Panel 28 and Panel 29: More than Books and Classes

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Throughout the years, the Division of Student Affairs has used innovative approaches to ensure that the campus community had access to sports and recreational opportunities, as well as theater, music, and the cultural arts. The Student Activities Office developed a ticket sales subsidy plan that allowed students to purchase tickets to a variety of venues at a reduced rate. The campus community enjoyed discounts for events at the Bayfront Center, Showboat Dinner Theatre, the Country Dinner Playhouse, and other popular locations. Students could even tee it up at a local golf course for $3!

After the on-campus day care center closed, a day care subsidy was developed to allow parents to receive some assistance if they wanted to place their children with a licensed day care provider. Student groups also held toy drives and other charitable events to help those less fortunate.

Over the years, Student Affairs has sponsored a number of teams in the city leagues (such as men’s, women’s, and co-ed softball; flag football; and basketball). The Sandspurs—a women’s soccer team launched in the 1970s—along with a men’s team started later—played games in the Florida Suncoast Soccer League. They used the men’s baseball field at nearby Campbell Park as their “home turf.”

“Another beauty of the campus was that it was open to the community. The neighbors would come in and watch games and things.” — Dorothy “Dot” Thrash, former bookstore manager, recalling the many concerts and films sponsored by the Student Activities Office.

Students made their mark in the community. Circle K and other clubs participated in “Paint St. Pete Proud.” Some diners green jackets as members of the USF Ambassadors while others grabbed the microphone to introduce speakers at the crowded programs sponsored by the Campus Lecture Series.

“A Warm and Inviting Campus”

“Another beauty of the campus was that it was open to the community. The neighbors would come in and watch games and things.” — Dorothy “Dot” Thrash, former bookstore manager, recalling the many concerts and films sponsored by the Student Activities Office.

The student-funded lecture series served as a springboard for bridging the campus and the community, started by the Student Civil Liberties Association. This initiative developed into a regular series, with a popular "open mic" program Wednesdays at noon, an international symposium, and numerous other events.

Members of the community responded. Impressed with the variety of programs and the welcoming atmosphere, they set up scholarship funds. They donated many of the sailboats used by the Watercraft Office. They remembered the campus that reached out to them.

Headling Out and Sailing into the Sunset

The “Outdoors, Etc.” club formed in the fall of 1977 as a student organization that promoted “outdoor activities and ecological awareness,” by hosting vegetarian dinners, hiking and camping trips, and community service. Sixteen years later, the Imperial Order of Bovine Sojourners was established as a travel club with regular trips out to Shell Island near Tierra Verde.

Lamar Sproose and John Maguire, members of the Student Management Association, at a Christmas Tree Drive, circa 1974.

Donald Haney, Director of Student Affairs, presents an award to an outstanding senior at a “Commencement,” July 1978. The first commencement for USF St. Petersburg did not take place until May 1982.

More than Books and Classes

Activities Almanac: A Chronology


1970: The University community held a pool painting party and a fundraiser to repair the pool’s outdated plumbing.

November 1970: When the Army decided to vacate the small building alongside the pool, the Student Association (predecessor to Student Government) created a “Coffee House Committee.”

1971: Students created an activities hub around the recently-remodeled swimming pool, including a coffee house, game room, babysitting service facility, and locker and dressing rooms.

February 1971: The Flying Club held organizational meetings; a Seabird Club was followed.

April-May 1971: Campuses hosted “Spring Collage,” an arts and music festival, from April 25 through May 1. Musicians performed.

January 1972: The “Discovery Room” — a day-care operation for students, staff, and faculty — opened alongside the pool. After it closed in the summer of 1973, the Activities Office began offering daycare subsidies (at a rate of 50%) for full-time students.

Spring 1973: Student Affairs also started an innovative program to subsidize the cost of select concerts and events at Bayfront Center, some dinner theaters and other venues for full-time students.

September 1973: An Office of Veterans Affairs opened on campus.

Fall 1974: The Activities Office rapidly expanded non-credit mini-courses offerings to include (among others) sailing, canoeing, gymnastics, photography, screen printing, first aid, and swimming.

Spring 1975: The first commencement for USF St. Petersburg did not take place until May 1982.

November 1983: Dedication of Haney Landing, including new K-12 sailing dock. This was honored Donald A. Haney, director of student affairs on the campus from 1976 to 1983, who had recently passed away.

Spring 1986: Coquina Hall opened, allowing Student Activities to move most of its operations from “B” Building.

July 1984: Student Activities hosted its own version of Olympic Games, dubbed the “Lucy 13 Olympic Games,” with egg relays, broom throws, and similar events. “Serious athletes need not apply. Fun-seekers only.”

September 1985: Reopening of the pool.

June 1988: Groundbreaking for the Student Multi-Purpose Facility, later known as the Campus Activities Center (CAC).

January 1990: CAC opened.

September 1993: Crew’s Nest relaunch in newspaper form.

Summer 1994: Expansion of CAC to include new fitness center and racquetball court.

Fall 1995: Student Activities Board created to replace Campus Lecture Series.

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Fall 1998: St. Petersburg Junior College students taking classes at USF St. Petersburg were offered an opportunity to participate in Student Government and Student Activities.

Fall 2003: Student organizations start to take over office space in the Terrace East complex.

October 2003: Safe Team patrols began on campus.

November 2004: First Multicultural Feast sponsored by the Center for Multicultural Affairs.