Outreach Chronicles

Award Ceremonies

During the month of May, the Florida Gulf Coast University’s Office of Outreach Programs celebrated student success and achievement at annual awards ceremonies at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater. On May 6th, 19th, and 20th, students in Scholars Program high schools, College Reach out Program high schools and middle schools were each honored respectively for their individual and program accomplishments. Students were treated to an elegant dinner prepared by the Broadway Palm staff, while dressed in their Sunday best to receive awards. FGCU Senior Nicole Wilson served as the Mistress of Ceremonies.

The Scholars high school awards ceremony, held May 6th, featured presentations and awards from Regions Bank, FGCU’s Office of Undergraduate Admissions, Scholars Program and the Duffus Family Fund. Regions Bank Lee/Charlotte area president Ryan Goldberg, and Crissy Fabian presented six $600 scholarships to seniors who would be attending Florida Gulf Coast University this fall, as well as $70 gift cards to 10 students to help with the cost of school supplies. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions also presented five Scholars and CROP Program students with Undergraduate Tuition Waivers. Fred Morgan, Coordinator for Student Activities at Edison College was the keynote speaker for the evening, delivering a powerful speech about “Generation X” and the promise that lies ahead for our students.

On May 19th and 20th, the College Reach out Program held two ceremonies honoring its high and middle school participants. This year the College Reach out Program had over 100 seniors in the program who were graduating. To recognize greater student achievement and achievement of the on-site school programs, several new awards were created for new and current programs. Students were awarded with program and achievement ID tags as their recognition. Programs also took plaques, while other programs were recognized as the “Most Outstanding Current and New Programs” took home commemorative plates for their schools. Isaac Brundage, Director of Housing at Florida A&M University, and Florida Gulf Coast University’s Cheryl Seals-Gonzales, Director of the Office of Institutional Compliance and Equity served as the keynote speakers for these ceremonies.
Leadership Retreat

On May 10th, the College Reach Out Program hosted its Leadership Retreat entitled “Entrepreneurs in Training” for students in the College Reach Out Program and Scholars Programs. Nominated by the coordinators, fifty-five students were educated on topics relating to professionalism, dress, and business etiquette. Students were asked to dress in business attire to set the mood for the day. Upon arrival at Florida Gulf Coast University, students were instructed on the importance of greetings, and how to effectively introduce themselves to someone.

Students were then broken into two groups, with males taking part in a session entitled “Young Men and the Dream,” while the ladies took part in “Women in the Workplace.” These two sessions focused on dress, and what are the difference between business and casual dress. Virginia Edwards, an Etiquette and Protocol Consultant, was the keynote speaker for the day, and gave presentations on professionalism and the Art of Business Dining. Students were treated to a three course meal with Mrs. Edwards highlighting the fundamentals of business dining. The day was extremely beneficial and educational with students leaving with tools to help them for the future. A special thank you goes out to Virginia Edwards and the FGCU Catering staff.

University Experience Day

Presented by Michael Powelson

College Reach Out Program’s (CROP) University Exploration Day (UED), and Scholars Program’s College for A Day (CFAD) offer participating students of both programs the opportunity to experience a typical day in the life of an FGCU student. The Office of Outreach Programs facilitates this experience, and for my part, as a student assistant, I bring visiting Scholars’ Club and CROP students out onto the environmental trails east of the Recreation Field to learn more about the mission of FGCU.

While walking along the trails I initiate a discussion with the students that combines local history with local environmental biology. For example, I talk to the students about the Spanish origins of the feral pig, and its role in the South Florida environment. I explain to them the environmental hazard of the Australian Melaleuca, and the current effort to eradicate this exotic and invasive tree. We see Swallow-tailed Kites, Snail Kites, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Turkey Vultures. We look at the carefully arranged holes on one particular Cabbage Palm that were made by a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. The students find the bird’s hunting method impressive. The sapsucker (a misnomer) pecks a hole in the tree to release the sap in order to attract insects that the bird eats; it does not eat the sap. We sometimes see feral pigs, and occasionally a black Racer.

The students have a really good time on the trails while they learn about our local environment and history and become part of the mission of the university to maintain our beautiful environment. I also benefit from this experience because it allows me to educate young people about the history and environment of Southwest Florida, hopefully impressing upon them a lasting appreciation for our community.

Written by Mike Powelson, Senior, History Major, College of Arts and Sciences; Student Assistant, Office of Outreach Programs, Division of Student Affairs.
FAEOPP Student Leadership Conference  by Jeanne Paul, Senior, Lely High School

In February, I had the opportunity to attend a Leadership Conference in Gainesville, FL at Santa Fe Community College. The Florida Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (FAEOPP) conference featured CROP, Upward Bound, and Talent Search from around the state. It was a great experience both academically and personally. Out of the whole experience I learned what it really is to be a leader and what it takes to excel with that responsibility. During this conference, I had the privilege to hear several keynote speakers. One that caught my attention the most was from a man, Dr. G. W. Mingo, the director of Upward Bound at the University of Florida, came from absolutely nothing to a successful individual. He talked about his rough childhood and growing up in a low income family. No one in his family went to college; neither did they make an effort to because they were financially unable to attend. Because of all that he’d been through, he refused to be another statistic. When he had the first opportunity to go to school, he didn’t hesitate for a second.

That’s why for me, whatever opportunity comes knocking at my door, I’m going for it. That is what leaders do. They don’t wait for people to make the first move. Leaders take the lead to guide others in the right direction. Also being a leader is not an easy task for someone to pick up. A leader has to be responsible. They make the differences in other people’s lives. Someone who isn’t responsible can’t play the role of being a leader. I also learned at this Leadership Conference, that we are all in competition, especially young people. We are all competing in life to be the best of our ability. This conference was a really great experience for me. I am really honored that I had the privilege to attend.

CROP 25th Year Day-at-the-Capital Celebration by Kimberly Charles, Senior, Fort Myers High

Twenty five years and over 100,000 students later, the College Reach Out Program was ready to celebrate and celebrate they did. This celebration was held in Tallahassee at the Capitol on March 13, 2008, and many CROP students around the State of Florida came together for the importance of their program, including myself. CROP has been such an inspiring program and has instilled in me, and the coordinator, an understanding of what it means to give and receive as a participant or staff member. The Program that promotes self confidence, learning and progression; allows you to meet students who are motivated to get ahead and can help you get there also; it’s a program which asks you to believe in yourself and in what you can do. Our program leader in Tallahassee, Mr. Darrell McQueen, displays these qualities of CROP and was at the Capitol with CROP personnel and students to share their experiences.

The day’s speakers asked us not only to understand the power we have/are deprived of as minorities but to not let the difficulties we face be an excuse for not working to our full potential. Then, we got to heard personal testimonies from current students as well as parents and a poem “Because of CROP” from a former student who felt he owed everything he had become to CROP. Attending this celebration made me realize how much CROP truly does change lives and how it touches more than just the students in the program. It made me proud to say that I am a CROP member and to know that if I need it, there are resources everywhere that are available to me. More than anything, I understand more than ever how vital it is that we keep this program alive and whatever needs to be done to do that should be done. Twenty five years and 100,000 students is simply not enough.
Summer Residential Program

FGCU College Reach Out Program’s Summer Residential component provided thirty (30) 9th, 10th and 11th grade students a real college experience. Summer Residential participants lived in the residence hall; attended classes and/or seminars for a week. Students also participate in leadership activities, financial aid, admissions, and career workshops. College Reach out Program’s Scholars Residential component ended with a four day, three night college tour and educational excursion. This summer the College Reach out Program created a partnership with the PSEP/Scholars Program by adding ten Scholars participants to the Summer Residential Program plus four students from the Collier County Migrant Program.

This year’s Summer Residential focused on SAT Preparation and College Survival Skills. Forty students participated in a 23 hour SAT Preparation program designed by the Florida Education Fund in partnership with the College Board. The program ended with a four day, three night college tour and educational excursion to St. Augustine, Jacksonville, and Islands of Adventure in Orlando.

The College Reach Out Program and PSEP/Scholars Program staff would like to thank Dr. Claude Villiers, Associate Professor School of Engineering, Anthony Hyatt and FGCU Undergraduate Admissions for volunteering their time and services to the Summer Residential Program.

Summer Institute

Hydrology, the study of the movement, distribution, and quality of water throughout the Earth; was the week-long theme of FGCU College Reach Out Program’s Summer Institute. Over forty (40) middle school students in the College Reach Out Program and PSEP/Scholars Program participated in a wide array of projects ranging from creating a new broadcast covering water, to measuring the density of water, and comparing it to other forms of liquids.

Similar to last years’ program, the day was split into two portions: a morning academic sessions where students took part in lessons dealing with reading and writing, then turning theory into practice in science and math courses. In the afternoons, students were able to choose an “afternoon activity” to participate in. Activities included Stepping, Dance, Sign Language, and Photography and drawing with Super Science of Florida, a local group that teaches the fundamentals of science in a fun and interactive way. At the end of the week, students gave presentations on what they had learned in both morning and afternoon sessions.

Also, to expose the students to something different, campers were offered the chance to stay on campus in an overnight experience, and then treated to a day of fun at Busch Gardens theme park in Tampa, FL. Special thanks goes out to FGCU’s Office of Housing and Residence Life, and Campus Reservations.
An excerpt from the University of Virginia’s Darden Business School Magazine about Scholar’s Club founder Christian Duffus.

CHRIS DUFFUS (MBA ’00) has temporarily left the world of corporate finance to take on the role of Deputy CEO of Finance and Administration for the 2008 Democratic National Convention Democratic National Convention Committee. He manages a multimillion-dollar budget in the weeks leading up to the August nominating convention in Denver.

And which candidate does he support? Why, the candidate who wins the nomination, of course, Duffus says. “I’m candidate neutral and that’s the policy of the DNC,” he says. “The only person I am for is the person that gets the nomination for president.”

He has taken a sabbatical as vice president of Finance and Corporate Development at M2Z Networks.

“I tried to get involved in 2000, but maybe I was too young and the timing wasn’t right,” he says. “But I’ve been involved in the party for awhile. The opportunity presented itself and I took it.”

Duffus is charged with organizing a state-of-the-art financial infrastructure. The Democratic National Committee in March was mobilizing hundreds of full-time staff and “a few hundred more part-timers,” Duffus said. “And everything has to get done yesterday. We’re working with a six-month timeframe. When Aug. 25 comes, we don’t get an extra day. In my role, it’s also human resources, general administration, and IT. I am the internal service provider to our entire organization. More important than anything else, we have to make sure the right foundation is in place when the presumptive nominee comes in.”

Duffus said he might be interested in working on a transition team after the convention.

“I’m open and looking to do the next best thing for me and my career,” he says. “But I suspect I will go back to the private sector.”

A former investment banker and CFO of a startup following his graduation from Darden, Duffus says he sees his current role as CFO of a (rapidly developing) start-up.

“This is going to be an historic convention because this is definitely one of the more important elections in my lifetime,” says Duffus, 35. “One of the great things about having a convention out west is we have a 50-state strategy and the west is very important to the DNC. We’re making great relations with the businesses and people out here. As I look at this challenge, I go back to my Darden education. My objective is I want to put in Fortune 100-type infrastructure, best of breed standards, principles, technologies, capabilities within this type of event so that going forward, it’s not just politics, it’s the business of politics. This is a national organization with global reach. And so it’s imperative that I bring those to bear within our organization.”