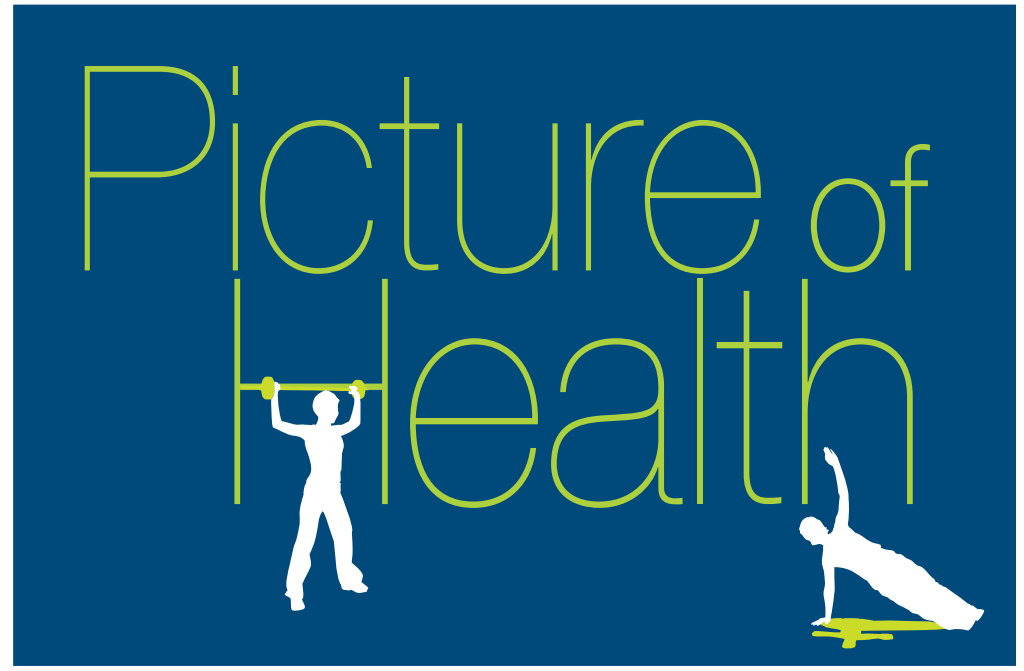
Maria Velez
administrative assistant,
Lake Worth campus



Maria Velez slipped on her black Reebok tennis shoes and stepped away from her desk at Palm Beach State College for 15 minutes one recent sunny morning to take a brisk one-mile walk around campus. Then she went back to work energized and focused.

The daily, sometimes twice-a-day, walks around the Lake Worth campus and the strength training and cardio routine she squeezes into her lunch break at the campus Wellness Center have become as natural as breathing for the 45-year-old administrative assistant. "I have it down to a science," she said. "It's a way of life for me."

Velez exercised before landing the job at the College in 1998, but she said having easy access to the Wellness Center and to lectures on healthy living make staying fit convenient. For her, exercise, proper nutrition and weight control are keys to avoiding heart disease and other health conditions that have affected her family for generations. Her father, paternal grandfather and great grandfather all died of heart attacks, and diabetes and high blood pressure are prevalent among her mother's family. "I've always exercised. I never joined a gym because I couldn't afford it. When I came here and learned there was a Wellness Center and it was free for employees, I was excited," she said.



Wellness Centers, new initiatives help students, employees get in shape

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

"My motivation is warding off these predisposed genetic diseases that exist in my family. I have to be very careful."

As Palm Beach State College has built new buildings at the Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade campuses, it also has established modernized Wellness Centers. Now, a new Wellness Center is under construction on the Lake Worth campus to replace the existing facility. It is slated to open in early 2013 as part of the third phase of the College's new Public Safety Training Complex.

Each campus Wellness Center has various classes, state-of-the-art equipment brands such as Life Fitness, workout DVDs such as "Insanity," "Tae Bo" and "Zumba" and supportive staff to help students and employees reach their fitness goals.

"When I'm stressed from all of the tests and homework, I come over here and release my stress," said Palm Beach State student and aspiring civil engineer Kender Louisius, as he wrapped up his workout at the Wellness Center in Lake Worth. He said his goal is to build up

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Palm Beach Gardens

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his muscles, and having easy access to the Wellness Center is helping him. "It keeps me in shape. It keeps me healthy so I don't have to worry about the health problems or diseases out here. It helps me breathe properly, and it boosts your self-esteem because you look good."

New wellness centers, lectures, gift card incentive programs, fitness challenges, dance classes, an intramural running club for students and employees, and a jump rope club are among numerous efforts to encourage more students and employees to get in shape and to make it exciting and a way of life.

The initiatives are in line with growing trends around the nation to help curb the obesity epidemic that leads to higher incidences of heart disease, diabetes and other ailments and contributes to the skyrocketing costs of health care. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 1 in 3 adults and 1 in 6 children are obese, and obesity costs the country \$150 billion a year.

"If these (students) are exposed to the fitness concept while they're here, they can get into it

from the get go. If they are fit, they're going to feel better, they're going to look better and they're going to perform better," said Lyn Becker, wellness center specialist at the Lake Worth campus and a certified health fitness specialist through the American College of Sports Medicine.

Becker launched a Lecture and Lunch series in fall 2011 for students and employees covering such topics as nutrition, weight management, stress management, heart disease, eating disorders and vegetarianism. She often taps the expertise of the College's own faculty and staff who serve as presenters. As an incentive for attendance, those who stay until the end of the session receive free lunch.

She and her counterparts are now part of a new wellness cluster at the College, which means they collaborate more to bring consistency to the services at the various Wellness Centers.

All of the campuses are seeing an increase in usage. "In a given day, we have 100 people use the facility – students, faculty and staff," said Lindsey Swann, wellness center specialist at the Palm Beach Gardens campus. She noted that 3,230 people have signed up to use the facility since it opened in 2007 in the new state-of-the-art BioScience Technology Complex. "We've had a nice increase over the semesters. We can see it trending up."

The Wellness Center in Palm Beach Gardens offers a Track Your Fitness program, in which

"If they are fit, they're going to feel better, they're going to look better and they're going to perform better."

Lyn Becker



participants can get body composition measurements and sit up, push up and flexibility testing, so that they can track their success. Participants in the program also are encouraged to participate in the center's instructor-led, 30-minute classes, including Core-Conditioning, Stretching and Strengthening, Working out with Resistance Bands and Shaping up with the Swiss Ball. "For those who don't enjoy a gym environment, we're trying to offer alternatives. We're trying to offer something for everyone," Swann said.

In Lake Worth, students, faculty and staff used the fitness center 16,937 times in 2011 compared to 10,948 in 2009. The Belle Glade campus also has seen a spike in users at its Wellness Center in the new Education and Training Center that opened in 2010.

"I love it because it's free, and I can come right after classes if I need to," student Samantha Shelton said while walking on the treadmill. Although she normally works out at the



Belle Glade

Wellness Center in Lake Worth, which is closer to home, she said she likes having the flexibility to visit the centers on other campuses, particularly since she works as a student ambassador at the Boca Raton campus and takes classes at various campuses to fit her schedule.

While personal training is not available, staff at the Wellness Centers help ensure those using the facilities are on the right track.

"If someone has a question, we will go in there and make sure they're doing things correctly or tell them about workouts for various body parts," said Oren Monroe, a wellness center assistant at the Lake Worth campus who teaches free Latin dance classes for students, faculty and staff.

It's not just the staff at the Wellness Centers who have focused on health. The Office of Human Resources at Palm Beach State introduced the College's health insurance carrier's ready-made program called BlueRewards last year that offers gift cards to employees who participate in health assessments including blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol screenings and track their progress in these and other areas.

"Those are indicators of your chances of developing major illnesses," said Melissa Solla, human resources generalist who oversees Florida Blue's BlueRewards program at the College. "It saves us money in the long run if everybody's healthy."

"All the research shows that from an HR perspective, health is critical in the workplace, and we're going to make every effort to ensure our employees are healthy," said Dr. Ellen Grace, executive director of human resources, safety and risk management.

Employees said they appreciate the College's emphasis on preventative health initiatives. "If we're all doing well and healthy, we're going to do better at our jobs," Leona Smith, finance department specialist, said after participating with about 30 others in a session called "Emotional Eating: Mood and Food" in April. The workshop was presented by Corporate Care Works, the provider of the College's Employee Assistance Program.

"I think it's wonderful that we're being proactive about our employees' health," Velez said.

See our facilities in action:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/WellnessCenter

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia



1 in 3 adults is **OBESSE**



On the Shoulders of Giants

Lilian Jordan Inspires Her Students to Reach for the Stars

BY MARK UDRY

When most of us venture outdoors at night, we take a quick glance up toward the night sky, mostly to see what the weather is like, if we bother to look up at all. Professor Lilian Jordan spent most of her childhood doing nothing but gazing at the heavens.

“When I was a child, I was amazed by the stars in the sky at night, and I often wondered what they were made of and what else was out there,” said Jordan. “So from a very early age, I knew what I wanted to do with my life, and I was determined to achieve it.”

Jordan was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At the age of five, she and her family moved to Distrito Federal, Mexico. Five years later, her family moved again, this time to Miami Beach, fulfilling her parents’ wish to live in the “great land of opportunity.”

Her interest in science and space was fueled as a teenager when she watched the PBS series “Cosmos,” presented by astrophysicist Carl Sagan. At Florida Atlantic University, she loaded up on as many math and physics classes as possible, with an eye on pursuing a degree in physics.

“It was very intimidating to study subject matter that had this stigma of being very difficult, but my natural ability in math greatly encouraged me,” said Jordan. “I use my own story as a lesson for my students, that you can become whatever you decide to be if you are determined and stick to your dreams.”

After graduating from FAU, Jordan spent several summers as a graduate assistant at the National Synchrotron Light Source at Brookhaven National Laboratory on New York’s Long Island, as well as the Center for Advanced Microstructures and Devices at Louisiana State University. Her research was based on photoemission studies of surface energy states of copper-

gold alloys. Jordan also collaborated with researchers at the University of Messina in Italy, developing a computer code for modeling surface energy states of copper, gold and their alloys.

Her teaching career at Palm Beach Community College began in 1995 as a part-time instructor at the Boca Raton campus; two years later she was hired as a professor at the Palm Beach Gardens campus, teaching physics and astronomy.

“I’ve always wanted to be a teacher – when I was young I played ‘teacher’ with my younger sister,” said Jordan. “I even assigned homework to her. She tells me to this day she still remembers the lessons I taught her.”

Jordan says her approach to teaching, especially with a potentially overwhelming subject like physics, is to make it interesting and relevant to her students. “I like to think of teaching as telling a story, the story of nature and its physical laws,” she said. “Each lesson unfolds some

of nature’s mysteries, and another piece of the puzzle is added to make the picture clearer. Because physics can be difficult both analytically and conceptually, I also strive to create an atmosphere of learning, where students feel free to ask questions with no feeling of intimidation.” She calls her classrooms and labs “discovery zones,” safe environments to learn, where classmates come together as a team to help each other succeed.

“Professor Jordan really goes way beyond the textbook,” said Arjun Malhotra, 21, a student in one of her physics classes. “You can tell that she really wants us to succeed, and in turn, you don’t want to let her down. She really challenges you to do well, but she does it at our level. She doesn’t talk over our heads.”

As each of her classes progresses through the semester, Jordan likes to tell her students historical tidbits about the scientists who contributed each piece of the scientific puzzle of the subject they’re learning. She points out that some of

these brilliant individuals may have experienced hardships, heartbreak and setbacks themselves. She notes that her scientific idol, Sir Isaac Newton, was an introvert, didn’t take criticism well and wasn’t the best of students in school. However, he had a powerful mind and great determination to succeed. Jordan cautions her students to recognize that science doesn’t happen overnight but builds from the contribution that one individual makes to the next.

“Newton was famously quoted as saying, ‘If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants,’” said Jordan. “He also said, ‘Plato is my friend, Aristotle is my friend, but my greatest friend is the truth.’ I make it a point to stress to students in all my classes that it is important to be ethical when reporting scientific findings.”

One story Jordan relates to her students is the time in 2000 she and her husband, Robin, a physicist at FAU, made a pilgrimage to

continued on page 16



“Newton was famously quoted as saying, ‘If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants,’” said Jordan. “He also said, ‘Plato is my friend, Aristotle is my friend, but my greatest friend is the truth.’”



“I like to think of teaching as telling a story, the story of nature and its physical laws. Each lesson unfolds some of nature’s mysteries, and another piece of the puzzle is added to make the picture clearer.”

continued from page 15

Newton’s birthplace in England that included a trip to Trinity College in Cambridge where he studied.

“Cambridge is a private school, so you can’t get in unless you know someone there. My husband had an acquaintance there and wrote to him, asking if we could visit. This friend was kind enough to go a step further; he arranged for us to meet the head librarian where Newton’s works are kept. We had a private viewing of his manuscripts. We saw that he did his calculations in algebra and calculus, which was considered inferior at the time; in all of his published works the problems were in geometry. It was because his work was so deep and so complicated, no one at the time could understand it.”

To make the subject come alive for her students, Jordan does as many hands-on classroom demonstrations as possible, with students participating in the process. She believes this helps them make connections and remember the concepts of the scientific formulas they’re learning. Jordan invites students to bring in YouTube videos or their favorite clips from the popular cable television show, “Mythbusters,” to share with classmates.

Jordan makes it a point to tell her students that a career in the sciences and math is possible if they’re dedicated to learning and passionate about following their dreams. She urges them to apply for as many internships as possible in their fields of interest and to seek out any opportunities where they can network with established professionals. She also has accompanied several students to “Great Minds in STEM,” a yearly conference of the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation, where they attend seminars in career development.

“Lili is one of our gifted faculty members who engages students at their level of ability and raises them to a much higher level. Students understand she is genuinely concerned about their individual success,” said Scott MacLachlan, dean of student services at the Palm Beach Gardens campus.

In 2011 Jordan won the Gimelstob Student Choice Award for Excellence in Teaching. “That award will always be treasured by me because it was entirely student-based,” she said. “It was a very humbling experience and a great honor.”

Hands-on physics

To make the physics lessons in their textbooks come alive, Jordan frequently has students participate in hands-on experiments. Here, students measure the net force of two objects on a track.

In a centrifugal force experiment, a spinning wheel moves the student in her chair according to the angle of her hold on the wheel.



See more photos on Flickr:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia

“I have a love of learning, and if I can instill that in them, see it in them, it’s an incredible feeling,” she says. “When they ask more questions and want more knowledge, you realize it’s not just for getting a good grade; it’s because they want to learn. I see it happen in every class I teach, and it’s the ultimate compliment for a teacher.”



Achieving New Heights

Center for Bachelor's Programs

40,601
sq ft



Watch the time-lapse construction video
of the Center for Bachelor's Programs!

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See all the programs:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/programs/Bachelor

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Bachelor's programs, Honors College get new home

A three-story building opens to students at Palm Beach State in Lake Worth this fall, creating a new home for the College's bachelor's degree programs and the Dr. Floyd F. Koch Honors College.

The \$8.2 million, 40,601-gross-square-foot building further enhances the northern entrance to the campus on Lake Worth Road. It features a three-story wing with 15 classrooms and a two-story administrative wing with 26 single offices and other office space. The wings are connected by a three-story glass atrium, giving the appearance of two buildings as people enter the campus from the Lake Worth Road entrance. It also features wide corridors, allowing for corridor seating, and a 144-seat lecture hall. ■



Palm Beach State inches closer to land purchase for fifth campus

Palm Beach State College has signed a \$4.5 million contract to purchase 75 acres in Loxahatchee Groves for a future fifth campus.

The move puts the College closer to sealing a land deal that has been in the works for more than a year and to establishing what would become its first new campus in more than 30 years. The last time the College opened a campus was in 1982 with the establishment of the Palm Beach Gardens campus.

The land is located in midwestern Palm Beach County at the northwest corner of Southern Boulevard and B Road and includes over 1,000 feet of frontage on Southern Boulevard. In addition to Loxahatchee, the campus would draw from residents in the communities of Wellington, Royal Palm Beach and The Acreage.

Palm Beach State signed contracts Feb. 3 with Simon Family Trust, which owns the land, and Atlantic Land Realty, a company that plans to develop a commercial shopping district on adjacent land that it also is securing from the Simon Family Trust.

The College is now working with Loxahatchee Groves on land-use amendments that would allow this land to be used as a state college and gain the town's approval of the College's site plan. The College must settle these steps and other matters before the Oct. 30 deadline to close on the land deal. The site will be purchased with auxiliary fund revenues, which are proceeds to the College from operations such as the bookstores, food service and vending machines. No general fund revenues are being used or diverted from classrooms or personnel for the site, said Richard Becker, vice president of business services and administration.

A construction start date has not yet been set. ■

New degree program puts career success in focus

On the Palm Beach Gardens campus this fall, Ophthalmic Medical Technology students begin the new two-year program that leads to an Associate in Science degree in one of the nation's fastest-growing medical occupations.

Ophthalmic medical technologists work closely with ophthalmologists – eye physicians and surgeons – in the evaluation of vision and treatment of patients with eye disorders. Using advanced diagnostic instrumentation, these skilled professionals obtain medical histories, measure patients' visual acuity and assess optical correction, assist the physician, and perform clinical and administrative responsibilities.

There are only about two dozen such programs nationwide, and Palm Beach State College's is the first in South Florida. Located in the BioScience Technology Complex, the program's newly constructed learning center features a laboratory with the latest ophthalmic equipment. Students will develop technical proficiency through a hands-on curriculum taught by ophthalmologists and certified technicians and perform externships in local ophthalmic practices, clinics and hospitals.

"This program has been five years in the making," says Robert M. Kershner, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.S. Dr. Kershner, a board-certified ophthalmologist and Palm Beach State professor of anatomy-physiology and micro-

biology, developed the program and serves as department chairman. "A career in vision is one of the most satisfying and rewarding a student could choose. Certified ophthalmic

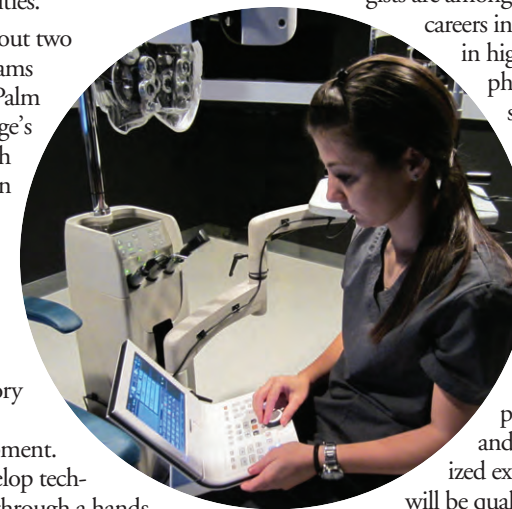
"Certified ophthalmic medical assistants, technicians and technologists are among the most sought-after careers in all of medicine and in high demand by eye physicians and surgeons."

medical assistants, technicians and technologists are among the most sought-after careers in all of medicine and in high demand by eye physicians and surgeons."

Preference for admission has been granted to residents of Florida, where the need for eye medical treatment and surgery is strong and growing. Following program completion and industry-standardized examination, graduates will be qualified to be certified by

the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology as a Certified Ophthalmic Assistant, Certified Ophthalmic Technician or Certified Ophthalmic Medical Technologist.

The Ophthalmic Medical Technology A.S. degree program joins more than 20 other health care-related degree and certificate programs offered by the College. ■



For more information:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/programs/OMT

561-207-5726



Banner Year for Panthers

2011 2012



Mechel-La Ward | Women's Basketball

2 All Americans

Two student athletes were named to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) All Americans:

Waverly Austin | Men's Basketball



29 students were named to the Southern Conference All-Academic Team. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater.



3 Championships!

Three Panther sports teams brought home the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) Southern Conference Championship. The Women's Basketball, Men's Basketball and Men's Baseball 2011-2012 success marks the first time in the College's history that three Panther teams won the Southern Conference Championship in the same academic year.

The three head coaches for the Women's Basketball, Men's Basketball and Men's Baseball teams also made College history by each being named Coach of the Year in the Southern Conference. Behind every good team is a good coach.



Head Coaches
Kyle Forbes
Men's Baseball



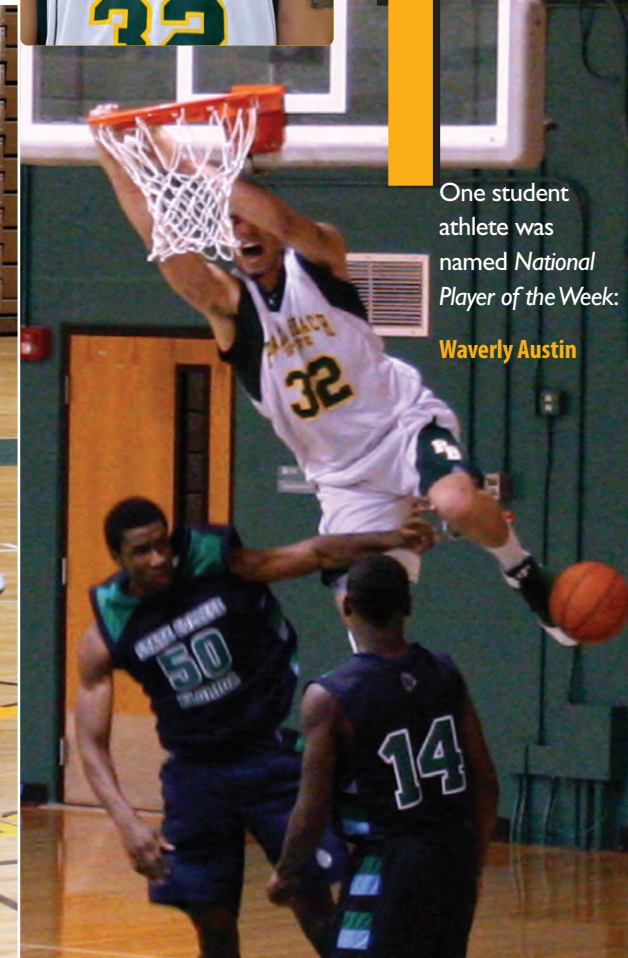
Kris Ruffo
Women's Basketball



George "Butch" Estes
Men's Basketball



1 One student athlete was named *National Player of the Week*:
Waverly Austin



Watch it LIVE! in Lake Worth

FALL 2012 / SPRING 2013

Home Game Schedule



VOLLEYBALL

SEPT 4	BREVARD COLLEGE
SEPT 11	BROWARD COLLEGE
SEPT 18	MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE
SEPT 20	POLK STATE COLLEGE
SEPT 27	INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE
OCT 2	BROWARD COLLEGE
OCT 19-21	LAKE SUMTER TOURNAMENT
NOV 2-4	NJCAA STATE/DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

NOV 14	IMG (SEMI-PRO)
NOV 27	MIAMI RAIN (SEMI-PRO)
DEC 5	CHIPOLA STATE COLLEGE
DEC 8	MIAMI RAIN (SEMI-PRO)
DEC 16	CLINTON JC
DEC 17	MUSKEGON
DEC 18	CENTRAL WYOMING
DEC 28	LSU-EUNICE
DEC 29	NW FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
JAN 5	INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE
JAN 12	MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE
JAN 19	ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
JAN 23	BROWARD COLLEGE
JAN 29	BREVARD COLLEGE
FEB 9	INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE
FEB 16	MIAMI DADE COLLEGE
FEB 23	ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE

MEN'S BASKETBALL

NOV 5	POLK STATE COLLEGE
NOV 7	RISE ACADEMY
NOV 9-10	BATTLE BY THE BEACH
NOV 16-17	JACKSONVILLE TOURNAMENT
NOV 22	DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE
DEC 8-9	JUCO SHOOTOUT / GAINESVILLE
JAN 12	BROWARD COLLEGE
JAN 26	MIAMI DADE COLLEGE
JAN 28	BREVARD COLLEGE
JAN 30	INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE
FEB 9	BROWARD COLLEGE
FEB 20	MIAMI DADE COLLEGE
FEB 25	CONFERENCE SEMI-FINALS
FEB 27	CONFERENCE FINALS

See more photos and all the Panthers sports schedules including Baseball and Softball:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia
www.palmbeachstate.edu/Athletics





Full STEAM Ahead

SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING ARTS MATHEMATICS

Foundation aims to help students prepare for high-tech, high-demand careers

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – the so-called STEM fields – are now commanding center stage, as public officials and education and industry leaders search for solutions to ensure economic competitiveness for the future.

Research from the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology shows a need for nearly a million more STEM professionals than the U.S. will produce at the current rate over the next decade. To meet this goal, the United States will need to boost the number of students who receive undergraduate STEM degrees by about 34 percent annually over current rates. State and local leaders also have identified STEM as a key growth engine to expand and diversify Florida's economic base.

Recognizing the need, the Palm Beach State College Foundation is launching an initiative to increase funding for scholarships to students pursuing education in these disciplines. The Foundation's emphasis is STEM plus the arts, or STEAM, and in addition to scholarships, the initiative will seek support to ensure that STEAM programs are sustained at optimal levels and expanded as funding permits.

A community event planned for early 2013 will be the launch pad for the Foundation's five-year

STEAM initiative to support increased student access, retention and success through scholarships, internships, classroom enhancements and more. Working to raise almost \$7 million during that time, the Foundation seeks to award 1,000 new scholarships, with a portion earmarked for young

"I strongly believe that if we encourage our youth to make strides in these disciplines we will be able to create a new wave of innovation and prosperity."

Yvonne Boice-Zucaro

women pursuing careers in male-dominated science and tech fields. Funds also will be directed to the development of new instructional resources and internship opportunities.

Major gifts director Pat Lord is spearheading the initiative with the support of a team of community and business leaders. Lord points to recent reports from the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Council of 100 identifying a shortage of highly skilled, highly educated workers, considered the most important resource for developing a

strong, diversified economy. "At the current rates, nearly 1 million jobs will remain unfilled due to the estimated shortage of properly educated individuals. STEM is where the future jobs will be most plentiful, offering graduates multiple career opportunities and high salaries," she said.

Dr. Peter Barbatis, vice president for student services and enrollment management, said STEM workers will drive the nation's competitiveness by generating new ideas, businesses and industries. "Over the past 10 years, growth in STEM jobs was three times as fast as growth in non-STEM jobs, and workers command higher wages, earning 26 percent more than their non-STEM counterparts," he observed.

Community on board

Local business leaders and Foundation board members Yvonne Boice-Zucaro of Boca Raton and George Elmore of Delray Beach are co-chairing the Foundation's STEAM team. Boice-Zucaro says she views such initiatives as critical to the nation's success.

"I strongly believe that if we encourage our youth to make strides in these disciplines we will be able to create a new wave of innovation and prosperity," she added. "Right now we are at a critical juncture; however, if we work diligently in the process of guiding our youth to make smart choices for their future, we ensure better lives for these students and a revitalized economy for our country and the world."

Businesses engaged in STEM disciplines will be involved, along with industry leaders, private and public foundations, local philanthropists and individuals committed to improving education. The Business Development Board of Palm Beach

County is lending its wholehearted support. President and CEO Kelly Smallridge points to Palm Beach State College's designation as the Employ Florida Banner Center for Life Sciences as an indicator of the College's reputation in STEM areas.

"Palm Beach State stands tall among our training and education centers," Smallridge said. "The BDB is proud to be working with the College to create new and stronger partnerships that will lead to a stronger, better educated workforce."



Help create more scholarships for future scientists.

Running on STEAM

Palm Beach State students have a broad range of science and technology program options to consider as they choose their field of study and career goals. In addition to the Banner Center, the College offers cutting-edge programs in such areas as energy, information technology, environmental science and biotechnology. The College's Institute for Energy and Environmental Sustainability is meeting current and future community needs for a highly trained workforce in emerging green industry sectors, such as renewable and clean energy and smart grid operations. The Math and Science Institute offers a rigorous summer program in math, physics, environmental science and biotechnology for honors and advanced high school and college students. The College's new bachelor's degree in information management provides an advancement path for computer technology professionals.

In the recently launched Science Path program, Palm Beach State faculty are working with public high school teachers in an effort to better align curricula in biology and chemistry to increase student readiness for higher learning in subject areas considered the gateway to STEM careers. Readiness in other STEM-related coursework also will be put into focus through this collaboration, funded through a \$375,000 Quantum Foundation grant.

With so much emphasis on STEM, why add arts into the mix? Simply put, STEAM reflects the importance of the liberal arts for the individual and the community. A liberal arts education helps students become well-rounded individuals with more than technical expertise, notes Dr. Sharon Sass, Palm Beach State's vice president for academic affairs.

"We hear so many times from employers that they are looking for employees who not only come to them skilled in their profession, but who also can read, write and have an understanding of history and literature," Sass explained. "To have a truly educated workforce who will be productive, contributing, civic-minded citizens who can think critically, we must provide a well-rounded education that includes math, science, literature, social sciences, communications and humanities in addition to the skill-based courses."

That viewpoint resonates with STEAM committee member Greg Martini, president of GEM Marketing Consultants and a Palm Beach State alumnus. Martini says his studies at Palm Beach State helped to define who he is today. He considers the College the "workforce driver" for today's high-tech careers. "South Florida's biotech, engineering and energy providers keep Palm Beach State students keenly in their focus as a prime potential employee source for high-demand work that is being done today, as well as finding solutions in the future," he said.



PALM BEACH STATE
COLLEGE FOUNDATION

Get involved...

To learn more about endowed scholarships, planned giving or other ways to contribute, please email us at Foundation@palmbeachstate.edu or call the Foundation office at (561) 868-3450.



Watch Palm Beach State students conduct experiments in zero-gravity!
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Palm Beach State College Foundation STEAM COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs:

George Elmore, Hardrives, Inc.
Yvonne Boice-Zucaro, Fugazy International Travel, Inc.



Communications:

Greg Martini, GEM Marketing Consultants

Business Partners:

Kelly Smallridge, Business Development Board of Palm Beach County

Scholarships:

Yvonne Boice-Zucaro, Fugazy International Travel

Academic Programs:

Dr. Sharon Sass, Vice President for Academic Affairs;
Dr. Ginger Pedersen, Dean of Curriculum and Educational Technology, Palm Beach State College

www.palmbeachstate.edu/Foundation

A Life Turned Upside Down:

Gordon Palmer Takes the Path Less Traveled

BY MARK UDRY

Gordon Harris Palmer Class of '82

Senior Attorney, State of Florida, Unemployment Appeals Commission

Vice President, Florida Disabled Outdoors Association

Associate in Arts, Palm Beach Junior College, 1982

Bachelor of Business Administration, Florida Atlantic University, 1985

Juris Doctorate, Florida State University, College of Law, 1988

May 29, 1977

That date is profoundly significant in the life of Gordon Harris Palmer. He can recall it as easily as his birth date. That day marks both the end of one way of life and the beginning of another.

Palmer had been 18 years old for all of eight weeks. He was tall, strong, well-built, with shoulder-length blond hair, popular with girls. It was Memorial Day weekend; high school graduation was coming up. To celebrate, Palmer and a friend drove down to Miami to catch a Fleetwood Mac concert. While he was there, Palmer ran into an ex-girlfriend, and after the show the three went bar-hopping. Palmer's friend, who had driven the two down to Miami, said he was too tired and asked Palmer to drive them back.

The car was a two-seat MG Midget convertible – a car so small you don't get in it as much as you put it on. There were no seat belts, no roll bar, no airbags. Bleary-eyed and fuzzy-minded, Palmer got on I-95 and started driving home to Lake Clarke Shores near West Palm Beach, over an hour away.

They never made it back.

"I remember getting in the car and driving on the interstate in Miami," said Palmer. "The next thing I know, I'm lying in a hospital bed. I passed out at the wheel, went straight through a curve into the median and the car flipped."

The crash turned the car into a tangled confetti of metal, plastic and rubber. Both teens were ejected from the Midget; Palmer's friend miraculously only suffered a dislocated shoulder and an injured knee along with some cuts and scrapes.

Palmer had damaged his spinal cord at the C4-5 level and was paralyzed from the chest down.

"It was every parent's worst nightmare come to life," said Palmer. "The hospital staff was telling them I might not make it and that they should start making final arrangements."

Palmer spent eight weeks in a Ft. Lauderdale intensive care unit, six of those on a respirator to help him breathe. He was then transferred to Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, where he stayed the next six months rehabbing from his injury.

The transition from being an active, independent teenager was difficult for him. Palmer's free time had been spent surfing, water-skiing, swimming and skateboarding. The kid who, in his words, "felt invincible," who at 17 had backpacked alone across Europe for five weeks, now needed round-the-clock care just to stay alive.

"When you're in rehab there's a lot of peer support. We all encouraged each other because that's the only way you had any hope of getting better," said Palmer. "But after I got home...we

had a house on the lake, and I would sit for hours, looking out at the water where I used to water ski. I thought about killing myself many times but did not want to put my family and friends through that. To say my life had changed was a severe understatement. However, I also knew I had to do something with my life and keep my butt out of a nursing home."

Both of Palmer's parents – Buddy, an electrical contractor and business owner, and Eloise, an elementary school teacher – were college graduates and stressed the importance of higher education to their four children. Palmer set his sights on a college degree.

In January of 1979, Palmer enrolled in two classes at Palm Beach Junior College. His friends and family held fundraising events to purchase a van for him to travel back and forth to campus to attend classes, with his mom, dad, his younger brother, Donald, or friends at the wheel.

"PBJC was a good place for me to go for a college education and get adjusted to my new life in a wheelchair," said Palmer. "Even back in those days, the campus was fairly accessible, and that was in the days before the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). The disabled student services department was helpful with paying student note-takers and

having rooms available for taking tests and other services. The only problem I really had was, since I didn't have full use of my arms or hands, I had to wait for someone to open a door for me."

Palmer graduated from the College with an A.A. degree in May of 1982, but the triumph was short-lived. Eloise Palmer had developed colon cancer the year before, and chemotherapy and radiation failed to beat back the disease; she died in September 1982.

It was in his junior year at Florida Atlantic University that Palmer began thinking about how he was going to support himself and maintain any semblance of independence. After graduating from FAU in 1985, Palmer attended law school at Florida State University.

"I chose FSU because it had an independent living facility for students with disabilities," Palmer said. "It also took me out of my comfort zone because all my family and friends were living in south Florida. I figured a career as a lawyer would provide me a decent income for me to pay for my life as a quadriplegic. There's a lot of out-of-pocket expenses associated with my disability, and I knew I'd have to fend for myself – there was no way I was going to end up in a nursing home."

Palmer received his law degree in August 1988, passed the bar exam and was hired as an attorney with the State of Florida Unemployment Appeals Commission the following year, where he has worked for almost 23 years. He listens to recordings of unemployment hearings, reads over the state's hearing officer's decisions, and with the help of voice-to-text dictation software, writes case summaries with his recommendations for settling the arbitration, with a group of three commissioners rendering a final verdict.

"Administrative law sounds dry and boring, but this job works out well for me because I can work fairly independently and the hours are flexible. Generally, it takes me about three hours to get ready for work. I have someone I pay to help me – get me out of bed, get me dressed, take me to work," said Palmer. "And I'm really happy with the work that I do. And listening to these hearings, you hear all kinds of stories about why people are unemployed – some of them are really incredible."

Palmer is a volunteer on the Florida Disabled Outdoor Association board of directors and its current vice president. He is actively involved in the FDOA program SportsAbility, which promotes events throughout the year where participants with disabilities play sports, go fishing, kayaking or canoeing, and enjoy other



MOVING FORWARD: from top • Gordon Palmer with his parents at his 1982 graduation from Palm Beach Junior College • an FSU graduate, Palmer visits with Chief Osceola and Renegade before a Seminole football game in Tallahassee • Palmer and friends at a SportsAbility event.

outdoor activities. He also is involved with the North Florida Spinal Cord Injury Association, a support group for people who have sustained life-altering spinal injuries.

"I realize that I'm very fortunate and blessed to be where I am," he said. "I've shared my story about my accident thousands of times. If just one person listens and doesn't make the mistake I made – then I know I've given something back." 🌱

Alumni Corner

Palm Beach State College
College Relations and Marketing
4200 Congress Avenue
Lake Worth, FL 33461-4796

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Palm Beach State College salutes these graduates and takes pride in their success stories. If you are an alumnus, we would love to share your accomplishments.

Please contact us at

cmarket@palmbeachstate.edu



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1977 COLLEGE DRIVE

BOCA RATON
3000 SAINT LUCIE AVENUE

LAKE WORTH
4200 CONGRESS AVENUE

PALM BEACH GARDENS
3160 PGA BOULEVARD

561-967-7222

www.PalmBeachState.edu

Alumni Success Stories



Juan Harris

PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, A.A., 2001
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY, B.A., 2003
PALM BEACH ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY, M.S., 2006,
M.B.A., 2008

Certified addictions counselor Juan Harris directs the Center for Older Adult Recovery at the Hanley Center in West Palm Beach, where he has launched a highly successful offshoot program for baby boomer clients. As a boomer himself who went into recovery and has been sober for nearly 16 years, he recognized that this group's needs differed from those of senior-age and young addicts. A trainer and credentials evaluator for the Florida Certification Board, he has presented nationally on substance abuse and dual diagnosis dependency among older adults.

Harris first enrolled at then Palm Beach Junior College on a basketball scholarship in 1970 but left without a degree. Returning 20 years later, he discovered caring faculty, friendship and support. "When I came there as a mature student, I was welcomed by wonderful people who truly cared about my success," he said. Harris was active in Phi Theta Kappa honor society, earning a scholarship to continue his education.



Mary Pitman

PALM BEACH JUNIOR COLLEGE, A.S., 1981
PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, A.A., 1996
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, B.A., 2000

With billions of dollars in unclaimed money out there, Mary Pitman of Vero Beach is on a mission to get it all back to its rightful owners. A nurse by profession, she has turned her hobby of finding missing money for family, friends and co-workers into a how-to book now in its second edition. She also has appeared on "Good Morning America," worked on several of their "Show Me the Money" segments, and has been featured on Suze Orman's "America's Money Class" on the Oprah Winfrey Network.

"My passion is empowering people to be able to find ALL the missing money they have coming to them," Pitman says. Her book, "The Little Book of Missing Money," shares search tips that go beyond state unclaimed property sites and include mining data from class action lawsuits, performance royalties, insurance policies, retirement plans, old stock certificates and more. The book was named to Kirkus Reviews "Best of 2011" list.



Susan H. Skemp

PALM BEACH JUNIOR COLLEGE, A.A., 1971
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY, B.S.M.E., 1981

When Boca Raton native Sue Skemp gazes at the sea, she sees more than natural beauty and rich marine life; she sees the energy-generating potential of ocean currents and thermal energy conversion. As executive director of the Southeast National Marine Renewable Energy Center at Florida Atlantic University, she heads research, testing and evaluation programs to advance ocean energy technologies.

Her career track started in 1963 in a technician role at Pratt & Whitney. She enrolled in night classes at Palm Beach Junior College several years later. "This pointed me towards an engineering degree and laid the foundation for me to be able to study mechanical engineering at FAU," she said. In 31 years at Pratt & Whitney, she led important research and technical programs, including projects with the U.S. Department of Defense and NASA, before moving on to leadership roles with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. Skemp joined FAU in 2008 and currently serves on engineering advisory boards at the U.S. Military Academy and the University of Maryland.