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Genshafted again?

It came out of the blue last week. Powerful legislators want to roll back history and end USFSP’s independent accreditation. What would that mean? No one – not administrators, not faculty, not students – knows for sure.

Some A’s to your Q’s

What’s all the fuss I’m hearing about the university’s accreditation?

Last week influential lawmakers in Tallahassee introduced legislation that would abolish the independent accreditation that this campus has had since 2006 and put all three campuses in the USF system – St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee and Tampa – in one university controlled by Tampa.

What’s the accreditation and why is it important?

It is considered a crucial measure of an institution. To get accredited, a school must undergo a rigorous review from an outside agency, in our case the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. SACs studies the school’s mission and the resources, services and programs it offers to maintain that mission. When we got separate accreditation, it gave our campus a jolt of prestige and helped us get more control over hiring, curriculum and student admissions.

What does the legislation say?

If adopted, the USF system would have until Jan. 15, 2019, to prepare a plan to “orderly phase out” the separate accreditation of the St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses so that the three campuses in the USF system – St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee and Tampa – in one university controlled by Tampa.

Campus frustrated, fuming after surprise move

By Michael Moore Jr.

A state bill could lead to changes in the USF system if passed.

When Don Sullivan was an influential state senator from Pinellas County, he grew tired of the shabby way administrators on the Tampa campus of USF treated the small branch campus in St. Petersburg.

So in 2000 he introduced a bill that would have split the campuses and created a new school in St. Petersburg called Starnes County University.

The bill narrowly failed, but Sullivan’s sentiments got the attention of lawmakers and the Tampa campus.

In the years that followed, some of the power in Tampa shifted to St. Petersburg, and in 2006 the long-neglected campus won separate accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – an important distinction that helped launch a decade of growth in enrollment, fundraising and prestige.

Last week, however, another powerful legislator from Pinellas County helped introduce legislation that might bring things full circle.

The proposal by Rep. Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor, would abolish the separate accreditation enjoyed by USF St. Petersburg and put all three campuses of the USF system – Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee – under one umbrella controlled by Tampa.

That would position the two smaller campuses to receive more resources when USF Tampa joins the University of Florida and Florida State University as so-called “pre-eminent universities” that are entitled to millions of dollars in bonus funding.

“I think the impact is virtually all positive,” said Sprowls, who is in line to become speaker of the House of Representatives in 2020. “If this were to go through, all of the campuses would have access to a pre-eminent university in their backyard.”

But the curious timing of the proposal – which came without notice, in the second week of the eight-week legislative session – left many faculty, administrators and allies of the St. Petersburg campus frustrated and fuming.

One of them was Sullivan, who left the Senate in 2002.

“It’s amazing to me how often this bad idea keeps coming back to life,” he told the Tampa Bay Times.

“The natural instinct of the Tampa campus to dominate the curriculum and to dominate the control of the budget resulted in Sarasota and Pinellas County getting short shrift,” he said. “I wish we had the University of St. Petersburg.”

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SPRINGING OUT

In the midst of USF St. Petersburg’s struggle to retain accreditation independent of USF Tampa, local leaders make their voices heard. Read what campus and community officials have to say about the process.

THE CROW’S NEST

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Accreditation

At issue in the debate is accreditation, which in higher education is considered a crucial measure of an institution.

To obtain accreditation, a school must undergo a rigorous review from an outside agency, which scrutinizes the school’s mission and objectives and the resources, services and programs it offers to maintain that mission.

USF Tampa has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools since 1965. When USF St. Petersburg was awarded separate accreditation in 2006, it brought prestige to the waterfront campus and further assurance that it would have more control over hiring, curriculum and student admissions.

Although the St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses have separate accreditation, they are not autonomous. They still fall under the control of the 13-member Board of Trustees for the three campuses of the university system and the president the board hired in 2000 – Judy Genshaft.

Genshaft, 70, appoints and supervises the regional chancellors in St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee and oversees broad policies that govern all three campuses.

She is well paid – with a compensation package of more than $900,000, according to published reports – and powerful. As the large Tampa campus has grown in enrollment and national stature, Genshaft has become a major player in the politics and economic development of the Tampa Bay region.

In recent months, Genshaft has appeared intent on strengthening her hold. In September, she ousted Sophia Wisniewska, the popular regional chancellor in St. Petersburg, for her handling of Hurricane Irma. Genshaft installed an interim leader – Martin Tadlock – who had been on campus for only 14 months, and announced that the search for a permanent replacement would not begin until the following spring.

It was the sixth time in her 17 years that Genshaft had changed leaders in St. Petersburg, and Wisniewska’s admirers contend that her abrupt departure blunted the momentum she had helped build in image, admissions and fundraising.

Wisniewska’s ouster was “more like an executive resignation,” said Ray Arsenault, a longtime supporter of Southern History in St. Petersburg and once a defender of the campus.

Six months earlier, the regional chancellor in Sarasota-Manatee also departed suddenly. Sandra Stone cited family reasons in her letter of resignation, but the Board of Trustees had voiced concerns about the school’s lagging fundraising.

A new candidate announced last week for the campus’ benefit was fired and access to pre-eminence” funding.

Since he is in line to become Senate president next year, Galvano is – like Sprowls – one of the state’s most powerful lawmakers.

At week’s end, however, those new and administrators in St. Petersburg were still unsure what the bill might portend for their campus.

Not so fast

Meanwhile, two other important voices had a message for legislators: Not so fast.

The St. Petersburg campus “drifted for years from willful neglect” from the main campus in Tampa, the Tampa Bay Times editorial said.

“With a new leader; suddenly surfaced last week in the state House of Representatives. It was approved 12-1 on Wednesday by the House Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

In the Senate, the issue has not had an airing, but Sen. Bill Galvano, R-Bradenton, told the Sarasota Herald-Tribune that he is open to taking away the independent accreditation of USF Sarasota-Manatee.

Byron Shinn, chair of USF Sarasota-Manatee campus board, welcomed the proposal “Thats just the way to do it,” he added.

While taken aback by the timing of the proposal, some faculty and students in St. Petersburg agree that it could re-bound to the campus’ benefit in more funding and academic opportunities for both students and faculty.

For example, Tadlock said, St. Petersburg could get doctoral programs and be able to offer students more fields in health care, engineering and performing arts.

Deanna Michael, an associate professor in the College of Education who also serves on the Faculty Senate, says that while it’s too early to know the consequences of the bill, she is hopeful that the process will benefit the campus and cites her strong working relationship with Tadlock administrators.

“I’m optimistic there will be a desire on all sides to maintain St. Petersburg’s programs and our strong programs,” Michael said.

The role of history

In the early years of its history, the St. Petersburg campus had no stronger ally than Nelson Poynter, the owner of the St. Petersburg Times (now Tampa Bay Times) from 1938 to 1975.

In the 1950s, the newspaper strongly urged the Legislature to put the new state university in Pinellas County, not Tampa.

When Tampa won out, Poynter and the Times editorial board became champions of the little branch campus in St. Petersburg. The Times accused Poynter himself of being a generous financial contributor. He died of a stroke on June 15, 1978, just hours after he proudly took part in the groundbreaking for the first major expansion of the tiny campus.

The campus library is named for him.

In its editorial on Friday, the Times cited the history of the Tampa campus and argued that “history has to be taken into account in any push for transformational change” in the USF system.

A unified USF system “is not the worst idea the Flori-da Legislature had,” the editorial said, and Sprowls “makes a provocative argument that times are different” and St. Petersburg students and faculty would benefit.

But the dramatic improvements St. Petersburg has made should not be put in jeopardy until important questions are answered, said the newspaper.

“What would be the governance structure under a unified USF? How will the St. Petersburg campus be guaranteed its fair share of the performance money, the attention and the promising future Sprowls envisions?” said the editorial.

“Whatever would be the impact on enrollment at USFSP and access for minority students to a local university campus if the admission criteria were the same systemwide?”

“How would the campus continue to grow as an economic driver and attract for St. Petersburg if all of the key decisions were made in Tampa?”

Information from contributor Nancy McCann and the Tampa Bay Times, Sarasota Herald-Tribune, WUSF News and USF websites was used in this report.

Not a “Tampa move”

Martin Tadlock, interim regional chancellor, believes in some of the benefits unified accreditation could bring.

Although some in St. Petersburg see Genshaft’s hand in the legislative proposal, Tadlock said at a campus forum Friday that it is “not a wound” and “the botted rollout will make it harder to have a thoughtful discussion about USFSP’s future and to portray a reunified university as something besides a power grad.”

The proposal in Tallahassee to strip independence (from USFSP) without appropriate public input is unwise and not in the best interests of the student body, said U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, D-St. Petersburg.

The proposal, which is buried in the last two pages of a massive bill, suddenly surfaced last week in the state House of Representatives.

It was approved 12-1 on Wednesday by the House Post-Secondary Education Subcommittee and moves next to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

In the Senate, the issue has not had an airing, but Sen. Bill Galvano, R-Bradenton, told the Sarasota Herald-Tribune that he is open to taking away the independent accreditation of USF Sarasota-Manatee.

Sprouls – one of the state’s most powerful lawmakers.

At 3,000, then, the USF system as it stands now has over 4,000 members. The regional chancellor of USF Sarasota-Manatee is still unsure what the bill might portend for their campus.
Many Tallahassee insiders think the current House speaker, Richard Corcoran, has more power in Tallahassee than Gov. Rick Scott.

In a phone interview with *The Crow’s Nest*, Sprowls explained that he understands the reluctance of some students and professors to accept the bill as a positive.

“It’s good to be cautious about changes like this,” he said. “But this is a unique opportunity to bring resources together and elevate the USF brand nationally by making sure that all three campuses are pre-eminent and have access to pre-eminent resources.”

V. Mark Durand, a professor of psychology who was founding dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in 2003-2004 and acting vice chancellor of academic affairs in 2015-16, isn’t so sure USF would receive the same fairs in 2015-16, isn’t so sure that all three campuses would be conducted in a way that’s exactly what UF and campuses.

“Currently, that is not the case,” Sprowls said.

The current system in place actually disincentivizes Tampa, which he says he has not received.

Sproles does, however, understand the frustrations of students and professors who have grown leery of USF Tampa with their increasingly hands-on approach.

“My understanding is that things have changed,” Sprowls said. “I have not received any of that extra money. But the landscape has changed. The state university system is poised to join them this year, last year received $8.7 million extra as an "emerging pre- eminent" school. (UCF is the University of Florida and Florida State, which in 2013 to help state universities move up in the pecking order of the nation’s most prestigious schools. Schools that meet at least 11 of the 12 benchmarks set by the state – including size of endowment and research expenditures, admission standards, freshman retention rate and four-year and six-year graduation rates – get millions in extra money.

What are the state’s pre-eminent universities now?

The University of Florida and Florida State, which in 2017 received an extra $17.3 million from the state, according to the News Service of Florida. USF Tampa, which is poised to join them this year, last year received $8.7 million extra as an "emerging pre-eminent" school. (UCF is also an emerging pre-eminent school.)

Won’t USFSP and USFSM – which don’t perform as well as USF Tampa on certain benchmarks – pull down USF’s numbers if the three campuses are folded into one?

Yes, as things now stand. But Sprowls argues that this would compel Tampa administrators to pour more resources into the two smaller campuses. A rising tide lifts all boats, he says.

What would our campus lose if we lost our accreditation?

That’s the $64,000 question. Would Tampa administrators really put more money and resources into St. Petersburg? Would it allow St. Petersburg to maintain its distinctive identity, its key role in St. Petersburg’s so-called Innovation District, its emphasis on minority and non-traditional students?

As interim Regional Chancellor Martin Tadlock said at a campus forum Friday, a lot of questions are simply unanswerable at this point.
A
rriving to class on time is difficult. Arriving to class on time with no way to access the building is impossible. Robert Beasey, 45, an interdisciplinary social sciences major, is faced with this problem on a regular basis. Beasey has been disabled his whole life and relies on a motorized wheelchair to move around campus. Mobility becomes an issue, however, when he encounters bicycles parked on walkways or accessibility ramps.

“When I come into the Student Life Center, the ramp has bicycles chained to the railing. I don’t have the best eyesight and have spatial problems too, making it hard to move around bikes,” said Beasey, “I’ve been around a long time. I’m sure people have seen me here everyday, using the ramps.”

Beasey isn’t alone. As USF St. Petersburg has grown, so has its population of disabled students.

“I guarantee you there are more disabled students than there has ever been, so they can’t say they don’t see us,” said Beasey. “It irritates me because it’s like they don’t even think the ramp is for the wheelchairs.”

Accessibility ramps aren’t the only concern for disabled students. Robert McDowell, assistant director of Student Disability Services, explained that bikes parked along sidewalks also pose a mobility challenge.

“Even if they put their bike on the other side of the ramp or a walkway railing, handlebars and pedals protrude into the path,” said McDowell.

Enforcement is difficult, said Guy Van Asten, safety and compliance officer for the university. Commuting students often park their bikes for the length of a class, leaving little time to catch them.

“If we see somebody locking a bike up where they shouldn’t be, we ask them to move it to a bike rack,” said Van Asten. “It’s kind of hard to keep up with them, there’s not a lot you can really do other than catch them in the act and have them relocate.”

Part of the issue stems from underuse of the available bike racks.

“The implementation of bike corrals have gotten much better; we used to have bikes all over the place. It’s still not perfect, but headway is being made,” said Van Asten. “Looking at what kind of usage the racks are getting now, I’d say they get around sixty percent full at best.”

Underuse, however, doesn’t account for the complete lack of a bicycle rack outside the Student Life Center.

“The SLC once had a rack placed outside it’s Fitness Center. During construction on the lot, the rack was removed and never replaced. Beasey and McDowell, who both work for Student Disability Services inside the SLC, filed a request for a new rack to lessen the number of accessibility ramp blockages.

“Back in November, I got so fed up seeing those bikes there that I contacted Facilities Services and told them that we need a bike rack at the SLC,” said McDowell. “The department said they would take care of it. Nothing happened.”

Beasey expressed his disappointment. “They told me there would be racks, but I don’t see them. And now we’ve started another semester and there is nothing.”

McDowell has since attempted to file another a request, to which Facilities Services replied that an order for a new rack has been placed, but did not provide a date for its arrival.

The immediate solutions provided by McDowell and Van Asten are to be mindful of others and to speak up if there’s a problem. Specifically, Van Asten advises bicyclists to register their bikes with the campus police department.

“You get a free u-lock, it’s a great crime prevention method and lets us get in contact with you if something is wrong with your bike or its placement,” said Van Asten. “Ultimately, when something like this happens, tell somebody. If you were in the same situation, you wouldn’t want to be blocked either.”

To report a problem or register your bicycle, contact the USF St. Petersburg police department at 727-873-4140.


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Campus in confusion: community weighs in

By Jeffrey Waitkevich
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I

terim Regional Chancellor
lor Martin Tadlock sought
 faculty and staff opinions as
all students began to keep
bush about his own.

“I have my own thoughts
hing, but my job is to
ensure that we are advantaged
to every extent possible,” said

“Judy (Genshaft) was just
as surprised as we were.”

He also stressed that this
was not a move of the USF
Tampa or the USF system.

“It’s kind of a wait and
see, folks. You know what we
know,” said Tadlock. “We’re
cariously optimistic and
waiting to see where things
go… There is not going to
be a strong voice using USF
system is absolutely opposed
to this or the Board of Trust-
 certainly opposed to this.”

Despite not knowing what
the future holds, professors,
students and community lead-
ers openly voiced their opin-
ions on House Bill 423.

Jay Sokolovsky, Director of
Anthony

“We didn’t have the his-
ory of dominance in how Tampa
used their (resour-
res), there wouldn’t be this
apprehension. We certainly
were not consulted about this.
We did get some emails from
faculty who have said that
their students are concerned
and we prefer the situation
to stay the same.”

“It’s relatively unusual to
have the level of turnovers and
the frequency of turnovers
d here… There’s often been this
relatively widespread feeling
from faculty that we are
the scene, even rather than the
full siblings of the campus.

From my perspective, it
probably will not affect stu-
dents, the staff, the organiza-
tions and as long as we’re still committed to
this university, it’s still going
to feel like home to us. The
organizations and what we
have here is really what makes
USFSP what it is. That I think
is going to continue regard-
less, even in this intermediary
point where we don’t know
what’s happening. I don’t
think anyone should panic…
There’s going to be a decision
made and when that decision
is made, we’re going to be
prepared and in the meantime,
we are going to keep doing what
we’re doing.”

Andrew Becht, former
student body president at
USF Sarasota-Manatee

“Local government gov-
erns best. The administration
in Tampa does not understand
what it is like to e a student at
Sarasota or St. Pete… I have
no faith that a unified system
would see more funding com-
ing to Sarasota or St. Pete.”

State Rep. Ray Rodrigues,
R-Estero, a sponsor of the bill
that would abolish USF St.
Petersburg’s independent ac-
creditation.

“I dismiss those concerns
(of critics who say the Legis-
lature is meddling in academic
affairs). Constitutionally it’s
our responsibility to provide
the appropriations (for uni-
versities). With responsibility
comes accountability. We are
responsible for all students.”

Charlie Crist, U.S. Rep-
resentative for Florida’s
13th Congressional District

“USF Petersburg has blossomed since gaining individual accreditation in 2006. The proposed move in Tallahassee to strip inde-
pendence without appropri-
te public input is unjust and
not in the best interests of the
student body.”

Sen. Bill Galvano, R-Bra-
denton

Ending USF Sarasota-
Manatee’s independent ac-
creditation “will increase
efficiency, effectiveness, ac-
countability and access to
preeminence (funds) … I in-
tend to talk to a lot of folks.
Having said that, USFSM
had to go into (financial) re-
serves last year while USF
main saw record funding … I
want equity and fair support
for our campus. Status quo is
not working.”

The community voices their opinions about the House Bill 423.

COURTESY OF USFSP

Flu season nothing to sneeze about

By Delaney Brown

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T

his year, the end of the
holiday season means
the flu is out in full

Almost six percent of
Americans currently seeking
medical care have flu symp-
toms, and every state, ex-
cluding Hawaii, has reported
widespread flu activity, which
led the Center for Disease
Control and Prevention to de-
clar e the 2017-18 flu season
“moderately severe.” Howev-
er, the moderately severe rat-
ing is common. The 2014-15
flu season received a similar
ranking.

The H3N2 strain of the
influenza virus is what experts
at the CDC cite as the reason
for the severity of this year’s out-
break. This strain is the most
dangerous of the seasonal flu
strains, as it tends to bring
more severe symptoms, es-
pecially for those already at
increased risk, such as preg-
nant women and those with
asthma or heart disease.

College students are put
at risk for contracting the flu
virus by close living quarters
and communal spaces.

“We are seeing lots of dif-
ferent viral infections, not
necessarily just the flu. We are
seeing a lot of bacterial infec-
tions: Bronchitis, sinusitis, as
well as gastrointestinal virus-
es,” said USF nurse practi-
tioner Aimee Dougherty.

The flu claims 12,000 to
56,000 lives each year. While
many of the deaths are among
children and the elderly, the
ages 18-64 make us 60 percent
of reported flu hospitalizations.

Flu strains vary from year
to year, forcing vaccines to
adapt to target the most prev-
mal strains. However, epide-
micrologists are not psychics,
meaning that some years’ pre-
dictions don’t reflect reality,
as in the case this year.

This year’s flu vaccine is
a poor match for the particu-
lar H3N2 strain in circulation.
The CDC estimates that the
vaccine will be effective in
preventing only 30 percent of
H3 viruses this year. However,
even in the best years, the flu
vaccines topped out at 60 per-
cent effectiveness.

With 13 weeks left in the
flu season, experts still recom-
mend getting flu shots. Even
if people don’t prevent
catching the flu, it can help to
minimize the symptoms.

“It’s never too late to receive a flu vaccine,” said Dougherty.

Flu shots are free for students
at the Wellness Center in SLC
2300. Vaccinations are covered
annually by tuition fees.

For those who have already
received flu shots, there are
steps that can minimize the
chance of exposure.

Dougherty recommends
avoiding close contact with
the infected, frequent hand
washing with soap or an alco-
hol-based hand sanitizer and
disinfecting surfaces that may
be contaminated.

With this year’s outbreak being the most severe since
2009, vaccinating for the flu is as important as ever.

COURTESY OF MIVS EMPLOYEES | FLORIDA TODAY
By Whitney Elfstrom
Senior Journalism and Digital Communication Major
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I imagine the CEO of a Fortune 500 company sitting down for an interview and being referred to as "a boy. That sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But somehow, women are referred to as girls every day.

The term girl is often used to make a woman seem younger, and some women are okay with that, but it normalizes the use of a word that strips someone of their authority. A girl has to ask her parents for permission before leaving the house. A girl continuously needs guidance in making any significant decisions. A girl is someone who still lives at home, doesn't have a steady income and, well, is under 18 years old. I'm often at fault here, but every time I catch myself using the word girl to describe myself, I correct my language and remind myself that I am, in fact, an adult woman.

Even in the process of writing this article, I admit I tend to refer to myself as a "girl," and was immediately roasted by my co-workers, who demonstrate how much this term has become ingrained in our society. In Mayim Bialik's viral video "Girl vs. Woman: Why it matters," she says, "Whatever it means. It matters what we call people. Language matters—words have meaning. And the way we use words changes the way we frame things in our mind." She then argues that in using "who" to describe the adult female, that this is normally used to describe women changes the way society views women—"even unconsciously—and in doing so we don't equate them with adult men.

Now, I recognize that oftentimes we still refer to college-age males as boys, and that women aren't the only people affected by this adverse language. Perhaps it's because we tend to associate language with reflects our own sense of self. So, if we still see ourselves as girls and boys, we're going to refer to other people in the same manner.

With that in mind, young adults, in general, should be referring to themselves as women and men once they hit 18. When we continue to use language that is meant to identify children, we believe ourselves and those around us. Language is important and shapes the way we think and make decisions.

But once men and women graduate from college, suddenly boys become men in the eyes of society while women are still referred to as girls.

When we use words to describe adult women that are typically used to describe children, it changes the way we view women—"even unconsciously," so that we don't equate them with adult men," Bialik said. "In fact, it implies that they're inferior to men."

A group of 32-year-old males will never be addressed with, "Hello boys," but far too often the same cannot be said about a 32-year-old group of females.

The default language would almost always be to say, "Hello girls" to a group of women.

Why wouldn't someone call a group of men boys, you might ask? Because it's seen as unmanly, and we wouldn't dream of stripping a man of their masculinity. It's not something we live in a male-centric culture, and even though women are tacking the patriarchy more and more each day with movements such as #MeToo and no longer taking shit from men, there is still a lot of ground that needs to be covered—one of them being language.

In The Guardian's article "Stop calling women 'girls.' It's either patronising (sic) or sexually suggestive" Hannah Jane Parkinson writes, "… in a world in which substantial pay inequality and glass ceilings still exist, language matters."

So next time you see a group of females and you simply can't think what to call them, ask yourself this: Do they look like a group of neighborhood kids running down the street? If not, you should probably call them a group of women.

By Anna Bryson
annabryson@mail.usf.edu

Sandra Vernon-Jackson graduated State University of New York along with 215 other meteorology students—only five of whom were women.

S
he was the only woman of color.

"It sparked something in me that we are not sending the message that women, women of color, women of color from other countries, from Jamaica, can do this," said Vernon-Jackson.

"I think so many times when students see a woman in the position of whether coding or engineering or meteorology, there is a role model."

Vernon-Jackson, STEM instructor, is working to bring Girls Who Code to USF St. Petersburg. Girls Who Code is a non-profit organization that teaches young girls computing skills, which are a proven path to secure and prosperous careers in the future.

Despite being new to the USF St. Petersburg family, Vernon-Jackson sees the opportunity for Girls Who Code to bring programming off the ground at USF St. Petersburg.

Vernon-Jackson envisions the program possibly starting as a summer camp where middle and high school aged girls learn coding skills.

She thinks that once the STEM lab is built, the Girls Who Code organization will take off.

"Whether it's robotics or aerospace engineering or coding for girls, I think once we get that STEM lab up, it's going to accelerate all these different areas," she said.

Vernon-Jackson sees the need for Girls Who Code in the Petersburg area, which is riddled with schools that aren't doing well, such as Azalea Middle School and Azalea Elementary College Preparatory School, which both received F ratings from The Florida Department of Education in 2017.

She believes that young girls and students of color will start to envision themselves in roles they've never imagined themselves in because they can start to envision themselves in roles they've never imagined themselves in because they can imagine the CEO of a tech company.

It's no secret that we live in a world in which substantial pay inequality and glass ceilings still exist, language matters."

So next time you see a group of females and you simply can't think what to call them, ask yourself this: Do they look like a group of neighborhood kids running down the street? If not, you should probably call them a group of women.

STEM instructor pushes to close gender gap in tech field

Girls Who Code provides the opportunity for young women to pursue programming at USF St. Petersburg that are otherwise unavailable.

By Whitney Elfstrom
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The Crow's Nest is committed to providing an environment to the University of South Florida St. Petersburg and its surrounding community. The Crow's Nest abide by the highest ethical standards and focuses on stories that help readers make informed decisions on current issues. We take seriously the public's right to know and strive to uphold the highest standards of reporting as defined by the Society of Professional Journalists. Opinions in this newspaper do not necessarily represent those of the administration, faculty or student body.
Yoga on Tap conquers fear with a stretch and a brew

By Jessica Jagodzinski
Contributor

Crowds gathered inside 3 Daughters Brewing Thursday to avoid the chilly weather, get drunk and name-drop that way. Yoga on Tap, an hourlong class taught monthly by an instructor at the Body Electric Yoga Company, blends yoga with drinking alcohol for a $15 cover charge. Yogis of all skill levels stretched their way through the class, which was built for beginners and experts alike.

A new pair to the mindfulness guru practice, Adrienne Wilson and her 9-year-old son Evan Wilson, were among the first dozen to arrive. They carried beach towels instead of yoga mats as they entered the makeshift studio, unsure of what to expect.

“He’s my little fitness guru. He’s the reason I came,” Wilson said.

The class began at 6 p.m. when instructor Katelyn Grady introduced the theme of the night: surrender.

“More than one person canceled their attendance because of the weather. So, I was inspired to talk a bit about stretching our comfort zones and the power of the mind,” Grady said, “But to even get to that place, you first have to accept what is. You have to surrender to circumstance which in this case was the chilly weather.”

“For the next hour, I’m going to be lightly bossing you around,” Grady said. “You always want to get a little nervous … Trying a little harder.”

Musician Billy Mays III sat behind Grady on the stage, providing the crowd with a beat to stretch to.

Mays has performed his ambient installation pieces set at the Body Electric studio and has collaborated with them on the Yoga on Tap events for around two years.

“There’s just different kinds of sets that I do. This is more like me improvising. There’s just different kinds of sets that I do. This is more like me improvising. Yeah, I guess these kinds of sets are less focused on me and more [the audience] doing something.”

Throughout the class, participants began shedding their extra layers as the exercises warmed and invigorated them despite the cold January air breathing through the warehouse. Lowering themselves into downward dog position or plank pose provided them the opportunity to sip on their 3 Daughters brew.

As participants wound down in child’s pose, Grady challenged them to fill the room with their voices as they chanted the sound of the universe.

“Sometimes I feel hesitant in chanting ‘om’ in a big space like this. I fear it will get lost in the cavernous room … We just have to be loud,” Grady said.

Grady climbed onstage and cranked Mays’ music louder, filling the warehouse and outside allies with his “transcendent” slow jam and continuously dimming the lights as she introduced more challenging stretches.

“How will we ever grow if we keep running away from the shit that makes us uncomfortable?” Grady asked the class.

Yogis enjoy the tunes of Billy Mays III and beer while challenging themselves.
Rivalry and rancor have simmered for years.

A proposal in the Legislature that would end the independent accreditation of USF St. Petersburg marks the latest chapter in the 52-year history of the university and its often-rocky relationship with the much larger campus in Tampa.

1956--The Florida Legislature authorizes a new state university. It is called the University of South Florida because it is in the southernmost university in the state and its backers think the name will help get the support of legislators in the southern part of the state. (It did.)

1960--Classes begin in Tampa, which became the site of the new university only after spirited competition between civic leaders and newspapers in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties.

Sept. 7, 1965--Because the 5-year-old university admitted more freshmen than it could house, nearly 260 freshmen begin their college careers in St. Petersburg. They live and attend some classes in buildings on a small peninsula in Bayboro Harbor where the university's College of Marine Science stands today.

Summer 1968--Moving without the approval of the Legislature, USF President John S. Allen and a dynamic young administrator named Lester Tuttle begin creating a "Bayboro Campus" on the 11.8-acre peninsula. Among their first moves: offering classes to juniors, seniors and graduate students in a --2--2 partnership with St. Petersburg Junior College.

1969--The Legislature makes the new campus official and gives it the name University of South Florida-St. Petersburg. It is the first branch campus in the state university system.

Feb. 11, 1975--Voters in Clearwater reject a proposal calling for the city to donate land for a new home for the campus there.

1976-77--The city of St. Petersburg acquires and clears land along the north shore of Bayboro Harbor for an expansion of the campus.

June 1978--Civic leaders from both sides of Tampa Bay join university officials in a groundbreaking for the expansion.

1980-1986--USFSP is very much a commuter campus. Up to 85 percent of the students are juniors and seniors, and well over half take classes in the evening.

May 1981--Officials dedicate two new buildings -- the Nelson Poynter Student Library (now Bayboro Hall) and Bayboro Hall (now Davis Hall).

April 1984--Coquina Hall is dedicated.

1986 and 1987--The city continues acquiring land for campus expansion.

June 1989--The U. S. Geological Survey's new Center for Coastal Geology moves into a historic building that once housed a Studebaker auto dealership at 600 Fourth St. S. In the years that follow, the USGS and the university forge a collaborative partnership.

January 1990--The Campus Activities Center (now called the Student Life Center) opens. It is expanded in 1994 to include a fitness center and racquetball court and remodeled in the summer of 2015.

April 1992--The so-called "B Building," a now-wobbly structure that had served the U.S. Maritime Service, Florida Presbyterian College (now Eckerd College) and USFSP for five decades, is demolished to make way for a marine research facility (now called the Knight Oceanographic Research Center).


Fall 1998--The campus accepts its first freshman class since the "overflow" classes of 1965 and 1966.

Early 2000 -- State Sen. Don Sullivan, R-Seminole, peaved at the way the Tampa campus governs the St. Petersburg campus, introduces a startling proposal: He files legislation that would transfer most of the St. Petersburg programs to a new school that would be called "Suncoast University."

Late 2000--Sullivan's proposal comes to naught in the Legislature, but it helps spark fundamental changes for the St. Petersburg campus -- an expansion of course offerings and degree programs, increased autonomy, and planning for separate accreditation.

June 2002--Bill Heller, who led the campus as dean and CEO for a decade, is ousted by USF President Judy Genshaft. He goes on to champion higher education during four years in the Legislature and later becomes dean of USFSP's College of Education.

May 2002--Some of the students who began college in the fall of 1998 as members of St. Petersburg's first freshman class since 1965 and 1966 graduate-a milestone for USFSP.

August 2006--The school's first dormitory, Residence Hall One, opens at the corner of Fifth Avenue S and Second Street.

June 2006--After 43 years under the control of the Tampa campus, USFSP is awarded separate accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools -- the state's first regional campus to earn that distinction.

June 2008--The university is stunned to learn it has been put on probation by the accrediting association for failure to comply with two standards for measuring student progress. Chancellor Karen White is replaced by Margaret Sullivan, a specialist in higher education accreditation, and full accreditation is restored.

February 2011--USFSP wins reaccreditation through 2021.

August 2011--The University Student Center, which features a dining facility, banquet hall, meeting rooms and six-story dormitory, opens at Sixth Avenue S and Second Street.

July 2013--Sophia T. Wisniewska, 61, a scholar of Russian language and literature and chancellor of Penn State Brandywine, is named regional chancellor.

September 2014--The USF Board of Trustees approves a strategic plan -- called Vision 20/20 -- that would increase USFSP's enrollment to 10,000 over the next decade while strengthening the university's commitments to teaching, research and ties to the local community.

September 2014--Retired entrepreneur Kate Tiedemann donates $10 million to the university -- the largest gift in its history. The university names its College of Business in her honor, and late in the year it breaks ground on a new building along Seventh Avenue S at Third Street. The building opens in 2017.

March 2015--The Board of Trustees approves the purchase of nearly 4 acres from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies for $6.2 million. The land, between Eighth and 11 avenues S and Third and Fourth streets, might eventually be the site of a new building for science, technology, engineering and math.

September 2015--The campus begins a yearlong celebration to mark its 50th anniversary.

September 2016--Planning begins in earnest for a third dorm (and dining hall). When it opens in 2019, the facility at Third Street S and Sixth Avenue is expected to house 538 students, giving the university nearly 1,100 dormitory beds.

Sept. 18, 2017--In a move that turns the campus upside down, Genshaft ousts the popular Wisniewska for the way she handled Hurricane Irma. As her interim replacement, Genshaft promotes Martin Tadlock, who had arrived 14 months earlier to be vice chancellor of academic affairs.

Jan. 16, 2018--Through the news media, the campus community learns that two influential state legislators are seeking to end the independent accreditation of USFSP and Sarasota-Manatee, melding them into a single university under Tampa control.

This chronology is based largely on the work of university historian James Anthony Schuur, a former special collections librarian at the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library. Information from the Tampa Bay Times, Tampa Tribune and websites of USF and St. Petersburg was used in this report.