Florida Tech TODAY
A magazine for Alumni and Friends of Florida Institute of Technology
FALL 2012

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On the Beat with a British Bobby
The Lindeman for the Job

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In This Issue

Football Uniforms Unveiled
On the Beat with a British Bobby
The Lindeman for the Job
Dear Florida Tech Alumni and Friends,

I can’t imagine a more exciting time in the history of Florida Tech. Both academically and athletically, your university’s trajectory continues its upward climb to greater prominence.

In August, the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac 2012 ranked FIT the third fastest-growing campus in the nation, comparing private, nonprofit research institutions. Among the 1,500 institutions annually assessed by the publication, Florida Tech was among the top 50,000 readers.

For the third straight year, U.S. News & World Report ranks us as a Tier One Best National University. Among the 1,500 institutions.


As we look forward to our 55th anniversary next year, I remain confident that the best is yet to come. Thanks for all you do to support your university.

Sincerely yours,

A. J. Catanese, Ph.D., FAICP
President and Chief Executive Officer
Welcome to our revitalized “Mailbag” section, “Two Cents,” where we publish reader feedback to Florida Tech TODAY. Response to our recent readership survey indicated you would like to see a return of this section. Dwindling correspondence prompted its retirement, but we are happy to revive it and welcome your input on the magazine. Have a comment or opinion you'd like to share? Email us at fltechtoday@fit.edu.

Who's That Girl?
"The beautiful, blond-haired woman with the million dollar smile in that photo is Sandi Billings," James Gering, laboratory director and instructor in the department of physics and space sciences, told us. Miguel Adao ’89 concurred, "She was my boss when I was sports editor at The Crimson, 1988–89."

After earning her bachelor’s in space sciences at Florida Tech, Billings ’90 went on to earn an M.S. in geophysics from the University of Idaho. Today, she is a major gifts officer for Northwest Public Radio at Washington State University.

She remembers her time at The Crimson fondly and sends a special greeting to all the staff of the late 80s.

"I was the editor one year and the managing editor the year before. Miguel was the sports editor, and he led a team of four (including himself) who all spoke five languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and French (I think). At deadline, they would come in a mad rush and talk a mile a minute, changing from language to language fluidly. It was cool," she recalls.

Two seats to the left with the long earring and balloon is Michelle Kelley Whisenhant ’90. After retiring from the U.S. Navy, Whisenhant returned to Satellite Beach with her husband of 22 years, Rob. She currently teaches online classes in physical science for a community college in Maryland and for Florida Tech University Online.

Cover Critique
"Thank you for the latest copy of Florida Tech TODAY. However, I at first threw it out because it appeared to be a whole brochure about CarMax. While I realize you have to promote successful alumni, this is way over the top in terms of brand placement, not befitting a university publication. I receive many such publications and have never seen such blatant first cover advertising!"

Daphne Lange Rosenzweig, Ph.D, ISA CAPP
President, Rosenzweig Associates, Inc.

Editor’s Note: Our goal was to acknowledge the success of an alumnus who founded and leads a well-known Fortune 500 company. We welcome commentary from our readers in order to continue improving the magazine.

Hot Topic
Most viewed article from the online edition of Florida Tech TODAY:
Nothing But Net—Working Global Appeal
Readers from Australia to Zimbabwe viewed the online magazine.

The most international traffic came from:

President Obama Speaks at Clemente Center
Barack Obama, in the first-ever visit of a United States president to Florida Tech, made a 35-minute speech to about 3,000 in the Charles and Ruth Clemente Center on Sept. 9. The visit, while not representing a university endorsement, brought the president to campus on a campaign swing through Florida. Some attendees, including Florida Tech students Karolyn Burns and Ashley Fish (pictured below), began lining up before midnight to make sure they could claim a good spot in the Clemente Center when the doors opened. See additional social media coverage at http://bit.ly/FIThostsObama.

TEDx Lecture at Gleason Center
A highlight of this summer’s International Space University/Space Studies Program (ISU-SSP12) hosted on campus was the TEDx lecture on July 6. Attendees filled every seat in the Gleason Performing Arts Center to listen to “ideas worth sharing” around the theme of Open Source Space. Read more about the event, the speakers and the other exciting ISU activities at Florida Tech this summer at http://blogs.fit.edu/blog/category/campus/isu.
Meticulous Measuring

A sea of 2,500 numbered golf balls plummeted toward the pin from a helicopter at the ninth annual Chopper Dropper event this spring. A total of 13 lucky winners received cash prizes, including grand prize winner Joseph Pauldine, of West Palm, Fla. Part of Sporting Affair XX, the signature event supports student-athlete scholarships.

Best ROI in Florida, Students Beat Odds

On Campus

Bryan Gillenwater ’11 was snapped up by Siemens when he graduated last May from Florida Tech with a degree in mechanical engineering. That he was one of the first to graduate with a minor in sustainability from the university couldn’t have harmed his prospects.

After a successful year as an engineer in training at Siemens Wind Service Americas, Gillenwater is in a new job. He’s a project engineer with Global Operations Management for Offshore Service, working out of the Siemens Wind Power headquarters in Brande, Denmark.

“I highly recommend taking the sustainability and global business courses at Florida Tech. The subject matter applicability and experience in an interdisciplinary environment helped me substantially after graduation,” he said.

Gileenwater is one statistic among the results now in from the follow-up graduation survey results of the classes of December 2010 and May 2011 who attended the main campus. According to respondents, 94 percent of graduates are today employed, in the military or enrolled in graduate school. Up to 89 percent of those who said they were employed are working in their major.

This contrasts with a U.S. News & World Report story of April, 22, 2012, which said, “About 1.5 million, or 53.6 percent, of bachelor’s degree-holders under the age of 25 last year were jobless or underemployed, the highest share in at least 11 years.” The report continued: “Out of the 1.5 million who languished in the job market, about half were underemployed, an increase from the previous year.”

The Florida Tech graduation survey results also documented that the 45 percent of respondents who are employed are earning more than $50,000 a year. Finally, 58 percent of respondents participated in a co-op, internship or other major-related work experience while at Florida Tech.

The university is recognized by Bloomberg Businessweek and a recent survey by PayScale.com as the top private university in Florida for return on investment.

Founders Club Contributes $1.2 Million for Football Funding

A dozen donors have pledged a collective $1.2 million to help launch a new era for Florida Tech athletics. At a special “Inside the Huddle” football banquet last spring, featuring legendary football coach Howard Schnellenberger as keynote speaker, President and CEO Anthony J. Catanese introduced members of the Panthers Football Founders Club.

Helping kick off football are Stephen K. Badoletto, M.D., Premier Sports Medicine; Thomas Biddix, Biddix Charity Foundation; Carol Craig, Craig Technologies; John Fielding, Chip Lafferty, Hill York; Bruce Nelson Jr., Brevard County Hyundais; Steve Ryland, Beachside Health Studio; Maheesh “Mike” Shah, Southeast Petro Distributors Inc./M&R Enterprises Inc.; Scott Sorensen, Sorensen Corporation; Mike Valletutti; Tony Weight; and Mike Williams, M.H. Williams Construction Group Inc.

For information on football fundraising, contact Matt Kilkullen at mkilkullen@fit.edu or (321) 674-8427.

Students Make the Difference

Students are a big reason why Florida Tech has again been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. This is the sixth consecutive year that the university has earned the national recognition for its exemplary community efforts.

Lucas Worthen and Wade Dauberman ’12 are just two who put Florida Tech on the national radar. Through the animal advocacy group Pilots N Paws, College of Aeronautics student Worthen flew three-month-old black Lab, Hattie, from Florida to Los Angeles. The homeless pup, scheduled to be put down, was saved by Worthen who delivered her by Piper Archer to the family who adopted her.

Dauberman earned the university’s first bachelor’s degree in astrolgy last May. May then commenced to bicycle 4,700 miles in honor of his father who died of the rare disease Scleroderma. He cycled across the country to raise Scleroderma awareness and research funds.

Making News

Florida Tech star researchers often find themselves the subject of international and national news for their work and expertise. Below are a few who have recently found themselves in print and facing TV cameras.

National Geographic’s Wild TV program, “Animal Superpowers,” Michael Grace was filmed setting up a mobile lab in the swamps of Florida. He used one of the world’s best infrared video cameras to demonstrate the ability of pit vipers and pythons to “see” the thermal world even in complete darkness.

National Geographic Magazine: Research news from Mark Bush, the pre-Columbian human impacts on the Amazon Basin, found an international audience in summer 2012.

New York Times and more than 60 other media outlets: Biological Sciences Department Head Richard Aronson’s published paper in Science about evidence for potential spatial system ecosystem collapse was picked up with great interest around the world.

Discovery Channel Canada (to air January 2013): Joe Byrner and Dan Butcherd, physics and space sciences faculty, faced the camera to tell what they know about mysterious space phenomena and the possibility that intelligent life is traveling through the universe.

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On Campus

What’s New on Campus

Changes continue to take shape all across the Florida Tech campus. To put these improvements in perspective, we’ve mapped it out.

Is State Data Transparent?

Some state governments are much better than others at providing transparency in access to their spending data. This is according to new results from the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business’ Activity Based Total Accountability (ABTA) Institute. The ABTA Institute mission is to provide and promote simplified accountability measures and cost/performance comparisons for effective decision making by government leaders.

Based on website analyses, each state earned a grade on the institute’s report card at http://abta.fit.edu/report_card. They range from the best—A minus for Indiana, New Jersey and Utah—to the lowest, with nine states earning an F. Florida rated B-plus, ranking fourth out of 50.

“This effort creates transparency in government spending to serve the taxpayer,” explains ABTA Institute Director Deborah Carstens. For information on what went into the ratings, see the reports and tables at: http://abta.fit.edu/data.

Where Am I App?

Trying to find your way around campus? There’s an app for that! Developed by undergraduate students Frank Sanchez, Roger Cotrina and Joseph Del Prete, the FIT Mobile App is available for iPhone and Android devices and offers a variety of features, including:

• A geo-locator map that displays the location you search for
• Directories offering one-click emailing and direct dialing
• Daily menus for campus dining locations
• Live streaming of WFIT radio

The FIT Mobile App is a free download from the Apple App Store or the Google Play marketplace. Simply search “Florida Tech” or scan the appropriate QR code!

Swimming Scholar

The newest Farmer Scholar, Brayden Thompson, not only held a 4.5 GPA and was president of the National Honor Society chapter at Astronaut High School, but was a varsity letterman in swimming and diving, and track and field. Starting this fall as a chemical engineering major, he is the fourth Farmer Scholar.

Phillip W. Farmer, retired chairman, president and chief executive officer of Harris Corp., donated $1.5 million to establish this endowment, which provides a full four-year scholarship award annually to a Florida high school graduate.

Q. What does it mean to you to receive the distinction of being a Farmer Scholar?

A. Receiving this distinction means the world to me, because all of my hard work is finally paying off. I am so grateful to everyone who was involved in my selection but when I first came to Florida Tech, I knew it was where I wanted to be.

Q. What inspired you to come to Florida Tech?

A. I knew Florida Tech was one of the top engineering schools—when I started looking into colleges, I came for a tour. I had always been skeptical of the idea that when you first visit a college campus you would know if it was the right one, but when I first came to Florida Tech, I knew it was where I wanted to be.

Use It

Want to extend the life of your battery? Keep using it. The charging circuitry of the device has all the “smarts” to optimize performance.

Size Matters

The larger the screen, the more energy consumption that occurs (assuming the same screen technology is applied).

Energy Efficiency

Smart devices, like smart phones or tablets, are designed to minimize energy consumption. Kepuska’s research shows the energy usage of smart devices is at least 400 times better than that of single function devices. Additional energy conservation strategies include unplugging your charger when not in use and turning off your device during the night.

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What Inspires You to Come to Florida Tech?

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Passport Pete
This summer, Pete the Panther traveled the globe with students, staff and alumni. View his complete vacation at http://bit.ly/PassportPete
Above: Pete visited Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Calif., with Michelle Boehmke Fillingim ’97, Matthew Fillingim ’95, ’97, and children Kiara, 8, and Drake, 5.

Motorsports Mentor
NASCAR legend and local businessman Geoff Bodine (below left) is serving as honorary advisor to Florida Tech’s student design motorsports teams in the College of Engineering, which include projects like the concept car, mini baja and Formula SAE. In this role, Bodine will advise students on some of their designs.

Growing Greeks
A new fraternity, Sigma Tau Gamma, is joining the ranks of Greek Life on campus, becoming the eighth organization within Florida Tech’s InterFraternity Council. The colony, comprised of 17 founders, has started the yearlong process of becoming a chapter.

One Minute Awareness
Spreading science one minute at a time, Florida Tech alumnae are involved in two different public radio broadcasts. At WFIT, Sarah Arnett ’10 Psy.D. delivers the Psychology Science Minute, sharing relevant scientific research in the field of psychology.
At WQCS in Fort Pierce, Fla., Sarah Frias-Torres ’01 Ph.D. produces the Ocean Minute about ocean conservation.
Learn more about the Psychology Science Minute at: http://cpla.fit.edu/psych/psychology-science-minute.php
Learn more about the Ocean Minute at: www.teamorca.org/cfiles/ocean_minute.cfm

Since assuming her position June 1 as senior vice president for development and chief development officer, Susan St. Onge, JD, MBA, has hit the ground running—working closely with President and CEO Anthony J. Catanese, executive leadership and staff on the upcoming capital campaign plan. St. Onge brings with her an extensive background in development and specifically capital campaigns.

St. Onge joins the development team from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where she most recently served as associate vice president for planned giving. She also held the position of senior associate dean for development in the School of Medicine and positioned the school to exceed its $350 million campaign goal. Other development positions include chief development officer at Yale-New Haven Hospital, where she provided leadership on a $100 million campaign, and executive roles at several hospitals and foundations in Cleveland and New York.
A Juris Doctor, St. Onge said her foray into the field of philanthropy was the result of an inspiring meeting. “There was a particular hospital I admired in my community,” she said. “I met the senior vice president, and he made me realize how my skills as an attorney could benefit the hospital.”
Now, St. Onge looks forward to inspiring Florida Tech alumni and friends of the university. “I would encourage alumni to consider the fact that they are what our students aspire to be and to be motivated by what they can do for our students—whether it’s counsel them, open doors for them, support their school experiences or financially support the university.”
St. Onge says the university’s future looks bright. “In today’s environment, when the world seems to be asking the question ‘Is the cost of higher education really worth it?’—we can answer with a resounding ‘Yes!’ FIT delivers an excellent product. Our students graduate in four years, and a very high percentage are employed soon after graduation. They find good jobs and more and more are staying connected or reconnecting with us as alumni.”
No stranger to the Space Coast, St. Onge and her family lived in Merritt Island in the 1980s, and she has fond memories of the early days of the shuttle program. Her husband, Tom, is a manager who spent some time at Kennedy Space Center and is currently with NASA at its Glenn Lewis Research Center in Cleveland. Their son, Jason, is an associate at BG Strategic Advisors, a merger and acquisition firm in West Palm Beach.

Susan St. Onge at Helm of Development

“In today’s environment, when the world seems to be asking the question ‘Is the cost of higher education really worth it?’—we can answer with a resounding ‘Yes!’”

Susan St. Onge, JD, MBA

Lisa M. Onorato
The 2012 Northrop Grumman Engineering & Science Student Design Showcase brought more than 100 industry leaders and alumni to campus in April to evaluate a new crop of capstone senior projects. From a philanthropic standpoint, two critical types of gifts help make this event a success. The first is funding, ensuring student teams can purchase materials essential to the development of their designs. The second is objective feedback from independent judges with real-world experience.

The funding is made possible through philanthropic support from a number of corporate partners, including a $1 million endowment created by Northrop Grumman in 2008, which generated roughly $25,000 for projects this past year. Other financial supporters included Boeing, United Space Alliance, Starport Aviation and Next Era Energy.

A number of corporations also provided the gift of time and talent, allowing their employees and senior managers to spend the day interacting with students, asking challenging questions and posing critical “what-if” scenarios. Volunteers came from Authentec, Boeing, DRS, General Electric, Harris Corp., Hill York, Intersil, L-3 Communications, LiveTV, Lockheed Martin, NASA, Northrop Grumman Champion Award, Next Century, Next Era Energy.

Members of the Northrop Grumman Champion Award judging delegation—including Florida Tech alumni Hugh McFadden ‘06, far left, and Dave Keldau ’05 MBA, fifth from left—congratulate the College of Engineering’s winning team: Self-Maneuvering Parafoil.

Arpat Rodpai, a Northrop Grumman employee and Ph.D. candidate in electrical engineering, has served as a judge for the past two years. “Overall, I think it is an excellent event for everyone,” he says. “It allows students to become innovative, collaborative and have self-confidence about their skills. The presentation component helps students prepare for real jobs.”

Alumni bring an industry perspective, along with a historical frame of reference. Al Hagopian ’89, ’94 MBA, was a first-time judge this year. “Times have changed dramatically from the ’80s where we only had feedback from our advisor(s) and instructors during the year,” he explains. “Giving back in some small capacity to the community makes me proud of my heritage at FIT.”

Recent alumni also play a valuable role, given their familiarity with the event from a student perspective and their growing industry experience. Kevin Shah ’09 has judged two showcases and says the event offers a glimpse into real-world challenges. “The questions judges ask are based on their experience in the commercial world, which students need to be prepared for, especially when interviewing for jobs,” he says. “Students are tested in every way, and employers have the opportunity to identify talented students for potential employment.”

David Iodice, who holds six Florida Tech degrees, has volunteered as a judge for three years, saying it validates why he chose FIT for his education. “It truly is ‘High Tech With a Human Touch,’” he says. “Having the pleasure of talking one-on-one with the students and feeling their passion for their project is invigorating and rekindles that spark to go ‘to the stars through learning’ (Ad Astra Per Scientiam).”

The next showcase is scheduled for April 19, 2013. To learn more about corporate sponsorship or judging opportunities, contact Gretchen Sauerman, director of corporate giving, at gsauerman@fit.edu.

Gretchen Sauerman

Philanthropy and the Arts

“Art is more than drawing, painting, sculpture or photography. It is a way of seeing a great adventure, an exploration in finding meaning in common ordinary things. Art gives us a vision of our lives, our beliefs and our history,” theorizes Martha Sinclair. Becoming a Founders’ Club member of the Foosaner Art Museum harmonizes with her late husband Jack’s philosophy of philanthropy and art.

Wistfully, Martha shares the passionate family influence that drew the couple to art. Jack’s grandfather owned a movie theater and his mother played the piano for silent movies. As parents of twin daughters, Martha and Jack understood that games are a part of childhood. Often, Jack drew a squiggly line on a piece of paper and the girls turned it into art. Who knew a squiggly line would inspire the twins, Shellie and Sherrie, to become Art History Presidential Scholars.

For the Sinclairs, art is a way of life. “Art adds beauty, encourages imagination and enhances the quality of life in a community,” states Sinclair.

By giving to the Foosaner, the gift continues the time-honored tradition of patrons who cultivate knowledge and nurture beauty for today and generations to come. Martha’s hope is that their gift entices others to support the Foosaner Art Museum and elevate it as a key cultural destination for the Space Coast and beyond.

To learn more about supporting the new cultural initiative of Florida Institute of Technology, please contact Shelley Johnson, major gift officer, at (321) 674-8079 or shelley@fit.edu.

Twice the Impact

Double your gift with a corporate match

The word has gotten out: corporate matching gift programs offer donors a simple way to double or even triple their gifts to Florida Institute of Technology. As a result of an awareness campaign that began with a P.S. notation on thank you letters and continues with a targeted approach to alumni who work at matching gift companies, Florida Tech is experiencing a significant boost in the number of matched gifts.

“Changing the gift amount to the university grew by 50 percent,” said Ali Faisal, assistant vice president for development services. “Overall, the college received $60,000 in matching gifts.”

According to Faisal, more than 16,500 companies in the United States offer matching gift programs. “Some companies will also match donations made by spouses, retirees or even in recognition of employee volunteer time. There are companies that automatically match gifts made through payroll deductions,” stated Faisal. “We’re seeing more and more companies providing gifts and initiating matching programs including Harris, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, GE, IBM, Boeing and more. We are extremely grateful to these corporate employers and their philanthropic support of education.”

The process for submitting a matching gift claim differs from company to company. To find out if your company has a matching gift policy, visit our company database at http://give.fit.edu/matchinggifts. Our development team can also research your company’s matching gift policy. Simply send the name of your company to Stephanie Bacon at sbacon@fit.edu or call (321) 674-6141.

Martha and her late husband Jack Sinclair

Stephanie Bacon

(321) 674-6141.

Gretchen Sauerman
With Homecoming and our annual meeting fast approaching, our efforts are focused on several key issues—the Gleason “Name A Seat” Campaign, the vision for the Alumni House and alumni engagement with the FTAA. We are supporting the university by taking ownership of the “Name the Seat” campaign for Gleason Performing Arts Center. Our goal is to sell all 500 seats before the end of the year. We must sell all the seats to benefit from the sales, so I urge each of you to buy a seat.

One absolutely vital mission of the FTAA is to broaden and strengthen our engagement with alumni. We welcome participation on many levels: donate to the Alumni Association, volunteer your time as a committee or board member, work with the Office of Admissions to recruit quality students and student-athletes in your area, get involved with active alumni chapters, or even start a new chapter. We continue to work on the challenge of making our online degree alumni feel they are as much a part of our family as those who attended the “brick and mortar” campuses.

In closing, I want you all to know that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your president the past two years, and for my second nine-year term on the board. I believe participation in the FTAA has provided me a way to give back to the university (which has given me so much over the years), and more importantly to the people who have made such a difference in my life. I want to thank all of you for this opportunity, and I wish you all the best in the future!

From the desk of John A. Valente ’76, ’81

Alumni News from the FTAA President

Homecoming 2012

Nov. 1–3, 2012

Going for the Gold

Thursday Nov. 1
10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Ernst Oppel, German Impressionist
Foosaner Art Museum

10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Battle Worn: Masculine Ideals and Military Identity in Modern Japanese Textiles
Ruth Funk Center for Textile Arts

Noon
Daily Mass, All Faiths Center

3:30 p.m.
Women’s Basketball vs. Chilean National Team (Exhibition), Clemente Center

7:30 p.m.
Men’s Basketball vs. Chilean National Team (Exhibition), Clemente Center

Friday, Nov. 2
8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. (Register/free)
FITSA and the College of Aeronautics present Breaking the Chain 2012—Safety Symposium

9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Florida Tech Alumni Association (FTAA) Board of Directors meeting
Trustees Dining Room

10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Ernst Oppel, Foosaner Art Museum

10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Battle Worn, Funk Center for Textile Arts

Noon
Daily Mass, All Faiths Center

Noon–1:30 p.m. (Register online)
Panther Basketball Tip-Off Luncheon
Featuring Boston Celtics Legend Sam Jones
Hardy Room

5:30–7 p.m. (Invitation only)
Special reception to honor 2012’s Jerome P. Keuper Distinguished Alumni, GOLD and Outstanding Alumni award recipients,
Yellow Dog Café

6–7 p.m.
Tours of the Bubker Flight Training Facility

7–9 p.m.
Aero Hangar Reception

6 p.m.–1 a.m.
Homecoming Fest, Downtown Melbourne
Featuring a free live concert by The Mighty Mighty Bosstones

Saturday, Nov. 3
8 a.m. (Register online)
Homecoming 5K Run/Walk, FIT campus

10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Ernst Oppel, Foosaner Art Museum

10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Battle Worn, Funk Center for Textile Arts

10 a.m.
Homecoming Parade, Panther Field

11–12:30 p.m.
Homecoming cook-out and tailgate party
FIT Campus

1 p.m.
Homecoming Intra-Squad Football Scrimmage, Panther Field

4 p.m.
Volleyball vs. Barry, Palm Bay High School

6–10 p.m. (Register online)
Homecoming Awards Gala, Clemente Center
Featuring entertainment by Greg and Brian

*Schedule subject to change.

Homecoming Fest Rocks Friday Night
The Mighty Mighty Bosstones (“The Impression That I Get”) will headline Homecoming Fest, Florida Tech’s newest Homecoming celebration, in downtown Melbourne on Friday, Nov. 2. Don’t miss this free concert and lively street party featuring food, drinks and live entertainment, sponsored by SGA and FTAA.

Homecoming Awards Gala, Clemente Center
Featuring entertainment by Greg and Brian

Other Highlights:

Saturday Morning
Race through the Jungle, past Panther Plaza and across south campus.
Register Online

Saturday Afternoon
Check out Panther football in a true Homecoming tradition! The intra-squad scrimmage takes place at Panther Field.

For more information or to register:

HOMECOMING.FIT.EDU

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New York City

1) Mathew Murtha ’05 and John Sodano ’83
2) New York Tri-State Chapter leaders Weyni Nazon ’01 and Fab Barasti ’99
3) Tadai Qureshi ’01 M.S., ’03 M.S., guest Elise Liebowitz, Richard Halprin ’80
4) Stephanie Lovers ’75, Trustee Joe Caruso ’70, Chuck Reilly ’77
5) Joe Tafe ’02 and President Catanese

Raleigh

1) Partha Svarayan Venkatram ’99 M.S., Johan Kristoffersen ’91 M.S.
2) FTAA President John Valente ’76, ’81 with John Fisher ’79
3) Alumni Executive Director Bino Campanini ’90, ’92 MBA, and Andrew Major ’98

New York Tri-State Chapter leaders Weyni Nazon ’01 and Fab Barasti ’99.

Greater Boston Area Chapter
Auctions Signed Wakefield Cap

Greater Boston Area Chapter President Bernie Fuchs ’70, left, presented Douglas Schuler ’72, ’91, with an FIT baseball cap signed by Tim Wakefield. Schuler was the winning bidder for the cap, which was part of a silent auction at the reception to raise money for Boston chapter alumni outreach and activities. Wakefield himself was unable to attend the reception, as it was “Tim Wakefield Day” at Fenway Park. Connect with the Greater Boston Chapter on Facebook! http://bit.ly/bostonalumni

1) Head Football Coach Steve Englehart and his wife Carrie toured the city during their visit
2) Florida Tech University Online alumnus Carl Banks ’12 with his wife Maureen
3) Bino Campanini and Ben DiScarcina ’99, ’04 President and CEO Anthony J. Catanese and his wife Sara with Bernie Fuchs ’70
4) Bruce Freedman ’76 and his wife Lynne with Coach Englehart

1) Parthasarathy Venkatram ’99 M.S., Johan Kristoffersen ’91 M.S.
2) FTAA President John Valente ’76, ’81 with John Fisher ’79
3) Alumni Executive Director Bino Campanini ’90, ’92 MBA, and Andrew Major ’98
1) Bill Jurgens with rowing alumni  2) President Catanese and his grandson Robert  3) Jamie Brelin ’95 and Reivan Brelin ’94, ’96 MBA  4) Rowing alumni Paul Mellinger ’88, Pete McLaughlin and Sam Stevens ’87  5) Matt Kilcullen, assistant vice president for athletic fundraising, with Doug Newbert ’92  6) Trustees Jonathan Zung ’86 and Joe Caruso ’70 with President Catanese

San Diego Alumni Chapter Luncheon
In August, members of the San Diego Alumni Chapter gathered for lunch at Stone Brewing Bistro. Attendees included, from left: Nicole Shipley ’12; Michael O’Hara ’87; Chris Rosemeyer ’04 and wife April; Chris Blatt ’88; Claire Surrey-Marsden ’04 and Chad Marsden ’99 with son Hudson; Miguel Adao ’89; Lisa Matthews ’80; Mark Burdette ’94 with wife Carolyn and sons Benjamin and Adam; and John Shipley. For more information about San Diego Chapter activities, email Miguel Adao at Miguel.adao@hp.com.

1) Ann-Marie Helgestad ’12, left, with her family from Norway, visits with Ken Stackpoole, vice president of aviation programs and dean, College of Aeronautics  2) Mustafa AlSharif ’08 M.S., ’12 Ph.D., left, with a friend from UAE. Qais AlSharif joined by Professor Muzaffer Shaikh and President Catanese  3) College of Engineering Dean Fredric Ham and Jerome Garcia ’12 M.S. from Trinidad and Tobago  4) Anjhana Ramakrishna ’12 M.S. (center) with her sister Bhagyashree Ramakrishna (left) who flew in from India and Bharati Belwalkar ’11 M.S.

“I invite all alumni to name a seat and leave our legacy in Gleason for future generations of Panthers, to support our alumni association and keep Florida Tech traditions alive. Join me and be part of the 500.”

Tom Folliard Jr., Class of 1989
Chief Executive Officer, CarMax Inc.

alumni.fit.edu/gleasonseats
Aerial Observations
Alumni lead two visionary projects at Northrop Grumman

To look down, or look up? When soaring high above the Earth, that's a difficult question, given the spectacular sights in either direction. Thanks to two Florida Tech alumni, humankind will soon have tools offering a better view of both the heavens and the Earth. Jeff Grant ’75 and Alan Metzger ’81 each lead teams of Northrop Grumman engineers and scientists in the development of two highly anticipated projects.

Grant heads Northrop Grumman's Space Systems Division, the major U.S. contractor for the James Webb Space Telescope. When completed in 2018, the telescope will give scientists a glimpse of some of the oldest parts of the universe, answering questions that haven't even been asked. Conversely, Metzger leads Northrop Grumman's team developing a state-of-the-art airship, the Long Endurance Multi-Intelligence Vehicle (LEMV). The $517 million project, slated for completion this year, will provide the U.S. Army with a new tool in defense initiatives in areas such as Afghanistan and the Middle East.

So how did two alumni land such prominent positions at one of the world's largest global security companies? Each has his own story, but a common element is the unique setting Florida Tech provides to its students.

"FIT provided not just a learning environment," said Grant. "We also learned about team building, communicating and stretching beyond the academics."

"Airships offer significant affordability with minimum fuel usage, less moving parts for increased reliability, and, due to the endurance capabilities, a lot less ground support personnel."

Alan Metzger ’81

Above: Jeff Grant (third from left) is shown here during a ceremony Oct. 26, 2011 opening a new exhibit about the James Webb Space Telescope at the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore. Northrop Grumman photo by Marty Katz

Below: During a recent campus visit, Grant stopped by the lab of Stephen Wood, program chair for ocean engineering.
While majoring in engineering, Grant also participated in a number of extracurricular pursuits. As a member of the College Players (left), a resident advisor and a member of a fraternity, Grant honed important interpersonal communication skills. Other activities—working at WFIT, a projectionist at Gleason Auditorium and even performing repairs at the bowling alley that was under Evans Hall at the time—provided hands-on technical skills that would prove valuable in the engineering field.

On the academic side, Grant touts many of his instructors’ industry-oriented educational style. “The adjunct faculty members were impressive because they were holding classes at night, but during the day, they were addressing these same problems in the real world,” he said. “There was a realism, a pragmatism. You had academic rigor combined with the practicality of managing a complex program.”

Grant transferred to FIT during his sophomore year, after beginning his studies at Clemson in his native South Carolina. As a young scuba diver, his passion for the ocean lead to the pursuit of an ocean engineering degree, which he heard promised better job opportunities than other disciplines. His 21-year career at the CIA underscores that decision.

“My time at FIT served me well,” he said. “I believe the entrepreneurial experience—as well as two years of Russian—gave me an advantage.”

Ocean engineering proved useful to his current field as well. “You’re designing things to go into a harsh environment—whether it’s underwater or in space.”

These days, Grant has the honor of leading a team in the development of the Webb Telescope—arguably one of the most important tools on the horizon for astronomers, physicists and astrophysicists. “Scientists are enabled by more precise instruments, combined with patient observation,” he said. “There is a big change coming and it’s exciting to be part of this huge international collaboration.”

Closer to Earth, Alan Metzger’s LEMV team will soon deliver a football-field-sized hybrid airship to the U.S. Army. As an “unblinking eye,” capable of uninterrupted surveillance for more than three weeks, the LEMV will first be used by troops in the battlefield in Afghanistan. Reaching heights up to 20,000 feet, the LEMV will provide unprecedented views of the Earth’s surface, affording our military on the ground with a powerful new tool in the arsenal.

The LEMV is slated to deploy this fall to much fanfare from the U.S. Army. “Airships offer significant affordability with minimum fuel usage, less moving parts for increased reliability and, due to the endurance capabilities, a lot less ground support personnel,” explained Metzger. The LEMV is the first product in a new business area for Northrop Grumman, called the Lighter-Than-Air (LTA) market.

Metzger joined Northrop Grumman in 1988 as a member of the Joint STARS team and has advanced to greater supervisory positions, including chief engineer, program director and vice president. He credits his Florida Tech education with preparing him for his senior leadership roles.

“The professors were very knowledgeable, and many brought personal experiences into the classroom,” he said. Listening to his own children describe their experiences at larger schools with as many as 600-700 students per class, he appreciates the Florida Tech advantage. “That was not my experience at FIT, and I think it had an effect on being successful in a team-oriented environment.”

Like Grant, Metzger took full advantage of Florida Tech’s active student life, including varsity basketball, intramural sports and Greek Life, where he learned the value of teamwork and served as president of the Chi Phi fraternity. These days, a number of Florida Tech alumni are part of his Northrop Grumman team, including Paul Henkel ’81, lead avionics engineer; Dave Dabrowski ’97 M.B.A., vehicle engineering director; Tim Atkinson ’03, ’07 M.S., software engineer; Andrew Saffioti ’07 M.S., communications engineer; Pat Magee ’01 M.S., contracts manager; Mark Wengrovsky ’97 M.B.A., vehicle engineer lead; Melissa Marszal ’95, ’07 M.B.A., pricing analyst; Dave Huddleston ’83, hardware design engineer; Joe Durso ’96 M.S., business development; Denniel Brande ’08 M.B.A, cost and schedule management; and Jim Palmer-Smith ’78, lead systems engineer.

As alumni, Grant and Metzger embody the Florida Tech motto, “Ad Astra Per Scientiam,” or “To the Stars through Learning.”

Gretchen Sauerman
EMERGING ENGINEERING:

Biomedical engineering has recently emerged as a discrete discipline. Closing the gap between engineering and medicine, the field has evolved from an interdisciplinary specialization to a field in itself. From applications in artificial organs and biocompatible prostheses to diagnostic and therapeutic medical devices such as clinical equipment and micro-implants, this joining of engineering with medicine offers potential to ease pain, produce more accurate diagnoses and, often, save time and money.

The discipline also tops Forbes’ most valuable college majors list and is recognized as a growth field by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This fall, the College of Engineering introduces biomedical engineering degree programs at the master’s and doctoral levels, joining the existing undergraduate program.

“Students are attracted to this field because of the endless possibilities for advancement in health care diagnostic methods, new monitoring and therapeutic techniques as well as the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives,” said Fredric Ham, dean of the College of Engineering and Harris Professor of Electrical Engineering. “I have personally spent a significant portion of my research career working in this field in the area of biosensors.”

Other Florida Tech faculty members have also been involved in biomedical-related research for many years. Kunal Mitra, founder of Florida Tech’s biomedical research program, recently earned a patent for a laser-based skin cancer detection and treatment system. The system is designed to reduce or replace costly, invasive biopsies that detect skin cancer cells in a patient. It reduces diagnosis time by making results available immediately so that treatment may begin sooner.

“There is a sharp contrast in the absorption images of normal cells and cancerous cells, which can be detected using the short-pulse laser system. The system can image and display healthy cells to reduce the need for painful biopsies,” explains Mitra.

Amir Sajjadi ’12 Ph.D. has also harnessed the power of short-pulse lasers for biomedical engineering advances in the diagnosis and treatment of subcutaneous tumors. As part of his dissertation research, he developed a novel technology that uses a focused ultra-short pulse laser beam to precisely remove a tumor, which prevents damage to the surrounding healthy tissue. The technique allows for the removal of subcutaneous tumors without any incision or surgery. He also advanced a time-resolved optical imaging technique using short-pulse lasers by employing gold nanoparticles as viable contrast agents. “Combining these two techniques provides an unprecedented tool for early cancer detection and removal,” he said.

Sajjadi’s work has been published in three leading scientific journals, 12 peer-reviewed conference proceedings and has been presented at 15 conferences. “In this challenging research, I have been using a variety of experimental, computational and analytical methods. As a result, not only have I acquired a deep understanding of the physiology and cellular infrastructure of living organisms, but also I have obtained extensive experience with some sophisticated experimental methods and computational techniques,” he said.

Another alumnus forging opportunities in biomedical engineering is Ronald Richardson ’84. Following undergraduate work in pre-professional biology at Florida Tech, he enrolled in the biomedical engineering program at Duke University’s Pratt School of Engineering, earning a master’s degree in 1992. His master’s thesis was on encapsulating implantable biosensors. “It was very interdisciplinary. I combined biochemistry, physiology, electrical engineering, thermodynamics and more for the experimental design and analysis,” he said. Later, in the ’90s, Richardson became a sort of “go between,” translating needs and capabilities for clinical users and medical device manufacturers in the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Agency. As a program manager for integrated clinical systems, he prioritized diagnostic imaging and clinical laboratory equipment requirements for fixed and field medical treatment facility capital investment equipment programs.

“In biomedical engineering, you work across boundaries and need a solid background and knowledge of almost all the engineering disciplines as well as biology and medicine,” said Richardson. “Every problem presents unique and thought provoking challenges. What’s rewarding is that you ultimately contribute to health care delivery and extending and improving quality of life for millions of people.”

Karen Rhine
On the Beat with a British Bobby

Paul Robertson ’94:

Before each shift, Paul Robertson ’94 puts on his uniform—black cargo trousers, black shirt tucked under a black stab vest, handheld radio affixed near his left shoulder and a rig belt adorned with handcuffs, baton and pepper spray. Ato his head rests the traditional Custodian helmet (but only when he’s on foot patrol, which is a rarity). Noticeably absent is a firearm.

Robertson is a police constable stationed at Bognor Regis, West Sussex, two hours south of London, along the coast of the English Channel. Unlike a U.S. police officer, he does not carry a gun. In fact, though trained for crowd control, demonstration situations and CBRN (chemical/biological/radioactive/ nuclear) incidents, Robertson has never received firearms training.

“The main difference between police in England and police in the U.S. is obviously the fact that we are not armed as standard,” explains Robertson. “We have armed units, but the ordinary Bobby carries an extendable baton and pepper spray when out on patrol.”

On the beat in his rural, seaside community, Robertson is part of the Neighbourhood Response Team, which deals with emergency situations as they are called in to 999 (the British equivalent of 911). Anything from a noise complaint to an assault, Robertson responds to the scene in his patrol car, which is not the famed black and white “panda” car, but a modern general patrol vehicle, or GP, that is silver with blue and yellow reflective decals.

Robertson has served on the force for eight years, and in that time, calls have spanned the mundane to the morose—a typical disorderly drunk to a badly beaten man “set alight.” Common issues include drugs, “drink-related anti-social behaviour” and theft. “The theft increase is a direct result of what is happening with finances, jobs, taxes, and the like in England. People can’t or won’t work, but still want the good things in life, so they feel as if they are entitled to take them from wherever they can,” he laments.

Like the U.S., suspects are innocent until proven guilty. However, after being arrested on suspicion of a crime, British defendants are photographed and fingerprinted, and also have their DNA taken.

DNA sampling upon arrest is growing, but not universal in the U.S. The practice is law in 26 states, yet several legal battles wage questioning its constitutionality.

Outside of the day to day, Robertson has participated on some high-profile assignments in recent years. In the wake of the 2011 London riots, he spent two days on patrol in the north/northeast area of the city, where fortunately, “nothing of note happened.” In July, he assisted at one of the change-over points as the Olympic torch made its way through the country-side on its path to the London games.

“I actually got to see and touch the torch,” he says. “I have not washed my hand since!”

With his unusual application of an applied mathematics degree, Robertson jokes, “I’m not quite sure what inspired me to become a copper as I didn’t have family or close friends who were emergency service personnel. I just failed to grow out of the ‘I want to be a policeman/fireman/train driver’ stage.”

And, though he’s not analyzing complex equations (“The only problem solving I really have to do is decide whether I am going to knock the door in or break a window”), he is protecting and serving his community.

“The most rewarding part of the job is a ‘thank you’ from a victim of crime when we are able to quickly catch the person responsible and seeing their face light up with gratitude and relief. Obviously the worse the incident or more vulnerable the victim, the quicker catch the person responsible and seeing their face light up with gratitude and relief. Obviously the worse the incident or more vulnerable the victim, the greater the feeling,” he says.

At the end of a shift, Robertson’s favorite duty is getting back home to his family—wife Laurie (Hockridge) ’94, and sons Harvie, 4, and Frankie, 6, holding an Olympic torch he made to celebrate the day the real torch passed through their town.

Robertson and wife Laurie (Hockridge) ’94, and sons Harvie, 4, and Frankie, 6, holding an Olympic torch he made to celebrate the day the real torch passed through their town.

Christena Callahan
Ken Lindeman:
The Lindeman for the Job

The Synergy of Sustainability, Scientific Research and Sage Scholarship is all in a day’s work for Professor Ken Lindeman

Around campus, professor Ken Lindeman has become known informally as “the sustainability guy.” It’s a moniker of convenience. He is, after all, academic director of the sustainability minor, advisor to the Student Organization for Sustainability Action and one of Florida Tech’s most tireless organizers of campus greening efforts.

Lindeman doesn’t mind the label, he admits, as it certainly applies—at least to some degree. “But sustainability requires team efforts involving dozens of best practices that must be developed, implemented and maintained to last over time,” he says.

Yet, sustainability is just one of the threads in Lindeman’s broad web of work. “He is also Florida Tech’s online sciences director, consults frequently on Latin American coastal management issues, and is principal investigator on several research projects.

Most striking about Lindeman’s office, tucked away in the woodsy, secluded home of the department of education and interdisciplinary studies, is his array of wonderfully messy bookshelves. Crammed with everything from academic tomes to paperback novels, texts on topics ranging from law to systems engineering to Eastern philosophy, it is clear the professor’s interests are not only deep but diverse—a characteristic, he says, that has its pros and cons.

Certainly, Lindeman runs the risk of being called a jack-of-all-trades, master of none. But such a sobriquet couldn’t be further from the truth. “I’ve worked to integrate diverse, interdisciplinary themes for decades. One of the goals has always been to become highly knowledgeable in seemingly distinct disciplines that can be unified to optimize public policy impacts,” says Lindeman, whose career is proof of an ability to do just that.

In 1989, Lindeman dove into the policy arena by starting his own coastal research nonprofit. It was an experience, he says, that forced him to learn the business, law and politics associated with science-based conservation actions. He also began to work on coastal issues in Latin America, with products that included pioneering conservation research in Cuba where he has co-authored seven journal articles and a book by the Smithsonian Institution Press (among 50 journal articles and two books to date), assisted development of one of the largest marine park systems in the Caribbean, and taught a coastal management course in Spanish at the University of Havana.

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“Through these experiences, I got proficient at organizational start-ups and at translating science for decision-makers,” he says. “When you’re doing policy work, it doesn’t end with a journal article. That journal article is a new tool to try to move much larger systems that are often not designed to listen to science.”

On the research side, Lindeman’s work has focused on the developmental biology of marine fishes, coastal habitats, reef fisheries, coastal management and climate adaptation. He’s currently part of a research team awarded a $1.5 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Services Office to make advanced regional predictions of sea level rise for six sites on the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

Lindeman characterizes the other principal investigators that make up the research team as “rocket scientists of sea level research.” And his role? “I’m the policy guy. It’s my job to translate the research into products that are interpretable by non-scientists.” He says. To that end, Lindeman and his students are analyzing over 1,000 climate planning documents from around the globe and building a comprehensive summary of the most effective tools for transferring technical information on sea level adaptation to policy makers.

This past summer, Lindeman co-managed (with graduate student Lauren Dame) three workshops on Sea Level Rise Science and Adaptation at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts, Nags Head, N.C., and close to home in Melbourne, Fla. The workshops examined current sea level research and information needs among 100 representatives of federal, state and local agencies, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and businesses.

So there’s more to his work than campus sustainability. “But there is also far more to sustainability at Florida Tech than his efforts, he is quick to point out.

“I didn’t make all this happen,” he says, in reference to the working list of campus sustainability projects he always keeps close at hand. “Significant sustainability actions were taken on campus before the academic program was launched. There are many champions across all colleges and various administrative components at FIT. I’m just one player.”

Lindeman speaks modestly about his role in the greater university effort toward a greener campus, but not about his passion for doing so. “I’m really into this. My wife will roll her eyes about how much I talk about the sustainability program,” says Lindeman, who is equally forthcoming about the high expectations he has set for himself and for students in the minor program.

“Our measure for success is that it all outlasts us,” he says. “The sustainable practices we implement around campus, the systems we initiate, the momentum of the academic program, these things can’t end when a student graduates or when I get hit by a bus. That’s how we know we’ve done things the right way—when they last beyond us.”

Ultimately, Lindeman views his research, teaching and campus sustainability efforts as intrinsically—and beneficially—linked. “There are no boundaries outside of time and funding,” he says. “Everything falls under the umbrella of education. My goal is to help assemble an array of exceptional young scholars working on primary issues that will foster more sustainable societies in the future.”

Andy McIlraith

Diving with groupers in Cuba

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Love, Pride and an Opportunity

Former Panther embarks on first season as head volleyball coach

When Amy O’Brien ’09 reflects on the past few years, she vividly remembers her volleyball career at Florida Tech, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in business administration and serving as an assistant volleyball coach for the Panthers.

Aspirations of earning an MBA followed her time as an undergraduate and those were met with a desire to continue her coaching career. One opportunity she didn’t foresee occurred in May when she was named FIT’s new head volleyball coach.

She follows in the footsteps of Robin Chan, Fidgi Haig and Adam Thorstad as FIT graduates who are currently a head coach of one of the Panthers’ 21 sports.

“I was able to grow at FIT as a person and student-athlete,” she said. “In my two years, I loved being a student, our campus, the athletic program and my teammates. To now be the head coach of the volleyball program is an honor.”

As she begins her first season this fall, she will utilize some of the lifelong skills she learned as a student-athlete at FIT and her previous college, Florida State College at Jacksonville.

“As a student-athlete at an academically challenging school like Florida Tech, I learned how to manage my time,” she said. “I majored in business, and I really think the business program helped me develop professionally.”

Love for the Game

Volleyball is a sport ingrained in the 25-year-old from Holiday, Fla. Her mom and two sisters played it collegiately. She’s been active in the game since childhood and has developed a passion for it. Although she no longer plays competitively, her love for volleyball remains.

“I love for volleyball,” she said. “I always want to play even now after I’m done playing. I can’t imagine not being involved in it. Stepping into the spring as the program’s interim head coach and being in control of the practices and games was such a rush for me. I knew coaching was what I wanted to do.”

Now Introducing ... Your 2012 Panthers

O’Brien and the Panthers will play nearly 30 regular-season games this fall starting Aug. 31 and concluding Nov. 16. This summer, she’s spent much of her time preparing for the fall season. Among the tasks she’s crossed off her list are goals for 2012: play hard as a team, compete for NCAA postseason play, achieve a 3.30 team GPA, continue to make a positive impact in the campus and Melbourne communities and help promote the team’s home games.

“It is awesome having packed stands,” she said. “Our fans along with Pete the Panther, the pep band and cheerleaders help create a fun environment. If people haven’t attended our games, I encourage them to come.”

O’Brien prides herself on being energetic and a motivator. She’s ready to take on the opportunity to be a head coach at the college level and is grateful for the support she’s received from FIT’s coaches and staff.

Player, assistant coach, head coach—she’s another good example of how students can benefit from a degree at FIT.

A Dynamic Decade

A big proponent of collegiate athletics, President and CEO Anthony J. Catanese has added 11 sports to the university’s landscape since his arrival in 2003. During his first year, he sparked the addition of five programs: men’s and women’s golf, women’s soccer and men’s and women’s tennis.

All five sports have experienced success in their first decade. Notable achievements have ranged from an NCAA Division II national champion in women’s golf to an NCAA South Region Championship, Final Four appearance and Sunshine State Conference Championship in women’s soccer to more than 15 combined appearances in NCAA post-season play by all five sports.

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“A Dynamic Decade

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Last spring, Duane De Freese arrived in the Mentawai Islands, the second leg of an Indonesian surf expedition he describes as the trip of a lifetime—physically, emotionally and spiritually. After a week of travel, a week in Bali and a 75-mile boat ride across the Mentawai Strait off the west coast of Sumatra to Karamajet Island, he was set to spend 11 days at the Kandui Surf Resort.

Each morning, a boat ferried him to the many surf breaks near the island. On day two, that break was called Hideaways.

As he waited for his set, his wet hair glistened in the sun. The salt breeze kissed his face. The taste of iron was bitter on his lips—a reminder of the errant board that met his nose earlier that day. The swell approached. He paddled hard. The crystal blue Indian Ocean rolled out before him as he cascaded down the wave. Then, a momentary mjudgment and the thunderous surf pounded him into the shallow coral reef below, sending him tumbling beneath the powerful force.

Overcome. Just like the emotions he was there to escape.

The “senior citizens surf tour” guys—De Freese, center, with University of Rhode Island surf buddy, Mike Ryan, right, and Rhode Island transplant, Curt Schwartz, left, who has been living full-time in Bali for over a decade.

(for left) De Freese respecting local Hindu traditions while sporting a T-shirt from LongDoggers, a Brevard restaurant owned by alumni, John “AJ” Burr, who attended in the ’80s and Al Steiginga ’89. The shirt was a big hit with the local surf crew, said De Freese.
In 2011, De Freese experienced the unthinkable. His wife Vicki, his best friend of nearly 26 years, passed away. “She underlined to get more involved in surfing again,” recalls De Freese, who had dedicated less time to the sport on advice from Vicki. “Just before her death, she was really pushing peace again.

De Freese’s world came crashing down. His wife Vicki, his best friend of nearly 26 years, had enjoyed as a couple. The trip rekindled decades-dormant friendships and lead to a more epic adventure with a former college and surfing buddy, Mike Ryan. They called the month-long expedition “the senior citizens surf tour” during which DeFreese would celebrate his 58th birthday.

“The trip the next eight months in focused preparation—working out every day, surfing when I could, eating right and buying lots of surfboards to find the quiver of ‘magic boards’ to carry on the journey,” he says.

In April 2012, that journey began.

Sleeping in “umas,” the thatched houses built in the traditional Mentawai style by local Mentawai craftsmen, the surfers awoke each day to a verdant, tropical paradise. A labyrinth of white sand paths connected the resort outbuildings and led to coastina sand beaches where the ebb and flow of the sea sent ghost crabs scurrying. A canopy of palms and seagrasses framed the view of perfect turquoise barrels rolling in the distance.

“The Mentawai Islands are one of the most consistent surf destinations in the world,” says De Freese. “Exposure toward the southern Indian Ocean provides high-quality surf on shallow coral reefs that will give you the best wave of your life or a proper beating. I got both!”

In fact, the wipeout at Hideaways was so intense that De Freese experienced a blunt impact trauma. “I had a bruise down my entire left leg, fractured the T12 vertebrae and damaged two lumbar discs in my lower back,” says De Freese. “It ended my surfing, but not the fun. It was such an unusual place to be and so exquisitely beautiful you couldn’t help but enjoy it.”

Fortunately, the island experience proved as stimulating as the waves. Unlike other remote tourism venues that import staff as well as guests, Kandui is staffed by Mentawai locals, guaranteeing an authentic travel experience. “You very much got a sense of the culture,” explains De Freese. He danced with the Shamans, the traditional medicine men of the islands who travel down from their jungle dwellings to visit the resort. Lean, tattooed and sun-etched, the Shamans wear colorful headresses, woven loincloths and croton leaves, palm fronds and other tropical foliage as they dance, drum and chant. “Then, willing guests, like De Freese, are invited to taste sago palm larvae (grub-like insects considered a delicacy of the islands).”

“Leathery skin, squishy insides, crunchy head parts … keep a Bintang beer close at hand for the wash down!” advises De Freese.

Ultimately, the trip was as cathartic as it was catastrophic. “It will be months of rehab before I surf again,” says De Freese. “With that said, it was still the best trip of my life! I have a reservation for April 2013. I am now focused on recovery, rehab and reconditioning so I can get back in the surf.”

The sport that shaped his life and his career also proved to be the therapy that helped bring peace to his heart. “To do it well, you have to live in the moment and focus on finding a rhythm with the ocean,” says De Freese. “It’s a good lesson for life.”

Christena Callahan
2011–2012 Honor Roll of Donors

Each year we honor trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents, corporations, foundations and other friends in the Honor Roll of Donors. This year’s Honor Roll of Donors consists of those who give to the university between May 1, 2011 and April 30, 2012. We salute all who gave Florida Tech during the 2012 fiscal year.

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Continued from page 59

James Latimer ’05 and wife Myrnam welcomed baby girl Isabella Julie Latimer on April 1, 2011. She weighed 7 lbs., 0 oz., and measured 20.5 inches. James and family reside in Sugar Land, Texas. James works for Deloitte Consulting Group at Houston Bush Intercontinental Airport and is a Fighter Crew Chief in the 147th Reconnaissance Wing, Texas Air National Guard, at Ellington Field.

Gregory K. Walker ’06 of the Defense Acquisition University had completed 21 years of federal service. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on May 18, 1990, and completed his services commitment on Aug. 8, 1999. He has served as an aviation manager for Amazon.com, a contract specialist for the U.S. Army, a lead logistician for the U.S. Army, and currently serves as a professor of logistics with a Demonstrated Master Logistician credential. Walker received his degree from Florida Tech’s Huntsville campus. He is married to Rosalind Y. Walker (U.S. Army) and has four children, Senior Airman Gregory L. Walker (U.S. Air Force), Corporal Martin J. Walker (U.S. Army), Maya E. Walker, and 18-month-old Luke Sky Walker.

Mike Piazza ’89 and Melissa (Reinders) were married on Jan. 12, 1992, in Port St. Lucie, Fla. Both received a FIT varsity athlete, Melissa and Mike met at Florida Tech in 2006. Mike was a starting baseball pitcher, and Melissa was on the volleyball team. Piazza was voted Florida Tech’s Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year in 2008–09 and signed with the Los Angeles Angels in 2009. Melissa graduated from the University of Central Florida in 2010 with a degree in communication.

Congratulation! If you’ve recently welcomed a new Panther Cub to your family, contact us for your free infant T-shirt. Your only obligation is to send us a photo of your baby wearing the shirt— we will proudly display it in Florida Tech TODAY.

Email hrosskam@fit.edu to receive your shirt.

Jennifer Gillette ’10, ’12 MBA, played this summer for the Chesapeake Charge in Maryland. The Charge is a member of the Women’s Premier Soccer League, an independent national league representing the highest level of women’s amateur soccer in the United States.

Faculty/Staff
Quiana Bradshaw ’10 M.S., adjunct faculty member, with Florida Tech University Online and a doctor of computer science candidate, welcomed daughter Quiana, born Dec. 11, 2011. Julia was a starting baseball pitcher, and Melissa was on the volleyball team. Piazza was voted Florida Tech’s Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year in 2008–09 and signed with the Los Angeles Angels in 2009. Melissa graduated from the University of Central Florida in 2010 with a degree in communication.

Colin Bateman, adjunct instructor of physical science for Florida Tech University Online, was killed in a bicycle crash on Jan. 24. Colin was an energetic athlete, a dedicated educator and a friend who brought joy to many.

Tom Eschenberg ’86 M.S., ’87 MBA, who served as the mayor of the Town of Malabar since 2004, died in June after a short bout of cancer. Eschenberg earned two master’s degrees from Florida Tech and spent 39 years of his career working at Harris Corp.

Longtime university supporter Martha Hartley passed away on July 14. The generosity of Martha and Jack Hartley, university trustees, is evident all across the campus. Events take place daily in the Hartley Room, and many students earn a top-notch education with the financial assistance of the John Thomas McCartney Scholarship and service left a deep impact in the world of non-linear mathematics.

Richard Michael Librizzi ’89 M.S. passed away on May 50 in cantillia, Va., at the age of 49. Librizzi received a M.S. in computer science from Florida Tech and was most recently employed by the Software Engineering Institute of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Forrest McCarthy, former director of the Engineering Institute of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pa., has been a leader in the field of engineering education and research. He has served as chair of the IEEE Education Committee, the IEEE Education Society, and the IEEE Computer Society.

Llewellyn (Lew) Henson III, who served an Florida Tech’s second library director, died in May. Henson led the library from 1994 to 1996. In the early 1980s, he played an important role in guiding the construction of the Evans Library. Those who knew him will recall his impish smile and management style “by walking around” and listening to people, said university historian Gordon Patterson.

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2000s
Andrew Condon ’85 and wife Renee welcomed their first child, Army, Sept. 7, 2011. Andrew received his Ph.D. in coastal engineering from the University of Florida in December. He currently works for the Naval Research Lab at Stennis Space Center in Mississippi as a postdoctoral research in ocean dynamics and predictions branch.

Josep Sinkiewicz ’88 was recently awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, a U.S. Army honor awarded for heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight. Sinkiewicz, an Apache pilot, is based out of Fort Drum, N.Y. He recently completed a yearlong tour in Afghanistan with other FIT graduates: Randall Rennieise ’08 (Blackhawk Pilot), Jeff Shadwick ’88 (Kiowa Pilot) and Ben Jackson ’04 (Chinook Pilot). Pictured are Captain Ben Jackson ’04 and wife Lauren (Walker) Jackson ’04 on left, Captain Joseph Sinkiewicz ’88 and girlfriend Mel Rego ’09 on right.

In Memoriam
Richard A. Shriver, 80, passed away on Aug. 19. He retired from Florida Tech last April, after serving as professor of humanities in the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts since early 2008. Skellings was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature and the Pulitzer Prize. He was selected from among more than 400 other Florida poets to earn the title of Poet Laureate in 1980. Appointed to the lifetime honor by former Gov. Bob Graham, he authored seven books of poems. The Skellings archives reside at Florida Tech and are accessible online at http://research.fit.edu/edmundskellings.

Thomas Peake, emeritus faculty in the School of Psychology, who retired in 2007, passed away Sept. 11. “Tom was a vital part of the School of Psychology for many years and was known throughout the university for his scholarly work, collegial manner, genuine caring and gentle wit,” said Dean Mary Beth Kenkel.

Florida’s Port Laureate Edmund Skellings, 85, passed away on Aug. 19. He retired from Florida Tech last April, after serving as professor of humanities in the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts since early 2008. The Skellings was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature and the Pulitzer Prize. He was selected from among more than 400 other Florida poets to earn the title of Poet Laureate in 1980. Appointed to the lifetime honor by former Gov. Bob Graham, he authored seven books of poems. The Skellings archives reside at Florida Tech and are accessible online at http://research.fit.edu/edmundskellings.
Q: Homecoming is fast approaching. How do things look?

Last year’s homecoming celebration was a huge success, and this year’s homecoming is shaping up to be even bigger and better! The FTAA has partnered with the Student Government Association, and together we are building a platform to improve homecoming over the coming years. I am positive our alumni will have a great experience if they come to campus. The establishment of a football program has injected a new energy and enthusiasm for homecoming, which will only increase once the official games start next year.

Q: What can we expect at Homecoming 2012?

Many events will be happening on and around campus. Highlights include Homecoming Fest on Friday night in downtown Melbourne. This inaugural street party will feature food, drink and live entertainment topped off with a concert by national act The Mighty Mighty Bosstones. The opportunity to partner with our local business community to create a marquee event with great appeal to our students and alumni is something we are extremely pleased about. Saturday will feature a 5K campus run, the homecoming parade, a barbecue/tailgate followed by an intra-squad football scrimmage. In the evening, the FTAA will host the Homecoming Awards Gala in the Clemente Center. For a full schedule of events, folks can visit our Homecoming website http://homecoming.fit.edu.

Q: Where will the football scrimmage be held?

The game will be played at Panther Field, next to the new Varsity Training Center on the south end of campus. Even though it is an intra-squad scrimmage, Coach Englehart told me it will be played like a regular season game, so it should be a great opportunity to see what Panther football is all about. The good thing is that no matter what happens the Panthers will win!

Q: Last year the Homecoming Awards Gala sold out?

Yes, last year the gala was a huge success with 420 attendees. We are confident we will sell out again this year. The Homecoming Awards Gala showcases the very best of Florida Tech’s alumni with the presentation of Outstanding Alumni Awards in each college as well as the GOLD (Graduate of the Last Decade) Award and the Jerome P. Kreuper Distinguished Alumni Award. Of course, it is also a fun night with a cocktail hour where alumni can mingle with the administration and faculty and entertainment after the awards program. Tickets are $75.

Q: How is the Gleason “Name A Seat” Campaign going?

Very well! Vic Ross ’90 has agreed to chair the campaign. All alumni in our database will receive a letter from the FTAA outlining the campaign and why we’ve taken on this challenge. We hope our alumni will take the time to read the material and consider being part of the 500. As our campaign chair has stated, “we may not be able to put our name on a building but we can put it on a seat.”
Homecoming 2012

Going for the Gold

Join us for a red carpet celebration of Florida Tech and its Alumni!

For more information:
Bino Campanini, Office of Alumni Affairs
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Saturday, November 3
Clemente Center
on the Florida Tech campus

See Schedule on Page 14

Football
On the Field

Fans fill the Clemente Center and Pack Pirate Stadium!

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