Bill: Make St. Pete a branch campus

By Nancy McCann

L egislation that would ensure that USF St. Petersburg becomes a full branch campus under consolidation was narrowed in the state House of Representatives. If approved by lawmakers in both houses, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee would become branch campuses as defined by the region’s higher education accrediting agency once consolidation takes effect in July 2020. That means the two smaller campuses would have their own budgetary and hiring authority and their own faculty and administrative organization. The legislation has not been approved by the full House, however, and the same language is not in the Senate’s version of a broad higher education package. That leaves law in limbo as state lawmakers head into the final two weeks of the 2019 session – a stretch typically dominated by horse-trading and last-minute deals.

Why all the fuss about ‘preeminence’?

By Nancy McCann

W hen Pinellas County legislators led a move last spring to consolidate the three campuses of the USF system, their stated goal was simple: They wanted St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee to get some of the state’s “preeminence” money coming to Tampa. During the discussions that followed on how to implement consolidation, some administrators and professors in Tampa have stressed that maintaining USF Tampa’s newly won status as a preeminent state research university is paramount. One reason is USF system President Judy Genshaft. “Strengthening Florida preeminent university status for the (unified) University of South Florida is absolutely, absolutely our No. 1 goal and everything else falls in place with preeminence,” she said at a USF system Board of Trustees meeting on Jan. 14. But wait.

USF Tampa is getting $6.15 million in extra state funds in 2018-2019 for meeting the Legislature’s requirements for preeminence. That’s a tiny fraction of the Tampa campus’ operating budget of $851 million. And it’s small potatoes compared to the $79.6 million that Tampa is getting this year in what’s called performance-based funding. USF St. Petersburg’s share of that is about $8.3 million – which is more than Tampa’s preeminence funding. Moreover, preeminence money is subject to the whims of the Legislature every year. Under a working state budget proposed by the Florida House, USF Tampa’s share of preeminence money next year would be cut in half.

As term draws to close, SG falls apart

By Dylan Hart

F or weeks, controversy had simmered around Student Government. It approved a budget for 2019-2020 that increased its own allocation by 19 percent while slashing the money for other campus organizations. Its president threatened to cut off all funding for The Crow’s Nest in a short timeframe.

And while senators engaged in a battle over a proposal to create a new senate position, a member of the supreme court resigned with a stinging rebuke of Student Government. “Eventually,” he wrote, “SG becomes toxic to everyone that it is in.”

The simmering controversy exploded into chaos last week in a circus of tweets attacking coworkers, a short-lived attempt to impeach the entire supreme court and a packed meeting where the spectators included the regional vice chancellor of student affairs and the dean of students.

And tensions continue to rise.

Now, six members of SG are facing impeachment, including Student Body Vice President Ysatis Jordan.
So why are so many influential leaders so keenly focused on “preeminence”? The extra money is nice, university officials say, but the word “preeminence” carries a lot of weight with professional administrators and prospective students.

That frustrates Ray Arnsautil, a history professor and president of the USF St. Petersburg Faculty Senate.

“All they (Genshaft and some members of the Tampa administration) can see is metrics,” he told The Crow’s Nest earlier this year. “Their bottom line is (maintaining USF’s) preeminence in the state university system by meeting key metrics in student admissions and retention rates, research spending, size of endowment, and other academic outcomes.”

“The fixation on preeminence makes it harder for the (St. Petersburg) campus to serve non-traditional and minority students and let students change majors as they explore their educational growth,” Arnsautil said.

“A formulaic march to graduation,” Arnsautil said, “is intellectually destructive.”

In February, the Tampa Faculty Senate voted overwhelmingly to oppose making St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee full branch campuses because that “would threaten” Tampa’s new regional campus.

The senate did not mention performance-based funding.

However, when Tim Boaz, the Tampa Faculty Senate president, was asked last week about the sharp focus on preeminence while performance-based funding is significantly larger, he said both revenue sources are important.

“Leaders at USF are keenly focused on both preeminence funding and performance-based funding,” Boaz wrote in an email to The Crow’s Nest. “These are the two main ways in which the university can increase the amount of funding from the State of Florida and both are very important.”

“Preeminence” does carry with it a connotation of excellence or quality that Enhancements and reputation of the university which is also very desirable.”

Metrics and money
Preeminence was created by the Florida Legislature in 2013 to give extra funds to the state universities that meet at least 11 of 12 metrics – or yardsticks – that legislators established and re-examine each year.

After consolidation, data from USF St. Petersburg and USF Sarasota-Manatee will be combined with Tampa’s when determining if the metrics have been met.

The preeminence metrics recognize research productivity and include: Having an annual research expenditure of at least $200 million or continuing their education; median wages of bachelor’s graduates employed full time; percentage of bachelor’s degrees without excess hours; and percentage of undergraduates with a Pell Grant, among other things.

Two pots of money are created each year for performance-based funding: the state’s contribution and institutional contributions from each university’s recurring budget. The Board of Governors of the State University System establishes minimum thresholds for the universities to receive the two types of funds. The funding is determined by a point system based on the 10 performance-based metrics. The USF system’s 2018-2019 performance-based funding award from the state’s contribution was about $7.7 million less than last year.

Appealing to students
As recent associate vice chancellor for administration and finance, David Everingham spends a lot of time poring over numbers. “While preeminence may receive the most attention lately in the news, the Board of Trustees and leadership across the USF System have remained focused on all metrics for both PBF (performance-based funding) and preeminence,” he said in an email.

“I think the public hears more about preeminence these days since it was achieved by USF (Tampa) this year and because of accreditation consolidation, which will ultimately require the evaluation of consolidated data for all three campuses in achieving designating the three campuses.”

Martin Tadlock, USF St. Petersburg’s regional chancellor, told The Crow’s Nest that the simple answer to why there is so much emphasis on preeminence is that people value rankings and designations.

“It’s not all about the money. Preeminence is a stamp from the state acknowledging the top-tier research institutions,” he said. “It’s appealing to students who are looking for institutions that are designated as exceptional. Initially, rankings and designations grab people’s attention.”

Tadlock said that preeminence also leads to “most AAU (Association of American Universities) membership.”

Last year USF Tampa was awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa – the nation’s oldest and most prestigious academic honors society for undergraduates and university leaders are working to join AAU next year.

AAU is considered an elite group. AAU’s 62 public and private members are judged to be leaders in innovation, scholarship and contributions to society.

UF is the only Florida school on the list, which includes Princeton, Yale, Columbia, Stanford, Duke, Purdue, the University of Michigan, Georgia Tech and Texas A&M.

“Metrics measure efficiency and productivity but there’s always more room for discussion to be had,” Tadlock said.

“I’ve been saying since ‘I’ve been here and I’m not wrong: Do the right thing and the numbers will follow.”

Corrections
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By James Bennett III
jamesbennett@mail.usf.edu

Mayor Rick Kriseman, USF President Judy Genshaft and Regional Chancellor Martin Tadlock are all expected to speak at a groundbreaking ceremony for the new residence hall on April 25. Ceremony attendees will be able to take a tour of the facility using virtual reality goggles and their smartphones.

The six-story building is being constructed on Sixth Avenue S and between Third and Fourth streets in the soccer field and adjacent to the parking garage. It is expected to be complete by July 2020. Names for the $33-million building are still being considered.

About 60 to 75 percent of the 375 beds in the new residential hall will be in private rooms, with four beds and two bathrooms per unit. The other units will be two-bed, one-bath with bedrooms shared between two students.

About a third of the bedrooms in the single bedroom units will be transformable to hold two students instead of one. The 125,000-square-foot design would increase the number of beds on campus by 70 percent and have study areas, community laundry rooms and a student lounge on each floor.

The building’s full-service dining facility will seat 400 people. It will have longer hours than The Reef and a variety of meal plans available.

“This is a historic event for USF St. Petersburg,” Tadlock said in a press release. “This new residence hall and dining facility will not only provide much-needed affordable living and dining options for our students — it will foster a greater sense of community and help us with our efforts to continue improving student success.”

The new residence hall, which was funded by USF Tampa’s housing revenue, could offset the university’s more than $1.5 million investment in student success.

“The demand for student housing continues to grow, and we believe that this new residence hall and dining facility will foster a greater sense of community and help us with our efforts to continue improving student success.”

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SG, continued from P1

Everything that you all do today — all of the decisions — have strong impact and will resonate throughout the rest of the term and through terms long past. That is why Division Wayne Isacs told the senate.

While many of the impeachments center around a April 8 general assembly meeting and the subsequent supreme court hearing, Jordan is facing impeachment partially because of two tweets she posted attacking coworkers because of two tweets she posted attacking coworkers.

On April 11, she tweeted: “Waiting for two gay males to call my boss crying about something that doesn’t even concern them. I’m taking bets on how long you think it will take.”

Jordan later apologized after the failure of a bill drafted by senators Naya Payne and Gregory Cote to create a new position, the secretary of the senate, to oversee student government activities and fund the student body.

On April 15, Jordan tweeted: “Heard this girl named Mya Hodgens last night from SG. Apparently she can’t stop talking about me on Twitter on Tangle. I hope someone lets her know I’m engaged.”

Horak is an associate justice in the SG judicial branch. In a tweet, while Jordan did not publicly apologize, she continued to post on Twitter after facing backlash from students. She referenced a tweet USF St. Petersburg’s marketing and communications director, in an email. “The demand for student housing continues to grow, and we believe that prospective students may be more attracted to USF St. Petersburg if there are more options for on-campus living.”

While the senate was focused on the impeachment, faculty were fixated on the impact of social media — although unwilling to name names, they were all focused on Jordan’s posts.

“People mess up,” said Patti Helton, regional vice chancellor of student affairs. “When you’re a leader, it’s a bigger mess-up because people are watching you. If you think nobody’s watching you, they are. It’s a sign of a leader to acknowledge that you made a mistake and should have to apologize or ask for forgiveness.”

The committee will now review the impeachments and present its findings to the senate at general assembly. After being voted on by the senate, the impeachment will go to the SG supreme court for a final decision — the same supreme court that was going to be impeached.

There is only one general assembly meeting left for the term, and no guarantee that the committee will be able to complete its goal in time.

Additionally, Jordan and Porcelli are graduating at the end of the semester — making their potential impeachment more symbolic than realistic.

To close the special assembly, Porcelli quoted the poet Maya Angelou: “People will not forgive what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
S

ome seniors have a thesis paper. Senior graphic design majors have a thesis show. The newest crop of graphic design seniors will showcase their thesis projects at the cozy Studio@620 on May 1. This year’s theme: “winding it.”

But before the show comes the preparation and the sweat. What’s your thesis?

The class of 19 students started the graphic design program together in the fall of 2017. The program is selective, admitting students to a class every fall. Julia Scheiber, who graduates in December, said the seniors learned what a thesis is last semester. Their prompt was “to be an activist.” Scheiber’s thesis is last semester. Their class went to Studio@620 to divide up their spots for the show. That helps them determine how much space they have for their pieces. The day before the show, they set everything up. Scheiber had asked her other classmates worked on the show program with the descriptions of the theses. Instead of having their headshots taken for the program, Nam Ho did charcoal portraits of each senior to go with the descriptions. The class coordinates everything, down to the food and drinks and finding photographers. They want to document the show before tearing it down the next day.

Epilogue: What’s next after graduation?

“I’ve made some really awesome connections, and especially at the beginning of the program, it was terrifying, and nobody had any clue what they were doing. So we all got together because we had to survive.”

Scheiber wants to study motion graphics and animation after graduation. She has her eyes on an online motion graphics school called Mograph Mentor. She discovered her love for motion graphics during her first semester of the program. The assignment that sparked it? A two and a half minute kinetic typography project — something similar to a lyric video.

Her older sister and her husband are animators. Another sister and her husband are motion graphics artists. Scheiber’s other goal is to leave Florida — maybe even the United States — and travel. Although she grew up in St. Pete, she hates the heat.

For this student, home is a sailboat

By Emily Sisell

Contributor

A rocky start is what Gabe Walks wakes up to every morning. The smell of salt water blows through his sailboat’s windows, just off the South Yacht Basin in St. Petersburg. Walks, a junior economics major, pays only $300 a month rent bill. Unlike most students, who have to pay large costs for living in the dorms or apartments nearby, Walks pays only $300 a month to dock his boat. He doesn’t need a parking permit.

Another benefit of living on his sailboat? Walks has his own personal space, without feuds from roommates. When he runs into free time, all he has to do is untie his boat from the dock, and within minutes, he is at peace, feeling the waves of Tampa Bay.

Between music, work, school, homework, a social life and being a loving cat dad to Lil’ Pump, having a multi-purpose home is his escape from reality.

He learned to sail from his father years ago. Sailing is Walks’ way of relieving the stress that comes with his lifestyle.

In addition to being a student, Walks sings and plays guitar for the indie hip-hop band Armonia, which has now released nine original songs. Its work is streaming on SoundCloud and Spotify. Armonia is a two-man St. Petersburg band that produces all its own music. Walks and his bandmate, Chai Oyola, play at local venues, with hopes of traveling on tour in the future.

Music has been Walks’ passion since he was a child, and it continues to find its way into every moment of his life.

“Music consumes everything in me because it’s such a pure expression,” Walks said. “With my music, it’s me doing what I love and sharing it with other people who love what I do, and that alone is enough to make me always want to make more.”

Even while he goes about other parts of his day, music is always on his mind. He uses this to encourage him to do well in school and later use his degree to advance his music career.

Between class, homework and tutoring students on campus, Walks manages to find time to practice and produce new content.

“This lifestyle may be hectic, but I’m really happy to have all these opportunities that I’ve never been an integral part of my growth,” he said. “All these learning experiences in college have helped me foster my passion.”

The Turne. He lives there year-round with his cat Lil’ Pump.

Gabe Walks decided to forgo a college dorm for his sailboat at the Turne. He lives there year-round with his cat Lil’ Pump.
Harbor Hall students embrace vending machines

By Alyssa Harmon

S

udents who walk into Harbor Hall will see two shiny new vending machines in the lobby of the building.

New students may not notice them, but veteran English and graphic design majors are incredibly grateful and thankful to have them.

On the fringe of campus, students in Harbor Hall are distanced from the rest of campus. Some students complained that there were no options for food, which goaded Bernard into action. He stepped in. The whole student body was excited over a snack machine, Bernard said.

By the time Bernard received the notification, the machines were already in place. The schedules of full-time students and faculty were not going to be rearranged in order to accommodate vending machines in Harbor Hall. After months of anticipation, the lobby’s reception desk was moved to make space for a soda machine.

Stumbled across the machine suddenly appeared in the front of Harbor Hall. It is a great feeling to have the vending machines in the building,” Bernard said. “I am happy that fellow students can be refreshed daily. It is strategically located, and I am pleased that the appropriate offices responded accordingly.”

When Bernard first contacted the school’s vendors and asked them to install snack and Coca Cola machines in Harbor Hall. Once Coile received Bernard’s request, he contacted the school’s vendors and asked them to install snack and Coca Cola machines in Harbor Hall.

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Students were happy that progress was being made, but Bernard still wasn’t satisfied. He was determined to get the snack machines as well. A few more weeks passed, and on April 1, a USF snack machine appeared in Harbor Hall. And the students were happy.

By Alyssa Harmon

DEAN, continued from P1

He was serving as dean of education at the University of North Carolina Charlotte when he was hired in 1992 to become dean and executive officer of the St. Petersburg campus of USF.

The campus had 3,200 students back then — all of them upperclassmen and graduate students. It had no residence halls and no University Student Center, and many professors griped that it was under the thumb of administrators in Tampa, 35 miles away.

But the campus — and Heller — had ambition.

“He wanted to build a Petersburg faculty and staff recall seeing Heller just about everywhere — whether he was teaching or engaging he served on over 10 local advisory boards in addition to working at the university. "I see him at a formal function during the day, then another function in the evening completely unrelated. Then at night he’d be in a T-shirt at an event as a volunteer parking cars," said Richard Rash, who ran 10 local advisory boards in addition to working at the university.

“He carried the torch for more than half a mile of his journey from Florida to Atlanta in the 1996 Summer Olympics. And he started to push USF St. Petersburg on the map. "As sweet and nice as he is, he can be tough. He can hang in there — he had to," said Ritch, founding director and curriculum adviser at the Bishop Center.

"I don’t think without Bill and his community leadership we would have ever seen this separate accreditation (which the campus achieved in 2006) and the development of the campus," Ritch said.

"He’s the man who was instrumental in getting and creating a fully separated accredited university at USFSP," said Watson Bridges, co-chair of the Retired Faculty and Staff Association. "He’s the man that got the job done." That said, Heller had a lot of late nights at the university.

Those who worked closely with him realized only getting to meet with him in the early mornings or early evenings because he was always out in the community during the day.

When Keith Childs, maintenance supervisor of air conditioning and heating, worked evenings, he learned to come by Heller’s office a little later than usual. “Half the time I would have to threaten to turn off his electrical power to get him to go home,” Childs said. “He would always tell me he had just one more email to send, ‘One more email, Keith.’”

In addition to contributing long hours, Heller offered monetary contributions to the university.

Heller and his wife, Jeanne, are responsible for the Scholar’s Lounge in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

They also established the H. William Heller Scholarship in Special Education for students in the College of Education who either have special education needs or have a focus in special education.

His generosity showed in smaller ways, too. At Halloween parties, he dressed up as Santa Claus and brought a sack full of gifts.

On Thanksgiving, he bought dinner for the faculty and staff. At a Halloween party where students made fake graves for all of the faculty, Heller’s headstone read: “Here Bill Heller would have laid but he waived his burial plot.”

Heller was a great advocate for fees for students and visitors at campus events.

Childs remembers asking Heller if he knew of a tutor for his grandson who was struggling in school.

"At Christmas two days later he gave me a phone number and had everything set up to get my grandson what he needed," Childs said. "He put his people before anybody else."

Now the university is giving Heller something back. Pinellas County Commissioner Charlie Justice, a member of the Florida House of Representatives at the time, filed legislation in 2006 to rename the building after Heller once he retired.

Justice met Heller when he was a student assistant at USF St. Petersburg still working on his degree when he saw him every morning in the office.

He has a huge impact in every facet of the development of USFSP," Justice said. “It is appropriate that he be recognized in some way to honor his work, honor his contribution to the university and make sure that we remember that contribution for years to come...”

Justice remarked that when he filed the legislation 13 years ago, he didn’t think it would be much longer before Heller retired.

It was a running joke that he would say he would retire in a couple years and then five years would go by and he’d still be working hard,” Justice said.

Tadlock and USF System President Judy Genshaft has equated on that. She has said that officials planning the administrative structure of the university need to study examples that are “somewhere in between” a branch campus and an instructional site that has little control over campus identity.

The Tampa Faculty Senate did not equivocate, however.

In a stinging put-down of St. Petersburg, it “voted overwhelmingly” in February to oppose making St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee branch campuses as defined by accreditors.

Giving the two smaller campuses that designation “would threaten the preeminence status and funding – that USF Tampa achieved for the first time last year, the Tampa faculty said.

The higher education package in the state House might ease the Tampa faculty’s fears, at least for now.

The legislation stipulates that data from St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses will be compiled with Tampa’s data when the state calculates preeminence metrics until 2022.

Bill Heller and his wife, Jeanne, made multiple generous contributions to the university. Giving the two smaller branch campuses that designation “would threaten the preeminence status and funding – that USF Tampa achieved for the first time last year, the Tampa faculty said.

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Bill Heller has been in poor health, declined an interview with The Crow’s Nest.

The Coquina Hall renaming ceremony will be held May 15 at 3 p.m. in The Reef.
Food doesn’t have to be complicated

By Katlynn Mullins
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There isn’t a “perfect” diet.
Food is subjective.
Some people are drawn to steak, while others are drawn to pad thai. It isn’t a question of weight loss and beauty; it’s “Do I feel happy with the food I’m consuming?”

Arguments over plant-based vs. meat-eating diets are all I see over social media. It was once vegans ripping into meat-eaters about how horrible they are, but it’s become an endless flow of vegans defending their choices.

Yes, there are vegans who judge every chicken nugget-loving carnivore, but the majority are more than happy mingling with their own business.

That person has time to spend every waking moment scrutinizing someone over a burger.

I became vegan before my second year in college. Now, going into senior year, I’m facing a dilemma that a lot of my peers share: “I don’t have time to cook three meals a day, and I know I’m not healthy. What do I do?”

The answer: Whatever I want.

Sarah Vinson, a general biology major, was vegetarian when she started college. With work, school and a limited budget, it was hard to cook food all the time.

 “Now I eat chicken mostly, with seafood sprinkled in,” she said.

It’s easier and more filling on days when she leaves her house at 10 a.m. and doesn’t get home until 9 p.m.

Andrea Lubin, a journalism major, tried being vegan, but it didn’t work out for her. Now, she tries to “eat at least one meatless meal a day” and buys more veggie products. She likes Almond Breeze milk and Earth Balance butter.

After sitting down with Wendy Lauer, a licensed and registered dietitian at St. Anthony’s Hospital, the differences between plant-based and meat-eating diets aren’t as huge.

Fruits, vegetables, lean meats, nuts, seeds, beans and legumes are the seven components to a healthy and balanced diet, according to Wesley.

Though lean meat isn’t part of a plant-based diet, protein is found in beans, legumes, vegetables and the group could be filled with meat alternatives. The six other categories are common to both diets.

“Half of your plate should be vegetables,” Wesley said. The rest should be 25 percent protein and 25 percent carbohydrates.

A large focus is placed on protein, but it isn’t the pinnacle of a healthy diet. Wesley advocates for single-ingredient foods, which are mostly found in a long time and don’t really want to go back. But then I went to Europe.

I wanted to try the more authentic things. There were bakeries everywhere in every corner, and with a language barrier in Barcelona, I’m sure there was butter on some of the bread I ate for breakfast every morning.

I didn’t hate myself for my choices. I didn’t become vegan to save the animals, though I love that aspect of it. I did it because I felt better, mentally and physically. I had found freedom in my food again.

I’m lucky to live in St. Pete. I don’t have to debate on pastries when The Cider Press Café has cupcakes and donuts. Love Food Central has pies and soft serve ice cream, and U.S. Bakery makes vegan cookies.

At this point, I teter a line between vegetarian and vegan. I buy dairy alternatives at the grocery store, but if I’m somewhere new and see a product that isn’t vegan, I may reach for it.

Again, food is subjective. It doesn’t need to be scrutinized. An amount of tracking can make someone happy. That comes from trying different things and finding what works.

Diets and labels don’t matter. Eating matters.
Jaclyn Dell never planned on pursuing a degree. Now, she’s graduating with a master’s degree and has been awarded a grant via the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to get her doctorate in psychology.

The program awards only 2,000 grants annually, which are chosen by a 12-member board appointed by the president of the United States. It’s intended for individually designed study and research projects or for English teaching assistant programs.

With the help of a scholarship representative from USF Tampa, Dell spent a year working through the process of applying, including months of revising her application, figuring out who she would work with, and completing many panel interviews.

She got the news that she had been accepted while she was working on her lab — a fitting scene.

In the fall, Dell will head to the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom, where she’ll begin her research. She’ll continue there for three years, or until her doctorate is completed.

Her research will focus on mechanisms in the brain related to nicotine addiction — things she hopes to expand to alcohol. She’ll be leaving behind her husband, Robert, and her three puppies: Sampson, Sophie and Franklin.

“It breaks my heart because (my dogs) are like my kids,” she said. “So yeah, it’s going to be horrible, miserable, but they’ll still Skype me,” she said.

She echoed that for her husband, of course, but she said he’s a man of faith and backs her 100 percent.

“He’s awesome; he knows this is something that I’ve always wanted to do and what I’ve been called to do,” Dell said. “He believes I’ll be successful and was like, ‘I’m not going to stand in your way’.”

The two met at The Rock Community Church and Transformation Center in St. Petersburg which serves as a place of worship and a recovery ministry offering faith-based programs geared toward people and families suffering from drug and alcohol addiction. Dell, 34, works as the women’s treatment coordinator and teaches classes. Her husband is the director and senior pastor there.

Her experiences at The Rock, and losing her father to alcoholism, led her back to the classroom in 2010 to study drug and alcohol addiction. “I saw people struggling, and I thought, ‘If I get a degree in something, it will help people,’” Dell said. “My husband has the spiritual side covered, and I needed to do something in academia. I like to blend beliefs and science, which sounds a bit crazy.”

Two topics she knew she needed to learn about were drug addiction and the psychology surrounding it. Deciding which route to take gave her trouble, though.

She spent four years at St. Petersburg College trying to find the right academic avenue before coming to USF St. Petersburg. After her first cognitive and physiological psychology courses, she set her sights on the neuroscience and underlying factors of addiction.

Dell said her father died when she was young, and his absence has always been an overarching theme in her life. Her questions of why it happened led her to ask why he didn’t do something different — or if it was even his choice.

“When someone loses their parent to alcoholism, it’s kind of ever-present,” she said. “The trickle down (of his death) to your siblings and other people and just the devastation (the addiction) leaves in its wake, it has always been there.”

“The ability to do something about it and have an impact against it has always been something I want to right.”

Her research in St. Petersburg has secured her internships at both Brown and Yale universities.

Her experience at Brown helped prepare her for grad school while hanging out with fruit flies in the university’s neuroscience department. Studying reward and memory.

“Basically, we got flies drunk with vaporized alcohol, (it’s) the coolest thing,” Dell said. “They like alcohol, they like the smell of it, they get drunk and they get woozy – it’s crazy.”

Her time at Yale, funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, had her researching electroencephalography (EEG) — measuring electrical activity in different parts of the brain and recording the activity as a visual trace — which mirrors what she studies at USF St. Petersburg.

“It was about substance-abusing mothers and their reaction to their babies or other babies because when you use drugs constantly, it compromises your reward circuits,” Dell said.

“Parenting is very rewarding, so the idea then is if substance-using mothers have kind of compromised these circuits, are they then compromising their ability to connect with their own babies?”

Dell wants to do more than just measure when something happens, like she does with EEG, but also wants to know where it happens, which she can track with functional magnetic resonance imaging — combining temporal and spatial imaging is one of her goals while she studies in the United Kingdom.

“I’m setting my sights on that, because to be a part of that is so mind blowing to me,” Dell said. “The possibilities are endless.”

Access to the latest technology isn’t the only thing that puts a smile on her face when she thinks about her future there.

Birmingham also offers her access to scenes that have inspired some of her favorite pop culture icons, namely J.R.R. Tolkien and the Tolkien Trail.

The author is well-known for writing immersive fantasy novels, like the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy and “The Hobbit.” The city offers tours of the area that is said to have inspired his work – it’s a once in a lifetime opportunity, Dell said.

In addition, she plans to volunteer at a local charity to immerse herself in the culture.

From never planning to get a degree to toying around with the idea of getting a postdoctoral position, Dell said she just kept trying. She said it didn’t make sense for her to get internships at Ivy League schools or have a full ride to get her doctorate.

“I just keep trying things,” Dell said. “I think, a lot of times, people think, ‘What if I can’t do it?’ And, ‘What if it doesn’t work? What if I’m not smart enough?’”

“But what if you are? You don’t know until you give it a shot, and I think that embodies me more than anything.”

JACLYN DELL HOPE TO GET HER WORK ON NICOTINE ADDICTION PUBLISHED BEFORE SHIFTING HER FOCUS TO ALCOHOL AND, POSSIBLY, OPIOIDS.
Petersburg alumna, was diagnosed with endometriosis, which causes symptoms that range from throbbing up to losing vision. But Guerra said the treatment that helps her most is medical marijuana.

"Percocet will help, but it usually takes at least an hour to fully kick in or more. But (before I take) medical marijuana, I'll be in bed black out from pain." Guerra said. "And I thought, 'If I was homeless, I wouldn't survive my period.'" Guerra said. "I come in, and have a sit down meal at 7 a.m. to make fresh rosemary herb bread. And it didn't take me long to understand my role on this campus. Though it's technically off campus, the Tavern is right across the sidewalk from the university.

I t's only open on weekdays, but Herzhauser opens the restaurant on graduation day every year to meet the parents of the students who have been hanging out at the Tavern throughout their college careers. "I meet students when they first come here for orientation," Herzhauser said. "It's rewarding to see them for four or five years and watch them mold into the new stage of their lives, and see how that student has grown and matured." The Tavern is not just for students; it's also a popular place for professors and locals. The famous crunchy grouper sandwich draws people in. "I'm the luckiest guy in the world to have the opportunity to rub elbows with the great faculty and staff here," Herzhauser said. "I feel like I own the Tavern — I've just been holding the keys." Now it’s time to hand the keys over. The Tavern will be sold to Dennis Bixler and his wife, Stephanie, on April 29. The Bixlers are already part of the Tavern family. Dennis runs the open mic night every Wednesday at the Tavern, along with his brother, Patrick, who works there. Thomas, who had hand-selected the family who would take over because he wanted someone who cares about the Tavern and understands its importance to the community.

"My biggest concern other than running the restaurant is people is coming here looking for Tom," Dennis Bixler said. "People come in after we’re closed just to have their kids say ‘hi’ to him. Tom’s legacy will be here as long as the Tavern is here." Patrick Bixler has worked at the Tavern for three years and has been running open mic nights his brother for the past nine.

"There’s just something special about this place," Patrick Bixler said. "It’s a living, breathing entity. We all love Tom, and we work our asses off over here. We don’t just do it for Tom, we do it for the Tavern because we love this place. Everyone who comes here is part of the Tavern, and that’s what makes this place special." Soon, Dennis Bixler will be parking his car in every day at 7 a.m. to make fresh rosemary herb bread. "I can’t wait to get the shit out of Tom, I can’t even talk about it yet," Patrick Bixler said. "Those are huge shoes to fill." The Bixlers are confident that they can fill them and carry on the legacy of the Tavern. When his time at the Tavern is over, Herzhauser will spend his time traveling with his wife and playing with their grandchildren. "It’s one thing to have good product, but people come to see me," Herzhauser said. "I come in, and have a drink with everybody. Those are the things I will miss when it’s over."