Teams amp up for post-season play ▶ Grounds crew battles invasive plants
Unearthing clues to Seminole history ▶ Awards honor outstanding alumni

FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY
Pinnacle
www.fgcupinnacle.com

24 HOUR FESTIVAL
Up all night for art’s sake
Give more generously by giving more intelligently.

When you have causes in your life that are important to you, it’s vital to know that you are giving in the most effective ways possible. Which is why you should learn about the benefits of integrating your philanthropic efforts with your overall financial strategy. With the help of UBS, you’ll see how much harder your gifts can work for others while maximizing growth opportunities and minimizing tax exposure for you. You’ll feel more confident that you’re giving as generously—and as effectively—as you can.

Join us for Clarifying your philanthropic vision, an important conversation about how you can get the most out of giving to others.

Advice you can trust starts with a conversation.

**Tuesday, January 24, 9:00 a.m.**
Florida Gulf Coast University
10501 FGCU Boulevard
Fort Myers, FL 33965

Complimentary lunch will be served.

**RSVP by Tuesday, January 10**
James A. Tronnes
Senior Client Service Associate
239-277-3689
james.tronnes@ubs.com

7950 Summerlin Lakes Drive, Suite 1
Fort Myers, FL 33907
800-237-1110

You’re invited to
Clarifying your philanthropic vision

**Hosted by**
Berry and King Wealth Management Group

Jeffrey R. Berry, AAMS®
Vice President–Investments
Jeremy D. King, CRPC®
Vice President–Investments

**Guest speaker**
Joshua O. Dorcey
The Dorcey Law Firm, FLC

ubs.com/team/berryandking
DEPARTMENTS

3 President’s Q&A
5 Editor’s Corner
6 How to...
Tell it’s fall in Southwest Florida
7 Anatomy of ...
A bald eagle
8 Faces
FGCU employee No. 2
9 Cutting Edge
The First TEDeX at FGCU features inspired thinkers on sustainability.
10 Where are they now?
Emma Racila
11 Collective We
Students step into African-American “stomp” tradition.
11 By the Numbers
Central Energy Plant
42 Sense of Place
Florida Panther Posse Challenge
54 Class Notes

FEATURES

12 BIG DIG
A summer field study gives students a chance to apply archaeology techniques while helping the Seminoles try to reclaim their history.
BY DREW STERWALD

12 ART ON THE FLY
Students push their creativity — and pull an all-nighter — for FGCU’s annual 24 Hour Festival.
BY DREW STERWALD

20 MOVING UP
The coaching staff previews FGCU’s first season as a full-fledged Division I school.
BY CHRIS DUNCAN

34 Setting the PACE
2011 Alumna of Distinction Melissa Simontis is devoted to promoting a program that helps girls at risk turn their lives around.

36 Eagles soar
FGCU’s annual awards for rising alumni recognize a special agent, a nurse who deals with newborn mortality and others.

44 Going digital
Assistant Professor of Art Michael Salmond meets the growing demand for an electronic and interactive media curriculum.

46 GROUND WAR
FGCU’s battle to eradicate invasive exotic plants and replace them with natives wages on.
BY DREW STERWALD

50 Hooked on fish
A banking magnate donates his collection of rare and ancient ichthyology reference books.

52 Driving green
Estero Bay Chevrolet provides energy-saving Volt to President Bradshaw.

On the cover:
Brittney Brady, left, and Katelyn Gravel perform at the 24 Hour Festival.
Q: More and more we’re hearing the word “accountability” in the news, along with the suggestion that somehow universities need to develop a better method of assessing how efficiently and effectively they are working. How do we measure success?
Q: More and more we’re hearing the word “accountability” in the news, along with the suggestion that somehow universities need to develop a better method of assessing how efficiently and effectively they are working. How do we measure success?

A: The discussion on accountability is occurring not only in the media but also in state legislatures and at colleges and universities across the country. Historically, the public trusted colleges and universities to efficiently and effectively carry out their mission to educate students. And the reality is that in most cases these institutions did just that and they did it with distinction.

The effort to measure success and to be accountable for the work we do as educators and researchers is constantly evolving. However, over recent years, universities have been re-defining the metrics used to assess educational outcomes that would better indicate how well we accomplish our goals and what areas require improvement.

With input from the private and public sectors, higher education must develop a common understanding of the relevant metrics that indicate student success and hold ourselves accountable. Currently, we measure what we believe is essential to understanding how successful we are as institutions of higher learning. For instance, we measure the six-year graduation rate, the retention of students from one year to the next, the retention and productivity of faculty and staff, and the ratio of students to faculty. However, in most cases, one of the most important indicators of the impact of higher education on a student’s success is what that student has accomplished and is doing 10-15 years after graduation.

Still, universities are committed to ongoing assessment – as we are at FGCU – to ensure we remain effective in educating our students.

Q: Increasingly, students and families are finding it difficult to pay college tuition. Why is it so much more expensive to educate a student today?

A: There are many reasons that students and their families are being asked to pay more each year for a university education. First, I want to emphasize that in the world of higher education, public universities in Florida are quite affordable, including FGCU, with tuition and fees approximately $5,500 a year for Florida residents.

At state universities like FGCU, increasing tuition is in part due to decreasing support from the state.
And while that investment from the state is shrinking, the cost of what is required to offer a high quality education to our students is growing. Many of our programs, such as those in the health sciences, require state-of-the-art technology and laboratories, which must continue to keep pace with advances in the fields. Further, the costs of attracting and retaining high-quality faculty and staff continue to increase, especially in the high demand/low supply science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Q: We hear from some the suggestion that our problems would be solved if we adopted a business model.

A: My first response to that statement is that we do follow a business model. We’re a $180-million-a-year enterprise, responsible to our FGCU Board of Trustees, made up of many individuals with extensive business experience. If we didn’t follow best practices in business operations, our doors wouldn’t remain open for long.

There are important differences in our governance that distinguish a university from a corporation. One of those, of course, is the practice of shared governance. The relationship between the administration and the faculty and staff at a university is, I believe, unique to higher education. In matters of academic curriculum, for instance, the decisions are collaborative in a way that would seem foreign at most businesses. But for universities, the collaborative approach ensures that we develop programs that fit student interest and faculty expertise; meet the needs of our region and society; and respond to the demands of the job market. It should be pointed out that even with the multi-year cuts in our state appropriation, FGCU through fiscally conservative practices has realized greater efficiencies and managed quality growth. And we have done this with balanced budgets each year.
Curing what ails us

The past couple of months, my perspective on the value of medical care has become intensely personal. A bone marrow biopsy, PET and CT scans. Blood tests. Hours of chemotherapy. White blood cell booster shots. More blood tests.

Battling cancer has brought me into contact with dozens of dedicated health-care professionals – physicians, nurses, radiologists and lab techs, among others. Their expertise has given me confidence that I’m getting the best care available; their caring attitudes have calmed my fears as I’ve undergone tests and treatment.

My experiences have afforded me plenty of opportunity to consider how critical a role they play in all of our lives at times when we are at our most vulnerable. And so it was a great relief to see that the university administration came up with a cure for a budget shortfall that had threatened to delay completion of Academic Building 8, our new health professions building.

When the $4.5 million needed to furnish and equip it was unexpectedly cut from the state budget this year, administrators could have left the building incomplete and empty and hoped for a better outcome next year. Instead, they swiftly triaged the list of planned projects, redirecting sufficient funds to finish it in time to open this winter.

Coming up with that money means the new building won’t have the solar panels originally planned to help save on energy costs. It also means that a southern access road to the campus and a boardwalk linking South Village residence halls to the main campus will have to wait.

While all three are worthy projects, the need for health-care professionals trained in state-of-the-art techniques remains far more urgent.

As baby boomers age and technology advances at warp speed, the call for highly educated health-care professionals will only increase.

The U.S. Department of Labor predicts there will be a 30 percent increase in the number of health-care jobs in the next decade. That works out to about 5 million jobs. Meanwhile, boomers will retire, including those now working in the health industry, leaving still more positions to be filled.

Researchers are making major strides in treatment, requiring those who enter the field to know more than ever before. It’s not simply about dispensing medications, diagnosing ailments and demonstrating good bedside manner; technology grows more complex by the day.

Given my current state of health, I am acutely aware of how important it is that the university does the best job possible of training the next generation of health-care professionals.

No one expects or plans to need the level of care I’ve been fortunate to receive in recent months. But whether it’s cancer or heart disease, a car accident or a chronic condition, the quality of the rest of our lives depends on the caliber of care to which we have access.

Clearly, FGCU’s administration recognized the situation was critical and found an appropriate remedy.
Figure out it’s fall in SW Florida

WHILE SIGNS OF FALL IN FLORIDA MAY NOT BE AS bold and vibrant as the changing of the leaves up North, there are subtle signals that indicate seasonal transition as well as species that depart or arrive for winter.

Toward the end of summer, the swallow-tailed kite (Elanoides forficatus), which is often seen on campus, makes a 5,000-mile journey to its winter grounds in South America. Meanwhile, the colorful painted bunting (Passerina ciris) arrives to winter here, and many birders flock to wildlife sanctuaries to get a glimpse of this beautiful bird.

The bunting isn’t the only splash of color that arrives on the landscape. Fruits of the native shrub beautyberry (Callicarpa americana) fully ripen, displaying a full buffet of the purple berries that many birds snack on. Our native muhly grass (Muhlenbergia capillaris) flowers, creating a pink and purple sheen across the landscape, and the leaves of the red maple (Acer rubrum) show tints of red and orange.

As evening temperatures drop to the 70s, the afternoon downpours taper off, signifying the end of the rainy season. The frog choruses that echo through summer evenings begin to quiet as species move on and prepare for the dry season.

Waters recede and wildlife sightings increase as creatures concentrate in deeper ponds and sloughs. Animals are on the move, so slow down and watch for turtles, alligators, snakes and other critters crossing roads in search of water and food.

By mid-November, average night temperatures drop below 60 degrees, and hurricane season concludes at the end of the month. Pond and bald cypress trees (Taxodium ascendens and Taxodium distichum), our native deciduous conifers and residents of our wetlands, drop their needles as they hunker down for the dry season.

American alligators (Alligator mississippiensis) return to their gator holes – deep ponds or dens that they have engineered with their tails. Alligators are a keystone species – they play a critical role in protecting other creatures, especially this time of year. Their ponds provide critical habitat for wildlife such as turtles, fish and many bird species during the dry season.

While changes may seem hard to detect at first glance, if you take a second look, you can savor the beauty of Southwest Florida’s autumn.

SARAH W. DAVIS is FGCU campus naturalist, colloquium coordinator and an instructor in the Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences.
**[ ANATOMY OF... ]**

**A bald eagle**

Noble birds more common in Florida than in any state except Alaska.

During their drastic decline in the DDT pesticide era of the 1960s and 1970s, young eaglets were taken from Florida nests for use in a reintroduction program aimed at rebuilding populations elsewhere, according to Jerry Jackson, FGCU professor of ecological sciences and host of WGCU-FM’s “With the Wild Things” segments. Here are some other interesting tidbits he provided:

- **The lower legs of bald eagles are bare; those of the golden eagle are feathered all the way to the base of the toes.**
- **The bald eagle isn’t truly bald.** The white feathers covering its head appear at maturity when it is 4 years old.
- **The prominent brow over the eyes creates the impression of a stern look, but the bony ridge on the skull actually functions like a visor.** It shades the eagle’s eyes, protecting it from glare and enabling better vision for hunting.
- **An adult bald eagle’s bill is solid yellow; an immature bird has yellow at the base and a black tip.** A golden eagle’s bill is smaller and darker yellow.
- **Large feathers at the wing tips create tiny vortices of air with each wing stroke that make flight more energy efficient.** Though they resemble spread fingers, they are not any wider apart than other wing feathers. They are sculpted – notched on both the leading and trailing edge – for several inches near the tip.
- **The prominent brow over the eyes creates the impression of a stern look, but the bony ridge on the skull actually functions like a visor.** It shades the eagle’s eyes, protecting it from glare and enabling better vision for hunting.

"There is no way one can tell the sex of a bald eagle from a photograph or just by seeing it. Females are slightly larger than males, but not large enough that you could easily see the difference.”

- JERRY JACKSON,
  FGCU PROFESSOR OF ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES

---

**[ A-VERSE ]**

KEVIN PIERCE is host of “FGCU Perspectives” on WGCU-TV and is host and producer of “The Florida Environment” on WGCU-FM and other Florida public radio stations. He lives in Fort Myers.

**TIGER’S WOODS**

**NEWS ITEM** — A domestic black cat has joined hogs, alligators, raccoons and armadillos as a representative of FGCU campus fauna.

> When we walk among the creatures; Choosing species to discuss; They’re the ones in home-team bleachers; Any wildlife that’s seen is us.

**PIANO**

**NEWS ITEM** — An FGCU sophomore won first prize in an international piano competition in Lima, Peru.

> Instruments follow technology’s lead; An amped Fender Rhodes blasts a B-chord. Perhaps it’s not long before iPhones will breed And a baby grand’s made with no keyboard.

**SAINTS MISBEHAVIN’**

**NEWS ITEM** — With state funding vetoed, FGCU will finish its Health Professions building by eliminating or postponing other projects.

> Robbing Peter to pay Paul Built Paul’s cathedral, reads the plaque. But there’s a post-script few recall: Pete’s, one day, wants its money back.

**DAWDLLE DO IT**

**NEWS ITEM** — A group of FGCU students is concerned about campus construction’s impact on burrowing reptiles.

> He moved... So slow... The Gopher Tortoise... Contracted onset rigor mortis.
Barbara Krell
FGCU employee No. 2

BARBARA KRELL HAS BEEN PART OF FGCU SINCE BEFORE IT WAS FGCU.
Florida’s 10th state university didn’t even have a name yet when she signed on as executive assistant to founding President Roy McTarnaghan.
What was it like applying for credit cards for administrative travel, scheduling job candidate interviews, renting furniture for leased office space – all before the university was christened?
“Surreal,” she says. “It’s been a long journey. I had just turned 40 when I started.”
Krell was hired July 1, 1993. Her employee number: 2.
If she cares that she just dated herself, Krell doesn’t let on. As a gatekeeper for six FGCU presidents, including interims and current President Wilson G. Bradshaw, she is well-practiced in the art of discretion.
“I do a lot of listening,” she says, and leaves it at that for the moment.
Krell has had a lot of practice listening at high-level posts. She assisted four Cape Coral city managers while taking night classes toward her 1992 degree in human resource management from Barry University. Before that, she worked for a hospital president in Pittsburgh. Growing up the fourth of 11 children, she learned cooperation, compromise and teamwork.
“I love solving problems. I’m resourceful – my mother always said that,” she says.
It’s a quality she shares with her favorite screen character, scrappy survivor Scarlett O’Hara of “Gone with the Wind,” whose last words were “tomorrow is another day.”
“There’s always a solution,” Krell says.

Focus on what matters. You can get over and past anything. Giving up is not an option.”
That resilience came to the fore as she helped launch a university from scratch. Only one other person hired the same year as Krell still calls the university home: Chief of Staff Susan Evans.
“I have tremendous respect and admiration for how Barb handles the wide range of situations that are brought for a university president’s attention,” Evans says. “She does this with grace, professionalism, empathy and that always-needed great sense of humor.”
Krell apologizes to a visitor for the state of her desk on the third floor of Academic Building 5. In truth, it could hardly be tidier.
“I was born to organize others,” she says. President Bradshaw would agree. “She not only carries out her duties and responsibilities with experienced professionalism,” he says, “she has a unique ability to anticipate what the Office of the President needs to address and what should be delegated to other divisions.”
Krell beams like a proud parent when she recalls the university’s groundbreaking in 1995, the thrill of seeing students on campus for the first time two years later, the rise of academic buildings and residence halls.
“I feel very honored to be here in this position – it’s exciting,” she says. “It’s not making widgets – it’s education for our community and our children.”
— Drew Sterwald
TED is brimming with innovators, people less interested in figuring out how to prop up the collapsed economy of the last century than in creating an economy for the 21st century.”
— ARIANNA HUFFINGTON, HUFFINGTON POST

FGCU’s first TEDx goes global

Online videos send sustainability message around the world.

A

KPEZI OGBUIGWE OF NIGERIA IMAGINES A NEWSPAPER HEADLINE in 2026: “The rush for Africa, the modern continent.”

“People of all colors and languages seek to relocate to Africa, the only continent where there is sufficient and organic food for everyone, decent homes, efficient and reliable infrastructure and honest and dedicated workers, a continent of lush green forests, flowing clear rivers, blue skies and clean air,” she says to a studio audience at WGCU-TV. “No one could believe only 15 years ago, this same continent was the wretched of the Earth.”

Ogbuigwe’s futuristic message of hope and sustainability for Africa was taped in April as part of the university’s first TEDx event. The head of environmental education and training for the United Nations Environment Program, she joined sustainability scholars Heila Lotz-Sisitka of Rhodes University in South Africa and Mary Evelyn Tucker of Yale University on the bill.

Videos of their presentations have gone global through TEDTalks.

TEDx? TEDTalks? Who’s TED?
It’s a nonprofit organization (slogan: “Ideas worth spreading”) started in 1984 as an international conference centered on technology, entertainment and design (TED). Since then, its scope has broadened to include TEDx programs, which are independently planned local events, and TEDTalks, online videos of the programs. The latter is a sort of digital clearinghouse of free knowledge and inspiration from innovative thinkers such as Apple founder Steve Jobs (“How to Live Before You Die”), “Eat, Pray, Love” author Elizabeth Gilbert (“Nurturing Creativity”) and motivational speaker Tony Robbins (“Why We Do What We Do”).

Often used in classrooms, the 15- to 20-minute videos are effective at reaching today’s tech-savvy students, says Anne Hartley, associate professor of ecological studies. She organized “TEDxFGCU” through FGCU’s Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education.

“They really seem to engage (students) a lot more than other programs we’ve offered,” she says.

With the video posted online, the program has the potential to reach a far wider audience than a typical seminar on a university campus, she adds. “It’s all about idea sharing – we want to be part of the TEDx movement.”

With the required licensing, any university department or organization could program FGCU’s next TEDx. Besides technology, entertainment and design, topics can include business, science and global issues.

Videos from the university’s first TEDx can be viewed at tedxtalks.ted.com or on YouTube by searching “TEDxFGCU.”
— Drew Sterwald
WGCU upgrades studio to help raise revenue

Southwest Florida’s public media outlet is touting its new state-of-the-art production equipment in an effort to boost revenue in the face of lost state funding.

An $867,000 upgrade, including high-definition cameras and editing suites, positions WGCU to step up its client-based production services for commercials, infomercials, talk shows and Web content. A 2010 federal grant covered half of the cost, but the Florida Legislature didn’t fund its grant-matching program this year; unless that is restored, WGCU will have to pay the remainder.

The shortfall comes on top of the governor and legislature eliminating $522,000 in WGCU support — about 10 percent of the $5.1 million annual budget.

All of which makes it more urgent to market the newly christened Gulf Coast Studios’ rental and production services, says General Manager Rick Johnson.

“We are the only studio between Tampa and Miami of this size and with this equipment,” he says. Meanwhile, the radio and TV stations have reduced the frequency of locally produced documentaries and talk shows, slashed travel and training and frozen a reporting position. Cutting programming is a delicate matter for WGCU, which won its first Peabody Award for public service this year.

If we start slashing programming, well (programming) is what generates viewers and listeners, and that’s what generates membership revenue,” Johnson says. “But if we don’t show the pain, those responsible for the cuts can say we didn’t need the money anyway.”

For details about Gulf Coast Studios, call (239) 590-2340.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Emma Racila

Volleyball player enjoys net work with national deaf team.

Volleyball has given Emma Racila a jump on her professional aspirations. Ever since her 2007 internship with Florida congressman Connie Mack, she has dreamed of returning to Capitol Hill. This fall, she was able to move from Florida to Washington, D.C., thanks to her part-time job as assistant volleyball coach at Gallaudet University. By day, she works at Rare, a nonprofit that promotes conservation.

“I’ve always been interested in legislative work and policy analysis,” Racila says. “That internship with Connie Mack probably changed my life.”

It’s been a busy year for the 23-year-old from Estero. Since earning a master’s degree in public administration at FGCU last spring (she has a bachelor’s in political science from the College of Charleston), she has completed an internship with the Lee County Visitors & Convention Bureau and competed internationally for the National Deaf Volleyball Team. In November, she travels with the team to Brazil for the Pan American Deaf Games.

Racila, who played on FGCU’s volleyball team during graduate school, has moderate to severe hearing loss, which was diagnosed when she was 3. The 6-foot-1 outside hitter wears hearing aids most of the time, but USA Deaf Volleyball regulations don’t allow athletes to wear them during sanctioned competitions.

“It takes a lot more visual awareness,” she says. “You have to look over at the coach and at the players and communicate before a play starts. It’s my first time being immersed in any kind of deaf team. I’ve learned so much more sign language. I would like to keep it up.”

— Drew Sterwald

Emma Racila

Emma Racila - Volleyball player enjoys net work with national deaf team.

OLLEYBALL HAS GIVEN EMMA RACILA A JUMP on her professional aspirations. Ever since her 2007 internship with Florida congressman Connie Mack, she has dreamed of returning to Capitol Hill. This fall, she was able to move from Florida to Washington, D.C., thanks to her part-time job as assistant volleyball coach at Gallaudet University. By day, she works at Rare, a nonprofit that promotes conservation.

“I’ve always been interested in legislative work and policy analysis,” Racila says. “That internship with Connie Mack probably changed my life.”

It’s been a busy year for the 23-year-old from Estero. Since earning a master’s degree in public administration at FGCU last spring (she has a bachelor’s in political science from the College of Charleston), she has completed an internship with the Lee County Visitors & Convention Bureau and competed internationally for the National Deaf Volleyball Team. In November, she travels with the team to Brazil for the Pan American Deaf Games.

Racila, who played on FGCU’s volleyball team during graduate school, has moderate to severe hearing loss, which was diagnosed when she was 3. The 6-foot-1 outside hitter wears hearing aids most of the time, but USA Deaf Volleyball regulations don’t allow athletes to wear them during sanctioned competitions.

“It takes a lot more visual awareness,” she says. “You have to look over at the coach and at the players and communicate before a play starts. It’s my first time being immersed in any kind of deaf team. I’ve learned so much more sign language. I would like to keep it up.”

— Drew Sterwald

Emma Racila

Emma Racila - Volleyball player enjoys net work with national deaf team.

Emma Racila

Emma Racila - Volleyball player enjoys net work with national deaf team.
A Step Above Perfection

Dancers in sync with African-American tradition.

LAPS, SLAPS AND STOMPS RESOUND THROUGH ROOM 214 IN THE Student Union as A Step Above Perfection performs at the Black Student Alliance annual banquet. In unison, the steppers twist and turn, kick and wave, chant and shout, practicing an art form rooted in African and African-American culture.

The audience whoops approval. A Step Above Perfection, or ASAP, brings to Florida Gulf Coast University a highly physical dance form embraced by black fraternities and sororities as far back as the 1940s and re-popularized recently by movies such as “Drumline” and “Stomp the Yard.” Founding ASAP member Clarisse Delva (‘11, Criminal Justice) started stepping in high school in Orlando and decided to launch an FGCU team in January 2008.

“I wanted to bring something multicultural to campus,” says the 22-year-old graduate student. “Stepping is very common at predominantly black schools.”

Indeed, synchronized stepping has long been a tool for instilling group identity and unity in African-American schools, churches and social groups, according to Elizabeth Fine’s “Soulstepping: African-American Step Shows” (University of Illinois, $24.95). Black Greeks on American college campuses turned it into a pledging rite.

At FGCU, A Step Above Perfection can be seen – and heard – at basketball half-time shows and other events. Off campus, members also volunteer as mentors at Fort Myers’ PACE Center for Girls, a nonprofit delinquency-prevention agency for teens.

“We encourage them and advocate education,” says ASAP president Debraille Richardson, 19, a communication major from Hollywood. “Our team shows them that girls of all colors, shapes and sizes can go to college.”

“We also show them there’s more to college than studying,” Delva adds.

— Drew Sterwald

Chilling out on campus

It should come as no surprise that the Central Energy Plant was the first building completed on campus. It had to be in order to supply the chilled water that travels through an underground network of pipes to cool the air inside the academic buildings and other structures that followed. One of the largest ice thermal storage plants in the state, the facility generates and stores ice at night when demand and rates for electricity are lower, saving on utility costs.

Number of buildings within the campus loop cooled by the Central Energy Plant

Square footage under air cooled by Central Energy Plant

Number of tanks in Central Energy Plant’s thermal ice storage system

Temperature of water flowing through steel pipes to buildings for cooling systems

Temperature range maintained by air conditioning in most campus buildings. The library ranges from 72° to 74°.

Temperature range in cadaver storage room (a cadaver is used for instruction in the College of Health Professions) in Griffin Hall, the best place to chill out on campus. Or cool down in the Network Operation Center in Griffin, where computer servers hang out in a pleasant 68 to 72 degrees.
TIM THE TRENCHES
Students dig into history at reservation

Amanda Rodriguez kneels in a field in the Everglades, bending over a square trench that she and other FGCU students have carefully excavated with trowels in 2-centimeter layers. That’s roughly three-quarters-of-an-inch at a time.

With hand brooms and brushes, they sweep each layer of soil into dustbins, scanning for bits of bone, shell or pottery – evidence of prior occupants of this patch of land in the eastern reaches of the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Big Cypress Reservation. The students then pour the soil into plastic bags labeled with the plot coordinates they were taken from; later, the soil will be floated in water to flush out tiny seeds, bits of pollen or other microscopic evidence of life.

Story by Drew Sterwald
Photos by Brian Tietz

TOP: Artifacts such as this bone point, found during an FGCU field study, offer clues to Seminole Indian history.
RIGHT: Students excavate a 2x2-meter plot at the Big Cypress Reservation near Clewiston.
t’s tedious,” Rodriguez admits to a visitor. “But I love the methodology. I’d rather go slow. It’s definitely worth it to capture everything. We’re putting what we find together to establish what this site was.”

The senior anthropology major joined 14 other students this summer in an archaeological field school that FGCU offered in collaboration with the Seminoles’ Tribal Historic Preservation Office, which is based at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum south of Clewiston. With unprecedented access to a small portion of the reservation, students learned and practiced modern techniques of archaeological investigation to help piece together clues to the heritage of the Native Americans known as the Unconquered People.

Among the questions they hope to unearth answers to: Can a chronology of human occupation of the site be established? Does evidence exist of structures built? What was the diet of the people who lived there?

The excavation could be the first of many at the site, as the partnership grows between the Seminoles and the university, says Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Willard Steele.

“This is an amazingly significant spot,” he says. “It was one of the most densely occupied sites in the Everglades. You can practically lean down and pick up a piece of pottery. The tribe has an unbelievably complicated history, and that history has disappeared. They didn’t want to share it with the people who were chasing them with guns. We hope to get rid of the mythology and build a real history.”

For hundreds of years, newcomers sought to convert indigenous Americans...
to Christianity, steal their land and segregate them. No wonder some Seminoles still oppose outsiders poking around their ancestral home.

“With any group, there are always some people not happy with what’s going on,” says tribe member Jake Osceola, who manages the Billie Swamp Safari attraction on the reservation. “Most tribal people are somewhere in the middle. Culturally, we don’t like disturbing things. The Tribal Historic Preservation Office understands. The education and knowledge to be gained warrants doing this. Our history is being re-analyzed.”

CENTURIES OF MISTREATMENT

Today, roughly 2,000 Seminoles live on six reservations in Florida including Big Cypress, which covers 52,000 acres in southeastern Hendry and northwestern Broward counties. But when European explorers landed and their countrymen began to colonize the peninsula starting in the 16th century, as many as 100,000 aboriginal people lived here, according to the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Florida’s Seminole, Creek and Miccosukee tribes descended from the Maskókî-speaking peoples who lived throughout the South.

Pushing the natives ever farther south, the colonists took their toll.

They introduced diseases that killed Indians.

The Spanish stole their land.

The British enslaved or killed them.

The U.S. government tried to banish them and waged war on them.

By the time the Third Seminole War
with the United States ended in the mid-19th century, only a few hundred tribe members remained in Big Cypress and other isolated pockets of Florida. Remnants of Seminole villages from that time – and earlier, prehistoric occupation – have been discovered by the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, sparking interest in further excavation.

A year in the planning, this summer’s field study followed a 2009 project focused on pinpointing the location of Fort Shackleford, a U.S. Army outpost built in 1855 on what is now Big Cypress; its destruction, allegedly by local natives, set the stage for the Third Seminole War.

Field work can help unearth and amass an unbiased history while teaching tomorrow’s archaeologists and anthropologists how to conduct research with sensitivity toward other cultures.
STUDENTS LIVE IN CLOSE QUARTERS

After two weeks of lectures on campus, FGCU students trek 70 miles to the reservation for two 10-day sessions of surveying, digging and sifting for artifacts under the supervision of faculty and tribal preservation staff. At night, the amateur archaeologists decamp to Billie Swamp Safari, where men and women bunk in separate Seminole chickee huts—picture the traditional thatched palmetto roofs with screen walls and lantern lighting. A steady breeze blows through the rustic huts from the nearby swamp, where airboats buzz by bearing tourists. Cultural immersion, indeed.

By day students sweat, swat bugs and scrutinize particles. By night they dig dirt out of their fingernails, cook meals for one another and maybe play Cranium. It is not an experience they will soon forget.

“You get really close to your classmates when you’re together day and night,”
says Jeffrey Sepanski, a junior anthropology major sitting on a top bunk bed.

Just a few miles from camp, the field station sits on land identified as a Native American tree island – a distinct cluster of trees, shrubs and other plants that’s seen in sawgrass marshes and water-lily sloughs throughout the Everglades. Tree islands are biologically diverse due to their higher elevation relative to wetlands; they were the only spots in the Glades left high and dry during rainy season, providing refuge for animals, trees and humans.

“This is the best place in the south part of the state to live if you’re a Native American,” says Steele, the preservation officer. “There’s a diversity of flora and fauna. A canoe route across the Everglades comes right here.”

Although lately used as cattle pasture, evidence shows prehistoric occupation on the site. The preservation office in 2007 found almost 100 mammoth bones and teeth in the area that could date back 10,000 years.

It’s believed that a village and boat landing existed on the site in the 19th century, making it an important center for trade and communication among Seminole groups. An 1837 map shows the area now known as Big Cypress Swamp was designated as Waxy Hadjo’s land, but little is known about this Seminole leader. His village may have been resettled by the government to Oklahoma, but some accounts say he refused to leave. Other reports suggest that he was hanged for raiding the mail delivery from Fort Brooke in Tampa.

“One important reason to conduct archaeology is to reveal more about the life of this important leader, which will allow a more complete story to emerge,” says Paul Backhouse, deputy tribal historic preservation officer and an instructor in FGCU’s Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences. “There’s no sign (on the grounds) that says, ‘Waxy Hadjo landed here.’”

Backhouse and then-University Colloquium Coordinator Annette Snapp directed the field study, which began with a Ground Penetration Radar study to identify geological anomalies beneath the surface. Other modern technology has helped students accelerate the process and refine the data they’ve gathered by producing high-definition topographic surveys as well as 3-D information about where each pottery chip, conch fragment and deer bone splinter was discovered.

By studying the juxtaposition and layering of objects, students can develop

“Archaeologists used to be viewed as grave robbers. We’ve been able to create a relationship with the Seminoles, to help them see it as a tool for preservation.”

— Willard Steele, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

A Russian Blue bead found during the field study most likely dates to the late 19th or early 20th century. INSET: This shell was intentionally perforated and probably used as a fish net weight.
historical snapshots of the land and its occupants.

“Students have a large say,” anthropology major Rodriguez says. “They want our input. They ask us, ‘What do you guys think?’ It’s a collaboration.”

BLUE BEAD A LINK TO TRADING

Students now are analyzing the thousands of artifacts they found during the field study with the goal of developing interpretative materials that can be used in tribal schools. Among their findings:

◆ A clam shell with a large hole bored through it, as for a necklace. “It could be prehistoric bling,” quips Kate Redente, preservation office collections manager, standing under a canopy where items are cleaned, bagged and tagged. “We’ve found prehistoric and historic artifacts. We’ve found pottery (pieces) that could be 3,000 years old.”

◆ A cobalt-blue glass bead with carved facets that prove the pea-sized bauble was handmade. Probably used in trading, it links the site to Seminole occupation.

The search for and discovery of such ties to the past help strengthen the tribe’s connection to the land and to the university, Snapp believes.

“We’re building a strong foundation,” she says. “Tribal members are coming out to see what we’re doing at the site. We’re engaging the tribe.”

Osceola, the tribe member who runs Billie Swamp Safari, has enjoyed watching students interact with his staff and get a taste of the Seminole culture. He hopes the tribe’s young people, in turn, will forge a connection with the university.

“A lot of our history is word of mouth – people can get things wrong,” he says. “Some of the information they’re finding can help strengthen the tribe’s sovereignty, give us some proof tied to the landscape. To have a written word and to physically see these places ... man!”

UNCONQUERED THROUGH TIME

The Seminoles are descendants of other tribes, such as the Creek Indians. The Seminoles’ name derives from Spanish colonists calling them cimarrones, or runaway slaves, because they refused to be dominated by European newcomers.

1510 - First recorded European contact with Seminole ancestors, as Spanish slave ship reaches South Florida peninsula.
1513 - Spaniards claim land that will eventually become the eastern section of the United States, calling it La Florida.
1539-43 - Hernando DeSoto explores Southeast, first white contact for many tribes.
1565 - Spaniards establish St. Augustine, first permanent European city in North America.
1704-08 - English destroy Spain’s Florida missions, killing or enslaving thousands of natives.
1740 - Alachua, earliest recorded Seminole town, established in north Florida.
1763 - Spain cedes Florida to England.
Circa 1804 - Osceola (William Powell) born near Tuskegee, Ala.
1813-14 - Creek War in Alabama forces Indians southward where they join Florida natives.
1816 - First Seminole War begins after Gen. Andrew Jackson crosses into northern Florida.
1832 - Treaty of Payne’s Landing ratified by Congress, promising 5 million acres in Southwest Florida to Seminoles.
1835-43 - Osceola leads tribe in Second Seminole War.
1837 - Osceola, captured under flag of truce; dies in prison in 1838.
1838 - Trail of Tears forces 16,000 Cherokees from their eastern homeland to Oklahoma; at least 2,000 die along the way. About 3,000 Seminoles shipped to Oklahoma.
1845 - Florida becomes a state.
1855 - Billy Bowlegs leads attack on U.S. Army surveyors. Third Seminole War begins.
1858 - Third Seminole War ends with capture of Bowlegs. A few hundred Seminoles remain in Big Cypress and other isolated parts of Florida. U.S. government abandons efforts to remove all Seminoles.
1890s - Seminoles and whites begin to trade peacefully on the borders of the Everglades.
1928 - Tamiami Trail opens, fueling boom in South Florida tourism. Seminoles begin to sell crafts and wrestle alligators for show.
1934 - Indian Reorganization Act promotes native self-determination.
1957 - Seminole Constitution ratified by vote of 241-5. Tribe gains federal status as the Seminole Tribe of Florida. First Tribal Council is elected.

SOURCE: Seminole Tribe of Florida
Students try to beat the clock in 5th annual 24 Hour Festival as Pinnacle tags along

The Arts Complex Lobby buzzed on the evening of Sept. 10, but it wasn’t for the usual gallery opening.

In the final minutes of the 24 Hour Festival, students milled around the room checking out each other’s paintings and sculptures. A pair of actors tried to stifle butterflies in their stomachs, probably churned up by lack of sleep and perhaps too much Red Bull. A team of aspiring filmmakers raced to the registration line at 6:10 p.m. holding an open laptop computer that was still burning their digital movie onto a DVD.

A minute later, the competition closed.

Precisely 24 hours had passed since festival organizer and Florida Gulf Coast University theater Professor Barry Cavin finished reading the list of required content for the arts contest to about 50 students in the TheatreLab.

BY DREW STERWALD
Photos by Brian Tietz
Now it would be up to the judges to decide who would win $1,500 in scholarships in the fifth annual 24 Hour Festival. Artworks were displayed in the lobby, and movies and live performances were showcased later that night in the TheatreLab.

The idea for the event evolved from a news report Cavin heard about a 24-hour film festival. Why not pair it with live theater? Gallery director Anica Sturdivant suggested adding visual art to the mix.

The overnight competition has become a tradition eagerly anticipated by students who enjoy the adrenaline rush and the chance to push themselves creatively.

“It’s intense. You get this illusion that you can plan. But you have no idea how it’s going to evolve, and you realize how little time you have.”

—Brittney Brady, senior, theater major

“It’s intense,” said senior theater major Brittney Brady, who won the live performance category in 2010 and participated again this fall. “You get this illusion that you can plan. But you have no idea how it’s going to evolve, and you realize how little time you have.”

Brady partnered this year with senior English major Katelyn Gravel to create a video and live performance based on the required elements – a quotation, a theme and a short scenario all written by Cavin. The elements: something broken, storm, pudding, tattoo, apple, charm, ice cream truck, big dog, little bicycle.
The quote: “Without noticing, we watched the sun come up for the very first time.”

The theme: “Trouble comes, shake the bees. Not every beginning or end comes with a sign, but there’s music in everything.”

Pretty random, right?

Students were judged on how well they incorporated this content and more, and $500 scholarships were awarded to three individuals or teams for static visual art, moving image and live performance.

Not everyone found the list of requirements daunting.

“It was easy,” said Megan Ostl, a freshman occupational therapy major who entered a poem she said she wrote in about 20 minutes. “I’ve always liked the arts – it’s my passion. I’m shy, but I turn into a different person when I perform poetry.”

After receiving the parameters for this year’s competition, students scattered to rooms inside the Arts Complex, to residence halls and to off-campus apartments to brainstorm, film, procrastinate, paint, write or all of the above.

Brady and Gravel settled on the floor of the dance studio and hashed out ideas. On a laptop, they watched a YouTube video of an opera sung in German and decided they liked the Kabuki-like makeup design. They also would incorporate a video of shadow puppets into their

TOP: Nate Bartman works on an original song while director Armando Rivera records him. The pair teamed up with Kiara Feliciano to make a film for the 24 Hour Festival.

MIDDLE: Early the next morning, Bartman and Rivera shoot scenes on location on the FGCU nature trail after being up most of the night. Students were given a scenario involving a forgotten man living in a forest who talks to trees.

BOTTOM: With only a couple of hours left until their deadline, Feliciano and Rivera edited their film in Rivera’s south Fort Myers apartment.

...
abstract interpretation of the storyline, which they performed live.

Across the room, Armando Rivera, a junior theater and history major, huddled with Kiara Feliciano, a senior theater major. He read the festival requirements over his cell phone to their collaborator, senior philosophy major Nate Bartman.

“Something to think about on your way here,” Rivera said.

In the meantime, the pair compiled a list of items they needed to buy for their video production, which had a $150 budget. They talked locations for filming and how to use flashbacks to develop a narrative.

“I think we’re on to something,” Feliciano said.

An aspiring theater and film director, Rivera would handle the camera work. Feliciano would act in the movie and edit the digital footage. Bartman would act and write original music for the production.

“I’m excited,” Feliciano said. “We have a lot of talent on board. Armando’s a brilliant actor. We both love editing. Nate’s a great actor and guitar player.”

And then they were off.

“We gotta find a location to shoot. Bye, you two,” Rivera said to the team across the room. “Good luck!”

Sometime in the middle of the night, the filmmaking trio decided to shoot scenes at sunrise on the campus nature trail. Sunrise came and went. Filming started at about 8 a.m.

Bartman had to go to work later that morning, but Rivera and Feliciano returned to the trail at 2:45 p.m. for more footage. In a flowing white dress, Feliciano

As the contest deadline looms Saturday, Sept. 10, Tim Bricknese registers for the live performance category in the Arts Complex lobby. He wrote a song with Lisa Sidoran that they performed in the festival showcase that night.
flitted among the palms and oaks with a yellow feather stuck in her headband as Rivera gave direction. In the contest scenario, a man encounters a mysterious figure in a forest that might be a woman or might be a yellow-feathered bird.

Then the pair drove to Rivera’s apartment and started editing footage and Bartman’s score using Apple’s Final Cut Pro X software.

Time ticked away as Rivera and Feliciano fitted scenes together and toyed with special effects on the wide-screen Mac. Their post-production work dragged on in the apartment complex off Daniels Parkway even as students began trickling in to the Arts Complex with their finished – or almost finished – projects.

By 4 p.m., Matthew L. Engel’s mixed-media work already hung on a wall in the lobby. A cross between cartoon and graffiti, it combined figures and words rendered in crayon-like colors: a blue humanoid among trees, a yellow dog, clouds and lightning.

“You get class assignments that are so dictated,” the senior art major said. “This is open to interpretation. It allows you to be creative in a short amount of time.”

His friend, senior art major Chris Carver, arrived at 5:40 p.m. with his multi-media sculpture, “Pudding in Bees.” He built a wooden cabinet out of scrap wood he had lying around and added plastic toys, jars of pudding and
applesauce and other objects from the list of required elements. A calliope recording emanating from inside evoked the necessary ice cream truck.

Carver – who signed his piece as “Mr. Revrac” (Carver backwards) – was up at 4 a.m. staining wood. It still smelled pungent, which added another layer of sensory stimulation.

“I build boxes a lot,” he said. “I picked up most of the stuff at crafts stores on the way home last night.”

With a minute to spare, Ryan Lynn ejected the DVD of his movie, “A Hitchhiking Adventure,” from his laptop and signed in. The trio of filmmakers headed by Armando Rivera was not as lucky. Their computer was still “rendering,” or finalizing the digital editing process. It took more time than expected.

“He’s been dreaming of this (festival) all year,” Cavin said, looking around for the student.

At 6:30 p.m., Rivera finally arrived. The DVD of his movie came later. Cavin let him show it outside of competition. Shrugging off the disappointment, Rivera said he wanted to be there to support the other student artists.

“We’re fine – no shame,” he said. “Even though it’s not going to win $500, it’s going to win the hearts of the people.”

LEFT, TOP: Katelyn Gravel, left, and Brittney Brady work on their hair and makeup for their live performance, which incorporated a background video of shadow puppets that they made.

MIDDLE: The Arts Complex lobby buzzes as students, faculty and judges arrive for the festival showcase on Saturday night.

BOTTOM: FGCU Professor James Brock performs during the showcase in front of a full house in the TheatreLab. Faculty members can participate in the festival but are not in competition with students.
WINNERS

These students won $500 scholarships in the 24 Hour Festival:

(TOP) Moving image: “The Lonely Man” by Ben Kirchman, senior theater major

(FAR LEFT) Static visual art: “Pudding in Bees” by Mr. Revrac (aka Chris Carver), senior art major

(LEFT) Live performance: “Not Every Beginning or End Has a Sign, But There is Music in Everything” by Tim Bricknese, sophomore business major, and Lisa Sidoran, junior communication major
THERE'S A KILLER ON THE LOOSE, STRANGLING NEIGHBORS AND SPREADING FIRES THAT create further casualties. Southwest Florida natives are disappearing because of this rampaging fiend.

The perpetrator: *Lygodium microphyllum.*

Alias: Old World climbing fern.

A native of Africa, Asia and Australia, the invasive plant has become naturalized in the United States, where it aggressively invades swamps, glades and hammocks. Its wiry vines stretch as long as 100 feet, smother other vegetation and snake their way up trees where they act like fuses for wildfires to ignite forest canopies.

Old World climbing fern is just one of the public enemies of the plant world threatening natural lands around Florida Gulf Coast University and beyond in South Florida. Besides the usual suspects — melaleuca and Brazilian pepper trees — others on the most-unwanted list: cogongrass, ear-leaf acacia, java plum, climbing cassia, air potato and downy rose myrtle.

Even before the university opened in 1997, the plan of attack has entailed identifying, studying and removing invasive exotic plants and replacing them mostly with low-maintenance native trees, shrubs, groundcovers and wildflowers from the FGCU Master Plant List. The goal: 80 to 90 percent native vegetation.

Why? Because exotic plants displace native flora, which can send fauna — in this case, wild turkeys, deer and otters — looking elsewhere for habitat. That reduces biodiversity. Also, certain exotics suck up groundwater, disrupting natural flow patterns and monopolizing moisture needed by other plants to survive.

“These plants are superplants,” says Michael Weston, senior forester with the Florida Division of Forestry’s Caloosahatchee District. “They haven’t come with native bugs and diseases, so they act like plants on steroids.”

Efforts continue to stamp out exotics, restore natives at FGCU

BY DREW STERWALD
PLANT PESTS
The four species on the following pages are considered the most invasive plants on the Florida Gulf Coast University campus. Efforts to eradicate them have been ongoing since the university opened in 1997.

MELALEUCA
aka paper bark, cajeput, punk tree
Melaleuca quinquenervia
- Melaleuca is a tall (up to 80 feet) evergreen tree in the eucalyptus family.
- Aggressively invades wetland habitats including sawgrass marshes, wet prairies and aquatic sloughs in southern Florida.
- Bark is papery, layered, brownish-white and peeling.
- Leaves are gray-green and smell of camphor when crushed.
- Flowering occurs throughout the year. Brush-like spikes of flowers are white and give way to small, woody seed capsules. Seeds as small as grains of sand are spread by wind and water.
- Reduces biodiversity, displaces native vegetation and reduces value of habitats for wildlife; accelerates loss of groundwater due to increased evapotranspiration.
- Native to Australia, New Guinea, and New Caledonia; first introduced into the United States in southern Florida in the early 1900s for landscaping and “swamp drying.”

The state estimates as many as 1,200 non-native plants have naturalized in Florida – meaning they now spread on their own – though not all are invasive. That’s almost a third of the plant species growing uncultivated in the state.

As many as 100 invasive non-native plants have infested Southwest Florida, Weston estimates. Efforts to eradicate or at least control them and restore natural balance on the FGCU campus are paying off, he says.

“The university is one of the brighter points in Southwest Florida,” Weston says. “FGCU in 20 years is going to be this area of pine flatwoods, cypress strands and wet prairie that will be hard to find anywhere else in Southwest Florida.”

INVASIVE PLANT PATROL
The ground war to restore those natural ecosystems grinds on.

Every day, FGCU landscape superintendent George Brown turns an eagle eye to the earth, scanning for plant pests. In 1996, when he was hired, the 355 acres around campus set aside for preservation and restoration were roughly 80 percent melaleuca, he says.

Land within the FGCU Boulevard loop has been virtually wiped clean of the pernicious plant. Herbicides are the primary weapons, but insects also have been introduced to biologically control melaleuca. Some saplings are pulled the old-fashioned way – by hand.

Yet the environmental enemy’s numbers are staggering. A single mature melaleuca can produce more than 100 million seeds.

“You don’t see a lot left, but we can’t give up,” Brown says. “Melaleuca seeds can stay viable for 10 to 12 years in the soil. We may kill the melaleuca, but there’s always new stuff out there.”

Along the way, the eradication campaign has created learning and research opportunities.

Through service-learning projects, students have helped pull and plant
trees. A long-term study of a 2 ½-acre plot east of the university’s cell phone tower near the main entrance has entailed identifying, mapping, measuring and tagging every tree on the plot. Varying methods for removing melaleucas and the effect they have on native plants have been analyzed.

“When invasive exotics move in and dominate natives, they have a cascading effect on the food chain,” says Win Everham, FGCU professor of marine and ecological studies. “When the herbivores don’t have their preferred food, their population goes down.”

One former graduate student based her master’s thesis on how the 1,000-acre campus fire in 2004 affected melaleucas and natives. Brenda Brooks (’07, M.S. Environmental Science) is now executive director of the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed Land & Water Trust, which oversees a 60,000-acre preservation straddling Lee and Collier counties.

“Having the field experience is far different from reading about fire ecology out of a book,” she says.

Brooks calls the campus a “living laboratory.” Her research showed that areas of the fire with heavier melaleuca infestation burned hotter and killed more native plants than areas with lighter infestations.

“I’ve always been fascinated with invasive exotics,” she says. “A lot of people think you go in and take them out. It’s never like that – you never get rid of them 100 percent.”

‘AN EXOTIC MESS’

Continuing research adds to the knowledge base that guides efforts to combat invasive exotics and to achieve environmental recovery. And when they talk of restoration, those involved make it clear that means more than just returning the site to its pre-FGCU state. Before the university builders broke ground in

**BRAZILIAN PEPPERTREE**

*aka Florida holly, Christmas tree*

*Schinus terebinthifolius*

- Broadleaved, evergreen shrub or small tree.
- Invades natural and disturbed areas in Hawaii, Florida, Texas and California. Seeds spread by consumption and deposition of the fruit by wildlife.
- Can grow to 30 feet tall.
- Leaves smell strongly of pepper or turpentine when crushed.
- Trees have clusters of small, white, five-petaled flowers; fruit are small, bright red berries.
- Invades a variety of habitats including old fields, forests, hammocks, ditches and wetlands.
- Forms dense thickets that displace native vegetation.
- Native to South America; first introduced in the United States in the 1840s as an ornamental.
- Produces chemicals in leaves, flowers and fruits that irritate human skin and respiratory passages.
OLD WORLD CLIMBING FERN
Lygodium microphyllum

- Native to Africa, Asia and Australia; naturalized in the United States in 1965.
- Aggressively invades swamps, glades and hammocks.
- Can form dense mats that smother understory vegetation, shrubs and trees. Thick mats of dead fronds that grow into trees act as ladders, bringing ground fires into tree canopies.
- Can grow as long as 100 feet.
- Vines are thin, wiry and remain green throughout winter.
- The leafy branches off the main stem are 2-5 inches long.

COGONGRASS
Imperata cylindrica

- Extremely aggressive, considered one of the top 10 worst weeds in the world.
- Invades a range of sites, forming dense infestations that exclude all other vegetation.
- Native to Southeast Asia.
- Accidentally introduced into the southeast United States in packing material in the early 1900s; intentionally introduced in Florida for erosion control and livestock forage.
- Frequently seen along roads.
- Leaves have an off-center, whitish midrib and finely serrated margins. Leaves are up to 6 feet long, stiff, and have a sharp, pointed apex.
- In spring a large fuzzy panicle of flowers and seeds forms, giving the plant a cottony or silky look.

1995, the natural landscape had been drained by miners, stripped by loggers, trampled by grazing cattle and exploited by hunters.

“It wasn’t pristine land to begin with – it was heavily disturbed,” says grounds superintendent Brown, who has been around Lee County long enough to remember when strawberry fields blossomed where the Edison Mall now sits in Fort Myers. “It was an exotic mess.”

Cleaning up that mess has helped restore natural water flow and retention, he says. To replace the exotics, the university plants 10,000 to 12,000 trees, seedlings and shrubs each year. Thousands of bald cypress and slash pine seedlings have been planted, along with dozens of dahoon hollies and Walters viburnum.

Results are difficult to quantify, but anecdotal evidence suggests recovery is happening. Night herons, for instance, have been trying to establish a rookery, Brown says.

“Water is like the heartbeat – the plants and animals follow,” Brown says. “There’s more diverse plant life and more diverse fauna now.”

TERMS

EXOTIC: A species introduced to Florida, purposefully or accidentally, from a natural range outside of the state.

NATIVE: A species whose natural range includes Florida.

NATURALIZED EXOTIC: An exotic that sustains itself outside cultivation.

INVASIVE EXOTIC: An exotic that not only has naturalized, but is expanding on its own in Florida native plant communities.

SOURCE: Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council
RETURN OF THE NATIVES

About 10,000-12,000 trees and shrubs from the FGCU Master Plant List are planted each year on campus, ranging from thousands of bald cypress seedlings to dozens of 25-gallon red maples. The Physical Plant staff is responsible for carrying out the Campus Tree Care Plan, which calls for protecting and maintaining forested areas by managing the impact of development and construction on trees and the natural environment. These are some of the most commonly planted trees:

Bald Cypress
*Taxodium distichum*

- Grows at a moderately fast rate, reaching 40 to 50 feet in 15 to 25 years. Capable of reaching 100 to 150 feet in height at maturity. Although native to wetlands along running streams, growth is often faster on moist, well-drained soil. At water’s edge it develops “knees,” or root projections, that extend above the water.
- The pale green, needle-like leaves turn coppery red in fall before dropping, but the bare branches and reddish gray, peeling bark provide landscape interest during the winter.
- The small seeds are favored by some birds and squirrels.

Slash Pine
*Pinus elliottii*

- Large, heavily branched, long-needled conifer grows rapidly and is capable of reaching 100 feet with a three- to four-foot-diameter trunk.
- Six-inch-long cones appear among the dark green, eight-inch-long needles, and are favored by wildlife. Gray-brown bark is deeply furrowed and scaly.
- Self-pruning of its lower branches, somewhat pyramidal when young and forms an open, rounded canopy creating a light, dappled shade beneath.
- Grows well on a variety of acidic soils in full sun or partial shade. A fast grower with strong wood, reaching a height of 75 feet but often much shorter in the southern part of its range.
- Newly emerging leaves and red flowers and fruits signal spring.
- Seeds popular with squirrels and birds.
- Brilliant display of red, orange or yellow fall leaves (sometimes on the same tree) lasting several weeks.
- Grows best in wet places.
- Easily transplanted and usually develops surface roots in soil ranging from well-drained sand to clay.

Red Maple
*Acer rubrum*

- A large, fast-growing, shade tree noted for its dense, oval canopy.
- Eventually reaching 60 feet or more in height with a 40- to 60-foot spread over a life span of 50 to 70 years.
- Smooth, narrow leaves are shiny on both sides and normally drop brown in the fall and winter.
- Grows easily in full sun or partial shade and is tolerant of a wide range of soils, from moist and rich to dry and sandy.

Laurel Oak
*Quercus laurifolia*

- A fast grower with strong wood, reaching a height of 75 feet but often much shorter in the southern part of its range.
- Newly emerging leaves and red flowers and fruits signal spring.
- Seeds popular with squirrels and birds.
- Brilliant display of red, orange or yellow fall leaves (sometimes on the same tree) lasting several weeks.
- Grows best in wet places.
- Easily transplanted and usually develops surface roots in soil ranging from well-drained sand to clay.

SOURCE: University of Florida
ELISSA SIMONTIS, FGCU’S 2011 ALUMNA OF DISTINCTION, lives by the ideal of paying it forward. As an undergraduate, she received a full scholarship to Florida Southern College in Lakeland, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in communications. Now, three years after earning a master’s in business administration at FGCU and five years into her career, Simontis feels a responsibility to do something positive for others in return. “It changed my life,” she says of the scholarship. “It took the burden off
Melissa Simontis says a college scholarship changed her life, and now she’s helping change the lives of girls who attend PACE Center.

my family and opened so many doors. I realize the gravity of this investment made in me. Education is the best gift you can give someone or invest in for yourself.”

Simontis sees proof of that every day as development director at the PACE (Practical Academic Cultural Education) Center for Girls in Fort Myers. The 4-year-old nonprofit organization provides education, counseling and training to girls at risk of winding up in the juvenile justice system. Many turn their lives around.

About 50 girls ages 12-18 voluntarily attend day programs at the local center – one of 17 PACE facilities around the state. The girls wrestle with troubles such as abuse, neglect or truancy. As many as 65 percent have used drugs before coming to PACE, and 44 percent have run away from home.

“We’re a small organization trying to make a big difference,” says Simontis, 27, who is responsible for planning and executing the center’s fundraising initiatives, overseeing its volunteers and promoting its mission to the community. She held a similar post with Island Coast AIDS Network for three years before joining PACE in September 2009.

“People need to understand these are not bad girls – these are good girls who’ve had something bad happen to them,” Simontis says. “They know it doesn’t define them.”

To help get that message across to the public – as well as to the girls themselves – Simontis created an ambassador program. Girls who are comfortable doing so are chosen to represent PACE in the community, sharing their stories with visitors and donors in order to build a better understanding of the challenges they face and the help the organization provides them.

Sometimes the girls discover their problems are more common than they think. It’s not unusual for people who meet the center’s ambassadors to open up about their own lives, Simontis says.

“PACE is a very relatable cause,” she says. “One in four women is sexually abused by the time she’s 18. Everyone has stories they can relate to.”

By arranging visits from Boston Red Sox players and Radio City Music Hall’s Rockettes, and by organizing fundraisers like the popular Love That Dress! benefit, Simontis has helped raise PACE’s profile in Southwest Florida. Her development efforts also paid off in a Southwest Florida Community Foundation grant that allows PACE girls to participate in YMCA afterschool programs.

Alice Brunner, PACE’s executive director and former head of new student programs at FGCU, says Simontis’ expertise in public relations, fundraising and grant management aren’t the only facets that distinguish her work.

“She has PACE girls’ best interest foremost.”

Simontis has introduced some of the girls to FGCU and fostered connections between university students and PACE. Members of A Step Above Perfection, FGCU’s African-step dance team, volunteer as mentors at the center.

“A lot of what I do is pay it forward,” Simontis says. “I’ve been on the other side. I want the PACE girls to succeed.”

The alumni awards committee was impressed by her dedication – and by the 68 people supporting her nomination, according to Chairman Matt Visaggio.

“Melissa chose to improve her local community, innovating PACE’s fundraising capability and creating a development model that is being implemented throughout the state,” he says. “The end result is poured back into a program that helps young women break free from negative behavior and circumstances to succeed.”

Beyond PACE, Simontis is often seen out in the community supporting other causes and networking with successful local business people. She serves as chairwoman of the Women in Business Committee for the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce and special projects chairwoman for the Southwest Florida Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association.

Those connections and others will come into play as Simontis faces her next big challenge: a $3 million capital campaign for a new PACE center planned for 2013. PACE has outgrown its space.

“Conducting a capital campaign will most certainly be challenging, but I have complete faith that our community will step up to the plate as they always do,” she says. “I am excited to be a part of something hugely transformational, and the remarkable progress I see daily in our PACE girls is the greatest inspiration of all.”

Melissa Simontis’ nomination for Alumna of Distinction had the support of 68 people. Here’s what some of them said:

“Giving is powerful, and Melissa provides the best example of the power we all have to give. She enriches the lives of PACE girls, staff, students, the board of directors, our PACE supporters and constituents.”

— Alice Brunner, executive director, PACE Center for Girls, Fort Myers

“The skills and knowledge that Melissa learned while attending the university shine through in the impact that she has on our community today and will continue to have into the future. She is the type of individual that FGCU should be proud of.”

— Stephanie Ink, financial adviser for Alliance Financial Group, FGCU Alumni Association board member

“Melissa exemplifies professionalism, class and courtesy. The work she performs is always executed with the highest level of detail and concern.”

— Gal Markham, PACE Center for Girls board chairwoman, president of Markham Norton Mosteller Wright & Co. PA.

“I want the PACE girls to succeed.”
SUCCESSFUL ALUMNI HONORED

The Florida Gulf Coast University Alumni Association inducted five accomplished graduates into the Soaring Eagles Society last spring. Recipients are individuals who have dedicated time and resources to their communities and excelled in their professions within a decade of earning their degrees. The Soaring Eagles complement the Alumni of Distinction Society, which has been honoring graduates since 2004.

BY DREW STEWART
Photos by Brian Tietz
In just her first full year in a classroom, Ansley Cockram was recognized as an outstanding teacher. She won the Brilliant Orange Award, presented by the Foundation for Hendry County Public Schools and the Gulf Citrus Growers Association to honor distinguished beginning teachers.

“You would not consider her teaching style or abilities to be that of a beginning teacher,” says Lori Duckstein, her principal at Eastside Elementary School in Clewiston.

“Her lessons flow. Her classroom management is superior. Her student engagement is fantastic.”

How does she do it?

“I try to go deeper into things instead of just getting an answer to a question,” Cockram says. “I make them explain why.”

Just out of FGCU, she promised to teach at the school for at least three years and has kept her word – even though openings have come up at schools closer to her home, Cockram’s principal says.

She feels strongly about her profession and her pupils.

“Teachers have the ability to change the world through who they teach,” Cockram says. “You contribute to a foundation that can make a difference in every child’s life.”

In Clewiston, kids face more than the usual academic challenges. At Eastside, 80 percent of students qualify for free lunches because they come from low-income families. The agriculture-based county’s unemployment rate has reached as high as 20 percent in the past year.

“These kids, some of them don’t eat unless they’re here at school,” Cockram says. “To be a positive role model in somebody’s life is a big deal.”

---

ANSLEY (SHUPE) COCKRAM, ’09

DEGREE: B.A., Elementary Education
AGE: 25
HOME: LaBelle
OCCUPATION: Fifth-grade teacher

ALUMNI AWARDS
ART OF MATTHEW JOHNSON’S JOB IS TO ENSURE THAT THE PAST HAS A FUTURE.

As director of Cultural and Historic Affairs for the city of Fort Myers, this alum oversees the Southwest Florida Museum of History and the historic Burroughs and Langford-Kingston homes, thus helping to preserve and promote local heritage.

Revenue from the attractions he manages – which also include the Imaginarium Science Center – increased $200,000 last year, in a time when many institutions are slashing budgets and programs.

“Matt has led efforts that successfully have brought hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant funds to our museums,” says history museum education manager Nicole Dunn, who nominated him for alumni recognition. “(He) is well respected throughout Fort Myers as an historian and a leader.”

Not bad for someone who started 10 years ago as a museum educator/historian before even finishing his degree. Along the way, Johnson also has co-written two books – “Lee County: A Pictorial History” and “Images of America: Buckingham Army Air Field” – and cultivated connections between city attractions and FGCU history and science faculty and students.

The son of a U.S. Air Force colonel, this Soaring Eagle landed in places all over the globe as his family moved. Living abroad stimulated his interest in other cultures and their pasts.

“I’ve always been interested in history,” he says. “There are so many people here from elsewhere who don’t pay a lot of attention to local history. We have a fascinating history dating back to the last ice age. Being able to share that is great.”

MATTHEW JOHNSON, ’01

DEGREE: B.A., History
AGE: 36
HOME: Fort Myers
OCCUPATION: Director, Department of Cultural and Historic Affairs, City of Fort Myers
At 26, Samantha Scott still has plenty of years to qualify for Gulfshore Business Magazine’s “40 Under 40.” She has already made the annual honor roll of Southwest Florida’s up-and-coming leaders twice.

After graduating from FGCU in 2005, Scott worked at boutique firms as well as a statewide marketing company. In 2007, she and husband Derek went into business for themselves as Pushing the Envelope. Their marketing and public relations acumen has landed clients that include Harley-Davidson franchises, the locally owned Pinchers Crab Shack restaurants and Dunkin’s Diamonds in Fort Myers.

Meanwhile, Scott continues to give back to the community as well as to the university. Pro bono work includes the Blessings in a Backpack food drive, the Children’s Advocacy Center of Southwest Florida and Susan J. Komen for the Cure Southwest Florida.

“My passion for doing things for the community started at FGCU with service learning,” Scott says. “FGCU has a real commitment to doing things for the community.”

Since launching her company, she also has hired FGCU students as interns.

“I know the value of getting hands-on experience,” she says. “My experience in college, coupled with work in the field while I was in school, prepared me very well for what I do now.”

She credits mentor Ludmilla Wells, FGCU associate professor of marketing, with steering her in the right direction.

“Samantha demonstrated maturity in her work, innovative thinking and was unafraid to explore areas that may be unfamiliar to her,” Wells says. “Her interpersonal and leadership skills are extraordinary, and she is truly respected by her peers.”

Samantha Scott, ’05
Degree: B.S., Marketing
Age: 26
Home: Cape Coral
Occupation: Owner of Pushing the Envelope marketing, advertising and public relations firm
HEN MELISSA WALLACE BEGAN HER NURSING CAREER IN 2007 AT NCH North Naples Hospital, she didn’t take long to distinguish herself. “She was assigned to work with me as an intern, and I quickly realized what an asset Melissa would be to our unit,” says colleague Wendy Berg, who nominated Wallace as a Soaring Eagle. “Melissa has gone above and beyond the requirements of her job to meet the needs of grieving families who have lost a baby.”

A registered nurse, Wallace goes beyond offering a shoulder to cry on. She helps grief-stricken families compile scrapbooks to preserve their memories. With the help of co-workers, she also started the hospital’s “Night of Remembrance,” an annual candlelight service for babies who died in miscarriage, stillbirth or from neonatal causes.

Wallace’s efforts, so early in her career, earned her the hospital’s 2010 Nurse of the Year Award.

Coworkers praised her courage and compassion in taking on such a difficult and delicate role. “The nursing world is lucky to have her. She would have made Florence Nightingale extremely proud,” Michelle Schwing, clinical coordinator in labor and delivery, wrote in a nomination letter for the hospital award.

Wallace always knew she wanted to work in labor and delivery – “one of happiest times of people’s lives,” she says. Helping them cope with the tragedy of death is no less rewarding. “From the first patient I had that experienced a loss, I was very drawn to it,” she says of working with grieving parents. “You just have to be compassionate, empathetic, patient.”

MELISSA (MICHEL) WALLACE, ’07

DEGREE: B.S., Nursing

AGE: 26

HOME: Lehigh Acres

OCCUPATION: Registered nurse, labor and delivery
TO GET AN IDEA OF WHAT ANDY WATERS DOES FOR A LIVING, TUNE IN “NCIS.”

The long-running CBS hit revolves around a fictional team of Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents. Same work, different branch.

“My specialty for the last few years has been counter-intelligence and felony-level criminal investigations that have an Air Force nexus,” says Waters, a civilian who works out of Patrick Air Force Base in Brevard County. “Counter-intelligence investigation and analysis really contribute to our national security, and I get gratification out of my work knowing that.”

Assignments change frequently. One day he might interrogate an arson suspect; the next he might be assigned to security for a dignitary attending a launch at Cape Canaveral.

The field is highly competitive. When Waters applied for a position with the Office of Special Investigations, more than 400 applicants were competing for about eight positions, he says. The hands-on experience he gained at FGCU helped him edge out other candidates, he believes.

“We were afforded the opportunity to get out of the classroom and participate with local law enforcement entities,” Waters says. “We assisted on crime scenes and worked at the medical examiner’s offices.”

Assistant Professor Heather Walsh-Haney mentored Waters as his professor of record and as chairwoman of his master’s thesis committee. Impressed by the work he has done since leaving FGCU, she nominated him for the Soaring Eagle award.

“Andy’s ability to project poise, be an attentive listener and solve problems has helped him be successful in his professional endeavors,” she says.
Where the wild things are

Classroom promotes respect for critters and their environment.

MORE THAN 200 FGCU STUDENTS WORK TOGETHER EACH semester to teach elementary school pupils about wildlife and water conservation through the Florida Panther Posse, an environmental education project of the university’s Wings of Hope program.

Many of those children in third through fifth grade are bused to campus, where they enter the Florida Panther Posse Challenge, a room packed with science-based information and hands-on learning opportunities. They rotate through five stations where FGCU students teach them about panther kittens, ongoing research, radio collars and infrared cameras used to document wildlife movement and water conservation.

“We hope they go home and educate their families and friends about wildlife and respecting the environment,” says Wings of Hope director Ricky Pires.

She designed the challenge to enhance children’s reading, writing, science, geography, math and research skills, while giving university students a service-learning opportunity that enhances their environmental knowledge.

The classroom moved this fall from its original location in the Arts Complex to 247 Reed Hall. Here’s a sampling of its features.

1 BIG CAT: The Florida panther (Puma Concolor coryi) is a subspecies of cougar. DNA evidence from this specimen donated by a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation investigator was inconclusive regarding species or gender. It was seized in a drug raid.

2 CANDID CAMERA: Enlarged images of Florida panthers (and a doe with fawn) captured by cameras at Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge across from Big Cypress National Park east of Naples.

3 PHOTO GALLERY: The infrared cameras that captured these images are funded by the posse’s Pennies for Panthers program.

4 KODAK MOMENT: Students stop for a photo opp to pose as Florida wildlife.

5 HELLO KITTY: In the kitten challenge corner, students learn that panther offspring are born with blue eyes. They turn amber at 6 months.

6 WET AND WILD: The water conservation challenge, represented by the blue umbrella and puffy clouds, teaches about the water cycle and how to conserve use.

7 GREEN GIANT: On loan from the South Florida Water Management District/Big Cypress Basin, the gator promotes smart water use.

8 PAWS ON: Kids learn to read tracks by studying plaster casts of prints left by panthers, gators, bears, opossum, deer and other wildlife.

9 NATIVE CAT: A stuffed bobcat (Felis rufus) donated by Naples taxidermist Bob Dorta; the smaller cat is sometimes mistaken for a panther by the public – even though it has a shorter tail and a spotted coat.

10 WILD ART: Benches, screens and murals were painted by FGCU art student Linda Barone.

11 ON THE MOVE: Panthers retract their claws when they walk, so only the pads of their paws show in prints.

12 NIGHT VISION: Motion-activated cameras are mounted on trees about 3 feet off the ground to capture images of panthers and other wildlife; they have a range of about 30 feet.
HOW YOU CAN HELP
To support FGCU’s Wings of Hope program, send donations c/o Ricky Pires, 10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Reed Hall 213, Fort Myers, FL 33965; or contact her at rpires@fgcu.edu or www.fgcu.edu/cas/wingsofhope
Digital media enhances art offerings

New faculty member brings experience in interactive work.

"Please play with the art." Michael Salmond thinks it might take just such a sign posted in an art gallery to persuade visitors that the “look but don’t touch” code of conduct does not apply to electronic and interactive media.

Digital pervades the commercial world, but in the gallery realm this nascent art form still has a way to go to connect with an audience more comfortable with canvas and clay.

“Acceptance is definitely there now, but I think there’s always this kind of gee-whiz attitude to it – like there’s a lot of smoke and mirrors going on with digital,” says the newest addition to FGCU’s art faculty.

"It doesn’t seem to have the weight – well, it definitely doesn’t have the weight of 400 or 500 years’ worth of artists behind it," Salmond says. “But it has got that frontier spirit where people are pushing things in different directions and doing neat stuff.”

A native of England, Salmond arrived this fall as the first faculty member specializing in digital art and interactive media. A collection of his videos, games and other electronic media projects opened the exhibition season in the Main Gallery of the Arts Complex.

More and more, technology allows artists to stretch the boundaries of expression. One day, Salmond suggests, viewers might approach a traditional work like the Mona Lisa and wonder, “What does it do? You just sit there and look at it?”

“I can imagine that being the conversation someday,” he says. “We’re used to being passive. If people have to interact with something, that’s a barrier for engaging with the artwork. The younger generation is more used to interacting with stuff.”

The proof is in the projects, according to Morgan T. Paine,
When new technology comes out, if you’re intelligent enough and clever enough to get in early, you can really do well with quite simple ideas.”

- Michael Salmond, Assistant Professor of Art

FGCU’s visual and performing arts department chairman.

“Over the past several years, 20 to 30 percent of our graduating seniors have been using significant amounts of digital technology in their culminating exhibition projects,” he says. “By adding a faculty member with expertise in this area, we expect to make available increased rigor in their education and expand the possibilities for students who want to use these distinctive and new tools in their creative efforts.”

Whether their goals are artistic or commercial, bound for a gallery installation or a game station, digital art students must be prepared to adjust to constantly evolving tools and techniques. Industry demands tech-savvy creative types to conceive and design the next high-def video game or killer mobile app.

“In interactive media, we talk about always wanting to create ‘agile’ students – people who can jump around,” Salmond says. “You have to have an agile brain to make these weird connections and adapt.”

Salmond’s own work shifts among different media but often explores themes related to time, technology and travel: “.drift” is a Windows application he designed that slows down the computer’s clock, leading the user to question our dependence on machines and the reality of time; “F.P.S.” (First Person Shooter) is a 3-D video game in which players engage in a shootout involving criminals and hostages that ultimately challenges the player’s ethics.

Game design is the hottest thing in digital art careers right now, according to Salmond, with even small companies producing media sensations such as the “Angry Birds” game that swept the country this year.

Video games have spun into an art form, he says, one that requires viewers to interact with it – otherwise they’re just screen savers.

“When new technology comes out, if you’re intelligent enough and clever enough to get in early, you can really do well with quite simple ideas,” Salmond says. “It’s about designing experiences for people. It’s the same designing Disneyland the physical place or Disneyland.com. It’s all about what experience people take away, whether it’s a product-based thing or purely artistic expression.”

– Drew Sterwald

An interactive game was part of Salmond’s Main Gallery show.
NOW THAT FGCU IS A FULL-FLEDGED DIVISION I MEMBER ELIGIBLE FOR POSTSEASON play in all 14 sports, the athletics department is turning up the competition.

Women’s basketball and men’s soccer are just two FGCU teams that scheduled tougher non-conference opponents this fall. The women’s hoops squad will play at Seton Hall and host Michigan State and Virginia Tech. The men’s soccer team played highly regarded Portland and Washington in September.

“If you are a young team, you don’t want to overschedule. But if you are a good team, you don’t want to go against a bunch of weaklings,” FGCU Athletic Director Ken Kavanagh says. “You have to find a balance.”

FGCU hopes the tougher non-conference opponents will better prepare the teams for the Atlantic Sun Conference competition. In the department’s first full year of postseason eligibility, Kavanagh has set a goal for FGCU to win four conference championships and advance four squads to the NCAA Tournament. The goal isn’t outlandish considering women’s soccer, women’s swimming and diving, men’s soccer and women’s basketball won regular-season conference titles last year.

“We expect to be a definite factor in the Atlantic Sun and have a realistic opportunity to challenge for the postseason,” says Karl Smesko, FGCU women’s basketball coach. “We’ve got a strong non-conference schedule to prepare us.”

FGCU’s women won against University of North Florida, 70-54, last season in Alico Arena.
After playing Seton Hall, Michigan State and Virginia Tech, FGCU will travel to Hawaii for a non-conference tournament.

Smesko, whose teams are 232-46 in his nine seasons with FGCU, says the Eagles will continue to be an up-tempo, three-point shooting club. The team didn’t change its training schedule because of its new status as a full-fledged Division I member.

“If something is not broken, why fix it?” Kavanagh says.

In FGCU’s four years in Division I, seven teams won at least a share of 13 Atlantic Sun Conference or Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association regular or postseason titles.

“The NCAA Division I transitional period has been a long process,” FGCU women’s soccer coach Jim Blankenship says. “Becoming eligible for the postseason is something we’ve been waiting for for a long time. The opportunity is in front of us. Hopefully, we’ll take full advantage of it.”

Blankenship, whose teams played non-conference games against Syracuse and Miami this year, says the last four years have prepared his team for this day.

“We didn’t use the fact we weren’t eligible for the playoffs as a crutch,” Blankenship says. “We used the (regular-season) conference as our championship. This year, the emphasis is not just building the team, but being ready when it counts. Our kids know what’s at stake.”

FGCU has pulled in better recruits, hired more assistant coaches and increased season-ticket sales for its first year of full Division I status.

Smesko credits FGCU’s new status with helping him recruit 6-foot-2 Whitney Knight of Winston-Salem, N.C.
The freshman guard, rated 73rd best recruit in the nation by ESPN’s HoopGurlz, picked FGCU over Duke, North Carolina and West Virginia.

Knight is part of a recruiting class that includes Oregon State transfer Brittany Kennedy, a quick 5-foot-7 guard who is expected to start for FGCU after she becomes eligible in January.

“I noticed this year we got a lot more interest in recruits,” says Smesko, whose teams registered four straight WNIT appearances from 2007-10. “Full Division I status is only going to help us get a higher level of athlete here.”

The men’s basketball team, which has a new coach in former Florida State assistant Andy Enfield, has also seen a jump in recruiting despite last year’s 10-20 record. Enfield’s first three recruits – guards Bernard Thompson and Brett Comer and forward Filip Cvjeticanin – are expected to be big contributors this year.

Six-foot-nine Croatian native Cvjetkicin recently played in the under-18 Final Four in Madrid, Spain. “He’s been exposed to the highest level of basketball, and that will help him with the transition to college,” Enfield says.

FGCU’s women’s swimming and diving team won’t need help in the transition to full Division I status. The Eagles, who have won three consecutive Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association championships, picked up 10 incoming freshmen swimmers in a recruiting class that was ranked No. 24 in the nation, according to collegeswimming.com.

“Being ranked ahead of Big Ten, SEC and ACC schools is quite remarkable with our level of resources,” says Neal Studd, the FGCU swimming coach.

The school’s jump to full Division I status has already boosted ticket sales, Kavanagh says. Season ticket sales for men’s and women’s basketball doubled from last year, increasing from 300 to 600. Kavanagh believes having a chance to play for championships hits home with fans.

FGCU is investing more money in its athletics program since it’s now a full Division I member. Kavanagh says he has added full-time assistant coaches to various sports teams. The athletics department also recently installed a new basketball floor at Alico Arena and renovated the softball and soccer complexes with new seating.

“We’ll continue to grow each year,” Kavanagh says.

The end goal is to make FGCU a power player in Division I athletics. Kavanagh believes advancing to the NCAA Tournament and maybe winning a few playoff games can start making FGCU a household name around the nation.

The school got a taste of that recognition last year when FGCU pitcher Chris Sale was named Collegiate Baseball’s National Player of the Year. Sale was later drafted by the Chicago White Sox with the 13th overall pick.

“Our goal is to take FGCU and have those four letters mean something,” Kavanagh says. “When you hear FGCU, I want you to know who we are and where we’re located just like UCLA.”

— Chris Duncan
20th annual Founder's Cup Golf Tournament

Friday, October 14, 2011
Pelican’s Nest Golf Club
Pelican Landing, Bonita Springs

11:30 a.m. buffet lunch  1:15 p.m. shotgun start
‘til 7:30 p.m. cocktails, buffet and awards

For more information and program sponsorship, contact Kelley Reyff at (239) 590-1074 or kreyff@fgcu.edu

SPECIAL SPONSORS:
Lodge Construction, LLC
Maddox Construction Company
Taylor Rental of Naples

Fifth Third Bank
Simplex Grinnell
Ajax Building Corporation
Wayne Wiles Floor Coverings
Manhattan Kraft Construction

Service Painting of Florida
Estero Bay Chevrolet
Johnson Controls
Arthrex
United Mechanical, Inc.
Rare book collection an invaluable resource

Chicago banking baron honors Florida ties with donation.

RECEIVING THE GERALD E. AND MARJORIE G. FITZGERALD FISH BOOK COLLECTION was quite a catch for Florida Gulf Coast University.

Consisting of 142 ichthyologic reference books – some dating to the middle of the 16th century, some containing rare hand-tinted color plates – the collection is valued at $833,000. It represents a precious academic resource and serves as a lasting memorial to the generous spirit and insatiable mind of a larger-than-life banking magnate who vacationed and wintered in Naples for four decades.

“He had deep ties in Southwest Florida,” says James G. Fitzgerald, one of the Fitzgeralds’ five children and also a seasonal Neapolitan. “FGCU seemed the best fit to leave some mark on Southwest Florida.”

Written in English, Latin, German and other languages, the books provide anatomical and descriptive surveys of fish species throughout the world.

“The Fitzgerald fish book collection affords FGCU an historical reference that is invaluable for faculty and students in marine and environmental sciences,” says Donna Price Henry, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Gerald F. Fitzgerald most likely started collecting antiquities with a map he purchased on leave in London while...
serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, his son says. The hobby grew to include acquiring rare and ancient books as well as artwork and other artifacts relating to subjects that interested him – Americana, exploration, military history, cartography, economics and ichthyology. “He’d zero in on something that interested him,” James Fitzgerald says. “He just loved books. He was a very, very avid reader. He loved libraries. Wherever he traveled he looked up antiquarian booksellers and browsed them.”

The bibliophile’s most extensive compilation – a collection of Polar books, maps and art – resides at The Newberry Library in Chicago, the city where he was born in 1925. He died at 85 in October 2010.

Fitzgerald made his name and fortune in public relations then in banking in the Windy City. His wife of 61 years, Marjorie, still divides her time between the Chicago area and Naples.

In the introduction to a published catalog of his Newberry collection, he wrote: “People are often curious as to how someone living in the suburbs of Chicago would get interested in Polar material. The interest developed quite by accident in the 1950s while working in Chicago’s Loop. In those days there were a number of bookstores carrying a variety of used hardbound books and a surprising number of what were to become rare books.”

Fitzgerald’s collections grew as his fortunes did. From two community banks he bought in 1961, he built a $1.3-billion empire of 13 banks with 30 locations, according to the Chicago Tribune: “As head of Suburban Bancorp Mr. Fitzgerald gained a reputation as an innovator – his banks were among the first in the state to employ ATMs. He established Suburban as Illinois’ first multibank holding company.”

Fitzgerald sold the corporation in 1994 for $246 million, the Tribune wrote in his obituary.

He embodied the work-hard, play-hard ethos of the American business world. Away from the office, Fitzgerald was an avid sportsman, hunter, traveler, adventurer and storyteller. He liked Jack Daniel’s and a good cigar.

“He definitely was a larger-than-life person,” his son says.

Fitzgerald loved sport fishing in the Ten Thousand Islands, which may be why he purchased the first book in his fish collection on New Year’s Day 1994 at Sotheby’s. The nine-volume set “Allgemeine Naturgeschichte der Fische (A General Natural History of Fish),” printed in Berlin between 1782 and 1795, contains 432 hand-colored engraved plates.

His winning bid: $54,625.
Appraised value in 2009: $130,000.

The collection’s overall value can be attributed to the books’ condition, according to Harry L. Stern, a Chicago appraiser of antiquarian books. “The exceptionally fine condition of nearly all of these works is a key factor in determining their worth because of the excellent hand coloring of many of the plates,” he says. “Institutional copies of these works are frequently missing plates or have other faults.”

– Drew Sterwald
PHILANTHROPY
(continued from previous page)

Estero Bay Chevrolet donates Volt for President Bradshaw

IN KEEPING WITH FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY’S GREEN PHILOSOPHY, PRESIDENT WILSON G. BRADSHAW NOW DRIVES A CHEVROLET VOLT, THANKS TO ESTERO BAY CHEVROLET.

The dealership, which also provides multiple vehicles for use by FGCU athletics personnel, donated the Volt, which can run on electricity or gas.

“We know that FGCU is committed to sustainability,” said dealership co-owner Patrick Denson. “Just look at their projects involving alternative power sources, green building techniques and recycling – and the benefits these initiatives provide to the community. These mirror the mission of our dealership, General Motors and the Chevrolet brand, which includes being an active and productive member of the community.”

The Volt can travel about 35 miles on a fully charged battery without using gas or producing emissions. For longer distances, it uses gas.

“I am delighted with the gift of the Volt from Estero Bay Chevrolet,” Bradshaw said. “This gift reflects the university’s value of environmental stewardship as well as my personal commitment to a sustainable lifestyle.”

Estero Bay Chevrolet, at 10640 Chevrolet Way in Estero, is a full-service dealer of GM Chevrolet vehicles.

FGCU provost and wife endow scholarship

YOUNG WOMEN WHO HAVE OVERCOME ADVERSITY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A NEW SCHOLARSHIP CREATED BY FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY PROVOST RON TOLL AND HIS WIFE, KATHY.

The Tolls have pledged $10,000 to create the Ronald and Kathy Toll Scholarship Endowed Fund, which will give preference to young women who have completed the program at PACE, a local center that assists and mentors at-risk girls.

“We established this scholarship because we believe strongly that the opportunity to provide for someone’s education is the most significant gift that we could make,” says Toll, who is also the university’s vice president for academic affairs.

“In a free society, education is the basis for all individual and collective freedoms and success. Our preference for the recipient to be a young woman who has gone through the PACE program reflects our desire to encourage and reward perseverance in the face of adversity and to help turn around the lives of deserving girls whose world was negatively affected by familial, economic or other devastating hardships.”
Purchase a Membership today to…

Experience the Pride!

Visit Wildcat’s website for a Virtual Tour of the Arnold Palmer Championship course!

www.wildcatruncc.com

20300 Country Club Drive Estero, FL 33928
Ph: 239-947-6066

SIXTH ANNUAL
SANIBEL ISLAND
WRITERS
CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 3-6, 2011
BIG ARTS & Sanibel Island Public Library, Sanibel Island, Fla.

JOHN SAYLES
Keynote speaker

PRESENTERS: Steve Almond (creative nonfiction)
Lynne Barrett (fiction) / Dan Bern (songwriting)
Nickole Brown (poetry) / Kevin Canty (fiction)
Ron Currie Jr. (fiction) / John Dufresne (fiction/screenwriting) / Carmen Edington (editor) / William Giraldi (fiction/editor)
Barbara Hamby (poetry) / John Hoppenthaler (poetry) / Christopher Joyce (radio journalism) / David Kirby (poetry)
Christopher Phillips (Socrates Café) / Robert Root (creative nonfiction/editor) / John K. Samson (songwriting)
Christopher Schelling (agent) Laurel Snyder (YA lit) / Darin Strauss (memoir) / Jay Wexler (creative nonfiction)
Thomas Williams (novella/editor) / Tom Zoellner (investigative journalism)

HENRY ROLLINS
An evening of storytelling

www.fgcu.edu/siwc
or contact Tom DeMarchi at (239) 590-7421 or tdemarch@fgcu.edu
**CLASS NOTES**

[WEDDINGS, ENGAGEMENTS AND BIRTHS]

**’05**
Amy Benvie, (Master’s, Curriculum and Instruction), and Paul Benvie have announced the April 27 birth of their son, Eli Vernon. He weighed 7 pounds and 10 ounces. Amy is an instructor of mathematics at FGCU.

**’06**
Jeffrey Petroske, (Management), and Kimberly (Legendre) Petroske, ’07 (Psychology), were married June 5 in Venice. They live in North Port.

**’07**
Victoria Ellison, (Master’s, Accounting), and Jonathan Ellison have announced the May 5 birth of their son, Aaron Michael. He weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces and was 19 inches long.

**’08**
Karin Parenteau, (Management), and Daniel Moen were married March 26 at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Palm City. Parenteau is pursuing a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from the American College of Education. The couple lives in Arlington, Texas.

**’09**
Jason Becker, (Resort and Hospitality), and Courtney (Rogers) Becker, ’06 (Clinical Laboratory Science), have announced the March 1 birth of their daughter, Ava Rae. The Beckers and their son, Brendan, live in Coral Springs.

**’10**
Michael Nachel, (Political Science), and Felice Walker, ‘11 (Finance), announced their engagement on July 4. They plan a fall 2012 wedding. The couple lives in Fort Myers.

[NEWSMAKERS]

**’01**
Gary Parkosewich, (Master’s, Criminal Justice Studies), is an adult probation officer for the state of Connecticut.

**’02**
Edward Wacker, (Master’s, Finance), has been appointed vice president of Hudson Realty Capital LLC’s southeast regional office to expand its portfolio investments and asset management expertise. He was previously the assistant vice president of finance and asset management for McGarvey Development and J. McGarvey Construction.

**’03**
Ronald Curtis, (Master’s, Public Administration), is the new commander of the Bravo District at the Lee County Sheriff’s substation in Lehigh Acres. Curtis transferred from the Sheriff’s Economic Crimes, Robbery and Auto Theft Division in Cape Coral.

John Little, (Executive Master’s, Business Administration), has been appointed by Gov. Rick Scott to the FGCU Board of Trustees. Little is a retired neurosurgeon and chairman of the board for Moorings Park Institute.

**’04**
Idela Hernandez, (Human Services), is employed by the Florida Department of Education’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as a vocational rehabilitation consultant.

**’05**
Katrina French, (English), is an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service. In July, the White House honored her with the “Champions of Change” award.

**’06**
Jason Garcia, (Biology), has graduated with his master’s degree in public health from Nova Southeastern University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine. He was awarded the NSU College of Medicine’s Public Health Service award and the NSU College of Medicine’s Chancellor’s Award in Public Health. Garcia has been accepted to the University of South Florida’s College of Public Health, where he will pursue his doctorate in Environmental Health and Occupational Health.

Lindsay Pierce, (Social Work), is the director of recruiting and selection for Northwestern Mutual Financial Network: The Glenn Black Group in Fort Myers.

Bernard Pino, (Nursing), and Andrea Guerrero established Heartland Gardens, a not-for-profit community garden in Fort Myers. All of the produce is grown organically and distributed locally. The organization offers classes on how to grow, prepare and preserve foods as well as nutrition classes to encourage healthier living.

**’07**
Danilo Baylen, (Master’s, Elementary Education), has been selected as one of the 12 Governor’s Teaching Fellows for 2011 at the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia.

Donald Beckner, (Management), is the district operations trainer for Bed Bath and Beyond. Beckner, his wife and son live in Michigan.
Jesse Bouchard, (Marketing), was promoted to field director of Northwestern Mutual: The Naples/Estero Group. He will mentor new financial representatives and the intern unit.

Darren Davis, (Communication), was elected president of the Everglades Golf Course Superintendents Association (EGCSA). Davis is a golf course superintendent at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples.

Sarah Davis, (Master’s, Environmental Science), is the new colloquium coordinator at FGCU. She has been teaching University Colloquium since 2008. Prior to coming to FGCU, she served as the assistant director of the environmental learning center at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and as an interpretive park ranger for Everglades National Park.

Nikki Ingelido, (Legal Studies), is a third-year law student at Ave Maria University School of Law and is a full-time secretary for a family law attorney.

Dana (Angelora) Alvarez, (Elementary Education), is a teacher at Oasis Charter Elementary in Cape Coral, where she started the theater department. She married Juan Carlos in May 2008 in Fort Myers.

Bennet Hammer, (Master’s, Business Administration), has published a paper in the Proceedings of Informing Science and IT Education Conference (inSITE) titled “Information Systems Principles for Developing Secure Information Systems.”

Bethany Jameson, (Master’s, Business Administration), has been promoted to director of wellness for NCH Healthcare System. Jameson and her husband have a 2-year-old son, Tyler Jett.

Cord McConnell, (Communication), produced a feature film called “8 dates.” The movie is about a man whose internal clock starts ticking faster when he learns that his younger brother is getting married. In response, he ventures into online dating in search of his true love. The film follows him on his adventures as he winds up going on eight dates.

’09

Tim Hogan, (Master’s, English), has accepted the position of director of development-corporate for the Pacific Region of Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Eugenia Nicolini, (Communication), is employed by Prudential Financial in Scranton, Pa., where she manages client retirement 401k accounts.

’10

Sal Catalfamo, (Master’s, Business Administration), is the purchasing coordinator for Procurement Services at FGCU. He previously was employed with the Office of the Registrar.

Nicolette Costantino, (Master’s, English), has accepted a teaching position at Tallahassee Community College. Previously, she was the executive secretary for the College of Arts and Sciences at FGCU.

Jaime Zabala, (Computer Science), is the youngest software engineer at Vantage Systems in Lanham, Md. He is contracted as a flight software tester for NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center.

Audrey Campbell, (Master’s, Public Administration), is the new assistant volleyball coach at Tusculum College in Greenville, Tenn. She has served as the development assistant for FGCU athletics and assistant coach for the USA South and Tampa United volleyball clubs.

Laura Roler, (Master’s, Public Administration), has accepted the position of special events manager with the Southwest Florida affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

IN MEMORIAM

Robert Hamilton, (Master’s, Curriculum and Instruction), died on May 26 from complications of cancer. He is survived by two daughters, Charity ’03 (Clinical Laboratory Science) and Hayley Hamilton. Hamilton was a teacher at James Stephens International Academy in Fort Myers.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

11/19 SATURDAY

Go Wild at the Naples Zoo

Alumni Association members and their families are invited to discover “What Do Animals Eat?” Afterwards, experience the newest exhibits and animal encounters. 10 a.m. in Safari Canyon Theater, Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens. Cost: $12 for adults, $8 for children 12 and younger.

Purchase tickets through the Alumni Association by calling (239) 590-1087.

12/3 SATURDAY

Day of National Service

Make a difference in your community by joining fellow alumni throughout the nation in various service projects. Visit the Alumni Association website at www.fgcu.edu/alumni for a listing of planned activities in your area. Interested in hosting a community project? Contact us at (239) 590-1087.

1/10 TUESDAY

Webinar Series: New Year, New You

12 p.m., Virtual

With each new year comes new resolutions. Join FGCU graduate and owner of Purely You Spa, Jennifer Alvarez, as she provides tips on how to achieve your health and wellness goals.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

alumnirelations@fgcu.edu

or by mail to: Florida Gulf Coast University, Attention: Alumni Relations, 10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565

www.fgcupinnacle.com | Fall 2011 | Pinnacle 55
ACK-TO-SCHOOL ENTHUSIASM BUBBLED OVER during a foam party that was part of Florida Gulf Coast University’s annual Week of Welcome. Celina Romera channeled a little Willow Smith (“Whip My Hair”) during the Aug. 27 bash. Garth Francis of Fort Myers shot this photograph using a Nikon D3 with an 80-200mm f/2.8 lens using an exposure of 1/1000th of a second at f/7.

PARTING SHOT is a forum for essays, photos and art that present a unique, personal perspective. Submit material for consideration to Pinnacle Editor Karen Feldman at kfeldman@fgcu.edu or call (239) 590-7093.
Show your pride with an FGCU license plate and support student scholarships.
Now EZ to get...no line...no wait. Go to EZTagFL.com
Proceeds ($25) benefit university scholarships

For more information visit the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles at www.hsmv.state.fl.us/

Bequest  [bih-kwest] Noun.
The act of giving by will or testament.

Provide for your family first.
Then consider making a bequest, leaving a legacy that will benefit students through the ages by providing them with the greatest gift of all: an education. Help students help themselves — and the world.

For information, contact the FGCU Foundation at (239) 590-1077.
This is my hospital.

-Leon Mead, MD, Bonita resident and Orthopedic Surgeon practicing at NCH for 23 years.

Here's why:

• #1 busiest hospital in Florida for Medicare hip & knee replacements.
• Dedicated adult orthopedic joint replacement unit.
• Pre-surgery classes to help patients better understand their procedure.

NCH wants to be your hospital. Call us at 436-5430.

www.NCHmd.org