

Business Partnership Council Meeting Minutes

Environmental Science Technology

December 10, 2020

11:00 am

Online meeting

ITEM 1 *Guest/ Member Introductions*

Dr. Jessica Miles welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Business Partnership Council (BPC) members and guests to introduce themselves. Attending members and guests included:

Neal White, Bureau of Land Management

Dr. David Serrano, Broward College

Justin Freedman, ESciences

Jill King, South Florida Water Management District

Tilliandra Gross Martin, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection

Libby Reinert, Park Services Specialist (Jonathan Dickinson State Park)

Naomi D'Alessio, Grassy Waters Conservancy

Mrs. Gloria Aldama Harmon, Environmental Protection Agency, Southeast Area Office

Leonie Escoffery, Palm Beach State College

ITEM 2. *Guest Presentation*

Palm Beach State College Professor Leonie Escoffery gave a presentation on the Panther's Pantry initiative. Professor Escoffery stated that the Pantry started with a "hot topic" group that wanted to provide Thanksgiving meals to students in need. In 2018, the Palm Beach Gardens campus opened the Panther's Pantry. It is currently open two days a week, and students can receive up to 10lbs of food items per week. The Pantry will be opening their new location this spring. The new location will also include the "Panther's Closet" which will feature lightly used, donated clothing for \$1.00 each. Students help run the pantry; the closet is managed by the Honors Program students. Dr. Miles stated that she thought it was important for the Council to know that Palm Beach State College does so much more for our students that just academics. There is a tremendous need for an initiative such as this because a large majority of our student population is on Financial Aid. Professor Escoffery let the council know that the Pantry and Closet are accepting donations which could be anything from monetary donations to actual food and clothing. Prof. Escoffery can be reached at escoffel@palmbeachstate.edu, per inquiries from the Council Members on how to make a donation of any kind (supplies or financial).

ITEM 3 *Program Adaptations*

Dr. Miles updated the committee on Palm Beach State College's COVID-19 response. She stated that the Gardens campus registration was up by 3% on today's date compared to last year at this time; however, overall college-wide registration was down 24% compared to last year at this time. This could be due to a variety of factors: students taking a gap year, remote learning is not for everyone, payment plans no longer offered by the college, etc. Dr. Miles also added that PBSC offers one of the lowest costs per credit hour in the country and tuition has not been raised in approximately 10 years. The Environmental sampling course was offered face-to-face this fall term and was very successful. The Hazardous Materials course will be face-to-face this spring term, enrollment is limited to 12 and the 40-hour HAZWOPER certificate will be offered again. David Serrano stated that Broward College has had a downturn in their student numbers as well and shared that the students prefer in-person classes over online classes. He said that recording classes has assisted the students that cannot be present for the live class.

Dr. Miles updated the committee on the GIS Drone certificate. Palm Beach State College is not interested in new degree or certificate programs at this time; the College is actually in the process of looking at programs and certificates to eliminate. The PBSC GIS Course is transferable to the FAU certificate program. Eastern Florida State College currently offers a 21-credit GIS Certificate program that leads to an IT degree. If PBSC offered a drone certificate it would need to be tied to an AS degree. The IT program at PBSC, who Jessica reached out to, is not interested in adding a GIS certificate program, and it is not likely that the GIS certificate could be housed in the PBSC Environmental Science program. So, it is highly unlikely that PBSC will be offering a GIS or drone certificate any time soon.

ITEM 4 *Future Trends*

Dr. Miles asked Council Members to provide any insights they may have on future trends in their areas.

Justin Freedman stated that the best job candidates for ESciences have good baseline data collection, sampling and research skills. There are opportunities for some people that have a special niche; however, candidates with a broader skillset are very valuable.

Libby Reinert of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, focuses on the basics, visitor services and verbal and written communication skills. Adaptability and flexibility are also very important when working at the Park. Open positions currently include, Park Rangers, temporary and full time Maintenance Mechanics, Administrative Assistants, and Specialist Positions. Becoming a Park Ranger offers opportunities to learn basic skills which could lead to a Specialist Position.

Jill King stated that the SFWMD does have available some entry level scientist positions (50 open positions of a variety of types but some are science focused). These positions require a few years of experience. Internship opportunities are currently not available but should open up again next summer. Jill also shared information about monthly virtual meetings held on the 2nd Thursday of each month. The virtual meeting is well attended.

Dr. David Serrano of Broward College is looking for 10 interested summer or fall 2020 graduates who would be interested in getting their BS at Broward and then go on to University of West Florida's 1-year master's program with a focus on Geology. He has grant money that would cover their tuition.

Gloria Harmon stated that the FI. Dept. of Environmental Protection still has an active internship program and that they are currently taking applications. They have entry-level positions beginning this January. The internship positions are unpaid positions with no benefits and require 20-hours per week. The internships are in a virtual setting and give interns an advantage when applying to FI. Dept of Environmental Protections positions. They currently have 2 temporary OPS positions that could lead to full-time positions. These positions are not advertised but will be shared with Dr. Miles.

ITEM 5 *Miscellaneous*

Dr. Miles discussed the Reef Hope Project. On Nov 16th, the artificial reef was sunk in the ocean, 1 mile southeast of the Lake Worth Inlet in 40 feet of water. It is a milestone accomplishment that took over a year and a half. It was an interdisciplinary project that included faculty and students from engineering, welding, ceramic, and environmental science departments. The engineering students worked with CAD drawings to help determine the size and weight of the sculpture, welding students transformed steel into DNA, ceramic students created 30 small sculptures, and the environmental science students worked on materials and research designs to make sure it was functional for reef organisms in the future. The Reef was designed to hold coral fragments. Coral will be outplanted onto the sculpture in the future. It was a good news story that was covered by multi media outlets.

There are currently 9 students enrolled in the Environmental Science Internship course. So far these students will be involved with initiatives at Grassy Waters Preserve, the Jupiter Lighthouse Living Shoreline Project, Jonathan Dickinson State Park, and FWC.

This year's common reader is "There is no Planet B". The Community Earth Club has decided on a meatless Monday program in association with the Panther's Pantry. Students will receive a recipe and food to prepare a meatless meal. Community Earth Club students want to become very engaged with this initiative.

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The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm

Submitted by: _____ Jessica Miles _____