

## UF researchers go high-tech to fight invasive plants

Jim Cuda is a matchmaker, but he doesn't help lonely hearts find love. He finds organisms to fight invasive plants running amok in Florida.

An associate professor of entomology, Cuda is one of several scientists with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences who researches insects and pathogens that keep the pest plants in check on their home turf.

After conducting overseas field studies and extensive laboratory research to prove these organisms are host-specific, the natural enemies are released with government approval, to provide long-term control of the target plant species.

The practice is called classical biological weed control. Though it's been around for decades, genetic analysis has added a new dimension.

"Without the technology to do genetic matching, you're just guessing, basically," Cuda says.

Here's why—natural enemies may be highly adapted to a plant, even adapted to minor genetic variations found only in a particular area. Over time, enemies develop their own genetic variations to "match" the host plant, he said.

So a moth that devastates Brazilian peppertree in one place may have much less effect 500 miles away, because the genetic variations don't match as well.

Genetic analysis lets researchers examine a pest plant found in Florida and work backward to pinpoint where it originated.

Then researchers travel to the plant's native range and collect natural enemies. At the laboratory, they examine the performance of the natural enemies on plants with the genetic variations found in Florida, to determine which enemies perform best.

It's not easy, and complications abound, Cuda said. For example, some invasive plants were introduced to Florida multiple times, meaning there are multiple genetic variations to identify.

Politics can make it difficult for researchers to visit some foreign countries, or export natural enemies, but the effort is still worthwhile.



Jim Cuda, associate professor of entomology, holds weevils that may be useful in controlling Brazilian peppertree, one of Florida's most troublesome invasive plants.

Thomas Wright

Recent success stories from UF include the identification of several beetles and a virus that can control tropical soda apple, which takes over pastureland.

IFAS researchers are investigating classical biological control to manage insect pests, too. One important project is aimed at the Asian citrus psyllid, the insect that spreads bacteria responsible for citrus greening, the most serious disease facing Florida's citrus industry.

By Tom Nordlie

## Seen & Heard

### Management professors chosen as editors

Jason Colquitt and Jeffery LePine, both full professors in the Warrington College of Business Administration's department of Management, were selected as the associate editors of two of the leading journals in management research.

Colquitt was selected as an associate editor of Academy of Management Journal. LePine accepted the position of associate editor for Academy of Management Review.



Christopher Jermaine



Ivan Furic

The Sloan Research Fellowships have been awarded since 1955, initially in only three scientific fields: physics, chemistry and mathematics. Since 1955, 35 Sloan Research Fellows have gone on to win the Nobel Prize in their fields.

### Professor wins Clyde Ferguson Award

University of Florida Law Professor Berta E. Hernández-Truyol has been awarded the 16th annual Clyde Ferguson Award from the Minority Law Section of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS). The honor is named for one of the

first African-American tenured professors at Harvard Law School.

Hernández-Truyol is one of the founders of the Latino Critical (LatCrit) Theory movement and is widely published. She also is co-author of a forthcoming book on trade and human rights, which will be published later this year.

She is the second UF law professor to win the award in recent years. Kenneth Nunn was honored with the distinction in 2001.

### Business undergraduates earn first place

Four Warrington College of Business Administration students earned first place at the 18th Annual Undergraduate Marketing Case Challenge. Sarah Anassori, Matthew Kuhl, Sashi Mylavarapu and Catherine Nguyen devised ways to strengthen Alltel's future response to natural disasters. Alltel's chief marketing officer commented that he was particularly impressed with the integrity of the team's solution and the poise they exhibited.



**March 29**  
UFPA presents "Jigu! Thunder Drums of China." Phillips Center, 7:30 p.m. Reserved seating \$20 - \$35. Visit the Phillips Center Box Office or call 352-392-ARTS (2787) for tickets.

Kristen Bartlett Grace

## Note This

### March is National Nutrition Month

GatorWell and Healthy Gators 2010 are teaming up this month to promote National Nutrition Month. This year's theme, "Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact," focuses on the importance of portion sizes, as well as incorporating fruits and vegetables into a balanced diet.

For more information, visit [www.healthygators.hhp.ufl.edu/nutritionmonth.shtml](http://www.healthygators.hhp.ufl.edu/nutritionmonth.shtml).

### Herpetology Conference is approaching

The Florida Museum of Natural History will host the 31st annual Herpetology Conference on March 29-30.

For more information about the conference, visit [www.flmnh.ufl.edu/herpetology/herpsconference/afhc.htm](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/herpetology/herpsconference/afhc.htm) or e-mail [apitt@ufl.edu](mailto:apitt@ufl.edu).

### Journal submissions deadline is May 1

The University of Florida Journal of Undergraduate Research is seeking submissions for its 2008-2009 publication year. The deadline is May 1. Submission guidelines and writing tips can be found at [www.clas.ufl.edu/jur/submissions.html](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/jur/submissions.html).

For additional information, contact the editor, Creed Greer, at [cgreer@ufl.edu](mailto:cgreer@ufl.edu).

### Sales benefit shelter

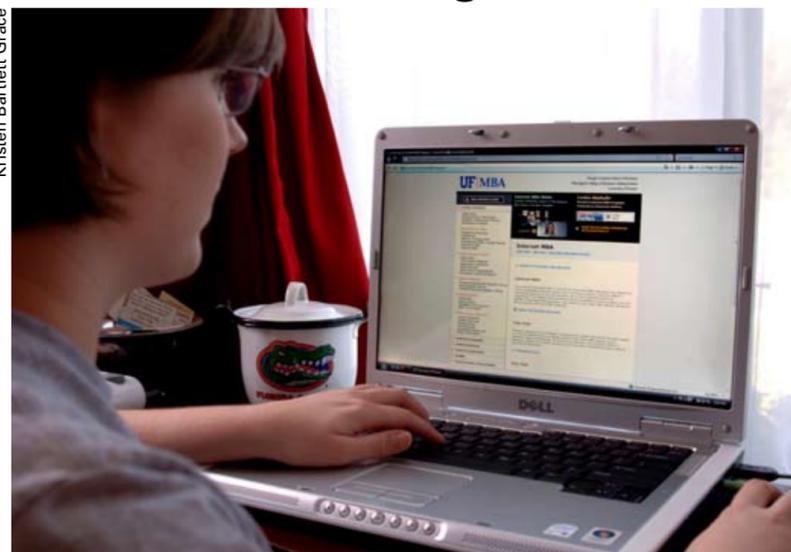


Allison Montague, aWEARness

T-shirts, with sales benefitting the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's shelter program, may be purchased at [www.aWEARness-clothing.com](http://www.aWEARness-clothing.com). An article in the Jan. 29 edition of Inside UF referenced the clothing sales.

## Top Stories

# Online MBA Program is ranked No. 1



A UF student reviews the online MBA program from the comfort of home.

The Economist magazine has ranked the University of Florida's MBA Program at the Hough Graduate School of Business No. 1 in the world.

The survey was the first to review distance-learning MBA programs, and was conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). EIU's criteria included program content, quality of students and distance-learning elements, which incorporate standards like a sense of connection to the school.

"We're proud of the level of camaraderie and collegiality in these programs. Students work together online, are interacting constantly in teams, and are fully invested in working with their colleagues through this program," said Alexander Sevilla, assistant dean and director of UF's Hough Graduate School of Business.

"Through this program, lectures are documented on a DVD, broadcast as podcasts and saved to students' iTouch (which they receive as part of the program). Students get a MBA library of content that

3-to-1, and has a graduation rate of 99 percent. This year's one- and two-year online MBA programs are both filled to maximum capacity, 65 and 59 students respectively, and a number of qualified applicants were turned away.

Sevilla attributes the program's success to the unique classroom policy, which requires students to spend one weekend a semester at campus with their peers and professors. Students spend one day wrapping up the previous semester's classes, and the second day meeting new professors and classmates.

The program's combination of technology, convenience and camaraderie affords students the opportunity to work and interact with other business professionals regardless of corporate or geographic boundaries. In doing so, the students and the university gain a vast network of alumni contacts throughout the world.

"We have nine different MBA programs, but each yields the same result... every program requires the same amount of rigor to earn a University of Florida degree," Sevilla said.

By Kimberly Cruts

has value throughout their MBA program and career," Sevilla said.

The program was created in 1999, with an initial graduating class of 24 students. Today, the Internet MBA draws the same ratio of applicants as the traditional MBA,

## Swing dancers stomp at The Swamp

More than 170 dancers from Gainesville and across the country spun into town for "Stompin' at The Swamp," Feb. 29- March 2. The weekend's workshops, lessons and dances had the theme of "Leaping through Time."

The 21 hours of dances featured a wide variety of music.

"A lot of dancers aren't used to listening to '20s music and 'future' music, or dancing to it for that matter, so I think the theme forced a lot of people to dance outside their comfort zone and learn new

things," said Florida Swing Club president Mika Turim-Nygren.

The weekend also featured more than nine hours of lessons and workshops taught by guest dancers Michael Gamble and Jaya Dorf of Asheville, N.C.

Student Government provided half of the funding for the event, while registration fees and fundraising covered the rest.

"The most gratifying part for me was looking around and seeing that everyone was having a good time," said Turim-Nygren.

By Kimberly Cruts

## Happenings

Listings in this section are a sampling of events at the University of Florida, compiled from entries listed in the full calendar that appears on the Web at [calendar.ufl.edu](http://calendar.ufl.edu). To submit an event online, visit <http://calendar.ufl.edu/submit/>.

**March 18**  
UFPA presents The Four Tops. Phillips Center, 7:30 p.m. Reserved seating \$30 - \$50. Visit the Phillips Center Box Office or call 352-392-ARTS (2787) for tickets.

**March 19**  
UF Choral Department presents UF Men's Glee Club & Women's Chorale Spring Concert. University Auditorium, 7:30 p.m. Admission free and open to the public. Call 352-392-0207 for more information.

**March 20**  
Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies presents "The Mirror" film screening. Florida

Gym, 6:15 p.m. Free and open to the public. Call 352-392-2101 ext. 205 for information.

**March 21**  
The Harn Museum of Art presents Visiting Artist Lecture: Steve Kurtz and Steve Barnes. Harn Museum of Art, 5 p.m. Free and open to the public. Call 352-392-9826 for more information.

**March 22**  
UF Choral Department presents "Verdi Requiem: University Choirs Concert." Phillips Center, 7:30 p.m. Call 352-392-0207 for more information.

## Voices

### Emerging Pathogens breaks ground



J. Glenn Morris

The University of Florida recently officially broke ground on the Pathogens Research Facility, a state-of-the-art laboratory that will serve as home to UF's Emerging Pathogens Institute.

This new building is the physical manifestation of an initiative President Bernie Machen began pursuing about two years ago, but which has roots in the university that go much deeper.

UF has a long history of research in many disciplines that we now collectively call emerging pathogens.

For example, IFAS' Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory in Vero Beach is one of the world's leading mosquito research centers. Dr. Fred Southwick, chief of infectious diseases in the College of Medicine, is an international expert on anthrax. And Dr. Cynda Crawford and her colleagues in the College of Veterinary Medicine are often the first to spot new diseases in animals.

With its warm climate, huge number of visitors and intense trade with South America, Florida is probably more susceptible to new diseases than any other state in the country.

Rather than just waiting for these new threats to arrive, the UF Emerging Pathogens Institute is working to anticipate their arrival, take preventative measures and develop effective treatments.

J. Glenn Morris

Director, Emerging Pathogens Institute

Kristen Bartlett Grace