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Student Government passed the 2011-12 Activities and Services fee budget during the general senate meeting on April 6. SG allocated a total of $1,104,000—a $53,100 increase from last year.

SG debated the budget during committee meetings for about two weeks. SG President James Scott first presented the budget to the senate on March 23.

Departments that receive A&S fees submitted budget requests last month. The Appropriations Committee worked through the budget to make recommendations based on those requests and each department's needs. The committee did not change the Harborside Activities Board, the office of Multicultural Affairs and The Crow's Nest's requested budgets, according to Jovanna Guevara, chair of the Appropriations Committee. The committee made cuts to the Student Government budget. All other requested budgets were increased before going to the general senate.

The 2011-12 budget shows an increase in most departments from the 2010-11 budget, according to SG budget documents available online through Google Docs. The documents are not currently available on the SG website.

The Student Life budget decreased 1.11 percent from this year's budget to next year's, and SG's budget decreased 2.04 percent.

Appropriations recommended $37,000 for the clubs and organization line in SG's budget. The clubs and organizations line had $20,000 in the 2010-11 budget, which had been a decrease from $30,000 in the 2009-10 budget.

Since the senate passed the budget, it will now go back to Scott to sign or veto. Scott said during the April 6 meeting that the budget process "went well" this year.

"This was the cleanest, most civil budget process," Scott said. "This is hard to achieve."

Keeley Sheehan
Managing Editor

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Students feeling pressure from pending Bright Futures changes

Tom Chang
Online Editor

The Florida Bright Futures scholarship program has offered many students the opportunity to attend post-secondary education in Florida since 1997. In light of the recent economic hardships, the program is in danger of undergoing changes and cuts. The proposals date to a March 28 meeting, and discussions are ongoing.

"The Senate has proposed curtailing the Bright Futures Scholarships by $1,000 per student," said Erin Dunn, campus director of Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans Services. "The House proposes increasing the requirements for high school graduates to qualify for the scholarships, including the Medallion Scholars Award."

Dunn said the state is dealing with less funding in higher education partly from a loss in federal stimulus funding. The current proposals are pending because the budget has not finalized.

"What I've been hearing from more students is that they are very worried that some of them are going to be affected," said Chuck Terzian, Student Government senator. "Some of them don't understand that you have loans available to you. A lot of students have never taken out loans for anything. So it's a scary kind of thing to even begin doing. They get told by their parents to be financially responsible. A lot of them, when they look at Bright Futures being cut, they worry how they're going to pay for school."

Terzian said having the debt to loans affects career decisions students make.

"Something like $30,000 is a huge number for someone who's never been in the workforce," Terzian said.

SG Senate President Christian Haas is a recipient of Bright Futures.

"I will say that the restrictions might be a little lenient," Haas said. "I think some people who get Bright Futures, probably shouldn't be in a tight budget time. If the money is not there, you should probably work a little harder, but the developments I'm aware of, they're going to take away the percentage and just offer a flat amount regardless of your institution. I think in a way it makes sense. It makes it harder for students to go to a more expensive university." Haas, hopes it helps streamline the college tuition rates.

"I don't think you should cut education when you're increasing salaries and operational expenses," Dunn said. "I do agree though that it's better to streamline it and not offer different prices to different schools."

 Florida state university tuition increased 15 percent in the fall 2010 semester; according to a June 18, 2010, report from the Orlando Sentinel. The state university Board of Governors voted to approve the increase in June.

"It's going to increase every year and I don't think there's any end in sight," Haas said. "I don't think Bright Futures is going to follow that increase, so I think it's definitely going to be harder. Students are going to have to come up with more money and I don't think the federal Pell grants are increasing anytime soon. Our future is going to involve less people being able to go to college."

Haas thinks that Bright Futures should be more competitive, but everybody should be able to go to college.

"Sen. Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach), the chair of the Budget Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations, said most of the students should be able to qualify for the American Opportunity Tax Credit," Dunn said. "She inferred that the credit might balance out the reduction of the scholarship amount. The credit is for undergraduate college expenses."

Dunn said the House proposal for Bright Futures calls for increasing the qualifying SAT score from 1280 to 1300 for the Academic Scholars award and the ACT score from 28 to 29, and increasing community service hours from 75 to 100. The mediation scholars under the Bright Futures program would increase the SAT score for some students from 1020 to 1170 and the ACT score from 23 to 27.

"The Governor's proposed budget doesn't reduce the current level of funding," Dunn said. "It only increases the criteria to receive Bright Futures in the first place."

The current plan for Bright Futures has eligible 2009-10 high school graduates receiving up to 100 percent of the required hours for their program study. They may only reduce their award if it was lost due to insufficient GPA in the first year of funding.

Students are not required to enroll full-time, but full-time students must earn 24 semester hours (or the equivalent) per academic year. Part-time students must enroll a minimum of six hours per term. They must also earn the required number of hours for which they were funded.

"Bottom line is that all higher education institutions are keeping their fingers crossed for the benefit of their students," Dunn said. "I am hesitant to create concern before we know the ultimate outcome of the final legislation."
Bill would allow use of A&S fees in campaign

Kelsey Sheehan
Managing Editor

A bill that would allow Student Gov-
ernment presidential and vice presi-
dential candidates to use Activities and Ser-
vice fees to fund their campaign passed
due to inaction. Senate President Chris-
tian Haas sponsored the bill, which was
passed through the senate.

SG President James Scott has not
signed or vetoed the bill because of le-
gal uncertainties with campaign finance
rules. Because the bill passed through the
senate but has not inactive, the bill
automatically passed, Haas said. SG will
now decide whether to repeal or amend
the bill, and determine its legality.

SG reduced the cap on election cam-
paign spending from $1,500 to $500.
The bill Haas sponsored, Bill 511-013,
"Resolution to amend Title 7 and Title
8 of the Student Government Statues," would allow presidential and vice presi-
dential candidates to use $300 of A&S
fee money to fund a campaign.

The current draft of the bill requires
candidates to collect a petition with 300
USFSP student signatures to allow them
to use the funds.

"If someone wants to run, but can't
afford it, this even the playing field," Scott said.

SG would allocate money to the Elec-
tion Rules Commission budget each year
for this purpose. The number of students
who could use the funding would be lim-
ited, according to Haas, allowing, for ex-
ample, three tickets to seek the funding
on a first come, first served basis.

The bill originally required that all
signatures be "unique," so that no stu-
dent signed more than one petition, but
this has been changed because SG saw
it as requiring a student to endorse can-
didates before campaigning has started.
The bill is intended to make campaigni-
ng "more about ideas," Haas said.

"Some people [in SG senate] want-
ed no cap. Some wanted it to $300," Haas said. The $500 cap on
spending "seemed reasonable," he said.

Students would not need to prove
genuine financial need, or give any in-
dication of income level, to be able to
make use of the A&S money allocated
for campaign finance.

"Public finance [of campaigns] makes
sense when everyone takes the money," Haas said. Students would be paying for a
"clean campaign process," he said.

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Exploring beauty abroad

A closer look is taken at what the word 'beauty' means in other cultures, particularly Spanish and Indian.

Taylor Gaudens
Contribution Writer

Traveling is easier for Americans these days, but it can affect the rest of the world in different ways. Two worldly, well-traveled people—USFSP Spanish Professor Ana Herrero and USFSP anthropology student Nora Gaunt—have learned, and continue to learn, new things about perceptions of beauty from their travels.

The American perspective on outward appearance, in general, varies by household. Some families place a lot of weight on how you put yourself together, no matter the age. Herrero said the same holds true for women in Spanish cultures. First impressions are important.

"You never know who you will run into. The way you look is the way you will be treated," Herrero said.

From her travels in India, Gaunt has found that women "get all decked out" and put on their best jewelry, and non-permanent designs on their skin for special occasions, she said.

"It's like putting on your good shoes," she said.

Herrero sees the way beauty is perceived in America as "kind of distasteful," she said. She sees a mentality of competition and a domination of materialism among today's youth that she thinks is "a little bizarre," Herrero said.

"A lot of people roll their eyes at the U.S. Our country has a bad rap for U.S. ideals," Gaunt said. "Our ideals are somewhat out of whack."

Gaunt said that when Americans, particularly those with lighter skin tones, travel to small, remote villages, the act of being on American foreign land suggests "I have more money than you.

When it comes to body type, some South American women have body types with "more meat, health and curves," Herrero said.

"I felt like I was the American type, skinny, but healthy looking," Herrero said of when she moved to the U.S.

Hispanic women are more "willing to accept a couple extra pounds," she said.

Herrero overheard a conversation at a Colombian-American salon where women around the age of 30 talked about having navel tattoos and procedures to have children, essentially undoing the reason for the surgery.

Certain attitudes about plastic surgery—from reality star Heidi Montag's plastic obsession to plastic surgery on high school students going under the knife—scare Herrero.

She feels the parents of teens are compensating for something they lack, in an attempt to prove themselves to society. Herrero believes the responsibility of self-image relies more on parents than young girls.

"Girls take image seriously and, especially of what the mothers think of themselves," she said.

In India, Gaunt saw many ads for skin lightening creams, a direct reflection of Western influence. She believes there is a line between experiencing a culture and exploiting it. When Americans travel to secluded towns, "the whole entire community changes because of exposure to the Western world," she said.

People travel for different reasons, but dressing appropriately for the country and culture you are visiting is important. Before she packs, Gaunt researches acceptable clothing, cultural taboos, what to say and what not to say, keeping in mind that religion plays an important role in many cultures.

"Make it clear that you think their culture is important and worthwhile," Gaunt said. "It's common courtesy," Gaunt said.

Each country and culture has its own perception of beauty, and what makes people happy. In Herrero's mind, Spain has the best perspective on beauty.

"Spanish women are consumers of products...[with] skin, it's not so much about the façade, it's about the healthy mentality of having good skin," Herrero said.

"The ideal of beauty is also psychological, not altering [the] self in an unnatural way," Gaunt said. "It's hard to find a group of people who don't have that issue at all. Every country has its own problems."

She believes the people of Costa Rica are "truly happy," but "you can't look at people and decide what [is] going on inside their heads," she said.

The Cackling Hen: Defining "spoof" for fools

Robbie Crowley
Campus & Beyond Editor

The Cackling Hen has resurrected. Chick-fil-A thought they could silence me, but I used one of my many body doubles to fool them. And since those body doubles are rubber chickens, that must have been a cheesy batch of chicken sandwiches. But thankfully no one reported the chicken being any more rubbery than normal, so it was business as usual.

Now getting back to the reality of the column, I will remind our viewers that our last issue was the spoof issue in honor of April Fool's Day. I would say "readers," but audience reading skills are occasionally questionable. I don't want to exclude anyone who just likes the pictures. Chick-fil-A did not slaughter a fictional hen and no rubber chicken went into students' nuggets.

The spoof issue typically creates a buzz, and now that we have a website up and running, that buzz extended past our loyal viewers to a broader audience. Sure, it opened up a can of worms (generic brand due to the budget) for misunderstandings and outraged comments, but page hits went up, and this hen eats worms for breakfast.

The spoof issue is intended to be a silly escape from reality. We all need a form of escape—that's why movies, video games and "The Jersey Shore" are so popular. Although The Crow's Nest is not an example of a daily newspaper, some typical news can be repetitive—budget cuts, raised student fees, repeat. Imaginations can run wild in the spoof issue. Can you imagine if Britney Spears actually came to campus or if USFSF actually had a zoology program with giraffes and tigers on campus? They (yes, including Britney) would be a perfect addition to our corpse population.

On top of writing the spoopy Chick-fil-A article, I also wrote the spoof article on Britney Spears being our speaker at commencement. It was ideal for a spoof since "Britney Spears" and "commencement" mix as well as oil and water, or Britney singing a capella. But even the most absurd stories fooled a few viewers. This was my favorite email:

"Britney Spears at commencement? Please tell me that's a joke."

Signed,
An alumna
PS. Please tell me the same about Charlie Sheen.

First of all, this alumna should learn that both her email address and standard signature at the bottom reveal her full name to anyone she emails, so her coy attempt at anonymity was in vain. Secondly, yes, all the articles are supposed to be jokes, alumna. This is USFSF—or money invested in a new residence hall and a "new" logo. The Crow's Nest is one budget cut away from using cereal boxes for paper. Thanks for writing.

So, to this alumna and our other 12 loyal viewers, view on and keep commenting. But beware of next year's spoof issue. We will probably unintentionally outrage more of you with articles that don't have one grain of truth to them.

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The Musician Society becomes reality

Amanda Petrarca
Entertainment Editor

The Musician Society, one of USF St. Petersburg newest clubs, offers students the opportunity to play instruments or gain a general understanding of music. The Musician Society led by the club's president Alvin Walker was started to give students who are interested in playing instruments an opportunity to play instruments. "It was just the idea of bringing music together on campus," Walker said. "Music is such a strong passion of mine."

Mark Lombardi-Nelson, current SG senator and 2011-12 vice president-elect, helped put together the drive to actually start forming the club.

"We're doing this because there is a lot of people here interested in music and that play music, but there's nothing holding that together," Walker said. "This organization is a way to create a family of sorts among the musicians."

The club seeks to unite musicians, said Vicky Salazar, event coordinator.

"There are a lot of people who like to play, but then not everyone has a drummer, a bassist, a guitarist and a singer to make up a band," Salazar said. "So we kind of just want to unite all of those people who like to play and just get together to jam out for a little bit."

Walker would like to see the club eventually expand to provide tutoring for students interested in joining but who don't know how to play an instrument.

"People in our organization can have the ability to teach them and build connections while amongst people that share the same passion," Walker said.

The club is now official, but starting it was a difficult and time-consuming process. "It was really hard actually. You have to do the whole constitution and I think we got denied around six or seven times," Salazar said. "And then finally, last Friday after submitting it four times, that day it was approved."

Walker and Salazar agree that the strenuous registration process was worth it, because the Musician Society is hosting the event "Balls Save Lives" before the semester ends.

"It's going to be a blood drive with Music Saves Lives. And then towards the end of the blood drive we're going to have a live concert," Salazar said. "We plan on having local bands that a lot of people know such as Mighty Mongo and Paint the Town Red. We're still trying to get a lot of other bands."

They will also raffle off prizes during the event—two free concert tickets from Jannus Live, and various gift cards.

Students interested in getting involved with "Balls Save Lives" or becoming a member of the organization can attend a weekly meeting, Mondays at 5 p.m. and Wednesdays at 2 p.m. in the Davis Lounge.

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Racing toward a dream

Greg Lindberg
Sports Editor

He competes in races. He can move up to 40 mph. If you don’t look fast enough, you might not see him go by. That’s because nothing gets in his way.

On March 23, Josh George, a Paralympic wheelchair racer, told his inspirational story to a small yet admiring group at USF St. Petersburg. The gold medal winner talked about his life and career as an athlete.

“The word ‘can’t’ isn’t really a negative term,” he said. “It’s only an expression.”

At age 4, George suffered a fall from 12 stories up in a high-rise condo in Washington, D.C. He landed on his legs and was immediately paralyzed from the chest down.

“My injury came when I was so young that I didn’t know any better,” he said, adding that his wheelchair was a “fun toy to play with” when he first started using one.

Instead of letting the accident bring the family down, his parents were determined that their son could still be active. He got involved in wheelchair athletics when he was 8 years old. He later attended the University of Illinois on a basketball scholarship and earned a degree in journalism.

George won gold and silver medals for the United States at the 2008 Summer Paralympics in Beijing, calling them a “physical representation of a goal I had.” The gold was in the 100-meter T53 event while the silver came in the 800-meter T53 race. Four years earlier, he captured two bronze medals at the Paralympics in Athens. The 27-year-old said that just because he won these extraordinary awards, that doesn’t mean his goals in life have been accomplished.

“There is always more to strive for,” he said.

The Paralympic Games is an international competition of athletes with disabilities held right after the Summer and Winter Olympics in the same venues. It is separate from the Special Olympics, which is geared toward those with mental disabilities. The 2008 Paralympics were so popular that they drew sold-out crowds of 92,000 people each day.

When racing, George uses a custom chair made of aluminum alloy that has three wheels. He positions himself as if he is kneeling and “punches” the wheels with his hands in rubber gloves. He can even climb stairs in the wheelchair. To prepare for events, he does weight training and works out his chest, upper back and arms, all of which provide the power he needs for speed and endurance. He is already looking forward to the 2012 Paralympics in London.

Other countries are more “forward-thinking” when it comes to the perception of disabilities, George said. The Paralympics are televised in Canada and parts of Europe, but receive minimal coverage in the U.S. There is a “stigma” about those with physical disabilities in the U.S., George said. People immediately want to help these individuals without asking whether they need assistance, which can make them feel even more unable to do things.

While at an airport recently, George was seated near Mariano Rivera, the long-time New York Yankees pitcher. Everyone was looking at him in his wheelchair and paid no attention to the well-known baseball star.

Jovanna Guvvara, an assistant in the multicultural affairs office, put on the event. It was one of several diversity events Guvvara has organized.

“We wanted to bring him in to show a different side of what diversity means,” she said.

La-Tarri Canby, the assistant director of multicultural affairs and programming, was impressed by George’s message.

“It really made me take a step back and evaluate some of the things that I’ve been making excuses for,” she said. “He definitely achieved what he came here to do—to make us focus not on the things we can’t do but on the things we can do.”

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Letter to the editor: “Jokes can be damaging”

In the last issue of The Crow’s Nest, an article about Manny Ramirez, the Tampa Bay Rays outfielder who was forced to serve a 50 game suspension for illicit use of a hormone typically given to women. The article, “Now Battling: Aso Ramirez,” satirically claims that “a recent physical exam has indicated that the drug will turn Ramirez into a female at some point in the near future.”

Though Ramirez is not transgender, the article is wrought with transphobic jokes. These ill-conceived jokes—very possibly unintentional—betray the transgender community and undermine the fundamental principles of respect and courtesy at the heart of athletics.

Sports have come a long way since Jackie Robinson stepped up to the plate for the Brooklyn Dodgers and Billy Jean King won the epic “Battle of the Sexes.” Nonetheless, biases against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender athletes continue to be endemic in the extended athletic community. For example, an NFL, NBA or MLB player has felt the freedom to publicly identify as gay or bisexual during his career. Negative recruiting tactics have been reported on some women’s college teams, where coaches allegedly urge prospective athletes to avoid teams rumored to have players who are lesbians. Furthermore, transgender athletes face tremendous obstacles when seeking to compete with persons of their gender, often being forbidden to compete or forced to step their transitions.

Despite these profound inequalities, many athletes, coaches, parents, sports journalists, fans and other participants oppose homophobia and transphobia in sports. The nature of athletics cultivates people—LGBT and straight—who value diversity, camaraderie and dignity. Every time we step into an arena or onto a playing field we have an opportunity to pursue victory through unity, and, by doing so with attention to the harms of anti-LGBT attitudes, we will leave those prejudices and inequities behind.

As a heterosexual Division 1 college coach and competing athlete, I am compelled to respond to The Crow’s Nest article—not because I can’t take a joke, but because these jokes are damaging and present an important moment for the sports community to think critically about our words and actions and to move forward in strength.

Hudson Taylor

Hudson Taylor is a wrestling coach at Columbia University, a competitive athlete and founder of Athlete Ally, a sports nonprofit to combat homophobia and transphobia.
Rule changes were main issue at Grand Prix

Rob Bibelhauser
Contributing Writer

Every year, the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg offers USF St. Petersburg students a front-row seat to the Indy Racing League’s first event of the season. The 2011 rendition of the race saw some immediate effects of new rules implemented by officials with the IndyCar Series. They were enacted to encourage a better show for the fans since some believe NASCAR is more exciting than the IndyCar circuit. The biggest change is to have side-by-side starts to the races. In previous years, drivers would line up single-file in the position they placed during qualifying. This year, they are right next to each other at the start.

When the Grand Prix kicked off, there was not enough room on the track, resulting in a major crash that netted drivers Helio Castroneves, Ryan Briscoe, Mike Conway, Oriol Servia and Marco Andretti, the grandson of racing legend Mario Andretti, had to have his car removed from the track by a tow truck.

"That's what happens when you try to imitate NASCAR. Our cars have too much power. It creates disasters. It's good for the fans, it's not so good for [the drivers]," 24-year-old Andretti said as his Honda-powered Dallara was taken away.

Dario Franchitti was this year's champion after narrowly escaping the five-car pileup in the first turn of the first lap. Franchitti grabbed the lead from pole sitter and 2010 champ Will Power, leading for 94 out of the 100 laps on his way to the winner’s circle.

Even Franchitti recognized the issues with the new changes and said team owners were in favor of them.

"There are probably a few of them sitting there scratching their heads just looking at bills for carbon fiber," he said, "and going, 'Why didn't I ever think of that?'"

Frustrated after having won the pole but failing to win back-to-back St. Petersburg races, Power was not sold on the new rules, either.

"I wouldn't call it successful," he said.

"The problem is they have so many cars bunched in such a tight space. I think this is just going to continue every race ... people getting knocked out every single restart."

Other subplots of the race included the emergence of fourth-place finisher Simona De Silvestro. The 22-year-old Swiss driver teamed up with new engineer Brent Harvey just before the race.

"I think we made the right choices," she said. "When he talks to me on the radio, he's really calming me down, so I think we'll make a good team."

St. Petersburg native Nick Andries, now in his second season of the Mazda Series, competed in the Star Mazda Series event this year and placed 17th out of 18. Andries, a St. Petersburg College mechanical engineering major, drives for Clearwater-based Team Pelfrey and scored four top-10 finishes during his cookie-cutter campaign.

The Grand Prix consists of a street course with 14 turns and a crossing near Residence Hall One. Skylar Reina, a sophomore at USF, attended race events on the first day.

"My dad and I were pretty big race fans, so we had to check it out," he said, adding that the noise wasn't "too bad."

Loud noise from the race was audible throughout downtown St. Petersburg during most of the events. While eating lunch on Central Avenue or studying in the library on campus, the sounds of racecars permeated the area. For those who didn't mind the noise, rooftops provided a cheap seat for amateur photographers and even tailgaters looking to catch a view.

Regardless of whether the race was better than last year, the Indy Racing League is in a transition period. The league's efforts to increase fan excitement have so far resulted in frustrated drivers. However, it is still too soon to make any major assumptions about how the new rules will impact the sport.

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PHOTOS BY AIMEE ALEXANDER / THE CROW'S NEST

Ryan Briscoe, of Team Penske, right, makes a pit stop on Day 3 of the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.

Dario Franchitti took the lead on lap 2, edging out driver Will Power in lap 99 by about 7 seconds. Franchitti (inset), first place winner of the 2011 Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Franchitti, a native of Edinburgh, Scotland, also won the 2010 Indianapolis 500.