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NEW STUDENT CLUB COMBATS DISCRIMINATION, FACES CHALLENGES

Organizers start a club that hopes to lessen prejudicial thinking and inequality toward homosexuality on campus.

By Lara Stewart
Staff Writer

You know there is a problem at USF St. Petersburg when hate slurs vandalize a library magazine. However, one new student group is intent on making sure it doesn’t happen again.

Last Wednesday, the current copy of the Advocate was removed from the magazine racks at Poynter Memorial Library by unknown persons and replaced with a photocopied clipping condemning gays on the basis of several Bible quotes.

"They're marking up [the library's copy of] the Advocate with hate shrugs," said Eric Ellis, a lead organizer for the new Gay and Lesbian Awareness student group. The Advocate is a national gay and lesbian magazine.

He said that he hoped that the Gay

Student union on its way, fees to increase substantially

By Elizabeth McCann
Staff Writer

Most USF St. Petersburg students want a place to hang out with friends, play video games, eat or just take a nap. Students by 2006 will get their wish, but it is going to cost them.

A realistic proposal for the campus future multi-purpose center calls for students to pay 34 percent more in student fees. With this increase, the $16.8-million structure will be paid off in 30 years. Meaning, a full-time, 15 credit hour student will pay about $95 more a semester.

Student Government presented on March 30 its version of the new student multi-purpose center, making a student union building at USF St. Petersburg no longer a dream.

The long-anticipated student union building will be built on the site of the now-leveled Fountain Inn, said Jim Brailsford, the consultant's recommended term according to many gay and lesbian organizations. Campus police said the club received permission from the university to chalk the message. The group's adviser Jerry Notaro, told the Crou's Nest, "chalking has historical significance in the gay and lesbian movement on college campuses."

"Hopefully it's just one person writing the shrugs," Ellis said.

Jun Boyd, the senior library technical assistant in the Poynter Library, said that vandalism of the magazines started last week, but it was the first time that they have had a problem.

One purpose of the group, "is to counter this, it's to deal with this sort of thing," said Ellis.

In a response to the vandalism, the group advertised its meeting information on a campus sidewalk with chalk. The club used the word "queer" in its message, which took some people by surprise. However, it is now an appropriately coined term according to many gay and lesbian organizations. Campus police said the club received permission from the university to chalk the message.

The group's adviser Jerry Notaro, told the Crou's Nest, "chalking has historical significance in the gay and lesbian movement on college campuses."

Notaro has waited a long time for an organization like this.

"I never thought I'd see it," said Jerry Notaro. "It makes me very happy that this [new club is starting] on this campus."

Because the campus was traditionally a commuter campus, it typically attracted older students, who did not have the same issues traditionally-aged college students would have. Notaro said. Notaro has been active in the Tampa campus' gay and lesbian group since its inception. Tampa's group is one of the oldest in the country.

"At the first meeting, we only gave our first names," he said.

Mike Rogers, one of the organizers of the discussion group, has been involved in GLBT groups for over five years.

"I think that there's a big need for visibility on campus," he said. "These issues have been very sparingly addressed around here, if at all."

He cited the school's Homecoming as an example of heterosexism on campus.

"There's also a large presence of conservative sentiment on campus," Rogers said. "This organization is one more step in the direction of balancing that."

Although Rogers said that he has not encountered any overt discrimination, he has encountered some subtle kinds.

"More like exclusion of the possibility of people being gay," he said. "The better textbooks will mention orientation page 8

Better voter turnout, Piccolo wins presidency

By Jennifer Manfre
Staff Writer

After four days of voting, the ballots have been counted and the results are official. Without any controversy or hanging chads, the newly elected Student Government officers for the summer and fall terms are: President Thomas Piccolo, Vice President Jason Merritt, Treasurer Chris Koenig and Secretary Daniel Cole.

It was an undisputed victory for Piccolo who defeated sole challenger, junior Christopher Gerber 133 to 20. Aside from the president, no other seat was contested.
Opinion

Not so foolish after all

It's that time again. We are burned out, over worked and under paid. Final exams and last minute procrastination are just around the corner. It's about time to let loose.

The Crow's Nest staff likes to live a little once in a while, too. While our "fun" is not as exciting as what you might do on Saturday night, it is nonetheless adventurous (maybe).

Some students suggested we publish an April Fools' issue. However, since the Crow's Nest is held to a higher standard than most college newspapers we opted to take the high road. Therefore, this edition of the paper is informative but not too funny.

Below is our twisted sense of humor at work. It is the kind of news that a journalist would love to work on for real. But the Crow's Nest will settle for some fake April Fools' news instead.

If we did do a "foolish" edition, this is what it would look like. Enjoy!

SPC takes over USF St. Petersburg

Wild, bizarre circumstances have forced the state of Florida to sell USF St. Petersburg to St. Petersburg College to pay for a new statewide bullet train proposed by voters.

By The Duke

The end is near.

After years of students day-dreaming nightmares of SPC taking over USF St. Petersburg, the harsh reality is here. SPC has agreed to purchase the regional campus for an astounding $1.1-billion. State officials said the money will be used to build the 2002 voter-mandated speed monorail train.

"This is a horrible day but also a great day," said USF professor Monica Johnson. "I love USF St. Petersburg to death, but I can't wait to take the monorail to Disney World."

Kerry chooses Olson as running mate

By Gracie Clinton

Presidential candidate John Kerry is convinced a USF St. Petersburg administrator is perfect to be his right hand man.

Gary Olson is considering resigning his position of interim associate vice president of academic affairs to run for vice president of the United States.

"I think he would be a fantastic choice," said John Peeps, a political science professor. "He already is VP here, he might as well be VP in the White House."

A Crow's Nest-Gallup pole shows the Kerry-Olson ticket leading Bush-Cheney 75 percent to 20 percent, with 5 percent voting for Nader-Genshaft.

Owner builds Tiki bar to reach for the planes

By Anastasia Beaverhausen

Students will have a new place to party next month once construction of the long awaited Tiki bar, the Grass Skirt, on the roof of Davis Hall is completed. Elvis Leeman, proprietor of the Skirt, said he wanted to build a place "Where the students could, you know, be even closer to the planes."

Leeman said he has always had high hopes of building such an establishment. His spirits were further buoyed by the fact that recent studies have shown that airplane fuel increases alcohol consumption.

USF Tampa sinking into Tampa Bay

By Sami the Manatee

If it wasn't bad enough for USF Tampa, things have gotten worse. The campus has sunk 10 feet in one week because 40,000 students and their automobiles place too much weight on the structural integrity of the ground. Experts believe the campus will continue to sink if the large mass of students continues to go to class.

One option has 15,000 students coming to USF St. Petersburg instead. However, students at the smaller, nicer campus have vowed to picket and protest the decision.

OPINIONS

Do you have an opinion on a topic affecting USF St. Petersburg or the surrounding area? Do you agree or disagree with our opinions? The Crow's Nest is seeking well-written, thoughtful letters to the editor. Letter writers should include their names, position (e.g., student), and phone numbers for verification. Letters may be edited for length or clarity, but otherwise are printed exactly as received. Not all letters may be published. Please email your letters to usfcrowsnest@aol.com.

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG

APRIL 7, 2004
By Jim Grinaker

Editorial

Most people expect justice. People also expect reasonable behavior. Standardized tests like the SAT, the GRE and the LSAT provide neither.

These standardized tests are intended to be a relatively objective way to gauge a student's abilities and tell if they will be ready to perform at the level expected by the school they hope to enter. When created, it was hoped that rather than go by biases, these tests would allow students a way to show their true performance. Sadly, this ideal is far from the reality we see today.

It is almost standard practice to take a "prep class." With these preparation classes so common, how are these tests supposed to give an "objective" idea of a student's performance? With so many taking prep classes, the scores become artificially inflated. It completely defeats the purpose of the test.

I can hear some people already saying, "but just by taking those classes to improve their grade, students show they have more initiative then your average student."

That is great, but many students cannot afford the "initiative." Kaplan, who has a near monopoly in the test prep industry, charge over $1,000 for most of their courses. Most students can't afford that!

A handout provided by our school entitled Preparing for Law School states in reference to the LSAT, "What if you do not do well on standardized tests? Either make another career choice, or take courses that help you overcome your deficiencies."

That's just great. If you can't afford the $1,000 price for a prep class you can basically take a hike. We don't want any poor people to be lawyers anyway. Heck, they might be honest and not kiss up to who ever has the most money.

If you think this is just a rant, there are plenty of studies that show minorities and those from lower class economic backgrounds (who are often one in the same) consistently score lower then those from a more wealthy background. Not just prep classes cause problems. The very structure of the test disadvantages the less wealthy.

A famous example was a question from the SAT, which said, "Yacht is to regatta..." How many kids in the inner city spend their weekends at a regatta? I bet if we looked at our sailing team they don't all come from the poorest of the poor.

Studies reveal that factors such as class ranking, GPA and involvement in outside activities are all better predictors of how students will perform once admitted. Some studies have shown that the SAT doesn't do a good job of predicting success in the first year of college, but it fails completely to predict if a student will manage to complete college or be a success in their future career.

The SAT cannot measure a student's level of motivation, which is often the biggest factor in determining what grades are earned.

It is time for schools, including USF, to ditch standardized tests altogether as a factor in admissions. No rewriting of the test could fix the flaws. Test prep companies sit like hungry wolves waiting to see how they can get the rich, better scores in exchange for piles of money.

Let's not just complain about this discrimination, but actually do something. Write to your Student Government, college administrators and Board of Trustees. We would not be the first; some colleges have already dropped a requirement for standardized tests. Our neighbor Eckerd College is giving it serious thought.

Perhaps our society is becoming more color blind, but there is still one major bias that remains, one color that matters: Green. The more of it, the better.

Letter to the Editor

Re: "Unmarried college couples choosing cohabitation" (Published March 24)

Dear Editor,

I think it's not a good article. It was too vague on substance. There were no facts or data on the results of cohabitation. I know the author wants to remain neutral on the subject, allowing the interviewees to write their stories. But that is not good investigative journalism. The author should state facts and concrete data on the issue.

For example, she should quote data from Ermisch and Francesconi researchers at the Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex. They co-wrote "Cohabitation in Great Britain: Not for Long, but Here to Stay."

They state in the book that cohabitation lasts less than two years before breaking up or converting to marriage. The more often and the longer that men and women cohabit, the more likely they are to divorce later.

According to Ermisch, today more than 20 percent of children are born to cohabitating couples. However, only about one third of those children will remain with both their parents throughout their childhood.

I think Ms. Martinez should do more research on the topic to inform the readers on what the facts are. But, maybe Ms. Martinez just wanted the interviewees to tell their stories with no intention of making this story to be an investigative story. Then, I would commend her on doing a good "Larry Kingish" interview.

Paul Dang
USF Alumni
University may eliminate social security number usage

By Kristie A. Martinez
Senior Staff Writer

There's a number that's more in demand than your phone number on a Saturday night. Everyone wants their hands on it: utility providers, workplaces, universities and identity thieves. It's the social security number, and it's becoming less and less secure.

Colleges and universities have historically used social security numbers to identify students, organize student records, and even allow access to services like campus gyms and cafeterias. Depending on their "educational need to know," anyone from guidance counselors to student assistants can access student social security numbers.

Because many worry that using social security numbers in universities increases the possibility of identity theft, some U.S. colleges are employing randomly-generated numbers to identify their students. This fall, USF is proposing to switch from using student social security numbers to randomly-generated identification numbers.

"The university is recognizing that students have concerns about having their social security number as an identifier, and it's being discussed... to allow students to have a [separate] student number," said Angela Depose, the university registrar at USF Tampa. "That does not mean we wouldn't collect student [social security numbers], but it would give students greater assurance that [their social security numbers are] being handled appropriately."

When entered into university databases, social security numbers quickly retrieve and bring together a student's records.

"It's a pairing agent to match up a person's documents and to use as a way to identify them," Depose said.

Once USF shifts to randomly-generated student ID numbers, certain university forms will ask for the students' new ID codes, not their social security numbers.

At USF St. Petersburg, some forms already request the student ID number, said Frank Hohengarten, dean of enrollment services. But until USF changes over to the new system in August or September of this year, the student ID number is synonymous with the social security number.

But social security numbers won't disappear completely. Students who become university employees must give their social security numbers to the college, and those receiving federal financial aid must also continue to give their numbers to the school.

Jennifer Fraser, assistant director of financial aid at USF St. Petersburg, said the federal government requires the social security numbers of students receiving federal financial aid because it organizes all income information using social security numbers.

"Financial aid will still always need social security numbers because they're tied to the federal government," Fraser said. "So if students want to continue to get federal financial aid, that's the only way it can be done."

But Fraser said she is constantly working on protecting students' social security numbers. When students come to the financial aid window, they write their social security numbers on an erasable board so the staff member can easily retrieve the student's files. The number is then erased from the board.

Depose said that every university faculty member who has access to student social security numbers must sign an agreement not to release information to a third party. They must also undergo training so they understand the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law governing the use of personal identification information in schools that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

"[The social security number] is a confidential information Rem," Depose said. "It's not to be shared. It's within the policy that it's only disclosed to people who need to know."

The training requirements for teachers give little comfort to USF St. Petersburg student Detrice Lewis.

"It's almost like you have to take people for their word until they mess up," she said. "I like to think that everyone's honest, but I know deep down in my heart that not everyone is honest. I just pray and hope that no one will [steal my identity]."

Lewis said she supports USF's shift to student identification numbers.

"I am concerned about [Identity See Privacy on page 8]

Students find cheaper textbooks elsewhere

By Vanessa Espinar
Staff Writer

The price of an education is more than just tuition. Many times, students find themselves having to trade, borrow, photocopy or find alternative places to buy books because of the rising prices. It is common to see sell or trade books signs posted around USF St. Petersburg.

While many students still buy their books at the USF Bookstore, others are looking for alternatives.

Student Solitaire Kelley finds Half.com and Amazon.com save her hundreds of dollars a year.

"I have purchased textbooks online for the past three years," said Kelley. "The Internet is a student's best option for saving the most money."

But students say the main reason for buying at the USF bookstore is the convenience.

That's why Christie Coston, a business student, buys her books there. She has three classes on the Tampa campus and one in St. Petersburg.

"I know where the cheaper bookstores in Tampa are, but I don't know where else to get them here," Coston said.

"The campus bookstore is the number one stop because we have the required books and supplies," said Scott Toscano, the USF Bookstore manager. "We offer the highest level of customer service. People definitely want to shop at a friendly place."

For some, the bookstore becomes the only option because of time available to rent out their books. I think that would be a better service."

According to a brochure found in the USF Bookstore, half of all used books sold on Half.com and Amazon.com save students up to 80 percent of what they paid for the book.

"I waited 'til the last minute so I got them here," said Kalinka Barrow, a senior. "Prices are high. Every time I hear what people pay online, I get upset," she said.

Drew O'Hara, USF Bookstore assistant manager, said they base their prices for used books on 75 percent of the publisher's price for new books. For new books, the prices are based on Barnes & Noble Policy. If books are being used for the next term, students get up to 50 percent of what they paid for the book. Some books might have a national demand, in which case the student gets approximately 75 to 45 percent of what they paid for it.

"Usually they're not using them next semester and I have to just eat them," said Barrow.

According to a brochure found in the USF Bookstore, on average, 67 percent of the cost of a book goes to the publisher; 9 percent to the author; 25 percent to the freight company; nine percent to the university, and 12.5 percent to the bookstore.

O'Hara said that they try to keep the prices down by encouraging professors to expand the same books each term so that students can get money back for used textbooks. He also said that they try to buy back as many used books as possible so that they don't have to buy from the publishers as much.

The bookstore is the last place we go to, and at that point there's nothing we can do than base our prices on what it costs us," O'Hara said. "Online sites such as half.com or Amazon.com may offer cheaper prices for books."

O'Hara said, "some online sites are peer-to-peer and they don't have to worry about costs and employees. Other sites offer discounts because they don't have as many employees because everything is computerized."

Bayboro Bookstore is an alternative to buying at the USF Bookstore.

"They are sometimes cheaper," said Brett Almond, an accounting junior. He also said they are more likely to have used books because used ones sell quicker at the USF store. He has also bought online.

"It's a lot better online, but I don't know what books are required in advance," he said. But sometimes there is not enough time to get them shipped, he said. "You pay more to have it right in front of you."

Some students have ideas that they think would allow them to get books without spending so much money.

"Hillsborough Community College rents out their books, I think that would be a better idea," said Marie Phillip, a USF senior.
Not your average college seniors

By Irena Milasinovic
Staff Writer

S
he does not worry about graduation, final exams or grades.

Lei Kellman thinks more about peace rallies, ethics meetings and politics. She is the other face of USF St. Petersburg.

Kellman, 82, is one of the senior citizen auditor classes at USF. She refers to herself as an “old lady” instead of a senior citizen.

Currently, there are over 120 senior auditors enrolled at USF St. Petersburg. The audit program offers Florida residents who are 60 years or older enrollment into classes of their choice depending on the availability basis.

“Our first responsibility are students who need classes to graduate to get those classes first,” says Joyce Morin, a senior admissions registration officer. The seniors mostly stick to the College of Arts and Sciences where history, literature and journalism are among their favorites. Morin says that the College of Business doesn’t offer classes to seniors because of the limited seat availability.

The audit program, mandated by state legislature and available in every state university or college, allows senior auditors to register for three classes per semester.

Kellman is taking two classes this semester: Jay Black’s “Mass Media Ethics” class and Juddithanne McLauchlin’s “Road to the White House.” She says some classes are more stimulating than others. “Road to the White House” is still waiting for Kellman’s verdict. “It’s interesting, somewhat,” she says.

She doesn’t worry about her outspoken disapproval of a particular presidential candidate. She wears a pin on her left side, close to her heart: “I didn’t vote for his daddy either,” the pin reads. She has been wearing it for last two or three years. “I wear it whenever I remember to put it on,” Students are very intrigued by her pin. “It’s a great conversation starter,” she says. “It gets people to talk to me.”

The program comes with many benefits for the auditors. They have complete access to campus facilities such as the pool and fitness center, and allowed to check out books from the campus library. “It’s very good for the university to give something back to the community,” says Morin. “It keeps (the seniors) active.”

Treated as students, senior auditors have to pay some of the same fees as students. They have to pay for parking; something that changed from few years ago when parking was free to them. They pay for student ID cards and books, but many choose not to buy textbooks for class. Ruben Anchundia, a business student, says that books sometimes are not necessary for them.

“They bring their life experiences to the class,” he says.

On the other hand, he says, “Sometimes classes are too advanced for them. It all mostly depends on a senior.”

Kellman says that going to classes allows her to keep up with current issues, and learn how students perceive world today. “I learn a lot from students,” she says.

But she worries about the students’ disinterest and lack of involvement in peace groups and rallies, of which Kellman is an active participant. She stands on different corners each week promoting peace and has participated in pep rallies at Baywalk.

“I have always been involved in peace (rallies),” she says. “I get involved in what interests me.”

She got involved in audit program at USF-SP about 12 years ago; well over a decade after the program was started in 1980. Kellman keeps herself busy by volunteering at the temporary shelter for women and children, and regularly attending Wednesday ethics meeting composed of eight current members, where they talk about the world, politics and economy. She says she likes the nice community feel the St. Petersburg campus offers to students. “It makes St. Petersburg a good place to live for me,” she says.

Kellman, a Brooklyn native, came to Florida in 1986 with her husband.

Her graduation, unlike traditional USF students, took place decades ago when she earned her Master’s degree from the University of Maine. She says the learning process never ends.

“My experience, to say the least, at USF St. Petersburg, has been a blessing to my life both academically and socially. When the call for student representatives for USF Day at the Capitol was issued on the St. Petersburg campus, I responded with enthusiasm. Along for the five hour trek to Tallahassee were freshmen Diana MacDonald and Sarah Young, graduating student Jackie Wertel and the Alumni Coordinator for USF-SP Sue Sietsma. Chancellor Karen White joined the list later.

Upon our arrival on March 90 at the Capitol, we were all enthralled with the transformation of the rotunda inside the building. Each level was adorned with some sort of USF memorabilia. Banners saying “Welcome to Bull’s Country” were predominately displayed. The acknowledgment of Florida’s senators and representatives surprisingly did not pale in comparison to the zealous celebration of the students in attendance at the event. Many legislators stopped by the USF St. Petersburg booth to ask about the university. I counted over several dozen who had specifically worn green or actual USF memorabilia in honor of our presence that day. This proved to me that the achievements of the university had not gone unnoticed. There are many points of pride that each student should be boasting about.

Were you aware that a USF Professor, Robin Murphy, developed search and rescue robots that found victims and helped rescue workers determine if passageways were safe in the aftermath of the World Trade Center tragedy? Or how about the fact that the Center for Biological Defense, located at the USF College of Public Health, developed a three-step technique that dramatically reduces the time it takes to detect anthrax in powders and on surfaces from three days to six hours. Or maybe the fact that the women’s sailing team located right here on Bayboro Harbor ranked 13th in the 2002 national championship.

I don’t feel that it is far-fetched to say that the enrolled students at USF are the future of tomorrow. The bonds we forge with leaders of today will determine our success as we enter the world outside the campus community of USF-SP. These leaders exist not only within our institution but also outside, too. The Capitol is a place where those who are elected to represent us are not always readily accessible to the general public. We, the students of your campus, meet with representatives for Pinellas County. Talking with Reps. Charlie Justice and Gus Billinkas was one of the many highlights of my day. Not only was it a chance to meet them, but we also voiced our opinion about issues that affect us as students. One important issue is the bill that is currently before the legislature that would force Student Government to pay for the placement of a flag in each classroom on campus. Rep. Justice said that he would gladly review any information against the passage of the bill that Student Government would submit to him. Rep. Billinkas proposed to personally help in allocating funds so that flags could be bought without the need to monetarily burden Student Government.

Being able to speak candidly with USF President Judy Genshaft and Chancellor Karen White enforced the belief that a casual environment does exist on our campus.

The one thing we as students need to realize before we graduate is that being a USF alumni makes us available to a network of influential people who can provide us with examples of how to forge a path of excellence. My day at the Capitol opened my eyes to the camaraderie that exists between individuals whose only background is that they attended the same school. It was a day for all of us to recognize that this bond is one that can fuel each student long after they graduate.

Warning: Reading the Crow’s Nest could be habit forming.
Curbing domestic violence now a state priority

Beauty parlors hold a unique role in women's culture. Traditionally, it is a refuge where women can take care of their personal needs, such as haircuts and manicures. However, a new initiative in Florida is taking a different approach to combatting domestic violence.

Florida's statewide program, "Cut Out Domestic Violence," is designed to provide a safe environment for victims of domestic violence. The program targets beauty parlors, which are traditionally known as places of refuge for women. The program aims to educate salon workers about domestic violence and equip them with the knowledge to recognize signs of abuse and provide support to victims.

The program is based on the idea that beauty parlors hold a unique place in women's culture. Traditionally, it is a refuge where women can take care of their personal needs, such as haircuts and manicures. However, a new initiative in Florida is taking a different approach to combatting domestic violence.

The beauty salon worker is trained to recognize signs of abuse, such as injuries, and to offer support and resources to victims. The program also includes the use of a hotline and other resources to help victims of domestic violence.

The program is designed to be inclusive, with the goal of reaching all women regardless of their background or culture. It is hoped that by targeting beauty parlors, the program can reach a wider audience and provide support to those in need.

This innovative approach is a step towards curbing domestic violence and creating a safer environment for women. By focusing on beauty parlors, the program is able to tap into a network of trusted professionals who can provide support and resources to victims of domestic violence.

The program is expected to be less than $10,000, which is an affordable cost compared to the potential costs of not addressing domestic violence. The program is an example of how creative solutions can be used to address a serious social issue.

The program is supported by Governor Rick Scott and others, who believe that it is a necessary step towards curbing domestic violence. The program is also supported by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which has a mandate to promote safety and security for all citizens.

The program is an example of how creative solutions can be used to address a serious social issue. By targeting beauty parlors, the program is able to reach a wider audience and provide support to those in need. The program is a step towards curbing domestic violence and creating a safer environment for women.

Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Election from page 1

experience as a valuable advantage.

Nancy Coscia, director of student life, said voter turnout was noticeably busier than last year. Last November, only 102 voted but 159 students voted this term.

The election, which took place March 29 to April 1 in the Davis Hall lobby, coinciding with the Harborside Activities Board's week-long social, "Spring Fling."

Three of the four leaders come to the table with executive board experience on USF St. Petersburg's Student Government. President-elect Piccolo is turning his current seat as treasurer over to new-comer Koenig. Cole and Merritt will continue to serve in their present positions. The new student administration will be inaugurated May 1 and serve until December 31.

"Because we have such a small population, we have a unique opportunity to create something really special," Piccolo said. "I want to get more students involved in events and start some traditions that are unique to the St. Petersburg campus."

He explained they are working to change a misconception that Student Government only exists to sponsor events like student orientations, the welcome back barbeques and homecoming. In addition to helping to increase student interest for those and other activities, they are equally committed to the business decisions on campus.

"We are doing real things that affect real change, just like state government," said Piccolo, a junior majoring in economics and history.

The student-run legislature manages a budget of over $780,000, which allocates money by a majority vote to a variety of school-related organizations and activities. Many students are unaware that the activities and service fees paid as part of their tuition go directly into that budget, said Koenig.

Cole who has spent four semesters in executive office, agreed. "I don't think students realize how much influence they can have," he said. "Our job is to voice the opinion of the students to the school's administration."

Giving the students a voice has been Merritt's mission since he took office last year. "We're trying to get students to do more than just show up for class," he said.

Student Government meets every other Wednesday in the Campus Activities Center room 133 and is open to the public. The next meeting is April 14 at 4:30 p.m.
According to the website, myfloridagal.com; stealing a person's identity can take as little as obtaining that person's social security number, date of birth, address and phone number. Armed with that information and perhaps a fake ID, an identity thief can establish credit in the victim's name, use the victim's credit cards and steal money from that person's bank accounts.

Students in college also must write their social security number on many documents, increasing its exposure, said Jon Wierzbowski, a USF St. Petersburg police sergeant.

Wierzbowski said he doesn't know of any identity theft cases that have happened to USF St. Petersburg students in the last three years, and that avoiding identity theft is based on safeguarding personal information.

"Every kind of information makes up a piece of your identity," he said. "Your account numbers, whether they be bank accounts or credit card accounts, your driver's license information, date of birth, name, race, sex — all are building blocks of your identity. Your social security number is your keystone.

"Treat your social security number as if it were money in your wallet," he said. "You wouldn't leave it lying around."

Hohengarten, USF St. Petersburg's dean of enrollment services, said there is usually not much that can alleviate students' paranoia about identity theft.

"Eventually, [the social security number] won't be a primary identifier [at USF]," he said. "But students must remember that their social security number is floating around in a lot of places, and the chances of it being stolen at the university are no greater than it happening anywhere else. The bottom line is you can only minimize your exposure. You cannot eliminate it."

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