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University faculty turnover not unusual

by SCOTT WACHTLER
staff writer

It is easy to see the new additions to the USF St. Petersburg campus. One can not miss the new parking garage or the new residence hall. There are even more students on campus. What is not so easy to see is what is no longer here.

Along with this period of expansion, the USFSP campus has experienced a turnover of faculty. Over the last three years, the College of Arts and Sciences — USF St. Petersburg's largest college and still in need of a permanent dean — lost 13 faculty members, the College of Education lost nine, and the College of Business lost three.

In 2005, the university hired 61 professors, Regional Chancellor, Dr. Karen White, says that when you take that many hires into consideration, the number leaving is not huge.

"We made it easy for these new hires to excel and we gave them the opportunity to research, and that made them very attractive to other schools," said White. "That's the best of news when other people admire our faculty."

USFSP Chief Academic Officer, Mark Durand, added, "Anytime of your good people leave it's cause for concern. We don't like to lose great teachers."

Durand has worked in the academic world for two decades. He says that turnover is common for people who move on and was not completely surprised when he heard there would be faculty leaving.

"We start by hiring faculty who we believe will be world-class and we provide the support that they need to become world-class. The downside to that is that they get multiple offers from other universities," Durand said.

He said that those that left were in a position of being portable. Most of these faculty members were originally hired in 2003 and had become assistant professors. The fact that they were successful and not yet tenured added to their ability to spread their academic wings and move on to different types of universities.

Durand met with many of the exiting faculty and said that the reasons for leaving varied. Family issues were common as well as financial reasons. In addition, some professors were just looking for a larger university environment in which to teach and conduct research.

Rois Hill, former dean of the College of Business, now teaches at Villanova University. In a telephone interview, he said that his reasons for leaving were not that he was looking for a different environment to teach in, nor were they family or financial issues. Hill's decision to leave was because he felt that there was a lack of high-level support for his plans to build USF St. Petersburg into a nationally recognized business program.

"It was hard to leave," said Hill. "I felt that I had a rare and wonderful opportunity to build something. Unfortunately, we weren't able to get the job done."

Dr. Robert Dardeene, associate professor in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, has twice sat on committees to look for a new dean for the College of Arts and Sciences. He said that the reason people may want to leave may have to do with the type of university they are looking to teach at. He stresses that USF St. Petersburg has only been separately accredited for a few months and that the university is still very much in a stage of emergence.

"There's a kind of person who likes to go to a place that's emerging and there's the kind of person who likes to go to a place that's settled," said Dardeene.

James Gore, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, also attributes the shift to the fact that this is a part of the cycle of hiring. The college has a lot of assistant professors on staff and only a few tenured faculty members.

"It's the way the faculty is weighted and it's pretty much the same as other places," Gore said.

When asked if the College of Arts and Sciences was in danger of being short of staff, Gore said that no dean would ever say that they have enough faculty, but that it should balance out and that there would not be a problem.

Durand said that there will be replacements hired for the missing faculty.

Dean of the College of Education, Vivian Fueyo, said that their college will be holding meetings this month to develop an action plan and that they plan on starting their search for new faculty in October.

The American Association of University Professors keeps statistics on all types of information about university faculty, but they do not have any information on normal turnover rates.

John Curtis, the association's director of research says, "That question comes up a lot, but we don't have any concrete information. The national databases just don't keep that info."

We have to do is know what USF St. Petersburg's turnover rate for the last academic year was 7 percent. According to the university's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness Web site, USFSP had 223 full and part-time faculty members at the start of the 2005-2006 academic year. According to data provided to the Crow's Nest by White, 17 faculty members have left since then.

USF St. Petersburg's turnover rate is not unusual when compared to a May 2005 University of Tennessee study of faculty turnover. UT's study cites research done by Margaret Harrigan at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in which the calculated turnover rates at hypothetical universities. According to the study, Harrigan positions the idea that a hypothetical university hired and retained all faculty until retirement after 30 years of service, we would expect a turnover of about 1.3 percent per year. Likewise, if a university hired and denied tenure to all faculty members at the end of six years, the turnover rate would be 16.7 percent per year. Using this logic, the 'normal' turnover rate falls between 3.3 percent and 16.7 percent per year.

Strange but true

by Samantha Weaver

According to pollsters, the animal liked most by people is the dog, followed by horses, cats, swans, robins and butterflies. Unsurprisingly, the most-disliked animal is the cockroach, followed by mosquitoes, rats, wasps, rattlesnakes and bats.

It was noted witt Oscar Wilde who, on this abhorrent notion, said: "Begging is having one wife and husband too many. Monogamy is the same!"

Demographers say that 62 percent of engaged couples live together before wedding.

A zebra is able to stand with in 15 minutes of its birth.

If you like tequila and have some spare cash, you might be interested in the latest offering from Tequila Lyi. 925. In an attempt to earn the Guiness World Record for the most expensive bottle, it recently put up for sale a Barrel Aged 26 Year Old Pasion Olor Seco tequila that had aged for six years. It's not the liquor itself that's so pricey, though; it's the bottles. There are 66 bottles decorated with gold and platinum that sell for $15,000 each, and 999 silver and gold bottles that go for a mere $25,000. The company's hopes for the world record rest on the tequila in really special packaging: a limited-edition platinum bottle with fancy artwork on the label. The price? A single bottle goes for $225,000. They've all been sold to private collectors already.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was reportedly a big fan of Mickey Mouse.

Those who study such things claim that blond beards grow faster than those of any other color.

The name "Barbara" comes from the Greek word meaning "foreign" or "strange."

Thought for the Day: "Sometimes I think war is God's way of teaching us geography." — Paul Rodriguez

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World Trade Center: A triumph of patriotism

Oliver Stone is no stranger to controversy. The director of "JFK," "Nixon" and "Platoon" always seems to have a political agenda when he makes movies. This isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It can change the way people think by encouraging them to openly question the American government and its policies.

But even those who are on the extreme right wing and have a complete disdain for Stone and his politics can appreciate the fact that he is one of America’s greatest living directors. He has won two Academy Awards for best director (for "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July") and is hailed by critics as one of the most radical and influential film makers of all time.

So when Stone announced he was directing a movie about 9/11, the most horrific tragedy in American history, many groaned, many applauded, and many were puzzled.

Why would Stone open up one of America’s greatest wounds only to cause more hurt to the survivors and the families of the survivors?

There are a countless number of conspiracy theories regarding what truly happened that fateful day. Some believe the government knew about the attack in advance; others even suggest the government was in on it. "World Trade Center," a movie dealing with the events of 9/11 seems to be up Stone’s alley, doesn’t it?

Wrong. Stone isn’t here to tell anyone what they should or shouldn’t believe. Instead, he gives us a very straightforward movie that deals with two of the many heroes of 9/11. This is a wise choice, because this shouldn’t be a movie that pits left vs. right; it should unify us much as we were five years ago when the attacks first occurred, albeit for a very short time.

"World Trade Center" opens with a very somber tone. We all know what is about to happen, so why try to hide anything?

The story quickly unfolds and focuses on the New York City Police Department Port Authority officers who were called to the twin towers as part of the rescue detail.

One of the officers is Sgt. John McLoughlin (Nicolas Cage), who after the ‘93 attack on the World Trade Center became an experienced authority on the towers, but is caught off guard because no one, himself included, anticipated an attack that would originate at the top.
The Crow's Nest asks:
"Do the security measures put in place at airports after 9/11 make you feel safer?"

by SCOTT WACHTLER
staff writer

"I did feel safer until recently with what happened with people wanting to smuggle liquid explosives on planes."
> Brian Mitchell, 22, senior Finance major

"No, I don't. They don't pat me down more than other people since I can't go through the metal detector [in a wheelchair]. If I wanted to I could easily hide something in here [the wheelchair]."
> Johann Bedingfield, 25, senior Anthropology/International Science major

"I haven't flown since 9/11 because of the way it made me feel. I was not afraid to fly before."
> Elizabeth Crane, 18, freshman Graphic Design major

"I feel about the same based on what's happened recently. If someone's going to want to do something to a plane they're going to do it regardless of what security measures are in place."
> Al Moragno, 32, senior History major (Tampa campus)

"Normally, no, but after you hear about shampoo bombs being foiled I guess, yeah."
> Stephen Cook, 19, sophomore Journalism major

Airport security

by BRUCE KITCHENS
staff writer

As the fifth anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks approached, recent events have again raised concerns about airport security.

In August, a college student traveling from Argentina to Houston packed a stick of dynamite in a checked bag. The dynamite was not discovered until after the plane had landed. Although the incident was not terror related it demonstrated that airport security issues in other countries can threaten U.S. airport safety.

The Transportation Security Agency was created as a part of the Department of Homeland Security to improve security of the nation's transportation centers after the events of September 11, 2001. The Associated Press reported comments made during a CSPAN interview by TSA Assistant Secretary Kip Hawley.

"We are focused on getting a base level of security around the world. We will put additional measures where we think we need to," Hawley said.

Now, with a few exceptions, liquids and gels...
Security is a work in progress

Security is a work in progress. Carried on U.S. flights and must be checked baggage. All passengers are asked to remove their shoes which are scanned for improvised explosives. Security measures increase the abilities of TSA personnel.

Significant improvements were made since the audit but did not offer any specific examples.

Large fixes need to be made to the airport security. The GAO reported two years ago that there are operational and cost considerations as well as political and economic interests to consider. In addition, legal issues dealing with privacy have to be defined and resolved before biometrics could be implemented.

The same report noted the most test failures were in the ability of TSOs to take training.

Security personnel assist a passenger with luggage at a security checkpoint.
ESPN: The “Extra Special People Network” does it again

by DEAN MULLINS
editor-in-chief

Everyone loves a great comeback story. Even the biggest, toughest and meanest bullies feel all warm and fuzzy inside when they hear about the Lance Armstrongs of the world. They just don’t necessarily admit it.

Over the years, ESPN has done a brilliant job in finding the most uplifting stories about athletes at all levels of sport. But they once-upon-themselves on college football openings Saturday with a heart-warming segment about University of Southern California running back Chauncey Washington.

It would be impossible even for the greatest dramatic writers of our time to duplicate with words the emotional impact this piece undoubtedly had on viewers. So for the unfortunate among you that did not see Washington’s story on “College GameDay,” you will find the appropriate emotional responses in parentheses throughout this synopsis.

Before you read on, it is necessary to tune your radio or scroll through your iPod menu and find your “Rudy.” “Remember the Titans.” “Friday Night Lights.” “Invisible” (a theme music and turn it on loud. Oh, and grab some tissue because repeated eye wiping will be required.)

Chauncey Washington dreamed of being the starting running back at USC. He was on his way. Then he tore his ACL in 2002 on a full-ride scholarship. (Oh my, what could have happened?)

In the spring of 2004, Washington lost his scholarship. (Did he tear up his knee, break his leg, get a life-threatening illness or what? Grab your first tissue.) He would have “to leave school or pay his own way.” (You should be angry enough to say this aloud, “Now that’s just not fair, it wasn’t his fault that he got hurt or sick!”)

Cut to Washington’s father, a perennial two-a-day worker who did whatever was necessary to provide for his eight children. He told his pigskin-carrying, hole-hitting offspring, “Coach is on your side. The school is on your side. Your family is on your side.” (Wise. Whatever the problem was, he had an amazing support group. This is getting good.)

As viewers watched video of a smiling Washington (This makes it clear that he is recovered and we are very happy) walking around campus, we heard the obviously moved narrator say, “While Reggie Bush was on his way to winning the Heisman Trophy and the Trojans were vying for a third straight national championship, Washington was just another student. (Well, he couldn’t play football and live his dream, poor guy.) Wipe the eyes, wipe the eyes.

It was hard. I had to study and take away all the distractions and leave people out of my life and take care of what I had to do,” said Washington. (This dude is driven. What an inspiration!) “What was his ailment, his devastating injury? What set him on the tumultuous path back to the USC backfield?” you ask. (Pins and needles, churning of fingernails.)

Not just once, but twice, Washington was (pauses for dramatic effect) deemed academically ineligible to play. (Look of shock and horror followed by sticking of index finger down throat.)

Yeah, I know; I could not believe it either. How could USC even consider holding athletes to the same academic standards as other students when the UCLAs and Cals of the world need a good thumpin’? I mean, there is a national championship to consider here. Washington should not have to spend time reading literature and studying politics. He needs to study his playbook and lift weights. Leave the studying to real students. (Cheers for Washington for overcoming the unfair academic path upon which he was led.)

Note to ESPN: When we sportfreak-students have a few moments to actually take a deep breath and enjoy a little football, and maybe get a little inspiration, the last thing we need is to hear about a spoiled-rotten athlete that doesn’t like to study. All of us college students have a sob story because higher education ain’t easy, especially when you have to pay for it yourself. Stick to the Lance Armstrongs of the world for your heart-warming stories and leave people out of my studies.

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21 Hayseed 7 Plankton component
24 Flower also called heartsease 8 Fir variety
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32 Look sullen 10 Sister
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39 Venomous viper 15 Prior to
41 Ersatz chocolate 16 Mitch Miller's specialty
43 Dance lesson 18 "M*A*S*H" locale
44 Petrol 19 Work unit
46 Boutonniere site 20 Fool
50 Malay Archipelago island 21 Hayseed
51 Under the weather 22 Prejudice
52 Wardrobe malfunction 23 Capital of County Clare, Ireland
53 Kimono sash 24 Flower also called heartsease
54 Potential syrup 25 Unable to proceed
55 "Peer-*" 26 Whirl
56 Tittle 27 Safecracker
57 Wading bird 28 Detail, for short

Weekly Sudoku

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Museum Exhibit Review

Keris Invincible: Sword handles from Indonesia

by CHRISTINA CASTELLANA
staff writer

In a small, dimly-lit room beyond the museum's foyer is an assortment of artifacts believed by some to have great magical and supernatural powers. St. Petersburg's Museum of Fine Arts is currently exhibiting a collection of intricately carved sword handles from Indonesia. According to information available at the museum, the handles are part of the traditional weapon found in Indonesia and Malaysia called the keris, or kris (rhymes with "crease").

A complete keris has a hilt (handle), blade, scabbard (fabric sheath) and a metal casing for the scabbard. Its origins date from the Pajajaran era (12th century), yet others have been found from the 9th century. Some sword handles on display are from the early 15th century while the rest hail from the 18th and 19th centuries. The handles are viewed through glass encasements where custom lighting enhances their exotic beauty.

Some sword handles on display are from the early 15th century while the rest hail from the 18th and 19th centuries. The handles are viewed through glass encasements where custom lighting enhances their exotic beauty. The sword handles on exhibit are painstakingly carved. According to the museum, the peoples from the islands in the East Indies believe these handles house spirits and have magical properties. Used in performing rituals and ceremonies, many of the handles depict gods and sacred animals like monkeys, dragons and birds.

One 19th century handle from Bali depicts the Hindu deity named Ganesha. Made of horn, the handle portrays Ganesha as a wise bearded man. Other handles in the exhibit depict mythical figures, including Hanuman and a rakshasa. Hanuman is the Monkey King who heroically rescues Rama's kidnapped wife, Sita, in the epic tale called the Ramayana. Rakshasas are mythical animal guardians of holy places.

According to the museum, keris blades are "wavy or straight" and have unique designs created through a process of mixing metals called pamor. Indonesians and Malaysians believe the designs have strong magical powers that influence the life of the owner. Most blades are made from nickel-bearing iron from the island of Sulawesi. Keris are often decorated with ivory, precious and semiprecious stones, silver and rare woods. The exhibit featured three complete keris along with a number of keris hilts.

In 1749 a meteorite fell in Central Java and the keris blades made from that cosmic rock were strictly reserved for the royal courts because they were believed to have extreme supernatural powers.

The keris exhibited at the museum are owned by Dr. Mark Wiesman, a collector of Oceanic art. The Museum of Fine Arts opened in 1965 and has the most comprehensive collection from antiquity to the modern era on Florida's west coast. Founded by Margaret Acheson Stuart (1896-1980), the museum continues her vision in providing a comfortable and elegant venue for the public to enjoy an extensive collection of master works from around the world.