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Women pursue higher education in rising numbers

For the first time, USF's College of Medicine has enrolled more women students than men. Of the 100 first-year medical students entering USF today, 57 percent are women. That's up from 42 percent women last year.

"This is a significant milestone for our College of Medicine," saidSteven Specter, associate dean for student affairs at the USF College of Medicine. "Attaining a higher proportion of women in our entering class is reflective of an international trend in admissions for medical schools."

While women historically have faced more barriers in the workplace, attitudes have been changing in the last 20 years, and the changing economy and other factors are giving women more opportunities than ever before.

Some women are choosing medicine as a second career. Debra Munro, 49, who holds a Ph.D. in international relations, with minors in statistics, economics and comparative politics, decided to enroll at USF's College of Medicine. Munro founded and directed a statewide economic and demographic research company in Tallahassee before coming to USF.

After some soul searching, she decided that a career combining her interest in applied science with community service would be ideal. Her mother's sudden death from a brain aneurysm in 1988, and later, her father's untimely death, also fueled Munro's determination to pursue a career in medicine 25 years later than most prospective doctors begin their medical education.

"I'm so thrilled to be starting medical school," she said. "I realize in some ways that the time I have to give back to medicine is shorter, but I plan to make it the driving force in my life - I want to take care of patients, to do something on a daily basis that makes a difference in people's lives."

In addition to medicine, women are selecting careers as research scientists, mathematicians and biologists. Biology departments have hired more women nationwide, although women faculty have not quite achieved parity with men and don't outnumber men nationwide, said Sidney Pierce, interim director of undergraduate studies for the College of Arts and Sciences. As of 1998, women earned 42 percent of the doctoral degrees in the sciences, computers and engineering nationwide.

That boost, however, has not yet led to more women joining the ranks of full professors at USF and other universities. Yet the numbers have been steadily rising, from 8.7 percent in 1970 to 21 percent in 1999, Cole said.

"In math, science and engineering, men (who are) full and associate professors outnumber women 6 to 1. I found this especially true when I was in the Pathology department at the University of Maryland medical school," she said. "Women predominated the assistant professor ranks, only three women were full professors and it was very difficult to move up."

Some faculty are encouraged, though, by the number of women becoming research and teaching assistants. Out of 47 Mathematics teaching assistants this fall, 13 are female, said Marcus McWaters, who chairs the department.

The challenge, of course, is retaining women so that they pursue the higher degrees while they try to balance parenting, a job and school, said Dewey Bollemann, director of Admissions.

USF has a Web site where faculty and others who recruit students can see the retention and graduation rates for all students, and compare them to other universities nationwide. The site is www.usf.edu/usfrp/retention/.
How huge planets got their rings

How did planets like Jupiter and Saturn get their stripes? Professors at USF St. Petersburg and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel believe they have answered the long-standing puzzle and in the process discovered a new law of physics.

Professor Boris Galperin, a physical oceanographer at USF working with Semion Sukorokov and Nadejda Dikovskaia of Ben-Gurion University, has identified the physical law that governs the atmospheric turbulence that causes dark lines in the outer layers of the giant gaseous planets of Jupiter and Saturn and the ice planets of Neptune and Uranus.

The scientists’ findings have been accepted for publication in Physical Review Letters, the top scientific journal for atmospheric sciences. This “new law,” they wrote, “is of fundamental importance not only in the theory of two-dimensional turbulence, but also in atmospheric sciences and planetaryology.”

Even amateur astronomers have long known that the markings on the largest planets in our solar system are caused by trains of clouds transported by organized, steady atmospheric currents. On Earth, turbulence caused by solar heating and the collision of wind currents with land masses disrupts atmospheric flows. The spatially ordered energy prevents the formation of circulating, global cloud bands.

A study of the thin atmosphere of gas giants, however, energy dissipation is small, and some of the sun’s energy is generally collected in stable, global jets that trap clouds and form planetary stripes.

For years, scientists have suspected that the interaction between planetary rotation and large-scale turbulence governs the bounded circulations on giant planets. Galperin and his colleagues quantified this phenomenon, found an equation that characterizes the distribution of energy among different scales of motion and arrived at simple formulas that characterize basic, energetic characteristics of giant planets’ circulations.

The model helps explain the paradoxical observation that the outer planets have stronger atmospheric flows, although the energy provided by the sun to maintain such flows decreases with increasing distance from the sun. The researchers found that the atmospheres of distant planets dissipate even less energy than their warmer sisters.

Energy loss is driven in part by small-scale turbulence caused by the sun’s heat. Therefore, while the outer planets receive less energy from the sun, they keep more of the energy they receive. This finding explains why Neptune has the strongest atmospheric circulation of all the gas giants while it is the farthest from the sun, by M.E. “Buddy” Baker

Local businesses bear signs of the green and gold

Employees driving Fowler or Fletcher Avenue might have seen the green signs popping up in front of local businesses. Now they know they’re in Bulls Country.

“The concept of Bulls Country is seen as a state of mind as much as an actual geographic area,” said organizer Bob Hallo. He and his task force hope to increase the university’s profile and visibility along Fowler and Fletcher avenues and other places, such as University Mall.

On Sept. 28, the mall hosted a USF Day with a pep rally for the football team’s out-of-town contest against nationally ranked Oklahoma. The Herd of Thunder marched band made its entourage that afternoon, and televisions set up in Rio Bravo and Ruby-Tuesday restaurants played the game.

Ruby-Tuesday and Outback Steakhouse have joined the Bulls Country effort, putting the green and gold up in businesses.

Ruby-Tuesday was one of the first. Billy Diamond, a former college football player, manages the restaurant and personally arranged the hanging of banners, posters, jerseys and other items on two walls dedicated to USF artifacts.

Diamond married a USF graduate and is a hardcore football fan. “I want students to come in, eat and watch road games in a USF section of the restaurant.”

The Bulls Country concept is great,” he said. “Most of our employees are USF students, so this is something for them to be proud of.”

The “Reef” O’Brady’s on Fowler Avenue also hosted a watch party for the Oklahoma game. More than 100 people attended that event and another 200 people cheered for the bulls in two other parties in St. Petersburg and North Tampa,” said Eric Seidman, director of the Annual Fund for the USF Athletic Association.

The nice thing about each event is that we’ve won over a few people that happened to be at those locations for dinner or to watch another game. The enthusiasm is catching and that will help us increase our attendance and membership in the Athletic Association.”

Other businesses are sporting Bulls colors. Wingate Inn, on Fowler Avenue across from USF’s front entrance, has renamed its conference rooms Bulls Country I and Bulls Country II. The McDonald’s restaurant at 56th Street and Fowler Avenue has changed its interior to green and gold. University Mall manager Tom Locke has agreed to provide a 130-foot wall on the back side of the mall for a USF-themed mural. The Bulls Country task force is considering sponsoring a contest to select the artwork. All of this will help define the neighborhoods as part of the university community, Hallo said.

“We want visitors and residents alike to know they are in or near a ‘college town,’” he said.

Elevated school spirit, visible Bull Pride and more support for university programs will be the natural result of the effort, he said.

With more than 195,000 people graduating since it opened in 1956, the university now has more than 90,000 alumni living within a 60-mile radius of its Tampa campus. This huge family of Bulls represents a large economic force and a strong base of Bull pride, Hallo said. “This whole thing is getting a positive reception,” he said.

St. Petersburg starts search for leader

USF St. Petersburg has formed a President’s Advisory Committee to search for the new campus vice president/CEO it met for the first time Oct. 11.

Mark Wilson, director of the College of Business Administration at USF St. Petersburg, chairs the 17-member committee.

“I am excited about the search for the new vice president at USF St. Petersburg, and I look forward to working with an excellent committee of faculty, staff, students and community members,” Wilson said.

“We have a lot of work ahead, but I see this search process as an opportunity to bring distinction to USF St. Petersburg within the USF umbrella.”

Jan Greenwood of the national search firm A.T. Kearney has been hired to assist the committee. Greenwood is an experienced consultant who is familiar with Florida’s Sunshine Law.

Helen Levine will represent St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker on the committee. “I appreciate President Judy Genshaft including the city in this important decision-making process,” Levine said.

The committee should begin reviewing candidates in January, with interviews to be scheduled in February. The group is not expected to meet again until January.

In addition to Levine and Greenwood, the committee includes faculty members, students, members of the public and the Campus Board. Other members are: Ray Arsenault, College of Arts and Sciences; Peter Betzer, College of Marine Science; David Bradski, USF Council and Nelson Poynter Library; Kimberly Chandler; undergraduate student; Genta Cox, Pinellas County Alumni Association and Human Capital Resource Center; Bob Dardenne, Faculty Council and College of Arts and Sciences; Karen Ann Dunlap, the Poynter Institute; Barbara Frey, College of Education; Jeanne Gaines, College of Business; Gudia Gayle-Ivans, College of Education; Howard Hinesley, superintendent, Pinellas County Schools; Don McCarty, A&P Council; Tina Neville, Nelson Poynter Library; Lisa Raderachers, graduate stu­ dent; Michael VanBuel, Community Advisory Council and Beers Skanska.

For more information, call Donna Knudsen at ext. 3-5450.