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## **Palm Beach State College Foundation to host world renowned marine biologist Dr. Edith Widder and NASA astronaut Joe Acaba Nov. 7**

Lake Worth, Fla. – (Oct. 3, 2013)—Ocean and space are set to collide as the Palm Beach State College Foundation hosts marine biologist Dr. Edith Widder and NASA astronaut Joe Acaba in a presentation titled “Yesterday’s Science Fiction is Today’s Reality” at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 7 at the Public Safety Conference Center on the Lake Worth campus at 4200 Congress Ave.

Widder, the president, CEO and senior scientist at the Ocean Research & Conservation Association and Acaba, a former flight engineer aboard the International Space Station, will speak about how ocean and space exploration produces technology that impacts our daily lives and advances society. The presentation is part of the Foundation’s five year STEAM initiative to ease the projected shortage of local, skilled professionals in the science, technology, engineering, arts and math fields.

In an interview that aired on CBS’s This Morning Jan. 23, Widder says there is much to be explored in the deep blue sea.



“It’s been said that we know more about the moon’s behind than the ocean’s bottom,” said Widder. “We’ve explored only about 5 percent of our ocean, and look what’s down there.”

Widder is referring to the giant squid, one of the largest living organisms on Earth. In 2012, Widder was part of a team of filmmakers and scientists who for the first time filmed a live adult giant squid in its natural habitat about 1,000 kilometers south of Tokyo. Their expedition was the culmination of a 10-year project to film the creature in its natural environment.

“The Nobel Prize for chemistry in 2008 was awarded for a chemical extracted from a bioluminescent jellyfish, and that discovery has been equated to the invention of the microscope in terms of the impact it had on science,” said Widder.

Just as the ocean holds many secrets yet to be discovered, so too does outer space, which is where Acaba has dedicated his recent career to exploring. Acaba has a vast work experience: he was a public school science teacher, a marine biologist and finally settled on space.

In May of 2012, Acaba, the first person of Puerto Rican heritage to become a NASA astronaut, was one of three crew members who launched from Kazakhstan aboard the Soyuz TMA-04M

spacecraft to the International Space Station. He and his fellow crew members, Gennady Padalka and Sergei Revin, docked with the space station two days after the launch. They returned to Earth in September 2012.

During a presentation made at NASA headquarters in Washington, D.C. earlier this year, Acaba described the journey as unique. “It’s like any life experience; it can’t help but change you and to change your perspective on the world.”

“The STEAM initiative is a major undertaking by the Foundation,” said Suellen Mann, executive director. “We launched in January at a signature luncheon where we presented Apple co-founder, Steve Wozniak and continue to ‘build STEAM’ with this series of world-class speakers. The community response has been very rewarding.”

Tickets are \$65 per person, \$120 for two. To register, visit [www.palmbeachstate.edu/foundation/STEAM](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/foundation/STEAM). For more information, call 561-868-3450.

*Serving 48,000 students annually, Palm Beach State College is the largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, providing bachelor’s degrees, associate degrees, professional certificates, career training and lifelong learning. Established in 1933 as Florida’s first public community college, it offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.*

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