Grant furthers oil spill research

By Emily Wehunt
Staff Reporter

When the BP oil spill, also referred to as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, hit the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, USF’s College of Marine Science partnered with other institutions and began research within days.

Now, two large grants have been awarded to the College of Marine Science. One for $20.2 million is from the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI), and one for $4.5 million is from the National Fish Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).

The spill was a result of an oil rig that exploded off the coast of Louisiana upon completion, killing 11 people. An estimated 170 million gallons of oil infested the waters and over 8,000 species were killed within the first six months, according to the National Wildlife Foundation. USF began research following the incident, resulting in federal grants.

Both grants will go toward continuing research on the effects of the largest oil spill in the history of the United States, but they each provide a separate purpose. Steven Murawski, a USF biological oceanographer, is the principal investigator for these grant funded projects.

The BP oil company paid out billions of dollars to organizations assisting in the "Gulf Coast Recovery," and the money has gone toward a number of different places, including restoration, response and cleanup, claims and settlements, and damage assessment projects, according to BP’s website.

GoMRI, an independent research group, was given $500 million from BP. The group’s purpose is to study the impact the spill had on the environment and public health and to provide funding to research institutions to assist with research projects.

USF’s grant from GoMRI will be used to continue research through C-IMAGE—Center for Integrated Modeling and Analysis of Gulf Ecosystems—which was created by USF in 2012. C-IMAGE is comprised of 13 universities, both national and international.

The C-IMAGE project will continue to study the effects the spill...
**USF among first oil spill responders**

Continued from p.1

had on the Gulf’s ecosystem, and will research what would happen if an event like this were to happen again.

The single $20.2 million grant is the largest the college has received for research on the oil spill. In the same week of receiving that grant, the College of Marine Science received another from NFWF for $4.5 million.

This grant also came from BP funding, who through plea agreements was subjected to provide NFWF $2.5 billion, which is to be used to fund projects that will benefit the Gulf.

The grant the college received from NFWF will be used over a three-year span and will provide necessary funds for a two-part project. The project’s purpose is to build a base map of the waters in West Florida through the use of an underwater sonar, and through a new high-tech camera system the college developed called C-BASS (Camera-Based Survey Assessment System).

“The offshore area in West Florida isn’t mapped very well,” Murawski said. “These are prime habitats for a number of the species that we are all interested in, like red snapper and grouper.”

Murawski says that mapping out this area will add to the base of what is known substantially. C-BASS will be attached to the back of a vessel, R/V Weatherbird II, and will sent to the ocean floor to record high-definition footage. C-BASS will be used to help determine the population of fish in certain areas.

The team, which will include scientist and post-doctoral grad students, plans to go out on 12 expeditions that will each be about two weeks long. The project will begin next month.

**Tampa student barred from St. Petersburg graduation**

Continued from p.1

Mahaffey Theater because “it was against policy.”

However, when he went to apply for graduation online earlier this year, he was prompted with the option to choose which campus he wanted to graduate from.

According to Carr, he received an email from the director of commencement at USFSP, Yoli Lanuza, which informed him that his request had been denied and he would not be able to graduate from the St. Petersburg campus.

“We wrote the official form to fill out for graduation let me choose,” Carr said. “So I figured I had a case to make, but apparently not.”

Carr also contacted the commencement coordinators at Tampa, who he said were a little more sympathetic.

“I really didn’t even get a straight answer from the people in St. Pete,” Carr said. “I got more of a straight answer from the people in Tampa.”

**Handbook to improve transition for new SG members**

By Jack Moscone

Lazar Anderson, student government’s assistant chief of staff, is in the process of writing a transition manual for SG. This manual, according to Anderson, is meant to smooth out the problems that SG has regarding the proper instruction of new and returning members.

Anderson, an experienced SG member, will use his knowledge to educate members on how to run SG more effectively. Prior to his role as assistant chief of staff, Anderson held the position of chief of Executive Operations; although, he claims starting out in SG is no easy task.

“Because Student Life only provides us with so much information on how to run SG, many new members, including myself at the time, are given little instruction and are forced to learn on their feet,” said Anderson.

“Learning about SG procedures and positions was a challenge for Anderson. But after an extended period of learning in the student organization, he feels equipped to leave behind a guide for future leaders.

“During my first six months in SG, I felt essentially useless,” Anderson said. “The purpose of the manual is to give members more guidance and instruction.”

The guide will help newcomers and current members understand how SG works and how to be an effective member. Instead of not knowing their place, how to contribute and how things work, members will now know how SG runs from the get-go.

The reason behind the manual is simple: Student Government will become stronger if transition issues and confusion are eliminated, Anderson said. He strives to establish smoother transition by creating the manual before his time at USF St. Petersburg is over.

Already graduated with a B.A. in business and working on a B.A. in entrepreneurship, Anderson is graduating once more after this semester. He hopes to leave behind a fully functioning and adequate SG.
Trial over SG financial authority delayed

Originally scheduled for Nov. 20, the trial received an extended two-week discovery period to gather material pertaining to the trial.

By Jeffrey Zanker
Crow’s Nest Contributor

The James Scott v. Student Government trial is postponed until further notice after pre-trial conferences. The case involves newly elected senator and former student body president James Scott against Student Government’s financial authority.

Scott sent a request for trial in September accusing SG of preventing proper budgeting for a bill titled “Beyond Sustainability” last June, which would approve the building of an energy monitoring system for campus structures. He holds Jozef Gherman, chief financial officer, responsible for withholding the bill’s budget by violating SG constitution. Senate Pro-Tempore Jared Pietniak is also on trial for being Gherman’s supporter.

The trial was scheduled for Nov. 20. But Stephen Bird, attorney general deputy, the defendants’ attorney, requested a motion of continuance, which gives both parties a two-week discovery period to gather their material for the trial. Bird has been the defense attorney for a week after Melanie Mercado was fired from her position as attorney general.

The Clean Energy and Resource Conservation Commission, who formed the idea for an energy monitoring system, would establish the Green Revolving Fund, which supports the projects by reducing resources usage and reusing savings for future projects. Scott said it would make USFSP financially sustainable.

The case started in June when Gherman found that the monitoring system budget wasn’t spent before June 30. The date marked the end of USFSP fiscal year. This caused CERCC’s spending authority to expire. The original request got lost and the money was swept back to the reserves.

Gherman used Florida statutes to support his action, which states that undistributed money remaining at the end of the fiscal year is carried over to the activity and service fund until the next fiscal year. Scott found his action a violation of SG’s constitution Article 1 Section II, which states “The powers and responsibilities of Student Government... shall not conflict with University Regulations or any other municipal, state or federal law.” He argues that Gherman overstepped his constitutional authority. He finds the money is still accessible, but needs to resolve the issue with SG.

“The project was approved fairly last semester,” Scott said. “But Gherman asserted that the state laws are supposed to be reinterpreted in his own terms. The state law is not clear. I think the case’s arguments is more about how it was funded than about law.”

Gherman finds Scott’s argument valid, but just a matter of opinion. “It’s a ridiculous notion that the opinion of just one person should be binding,” Gherman said. “He doesn’t realize that there are laws to be abided and kept from breaking.”

Both parties are to submit their material (witnesses, evidence) for the case by Dec. 3.

Class choices concern English majors

By Chelsea Abrams
Crow’s Nest Contributor

Some English majors are noticing limited class options for their spring class schedule. The departure of some visiting professors in the program is cause for the lack of options. Part of the reasoning behind this is a departure of a few visiting professors. Dr. Armstrong, one of these professors, finishes her visiting term at the end of this semester.

“By the end of next spring, spring of 2015, the English department will be down three visiting assistant professors in literature,” Robinson said. “My current and former students are asking me what courses... in 19th century British Lit will be taught in the future, and I honestly don’t know what to tell them.”

Dr. Julie Armstrong, the Literature Program Coordinator, said that seniors registering for classes have nothing to be panicked about. “We pretty much run the same amount of courses each term, give or take,” said Armstrong.

Armstrong said classes run based on enrollment. It’s possible fewer classes may be offered because the number of English majors are down.

“Numbers (of majors) in general fluctuate, so that is no big deal. We tend to have somewhere between 130 and 150 majors,” Armstrong said, “and those 20 can make the difference between several courses running and not running.”

Dr. Armstrong also advised that English majors should not wait until their very last semester and hope that courses are available.

Dr. Thomas Hallock, head of the department of Verbal and Visual Arts, said that the English department will be filling several new positions starting next fall.

Dr. Armstrong mentioned that the advisers are always happy to work with any student who is having trouble.

Students, faculty discuss speech codes

By Emily Tinti
Staff Reporter

Speech code scrutiny continues as students grow mindful of the controversial regulations currently in place at USF St. Petersburg.

The Crow’s Nest reported on the speech codes in an article three weeks ago. The codes were criticized by the organization the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, which says the codes violate the First Amendment Rights of students, staff and faculty members at the university.

The FIRE is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit group founded in 1999 by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Boston civil liberties attorney. It says its mission is the protection of fundamental rights on college campuses. Its boards of directors and advisers are a who’s who of people prominent in education, business and the law.

On Nov. 18, the USFSP community was welcome to discuss the rationality behind speech codes. Professor Deni Elliott, who specializes in ethics and professional life, and attorney and ethics professor Dr. David Steiner hosted the conversation, while students voiced their opinions.

After an hour of deliberation, the widely held belief seemed to be that while upholding these policies on campus clashed with the first amendment, they could minimize conflict and hold people accountable for offensive behavior. Those who did not completely agree or disagree with the codes discussed particular situations where they could help or hinder.

Many students, no matter their position, could identify several advantages to having speech codes implemented on campus, including sophomore Jade Levy.

“I think the biggest benefit of the codes is that they give students and faculty a safety net,” said Levy. “If anyone was to get bullied at our campus, they would know the person bullying them will have consequences for their hurtful words.”

Other students argued that responding to disrespectful words was a more effective measure than punishment. They recognized that the campus is occupied by adults who should be able and willing to cease negative behavior. As Professor Elliott put it, “more words, not less.” They acknowledged that in “the real world” consequential action does not take place unless the behavior crosses the line, so why should that change when students step foot on USFSP grounds?

Dr. Steiner chimed in to discuss the legality of the codes. He said students “must first be advised of consequences.” Then, if an individual’s actions go against speech codes, the behavior should be looked at and consequences carried out in a “neutral, unbiased form.”

He further expressed how the university community should conduct itself without the need for speech codes, believing the “Golden Rule” is important here: do unto others as you would want them to do to you. Personal interpretations and relationships can muddle the situation, thus making subjective violation consequences difficult.

“Best case scenario: We should act like we won’t offend anybody even if they’re the most offensive person,” said Steiner.

Casey Peterson, an academic program specialist in the department of Journalism and Media Studies, asked if speech codes were preventative or reactionary measures. He questioned if students were actually aware of the codes, located in the Student Code of Conduct, enough for them to actually prevent confrontive behavior. Or, if the policies were simply meant to punish it.

What the argument comes down to is whether or not a place of higher education, where thoughts and ideas are supposed to be discussed and explored, should be limiting speech.

Jozef Gherman, junior and chief financial officer for student government, feels the impact of speech codes depends on one’s interpretation, and he is not in favor of their presence on campus.

“I think it is sad that places of higher learning across the United States that such codes are being established and to a point where some campuses even have a designated free speech zone,” Gherman said.

Most students could see both sides, many creating examples of when and why speech codes would be appropriate; for instance, when a person intends to humiliate another, coerce someone, or in the case of plagiarism.

“I think the codes are realistic because they shape you to be a good citizen,” said Levy.

Learn more

To see the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education’s evaluation of USFSP speech codes, visit http://www.thefire.org/schools/university-of-south-florida-at-saint-petersburg/.
By Amanda Steffing  
Staff Reporter

Christmas specials to me were always the equivalent of Saturday morning cartoons. As jolly as Santa always looked, I was always confused about the behaviors of the characters that danced across the screen singing about bells and mangers. Perhaps I was just a skeptical child, but I think I was onto something. Mull over these Christmas curiosities and memories with me:

How the Grinch Stole Christmas So let me get this straight-singing villagers have the ability to make a heart grow physically? What if the Grinch’s ribcage couldn’t handle the rapid increasing size of his heart? Most importantly—why is he GREEN?

A Charlie Brown Christmas I really want the Peanuts to teach me their dance moves. These pint-sized performers put Taylor Swift and the cast of Dancing with the Stars to shame when it comes to their signature styles. But on second thought, don’t they seem a little harsh on Charlie’s taste in Christmas decor? I love the twig, and about most of America owns a replica from Target.

Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer Whoa. I didn’t realize how many jerks there were at the North Pole. How is that they aren’t getting coal?! I guess when you’re the big man, you can excuse yourself from the naughty list. Though karma is a b-- isn’t that why it was a foggy Christmas Eve for you? Check yourself before you wreck yourself, Santa.

Santa Claus is Coming to Town So the Burgermeister Meisterburger was clearly just in need of some high quality toys. And maybe some hugs. But what happened to this cranky, accented butthead to ban toys? You trip over enough yo-yos and that does it.

Frosty the Snowman I understand how happy kids get with magic, but isn’t singing and dancing with a snowman a bit odd? A child Amanda would have run away screaming at the sight in real life. He’s wielding a broom, too… isn’t that a bit creepy? It’s like an icy scarecrow…

The Sanding Ovations Master Sand Sculpting Competition and Music Festival was hosted behind the Bilmar Beach Resort on Treasure Island beach from Nov. 18 to Nov. 22. Sand sculptures were illuminated each evening with colored lights to accentuate each unique piece.

Jonathan Bouchard from Montreal, Canada won first place and people’s choice with Love Never Dies. Two half-buried skeletons were sculpted out of sand. They lie next to each other, looking into their empty eye sockets as they held one another in a loving embrace.

Chris Gunito from Key West, Fla. won second place with The Ripper. A giant top hat, one I thought of as the mad hatter’s hat, was sculpted with and huge mouth held open with wines. A person was grasping on for life as she was being swallowed by the hat. Unfortunately the teeth collapsed, but it is still a stunning sculpture.

Sue McGrew from Tacoma, Washington won third place and sculptors’ choice with Vertigo. Figures of women were sculpted with an opening in the middle I interpreted as the entrance to reality from the spiritual world. On the other side, a giant face protruded with an opening in the middle I interpreted as the entrance to reality from the spiritual world. On the other side, a giant face protruded from a spiral design. The eyes were carved open. I interpreted as the eyes are the window to the soul. Funk was brought to the beach with a “funk-a-delic” performance by Holey Miss Moley, Rev. Funky D and Cope on Friday. Bands like the Black Honkeys and Rocket Man Show on Saturday. T.C. Carr & Bolts of Blue got the crowd dancing with the blues on Sunday.

According to the Sanding Ovations Facebook page, the event was almost cancelled because Treasure Island “neighbors” attempted to stop all events from occurring on the beach with no beach parking. A recent ruling by the Pinellas County Circuit Court determined that a limited number of vehicles could be parked on the beaches during events. Sanding Ovations posted that if cars were not allowed on the beach, the sand used for the sculptures could not be delivered and they would not have the stage, beer trucks and vendors.

The organization said that Bilmar Beach Resort was a great neighbor for their support in allowing events on the beach for the festivities. Sculptures will be on display and illuminated in the evenings until Jan. 10, 2015.

By Caitlin Ashworth  
Crow’s Nest Contributor

A passion for sand art brought together world-class sand sculptors for three days of fun and blues music and artistic competition.

The Sanding Ovations Master Sand Sculpting Competition and Music Festival was held behind the Bilmar Beach Resort on Treasure Island beach from Nov. 18 to Nov. 22. Sand sculptures were illuminated each evening with colored lights to accentuate each unique piece.

When the sculptures were all adopted at birth. “I always say I’m thankful for my parents giving us all a wonderful life. Cheesy, but it’s true,” said Jenkins. Jenkins’ favorite holiday tradition precedes the presents. Before anyone opens a gift, they tell the family something they are thankful for. “The children can say ‘I’m thankful for my dog,” a tradition started by his grandparents.

Mark Jenkins, 22, celebrates with a pretty large crowd. He is the youngest of seven siblings, all still living in Florida. He and his siblings were all adopted at birth. “I always say I’m thankful for my parents giving us all a wonderful life. Cheesy, but it’s true,” said Jenkins. Jenkins’ favorite holiday tradition precedes the presents. Before anyone opens a gift, they tell the family something they are thankful for. “The children can say ‘I’m thankful for my dog,” a tradition started by his grandparents.

Some USFSP students celebrate the holidays with friends. Noora Khalil, 21, usually spends her winter break working. Being a full-time student, she likes to take advantage of the extra availability to pick up a few more shifts. However, she does take time out to celebrate. Khalil enjoys a white-elephant party and gift exchange with friends.

IF YOU GO:
According to the Sanding Ovations Facebook page, Sloppy Joe’s Restaurant is offering a free drink to everyone who takes a picture in front of the sculptures.

Holiday traditions around USFSP

Zach Mills, 21, also enjoys movies on Christmas. His personal favorite is “The Polar Express.” Wang’s family usually eats their Christmas meal at the family restaurant, Zen Forrest. “The spelling is intentional,” Wang laughed. Wang’s family does not have turkey or ham every year; the holiday meal is never the same. After the meal is finished, his family reads “Walter the Farting Dog,” a tradition started by his grandparents.

Victor Wang, 21, also enjoys movies on Christmas. His personal favorite is “The Polar Express.” Wang’s family usually eats their Christmas meal at the family restaurant, Zen Forrest. “The spelling is intentional,” Wang laughed. Wang’s family does not have turkey or ham every year; the holiday meal is never the same. After the meal is finished, his family reads “Walter the Farting Dog,” a tradition started by his grandparents.

By Tierney Tran  
Crow’s Nest Contributor

Holiday season is fast approaching and though Florida isn’t likely to see a white winter, we still have our traditions.

Sue McGrew from Tacoma, Wash. won third place and sculptors’ choice with Vertigo.
Review: Harpeth Rising

The band has been together for five years. They are a classically trained group that united at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. “To be in a folk band, you have to have a heightened sense of adventure,” said Reed-Lunn as she told a story about the band being caught in a Utah dust storm. Reed-Lunn says she went to school for the viola, but learned how to play the banjo on Youtube. “You gotta do the Sinatra,” Di Meglio said, mimicking her father’s Brooklyn accent. The girls got the crowd clapping when they performed a cover of Nancy Sinatra’s song. These Boots are Made for Walkin’.

Greenberg grew up hearing her father’s singing voice and watched him play. Greenberg said her parents have a farm and her dad uses the cows as an excuse to never leave. Every Harpeth Rising set includes a song dedicated to him. The band collaborated with Greenberg’s father, David Greenberg, for an entire album and together produced End of the World. “Folk music can be very dark. As long as you cloak it in chords, you can get away with it,” said Greenberg.

Harpeth Rising dove into a new genre with an instrumental version of Led Zeppelin’s Stairway to Heaven. The lyrics sang through the strings as the girls covered the classic. Their song, Four Days More, was used for a People’s Climate March, where hundreds to thousands of people gather to call for climate action. The song captures the passion of a group of people getting ready for a rebellion.

Harpeth Rising’s fourth album, Tales from Jackson Bridge, reached No. 6 on the Folk DJ Charts in October 2013 and No. 15 on the Euro-Americana Charts in March 2014. Harpeth Rising said the album expands on their blues, Latin and rock influences and adds some flavor of Texas Swing and Gypsy Jazz.

Beer to celebrate the season

By The Crow’s Nest Staff and Contributors

Staff Reporters

Take a taste. If the blast of weekly winter chills, incessant ringing of Salvation Army Bells, screaming shoppers jousting for Princess Elsa dolls, and tree-scented candles don’t set the seasonal mood, perhaps our picks for beers will lighten their mood.

The Drop Dead “Gourd-eous” Pumpkin Ale

The brown ale surprised with rich, pumpkin flavor. Unlike the rich, heavy ale drinking experience, the Drop Dead is a limited-time imperial porter. The Ale and the Witch described the brew as “oak aged, dry hopped, dark ale porter.” The beer is strong (8.8 percent) and dark, served in a chalice with very little head. It is heavy, but not as heavy as most imperial porters I’ve tried. It has a strong taste of coffee with chocolate and hops, but not too strong for religious porter and stout drinkers. I recommend The Dark Woods to craft beer drinkers and Cigar City fans. To some, imperial porters and stouts are more of an acquired taste. To others, it is holy water from the fountains of heaven. — Caitlin Ashworth

An Anderson Valley Winter Solstice

This Winter Warmer-style seasonal ale delivers a sugar-plum punch to the taste buds. It has a warm, coffee-colored body and enough malt and fruit sweetness to satisfy a liquid-dessert craving without being overwhelming. At 6.9 percent alcohol by volume, this brew isn’t recommended for session-drinking, but it would make an ideal chaser after a slice of pecan, pumpkin or sweet potato pie. So bask in the warmth of a campfire and enjoy a pint of Winter Solstice while King Diamond’s No Presents for Christmas helps spread the holiday cheer. Merry Christmas. — Mark Wolfenbarger

Ace Pear Cider

Have you ever thought, “Hmm...I would love to drink but I also want the taste of a watermelon Jolly Rancher in my mouth.” Ace Pear Cider has your back. The cider is light and sweet during every moment of taste. The predominant flavor of it is something of an artificial watermelon. While this isn’t a bad thing, it can be a little off putting having such a summer taste in the winter. But ultimately it’s a great thing: the pear cider will hit just the right spot for someone looking for a drink to remind them that they are in Florida, or that their night has ended and it’s time for dessert. — Thomas Boyd

For Christmas helps spread the holiday cheer. Merry Christmas. — Mark Wolfenbarger

By Angelina Bruno

This rendition of “Go Tell It On the Mountain,” tells the story of Jesus’ birth in an unconventional way. Pentatonix is an a capella group that features the sheer power of the human voice and beat boxing to create a track that seriously impresses.

“All I Want For Christmas Is You” – Mariah Carey

The classic Christmas love song from the 1990’s is the true sing (and dance) of long delight for the holidays. Last holiday season the tune spent 15 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Christmas chart “Holiday 100.”

“Go Tell It On the Mountain” – Pentatonix

Despite her adult sounding voice, Brenda Lee’s song is a classic tune almost every knows. “Holiday 100,” Brenda Lee’s song is ranking right below Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas is You” on the Billboard chart “Holiday 100.” Brenda Lee’s song is a classic tune almost everybody knows. What listeners may not know? Despite her adult sounding voice, Brenda Lee was only 13 when she recorded this track in 1958.

“Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” – Kenny Chesney

This country star croons about his need of good tan, and a grilled Mahi Mahi and pina colada Christmas dinner on the beach. It sounds like Kenny needs to take a trip to St. Pete Beach.

“Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” – Brenda Lee

“Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” – Jack Johnson

Featuring the smooth voice of Jack Johnson, accompanied by his acoustic guitar skills, this song has a small twist at the end. Rudolph calls the other reindeer out for being mean to him and gets what he deserves, an apology. “Rudolph you know we’re sorry, we’re truly gonna try to change.”

By The Crow’s Nest Staff

“Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” – Brenda Lee

Playlist: Crank it up for Christmas

Beer to celebrate the season

By The Crow’s Nest Staff and Contributors

Staff Reporters

The nutmeg and cinnamon aren’t rich in the flavoring— in fact, the cinnamon is just the slightest twinge in aftertaste. It’s seasonal, so take a taste fast. — Amanda Starling

The Dark Woods

Cigar City Brewing’s The Dark Woods is a limited-time imperial porter. The Ale and the Witch described the brew as “oak aged, dry hopped, dark ale porter.” The beer is strong (8.8 percent) and dark, served in a chalice with very little head. It is heavy, but not as heavy as most imperial porters I’ve tried. It has a strong taste of coffee...
Editorial

A look back at this semester

Celebrating the good, remembering the bad, and looking toward improvements.

Fall 2014. It’s been a big semester for USF St. Petersburg.

The university made headlines at major local media outlets when it announced the strategic plan—which included the goal of increasing student enrollment from 4,700 to 10,000 students by 2024.

With the plan has come a host of exciting news, from discussions about new major offerings to the plan to reopen the campus pool in spring 2015.

The university has received several donations and grants. In September, the university announced its largest donation in history: $10 million to the college of business, now named the Kate Tiedemann College of Business.

Ground was broken on the new building for the business school, which is scheduled to begin construction in spring. Duke Energy gave the university $1 million to fund solar panels, now installed on the top of the parking garage. Other grants have stimulated research and growth.

The university has also received its share of negative press. Its decision not to host African journalists in the Edward R. Murrow program account of panic over Ebola drew ire from many media organizations. An opinion from Poynter’s Andrew Beaujon called the decision a “jelly-spined response.” The Huffington Post said the decision was made as a result of “Ebola panic.”

But needless to say, people are talking about USF St. Petersburg. Good or bad, at least the university’s name is out to the public.

At The Crow’s Nest, we believe it has been a good semester for USFSP. But if the university hopes to grow, expand and thrive, there are some problems it must address to best serve its students.

Parking. It’s been a persistent problem for the last few years, but this year, the problem has compounded. Many students show up late to class because they cannot find a parking spot. The city removed parking along Sixth Avenue S, resulting in a greater need for spots in the parking garage itself.

Students continue to complain about the parking problem, but the issue has been largely ignored by the university. There are plans in place to install another parking garage on campus, but it won’t be discussed in depth until the end of the spring. Students (and professors) need solutions sooner.

It is true that many universities struggle with parking problems. But USFSP is mid-sized and doesn’t deal with many of problems larger universities have to deal with. ‘All universities do it’ shouldn’t be an excuse.

Commencement. Many students are unhappy with the current commencement venue at the Mahaffey Theater, which only allows them to invite five people. Students have voiced this complaint to USFSP administration since early 2014, and they’ve received little more than verbal sympathy.

As the university grows, the space at the Mahaffey will become even tighter. The Crow’s Nest thinks the university should value the desires of their students over the university’s relationship with the Mahaffey.

Internet access. Internet in the residence halls and on other locations has been spotty all semester, largely due to the presence of illegal routers. While students are responsible for the routers, the university is also passive on the issue. They ask students to remove the routers, but nothing is done to enforce this request. Therefore, students who do not own routers are punished for abiding by the rules. At the 21st century university, weak Internet is not an option.

If the university can address the concerns of the students, it could be the first choice of many bright students in the future.

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The regulation of season’s greetings

You just can’t realistically enforce speech regulations during the holidays. Even if it is assuming to say “Merry Christmas!”

By Emily Tinti
Staff Reporter

It’s difficult to imagine holiday greetings being offensive, but it happens more so every year. Christmas basically takes over the entire month of December, and the majority of the Western world celebrates it in some way; secularly or religiously. “Merry Christmas!” has now become somewhat of a default way to acknowledge somebody.

In any case, a simple “Happy holidays!” is acceptable. It’s all-inclusive and unassuming of somebody’s culture or observance. It incorporates all winter holidays, so nobody can get offended. Or so we thought.

Several retailers such as Macy’s and Walmart have addressed this controversy by asking their employees to use the general phrase as opposed to “Merry Christmas!” Some people, however, have been offended by that change, arguing that speech cannot be censored, and one’s right to say “Merry Christmas” cannot be taken away.

While I personally think a general greeting is fair and do not see anything particularly wrong with it, I’m not offended when somebody uses one religion to wish me the best. Honestly, if a retail employee said “Happy Kwanzaa!” I would reply with a “Happy Kwanzaa to you, as well!” even though I don’t observe the holiday. I think people, unless otherwise instructed, will naturally express their season’s greetings according to their own culture.

On the other hand, I can understand how the default could affront somebody who doesn’t celebrate Christmas, especially since I have family and friends who don’t. You don’t typically hear The Maccabeats when you’re holiday shopping; it’s usually a widely recognized Christmas song, or some pop star’s auto-tuned rendition.

One could argue that shoppers are sentenced to two months of Christmas music, Christmas décor and Christmas presents flooding almost every store, so putting more of an emphasis on the holiday with a “Merry Christmas” is too much. I know people who actively participate in all things Christmas who get annoyed with the constant presence of Christmas.

You just can’t realistically enforce speech regulations during the holidays. Even if it is assuming to say “Merry Christmas!” it’s simply a positive greeting spoken out of holiday cheer.

I think generalizing sort of downplays the other winter holidays, like the week-long Kwanzaa celebration, or the eight nights of Hanukkah. But in the end, they’re all warm, thoughtful season’s greetings.

Emily Tinti, a sophomore majoring in mass communications, is the arts and life assistant. She can be reached at emilyfaithti@mail.usf.edu or on Twitter @emilyfaithti.

This holiday, shop local in St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg is in love with its local businesses.

By Amanda Starling
Staff Columnist

Sporting goods and records topped the list of Yelp’s St. Petersburg best local businesses, according to a report by the Tampa Bay Times. In a season of expanded festivities and bustle for the best gifts, it’s easy for many of us to hop in the station wagon and rush off to the mall.

But St. Petersburg is different. There’s a special loyalty that lurks in the shops’ corridors that draws so many of us to support the eclectic. We may not love our sports, but we love our shops.

We search for rare editions of classic literature on the shelves in Haslam’s (but not without greeting the cats perched atop stacks of books). We chat with the clerks and dream up the next outdoor adventure with the staff at Bill Jackson’s Shop for Adventure. We unearth vintage finds at ARTPool Gallery, and stick around for the events that spill into the Grand Central District. We refurbish what’s already beautiful and give second chance at the Paper Street Market.

St. Petersburg is in love with its local businesses. We’re not interested in commercial success but we thrive on finding that special something that anchors our homes, our interests, and even our tastes. Special seasons just heighten our thankfulness toward them. Sunday afternoons are the best time to visit El Cap, the classic burger joint off of Fourth Street and 35th Avenue. The locals claimer on top of worn barstools and chatter with greasy cheeseburgers and domestic drafts. If you ever want to feel the real St. Petersburg, take a seat at one of stone benches and wait for a round of hellos from the staff.

Find your community wandering past the fronts of galleries and record stores. The 600 Block is home to studio spaces for artists, who offer a lesson on creativity and energy that emanates from the walls of murals. Step inside of Planet Retro (ranked number two on Yelp’s list) at 2414 Central Ave. for the best selection of local and classic favorites across a spectrum of genres.

Are you hooked by your local business draw yet?

Plenty of voices have expressed fear for the EDGE District near Tropican Field if the Tampa Bay Rays were to depart. Sports are everything, they say, and the draw to the region would be lost. With splintering attendance at the stadium, I’ve watched more locals slide into the brewerries than the bleachers. St. Petersburgers sift through niche finds in eclectic shops.

But we love our businesses that much.

A pep talk for your finals week

Final projects, papers and exams are due and all you want to do is crawl into your bed and watch Netflix, but now is not the time. I repeat, NOW IS NOT THE TIME!

By Emily Wehunt
Staff Reporter

Here we are. The final two weeks of the semester are upon us. If you are like most college students, you are probably starting to freak out right about now... and if you aren’t, tell us your secret. Final projects, papers and exams are due and all you want to do is crawl into your bed and watch Netflix, but now is not the time. I repeat, NOW IS NOT THE TIME!

The EDGE District near Tropican Field if the Tampa Bay Rays were to depart. We’re not interested in commercial success but we thrive on finding that special something that anchors our homes, our interests, and even our tastes. Special seasons just heighten our thankfulness toward them. Sunday afternoons are the best time to

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play with puppies. Enough said.

Inhale, exhale. Bath and Body Works has a line of aromatherapy scents that are amazing, and if you stressed out individuals, there is one that is called stress relief. Infused with eucalyptus and spearmint, the smell of it helps you relax and think clearly. They have soaps, sprays and candles available, but I recommend the lotion.

Play with puppies. Enough said. Before you know it, these last weeks will be over and you will have a nice, long break ahead. Enjoy it.

Emily Wehunt, a senior majoring in mass communications, is the arts and life editor. She can be reached at ewehunt@mail.usf.edu or on Twitter @emilywehunt.

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Men’s Basketball AAC Standings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>CONF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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American Athletic Conference Standings

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<tr>
<td>x - SMU</td>
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USFSP Baseball Club Spring Schedule (Home Games Only)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
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<td>FSU</td>
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<td>NC State</td>
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<td>Campbell</td>
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<td>Clemson</td>
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<td>IMG</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
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USF Basketball

The men’s team has started the season 5-1, holding a better record than UCF, UF and FSU basketball.

USF Football

The Bulls were shutout for the first time at home in school history in their final game of the season against UCF, 16-0. The Bulls are 4-2-2 all-time in the series against UCF.

USFSP baseball falls to UF in season finale

By Andrew Caplan

Staff Reporter

The 16-game fall schedule for the baseball club is complete and they are already shifting gears for the spring schedule.

The USF St. Petersburg baseball club posted a 9-7 record in the fall and saw a dramatic increase in the level of competition after having a 18-5 record last year. The club lost their fall-season finale 6-5 to the University of Florida, who are ranked No. 5 among club baseball programs.

The team will migrate to Huggins-Stengel Field at 5200 Fifth St. N and Campbell Park at 601 14th St. S for their 31-game scheduled starting in January. The club will be home for 22 of the games.

The club has seen an increase from local sponsors, heading to their second year as a club. Some of the club’s home games feature free food from The Tavern at Raybora, a restaurant located next to campus.

The club hopes to make a run at a national championship in the spring months, as well.

“We’re making a lot of progress,” Berger said. “Ultimately, the goal a few years down the road is to establish ourselves as one of the biggest and best club baseball programs in the country.”

The club has already shifted gears for the spring season. The team will welcome back several players, including their team captains, pitcher Reshard Clett, catcher Marvin Kloss and WR Davis.

By Andrew Caplan

Staff Reporter

While shoppers tackled each other for the best deals on Black Friday, the USF football team found reason to hold their heads high despite not qualifying for a bowl game.

Although they lost the “War on I-4” 16-0 to the University of Central Florida (8-4) in the season finale, the Bulls (4-8) accomplished feats not seen in nearly half a decade, some never seen.

In 2014, the Bulls doubled last year’s win total (2), had their fourth 1,000-yard rusher in school history (Marlon Mack), had their first wide receiver collect over 2,000 career yards (Andre Davis) and won their most conference games since 2010 (3).

The Bulls honored 20 players on Senior Day before they took the field for the last time in 2014, including their team captains, linebacker Reshard Clett, kicker Marvin Kloss and WR Davis.

“I appreciate them for helping to set the foundation of what the USF football program is going to be about,” Head Coach Willie Taggart said, talking about his departing seniors.

The team will welcome back many contributors next season.

Underclassmen, like Mack, shined in their short time under Taggart’s tutelage, who is still implementing the system at USF.

“A lot of people looking from the outside, they don’t know what it takes to build a program,” Davis said. “It’s definitely hard to get a program going, but Coach T definitely has the program going in the right way.”

Mack is a strong candidate for the American Athletic Conference’s freshman of the year. The running back averaged 86.7 rushing yards per game and scored nine times, more than doubling the Bulls’ rushing touchdowns from last season.

The USFSP baseball team plans to move more games over to Huggins-Stengel Field for the spring season.

Bulls shutout, celebrate season successes

Bulls shutout, celebrate season successes

Defensive end Demetrius Hill confronts the Knight’s quarterback Justin Holman. The game ended in a shutout from UCF.

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