

Contact

FOR THE FRIENDS OF
PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

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Life-Changing Faculty

Meet 10 professors who are shaping
the next generation

Life Changers

Whenever I talk with students and alumni about their experiences at Palm Beach State College, invariably they tell me about a key person who inspired them, launched their career path or gave them the confidence to pursue their dreams. That life-changing individual, in most cases, is usually a member of the College faculty.

Outstanding teaching, in my opinion, is the core of the academy. At Palm Beach State, 325 full-time faculty and an excellent cadre of adjunct instructors each year teach more than 48,000 students seeking certificates and associate and baccalaureate degrees. Whether our faculty are teaching in the classroom or online, their impact reverberates throughout the College as they prepare students to enter the workforce or transition to another institution of higher education for an advanced degree.

To enhance our focus on student completion, our faculty collaboratively identify specific learning outcomes that guide their instructional plans. Beyond that, they mentor and advise students, empowering them to take charge of their lives and move purposefully toward their goals. While they are focused on student learning, many instructors also have achieved great professional success in their own right. Through teaching, they share their knowledge and skills as a way to ensure that those entering their profession and global community are well prepared.

In this issue of Contact, we highlight a few of our faculty members who are making a huge impact on our students and the College.

Their backgrounds and teaching styles differ, but each shares a genuine commitment to helping students develop, learn and succeed. Their stories help us recognize the indispensable role of faculty in the academy, and perhaps cause each of us to reflect on a faculty member who made a difference in our own life.

Also in this issue, you will find an update on our continuing progress toward a new campus to serve the central western communities of Palm Beach County. We are now "shovel ready" and poised to begin construction as soon as funding permits. We also are organizing meetings with area residents to gain their insights and ideas on how this campus can best contribute to the success and economic vitality of the community.

We are committed to providing life-changing opportunities for all whom we serve. The Aspen Institute recently recognized our success by naming Palm Beach State College one of the top 150 community colleges in the nation. We are proud to be among the best, and we will continue to make this institution even better in the future!

Dennis P. Gallon, Ph.D.
President



Mission

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

Kristi Sorrow

Grace H. Truman

ART DIRECTOR

Kari W. McCormick

PHOTOGRAPHY

Joyce Edelstein

Al Evans

Candy Lall Dass

Matthew Lester


Kari W. McCormick

Tabatha B. McDonald

Diana Pierre-Louis

Kristi Sorrow





“I flip it around and make them think. I kill them with questions.”

Dr. J. Venereo
Instructor

Jesus J. Venereo, M.D.

CERTIFIED PATHOLOGIST, HIGHER INSTITUTE OF
MEDICAL SCIENCES, VILLA CLARA, CUBA
M.D., HIGHER INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES,
HAVANA, CUBA

Program pride

“We have a great reputation out there. Employers are fighting to get our graduates.”

Blah, blah, blah? Not Dr. V.

BY JOYCE EDELSTEIN

Jesus J. Venereo, M.D.

Instructor, Medical Assisting – Lake Worth

The 8 a.m. Medical Assisting class in Diseases, Disorders and Treatment is getting underway. Students are assembled, but instead of being half asleep, they are energized by a song blaring through computer speakers. Today's selection, "YMCA," has everyone dancing. Their instructor, Dr. Jesus Venereo, a medical doctor and pathologist, begins every morning class by playing a student's song choice. "It brings the class together and starts conversations. You get to know things about them that you wouldn't otherwise, if you were a 'blah, blah, blah' teacher."

Dr. V., as his students call him, couldn't be farther from being a "blah, blah, blah" teacher, which is how he refers to long-winded lecturers. While some lecturing can't be avoided, Venereo prefers not to be the "sage on the stage" and uses a combination of interactive strategies that puts the responsibility for learning on the students' shoulders. "I flip it around and make them think. I kill them with questions. I say 'I'm your guide and I'm here to lead you to success, but do not expect me to do your job. If you don't work, you don't learn.'"

What do they learn? Medical assistants perform a range of clinical and administrative duties in physician offices and health care facilities. They multitask constantly – for example, going from drawing blood to updating electronic health records – and free up physicians and other health professionals to see more patients. "Doctors can't function without medical assistants," Venereo says. In fact, the need for medical assistants is growing fast, with demand expected to increase by 29 percent through 2022, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

A graduate of the Higher Institute of Medical Sciences in Havana, Venereo left his native Cuba with his family in 1999 to start a new life here. He

began teaching at Palm Beach State seven years ago, but the journey to the Lake Worth campus had arduous twists and turns. He took factory jobs out of necessity, learned English and worked his way to being a sought-after teacher at local schools for the allied health professions. But teaching wasn't new to him: "I'm talking 1979, that was my first time teaching professionally. I was still a medical student and one day they pushed me into a class and said 'you are the teacher now.'" His use of music as a class ice-breaker stems from that time.

In Dr. V.'s classes, students learn through a combination of short lectures and hands-on labs in the program's authentic medical office environment. He also makes extensive use of online learning tools and videos – anything that will stimulate the students and get them to think critically about what they are doing, step by step. He takes into account their learning styles (i.e., visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic) when he chooses materials and uses technology students love, including Facebook. "Back in 1979, Havana, Cuba...computers? That was science fiction. But now you have to use what they use, if you want to reach them, if you want to make chances for them to learn."

One recent morning, 12 graduating medical assisting students stood at the front of a classroom and like warriors returning home, told their tales of victory in health care offices throughout Palm Beach County. They had just completed their required externships and most left with jobs. Hanging onto every word was an audience of newly enrolled students, all wanting to know: "Do you use everything you learned?" The answer was a resounding "yes."

need to ask...

Q Why did you become a medical doctor?

A I was born a pathologist. Like all boys in Cuba, I played baseball. I would play for a while and then 20 minutes later I would disappear. You want to find me? I'm in the backyard opening lizards and frogs to see what they have inside. When I was 10 years old, I already knew I wanted to be a doctor. But not any kind of doctor... I knew I wanted to be behind a microscope.

Q What are the rewards of teaching?

A There's nothing better than when you see a student's eyes shining... they light up with knowledge... they got the idea. That day you go home happy. Then as years pass, you start seeing your graduates – one is now a medical doctor, another a nurse, a radiology technician, a cardiovascular technologist. They come back and say 'thank you' – that's wonderful.

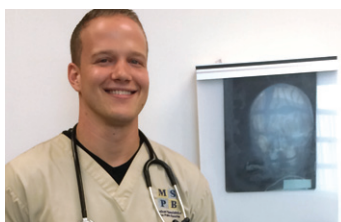
Q When did you first come to PBSC?

A We had just arrived from Cuba. My oldest daughter asked me for a ride to PBCC to register for her first class. I had just come from the window factory where I was working. I was all greasy and my clothes were dirty. The registrar looked at me from top to bottom. It was bad, but it was good. That put the idea in my head that one day I'm going to be in a lab coat again.



"Dr. V. makes it exciting to learn. He really challenges you to learn the material and know what you're talking about. I've had to study more than I ever had to before."

Hailey Mears, PBSC student



"With him being a doctor, he taught us more than we actually even needed to know, which has really helped me in my work setting. They see that I have knowledge beyond what I should have, and they value me more as an employee."

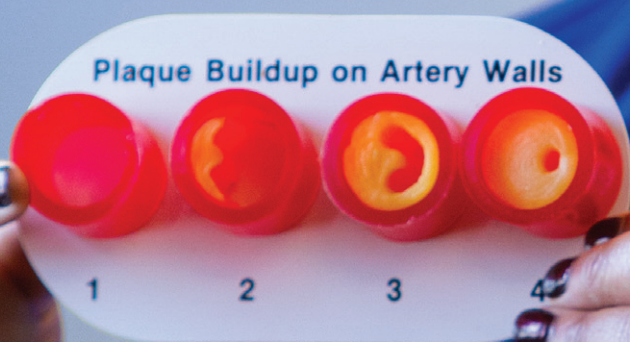
Curtis Ober, PBSC alumnus

View the video here:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia



“It’s so important that students understand how each topic is not only relevant to the real world but how it relates to them and their community.”



Dr. Kristy Taylor

D.H.SC., A.T. STILL UNIVERSITY
M.S., TOURO UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL
B.S., PARK UNIVERSITY
A.A.S., COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE AIR FORCE

Recent Awards

Legacy Magazine Top Black
Educators of Palm Beach County
Florida Compact Emerging Scholar

Dr. Kristy Taylor

Energetic leader reaches out to her students and community

BY KRISTI SORROW

Professor, Health Education, History – Belle Glade

When students walk into one of Dr. Kristy Taylor's classrooms, they quickly learn to be uninhibited.

"I tell my students that what is said in the classroom stays in the classroom," says Taylor.

According to the Pearl, Miss., native, letting students feel comfortable enough to express their opinions even if they are different from the mainstream is the key to unlocking their creativity.

This is just one of many things Taylor believes are needed to have a successful learning experience. "It's so important that students understand how each topic is not only relevant to the real world but how it relates to them and their community," says Taylor.

Taylor has been a health education professor at Palm Beach State since 2010. In 2013, she took on a new challenge of teaching American history and also became co-chair of the Department of Educational Services. The foundation for these roles, however, was laid much earlier, with lessons about leadership and discipline that she learned in the U.S. Air Force.

During her junior year of high school, Taylor saw a need in her community for more teachers. This got her thinking about the job for herself. With an outgoing personality and a desire to help people, she knew it was a match.

To help pay for her education, she joined the Air Force, where she served as a health care manager. At age 21, she taught health care management at the Community College of the Air Force as her first teaching experience.

She credits the Air Force, and several mentors she met along the way there, with helping her learn to teach students from a variety of backgrounds. The military life also developed her organizational and management skills.

Taylor is now using those skills in the classroom, where she teaches many aspects of health education, such as holistic health, chronic disease prevention, physical fitness and stress management. She also gives cross-curriculum assignments such as researching the history of medicine in America.

Taylor cares about more than just students' health habits, she also wants them to understand health insurance plans. "Most students don't know the difference between an HMO and a PPO plan," says Taylor. "By understanding what is and isn't covered, they're not left with potential unexpected bills."

Taylor's students also experience life outside the classroom through another one of her passions: service-learning. In fact, Taylor feels so strongly about serving others that she tells her students that if they participate in at least one project, she'll give them a recommendation.

In 2013, her students got a clearer glimpse into the lives and obstacles of low-income individuals and families through the Cost of Poverty Experience, organized by the Community Action Network of Palm Beach County.

During the project, Taylor says she experienced an "aha" moment when she knew her students were truly changed. "I like to challenge my students' preconceived notions by providing them with new learning experiences. In this case, they walked in one way and walked out totally different," says Taylor.

Taylor says she's not here to indoctrinate her students with her opinions but to encourage them to have their own and make informed decisions about their futures. For more information about Taylor, visit her blog at www.drkristytaylor.com.

need to ask...

Q What do you believe you bring to the classroom that makes you unique?

A My energy! I'm excited about what I do and students need to see that or they won't get excited themselves. My entire background has been focused on health education, but I was just as excited to teach history.

Q What have you learned from your students?

A They have taught me to be open-minded and that they will rise to the occasion if you expect great things from them.

Q What is the biggest health concern facing young adults today?

A A lack of knowledge. When students don't have a basic understanding of an issue, they won't even know what questions to ask.

Q Having been a student yourself for so long, how does it feel now to be a teacher?

A It feels good because you know your hard work is paying off. And, being a department chair, I can now help choose instructors and faculty who I know will care about students.



"Professor Taylor is full of energy and always encourages students to join clubs, school activities and become a part of the community. Not only is she willing to help students, but she inspires students to continue their education and become someone in life."

Karina Monroy, PBSC student



“He’s always trying to engage you in the projects. He’s always trying to tell you what you should get out of the design”

Diana Gonzalez, PBSC student

Dharmesh Patel

M. ARCH., UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES
B.S., FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
A.A., PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Dharmesh Patel

Great design lies in the details

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

Associate Professor, Department Chair, Architecture – Boca Raton

With a camera strapped across his shoulder, Palm Beach State Professor Dharmesh Patel waited in front of the Mandel Public Library in downtown West Palm Beach for his architecture students to arrive.

He was eager for them to see the four-story structure on Clematis Street given that they each had just four weeks to design their own library for a class project. Their designs would be showcased at the fall “Arch-Attack,” a juried event that Patel created in 2009.

For the next hour, led by the executive director of the library’s foundation, they toured each floor. They paid careful attention to not only the layout and design, but every detail – the wood floors, barrel-vaulted ceiling, lighting, beadboard walls that “create a warm, kind of homey feeling,” yellow- and blue-click mouse on the children’s computers and even the yoga class in session.

“A good architect thinks about all of these pieces,” James Sugarman told the Architectural Design 4 class. “Always think about the population you’re serving and the population of those who will use the facility.”

Patel knows this. And, he wants his students to become good architects. “I’m constantly stressing that they develop their ideas for the design all the way through to the smallest details,” Patel said. “Sometimes they hear it only from me, and it might not resonate as well unless they hear it repeated by someone else. It may be a bigger impact because now someone else is validating what I said.”

Site visits are a big part of Patel’s classes. He likes to get students out of their seats and into various communities to explore examples of the diverse projects that they will design for class and get them involved in projects that help the community and allow them to learn.

In 2012, for example, some of Patel’s students created the “Lake Worth Image-ability” project to give city

leaders ideas for how to spruce up the city and enhance its character and charm. Students created site plans and PowerPoint presentations, and they proposed other features, including a Lake Worth mobile phone app. They presented their work to the Lake Worth City Commission during a public meeting.

When Patel, a PBSC alumnus, launched “Arch-Attack” he was seeking creative ways to connect students to industry leaders and to each other. The event is held at the end of each fall and spring term, allowing students to showcase their design projects. He invites all PBSC architecture students and professional architects in South Florida, who critique the students’ work.

“I want Design 1 and 2 students to see what Design 3 and 4 students are producing in their design projects. They can talk to each other and give each other advice on materials, design ideas, equipment to buy and general helpful hints,” Patel said. “It is also important for students to network with local architects, which could lead to summer internships or a part-time job.”

ArchAttack also helps Patel because he gets feedback from industry professionals on class content. “I don’t want to teach something that’s not relevant to the current practices in architecture or in academia. I want to stay current.”

Patel was an adjunct professor for two years before becoming a full-time professor in fall 2009. He has worked to update the architecture lab so that students can use some of the best technology and equipment on the market, including a 3D full-color printer, a laser cutter and a large-format plotter and scanner.

“Now they can design really small scale models of their designs,” Patel said. “I’m trying to get them exposed to technology because that’s the new way of thinking about architecture.”

need to ask...

Q What inspired you to become an architect and, eventually, a professor?

A I was always good at drawing things when I was a little. When I got to high school, I took an art class. I took architecture, drafting and geometry at the same time. It all came full circle. I was really good at all of the three classes. After graduate school, I worked in L.A. for almost two years. I missed my family and friends in Florida, so I came back here and got a really good offer from an architectural firm in Boca Raton; at night I would teach at PBCC. I loved teaching as an adjunct.

Q If your students were giving a speech about you, what would they say?

A I hope they say that I’m a very passionate guy and that I care about the students. I’m very dedicated to the College, and I want the College to look good when I do anything.

Q Why do you take the approach that you take to teach students?

A I’m trying to push them as much as I can to develop their skills. It’s a very competitive field. It’s not easy getting into the upper division.

Q What does it take to be a good architect?

A It takes science, math and physics to be a good architect. You have to know about materials and construction.



“Professor Patel is a wonderful professor. He really does know his stuff. He’s more than fair.”
Rodrigo Campos, PBSC student



“He pushes you to be great. He really cares about everything we do. He’s pretty dedicated.”
Brandon Miller, PBSC student

See architecture students’ work here:
www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia



“They’ve grown up with this image that TV has given them, but it’s not reality.”



Paul L. Friedman

ED.D., NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
M.A., UNION INSTITUTE & UNIVERSITY
B.S., BARRY UNIVERSITY
A.A., PALM BEACH JUNIOR COLLEGE

Dr. Friedman is a 2014 recipient of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award.

Truth, justice and no gimmicks

BY JOYCE EDELSTEIN

Dr. Paul L. Friedman

Professor, Department Chair, Criminal Justice – Lake Worth

When Crime Scene Technology students enter the program's lab for the first time, they're always underwhelmed.

"There are no holograms or neon lights, The Who isn't playing in the background and Marg Helgenberger [of "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" fame] doesn't work here," says Dr. Paul Friedman.

Likewise, Friedman dashes the hopes of criminal justice students who set their sights on becoming criminal profilers. "There's really no such thing. People just don't run around profiling crime scenes in real life." Instead it's an ancillary duty, and even the FBI has a very small unit.

"It's hard for some students to adjust because they've grown up with this image that TV has given them, but it's not reality," says Friedman.

He should know. Friedman's been in the criminal justice field since he graduated from Palm Beach State's Police Academy in 1977. He served in various law enforcement capacities, including 15 years as a detective and crime scene investigator for the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, and became an adjunct instructor at the College in the 1980s. In 2001, he joined PBSC full time as a coordinator for the Criminal Justice Institute, and then in quick succession became an associate professor, professor and department chair. He earned his doctorate in education in 2013.

While Friedman brings his lifelong experience to the classroom, he focuses on giving students real world experiences of their own. In Crime Scene Technology—a program he started in 2003—students earn an A.S. degree or College Credit Certificate, but also graduate with resume-building experience under their belts. Almost from day one, students go out in the program's crime scene vehicle and function as crime scene investigators, assisting Palm Springs, Lake Clarke Shores and other area police departments on real cases.



"In Paul I truly have a mentor. . . I just owe so much of what I know to his teaching, his depth of knowledge."

Patrick Rothenburg, CSI Investigator, PBSC alumnus

"They're not being paid, but they have to maintain a work ethic – not only for themselves, but because they also represent the College," says Friedman, who emphasizes teamwork. "You can't go out there and do this by yourself."

Second-year students are often on call for an entire week. "If the phone rings at 2 o'clock in the morning, they'll run out, meet the police and participate," continues Friedman. Students also volunteer at public events, to fingerprint children for example, and in return develop a spirit of civic responsibility.

A crime scene investigation invariably leads to somebody going to court, and students are taught how to testify as expert witnesses. "They have to learn to be unbiased. They're not there as an advocate for any side. The truth is in the physical evidence," says Friedman. The final exam comes in the form of a moot court proceeding with an actual judge and attorneys present. "They get up on that stand and undergo the rigors of cross examination. It's the toughest final they'll ever take."

Friedman's Criminal Justice A.S. degree classes concentrate more on theory and Socratic discussion, but "textbooks are definitely not the total teaching tool." He also assigns real-life projects. "In Police Administration, I have my students review local agency budgets and create their own. You want a SWAT team, a marine unit and a canine? That's great, but how are you going to pay for it and what's its relative need and how do you measure that?"

Students describe Friedman as a hard, but fair teacher. "My biggest goal is to try to ignite some passion in the students, as well as push critical thinking skills, and, of course, accountability, responsibility and integrity. When you walk into public service – whether it's police, fire, crime scene, teaching, anything in public service – you have to think of the good of the whole."



"I'm learning an incredible amount of information in very little time. The way Dr. Friedman teaches doesn't make it feel like learning – instead, you're experiencing."

Leigha Cantor, PBSC student

need to ask...

Q How did you get started?

A I grew up in Far Rockaway, N.Y. and originally went to school to become a funeral director. I was doing an internship at Bellevue [Hospital], embalming indigent bodies. One of my heroes is Dr. Milton Helpem, considered by most to be the father of forensic medicine. He was the chief medical examiner of New York City. I watched him do a forensic autopsy and the hook was in. The whole world of forensics was in its infancy then. I've been obsessed ever since.

Q Do you have any teaching maxims?


A Think for yourselves! I have only one rule for class discussion: We're not going to have a dinner table conversation. There's going to be no yelling and screaming. I'll say 'if you want to espouse your opinion, I welcome it, but you better have some facts to verify what you're saying. I'm not interested in what your father or great-uncle says.' It's important that they develop opinions based on research and strategic and quantitative analysis, not just what is said at home.

Q Why do you like to teach?

A When you have passion for your subject material, it makes it that much easier to teach it. I'm very fortunate. I worked some really great cases over my career, and now I get to impart that information to the next generation and that feels good.

See crime scene students in action:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia



“I love Professor Allen. She’s really hands on. She always has time for you.”

Bernise Luzincourt, PBSC student

Carolyn Allen

M.S., FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
B.S., UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IRVINE

Carolyn Allen

Science professor helped pioneer online learning

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

Associate Professor, Department Chair, Biology – Boca Raton

Through her nearly 20 years of teaching, Palm Beach State Professor Carolyn Allen has successfully merged two of her passions to teach and inspire students – microbiology and technology.

She was the first professor to teach an online class at the College in the mid-1990s, and since then she has incorporated an online component into all of her microbiology classes, even the labs that are taught face-to-face.

"I'm passionate about microbiology, and I'm passionate about teaching and the use of technology in education," said Allen who became a full-time professor in 1994 after teaching as an adjunct for about two years.

Since pioneering distance learning at Palm Beach State, Allen has seen the College's number of online courses jump from one Environmental Conservation course then to 1,100 online course sections offered in the fall and spring terms today. She taught an online Environmental Conservation course after working with a computer science professor who was eager for the College to launch distance learning.

"We started on a wish and a prayer. There was no Blackboard," Allen said, referring to Palm Beach State's current and more sophisticated online class content management system. "The computer science faculty member ran the server out of his office so we could offer classes in a password protected environment. I know HTML because of that. We really started from absolute scratch. The demand for online classes grew very quickly."

Most of Allen's students are preparing for careers in nursing or other health fields, and she says the online resources help students master microbiology content, which is critical to their education and their success in health care.

She posts all of her lectures, videos and notes online as well as matching and crosswords games related to microbiology, which she created to help students.

"I believe so strongly in the fact that they need this information and background for their health profession. I try to instill in them the same respect that I have for microorganisms and the havoc they can wreak as well as the good that they can do. By the time I finish a semester with a class, they really are infected with the need to know more about microorganisms and to understand the role that microorganisms play in the hospital setting and the disease process."

With online learning or online components, today's busy students can learn anywhere and anytime.

"Technology is definitely a tool, and it's a tool that I strongly believe in using to empower my students so that they can work on their course materials 24/7. Whether they are on campus or not, everything is available to them. If they want to work at 3 o'clock in the morning they can," she said.

Students say her teaching methods and use of technology are effective. "I was really intimidated about this class prior to attending. She makes this class really fascinating," said PBSC student Ryan Kelly, whose goal is to become a nurse practitioner. "She is very knowledgeable, the labs are interesting and she takes complex concepts and makes them easier for us to understand."

need to ask...

Q What does it take to teach online?

A I strongly believe that if you're going to teach online you need to be available seven days a week. I'm very Type A in that if they ask me a question online on Sunday at 1 in the afternoon, they're going to get an answer that same afternoon. I do sleep, but I try to answer them off and on throughout the day and on holidays – maybe not as quickly as if I'm sitting here at my desk, but I stay connected to them.

Q How critical is microbiology today?

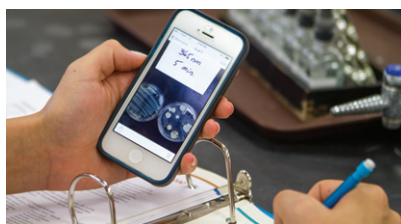
A What's happening in microbiology is going to revolutionize the health care field in the next 10 years, and that depends a lot on genetic engineering, which we cover in the class. Nursing [and other pre-health care] students should and do find this really exciting. They will be the ones that are working in the health fields when these changes are happening.

Q What role does technology play in microbiology?

A The things in microbiology that are going to change health care utilize technology. Technologies such as the engineering of tumor-targeting immune system cells (to cure cancer) are vital to the future of health care.

Q Did you always know that you were going to teach microbiology?

A I did not. Once I started teaching as an adjunct, I realized I had found my passion.



"She's amazing. She's not easy, but she's clear. She's very specific and particular, so it forces you to retain (the material). I've been able to retain it to the point that I'm tutoring other people."

Erin Rass, PBSC student

See the microbiology labs in action:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia





“To think outside
the box, you have
to know what’s
inside the box first.”

Robert M. Shalhoub
J.D., SAMFORD UNIVERSITY
B.A., UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Robert M. Shalhoub

Adjunct Instructor, Paralegal Program – Palm Beach Gardens

Setting the bar high

BY JOYCE EDELSTEIN

Enter the world of Robert M. Shalhoub. The 'attorney by day, adjunct instructor by night' is near-legendary as a superhero for paralegals in Palm Beach County. For 35 years, he has taught in Palm Beach State College's Paralegal A.S. degree program. His students are always a little scared at first, most work harder than they ever have before, but they always leave saying his "Court System: Procedures and Pleadings I & II" courses were among the best they've ever taken.

Paralegals, also known as legal assistants, support attorneys in the delivery of legal services. The PBSC Paralegal program exposes students to every facet of legal knowledge, and for his part, Shalhoub sets the bar high. "I want them to understand what they are doing. I want them to understand the concepts and principles involved." His two courses are taken in succession in the final year of the program. "They have to go through Shalhoub to get out," he laughs.

Born and raised in West Palm Beach and one of Florida's highest-ranking attorneys, Shalhoub captivates students, illuminating lectures with tales of his "downtown experiences" practicing matrimonial and family law. Students hang on every word and feverishly take notes. A student even transcribed every lecture, including all his "Shalhoubisms" (his better-than-the-textbook definitions of legal terms), and presented it to him as a book.

"He's a great teacher because he knows how to explain things in a way that makes it easier for students to understand," says Don Marsh, who graduates this spring. "While his classes are by no means easy, you learn a lot and understand what you are learning."

Everything comes together in the mock trial, an unusual opportunity for undergraduates. Asks Shalhoub, "If students want to know what we lawyers do, what better experience can I give them?"

The process starts with the case – a real one concerning an intersection collision that occurred in Washington, D.C. Students receive the "fact pattern" or case evidence in the fall term and use it to prepare complaints and answers, file counterclaims, do discovery and take depositions. In the spring term, they present the case before a jury consisting of former and future students.

As Shalhoub explains, "I want students to think outside the box. It's corny, but to think outside the box, I keep on telling them, they have to understand what's inside the box first." A mock trial makes for a perfect box.

The trial itself has become a rite of passage for each class. Students divide into teams, plaintiff v. defense, and play every role except judge. (Judge Timothy P. McCarthy of the 15th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida has presided over the mock trial for close to two decades.) "The students become absorbed in their parts so well," says Shalhoub. "Those playing witnesses will come to the trial dressed up as an ambulance driver, police officer, or whatever their part calls for. Or, they have to do an opening statement or cross examination. They get out of their shell...it's amazing."

By giving students the experience of going to trial and coaching them to think like a lawyer, they are better equipped to provide attorneys with unmatched paralegal support.

Shalhoub constantly runs into former students working in legal offices throughout the county, and many return to his classes to help with the mock trial. "I've been back and it refreshes my memory," says Tara Maione, a 2011 graduate who now works as a paralegal case manager. "It's always such a joy to watch him teach...people want to give back to him because he gives so much."

need to ask...

Q
A

Why did you start teaching here?

It was back in 1978. Dr. Ed Eissey [former College president] looked at me and said 'How would you like to be involved in the Paralegal program?' I said 'sure, no problem.' Everybody knows that Dr. Eissey is a Lebanese boy and I'm a Lebanese boy. His family and my family came here from the old country together.

Q
A

How do you know you've succeeded?

A [former] student will call me up and ask me out to lunch. I say, 'OK, why are we going to lunch?' They say, 'I want to thank you. I filed a lawsuit in Martin County and I won. I wouldn't have won if not for you.'

Q
A

Do you have any pet peeves?

I've always given tests where you have to write the answer out – it makes students think even harder. But then I have to grade them... a lot of students now have some of the worst penmanship you've ever seen. It has to be legible for goodness sake!

Q
A

Why did you become a lawyer?

Law has always fascinated me. I was influenced by Perry Mason – sure, I say it proudly. When I came home after school, I'd sit down in the house and turn on the TV and there was Perry Mason.



"You have all these teachers, and there are some you remember and some that you don't...he's definitely one you are going to remember."

Arlena Kindt, PBSC alumna




"He's just passionate about his students learning what they need to learn to be productive as a paralegal. He's a great professor, he truly is."

Dawn Salamone, PBSC alumna

See more of Professor Shalhoub here:
www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia





“I use a lot of self-deprecating humor in my classes. Who can you make fun of except yourself?”

David Childers

M.A., CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
B.A., SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
A.A.S., DELTA COLLEGE
A.COM., HENRY FORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

From high school dropout to cop to engaging professor

BY KRISTI SORROW

David Childers

Associate Professor, Speech Communications – Belle Glade

Sitting on David Childers desk is a top 10 list of human fears. Number one is public speaking. Number four is death.

“That means if someone goes to a funeral, he or she would rather be the cadaver than give the eulogy,” says Childers.

The thought seems absurd but is a reality that Childers has to tackle when he teaches public speaking and fundamentals of speech communication. This along with all the dreaded physical reactions that come with the fear, such as shaking, sweating and voice cracking.

To gauge his students’ level of fear, he starts off his class by asking his students where they are on a scale of 1 to 10. “A one means that you wish I would shut up right now so you could get up and start talking. A 10 means that you think you will end up fainting, hitting your head on the board behind you and looking at the dots on the ceiling as the last thing you ever see.”

Childers knows that there are usually a couple in his class who are close if not right at the 10 mark. He hopes that by getting them talking a lot in class, as well as by teaching them to pause, breathe and especially rehearse, their fear will dramatically decrease.

Laughter is another tool Childers uses to get students to relax. “I use a lot of self-deprecating humor in my classes. Who can you make fun of except yourself?”

When a student gets up to give that first speech, another classmate videotapes them using the student’s cell phone. Then Childers instructs the student to go home, sit in a dark room and review, review and review some more.

“When I do a presentation, I might end up recording myself up to 30 times. I have everything choreographed down to a pause, a look and a hand gesture. Steve Jobs said that for every minute you speak, you should spend an hour practicing.”

Another lesson students learn: Don’t go over the allowed time. “If you have a 10-minute speech, go eight minutes; 30-minute speech, go 28. If you go over, it could spoil everything. You want to leave your audience hanging.”

Childers admits that students either love him or hate him. Those who don’t like him have often experienced a different Childers – one who remembers nine years of freezing nights working the midnight shift as a Detroit suburb police officer, often encountering violent situations.

“I’ve dealt with hardened criminals, been stabbed three times and shot at. Students who think that they can get away with being disrespectful or disruptive in class quickly learn otherwise.”

After a decade fighting crime, Childers hung up his uniform for a teaching fellowship position at Central Michigan University. His police experience, however, left a permanent mark, one he carries into the classroom. “There is no other job where you learn more about human nature than being a cop.”

While at Central Michigan, unbeknownst to Childers, a company started asking around at the university, seeking to learn who their top students were. That led to a call from Merck & Co., one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world, and a chance to become one of their sales representatives. Childers spent the next year in intensive medical and sales training. On the job he excelled, earning the number two spot in the nation for highest sales three years in a row.

“People would ask me how I knew so much about pharmacology. I would say, I don’t know that much. But I do know about human beings. People buy from people they like and trust, and that’s the bottom line.” Childers teaches this to his students, along with four skills he says are critical to get ahead in the corporate world: speaking, writing, reading and thinking logically.

need to ask...

Q What describes your primary teaching method?

A I am an engager. Marcus Tullius Cicero, an ancient Roman orator, said “Never tell when you can show.” I always try and practice this in my classroom, stressing the importance of nonverbal communication.

Q Why did you want to go to college?

A I dropped out of high school at 17 and got married at 19. To make ends meet, I started working at a steel mill. It was like Dante’s Inferno. We would pour molten iron making it 130 degrees where we were standing. We wore heavy clothing to try and keep the heat out and had to take at least two salt tablets a day because we would sweat so much. I knew I didn’t want to have a job like that for the rest of my life.

Q How has social media changed your teaching style?

A Absolutely zero! I think technology is taking away that interpersonal – look in your eye and communicate – interaction because 90 percent of communication is nonverbal.



“Professor Childers encourages mutual respect and stimulates our way of thinking. He explains the course content and gives us personal examples that help us as individuals. He is excellent at what he does.”

Luisa Kuan, PBSC student

Put yourself in his classroom:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/SocialMedia



Professor Childers shows his students that speaking with a cork – while rehearsing a speech – helps make speaking in public seem much easier. Plus, it makes them laugh.



“Teaching in
a college
environment
is where my
heart truly lies.”

Joanne Cameron

M.S., FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

B.A., WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

An open book of kindness, passion and knowledge

BY KRISTI SORROW

Joanne Cameron

Associate Professor, Librarian – Palm Beach Gardens

In the spring of 1989, Joanne Cameron walked into a large empty room that was to become part of the new Limestone Creek Elementary School in Jupiter. Her task: to set up a library from scratch.

"I felt a bit overwhelmed, realizing the size of the project at hand," says Cameron.

That intimidation, however, soon turned into excitement as she thought of all the possibilities of the new job. "What librarian wouldn't love to have the opportunity to order all new books, equipment and videos to start a library collection?"

Cameron did just that with the help of a supportive principal and assistant. By opening day that fall, Limestone Creek would boast a beautiful new library filled with nearly 10,000 books and state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment to share with its 1,000 students, faculty and staff.

Cameron served as Limestone Creek's librarian for the next 11 years and considers the experience one of her most exciting.

She recalls a similar feeling when she first stepped into a library at age three in Pittsburgh. "I just loved going up to look at all the books and knowing you could bring all these magical things home with you."

Cameron kept her fascination with libraries into adulthood, when she took a part-time job at a local library while attending William Paterson University in Wayne, N.J. An elementary education major at the time, she soon discovered an opportunity to combine this love of the library with her desire to teach through a new dual major the university was promoting: education and library science.

After graduating with the bachelor's degree, Cameron went on to hold several jobs as a preschool and elementary school teacher and public librarian. She says all of her experiences were wonderful, but

the experience at Palm Beach State College has been particularly rewarding. "I get to teach a lot more in a college environment, and that is where my heart truly lies."

After taking one of her classes, students learn about the world of information available to them at the library – information that Cameron says they can't access through Google. The newly remodeled library at the Palm Beach Gardens campus offers more than 100 different online databases, where students can access more than 60,000 periodicals. It also has video viewing and production rooms, as well as practice rooms where students can rehearse class presentations.

Cameron has been an early adopter of new technologies and has been among the first to incorporate the use of Lib Guides, iPads, e-readers, virtual learning objects and other tools to enhance student learning. But what people appreciate the most about Cameron is her personality and genuine desire to help students.

"Joanne brings more than technological ability to her work," says Dr. David Pena, Library Learning Resource Center director. "She has that human touch – sincerity, a warm heart and a pleasant demeanor that is essential to engaging and retaining students. It is a rare day when I do not see a steady stream of students going into her office for personalized assistance. I'm sure that many of them would be lost without her."

Cameron has taught at Palm Beach State since 2002 and has lived in Jupiter since 1983. Although she grew up in Wyckoff, N.J., she says she feels truly at home in the Sunshine State.

need to ask...

Q What are some common misconceptions about librarians?

A We have to know a lot more than just books. Besides being good communicators with people and active adopters of technological developments, librarians need to have detailed subject knowledge to pass on to library users. We provide training to show people how to search for information and evaluate what they find. Most people are unaware that to be a librarian, you need to have at least a master's degree.

Q When did you know you wanted to become a teacher?

A I had a wonderful third grade teacher, Mrs. Ruth Frances, who was kind and caring in the classroom. I knew I wanted to be just like her one day.

Q What does a typical day look like for you?

A I spend half the day at the reference desk teaching students one-on-one. The other half I teach classes about the array of library resources available to them.



"Joanne played an irreplaceable role in my educational advancement at Palm Beach State, and I cannot overstate how grateful I am for her constant support. I have never seen her be anything but enthusiastic and seriously interested in student success."
Stephanie Kupiec, PBSC alumna



“I make health as relevant and involved and as personal for each student as possible.”

Tracy Ciucci

M.A., WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
B.S., WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Personal touch:

Connecting students with real-life health resources

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

Tracy Ciucci

Professor, Health Education – Lake Worth

Talking about certain health topics such as alcohol, drugs, eating disorders, mental health, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases may be difficult for some, but Professor Tracy Ciucci knows how to engage her students in the classroom and online.

She focuses on facts and community resources, and she takes a real-life approach to issues that impact college students and individuals everywhere.

"I make health as relevant and involved and as personal for each student as possible," said Ciucci, a former softball coach at Kalamazoo College and Kellogg Community College in Michigan. She taught health courses at those institutions and Western Michigan University before starting her career at Palm Beach State College in 2009. "These aren't theories that we're talking about. This is how health is applicable to their life."

Ciucci teaches all of her classes online or as a hybrid, meaning students meet one day a week in person and complete the rest of their work online. When students in the hybrid classes meet for class they have already completed their work, which leaves more class time for practical application.

"When they come to class, we do activities or group work, and they're all prepared because everything they did was already due online before they arrive. It's the best format for my students to get the most out of the course," said Ciucci.

Last year, her students did service learning projects that helped bloodmobiles double the number of students on campus that gave blood. They also helped increase the number of students who got tested for HIV.

Ciucci puts all of her lectures and presentations online. Students watch videos on different health topics and answer questions about them. Ciucci also created online card games to help them learn health concepts. The students complete self-assessments for

each topic, develop video presentations, post and respond to messages on the discussion board and write journals and blogs.

"Some of the students may never speak in class, but once you go to the online portion, they're the ones who are talking up a storm. Some of them are really comfortable online, and some are really comfortable in the classroom," Ciucci said.

She has developed measures to allow students to opt out of writing discussion posts or reflections on topics in which they don't feel comfortable without being penalized, but she does not avoid covering any topic. She also uses a private Twitter account that allows students to ask questions anonymously during class, and the Twitter feed is projected on a screen during class.

Her teaching methods and style have garnered glowing reviews from students and captured the attention of College leaders who nominated her for a 2014 National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Excellence Award. She will travel to Texas in May to accept the award.

"The majority of what I do is the teaching. Twenty-five percent of what I do is health- and community-based in the sense that they have health issues, and I have community contacts. I put them all together. I have community speakers in the classroom all the time."

Ciucci regularly refers students to the counseling center on campus as well as outside resources, including clinics where they get free health care.

"It's impossible not to start referring and finding out information to help those students. I have students who are dealing with a family member who committed suicide, or they are having suicidal thoughts themselves. How can I not provide them all of the information they need even though it's outside of class?"

need to ask...

Q What inspired you to become a health professor?

A My first teaching position as a professor was in a maximum security state prison. I encountered a population of people who were mostly poor and undereducated. I started seeing specifically in the area of health education how little information that they had.

Q If students were giving a speech about you, what would they say?

A That I'm accessible, current, encouraging and non-judgmental.

Q What have been the highlights of your career?

A The personal things that I've helped students with through the information that they've learned in this course, whether it was STD testing or preventing suicide. I'm fairly confident that there have been many cases where had I not contacted students about [statements they have made in] their writings, they may not be here today.


"She's very outgoing, and she allows us to learn at our own pace. She has information that you can incorporate in your own current lifestyle."

Chantale Charite, PBSC student

"She gets the class involved. You're not lost in the class."

Veerna Biniamin, PBSC student



A man with a receding hairline, smiling, wearing a green and white plaid button-down shirt. He is pointing his right index finger towards a whiteboard. The whiteboard has red handwritten mathematical equations, including $\vec{u} \cdot \vec{w} = \vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = 0$ and u_2, u_3 .

“If there’s a way to reach the students, he’ll find it.”

Nicholas Arcaro, PBSC student

Alex Opritsa

M.S., FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
B.S., FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
A.A., PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Alex Opritsa

Associate Professor, Mathematics, Math Club Advisor – Lake Worth

Learning to Love Math

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

Carrying a tray of sub sandwiches and two-liter beverages, Palm Beach State College student Vida Smith hurried into the room where Professor Alex Opritsa was busy at the whiteboard helping another student solve a matrix theory problem.

"If you don't feed your brain, you can't work," Smith chuckled as she headed to a table to set up the food for herself and more than a dozen other students there for a two-hour Friday afternoon math help session hosted by the Math Club on the Lake Worth campus.

Opritsa established the club in 2010 after a group of his math students expressed a need to get extra help. He was an adjunct professor then and spent much of his own time helping students. He would meet them in the library or the Math Lab for special help sessions and announce those sessions in all of his classes.

"It started out as a support system and help for the students because I wanted them to be successful. I wanted them to do well in the class," said Opritsa, a Palm Beach State alumnus who worked as a tutor, Supplemental Instruction leader and a part-time instructor before becoming a full-time professor in 2011. "We would just sit there and do math. This started proving to be successful. I'd be there and people would show up from different classes. The groups got larger and larger. We went beyond the curriculum. They would just learn math outside the classroom and have fun doing so. The club was really established without being established. We just said 'let's make it a club.'"

Since its formal establishment, the Math Club has become increasingly popular, with 640 members on the roster. Students like the help they get from Opritsa, who has a contagious love for math. The club's twice-a-month math help sessions are open to all students, not just those in Opritsa's classes, and they get help with every level from basic algebra to

differential equations. Opritsa helps the students with math problems. They help each other. And, well, they eat, thanks to club members like Smith who says students can't focus on math if they are hungry.

"I love this club," said Smith, who is studying business and first learned of the club from a friend who was enrolled in one of Opritsa's classes. "He's there to help every student. You don't have to be in his classes for him to help you. It's amazing. He goes overboard."

The math help sessions are among the club's numerous activities. Members also participate in community service projects, including collecting food for a local food pantry to help the needy. The club hosts guest speakers who discuss math concepts, and it holds monthly Math Phobics Anonymous meetings. During those meetings, the lights are dimmed and spa music is played softly through computer speakers; chairs are arranged in a circle for students to sit and share their challenges with math and learn strategies to overcome them.

"He's a great instructor mainly because he very much likes to reach the students. If there's a way to reach the students, he'll find it," said Nicholas Arcaro, an A.A. degree student and aspiring engineer. He has been a member of the club since 2011 and serves as its math therapy initiative coordinator.

Opritsa said the math club helps build students' confidence so they can perform better in their classes. "It just seems like it makes the most sense to have students network together and help each other outside of the classroom, supporting each other. They come in here and they get motivated. They feel comfortable with math and that gives them the necessary support to do math independently and to learn," he said. "It's a network of math learning for the whole College."

need to ask...

Q What inspired you to become a math professor?

A When I look back at how I ended up here, it just kind of happened step by step. Once I started working with students as a tutor, as a Supplemental Instruction leader and as a graduate assistant teaching classes and doing presentations in my graduate classes, it started converging on to this. But, I had no idea that I would be a professor. I realized 'that's what I want to do' once I tried it. It wasn't something that I kind of jumped right into. I really love it now.

Q What approach do you take to teach students, and why?

A I take the approach of learning it with them as opposed to teaching at them. That's what works best because of the type of subject that it is. It's really about exploration, curiosity and discovery.

Q How do you reach students who come to you with a fear of math?

A In the classroom, I find creative ways to share the beauty and relevance of mathematics and how it applies to our lives. I help them to try to connect on a personal level with the subject. When they take a math class they don't necessarily have the awareness of how they can relate to it. People like it once they begin to understand it.

Q If students were giving a speech about you, what would they say?

A They would probably say that I'm caring and passionate about what I do.



"I have a night class. Sometimes he stays until 10 helping anybody that has a question. He doesn't have to stay, but he does. I think he really likes math."

Richard Marrero, PBSC student

Shovel-ready

PBSC gears up for new campus construction

Architectural design, infrastructure and site work are underway for a new Palm Beach State College campus to serve residents in the growing communities of central-western Palm Beach County.

The District Board of Trustees last fall approved educational specifications for the campus' first phase and committed \$4 million for design and preliminary site work. The College is seeking a \$10 million state appropriation to begin construction of the first building on the 75-acre site located along Southern Boulevard in Loxahatchee Groves. The project is positioned to be "shovel ready" when funding is approved.

While the projected opening date is dependent upon funding, the campus could begin operating as early as

January 2016. The first phase will include a 50,000-square-foot multipurpose classroom/administration building, a health sciences and library building and a student center.

The campus will serve the fastest growing portion of Palm Beach County, providing convenient access to education and career training for residents of Loxahatchee Groves, Royal Palm Beach, Wellington, Loxahatchee and The Acreage. More than a third of the county's total population lives in these communities, and planning is underway for several large developments projected to add 43,000 additional residents. ■

All eyes on hoo?

A live webcast from the Belle Glade campus is giving students and the world a bird's-eye view of the intricate lives and behaviors of one of the earth's most mysterious creatures, the barn owl.

Webcams installed inside two owl nesting boxes on campus provide for up-close observation anytime from any computer or mobile device. The cameras catch everything from the owls' resting patterns and food selections to their interaction with one another and their owlets. "It's like being in someone's house. Instead of seeing a snapshot, you see events 24-7," said Dr. Vetaley Stashenko, PBSC anatomy and microbiology professor who supervises the project.

Stashenko built the plywood boxes, added wood shavings for nesting material and mounted them on 10-foot poles. Within a week of installation, two owls had populated the nesting boxes. A campus-wide naming contest came up with the names Hootie and Luna for these first two residents, who continue to inhabit the first nesting box while another pair of owls have

made the second nesting box their home. "We're finding out very interesting modes of behavior that are not recorded anywhere in the wildlife literature," Stashenko said. "For example, we have discovered that the owls can recognize infrared light from the cameras. We have the ability to change the intensity of that light, and if we manipulate it, the owls will answer or call to the light."

In addition, he said that while wildlife literature says that owls normally lay eggs between December and March, these owls have shown that is not always the case. "They're like people. They're going to behave differently. They're going to feed from different sources. They differ in how they behave, how they reproduce and how long they stay inside of the box. In the literature, you can't find this sort of data," Stashenko said. ■

View the Barn Owl Project webcam here

www.palmbeachstate.edu/programs/gladesbiology/owls.aspx



Panthers in Action!

Spring 2014 Home Games

MEN'S BASEBALL

| | | |
|------|--------|-----------------------|
| 5 PM | MAR 11 | EASTERN FLORIDA STATE |
| 4 PM | MAR 18 | BROWARD |
| 1 PM | MAR 22 | MIAMI DADE |
| 4 PM | MAR 25 | INDIAN RIVER |
| 4 PM | MAR 27 | NORTHWOOD |
| 5 PM | APR 2 | EASTERN FLORIDA STATE |
| 1 PM | APR 5 | BROWARD |
| 4 PM | APR 9 | BROWARD |
| 1 PM | APR 12 | INDIAN RIVER STATE |
| 4 PM | APR 15 | MIAMI DADE |
| 5 PM | APR 22 | EASTERN FLORIDA STATE |

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

| | | |
|---------|--------|--------------------------|
| 3PM/5PM | MAR 11 | KISHWAUKEE (IL) |
| 3PM/5PM | MAR 13 | STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA |
| 1PM/3PM | MAR 22 | MIAMI DADE |
| 1PM/3PM | MAR 29 | BROWARD |
| 1PM/3PM | APR 5 | EASTERN FLORIDA STATE |
| 5PM/7PM | APR 9 | INDIAN RIVER STATE |

All home games played at Lake Worth campus

Go Panthers!

See photos and all the Panthers sports schedules:

www.palmbeachstate.edu/Athletics

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Palm Beach State is here, too!

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#PBSC, #PBSCnews



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Palm Beach State College's STEAM initiative moves into second year

It started with Steve Wozniak — better known as “The Woz.” The Apple Inc. co-founder headlined the Palm Beach State College Foundation's launch in early 2013 — the first year of its five-year STEAM initiative to impact the projected shortage of local, skilled professionals in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) fields.

Now in its second year, the initiative has drawn some of the top names in STEAM fields (see right) to the College and Palm Beach County to educate students and the community on the growth and importance of STEAM careers to build a strong, diversified economy.

Along with these star appearances, the Foundation is working with the local community, raising money to support STEAM scholarships and academic programs, as well as increasing the number of student internships and partnerships with local businesses.

“The community response has been very rewarding,” said Suellen Mann, executive director of the Foundation. “Even more rewarding has been the student response. Students are now beginning to see that STEAM careers are where the future jobs will be and their limitless possibilities.”

One of those students is Victor Aguirre, whose dream is to become an aerospace engineer. A first-generation student, Aguirre has a fascination for aviation and was always watching the skies as a child.

During one semester at Palm Beach State, he took a trip as part of a class excursion to the Kennedy Space Center, which fueled his passion even more. Aguirre and his classmates went inside a mock space shuttle where they practiced both launch and land exercises.

“I came from a community with high poverty and unemployment. I think it would be a great story if I could go back and tell other students and show them that this is what you can do. You just have to work hard, go to college and believe in yourself.”



Help us make our goals...

www.palmbeachstate.edu/Foundation

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.



Aguirre's experience is just one of many at Palm Beach State supported by community and business leaders working to ensure STEAM programs are sustained at optimal levels.

“STEAM builds on Palm Beach State's successes of the past 80 years that have brought us to this moment: From humble beginnings, enrollment is now more than 48,000 students, signature programs are attracting notice and award-winning faculty are preparing the next generation of leaders,” says Palm Beach State President Dr. Dennis Gallon.

“But we can't rest. We must keep ‘building STEAM.’ As an alumnus or alumna, parent, student, business leader or friend of the College, the success of the STEAM initiative rests with you. I encourage you to plan your participation to reflect the value and importance to you of all that Palm Beach State has been and all we aspire to be.”

To hear more from Victor Aguirre and what others are saying about the STEAM initiative, visit the Foundation at www.palmbeachstate.edu/Foundation/STEAM



January 2014

John Lithgow - The two-time Oscar nominee shared his passion for the role creativity and the arts can play in expanding the traditional approach to education, literacy and life.



November 2013

Two explorers – NASA Astronaut Joe Acaba and deep sea scientist Dr. Edith Widder – talked about how ocean and space exploration produce technology that impacts our daily lives and advances mankind in “Yesterday's Science Fiction is Today's Reality.”



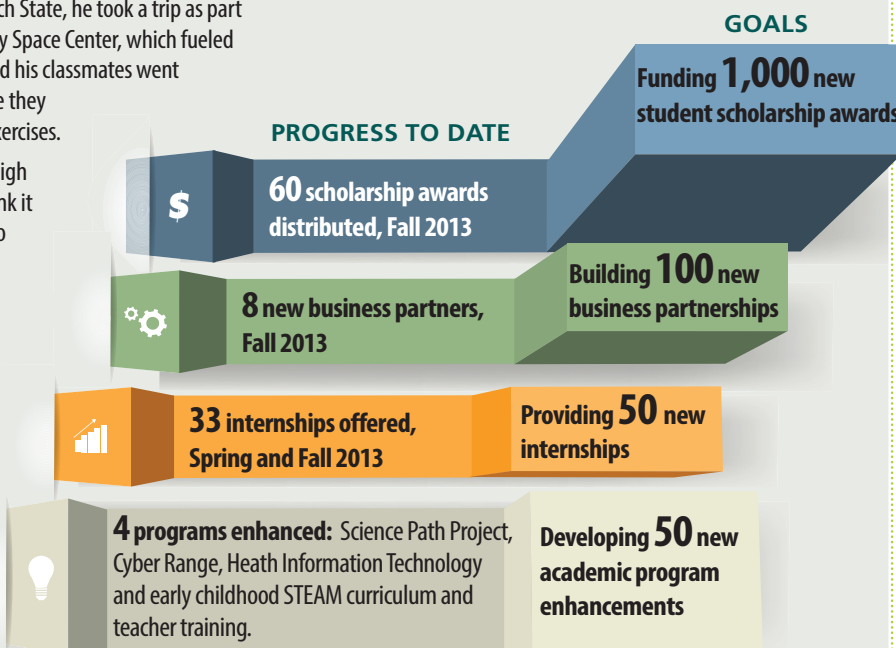
May 2013

John Sculley - Former CEO at Apple Inc. shared his experience of investing in and mentoring innovative high-tech companies that are changing the world in “Demystifying Entrepreneurism.”



January 2013

Steve Wozniak - Silicon Valley and computer icon shared his perspectives on U.S. competitiveness and the growing need for more science and technology professionals.





Life on the Wild Side

Brian Dowling's surprising, satisfying career

BY JOYCE EDELSTEIN



Sometimes destiny stares you right in the face.

Picture a seven-year-old boy staring transfixed at two man-eating lions, stuffed and on display at Chicago's Field Museum. He would get a good grade on his school report about the notorious killers of Tsavo, Kenya.

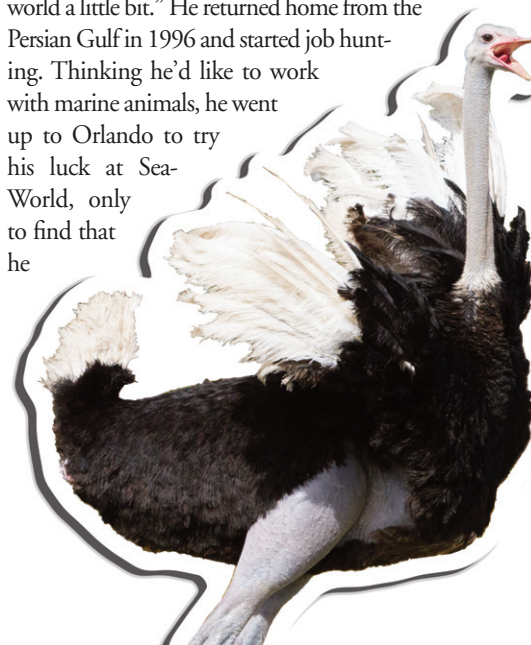
Flash forward to today and this seven-year-old is now the general curator for Lion Country Safari, the renowned drive-through wild animal park in western Palm Beach County.

Brian Dowling never imagined this would be his career when he was growing up a stone's throw away at the intersection of Lake Worth Road and Route 441. Thankfully, Palm Beach Community College interceded.

Dowling entered PBCC directly from high school in 1991 and enrolled in a biology class to satisfy an A.A. degree requirement. The night class was taught by Professor Michael Boxer, a former Navy Seal who would talk about his experiences that included taking a year off after he left the military to sail around the world. Inspired, Dowling found himself motivated.

"Coming out of high school, I didn't have direction. I went to college because I was supposed to. Then at PBCC, I stumbled across a professor who really struck a chord with me. I was so amazed by this guy. I really liked listening to his stories and wanted to follow in similar footsteps."

Follow he did. After two years at PBCC, Dowling joined the Navy "because I wanted to see the world a little bit." He returned home from the Persian Gulf in 1996 and started job hunting. Thinking he'd like to work with marine animals, he went up to Orlando to try his luck at Sea-World, only to find that he



was one of 1,000 applicants. Then sitting around the kitchen table back home with his mom, she suggested he apply for a job at Lion Country Safari.

"It never dawned on me that this is what I wanted to do, but somebody gave me a chance. I started off at the bottom, rakin' up monkey poop every day and worked my way up," says Dowling with a wry smile. "Now I run the whole wildlife department. I've poured my heart and soul into it, and I can't see myself doing anything else."

Dowling earned his Bachelor of Science in Biology from Florida Atlantic University at night, and while he credits Professor Boxer for setting him on his path, he made another important discovery in that PBCC biology class: "College girls want somebody smart who's going to do something with their life," recalls Dowling, who became a popular lab partner due to his high test scores. He ended up marrying Adrienne, a young woman in the class, and credits her with making him "a better person." They now have three daughters.



“Coming out of high school, I didn’t have direction. ... Then at PBCC, I stumbled across a professor who really struck a chord with me.”

Lion Country Safari has attracted more than 22 million guests from around the world since it opened in 1967. As general curator, Dowling is in charge of 40 employees taking care of more than 1,000 animals from six continents, representing 96 species of birds, reptiles and mammals. The mammals, including the largest herds of rhinos and zebras in the country, roam free on 320 acres.

“These animals are ambassadors for their species,” says Dowling, who also oversees the park’s conservation program to help replenish endangered species. “They represent their species to people, especially to younger generations. I look at it this way: I have an obligation to these animals and to their species to make sure that our guests learn about these animals, are inspired by them and want to help conserve them and protect them.”

As he moved up the ranks, Dowling held every “keeper” position for every type of animal, from chimps to lions to hoofstock (giraffes, antelopes, anything with hoofs). “The variety was exciting, but I think when the day comes that I retire from this job, I will look at building a pride of lions as being my greatest professional success.”

Usually zoos exhibit only two, maybe three lions. Space is one reason, aggression is another. Lion Country Safari takes a unique approach, displaying a whole pride of lions. “Living in a pride, being social, is a normal, natural thing for lions,” Dowling explains. “They sort out their politics through aggression. If lions aren’t able to do their politicking, you take something away from their lives. It’s like telling a bunch of teenage boys not to engage in horseplay. In a lot of zoos, you’ll see the big cats pacing back and forth. You don’t see that here. Living in a pride enriches their lives.”

Yet people, not animals are Dowling’s first priority. “You are only as good as the people you have working for you. My favorite part about the job is seeing how much passion my staff pours into the care of these animals. It makes me feel like I’m doing the right thing.”

Last year, National Geographic’s Nat Geo Wild channel was scouting locations for its new “Jobs That Bite” television series, which has host Jeremy Brandt trying his hand at the wildest animal jobs in America. Lion Country Safari was chosen as the series opener, and it featured Dowling showing Brandt the ropes. “I just treated the host like a new

employee and trained him how to do the job. None of it was staged.”

Brandt assisted in dental surgery on an aging, sedated lion, but the birth of a giraffe just 12 hours earlier gave Dowling and Brandt the unexpected opportunity to perform a neonatal exam. The results: a healthy female newborn weighing in at 171 pounds, 75 inches tall.

“It doesn’t get much cooler than that,” Dowling said on camera. No it doesn’t. 🦒

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Alumni Success Stories



Betty Lou McCray-Wells

A.A., PALM BEACH JUNIOR COLLEGE, 1969
B.A., M.S., FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
ED.S., NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Most meaningful learning takes place when teachers and students are motivated, interested and involved, says Betty Lou McCray-Wells, who has inspired Palm Beach County students for more than 43 years. The Bear Lakes Middle School math teacher has earned numerous awards, including the county's Middle School Math Teacher of the Year title in 1996. More recently, the school named its media center in her honor. "Ms. Wells inspires me and the entire staff and student body each and every day," says Dr. Kirk Howell, principal.

The West Palm Beach native says it was the pleasure of learning from PBJC math professor Daniel Hendrix that compelled her to pursue a similar career. "Many PBJC professors left an everlasting impression on me," she added. "They not only were concerned that each student learned, but the school as a whole made you feel welcome." She strives to impart that same positive energy through her teaching and her volunteer work serving children and senior citizens.



Kunal Dutt

A.S., PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, 2009

Kunal Dutt has had his head in the clouds since age 4. Now, as a SilkAir first officer in his home country of Singapore, he's living his dream in an Airbus A320 cockpit.

Armed with his Palm Beach State Aeronautical Science degree, Dutt attained a coveted cadet pilot position in 2010 and became first officer 20 months later. As he gears up for Boeing 737-800 conversion training, his goals remain sky-high: By 2016, he wants to be the youngest captain ever to come through SilkAir's cadet program.

PBSC has been instrumental in his success, says Dutt. "The Aeronautical Science program is very well rounded. Right from the start with SilkAir, I had an edge over my counterparts, putting me in a position to help them grasp some of the more difficult aspects." He fondly remembers aviation training with Professor Judy Maxwell and honors classes with Professor Diane Baird. "I'm forever grateful to my professors at Palm Beach State College. I'd never have been able to live my dream without them. And I remember that every day that I go to work."



Margaret Neddo

A.S., PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, 1990
B.S.N., NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
M.S.N., FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Margaret Neddo knows how frightening a trip to the ER can be for most people. "We meet people at the most vulnerable time in their entire lives. We need to be there for them and be their advocate," says Neddo, emergency department director at West Boca Medical Center since 2010.

In her current role, she works to improve care for critically ill patients and to mentor her nursing staff. She previously worked at Delray Medical Center's ER for 28 years, following earlier stints at JFK and Bethesda Hospitals. Her dedication to excellence and commitment to the nursing profession were recognized when she received Palm Healthcare Foundation's 2013 Leadership Award.

Neddo was a licensed practical nurse for 11 years before she enrolled in PBCC's registered nursing program. It was "humbling" to be a student again, she recalls, but higher education instilled in her an increased professionalism. "Each time I went back to school, it brought me to another level. I promote this to other nurses — Don't stop learning."