

WINTER 2010 | VOL 52 NO 1

# USF

MAGAZINE

USF is

***Unstoppable***



## SCENE ON CAMPUS

Located in the Physics/Mathematics building, the Foucault pendulum educates as it entertains. The pendulum, suspended from the ceiling, provides experimental evidence that the earth is rotating on its axis. Because the latitude of Tampa is 28 degrees, the pendulum takes 51 hours and six minutes to make a complete rotation. USF's Foucault pendulum is one of about 90 Foucault pendulums displayed around the world.





# USF

## MAGAZINE



COLLEEN NAUGHTON

**A USF graduate student is teaching villagers in Mali about the importance of sanitation procedures while earning her master's degree. See story page 32.**

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#### Unstoppable

Speaking before an audience of donors, faculty, students, alumni and friends, USF President Judy Genshaft launched the public phase of the university's most ambitious fundraising campaign to date – a \$600 million campaign to strengthen the academic experience, enhance facilities, and support students and faculty.

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#### In Their Own Words

Working with the USF Libraries Holocaust and Genocide Center and the Florida Holocaust Museum, students in Carolyn Ellis's Communicating Illness, Grief and Loss class are documenting the lives and memories of the region's youngest survivors of the Holocaust.

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#### Worldly Wise

For 17 USF graduate students, serving people in impoverished parts of the world is another day in the classroom. The students, under the direction of professor James Mihelcic, are part of the Master's International Peace Corps program, earning their master's degrees in civil and environmental engineering while helping solve real-world problems.

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COVER: CHRISTOPHE JOUANY  
INSIDE FRONT COVER: JOSEPH GAMBLE

**St. Petersburg's Crescent Lake is a classroom for students who are learning about environmental science while helping restore the 21-acre lake. See story page 14.**



MARK WEMPLE

**W**ELCOME TO THE winter issue of *USF Magazine*. We have so much news to share as a new year gets under way.

Our *USF: Unstoppable* campaign, the most ambitious and comprehensive fundraising campaign in our university's history, is in full swing. The \$600 million campaign already has surpassed the halfway mark of its fundraising goal. When you consider the astounding progress our university has made since its founding in 1956, it's hard to imagine a better investment than one that will help ensure the future of USF – the future of one of the country's most exciting and engaged universities.

Like me, I know you will take pride in our university's collaboration with the Florida Holocaust Museum to document the lives and memories of the region's Holocaust survivors. The effort, which includes professor Carolyn Ellis and her graduate communications students, as well as the Tampa Library's Special Collections department, will not only preserve the testimonies of local survivors, but will add to the work of the university's Holo-

caust and Genocide Studies Center.

In this issue you will read about USF students who are spending time in the Peace Corps under the direction of professor James Mihelcic. Working overseas in Uganda, Mali, Panama, Zambia and other remote locations, they are helping improve the lives of people in the developing world while distinguishing themselves as technically strong, globally engaged and service-oriented engineers.

You also will read about a unique partnership with Apple computers that is helping create an anytime, anywhere learning environment for our student-athletes by providing laptop computers to every student-athlete on every USF team.

As these stories show, we are a university on the move – at a pace that continues to be unstoppable. I look forward to sharing this issue of *USF Magazine* with you and to the exciting developments that will mark the year ahead.

*Judy Genshaft*  
JUDY GENSHAFT, PRESIDENT

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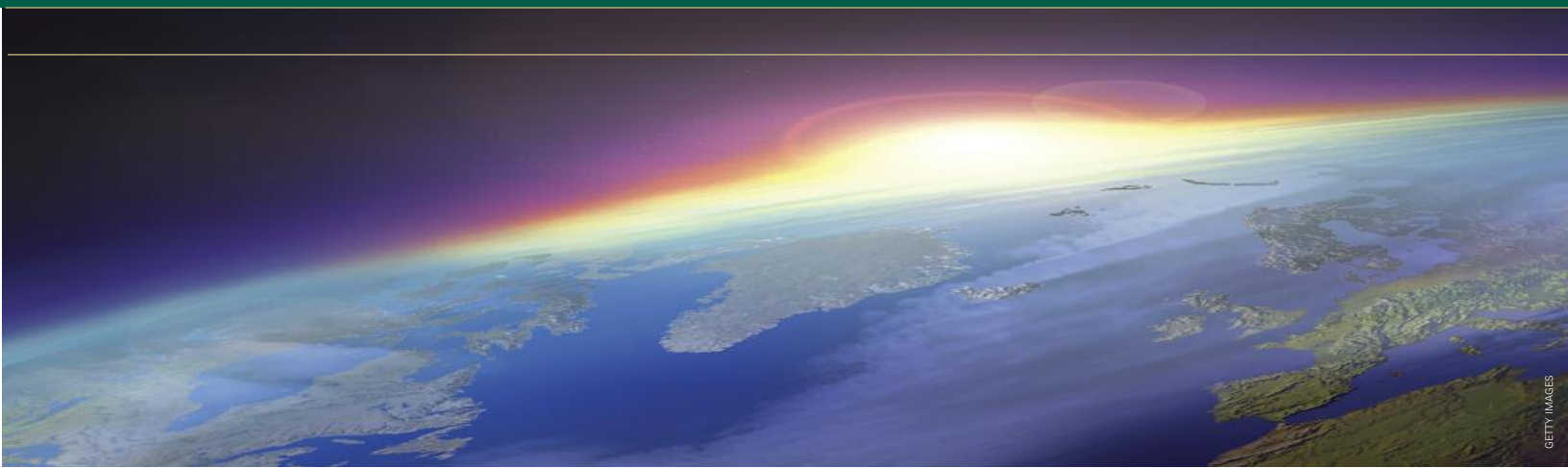
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## Global Perspective

USF programs enhance worldwide reach.

**S**OME WILL HEAD TO DISTANT LANDS. Some will remain at home, addressing issues of sustainability and promoting “green” and sustainable public policies.

Together, students in USF’s new School of Global Sustainability will have an impact on how a new generation addresses the complex challenges of protecting limited resources while building a prosperous future.

The school will unite USF’s world-class researchers in water, clean and renewable energy, climate change, coastal environments, human health and sustainable cities in interdisciplinary programs which recognize the worldwide challenges to creating sustainable systems.

The School of Global Sustainability also will help educate a new workforce for the new green economy – estimated to create 2.5 million new jobs in coming years. The first class of students will enroll this fall in a master’s degree program focusing on water sustainability.

The school will not be a traditional bricks-and-mortar school and will use online learning and the latest technological advances to allow students to complete programs efficiently.

“As a university, we must strive to improve the global standard of living,” says USF Provost Ralph Wilcox. “It is our responsibility, and is consistent with our strategic goals of increasing global impact and literacy, interdisciplinary integrated inquiry, community engagement and student success.”

The new school and master’s degree program are just the tip of the iceberg in USF’s commitment to expand global engagement initiatives.

A newly-announced joint venture between USF and

INTO University Partners will capitalize on the growing numbers of international students seeking to study abroad while creating new economic opportunities for the university and the larger Tampa Bay region.

The worldwide focus is fitting for Tampa as a major coastal city that is increasingly globally interconnected through trade and business, university leaders note.

USF joins nine universities in the United Kingdom and Oregon State University as exclusive partners with INTO to recruit as many as 300 international students from Latin America, Africa and Asia for a year-long college preparatory program on the Tampa campus. The program will prepare foreign students with the English and cultural skills needed to be successful at American universities – universities like USF.

**“USF’s responsibility is to prepare all its students to be successful in an integrated, globalized world...”** *- Judy Genshaft*

No public dollars are being spent on the recruitment effort. USF-INTO students, who will pay a full-time, non-resident tuition, are not counted against the university’s enrollment cap and will not displace Florida resident students in the admissions process.

“USF’s responsibility is to prepare all its students to be successful in an integrated, globalized world where the ability to work with people from other nations is a vital skill,” says USF President Judy Genshaft. “The INTO USF partnership will enhance the educational experience for all students on our campus, allowing us to continue offering the best courses for our students while creating educational opportunities for a growing market of international students.”

*- Ann Carney*



## Road to Discovery

An unexpected discovery leads to the development of a new anti-depression drug that could positively impact millions of lives.

**W**HEN FOUR USF researchers set out to find an effective treatment for children with Tourette's syndrome in the early 1990s, they never imagined their work would one day lead to the development of an anti-depression drug that could change the lives of millions.

TC-5214, the invention of USF researchers Paul Sanberg and Douglas Shytle, retired USF psychiatry professor Archie Silver and former undergraduate student Mary Newman, now a PhD researcher at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, could be the university's most important invention to date.

In December, North Carolina-based

biopharmaceutical company Targacept, Inc. and global pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca announced a major collaboration and license agreement for the worldwide development and commercialization of TC-5214 as it enters its final stages of testing.

When combined with one of the drugs most commonly prescribed for major depressive disorder, TC-5214 appears to be effective for people who do not respond adequately to the first-line treatment, explains Shytle. Major depressive disorder, he says, affects about 42 million people worldwide.

The USF discovery capped a decades-long journey of clinical and laboratory research. And, as is often the case with

scientific discovery, more than a little serendipity.

"This is what everybody waits for when a university is engaged in technology transfer—to get something that really makes a difference to society," says Karen Holbrook, USF's vice president for Research & Innovation. "It isn't just about doing research because it's exciting, but it's because it makes a difference to the people."

Under the agreement, which became effective in late December 2009, AstraZeneca made an upfront payment to Targacept of \$200 million and agreed to pay Targacept up to an additional \$540 million if specified development, regulatory and first commercial sales milestones are achieved, and up to an additional \$500 million if specified sales-related milestones are achieved.

While the details on the amount USF will be paid are confidential, Valerie McDevitt, the university's assistant vice president for Research & Innovation who oversees patents and licensing, says the new drug has the potential to generate millions of dollars for the university.

Today, the global antidepressant market is valued at more than \$20 billion.

"This has been a long and sometimes challenging journey, but this is a significant achievement that speaks to the value of investing time and resources into drug development and entrepreneurial research," says Sanberg. "This drug has the potential to positively impact millions of lives."

— Ann Carney



USF researchers Douglas Shytle and Paul Sanberg (pictured) worked with retired psychiatry professor Archie Silver and former undergraduate student Mary Newman to develop TC-5214.

## Stepping Forward

**U**SF alumnus Brian Lamb, a senior vice president and business banking executive, and Harold “Hal” Mullis, president of a local law firm, have been appointed to the USF Board of Trustees. Their five-year term appointments began January 1, 2010.

“We are fortunate to welcome these distinguished executives to our board during this exciting time in our university’s growth,” says USF President Judy Genshaft. “I would like to thank our outgoing trustees, Sonja Garcia, Robert Soran and Dr. Kiran C. Patel, for their tremendous contributions.”

Lamb oversees business development efforts in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and Polk counties for Fifth Third Bank. He currently holds board positions on the Shelton Quarles IMPACT Foundation and Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance. Lamb previously served on the board of directors for the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce and Meals on Wheels, and is a mentor with the USF College of Business Corporate Mentor Program. In 2008, Lamb received USF’s “Outstanding Young Alumnus Award” and, in 2007, he was named “CFO of the Year” by the *Tampa Bay Business Journal*. His Board of Trustees assignments include the Academic and Campus Environment Workgroup.

Mullis, a founding member of Trenam

Kemker, practices in the areas of mergers, acquisitions, and corporate and transaction law. He has served as a member of the Executive Council of the Florida Bar Association’s Tax Section, and for two years was a visiting lecturer at Stetson University College of Law. Mullis has held numerous board leadership positions in the community, including chairman of the board of Berkeley Preparatory School and Tampa General Hospital, and the Board of Governors for the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce. He was the 2007 recipient of the USF “President’s Distinguished Citizen Award.” His Board of Trustees assignments include the Health Sciences & Research Workgroup and Collective Bargaining Team.

## Top Gainer

**A** NEW REPORT COMPILED by the Education Trust lauds USF for significantly raising its minority graduation rates. In fact, USF came in 21st among the nation’s public four-year colleges that have raised their graduation rates for students who define themselves as African American, Hispanic or Native American.

“Even as we raise our undergraduate admission standards, we continue to attract greater numbers of Black and Hispanic applicants each year, especially as transfers, who are enrolling at USF with the academic preparation needed to succeed at a competitive national research university,” says Director of Admissions J. Robert Spatig.

USF has instituted several programs and campus improvements to support students’ academic experience at USF, including enhancements to financial aid, residence life, curriculum, orientation, student activities, technology and career services.

“The entire USF community has worked diligently to ensure that undergraduate students are academically and personally prepared to complete a rigorous course of study in a timely manner,” says Provost Ralph Wilcox. “We are building a university designed and dedicated to providing our students with engaged learning experiences, with the

requisite academic support they need and with an education which prepares them to be successful upon graduation.”

The university has paid particular attention to its minority students, he adds.

“USF is focused on student success for all students, and we will continue to pay special attention to those students who come to our campus with additional challenges and hurdles to overcome. We will not be satisfied until all USF students are successful in completing their degrees and are doing so in a timely manner.”

— Barbara Melendez



JOSEPH GAMBLE



## Going Lean

**E**XPERTS FROM USF'S COLLEGE OF BUSINESS are partnering with MacDill Air Force Base to help the supply wing streamline operations and potentially trigger one of the largest lean management transformations ever. The project could eventually include operations throughout the entire United States Air Force (USAF).

Working with the Sixth Air Mobility Wing (6AMW), USF professors will research MacDill's management, culture and business practices before crafting and implementing a change management strategy infusing the internationally recognized "Lean" management program into daily operations. Lean is a business process improvement program; lean organizations understand what customers value and scrutinize business processes to create value, minimize waste and improve performance.

Led by management professors Jerry Koehler and John Jermier, the goal of the \$745,000 effort is to create and implement an organizational change strategy for both the 6AMW and the 927th Air Refueling Wing. The project includes in-depth

research of MacDill's management, current efficiency measures, business processes and initiatives to streamline operations through a transformational program known as Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century (AFS021).

"We'll determine if MacDill's attempts at being lean are, in fact, effective before designing a program," says Koehler. "We will look to replicate effective practices and improve wasteful or inefficient processes."

Lt. Col. Jim Ledbetter, who heads the 6AMW's AFS021 program, says the goal of the effort is to increase combat effectiveness by building a stronger, more agile, combat-capable force. "Like the nation in general, MacDill faces resource constraints such as aging systems, increasing costs and outdated processes," he says.

"Professors Koehler and Jermier will help the Air Force develop airmen who are problem-solvers," notes Ledbetter. "This partnership will keep us on the leading edge and enable the USAF to remain the greatest air force in the world."

The mutually beneficial partnership will spark future educational opportunities for MacDill's employees as well as research opportunities for USF's scholars according to College of Business Dean Bob Forsythe. "We will work to improve efficiencies at the base and at the same time provide an avenue for faculty to examine struggles in the organizational change process," he says. "Such research brings real-time, real-world lessons into the classroom. Students in our management courses will be learning from the very instructors spearheading this project."

— Lorie Briggs





## Major Funding Boost

**T**HE RARE DISEASES CLINICAL RESEARCH Network (RDCRN) got a major boost last fall when the National Institutes of Health announced a second round of funding for the network, which includes the Data and Technology Coordinating Center led by USF's Jeffrey Krischer. The USF center and 19 new and returning consortia will be awarded \$117 million over the next five years to explore the natural history, epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment of more than 95 rare diseases.

A rare disease is a disease or condition that affects less than 200,000 individuals in the United States. To date, about 6,500 such disorders have been identified, affecting an estimated 25 million Americans.

Krischer, professor and chief of epidemiology and biostatistics for the USF Department of Pediatrics, has been principal investigator for the RDCRN's data coordinating center since it got its start in 2003. Consortia within the network funnel their data to Krischer and his team for collection, storage, management and analysis.

Under Krischer's leadership, USF has become the hub for epidemiological research in both rare diseases and juvenile diabetes, and has garnered worldwide attention as a model for large-scale clinical research.

"The great success of the first five years meant we coordinated 10 networks of studies. We'll now nearly double this to 19 networks," Krischer explains. "We built a foundation that we're now expanding to many more diseases, many more countries, and designing studies that will help many more patients."

Since its creation, the RDCRN has enrolled more than 5,000 patients in 33 clinical studies of various rare diseases, ranging from ataxias and primary immune deficiency disorders to inherited neuropathies and mitochondrial diseases.

The RDCRN is the only program that addresses rare diseases as a group. Previously, the NIH's institutes and centers funded research on individual rare diseases in their respective disease-type or organ domains.

— Ann Carney



## A Better Way

**A \$1.46 million federal grant will create the nation's first research center focused on treating criminal justice offenders suffering simultaneously from mental illness and substance abuse.**

**T**HEY REPRESENT A POPULATION of Americans desperately in need of assistance who remain sorely underserved when it comes to research and development of effective interventions and treatments that could help transform their lives. And their numbers continue to swell.

They're men and women who suffer from mental illness, simultaneously struggle with substance abuse or addiction, and have been arrested for offenses that are most commonly drug related. Released from prison with little if any

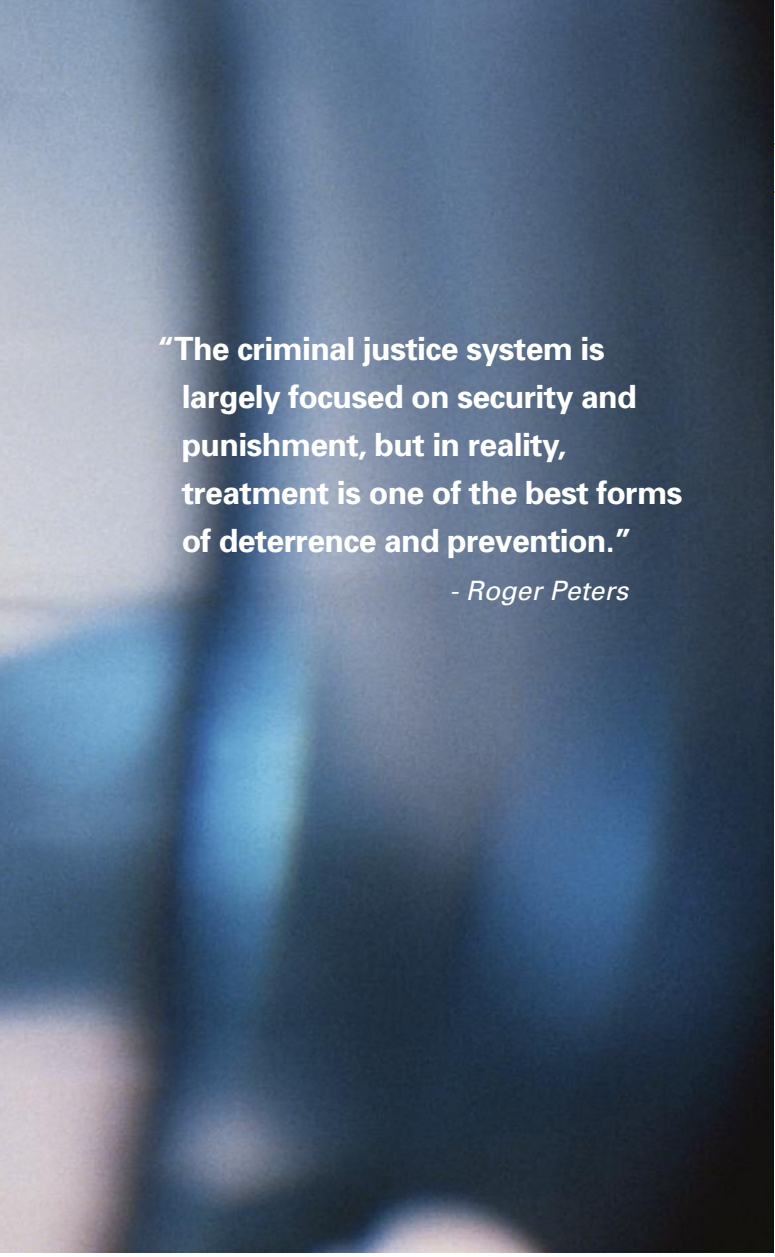
access to essential treatment or services, they return to criminal activity, are re-arrested and, subsequently, re-incarcerated.

According to Roger Peters, chair and professor of the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy in USF's College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, programmatic research into how to best address this critical public health problem – co-occurring disorders of mental illness and substance use in the justice system – represents a significant knowledge gap. Therefore, it has become a research priority for groups like the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

It's also a research priority for USF.

Last fall, the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy was awarded a \$1.46 million, two-year grant from NIDA funded via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. USF's largest stimulus grant to date, it will be used to develop the nation's first Research Core Center on the issue –





**"The criminal justice system is largely focused on security and punishment, but in reality, treatment is one of the best forms of deterrence and prevention."**

*- Roger Peters*

the USF Center of Co-Occurring Disorders, Justice, and Multidisciplinary Research (CJM Center). The Research Core Center will focus on co-occurring disorders in the justice system with an emphasis on implementation science/translational research, trauma and veterans issues.

For more than 20 years, USF has been at the forefront of this issue at local, state and federal levels, providing specialized expertise in the areas of mental health and substance abuse within criminal justice populations. The Department of Mental Health Law and Policy was a founding partner in 1995 of the National GAINS Center, the first in the nation to focus on effective mental health and substance abuse services for people with co-occurring disorders within the justice system. Today, the department sponsors a wide array of research providing a solid foundation upon which the new Research Core Center will develop.

For example, locally, USF researchers partner with the Hillsborough County Criminal Justice Department to de-

velop jail diversion services for people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders and with the criminal court system on treatment programs for drug-involved parents attempting to maintain or regain custody of their children.

Nationally, USF faculty are partnering with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to implement the National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans to identify strategies to match homeless veterans with existing community services. In addition, the department collaborates with experts at partner NIDA research centers to examine screening and assessment protocols for offenders with substance use and co-occurring disorders.

"This grant will provide us with the opportunity to build on our core strengths and current activities," says Peters, who serves as principal investigator (PI) for the project along with co-PIs from his department, Kathleen Moore and Paul Stiles, and Richard Dembo from the Department of Criminology. "It will enable us to hire and build faculty resources in key areas and across departments that will allow us to compete at the federal level for future research funding."

Specifically, the grant will support recruitment and development of three new faculty who will become independent, interdisciplinary investigators. The grant provides a rich infrastructure of research support for the new faculty, who will hold joint appointments in the collaborating departments of Criminology, Psychology and Community and Family Health, strengthening cross-university linkages and multidisciplinary efforts.

"In the United States today, approximately 34 percent of female offenders and 17 percent of male offenders have a major mental disorder," says Peters. Fifteen percent of the current seven million offenders who are incarcerated or supervised in the community exhibit co-occurring mental and substance use disorders.

"The criminal justice system is largely focused on security and punishment," says Peters, "but in reality, treatment is one of the best forms of deterrence and prevention. The CJM Center is poised to identify promising intervention strategies and test these interventions in pilot studies."

It's work that, in time, could create new hope for those looking for a road to recovery.

*- Mary Beth Erskine*

## Globally Speaking

USF's ROTC and World Languages programs partner to promote cross-cultural understanding through the study of language and culture.

**A**T A LONG NEGOTIATING table in Baghdad – Iraqis on one side – most of whom spoke some English – Americans on the other side with a skilled translator, Army Reservist Colonel Rocky Tyler only had English going for him – something he regrets to this day.

“I could hear them in their sidebar conversations at my end of the table and it would have been very useful to be able to understand what they were saying,” he says.

Today Tyler, a graduate student in USF's Second Language Acquisition/Instructional Technology

of International Education to promote global awareness and language proficiency. A foreign area officer at U.S. Central Command headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Tyler shares his experiences with his fellow soldiers in Project GO to help emphasize the importance of understanding both vocabulary and culture.

“We can get a whole lot done more efficiently if we make an effort to speak the language of the people we're trying to help,” says Tyler, who speaks Spanish and studied Chinese. “And they greatly appreciate the fact that we value their culture enough to learn their language and customs.”

**“Graduates will be more competitive in an increasingly international and global economy and workforce.”** *- Sandra Schneider*

(SLA/IT) program, is sharing his insights to help future military officers in Project GO, the ROTC Language & Culture Project at USF. Funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, Project GO takes a comprehensive approach to language acquisition, one that includes culture, history and more.

USF focuses on teaching Arabic, Chinese and Russian, as one of a dozen U.S. universities working with government agencies and the Institute

of International Education to promote global awareness and language proficiency. Another program at USF operates under the same guiding principle – that communication is the foundation of all relationships – the more high-quality the communication, the better the chance for high-quality relationships, both personal and global. Proficiency in more than one language opens the possibility for better understanding and potentially a more peaceful world, according to Sandra Schneider, director of USF's Center for



the Study of International Languages & Cultures (CSILC).

“CSILC equips students with the knowledge necessary for effective communication by emphasizing cultural, historical, political and religious issues and questions, keys to understanding among people from different cultures,” she says. “Graduates will be more competitive in an increasingly international and global economy and workforce.”

Schneider is principal investigator (PI) of a large-scale project at USF that is producing lessons in languages of critical geopolitical significance. She leads a team of CSILC language and teaching experts who are developing online learning modules that can be accessed by anyone with an





GETTY IMAGES

Internet connection through the Defense Language Institute's (DLI) Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS).

In the first phase of the project, supported by a \$1.2 million DLI grant, Schneider's team focused on Modern Standard Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies. Arabic is one of the most commonly used languages in the world, spoken by more than 280 million people as their first language and more than 250 million as their second, in 23 different countries. The team of faculty experts, native speakers and graduate students from USF, as well as the University of West Florida and the University of Florida, completed the first set of 150 lessons in December 2008.

In Phase II, via a \$4.5 million grant, CSILC is building lessons about portions of Central and South Asia while simultaneously providing training in the languages of Iran (Persian or Farsi), Afghanistan (Pashto and Dari), and Pakistan (Urdu).

"The team approach is allowing us to generate high-quality lessons while simultaneously training students and building cross-disciplinary relationships," says Schneider. "With this project, we're building the university's capacity in a systematic and interdisciplinary way toward our ultimate goals of promoting global literacy and understanding, and building USF's reputation as a globally engaged university."

Project GO's PI, Victor Peppard, chair of the Department of World Lan-

guages, sees both projects impacting people in all walks of life.

"Whether negotiating a peace treaty or business contract or getting directions, nuance and protocols can make or break communication," he says. "Ask any soldier on the ground, any businessperson, tourist or diplomat about witnessing a misunderstanding unfold, or best of all, the reverse, being understood. We could not be more pleased to be involved with languages of such importance to our nation's future and at the forefront of this state-of-the-art methodology through Project GO and CSILC."

— Barbara Melendez

## Healthy Play

An innovative program encourages students to participate in physical activities while earning prizes for their efforts.

**G**RINNING WITH anticipation, 8-year-old Ty'rique Brock waited patiently to hear if he was one of the lucky few to win a prize at the grand finale celebration of the Scorecard program, held in November.

Ty'rique had spent the fall filling up the 24 spots on his own scorecard with stamps and signatures verifying his participation in physical activity. While his goal was to win a prize, the real reward was improving his own health.

The Florida Prevention Research Center (FPRC) at the USF College of Public Health helped Robles and Sulphur Springs Elementary Schools implement the Scorecard program, which offers elementary age students action outlets for physical activity in their community. The program encourages youth to try new activities with an emphasis on fun rather than health or skill.

"It's all about providing an opportunity for them to try new things, to spend time with friends and family, to find something they like to do, and to have fun," says Robert J. McDermott, professor of public health and co-director of the FPRC with Carol Bryant.

Students use the cards to track their physical activity. When they have been active for a designated period of time (typically one hour) at a Scorecard site or at home, an adult stamps or signs one of the 24 squares on the card. Once all of the squares are filled, the card is redeemed for related prizes and makes them eligible for grand prizes.

The Scorecard program began in 2004 in Lexington, KY., and USF's FPRC earned a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2006 to fund Scorecard locally. After running a pilot program for middle school

students in Sarasota County, the FPRC started a full program for elementary school students in Hillsborough County last spring.

"One key point we learned from the Sarasota program was that it is better to target younger kids because, as they start to enter their teens, they start to favor sedentary activities, like video games and television," McDermott says.

"So the point is to interest them in activities earlier because, by the time students are teenagers, it's much harder to change those habits."

During the past year, the FPRC worked with Robles and Sulphur Springs Elementary Schools, as well as community partners in those areas, to tailor the Scorecard program to fit local needs. The goal: Help Tampa's youth become more physically active throughout the year.

Local venues hosted events for the students, like bowling for \$1 per game at Terrace Sports. Weekends were filled with events, such as track meets or baseball clinics at local parks, and activities like the Too Good For Drugs Walk and KidFest at MOSI.







**Elementary school student Ty'rique Brock earned stars for participating in physical activities.**

Public health graduate students staffed many of the events and evaluated the programs to provide feedback to the schools, as well as collected data from the program to present at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association. They will analyze the current program and present or publish those results as well, McDermott says. A next task is to apply basic marketing principles and develop a tool kit that can be used in schools around the country, he says.

The goal is for the schools to take the program and run with it, McDermott says.

"We have built an infrastructure with the schools and community organizers so that they could run the program on their own."

As for Ty'rique, he didn't win a grand prize but still came away feeling like a winner. His mother, Andrenna Brock-Cadet, says the Scorecard program was great for her son.

"Sometimes we're surrounded by a lot of negative and this program was a positive thing for my son," she says.

"As a parent, I enjoyed seeing him participate. And it helped me get out and move, too. They definitely need to keep this program going."

— Sarah A. Worth





## Lakefront View

USF St. Petersburg graduate students complete fieldwork while helping restore Crescent Lake.

**I**N A PILOT PARTNERSHIP to offer local fieldwork for environmental science and policy students, the 12 graduate students in Deby Cassill's Environmental Science class dug, measured and surveyed their way in and around St. Petersburg's Crescent Lake.

The USF St. Petersburg students tested water quality, tracked bat populations, analyzed bird life, determined nutrient sources, took core soil samples

2007 by residents near the lake.

Located between 12th and 22nd Avenues North and Fifth Street North and Crescent Lake Drive, the 21-acre freshwater lake also serves as a stormwater retention pond. The lake's park, with its benches, sidewalks and playground, is popular with joggers, walkers and families. Water flows from the lake into Coffee Pot Bayou, a popular drinking water source for manatees.

More than 80 years of development changed the hydrology of the lake, Bays says. Its watershed expanded, habitat-supporting marshes were depleted and nutrient levels changed. He sees the work of the students helping to correct years of diminishing lake health.

"If you have a functioning ecosystem in the heart of your community, residents know it helps them and helps their view of the neighborhood,"

Bays says.

For one of the projects, students Lauren Bates and Julie Vogel conducted a survey of park visitors. They asked 120 people at the park during different days of the week and at different times how they use the park.

"We wanted to see trends among age groups and whether visitors are

and surveyed the park's visitors to find ways to better educate the community about lake restoration.

In partnership with Jim Bays, an environmental biologist who lives near the lake, and with grant funding from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, the students worked in tandem with restoration efforts under way since



PHOTOS: JOSEPH GAMBLE

aware of the lake restoration," Bates says. "We also asked if they would want to volunteer. We want the information we gather to help the outreach be more effective."

The students will publish their findings in a newsletter distributed to the neighborhood around Crescent Lake.

Another student, Lee Snyder, tracked avian presence and plant use





**Biology professor Deby Cassill's student volunteers remove invasive plant species from Crescent Lake. The students will re-plant and protect native species to improve the health of the lake and its wildlife.**

in the urban lake park. He compared the use of two plant habitats, one at the north end and another at the south end of the lake. Snyder found that the birds preferred a habitat with diverse

plant species in close proximity.

"A healthy lake enriches the community and its experience with nature," says Cassill. "And the partnership is an opportunity to engage the graduate students in field work."

Graduate students in future classes will continue to research and restore Crescent Lake.

"The students create a useful baseline to compare future lake conditions," Bays says. "We will get to compare a year from now with other student projects to see if there is progress in lake quality. The information also supports future grant applications."

— Melanie Marquez

# Nurturing Success

**Corporate Mentor Program pairs first-generation business students with local business leaders.**

**T**WENTY-ONE YEAR-OLD TORRELL JACKSON describes Raymond James & Associates President Dennis Zank as a motivator, a “cool” business leader whose down-to-earth style motivates people. Arguably one of the busiest corporate leaders in the area, Zank has added another word to his resume for the last 15 years: mentor.

Zank is part of USF’s College of Business Corporate Mentor Program, which pairs first-generation-in-college business students with area executives. More than 500 students have been mentored by local business leaders since the program began in 1986.

Currently, Zank is matched with Jackson, a junior pursuing a double major in management and accounting. Zank passionately believes that spending a few hours a month with students like Jackson is critical to student success – and is a way for the 1976 graduate to help the business school fulfill its core obligation.

“I view the business school’s role as a simple one,” Zank says. “It comes down to jobs: create a marketable individual who understands business.” He explains that aspiring business leaders who are the first in their family to pursue a degree have great ability and desire – and are gaining knowledge in the classroom – but often lack access to the corporate world. “Frequently, they’ve not been able to see what it’s like in a business meeting. They may not have witnessed first-hand what it means to be a professional and understand why networking is essential,” says Zank. “That’s why I volunteer.”

For Jackson, his relationship with Zank began with a copy of the executive’s calendar and an invitation to enjoy a cup of coffee.

“I typically print my calendar and circle dates where I have meetings or events the student might find interesting and educational,” explains Zank. “I have to attend anyway, so why not bring along someone like Torrell and introduce him to the boardroom or let him sit in on a finance meeting?” Smiling as he recalls leaning over to explain jargon, Zank says he doesn’t limit the relationship to business discussions. “I like getting to know students as individuals,” he says. “I

like being able to offer advice as they consider job offers, ponder marriage, or talk about fishing.”

“At our first meeting we talked about everything” says Jackson. “He allowed me to ask questions about anything. He talked to me about improving and differentiating myself. He was full of wisdom and I left motivated to be the best person I can possibly be.”

One of the first pearls of wisdom Jackson learned was about managing weaknesses. “Mr. Zank told me that being successful is to know your negatives,” he says. “This is important because when executives consider people for a promotion, they look at each candidate’s positives and negatives. My job is to have a shorter list of negatives than others being considered.” Jackson says he has learned it is important to tackle those negatives instead of being overwhelmed by an honest self-evaluation.

Jackson is not the first student to learn such sage advice from Zank. Fifteen students have received copies of Zank’s calendar over the years, several of them now senior-level executives. One such student, Brian Lamb, was paired with Zank when he was an undergraduate student and captain of USF’s basketball team. Now a business banking executive with Fifth Third Bank, Lamb credits Zank with helping him transition from student to professional.

“Dennis offered a wealth of experience and helped me transition from college to the workplace,” Lamb says. “I gained exposure to simple things like executive attire and how to run a board meeting, both of which are part of my daily life now. He taught me the importance of setting and executing goals.

“The relationship we shared helped me appreciate opportunities readily available to well-educated, well-prepared students. I completed the mentorship program full of confidence in my ability to compete successfully in the ‘professional world’ and not just on the basketball court.

“Dennis constantly reminded me to stay connected to the university,” he adds. That clearly was the most memorable advice since Lamb was recently appointed to the USF Board of Trustees.

“Today, I am the mentor,” says Lamb, who also contributes financially to the Corporate Mentor Program and funds a scholarship. “I enjoy playing a very small role in students’ success.”

– Lorie Briggs





RAYMOND J.  
& ASSOCIATES, INC.  
Member New York Stock Exchange  
Private Client Group

Now a senior-level banking executive, Brian Lamb, left, and management major Torrell Jackson, right, are two of 15 USF business students who have shadowed alumnus Dennis Zank, one of the program's longest-serving mentors.



## Little Comfort

Feeling stressed? New research suggests you should step away from the ice cream.

**I**F YOU'RE ONE OF THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS who thinks comfort comes with a side of fries, think again.

USF psychology professor David Diamond's research is challenging the notion that comfort foods high in sugar and fat can serve as a stress-reliever. His recent study found that food containing high amounts of carbohydrates, hydrogenated fats and sugar – foods common in the typical American diet – do anything but make you feel calm and happy in the end.

In fact, the typical American diet could be intensifying the anxiety you're feeling.

Diamond's study on rats, recently presented at the annual meeting of The Society for Neuroscience in Chicago, found the diet that produced the least anxiety was based on the Atkins diet, which is a combination of protein and fat, but very low in sugar.

The researchers also found that the American diet group gained significantly more weight than the groups fed the Atkins or control diets, concluding that a low-carb diet not only helps to maintain a lower body weight but also may help to reduce anxiety.

Diamond's study with USF psychology graduate student Shyam Seetharaman was con-

ducted using rats, but correlates well to humans because of physiological similarities between rats and people.

"Both species produce the same stress hormones, and rats, just like people, will eat just about anything," Diamond says.

Diamond is also a career scientist at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, where he has developed a research program designed to help patients who suffer from mood and anxiety disorders. His VA-funded research has led him to focus on diet as a major factor in mental health.

Diamond has previously published work showing that a diet high in fat and sugar, in conjunction with stress, damaged brain cells. Excess blood sugar (hyperglycemia) caused brain damage and impaired memory in rats, he found.

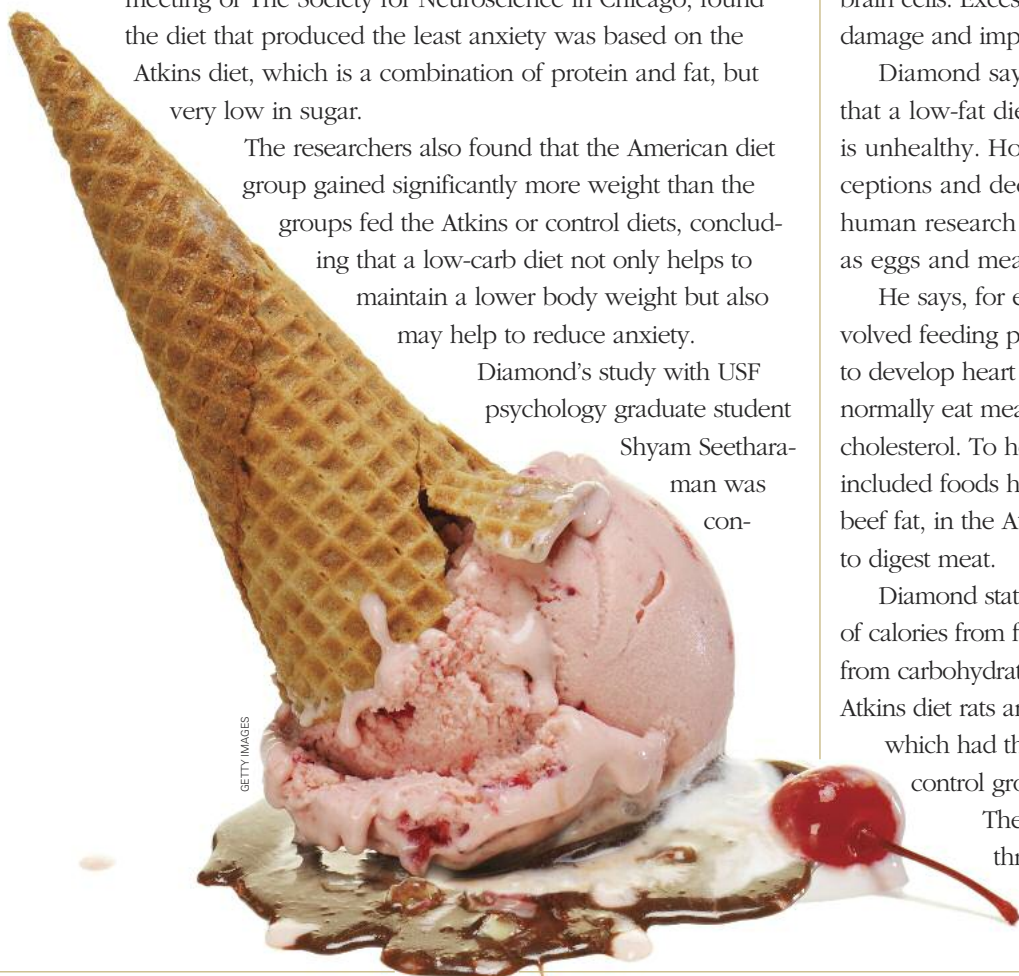
Diamond says that people have the mistaken impression that a low-fat diet is healthy and that the high-fat Atkins diet is unhealthy. However, he emphasizes that "myths, misconceptions and decades of poorly conducted animal and human research have led people to fear healthy food such as eggs and meat."

He says, for example, that much of the animal research involved feeding pure cholesterol to rabbits, which caused them to develop heart disease. The flaw in the study – rabbits don't normally eat meat, so their physiology is not adapted to digest cholesterol. To help eliminate these misconceptions, Diamond included foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol, such as beef fat, in the Atkins diet for his rats, which are well adapted to digest meat.


Diamond states that the ideal diet includes about 70 percent of calories from fat, 20 percent from protein and 10 percent from carbohydrates. He gave this combination of food to the Atkins diet rats and then compared them to a group of rats which had the high-fat, high-sugar American diet and a control group.

Then, Diamond and Seetharaman put the rats through a series of tests that involved placing them in stressful situations, such as putting the rats in the presence of cats.

GETTY IMAGES





A photograph of two men, David Diamond and Shyam Seetharaman, standing in a laboratory setting. They are both wearing white lab coats over their personal clothing. David Diamond, on the left, is a white man with dark hair, smiling slightly. Shyam Seetharaman, on the right, is a man of South Asian descent with dark hair, also smiling. They are positioned in front of a light-colored wall. Shyam's hands are resting on a black piece of equipment that has the 'hamilton kinder' logo on it. The overall tone of the image is professional yet approachable.

David Diamond, left, and Shyam Seetharaman found lower stress levels in rats that were fed a high-fat, low-sugar diet.

“Putting a rat near a cat is a pure psychological stressor since there is no physical contact between the two. This kind of stress is similar to when a person fears he can’t pay his mortgage or will fail an exam, since there’s no physical harm to the person, but there’s a lot of intense anxiety,” Diamond adds. “When we’re stressed-out, we have a natural evolutionary drive to crave high energy and calorie-dense foods which have lots

**“It’s the interactions among stress, excess carbs and a sedentary lifestyle that are the primary contributors to the diseases of modern life.”** - David Diamond

of fat and sugar.” Add that to the stress of daily living, and no wonder we’re a nation seeking comfort in all the wrong places.

But unlike the natural situation in which rats would convert that sugar to quick energy to run away from the cat, the sedentary lives humans lead cause their excess sugar to be converted to fat, which is stored in the body. That’s where Diamond believes the sugar in the diet and excess body fat contribute to chemical reactions in the brain that intensify anxious feelings.

His research has led Diamond to the conclusion that sugar is the real culprit in modern day health problems, increasing stress hormones which then urge the body to convert excess calories to fat, thereby contributing to the recent rise in the incidence of obesity in Americans. Diamond himself adheres to a high fat, low-carb diet – focusing primarily on sources of fat and protein in his diet, such as nuts, eggs, cheese, meat, vegetables, with a little fruit and a hefty daily dose of high-cocoa dark chocolate.

People under stress often turn to alcohol, drugs or ice cream, but it’s better to choose exercise and to cut back on the carbohydrates, Diamond says. And he says he sympathizes with a public continually bombarded with conflicting messages on what to eat and not eat.

“What I am trying to address is the myth that if you have a steak for dinner you’ll be having angioplasty for dessert,” Diamond says. “It’s simply not true that foods high in cholesterol and saturated fat are bad for you. It’s the interactions among stress, excess carbs and a sedentary lifestyle that are the primary contributors to the diseases of modern life.

“People under stress want quick relief, but that relief can be as toxic as the stress itself.”

- Vickie Chachere

# Natural Prescription

Chemistry and medical professors team up to develop medicine for malaria.

**T**HE ANTARCTIC IS LITERALLY THE LAST place anyone might expect to look for a treatment for a tropical disease like malaria, but under a retreating glacier is exactly where USF chemist Bill Baker found a bright red sea sponge that holds the latest hope for a new treatment.

Working in conjunction with tropical disease expert Dennis Kyle in USF's Department of Global Health, Baker tested compounds from the sponge and found them to be active against both malaria and leishmaniasis, a parasitic disease spread by sandflies which causes skin infections. Leishmaniasis is of particular concern to U.S. troops serving in the Middle East, but also is prevalent in places like India, Bangladesh, Brazil and Sudan.

"Natural products are where drug discovery began," says Baker, who has made a dozen trips to Antarctica in search of compounds that can cure diseases, including cancers. "This has been going on for over a century and much of the proverbial low-hanging fruit has been picked. Everything in your backyard has been studied. You have to go out to where the biodiversity is rich."

Their findings on the sponge compounds' effects on leishmaniasis were recently published in the *Journal of Natural Products*, the first study published from the collaboration of the two internationally leading scientists. Of the 70,000 individual organisms extracted from the vast collection of Antarctic and other life Baker and his colleagues will study, Kyle expects at least 50 different novel compounds will be identified as potential disease fighters.

For more than two decades, Baker, who came to USF in 2001, has scoured the world's oceans in search of new organisms that might produce biopharmaceuticals. Kyle arrived at the university in 2006 following his groundbreaking work at the Infectious Disease Research Program at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Their search focuses on the compounds produced in the natural world – the plants, fungi and microbes that may act

Bill Baker (right) and Dennis Kyle work to isolate disease-fighting compounds found within natural resources discovered on Baker's research expeditions to Antarctica.

JOSEPH GAMBLE

against some of the world's most fearsome diseases. Infusing new, faster technology and procedures – such as nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy and mass spectrometry studies – the collaboration holds the promise of tapping the vast and unknown potential of marine environments.

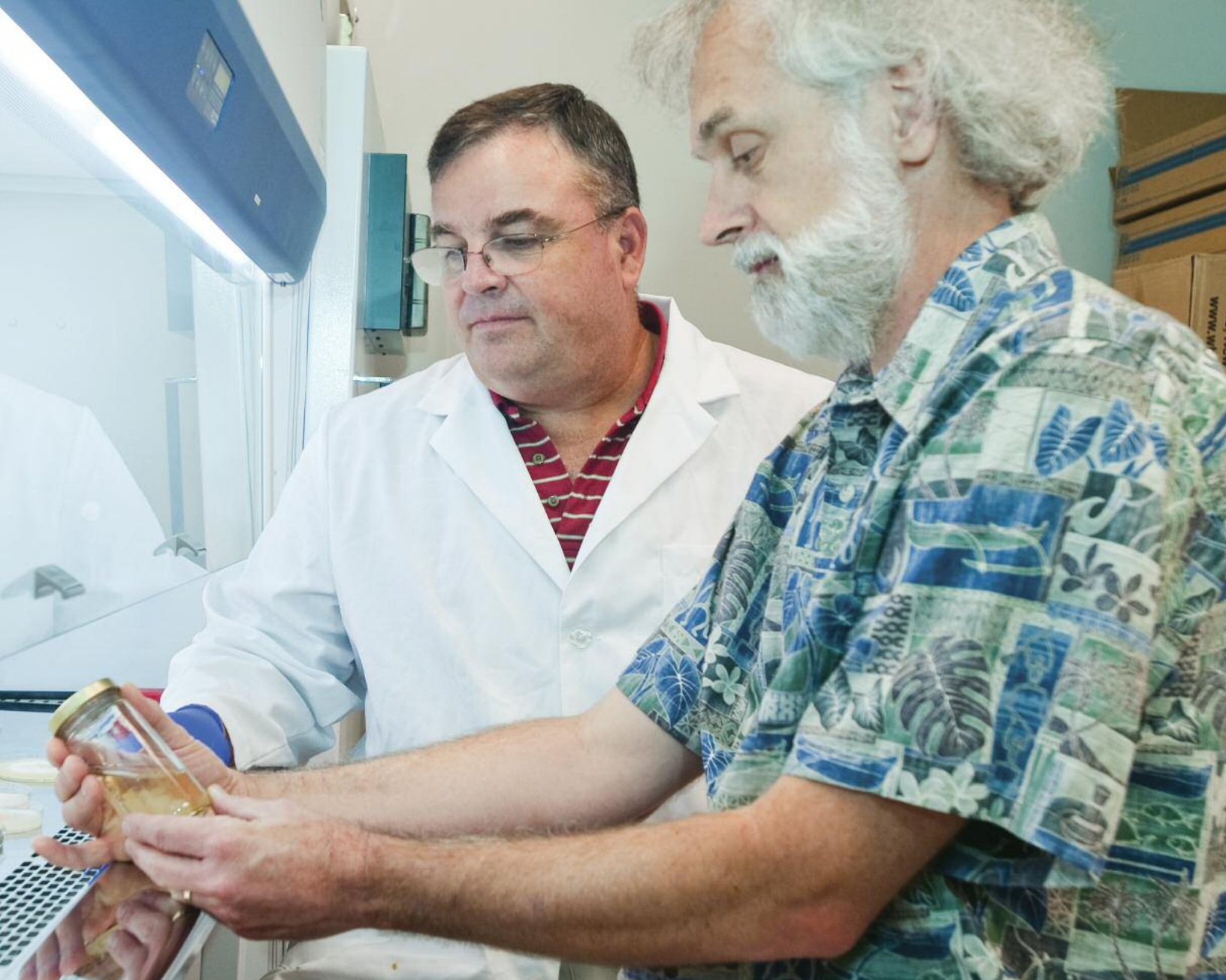
"It's sort of a process where you are searching for a needle in a haystack," Kyle says. "Bill and his students go out and find the part of the haystack that's active."

The discovery of a new compound from the Antarctic comes at a time when scientists are trying to grapple with the problem of drug-resistant parasites. Tropical disease experts are particularly alarmed at growing evidence that the parasite that causes malaria – *Plasmodium falciparum* – is becoming resistant to artemisinin, the most effective drug currently used to combat malaria.

If resistance to artemisinin drugs spreads, it will be a global disaster, Kyle explains.







The benefits of any newly discovered drug are substantial. A child dies of malaria every 30 seconds – and some one million people succumb to the disease each year. Leishmaniasis causes nearly 60,000 deaths each year, leaving those who survive it disfigured or with related health issues.

But if compounds can be gathered from far-flung parts of the world where those parasites would have had no exposure to them and thus no resistance, the opportunities for creating medicines that work more effectively and for longer periods of time increase, Baker and Kyle say.

Scientists are particularly interested in polar compounds since just three percent of the marine natural products have been culled from polar organisms and it remains an untapped source of potential medicines.

In the case of the Crella sponge, the organism was freeze-dried and once back at Baker's laboratory in Tampa underwent a multi-step process to extract its chemistry so it

could be examined, cataloged and then tested against disease in Kyle's lab.

There, human red blood cells infected with parasites that cause malaria and leishmaniasis were treated with the compounds. Five new steroids, called norselic acids, that were isolated from the sponges were found to be active against the parasites.

The next step, Kyle says, is to continue testing the compounds in animal models and continuing to search through the Antarctic collection for more promising chemicals, testing those against the assays in Kyle's lab to see which ones have an effect on disease.

"The nice thing is that it's easy to throw out a lot of it quickly because of the assays we have constructed," Kyle says. "It helps you focus on the ones that have the most potential."

– Vickie Chachere



# *Unstoppable*





## \$600 million fundraising campaign celebrates one of the country's most exciting and engaged universities while building a solid foundation for the future.

BY ANN CARNEY

IT WAS A NIGHT OF POMP AND circumstance. A night to celebrate remarkable accomplishments and academic achievements. A night to acknowledge an unstoppable force.

"Fueled by a can-do attitude and an energetic, entrepreneurial spirit, USF has become not only one of the largest public institutions in the country, but also one of the most important," said USF President Judy Genshaft. "USF is an unstoppable force, producing what our country and the world need."

Speaking before an audience of more than 500 donors, distinguished alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends of the university, along with Campaign Chair Les Muma and USF Foundation CEO Joel Momberg, Genshaft officially launched the public phase of the university's most ambitious, comprehensive campaign ever.

Called *USF: Unstoppable*, the campaign's goal is to raise \$600 million.

"Tonight is a night to celebrate two things: perseverance and promise," said Genshaft. "Our students are solving big problems. Our faculty is changing the world. USF is building the university of the future. We believe our mission to serve the educational, economic and health needs of our community, Florida and the world are too important to be deterred or delayed."

But it will take a significant financial investment, says USF alum and Campaign Chair Les Muma. "The real key to being a successful entrepreneur," he says, "is to invest in great ideas, invest in them early in their development and follow through with them passionately."

Muma, the retired co-chair of Fiserv, Inc. a Fortune 500 financial services company he co-founded, knows all about great ideas. He credits USF with instilling in him the desire to learn and keep on learning. "It is that skill set and the USF-instilled career goal of building something of lasting value that I used to launch my career."



College of the Arts students perform for the crowd at the campaign kickoff.

The campaign, which began its silent phase nearly four years ago, already has surpassed the halfway mark in its fundraising goal with more than \$332 million raised to date. The funds will be used for academic enhancements, capital, faculty, scholarships and priority needs throughout the entire USF System, and will focus on five target areas of the university: students and faculty, interdisciplinary research, global and community solutions, health and athletics.

### Programs that are Changing the World

"The *USF: Unstoppable* campaign represents a tremendous opportunity for people who are positive about the future," says Momberg. "Few investments will yield the kind of payoff guaranteed by the people and programs at USF."

Programs like USF Health's Diabetes Research Program.

The College of Medicine is at the center of the university's ambitious initiative to establish a nationally prominent

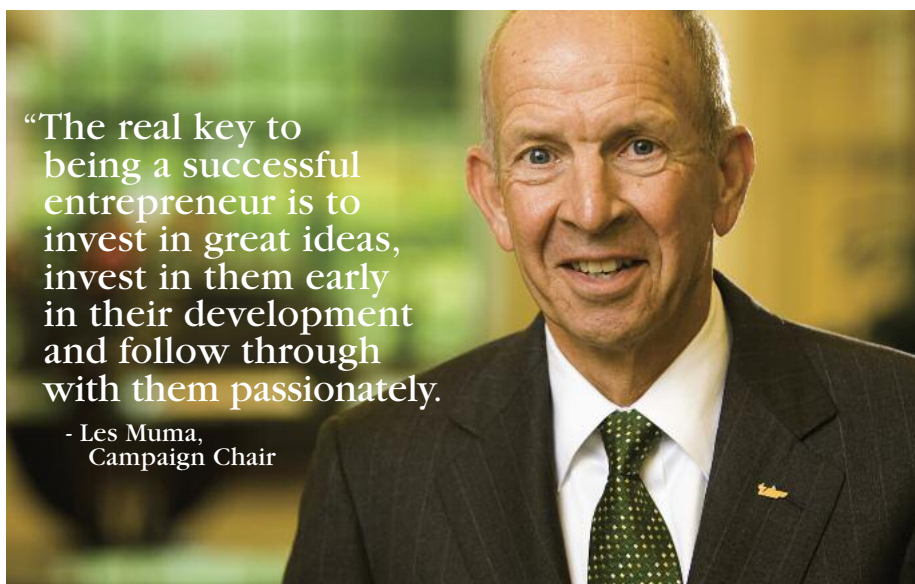
## USF: UNSTOPPABLE

program in diabetes and autoimmune disorders. Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics Dr. Jeffrey Krischer and his team have been using the power of computers to coordinate worldwide studies on the prevention and treatment of type 1 diabetes, one of the world's most devastating childhood illnesses. Virtually every major center conducting type I diabetes research today is linked to USF's Pediatric Epidemiology Center.

Established in 1965 as the USF Medical Center, the College of Medicine today encompasses the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health. Known collectively as USF Health, the enterprise is dedicated to providing care and wellness solutions globally and locally – solutions like one-stop health care at the Carol and Frank Morsoni Center for Advanced Healthcare; world-renowned leadership in malaria research; electronic medical records management; and innovative educational models that are transforming nursing education and patient care.

### Students and Faculty: An Unstoppable Force

While programs across the entire USF system are creating leadership



models for higher learning, it is the university's students and faculty who are making a difference around the world.

Students like the civil and environmental engineering graduate students studying with professor of engineering James Milhelcic. These students are blending their knowledge and desire to serve to address real-world problems far from home. In addition to taking classes at USF, Milhelcic's students spend two years in the Peace Corps solving engineering problems for communities in the third world and conducting research projects. Upon their

return, students publish the results of their projects and emerge as engineers who can effect positive change (see story page 32).

Effecting positive change is the goal behind the Undergraduate Global Research Scholars Program in the Dr. Kiran C. Patel Center for Global Solutions. The program's scholars have worked to address freshwater problems in the Monteverde Zone in Costa Rica, researched the impact of development along the Pacific Coast of Mexico and assessed water needs in Miches, Dominican Republic.





Closer to home, an internationally recognized team of USF physicists, polymers scientists, engineers and chemists are working together to harness the power of metal-organic materials. Their research could lead to ground-breaking applications for energy, health and the environment.

And, researchers in the Childhood Obesity Research Center at USF, a joint program between the Colleges of Education and Public Health, are testing ways to promote activity among 8- to 10-year-old children. They are part of a community-based initiative to reduce childhood obesity by making exercise fun and appealing.

### Excellence on the Field

Challenging the odds is nothing new for the more than 460 student-athletes competing on 19 Bulls teams. In just four decades, the Bulls moved from the fields and courts of an intramural program to the highest levels of NCAA competition. In the 2008/09 season alone, the Bulls won three Big East championships, as well as the prestigious Women's National Invitation Tournament. Bulls football, a program that started in a double-wide trailer a little more than a decade ago, is today

consistently ranked in the Top 25.

### Celebrating Success

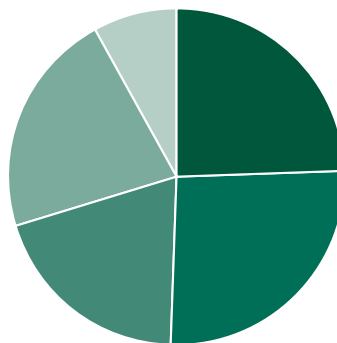
Twenty-two booths highlighting some of the university's most impressive academic programs lined the Marshall Student Center for the green and gold system-wide kickoff event in October – an event that spoke to many of the university's remarkable accomplishments.

In just five short decades, the university – which originally opened its doors to serve a regional population – has accomplished feats few would have believed possible.

Today, the USF System, one of the largest public institutions in the country, educates more than 47,000 students at two separately accredited institutions and two regional campuses.

It has been designated among the nation's fastest-growing research university by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and among the nation's top 20 "Up and Coming Universities" by *U.S. News & World Report*.

"We are working on solutions to



USF: Unstoppable Priorities

Academic Enhancements	\$147,200,000
Capital	\$157,500,000
Faculty	\$118,000,000
Scholarships	\$129,950,000
Miscellaneous	\$ 47,350,000
Total:	\$600,000,000

big problems," says Momberg.

And that's a fact that hasn't gone unnoticed. USF today is one of only three Florida public universities classified by the Carnegie Foundation in the

top tier of research universities, and the only public university in Florida classified as "Community Engaged" by the foundation.

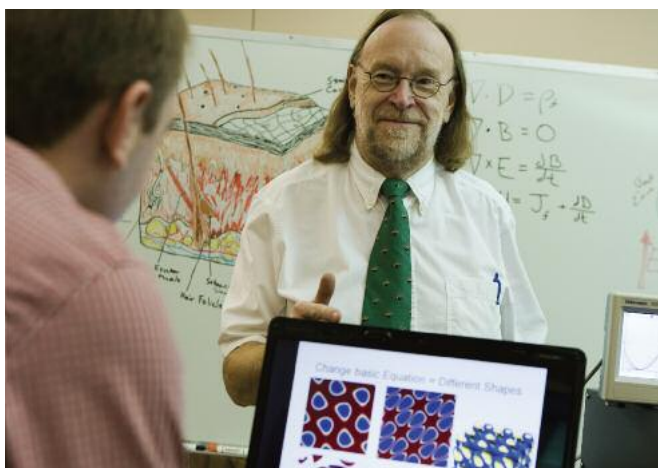
### Building on the Momentum

Substantial private support, gifts large and small, will allow the university's unstoppable spirit to continue to dream big – to strengthen the academic experience, enhance facilities and support faculty and students.

To continue its meteoric trajectory.

"USF: Unstoppable is more than a campaign slogan," says Muma. "USF: Unstoppable is an apt description of who we are, what we are made of, and where we are going." ■

To learn more about USF: Unstoppable or to make a gift, visit [www.unstoppable.usf.edu](http://www.unstoppable.usf.edu)







Jerry Rawicki shares memories of his experiences during the Holocaust with graduate students in Carolyn Ellis's Communicating Illness, Grief and Loss class.





# In Their Own Words

**Helping to preserve the stories of local Holocaust survivors, a communication professor and her students use innovative and therapeutic approaches to document oral histories.**

BY MARY BETH ERSKINE

**W**HITE-HAIRED, BESPECTACLED and seeming somewhat expectant, the 83-year-old gentleman sits at the end of a long conference table in a classroom in USF's Communications & Information Science building. Eyes around the table glance at him, a sense of apprehension in the air. The soft banter subsides. Carolyn Ellis's graduate course, Communicating Illness, Grief and Loss, begins.

"I am not used to the role of a celebrity," Jerry Rawicki says slowly in an accent that denotes eastern European origins. "The story I am here to share is one of carnage and deprivation. Yet, it is not mine alone. In some way, it is the story of every Holocaust survivor."

It was the summer of 1939, and Rawicki was a Jewish boy living in Plock, Poland when the roar of German planes would signal the end of the life he had known for 12 years. The Holocaust would take the lives of his mother, father and a sister, leaving him with haunting memories of death and brutality in the Warsaw Ghetto.

As he speaks, exposing both his vulnerability and his memories, Rawicki pauses for composure. Eyes around the table divert downward respectfully, some glistening with tears, giving him his moment. As difficult as his words are to hear, it is abundantly clear that this is a privileged encounter with one who has survived some of humanity's darkest days.



JOSEPH GAMBLE/AMEE BLOOGETT/DAVID FINK

## Historic Opportunity

**USF professor Carolyn Ellis provided a unique opportunity for students including Kristen Blinne, Chris Patti and Brandon Conrad to collect and preserve the stories of local Holocaust survivors.**

**“W**E CAN NEVER CAPTURE their stories fully, but we can always capture more,” says Chris Patti, a doctoral communication student in Carolyn Ellis’s class who took part in the Holocaust survivor testimony project.

As a member of one of three teams in the class, Patti worked with students Kristen Blinne and Brandon Conrad to document the stories of two survivors, Nathan Snyder of St. Petersburg Beach and Dr. John Rinde of Largo.

Patti’s job on the team was to conduct the actual interviews with the survivors including a pre-interview session. While “honored and humbled to have this opportunity,” he says the most difficult part for him was the sense of responsibility he felt as an oral historian to do the best job that he could. “How do you ever really understand and represent someone else’s experiences?” he ques-

tions. “It was a tremendous responsibility.” Yet, he feels that by continuing to employ innovative, interactive and collaborative interviewing techniques, he is moving slightly closer to accomplishing that.

“The course changed the way I view qualitative research methodology,” says Blinne, also a doctoral communication student, whose role on the team was to transcribe the interview tapes. “It showed me that we, as researchers, can step both into and out of our roles to create greater compassion and presence with those with whom we collaborate.”

The third member of the team, Conrad, a master’s student in communication, was responsible for editing the transcription into a finished product. He, too, believes in the therapeutic value of his professor’s innovative approach to Holocaust testimony and hopes that “in a way, the process of sharing their stories is a somewhat cathartic act.”



Rawicki is one of the few remaining – a living witness to the Holocaust. With the youngest survivors now in their seventies, time is of the essence to document their lives and memories.

“These firsthand stories must be recorded to honor the survivors and the memories of the victims so that no revisionists can argue against the Holocaust, and to make sure that future generations know that this truly happened,” says Carolyn Bass, executive director of the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg, Fla.

While the museum’s library has one of the largest Holocaust collections in the Southeast and has been preserving the histories of Holocaust survivors for decades, it does not have the staff to interview the survivors living in the Tampa Bay area who long to have their stories preserved before they die.

That need led USF Trustee Debbie Sembler, who is active with the Florida Holocaust Museum, to initiate a collaboration between the university and the museum focused on collecting and preserving the testimonies of local survivors. When the opportunity to become involved was proposed

to USF Professor of Communication and Sociology Carolyn Ellis, she wasted no time. An internationally recognized ethnographer who studies and records human cultures, sociologist, and communication scholar, Ellis has a longstanding interest in personal narratives of loss, trauma and emotionality in communication.

She connected with USF Tampa Library’s Director of

**“It is our responsibility as a civilized culture to preserve testimonies of these atrocious events and how people have coped and lived.” - Carolyn Ellis**

Special and Digital Collections Mark Greenberg. The USF Libraries, Greenberg explains, have a two-year-old affiliation with the Florida Holocaust Museum on several initiatives including one to integrate the museum’s library into USF.

Since the library already had experience documenting more than 500 unique oral histories for its collection,

**Doctoral student Chris Patti interviews Nathan Snyder, a Holocaust survivor, using a conversational approach to help trigger new memories and insight.**





The Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center's collection includes a Star of David bearing the word Jood (Jew in Dutch) printed in Hebrew style. Also included in the collection is a copy of *Brycha*, published between 1945 and 1948, which depicts the fate of European Jewry through photographs and text.

Greenberg said the staff could provide the technical services and logistical support for the interviews. Once completed, the digitized and preserved histories could be added as a permanent and publicly accessible part of both USF's and the museum's collections. The Holocaust survivor testimonies, he said, would additionally enrich the work of the libraries' Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center – an interdisciplinary center founded last year to unify USF's wide-ranging genocide studies initiatives.

With library staff providing the videotaping expertise, Ellis began interviewing survivors last summer including Rawicki. She then extended the opportunity to graduate students in her Communicating Illness, Grief and Loss class, making the Holocaust the focus for the fall semester.

"It is our responsibility as a civilized culture to preserve

testimonies of these atrocious events and how people have coped and lived," says Ellis. "Working with the USF Libraries Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center and the Florida Holocaust Museum to interview survivors of the Holocaust and hear and record their testimonies for future generations presented a unique opportunity for students to try and understand grief and loss as emotions we all experience, as well as to learn how to create oral histories."

To accomplish the task, Ellis grouped the class into three-person teams. After thorough research and preparation, including careful examination of sample interviews preserved in the Shoah Institute's world-renowned archive, each team was paired up with two survivors. One student would conduct the interviews; another, transcribe the audio tapes; and a third, edit the final transcriptions.



## Exposing Genocide

**T**O UNIFY AND SUPPORT USF's wide-ranging genocide studies initiatives, USF Libraries created a global, interdisciplinary center in 2008, the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center. The center supports the efforts of nearly 100 USF faculty spanning 36 academic units who are engaged in research and initiatives that contribute to understanding and preventing genocide. The center creates new opportunities for students, professors and researchers to contribute to global education and action and reaches out internationally to form partnerships that include the Florida Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, and the UK-based organizations Waging Peace and Network for Africa.

The Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center features a growing special collection of rare books, manuscripts, photographic evidence, realia, and other documents relating to the Holocaust and worldwide issues of genocide.

There would be some differences, however, between the way Ellis and the students would conduct their oral histories and the way those contained in archives such as the Shoah Institute were done.

With the traditional approach to oral histories, Ellis explains, the interviewer stays apart from the story following a formally structured protocol. "In this context, where organized testimony conforms to criteria established by archivists and historians, the survivor anticipates what the interviewer wants to hear, and the listener has certain expectations about what will be said. Therefore, the unspeakable remains unspeakable and the silenced remains unvoiced."

Ellis says that while the conventional approach has produced valuable and riveting archives of testimony, "I believe we owe it to ourselves and to the survivors to seek

additional ways of capturing their stories."

Ellis and her students have begun to use what she calls "interactive interviewing," a technique that allows for more natural dialogue between the survivor and the interviewer. "We started to move away from the traditional interview style where the interviewer's role is to guide the story chronologically and toward viewing the interview more as a conversation," she says. "The more intimate and comfortable context of conversation triggers memories that may not have been told before," says Ellis.

In addition to eliciting new information and insight, this approach adds what Ellis believes is a crucial dimension to the interview process.

"While research for the accumulation of knowledge is important, it doesn't need to be the only goal. I believe what we do as researchers should be helpful and therapeutic. After the interview process, the survivor should feel better in some way, if only in the sense that they have communicated their story well and in the hope that their story will live on."

In the future, Ellis plans to expand upon this innovative process by collaboratively producing stories and analyses with survivors and publishing unique chapters in a book they will co-edit.

Greenberg calls the classroom initiative brilliant. "The fact that this is not a history class, nor is it a Jewish studies class, but it's communication students learning how to help people who have experienced trauma, makes this effort so much more than solely preserving the past, as important as that is. It makes the entire effort more proactive with the purpose of putting an end to genocide."

And that's exactly what survivors like Rawicki hope for.

"I would like my contribution to be that the Holocaust is learned from and remembered," Rawicki says, "and put to use in pragmatic ways to make life on earth safer for everyone." ■

# WORLDLY WISE

BY VICKIE CHACHERE

**U**SF GRADUATE STUDENT Kevin Orner's classroom is a village in the hills of Panama, where he lives in a simple house with a dirt floor, no electricity and a bucket for a shower. His teachers speak Spanish and the indigenous language Ngabere.

Every day, he wakes up at dawn from his bed of bamboo rods with a simple sleeping pad on top, and then spends the rest of the day teaching those in the small village how to build safer, cleaner water and sanitation systems. For good measure, he throws in an English lesson.

In exchange, the villagers tell him the stories that have been passed down for generations, and in the evening their children teach him traditional dances. His village is so remote there aren't any maps of it, so Orner has drawn some based on how the residents describe their surroundings, which in addition to helping him navigate his way, helps him understand how they see their own community.

## USF MASTER'S STUDENTS COMBINE TECHNICAL SKILLS WITH GLOBAL VISION IN PEACE CORPS PROGRAM.

He is living the typical life of a Peace Corps volunteer, and for the next two years will work with the people of Comarca Ngöbe Bule, a large area set aside for two of Panama's indigenous groups. And while Orner is helping improve the health of the village, he'll also be earning his master's degree at USF – some 1,300 miles away – through the Master's International Peace Corps program.

Orner is one of 17 USF graduate students whose service in the Peace Corps will be part of their master's degree in civil and environmental engineering. Seven are on campus waiting for overseas placement, two are in Uganda, two in Mali, two in Panama, two in Mexico, and one each in Zambia and the Dominican Republic.





Kevin Orner

Panama, Central America  
Environmental Health Volunteer



Wednesday, December 9, 2009

### Second Month on Site

**Life on Site:** Here are some tidbits that may give you a better idea of what I've been up to lately.

#### Community Activities

**House Visits** – Drew maps of current water taps and latrines.

**English Class** – I'm teaching a class of about 20 students of mixed ages once a week. Topics this week included contractions, what is this?, and the numbers 1-10.

**Church** – I've attended church Saturdays between 9 and 12 in the morning. They've even asked me to help lead Bible study and sing in a quartet!

**Community Analysis** – I've helped lead activities like gathering census data, writing down their community history and stories, community maps, and daily schedules.

**Work Days** – I helped clean the cemetery before their Memorial Day and also helped clean the aqueduct line with my good ole machete. They've told me that nothing is safe when a machete is in my hands, as I accidentally chopped down a neighbor's bean plant.

**Settlers of Catan** – You read this right. I taught my counterpart how to play, so next is getting a full group of 4 to play.

**Dominoes** – My community gathers at my host family's house to play dominoes a couple times a week. They better look out – I'm beginning to catch on to the strategies.

*Story and photos excerpted from Kevin Orner's blog. Read more at <http://kevinpanama.blogspot.com>*



**USF's Master's International Peace Corps program has eight students in the field for the next two years. In addition to Kevin Orner and Colleen Naughton, these are the students and a glimpse of their stories:**

**JONATHAN BLANCHARD** (Uganda) earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he served as project co-manager overseeing the design and implementation of the first phase of a wastewater disposal project in El Salvador and a water supply system in Ecuador. He hopes his graduate work at USF will prepare him to work with developing communities around the world.

**JOSHUA GIRARD** (Zambia) earned a bachelor's in mechanical engineering, a master's in environmental engineering and a graduate certificate in sustainability at Boston University (BU). Studying at BU brought new perspectives and the opportunity to study abroad in Germany. He joined USF's Master's International program to combine his interest in the Peace Corps with his pursuit of engineering as a profession.

**KAITLIN GREEN** (Panama) earned bachelor's and master's degrees in environmental engineering at the University of Delaware. A study abroad quest through Australia opened her eyes to world travel and led her to USF's Master's International program to put her engineering education to global use.

**JUSTIN MEEKS** (Mali) earned a bachelor's in civil engineering at Gonzaga University after growing up near Glacier National Park in Montana. His love of nature inspired him to become a civil and environmental engineer and he hopes to focus on conservation and sustainability in the developing world.

**DUNCAN PEABODY** (Dominican Republic) earned bachelor's degrees in physics and Spanish at Lake Forest College in Illinois. During a break from college, he traveled to Costa Rica and El Salvador which inspired his interest in the Peace Corps. Debating whether to join the Peace Corps or attend graduate school, he found the perfect compromise at USF.

**STEVEN WORRELL** (Uganda) earned a bachelor's in civil engineering at Duke University, where he focused on environmental engineering. He hopes his time in the Peace Corps will help guide future work and its impact on the developing world.

The program takes students about 3½ years, one year on campus and two years serving in the Peace Corps. The remaining time is spent completing a master's thesis based on their experiences.

It's a program that came to USF 18 months ago with James Mihelcic, a professor of civil and environmental engineering and one of USF's State of Florida 21st Century World Class Scholars. Mihelcic founded the nation's first Master's International program in civil and environmental engineering in 1997 at Michigan Technological University. The engineering program joined a Master's International program in global health.

For Orner, the decision to join the Peace Corps while pursuing a master's degree was a natural fit. The Minnesota native became interested in helping people in the developing world after joining a friend on a week-long project in El Salvador.

Sitting in a café on the USF campus just weeks before leaving for the Peace Corps – while his contemporaries were planning the starts of new careers, buying first cars and getting new apartments – Orner explained the different path he was about to take to rural Central Panama.

"There are definitely sacrifices, but I feel it's worth the sacrifice for me," he said. "I don't want to have a job that pays a lot of money and not feel I did everything I could to help people.

"I guess my priorities are different."

**W**hen Jim Mihelcic graduated with his degree in environmental engineering in 1981, he and his best friend had a plan to join the Peace Corps. Mihelcic's father, a businessman, disagreed that spending several years in the remote parts of the world building latrines and water systems was the best path for his son.

For a young man whose interest in the health of the planet began when he joined Save the Whales in seventh grade, the decision not to go was a defining one.

Mihelcic went on to distinguish himself academically, earning a master's and a PhD in civil engineering from Carnegie Mellon University, and honing his interests in green engineering, sustainable development and global issues related to water, sanitation and health. The lead author of three engineering text books, Mihelcic's latest book, *Field Guide in Environmental Engineering for Development Workers: Water, Sanitation, Indoor Air*, includes a forward written by former President Jimmy Carter.





**Jim Mihelcic (right) brought the Master's International program in civil and environmental engineering to USF 18 months ago. Student Justin Meeks (left) is currently serving with the Peace Corps in Mali.**

"I am what they call a Peace Corps wanna-be," Mihelcic now jokes after having shepherded more than 50 graduate students through their field work and hundreds more undergraduates through programs such as International Capstone Design and Engineers Without Borders – programs that allow students brief trips overseas to work on small projects in developing nations.

"But for an engineer, it's important for them to understand that technology doesn't work unless you consider the human impact," he says.

As a professor, Mihelcic gives the students the engineering know-how to serve the small villages and towns where they will be placed, most often to help communities build non-polluting latrines and digging wells, simple hand-wash-

ing stations and water systems that allow them to access clean water from mountain springs. The idea, though, is much bigger than the projects the students build – it's about using their talents to affect the world around them, allowing people in impoverished parts of the world to build healthy, thriving and sustainable communities.

It is not just about doing the right thing, Mihelcic says, it's about doing the right thing, the right way.

"I have people say what we are doing is revolutionary," he says. "When we set up the program, I didn't really know what I was doing. All these students jumped into the abyss with me. Maybe by the time I retire this will be the way that engineering education will have become."

As their teacher, Mihelcic also guides them through the difficult aspects of years devoted to such a project. Peace Corps life can be lonely and the cultural differences between American students and the people they seek to help can be

## Colleen Naughton

### Mali, West Africa

Water and Sanitation Extension Agent



### December 2009

December 7th-20th was spent in training but this time a lot more technical and not much language training. I got to go down a well, down a latrine, help construct a latrine slab, help with top well repair in a nearby village, disassemble an India-Mali pump, learn about rope-and-knot pumps, and built half of a mini-cistern. Altogether very hands-on and useful.

Other training focused on HIV/AIDs education, project design and management, radio, urine fertilization, and Incoming Generating Activities (IGAS) – learned to make natural mosquito repellent, soap, mango driers, and mud fabric. Overall, I think training went really well but I am a PC dork so my opinions are biased. It was quite overwhelming with all the project opportunities and that our "real" work will be starting soon. However, our "stage"/new PCVs felt closer. I still had my dugutigi duties and we got some pretty awesome shirts made.

We also had a holiday party complete with paper snowflakes, a white elephant gift exchange, Home Alone, and hot chocolate and mini marshmallows courtesy of my mom, aunts, and nana ... I made about 25 friendship bracelets the colors of the Malian and American flags and gave them to the volunteers in my region (Koulikoro) and sector (WATSAN) as Christmas presents and they were a pretty big hit. If I get more colors I will make them for all of our stage. I am wearing one as an anklet and apparently that is a foreign concept to Malians and they keep asking why it isn't on my wrist.

*Story and photos excerpted from Colleen Naughton's blog. Read more at <http://colleeninmali.blogspot.com>*






vast. Mihelcic has been known to trek to remote locations to visit his students and his wife Karen spends hours writing letters and e-mails to them. Upon their return, he happily debriefs them and revels in their stories over big family dinners at his home.

The payoff comes in a cadre of new engineers who are technically strong, globally-engaged and service-oriented. Upon returning to the United States, many of Mihelcic's students have gone on to important positions uniting their engineering expertise with crucial public issues. One graduate is now working on the restoration of the Florida Everglades while another works for the U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology.

"I am just very proud of them as a teacher," Mihelcic said. "For my wife and me, they are obviously like our family. I am their cheerleader and I am their research advisor and I am their friend. I feel like they have done a lot more than I would have ever done as a singular person making a mark on the world."

ali is one of the poorest nations on Earth, and a place where the risk of infection from water and food-borne diseases is very high. Less than half the population can read and write, but it's now USF graduate student Colleen Naughton's job to teach the importance of proper sanitation procedures.

Sworn in as a Peace Corps volunteer in September, Naughton started her work by conducting hand-washing sessions at a village school and then teaching the villagers how to filter and treat water. Naughton tries her best to be sensitive as she lets the local residents know they are supposed to wash their hands and take sanitary precautions, even though they aren't accustomed to it. She tries to be gentle in her approach, hoping that over time they will become more comfortable with her and open to her instruction.

In between lessons, building soak pits (which allow villagers to direct dirty water from their home away from central courtyards where it will fester) and language instruction, Naughton lives the life of a typical villager. She spends hours shelling beans, corn and peanuts and carries water from a communal well in a bucket balanced on her head. "Luckily

the well is only a block away but it has earned me some brownie points," she notes in an entry in a blog she adds to every month when she gets a chance to travel to the nearest town with Internet access.

Other days are spent on more somber duty, she adds, attending one of the many funerals that occur in the village where, on a daily basis, she sees how sickness devastates families.

Before she began her tenure in the Peace Corps, Naughton didn't know she would be headed to Mali. But she had wanted to go to sub-Saharan Africa after a volunteer experience in Ghana in 2007 made her aware of the problems and potential of the region. Contemplating law school at the time, she soon found that Mihelcic's Master's International Peace Corps program was the natural fit; she was one of more than a dozen students who followed him from Michigan to Florida.

"It made me realize that there really are two worlds; it opened up my eyes," Naughton said in an interview before she departed for Peace Corps training. "I really want to be able to solve problems. I really want to build things that do that."

"It's the people. They do so much with so little and they are not resentful. I want to help them have a better life."

The first months of her experience held true to her expectations. She writes in her blog of dodging bats in her host family's home, of experiencing traditional ceremonies and of harvesting peanuts in a local field. An avid runner, she tells of the lush, green beauty of the rice paddies she sees on her daily trek.

She is growing close to those she meets, handing out small gifts of softballs, miniature Frisbees, and picture books from Michigan with its visions of pumpkin patches and snowfalls. And even though it is considered inappropriate in Mali to express emotion by crying, Naughton writes that women in a family she stayed with briefly shed tears when it was time for her to go.

It is not an experience for every student, but it's the beginning of the life this 23-year-old wants.

"I think it's just naturally what I want to do," Naughton says. "If I didn't, I would regret it. It's who I am." ■

## Learning on the Go

USF Athletics teams up with Apple Inc. to create anywhere, anytime learning environment for student-athletes.

**U**SF STUDENT-ATHLETES CAN NOW WORK on course assignments and view academic materials at any time and anywhere thanks to a unique educational partnership between USF and Apple Inc.

Under the new program, all USF student-athletes will have access to a MacBook Pro 13-inch notebook computer every semester – a computer that will allow them to keep up with their assignments and coursework while on the road.

With the new initiative in place, USF becomes the only university in the country where all student-athletes in NCAA sports have access to Apple laptop computers.

It's a game-changing initiative.

"Our goal was to create an anywhere, anytime learning environment for each of our student-athletes," says USF Director of Athletics Doug Woolard. "Apple's MacBook Pro will assist in providing comprehensive academic support services while accommodating the demanding practice and travel schedules of our student-athletes.

Our traveling teams will now be connected to classes, academic advisors and tutors anywhere in America – or for that matter, the entire world."

As part of the program, USF will be adding



new lectures to iTunes U, an area of the iTunes Store dedicated to educational material.

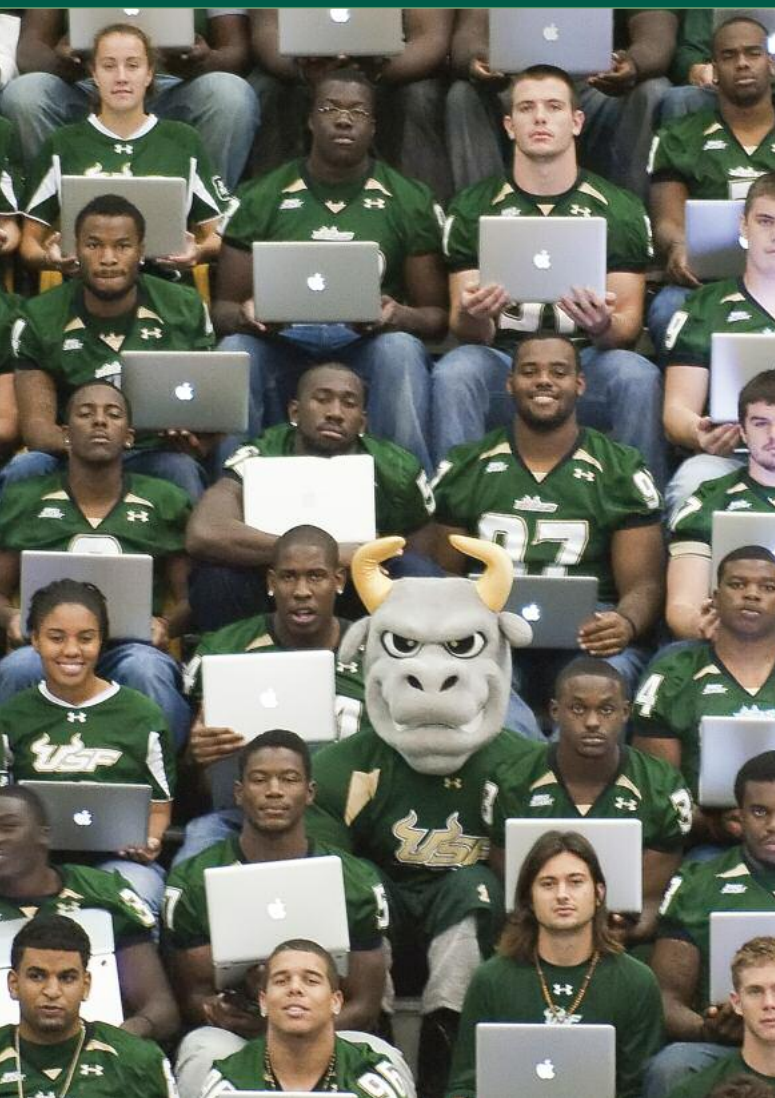
The new program will benefit more than 460 student-athletes enrolled in more than 2,400 different courses each semester according to USF President Judy Genshaft.

The MacBook Pro features a durable aluminum unibody design, perfect for life on the road. Apple's innovative, built-in battery delivers up to seven hours on a charge.

iLife '09, featuring iPhoto for managing photos, iMovie for making movies and GarageBand for creating and learning to play music, comes on every MacBook Pro.







## Welcome Coach

**A** NEW ERA FOR USF FOOTBALL got under way in January with the hiring of Skip Holtz as the program's head coach.

Just the second head coach in the program's 13-year history, Holtz comes to USF after five seasons at East Carolina and riding a streak of back-to-back Conference USA championships. He is one of just four coaches nationally to lead his teams to league titles each of the last two seasons.

Just days after his appointment, Holtz added five assistants to his coaching staff, including two assistant coaches who have been part of national championship staffs during the last decade, and one with professional championships under his belt.

Holtz, 45, is the son of former Notre Dame and South Carolina Coach Lou Holtz. Prior to being named East Carolina's head football coach, he spent six seasons at South Carolina as assistant head coach and quarterbacks coach, and five years as head coach at the University of Connecticut.

**Under the new program, more than 460 student-athletes enrolled in more than 2,400 different courses each semester now have access to a MacBook Pro 13-inch notebook computer.**

All Macs also run Mac OS X Snow Leopard, which includes iChat, allowing USF athletes to connect with tutors, academic advisors, academic coaches and fellow students regarding coursework.

Pursuant to NCAA rules, the notebook computers will remain the property of USF and will be checked out from and returned to the Athletics Department by student-athletes at the start and conclusion of each semester. Further, in accordance with NCAA rules, student-athletes are precluded from endorsing, recommending or promoting the sale or use of Apple products or services.

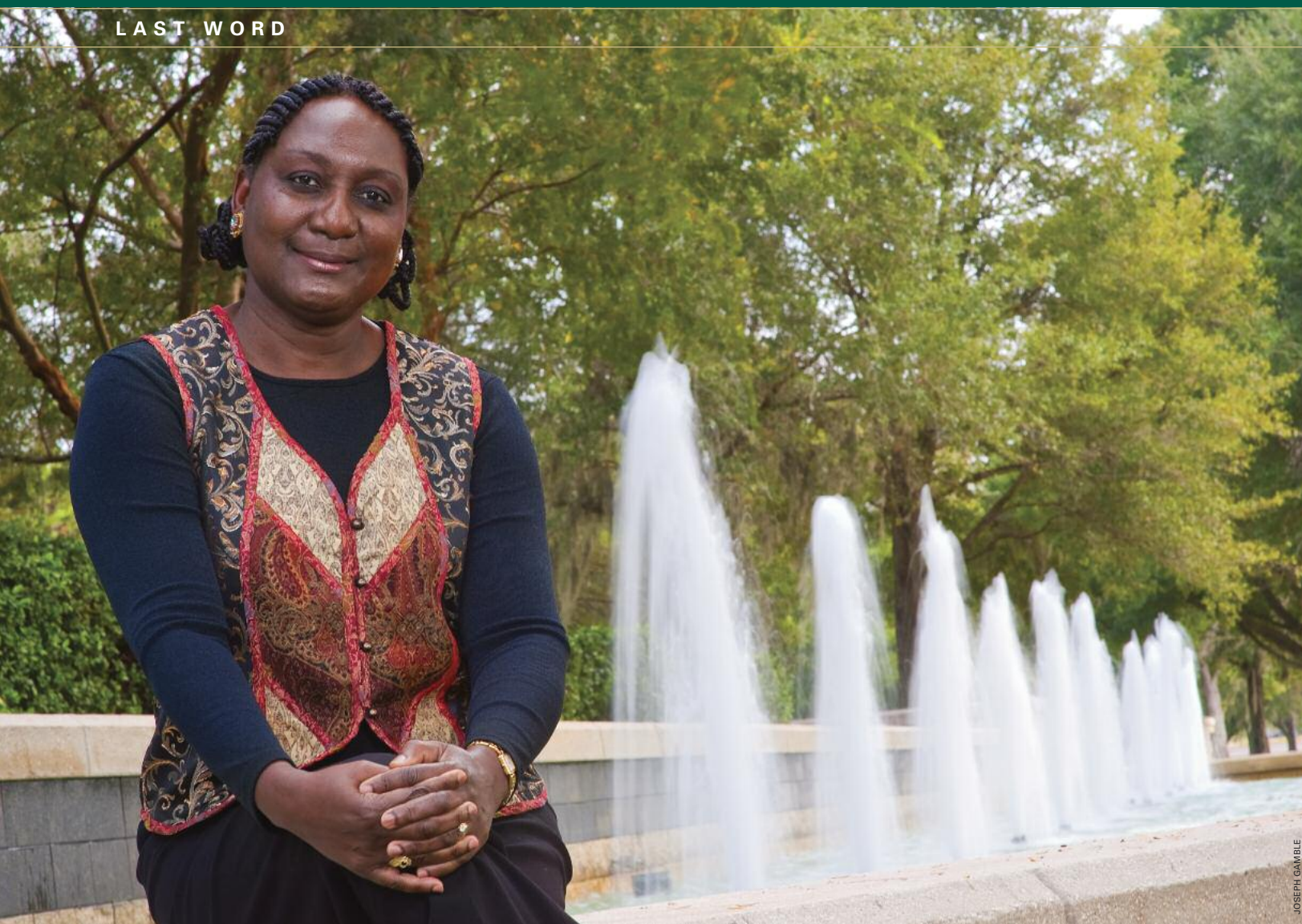
The initiative was made possible by an allocation from the NCAA Academic Enhancement Fund, private funds raised from the Bulls Club annual auction and a grant from the Verizon Foundation.

— Ann Carney



PHOTOS: JOSEPH GAMBLE





JOSEPH GAMBLE

## Fenda Akiwumi

**“Water is life,” says Fenda Akiwumi. But for Akiwumi, it is also her life’s work.**

**F**IFTEEN YEARS AGO at a UNESCO IHP (International Hydrological Programme) Conference in Germany on “Water Resource Planning in a Changing World,” Fenda Akiwumi, assistant professor in USF’s Department of Geography, presented a paper that took her fellow hydrogeologists, scientists and engineers from around the globe by surprise.

A geography and geology instructor

at the time at Texas State University, she had spent 14 years as a hydrogeologist in Sierra Leone travelling throughout the rural countryside. And even for someone who had spent her high school years in the African nation, observing the lives of the indigenous people in these areas was an eye-opening experience.

“I learned first-hand why many times water projects fail,” she says. “Differences in ‘water culture.’”

Akiwumi’s paper at that 1994 UN-

ESCO conference, “Humanistic Perspectives on Developing Sustainable Water Resources in an African Nation,” concluded that indigenous people’s perspective on water use and management contrasts with modern Western approaches. Conflict between the two styles of management limits community participation and, therefore, effective development of the resource.

While what Akiwumi presented was, indeed, a fresh perspective, she says what caused such a stir was the fact that she was a hydrogeologist focused on groundwater and its movement.

Nonetheless Akiwumi, who joined



USF in 2006, ignited a spark that day – a spark that has grown into a major effort to bring cultural diversity into mainstream water resources management to ensure the sustainability of both water and cultures.

**USF:** What was so surprising about the paper you presented at that 1994 UNESCO conference?

**Akiwumi:** The fact that I was a scientist suggesting that water resource management issues are as much cultural as they are technical. That's a perspective an anthropologist would take.

**USF:** How did you as a scientist arrive at that conclusion?

**Akiwumi:** First-hand experience. I saw that in traditional settings, water has major spiritual and social dimensions. A river might be a sacred site where rituals have taken place for generations. Or it might be a social setting for women. Modern Western approaches view water as an economic good. A hydrogeologist determines the best place for a well based on scientific and engineering reasons, but in reality, that might not be the best place at all for the people.

**USF:** How can this challenge be managed?

**Akiwumi:** Projects need to adopt a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary approach. Water scientists need to broaden their knowledge base to encompass a variety of relevant disciplines such as history, sociology and anthropology. And the views of indigenous people must be balanced with the methodologies based on modern development techniques.

**USF:** How have you remained involved

## Quick Takes

**Favorite book:** *Of Water and the Spirit* by Malidoma Patrice Somé.

**Hero:** My mother.

**Best place on earth:** The beach. I'm a sun, sand and sea person.

**Rain or sunshine:** Depends on my mood.

**Indoors or Out:** Out.

**Something surprising about you:** I'm not a very good swimmer.

in the issue?

**Akiwumi:** I was named the inaugural chair for UNESCO's expert advisory group on "Water and Cultural Diversity." We're working on a book project and have launched a database and Community of Practice on the subject. A paper I presented at an international symposium last year in Kyoto on integrating cultural diversity into the Sierra Leone water sector will be my contribution to the book project.

**USF:** What other research are you doing?

**Akiwumi:** I'm co-PI on an interdisciplinary National Science Foundation grant project that is investigating urban development, power relations and water redistribution as drivers of wetland change in the Tampa Bay urban ecosystem. I continue to do research in Sierra Leone on environmental deterioration and sustainable livelihoods of women in mining areas. And in Guyana, I'm working on mercury risk perception and artisanal gold mining, as well as mercury risk and

fishing in Tampa Bay. All these projects relate to water in one way or another.

**USF:** What courses do you teach at USF?

**Akiwumi:** A graduate seminar in global sustainable development. World Regional Geography to undergrads. My favorite class is Global Conservation because I integrate a lot of my research into the class.

**USF:** What is the most important lesson you teach your students?

**Akiwumi:** To always ask "why" first before jumping to conclusions.

**USF:** Why has water become your life's work?

**USF:** Water is essential to life. It's life itself, and a human right. The marginalization of poor and indigenous people inhibiting their access to water resources is a tremendous problem.

**USF:** What do you enjoy most about teaching at USF?

**Akiwumi:** The interdisciplinary approach to teaching and to research. I also love the focus on applied research and changing lives for the better.

**USF:** You have seen bodies of water all over the world. Do you have a favorite?

**Akiwumi:** In a remote part of northern Sierra Leone, we traveled to the top of a plateau at Gbenikoro village, Koinadugu District. From that vantage point, you could see this rice swamp, and the green of it was unlike anything I had ever seen before or since. It was breathtaking.

– Mary Beth Erskine



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