

UF Voices

Faculty Senate keeps full agenda

This year has been busy for the Senate. In January, the Senate approved a resolution to hire a faculty dispute resolution officer to be a resource and liaison for faculty who have questions about dispute resolution procedures.



Danaya Wright

President Machen will form a search committee for the position in the near future. Please let me know if you want to serve on the committee.

The Senate also supported President Machen's Academic Enhancement Program, which would apply a \$500-a-semester surcharge on students enrolling at the University of Florida. The funds would be used to hire up to 200 tenure-track faculty and 100 academic advisers and is vital to addressing our high student/faculty ratio.

The University Constitution Committee reported on regulation changes. Amendments are proposed to university regulations two or three times annually. Because many of these regulations affect faculty, the Constitution Committee reports to the Senate on these changes. Regulation changes are accessible at www.generalcounsel.ufl.edu and the Senate's report is available at www.senate.ufl.edu. This month, the leave policy regulations were amended to provide for domestic partners, and new language was included to better align military leaves with state and federal laws.

The Board of Governors commissioned a report from the Pappas Consulting Group on a plan for higher education in the State University System. The report is available on the Senate Web site and is important reading for anyone interested in the future of UF.

Don't forget that reports from all colleges on their progress toward shared governance are due to the Senate by April 30. There are still opportunities to participate in university committees. If you are interested, please contact the Senate office.

Danaya Wright
Faculty Senate Chair

Top Stories

Gators as clowns

After work, Giggles and Astro play for laughs

Mary Bennett's life is all about smiles. As the executive secretary to the senior associate dean of the University of Florida's College of Dentistry, she spends her days surrounded by people whose job is to fashion and fix smiles. When she leaves the office, her job is to elicit them.

To do so, Bennett dons a red vinyl nose; a big, blue bow; and an even bigger red wig as she transforms herself into a professional clown.

Bennett isn't the only Gator who turns clown on occasion. Her clowning co-star is Debra Hunter, a grants specialist in astronomy.

Bennett began her double life as "Giggles the Clown" 22 years ago when a boy from her church was hospitalized at Shands. She and a friend visited him, dressed in wild colors with painted smiles on their faces that spread from ear to ear.

As they made their way down the hospital halls, parents would poke their heads out of patient rooms and ask them to visit their children, too.

Bennett's desire to make people smile in their time of need has continued over the years, but her look has changed dramatically.

"We learned that smiles as big as the ones we were painting were actually pretty scary to little kids," she said with a laugh.

She now opts for hearts

"Astro" (Debra Hunter) takes her clown name from the astronomy department, where she works.



"Giggles," aka Mary Bennett, got her start as a clown 22 years ago by cheering young patients at Shands.

and freckles painted on her cheeks and inlashed, sparkling, red eyelashes. Her costume, too, has evolved into red-and-white polka-dotted petticoats and \$250, custom-made shoes that turn her size 6 1/2 feet into footlong monstrosities.

A curly, purple wig frames Hunter's painted face. Her skirt is fashioned from the same material as the curtains of her astronomy department office. She added a matching vest and bloomers and the galactic ensemble helped inspire her current alias "Astro the Clown."

It takes each woman about 90 minutes to create her clown counterpart.

Hunter's first gig as a clown came at 16 when she was promoting a furniture sale at her father's store. When her boss at McDonald's saw her in costume handing out balloons, he offered to pay her to come in on Saturdays as a clown for birthday parties. Her clown persona then was "Bobo McDonald."

Bennett and Hunter are both members of the Gainesville Sunshine Clowns and

the World Clown Association. Hunter is also a member of Clowns of America. Bennett has served as the president of the South East Clown Association in 2001, the World Clown Association in 2005, and the Gainesville Sunshine Clowns in 2007.

While they recognize that being funny is one of the biggest expectations of a clown, they credit compassion and empathy as the most important qualities for the person behind the nose.

"One of the fondest memories of my teenage years was clowning at a Special Olympics event," Hunter said. "Just getting to interact with those loving and happy kids helped shape me into the person I am today."

Bennett signs all her autographs with "Love and Laughter," and wears a charm bracelet every day that reminds her why laughter — and smiles — is her mission.

"Sometimes all people need is a little help to see the lighter side," Bennett said. "Laughing physically changes people."

By Mindy Morris

April 3
Noon, "Distinguished Ladies and Daughters of the Heart: Catholic Women in Spain's Second Republic," Samuel Pierce, Anderson Hall, Room 216

2 p.m., "Modeling Virus Assembly Avoiding Dynamics," Meera Sitharam, Cancer & Genetics Research Complex, Room C/G 101

April 4
7 p.m., "On Men, Women and the Rest of Us!" by Kate Bornstein, Reitz Student Union, Rion Ballroom

April 5
4 p.m., "Should Androgens Be Considered a Rehabilitation Aide?" Marybeth Brown, Florida Gym, Room 35

7:30 p.m., "Does the Bush Administration Care About Diplomacy?" Karen DeYoung, Reitz Student Union, Lecture Hall 282

April 6
4:15 p.m., College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' 2007 Lowdin Lecture and Chemistry Colloquium, Chemistry Lab Building, Room C130

April 9
4:05 p.m., "Efficacy of Folate and Vitamin B6 for Treatment of Depression," Titi Yang, CSE E121 Building

University Auditorium

April 4
7:30 p.m., Timothy Robinson, alto saxophone recital

In Focus

UF Basketball Pep Band is there for the team

With only a few minutes left to go in the NCAA regional championship game, two UF students pulled out their secret weapons and brought their group's play to its high point.

Jay Jacobs led trumpet player Chris Hefner and the rest of the Florida Basketball Pep Band in a rousing rendition of Paul Simon's "Call Me AL." After the team's win, the band followed with "We Are The Boys of Old Florida."

"It was nice to hear it fill the room and bounce off the walls of the stadium," said Jacobs, who is one of two doctoral students in the College of Fine Arts who assist in conducting the pep band. "It is usually played only for football games, but we can add basketball championships to that, too."

Three squads of 25 students — both music majors and nonmajors — rotate playing in the pep band for the team at home games. They don't travel to regular season away games, but they do travel to the NCAA contest — the big dance — on the chartered plane with the cheerleaders, dazlers and basketball team members.

The band's job is an established tradition — support UF and its athletic undertakings.

Because more people were rooting for



The Florida Basketball Pep Band plays for the whole team.

the underdog and against the Gators this year, Jacobs said the work was harder.

"As the defending champion, you kind of have a big target on your back and it makes your job different," Jacobs said. "The players have a lot to think about, obviously. While they are on the bench, we try to do a little extra work to keep the song in their ears and their spirits up."

One song that always gets Gator fans going is "Call Me AL." CBS sportscasters commented on it during the Gators' win

By Denise Trunk

over Butler, saying the band played it for Gator forward/center Al Horford.

For the six years Chip Birkner played in the pep band as a student in the School of Music, he played the song. Birkner is now the basketball band director.

"I'm sure the sportscasters aren't aware that Albert is our mascot," Birkner said. "We are supporting our whole team, and while it is Albert's moment in the spotlight, it is great that it works for Al Horford, too."

Seen & Heard

National design award in theater student's reach

A University of Florida graduate student in the College of Fine Arts will compete for a national title in stage design at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., later this month.

With his design for the performance "Waiting for Godot," Glen Anderson, a master of fine arts in scenic design student in the School of Theatre and Dance, won the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Region IV competition in Americus, Ga., and will progress to the finals in Washington, D.C., April 15-22.



Glen Anderson's design for the performance "Waiting for Godot" has been chosen for a national showcase.

This marks the third year in a row the UF scene designer has been chosen for the Kennedy Center competition and national showcase. Anderson will represent the College of Fine Arts and his hometown of Atchison, Kan., at the big event.

KCACTF is a national theater program that gives students from colleges and universities across the country the opportunity to showcase their talents in performance, design, playwriting and directing.

Air Force ROTC earns high marks

Of 144 Air Force ROTC detachments in the U.S., the University of Florida's has been ranked in the top 5 percent.

During the Operational Readiness Inspection, performed by the Air Force Air Education and Training Command Inspector in September, Detachment 150 received outstanding ratings in training, recruiting, personnel actions and education. The detachment received a rating of excellent for financial management and unit support.

These six ratings in the areas inspected led to an overall score of outstanding, the highest possible, given to less than 5 percent of detachments nationwide.

This is the first time in its 65-year history that Detachment 150 has received an overall rating of outstanding on an Operational Readiness Inspection.

Lecture features leading conservationist

Lawrence A. Selzer, president of The Conservation Fund, will talk on "Forest Conservation in the 21st Century" as part of the John Gray Distinguished Lecture Series set for 10 a.m. May 2 at Gainesville's Paramount Plaza Hotel.

Selzer's talk, which is open to the public, is the keynote speech for the 38th spring symposium for the Florida Division of the Society of American Foresters, hosted by UF's School of Forest Resources and Conservation.

Selzer's nonprofit organization, which has helped preserve more than 5 million acres since 1985, works to help protect land and water resources, including wildlife habitat, rivers and wetlands, forests and historic sites.

The lecture series began in 1994 to honor Gray, director of the UF forestry school from 1964 until 1977.

For more information on the symposium, visit the Web at www.flisaf.org.

April 5
7:30 p.m., Wind Symphony concert

April 6
12:50 p.m., School of Music convocation

April 7
1 p.m., pipe organ demonstration

2:30 p.m., Laura Elllis, organ recital

7:30 p.m., Jacaré Brazil and Agbedidi Jeliya

April 9
7:30 p.m., Kenneth Martinson, viola recital

Galleries

Master of Fine Arts Student Exhibition through April 6, University and Focus galleries

"In the House: Domestic Arts from the Horn of

Africa," through Aug. 24, Grinter Gallery

Harn Museum of Art

April 5
5 p.m., "New Researches on the Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts," Harn Eminent Scholar lecture by Chen Songchang

6:15 p.m., "Voices from the Tomb: A Legal Case from the Documents Excavated in the Baoshan Tomb, ca 316 BCE," Harn Eminent Scholar lecture by Chen Wei

7 p.m., "The Art of the Journal," student readings

Theater/Dance

Through April 7
College of Fine Arts presents "The Man of Mode,"

Constans Theatre, 8 p.m., April 3-6; 2 p.m., April 7

Phillips Center

April 7
7 p.m., Pen Masala

April 9
7:30 p.m., National Philharmonic of Russia with Olga Kern

Academic Calendar

April 13
Deadline, Spring add/drop by college petition
Deadline, Spring withdrawal with a "W" assigned

Note This

UF professional group taking officer nominations

The Academic & Professional Assembly (APA), an organization of professional staff at the University of Florida, is currently accepting online nominations for the 2007-08 slate of officers.

Serving on the APA board requires a monthly commitment of three to six hours, depending on the position, and is considered time worked with supervisor's approval. Open positions are president-elect, secretary/treasurer, membership chair, program chair and publicity chair. For information on duties and responsibilities of each officer, contact Ron Lester at lesterc@peds.ufl.edu.

Self-nominations or nominations of others (with their approval) may be made online at apassembly.ufl.edu/voting. The nomination deadline is April 13.

The slate will be introduced at the 3:30 p.m. April 26 APA meeting in Room 282 of the Reitz Student Union. Voting will take place online after the meeting and is open to all APA members.

For more information about the APA, visit the Web at www.apassembly.ufl.edu.

Annual Read-A-Thon features books, fun

The fifth annual George A. Smathers Libraries Read-A-Thon will take place on the Plaza of the Americas April 9-12. University of Florida students, faculty, staff and community members will read 10-minute segments from their favorite works of literature from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free Five Star pizza and pastry samples from Starbucks at Library West will be provided.

Other events on the plaza include an edible book contest on April 12. Submitted "edible" books will be judged in five categories, and winners will receive prizes sponsored by Burrito Brothers, Firehouse Subs and TIS College Bookstore. An open air photo exhibit of messages from the 34th Street Wall dating back to 1989 also will be available for viewing from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 10-12.

The events are free and open to the public. For more information and to download reading schedules, visit the Web at www.uflib.ufl.edu/readathon.

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