Legislature approves 4 percent raise for state employees

The state legislature voted to give most state employees a 4 percent pay raise effective Jan. 1. Gov. Martinez had recommended no pay raises for state employees. As of June 6, he had not signed the budget into law, but he was not expected to veto it.

Under the budget approved by the Legislature, A&P and USFSM employees would get a 4 percent raise and most faculty would get a 5 percent raise. Elected state officials would get a 4 percent raise and teachers would get a 6 percent raise. Legislators' pay would remain the same.

The legislature also approved spending $9.2 million for USF's Communications and Information Sciences Building, $1.5 million for the Institute of Marine Resources, $195,000 for the Student Health Center, and just over $1 million for a new building on the Lakeland campus. Polk Community College will pick up the rest of the tab for that building.

The legislature also approved money for several other projects at USF, including the following:

- $237,500 for the Center for Economic Education; $360,000 for completion of the Eye Clinic; $400,000 for completion of the psychiatric hospital; $897,792 for renovation and modernization at the USF Medical Center; $270,000 for public health building equipment; $200,000 for the USF-Tampa Bay Commuter project;
- $314,000 for completion of the Campus Activity Center; $200,000 for the Institute for Biomolecular Science; and $50,000 for the Florida-Japan Institute.

The figures represent a 14 percent increase from last year in funding for USF.

The budget calls for an 8 percent tuition increase for state university students.

Barbara Ann Blue resigns vice president's position

Barbara Ann Blue, vice president for University Relations, has resigned her position effective Aug. 31. President Borkowski said the announcement June 19.

Blue said she is leaving the university to develop her own business. She is in the process of starting her own business which will specialize in communications and mediation services.

Blue found the idea of leaving the university saddens me, the idea of starting and developing my own business is really exciting. This is something I have thought about — and perhaps dreamed about — for a long time. The time just seems right to stop dreaming and start doing.

"I have loved every minute of my five and a half years at USF," Blue said. "It has been a terrific experience, and I am grateful to President Borkowski, former President John Lott Brown and all the other people at USF who gave me the opportunity to serve as vice president. I will continue to be involved in the university and hope to contribute in any way I can." "USF’s public image has certainly improved in the last few years," President Borkowski said. "Blue deserves credit for gains made in community relations, government publications, and public relations. We will miss her expertise in these areas. Nevertheless, I am pleased that she is making the bold move to private entrepreneurship. The talent and work ethics she exhibited at USF will serve her well as head of her own company.”

A search committee will be appointed in July to find Blue’s successor. Borkowski said.

Blue came to USF in January 1984 as director of government relations and assistant to the vice president for university relations, succeeding Betty Castor, who is now Florida’s commissioner of education. Joseph F. Busta, Jr., was head of the division.

In August 1985, the university created a Division of Development and Alumni Affairs. Busta was appointed vice president of the new unit, and Blue was promoted to vice president for university relations.

"She has demonstrated great leadership qualities through her guidance of University Relations over the past four years," Busta said. "As an employee, she personifies the true spirit of USF in that she and her husband have established the James and Barbara Ann Blue Women’s Leadership Scholarship, a need-based award for women who have shown leader-
Psychiatry Center team triumphs in Sports Fest

Proving they're a bunch of good sports, staff members of the USF Psychiatry Center recently triumphed over more than 200 other teams in a day-long event staged on Clearwater Beach.

A team of 20 to 25 Center employees, supported by a cheering squad of equal size, participated in the Corporate Games series called Sports Fest. Among the challenges were Sprint-Splash-Crash-Dash and the Ocean Sprint Relay, which is a combination of swimming, kayaking, and surfboarding.

The games are staged all over the United States to foster a spirit of teamwork and build morale within various types of organizations and businesses. "We support these games as part of our overall Service Excellence Program," said administrator Jim Myers. "This event also gives USF and the Center some exposure in the community, which we see as part of our mission."

An awards presentation was held in

May at the Center to honor participants, who enjoyed reliving the day's spills and thrills over strawberry shortcake. The USF Psychiatry Center won third place overall last year.

"With the number of new people we have, this event is especially helpful in getting to know each other," said Mazhar Al-Abed, community relations representative, who coordinated the event. "We see the end result in the enthusiasm the Sports Fest generates. Many of those who came to cheer this year say they want to participate next year."

And the Center definitely plans to take part in the 1990 Sports Fest. "We're the tops," said Myers. "By all means, we'll go back and defend our title."

The Psychiatry Center Sports Fest winners are, from left, Pat Parker, Dean Rodriguez, Meredith Kiecher, Paul Wurst, Meg Winkel, Mazhar Al-Abed, Peggy Gummoe and Pam Ford.

Researcher's work may increase healing ability, prevent diseases

A USF professor is conducting research on natural substances that have been shown to increase the human body's healing abilities. Biology associate professor Dr. Gary Grotendorst of the USF College of Natural Sciences is studying what are commonly called peptide growth factors. That name covers a variety of cell-produced substances that have been shown to be effective in treating chronic lesions and certain immune deficiencies. However, the USF researcher hopes growth factors will also provide a key to preventing other types of chronic health problems.

"We're looking at the cellular-molecular mechanism that controls wound repair," Grotendorst said. "This is interesting because the same type of mechanisms may underlie a number of fibrotic diseases."

Grotendorst said fibrotic diseases, including coronary artery disease of the heart, arthritis, liver cirrhosis and kidney fibrosis, are essentially wound repair that occurs at the wrong place in the body.

The USF researcher said at the time of injury, white cells and other types of cells rush to the injured area to destroy bacteria and other harmful organisms. This collection of cells, along with fluid, leads to inflammation. Grotendorst said these cells also engage in another activity.

"They also produce chemical signals that recruit the other types of cells that restore the tissue. They bring connective tissue cells, vascular cells, and so on. So without these inflammatory cells, which produce the signals, you wouldn't have the reply," the researcher said.

According to Grotendorst, however, this process becomes unregulated in fibrotic disease such as arthritis.

"Unlike wounds, where the inflammation lasts just a short time, the problem found in arthritis is chronic inflammation in the joints that could go on for years. This leads to continual release of chemical signals calling for connective tissue cells, you get the wrong kind of tissue and it changes the architecture of the joint or, in other cases, the organ, so that it no longer functions correctly," he said.

Grotendorst said once the chain of wound healing events are better understood, then it may be possible to interrupt the sequence. That in turn would prevent the cell response to inflammation in arthritic patients and others with fibrotic conditions.

USGS dedicates historic Studebaker Building in St. Petersburg

The U.S. Geological Survey's Center for Coastal Geology dedicated its new home, the 64-year-old Studebaker Building, on June 12 on USF's St. Petersburg campus.

An open house following the private dedication ceremony welcomed the public to tour the newly renovated Studebaker Building.

A team of nine government scientists is studying coastal erosion and pollution and underwater mineral resources at the coastal research center, and the USGS plans to increase its St. Petersburg staff to 30 within the next five years. The USGS works in cooperation with the USF Marine Sciences Department, designated by the Board of Regents as a "Center of Excellence." Dr. Robert Halley heads the advance team of USGS scientists, who currently is studying coastline erosion along Lake Michigan and the Gulf Coast of Louisiana.

"We are looking forward to the partnership with USF and others in the Florida community that will make the new Center for Coastal Geology a world-class focus for understanding and solving some of the critical problems facing the nation's coastal resources," said Dr. Dallas Peck, director of the USGS.

The USGS in March 1988 announced plans to develop the national research center at USF St. Petersburg, after an extensive search for a new home for its Atlantic Marine Geology Branch in Woods Hole, Mass. Though the branch ultimately stayed in Massachusetts, the USGS elected to base its coastal geology program in St. Petersburg. Since fall, the advance team has worked in temporary quarters in downtown St. Petersburg.

The USGS is the nation's largest earth science and mapping agency, and is responsible for studying and assessing the natural resources and hazards of the coast as far as 200 miles offshore. It has mapped 1.5 million square miles of these offshore areas and will complete the deep-water seafloor mapping off all U.S. coasts by 1991. The USGS also plays a major role in understanding the physical and biological consequences of global change, such as shoreline and wetland erosion brought on by global warming, sea level change and other factors.

The Studebaker Building was built in 1925 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Once an auto showroom, it recently underwent a $1.2 million face lift designed for the USGS by Willingham and Associates.

The USGS Foundation recently was honored for its preservation efforts of the building by St. Petersburg Preservation Inc. and the American Institute of Architects.

The two-story structure includes 26 offices, two laboratories, a computer room, a locker room for divers, engineering shops for making marine equipment and a large area for testing it.

USF St. Petersburg recognizes faculty/staff anniversaries

Annually, USF recognizes those faculty and staff who have reached their 5-, 10-, 15-, 20- and 25-year continuous service anniversaries. St. Petersburg campus faculty and staff receiving this anniversary recognition were honored at a reception in April. The honorees are the following:

Five years: Rick Close, Cliff Bare, Pat Dalglisht, Frank White, Gary Stetson, Lorraine Jaboda, Cynthia Collins, Rose Randolph, Gene Vincent.


Fifteen years: Dean Milliken.

Twenty years: Evelyn Mohler, Evelyn DeLoach, Robert Dush, Dr. Robert Dush, Dr. McCarthy.

Twenty-five years: Jack Robinson.

Pictured above, front row, from left, St. Petersburg campus Dean Lowell Davis, Bob Throsch, Jack Robinson, Lorraine Jaboda, Evelyn DeLoach, Eva Blitz; second row, from left, Gary Stetson, Pat Dalglisht, Nancy Teets, Cynthia Collins, Cliff Bare.

Jack Robinson, right, a St. Petersburg-based professor of education, has been with USF for 25 years.

Stirling to head ISDC

Hilton Stirling, coordinator of the College of Business on the St. Petersburg campus, has been named acting department chairman of Information and Systems and Decision Sciences. He will begin his new position in August, the same month he will celebrate his 20th anniversary at USF. A nationwide search for a permanent ISDC director will be conducted.