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It’s Easy Being Green

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CLAS Room in the Bog

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A New Major in Sustainability Studies

Sustainability is more than a buzz word… it’s a career move.
About CLAS

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Florida is the largest college on campus with more than 600 faculty members responsible for teaching the majority of the university’s core curriculum to at least 35,000 students each year. CLAS has more than 12,000 undergraduate students pursuing a variety of disciplines through its 36 majors and 41 minors. Additionally, nearly 2,000 graduate students are attaining advanced degrees in the college. The College brings in approximately $40 million per year in external funding.
It *Is*
Easy
Being Green

Kermit may have a problem being green, but for these UF alumni and students, it’s a pleasure and a privilege.
Think of a glacier as a river of ice. As this river slowly moves, large and complicated caves form within—and these ice caves are where Jason Gulley, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geology, does his work. “Getting into glacier caves was hard because we didn’t know what was dangerous,” Gulley said. “We weren’t trying to push the limits too far at first. We had to gradually build up experience.” Gulley’s research has included the mapping of glacier caves around the globe: from Svalbard, Norway, to the Chugach Mountains of Alaska, to the Mount Everest region of Nepal.

When Gulley was an undergraduate, he did quite a bit of cave diving in Florida, where he became friends with several members of the University of Florida’s Department of Geological Sciences. “As a result of those early experiences mapping caves,” Gulley said, “I realized I wanted a Ph.D. in geology.” He came to UF and is now working with Professor John Martin, a specialist in “karst” aquifers—underground water channels surrounded by rock.

Gulley was first fascinated with caves at twelve years old, when his family took a trip to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. He crawled among the earthen tunnels, the dripping rock formations, the echoing crevasses—and he was hooked. “I fell in love with the hidden world that could exist beneath people’s backyards. Unlike a mountain, whose beauty is obvious, a truly spectacular cave may be concealed behind a lackluster entrance. The entrance to the deepest cave in the world is in a goat pasture in the Republic of Georgia, and the entrance is no bigger than the size of an end table.”

Glacier caves are particularly interesting for information they provide about the effects of global climate change. The work of scientists like Gulley is indispensable to understanding this realm of our volatile world.
Dave “Caveman” Friedman (Geology, 1990) uses myths and legends, clues and characters, and science and adventure to change the way kids learn about the environment. In 2002, Friedman founded Terra-Forma Education, an environmental education non-profit corporation in Seattle, Washington. In its first summer, Terra-Forma offered two one-week sessions of camp. It has now expanded to offer nine sessions every summer. This summer will begin its 10th season. “The kids love it and the program has continued to grow every year,” “Caveman” (as the kids call him) said.

Each week the kids are treated to different interactive stories, where they learn about nature and their connection to the environment. “They’re learning, but it’s all in the name of a quest,” Friedman said. “All of the stories follow the ‘hero’s journey’ storyline.” Friedman comes up with new stories each summer. “Kids pick apart everything,” he said, “The real challenge is staying a couple steps ahead of them as you create the story.”

“I have kids that start coming when they’re 6 and come every year until they’re 10,” Friedman said. And, because of the camp’s popularity, the middle schools created a program called Right of Passage Adventure. Each month, the kids come out for different events – kayaking, day hikes, biking, rock climbing, ropes courses, community service, etc.

“I look at my time at UF as being in a place that brought me a lot of life lessons in addition to a great education,” he said. From there he held various environmental consulting jobs. In 2000 he began working on creating the summer camp.

“I think it’s extremely important to be a mentor to these young people and create a community that supports the youth during the challenges of adolescence,” Friedman said. “And I’m trying to help the youth understand their interconnection to the earth, so they grow up wanting to protect it more.”
Maria Masque (Anthropology, 1986; MAURP Urban & Regional Planning, 1994) is the author and manager of the first fully sustainable general plan in the state of Arizona. Created at The Planning Center in Tucson, the plan was unanimously adopted by the city council in July 2010 and its implementation is intended to make Tucson the sustainable destination in Arizona.

Masque’s comprehensive plan includes policy direction for water harvesting, multi-modal access, walkability, affordability, transit-oriented development, mixed-use and heat island mitigation. Also included are the establishment of an art district, a regional trail system, contained farming, habitat integration and development of clean energy, green industry and technology.

According to Masque, it was her background in anthropology that made her aware of the interdependencies and interconnections among humans, settlements and the environment. And it’s this awareness that led her to begin an integrative public participation process. “Contrary to popular belief, culture is an essential component of sustainability,” Masque said.

Masque spent a vast amount of time traveling and learning about culture, which also prompted her interest in urban planning. She was born in Cuba, lived in Venezuela, and traveled through Peru. While in Peru, she was introduced to the archaeology work of Dr. Michael Moseley. A friend sent her a National Geographic article written by Moseley about interrelationships between environment, settlement patterns, human activities and subsistence. “I still have that magazine with me,” Masque said.

Masque was delighted to find out that Dr. Moseley taught in the UF Department of Anthropology. Originally an architecture major, Masque switched to anthropology. “Slowly my interest shifted from studying ancient cities in a space-time continuum to studying modern cities,” she said. Then, Moseley encouraged her to pursue her Master of Arts in Urban and Regional Planning. “The mentorship of wonderful UF professors positively influenced my philosophy and career path and inspired me to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to planning and urban design that integrates the environmental infrastructure as an essential component.”

Masque is currently in charge of all community and regional long-range planning projects at The Planning Center in Tucson. She also recently finished her first book, The Seven Gifts: A Path to Wholeness, Integration and Sustainable Living.
Dan Bryant, (Geology, 1988) founded a company called Geo-Cleanse, which works on environmental remediation projects. “I oversee all of the daily operations of our company,” Bryant said. From finances to proposal preparation, Bryant does it all. The company’s projects take him across the United States and Europe. Currently, Geo-Cleanse is working on a project at a former chemical manufacturing plant that disposed of its effluents in a nearby lagoon. The traditional way to clean up the project would be to dig up the dirt on the 2.5-acre site and incinerate it elsewhere. “This was very costly, and not a very ‘green’ or ‘sustainable’ solution,” Bryant explained. Geo-Cleanse devoted two years to developing an approach where hydrogen peroxide and other chemical reagents could be injected into the ground to destroy the contaminants. After extensive laboratory tests, they are just now beginning the treatment. Bryant is especially excited about what is going to be built on the Linden, New Jersey site after it’s cleaned up: a zero greenhouse gas emission power plant.

Another project took Bryant to NASA’s Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base in California, where he got to work alongside F-22 fighter jets practicing maneuvers with constant sonic booms. “At times the temperature there was over 110 degrees while we were working—it could be brutal at times, but it was a really neat place to work,” he said. “The scenery is also great.”

Bryant first became interested in geology when he visited the Florida Museum of Natural History in high school and met Bruce MacFadden, one of the first curators. Years later, MacFadden became his master’s thesis adviser, as well as his Ph.D. adviser. From those first visits to the museum, Bryant wanted to pursue a career in paleontology, but realized that a career in environmental clean up would be the most economically viable.

“I have found this to be a very satisfying career,” Bryant said. “There are a lot of opportunities and a lot of challenges, plus it is really gratifying to know that you are doing something that makes a difference,” he said.
Mimi A. Drew. (English, 1972; MS Engineering, 1975) recently was appointed by President Obama to the Gulf Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. She has worked for over 30 years in Florida on environmental issues and was the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) under former Governor Charlie Crist.

Following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Drew was deployed in June for two weeks to Robert, Louisiana Area Command station, the action center for all federal and state response agencies for the spill. “I coordinated DEP activities with the state Emergency Operations Center to make sure we were doing all we could do to monitor, track and respond to the oil spill,” Drew said. The operation is now in recovery and restoration mode. “We are still removing 10,000 pounds of tar balls on some of the beaches in west Florida, and will probably continue for a long time,” she said.

The recent oil spill shed a lot of light on human practices and how they affect the environment. “People love to live on the water but don’t always understand how their daily activities can turn that water into pea soup,” Drew said. An oil spill is a dramatic example of what can happen to destroy water quality and aquatic organisms. However, a much more prevalent example is everyday run-off into our waters, which can pollute our abundant springs and waterways. “So many of our formerly pristine waters, such as the beautiful springs in the Gainesville area, are showing signs of nutrient overload,” she said.

Drew’s love of water led her to pursue a career as an environmental science writer. “I realized I didn’t have the science background I needed to write intelligently about environmental issues,” she said. Drew was accepted into the master’s program in the UF Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences. “Attending graduate school was perhaps the most challenging, yet memorable period of my life,” she said. “My life took a very different turn at that point, and set me on the path I’ve been on my whole career.”

The combination of Drew’s strong writing and science backgrounds has allowed her to understand the details, communicate well, and make tough decisions about natural resource management. “It is our job to find the right balance between smart use of the resources and ensuring that such a use doesn’t damage that resource,” she said.
A typical college student’s summer often includes things like working at the mall, sitting by the pool, or watching television. But, that’s not the case for these CLAS students who went above and beyond to better themselves and others. What all these students have in common is a desire to learn more, be more, and to do more.
Where can you hear the Queen of England speak and then turn around and listen to a talk about the current situation in Serbia and Kosovo? Probably nowhere other than the United Nations.

IAN PROCTOR, a UF senior studying History, Political Science, and Business Administration, spent his summer in New York City interning at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations’ Political Department, dealing with the operations of the Security Council.

The work was fast-paced and each day was different. “One moment I’m researching legislation and debate concerning children involved in armed conflict, the next I’m working with the team members on the recent developments in the Balkans,” Proctor said.

There was an extraordinary amount of reading and writing involved in Proctor’s work. His department’s primary responsibility was to publish cables, which spell out the events of a meeting or debate for various departments within the UN, specialist groups or NGOs. “I got home at the end of the day thoroughly exhausted from the laps my brain had been running,” Proctor said.

While Proctor was working at the UN, he heard the Queen of England and Ban Ki-Moon speak. He was also involved in a status debate about Kosovo, in which he actually contributed to the formation of U.S. policy by explaining an analysis to one of the Foreign Service Officers, who then passed it along to the Washington desk.

Although Proctor has learned a great deal about the issues he worked with from his classes, his best preparation for the internship was through UF’s Model United Nations Team. “The exposure I had to world issues through that, and engaging in debate at competitions enabled me to be competent coming into this job,” Proctor said. “I actually feel like this job is going to aid me going back into my classes, because I believe that I am a better writer and more diligent worker now.”

Proctor encourages other students to seek the opportunities they want. “This job certainly did not wait for me,” Proctor said. “I didn’t give up and eventually it all worked out. His advice to students is to “go out there and make it happen.”
Finance major DAVID ROBERTS and history minor, spent his summer at the nerve center of the national economy: the U.S. Department of the Treasury. He interned in the Treasury’s Office of Financial Stability (OFS) in Washington, D.C. Among other policy initiatives, the office operates President Bush’s $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), which was created to strengthen the nation’s troubled financial sector in 2008. “Working at the Treasury was a fantastic summer experience,” Roberts said. “It’s amazing to think of the implications of the work being done there.”

Because OFS is granted the authority to handle huge sums of money for programs like TARP, it is subject to intense scrutiny by governing oversight bodies like the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Oversight Panel. Roberts helped to manage requests from these oversight bodies, and drafted responses to recommendations. By the end of the summer, he’d worked for the office in a variety of capacities.

Roberts plans one day to have a career in public service. He believes that his study of U.S. history lent him a unique perspective for the internship. “My knowledge of history was very important in understanding the Treasury and the role that it has in current events,” Roberts said. His daily duties required him to read and write complex government documents, and he credits his CLAS studies for preparing him with the critical analysis and writing skills he needed.

As one of the internship’s bonuses, Roberts met First Lady Michelle Obama. “I was surprised to see how tall she is in reality,” he joked. “And I was impressed with how genuine and kind she was. She’s definitely my favorite First Lady.”

UF senior and Political Science, Economics, and Food and Resource Economics major STEPHEN MORGAN spent his summer at the University of Delaware Disaster Research Center investigating the social science aspects of natural hazards and their impact on individuals, communities, and societies.

Using U.S. Census data, Morgan looked at potential flood and nuclear power plant disasters in Delaware. “This translates to measuring the vulnerability of different areas in Delaware using Census data—race, class, and gender,” Morgan explained. “These influence how an individual experiences a natural disaster, and this became very clear in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.”

After gauging vulnerability, he created maps to visually represent where the most vulnerable populations are located. He then analyzed the maps looking for patterns and relationships in dispersion of the groups— their composition and how they differ between hazards.

“This research should increase the research understanding of the location of vulnerable groups,” Morgan said, “and increase the ability of emergency managers to plan and prepare adequate evacuation and mitigation programs for vulnerable groups.”
UF mathematics senior CHAD ZHANG spent his summer being “misunderstood.” And understandably so!

For six weeks, Zhang worked as an instructor speaking Chinese to non-Chinese students at a camp where English is reserved for emergencies and safety rules only. “Speaking Chinese to students who could barely understand the language is probably the most taxing thing I’ve ever had to attempt,” Zhang said.

Living in a small wooden cabin a few miles from the small town of Cass Lake, Minnesota, Zhang was an instructor at a language immersion camp created by Concordia College. An activity teacher at the camp, Zhang taught Chinese through activities like ping-pong, badminton, martial arts, archery, soccer, and photography.

In ping-pong class, for example, Zhang created sheets of 30 vocabulary words and pictures to assist his short lecture. Using physical-response strategies, an incredible amount of repetition and lots of hand gestures, he taught students the Chinese words related to sports and ping-pong.

“Then, I’d let the kids play games on their own…but with a catch,” Zhang explained. “Whenever they performed an action, such as a toss or a serve, they were required to name it in Chinese. If they failed to do so, it would result in their opponent gaining a point.”

Although Zhang is not planning a career in education, he nonetheless found his experience as a language instructor to be incredibly gratifying. “When I realized that my work as a language instructor could influence someone’s educational goals or travel plans, I knew that I had made a real contribution!”

Speaking Chinese to students who could barely understand the language is probably the most taxing thing I’ve ever had to attempt.
As a geography major, NICOLE MOTZER is very aware of the world and its issues, so she wanted to spend her summer helping others.

She spent two weeks in Cartagena, Colombia, known as one of the most beautiful cities in the country and one of the most visited by tourists, with 20 volunteers on the Crossing Borders trip, organized by Children Beyond Our Borders (CBOB).

“Our trip was sort of a ‘guinea pig’ trip, for it was the first one that attempted to instill values rather than focus on subjects such as the environment, the body, etc.,” Motzer said. As a new mission for the trip, the volunteers worked on instilling values in the children that they could then apply to any life situation. According to Motzer, values they taught were civic engagement, self-esteem, education as a right, manners/good behavior, and freedom from poverty.

The kids they worked with face an array of obstacles: troubles at home, gang involvement, poverty, malnutrition, etc. “The kids are so passionate and thoughtful for their young age, and they still keep a positive attitude, smiling in spite of the daily obstacles they face,” Motzer said.

She said that the kids dream of becoming doctors, teachers, architects and lawyers. “I hope that we helped them realize that ‘todo es possible!’” Motzer said. “The last image I have is kids piled in a taxi, crying and waving goodbye,” she said.

For Motzer, the experience was humbling, and she found it amazing at how happy the people were, even in the poorest parts of the city. “It showed me that to be genuinely happy, one must appreciate just being alive, making the most out of each day, and loving the people around you.”

Nicole Motzer is a recipient of the W.W. Massey, Sr. Presidential Scholarship. This scholarship was established by UF alumni and volunteers Dayton Andrews, Bob Wilson, and Herbert & Catherine Yardley in honor of their mentor and business partner.
You could say that UF junior **Jacqueline Ros** has had a lifetime of preparation for working in the international arena, having lived in both Switzerland and Mexico and having served as vice president of Recurso, the UF campus organization that promotes global and local human rights awareness.

But Ros believes that what really prepared her for her recent internship at UNICEF was her CLAS studies. “To be honest,” she said, “although those things did help to give me a global humanitarian perspective, the experiences that probably best prepared me for this internship are all those research papers I’ve written!”

After studying abroad in Sevilla, Spain, the double major began an in-depth research project on early childhood development and education of Roma children for UNICEF. “I did not know much about their plight until I started working here, but it astounds me that in such a ‘modernized’ continent, so many human rights violations occur,” said Ros.

Ros plans to go to law school to study human rights issues from a legal perspective, rather than from a research and organization perspective. “I quickly realized that, although I do want to work on behalf of those whose human rights are violated, I want to do it from a different perspective,” Ros said.

Back at UF, Ros is now inspired to continue working hard by her co-workers at UNICEF. “The work they do there is amazing; the people are truly dedicated to their cause.”
In Nicaragua, Amanda Ayers helped rebuild a school that several years ago had been destroyed by a hurricane, in the town of Puerto Cabezas on the Miskito Coast. Were it not for volunteers like Ayers and the twenty-three other UF students on the trip, the school would today remain little more than a storm-ravaged ruin. Ayers and her peers spent ten days working on the structure before proceeding to other towns for more work across the country.

Ayers was in Nicaragua with the UF organization Recurso, a group dedicated to fighting poverty and promoting awareness of international development. In addition to constructing a school, Ayers and the group also ran a dental hygiene campaign in clinics and classrooms throughout the countryside.

They traveled light, staying in churches and shelters, often without warm water or electricity—but Ayers recognized that these slightly rugged living conditions were still more comfortable than those endured by most Nicaraguans.

She says the experience was a humbling and inspiring one. “I truly believe that we should all be able to help one another. It was exciting and empowering to be with a group of students who want to help bring change to the world.”
Senior RIKKI SEGUNI taught summer travelers in New Mexico about the environment. The astronomy and physics double major worked as a contact ranger for the Santa Fe National Forest in a program called “Respect the Rio” in the Jemez Ranger District. During the week, Seguin would do research and preparation, and on the weekends, she would carry out her ranger duties.

“On weekdays, I research the campground talks, plan new topics to discuss at booths … or clean a 150-gallon fish tank of native-New Mexico fish,” Seguin said. On weekends, she would begin her days at 8 a.m., pack up her forest truck full of supplies for the day, give an hour-long presentation to families at the campground on various topics such as predators, animal tracks, or local plants. After that, she would set up booths in high-traffic areas in the forest to teach people better ways to camp by distributing materials on river-friendly camping and fire safety tips.

“The hands-on tasks were more enjoyable, such as willow transplanting to increase shade on river banks, fence building to decrease stream bank damage, and studying genes of various fish,” Seguin said.

Seguin’s job was to educate the public and attempt to restore our waterways through public contact and various hands-on tasks. “All of the rivers and streams in the Jemez Ranger District are below standards in many categories, including temperature and turbidity.”

“Living in the base of a beautiful, red-rock canyon continuously took my breath away, even after living there for three months,” she said. Seguin had never been out West before, so she used all of her free time to explore New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado for hiking trips. “I was just blown away by all of the West’s majesty,” Seguin said.
At an age when most girls are concerned with fashion, make-up, and boys, Lisa D’Oyley had loftier (literally!) interests. At 13, she began her quest toward her FAA pilot’s license.

D’Oyley, now a fourth-year psychology and communicative disorders double-major, logged two flight hours with an instructor at the tender age of 13. “Really, I have no idea what my parents were thinking letting me try to fly a plane at 13 years old,” D’Oyley said. “My ‘i’s are dotted with hearts in my flight logbook.”

D’Oyley stopped flying for a while after that first ride, but after seeing that UF had a Gator Aviators Club, her desire to fly was reignited. “They were offering ground school (preparation for the written exam) during the spring semester, so I signed up for that.” She continued to work toward her license over the summer, passed the written part of the exam with “flying” colors, and then took to the skies.

“At first, I found I had a bit of a drawback… I couldn’t reach the pedals!” said D’Oyley, who stands at just 5-feet-4-inches. But she found the ideal solution. She now brings a child’s booster-seat with her when she flies. “It takes a lot of practice to get used to flying and concentrating on five things at once,” she said. “On my first flight, I was bumping around the whole time…it was like being on a roller coaster. But, the second time up it was much smoother.”

D’Oyley’s interest in flying comes from her father. He flies a Cessna, and she credits her many rides in the tiny plane to her fearlessness when it comes to flying. “I’ve been around airplanes and airports all my life because my dad is a pilot and flies for a living,” she said. “I don’t know whether I wanted to fly to be like my dad or what, but I’ve wanted to get my pilot’s license ever since I can remember.”

What’s next on the horizon for D’Oyley? After she finishes her flight hours, then it’s a “check ride” with an FAA examiner and on to her oral exam. D’Oyley hopes to eventually use her flight license in conjunction with a degree in speech pathology to fly professionals around the world.

Lisa D’Oyley is a recipient of the Charles Vincent and Heidi Cole McLaughlin Scholarship.
Within the bogs of the Appalachian Mountains are answers to questions about what our climate was like thousands of years ago, and the effect of human activities.

One UF alumna embraces her inner-kid, getting down in the dirt to find answers, while helping those around her.
Learning how to use a telemetry tracking device
I hope teachers will be able to use these lesson plans to prepare students for yearly mandatory testing as well as to teach them about interconnectedness.

graduate from UF in 2002 with a Ph.D. in Geography. Dr. Tina Delahunty says, “I just like getting dirty in the bog and being amazed at the little pollen fossils I find at each sampled depth of a sediment core. “It’s so cool assembling the pollen data to create a timeline of what plants lived there when, and what that tells us about how the landscape/climate has changed through time.”

Delahunty is a biogeographer who uses a method of palaeoecology to study historical landscapes. More specifically, she does pollen analysis, also known as palynology. She uses her research as an opportunity to get underprivileged fourth graders excited about science.

Her interdisciplinary education project aims to put together lesson plans for teachers to use to show children how science, technology, engineering and math are related. The lessons include field trips to her research bogs, where students get to play in the dirt while learning. “It did at one point look like students were more interested in getting muddy than learning anything, but post field trip assessment proved otherwise,” she said.

The students also understood the difference between climate and weather, and could identify many different environments around the world. A free-writing exercise after the field trip revealed that 70% of the students could recall how to take a tree core and what sort of data could be gleaned from the retrieved sample. About the same could relate what kind of data could be obtained from a sediment core.

She conducts her research and community educational outreach in The Nature Conservancy’s Orchard Bog site in Shady Valley, Tennessee. Delahunty discovered this site on one of her breaks from Ph.D. work. Bogs are one of the best places to get good sediment cores for pollen analysis. The bowl-like geology captures annual pollen dropped over thousands of years. It also provides an anaerobic environment where coreable sediment is plentiful.

Delahunty now works at Texas Tech University where she first gained an interest in geography education and working with kids. “The kids were so bright and their enthusiasm was addictive, compared to the often-complacent college student,” she said. By teaching kids from a young age, Delahunty thought that she could make a better contribution to society than by just teaching at the university level.
She has gained great satisfaction from merging her community service with her research, and it has paid off in terms of funding opportunities. She received funding or in-kind donations from the National Science Foundation, Johnson County Bank, Eastman Chemical, and J.L. Darling Corporation and Land Partners to facilitate geoscience education among fourth graders. “This age group is wide open to discovery, will freely admit when they don’t understand something and are minimally distracted by their peers,” she said.

Her multi-year, multi-faceted project aims to integrate science, technology, engineering and math lesson plans. Delahunty says, “I hope teachers will be able to use these lesson plans to prepare students for yearly mandatory testing as well as to teach them about interconnectedness.” In one such lesson, Delahunty takes a tree core and discusses several aspects of it, such as the quality of the rings as well as math-related items, like circumference, diameter, and radius. A more extensive project will be carried out next year involving additional classroom activities in addition to a field trip.

While at UF, she worked in the Land Use and Environmental Change Institute with Peter Waylen, Mike Binford, and Ary Lamme. Dr. Peter Waylen, who was a member of her doctoral supervisory committee and is a professor and chair at UF, said that Delahunty always displayed an eagerness to learn and a passion for her teaching.

“Educating children is an investment for the future but also one for the short run,” Waylen said. “Children tend to go home and ‘educate’ their parents. As a hydrologist, I remember being chastised by my 7-year-old daughter for running the tap water while I cleaned my teeth. In order to have political clout to achieve change, we must have an educated populace throughout all levels of society,” added Waylen.

And, in a poor area like Appalachia, where education is often lacking, it makes Delahunty’s work that much more important.
Cleaning Up the Gulf

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, BP has provided $10 million to the Florida Institute of Oceanography to fund research on the impact of the vast spill. FIO selected 27 research projects from 233 proposals. Two CLAS professors and one alumnus will be funded by this research grant.
In a broad sense, **Dr. Gustav Paulay**, an adjunct professor in biology and Curator in the Museum of Natural History, hopes his research on integrative biodiversity assessment of coral-sponge communities off the western coast of Florida will shed light on the fact that everything in an ecosystem, like the ocean, is interdependent. If you want to study one organism, you must study all of them.

“The project is basically setting up ways to keep track of the ecosystem as a whole, instead of just focusing on one species that we care about,” Paulay said. “It’s not necessarily an immediate response to the Gulf, but more of a long-term thing.”

Paulay is working in conjunction with experts from Florida State University, the Smithsonian Marine Station, and Nova Southeastern University to set up a monitoring system for the corals and sponges in the area. “These are all people I knew and had worked with,” he said. “I wanted a team to cover biodiversity, so I needed a lot of different areas of expertise.”

There is an extensive coral population on the Gulf shelf. Sponges are also abundant there. Sponges are sensitive creatures as they constantly filter water in and out of their bodies, so they react to even the smallest of pollutants. Often living for hundreds of years, these sponges provide a safe haven for many marine creatures.

Seeing the direct impact of humans on our environment, Paulay stresses the importance of slowing global climate change, as well as reducing effluents into water sources, which can cause adverse changes in the ecosystem. We need to think of ecosystems as full-functioning systems.
Dr. Andrew Zimmerman, assistant professor in the department of geological sciences, and Dr. Brian Silliman, assistant professor in the department of biology, received a grant to study biodegradation of the Deepwater Horizon oil in the marshes of the Gulf Coast as well as to test new remediation strategies for getting rid of the oil. “This is an opportunity to have a clear effect on public policy and environmental policy in real-time,” Zimmerman said. “People are very interested in our results to an extent that scientists rarely get to experience.”

The project is funded for two years, and the scientists hope to publish the first results within 3 to 4 months. The project will also survey the distribution of Deepwater Horizon oil in the Barataria Bay, LA area, where a lot of the oil washed up. We are looking to see how fast the oil is weathering away and which chemicals are persisting,” Zimmerman said. They will also observe plant and animal health in relationship to how much oil was received in different areas.

In addition to this survey, the researchers will test the application of biochar and magnesium peroxide as a means of passive remediation for the oil spill. “If proved effective and having no negative environmental effects, either of these might be applied to large sections of the marsh in this or the next spill,” he said. “These should reduce the amount of damage caused by harsh chemical cleaners or physical removal of soils, and lead to faster marsh ecosystem recovery.”
Dr. Robert Hueter (Ph.D. Zoology, 1988), director of the Center for Shark Research at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida, is working on a project looking at effects of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill on epipelagic and large coastal sharks and other fishes of the Gulf of Mexico.

The ecological effects of the oil spill in the open ocean and deep sea will take a very long time to determine. Hueter and his team have been involved in this assessment since the spill began. The project is examining open ocean life, such as sharks, tunas, billfishes, and other large fishes in the Gulf.

“Our research is looking for signs of contaminants in the blood and tissues of these creatures, to gauge the acute and chronic health effects,” Hueter said. “We and our collaborators are looking at levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in these fishes as well as genetic and immune system effects.”

Hueter received grants from the Florida Institute of Oceanography’s (FIO) fund provided by BP and the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation.

“\textit{It may seem like we ‘dodged a bullet’ with the Gulf oil spill, but in reality we ‘took a bullet’ and are now assessing how bad the wounds are.}”
A New Major in Sustainability Studies!

Sustainability has quickly grown from a buzz word to an economic necessity for businesses, governments, and non-profits. Starting this fall, the college will join a small handful of top-tier research institutions that offer a major in sustainability studies.

The interdisciplinary program will investigate the means to maintain environmental health, create economic welfare, and pursue social justice in a changing world. Students will gain understanding of the ways in which these three goals are interdependent and explore how they best can be pursued over the long term on local, national, and global scales.

In addition to drawing from humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences in the College, the major will also involve sustainability classes from colleges across campus, including Engineering, Agricultural and Life Sciences, and Design, Construction, and Planning.

Political Science professor Les Thiele, who coordinated the development of the major and now serves as its Director, believes that the university provides a unique opportunity due to its diverse options. “The University of Florida presents a one-of-a-kind opportunity for sustainability studies in that it can build from the large breadth of environmental curricula available, from food and agriculture to wildlife ecology to marine sciences.”

In addition to interdisciplinary coursework, students will also be required to take part in internships or service learning projects. Many of these projects will be ongoing, so students can be part of a legacy, creating and maintaining institutions or organizations that are themselves sustained year after year.

“The new major is educating the future citizens of the world. Most undergraduates today realize that their lives will be very different from those their parents led. The world is changing very quickly, and students must gain the knowledge and skills that will allow them to adapt to this dynamic world,” said Thiele. “The Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability Studies educates today’s students to be the future leaders and stewards of a planet that is quickly changing and desperately in need of being sustained.”
Upper Left, Clockwise: Alice Stankovitch, Graham Wigle, Juan Rivera, Patrick Albano, Jeremy Nelson, Grant McLeod are all students in the capstone class “Sustainability in Action.”
The St. Johns County Courthouse has been renamed the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center after Judge Watson who served as a circuit judge for almost 20 years and who serves as a Senior Circuit Judge since retirement in 1996.

Sammie R. Young (Biology, 1951) was named one of “40 Environmentalists in 40 Years” by the Montgomery County, Maryland County Council in honor of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day and in recognition of his significant contributions to environmentalism in Montgomery County.

Robert L. Parks (Political Science, 1960), now a veteran trial attorney, has been designated as a member of the 2010 Lawdragon Top 3000, the most elite list of the nation’s top attorneys.

Henry Fonte (English, 1973; M.A. Theatre, 1976) has been named Chair, Department of Theatre Arts and Producing Artistic Director of the Jerry Herman Ring Theatre at the University of Miami, Florida.

David Haines (Journalism/Political Science/Economics, 1971) has led Pitney Bowes Legal Solutions team in electronic discovery for corporate and law firm clients in complex litigation. Haines has also started three companies in search technology and identity management/privacy.

Ed Hickey (M.S. Geology, 1976) won first place in the 68th-Annual GOODE Water Ski National Championships M5 national slalom. He also won the IWWF Waterski World Championship Gold Medal in the Men’s 55 & over slalom. Hickey is the winner of the 2007 CLAS Outstanding Alumni Award and is president and co-founder of HJ Foundation, a Miami-based deep foundation construction company.

Richard Wilson (Chemistry, 1975) recently co-founded a nonprofit charity group called Melbourne Medical Mission. This group of Melbourne, FL-based physicians and allied medical personnel travel to Nicaragua annually to provide medical care to the poor in rural areas. During their recent trip, they treated over 1,000 patients.

Geraldine Robbins (Chemistry, 1983) was one of 32 teachers selected to be an Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator in 2010. The prestigious fellowship program offers elementary and secondary science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teachers with a demonstrated excellence in teaching an opportunity to serve in the national education or public policy arenas. Selected teachers spend a school year in the Washington, DC metro area, serving in a Congressional Office or a Federal agency.

Fellows provide practical insights and real world perspective to policy makers and program managers developing or managing education programs. “We have a STEM crisis in our country,” Robbins said. “Not only are students under-competing, few are interested in even competing at all.” The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Energy and is coordinated by Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education. Robbins will be serving at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. “I hope to inspire and engage students and educators in the area of STEM education,” she said.

To receive this prestigious recognition, Robbins had to complete an application that included multiple essays and reference letters. Once she was selected as a semi-finalist, she was invited to participate in a weekend of formal interviews with representatives from the Department of Energy and informal interviews with then-current Einstein Fellows.

“I have fond memories of UF. My favorite memory is Chemistry in Leigh Hall — what a beautiful building,” she said. “Such wonderful challenges and opportunities!” After UF, Robbins spent time as a bench chemist, then environmental field chemist. She started her own environmental consulting company, and later two other firms dealing with engineering and construction. She sold both companies in 1998 and began teaching at Episcopal High School in Jacksonville, FL, in 2000.

She later earned her M.S. in Mathematics Education from the University of Rochester, New York, and returned to teaching in 2005. “I like guiding students to see something in themselves that they may not have seen before. I like watching them solve problems,” Robbins said. “Most of all, I love their idealism, their fresh and unique perspectives and their wonderful, hopeful sense of the world.”

At Episcopal, Robbins served as Chair of the Episcopal High School Accreditation Standards Committee for SAIS, SACS, FCIS, during which time she oversaw an extensive compliance audit and evaluation that took two years to complete. The resulting report was so successful that Episcopal was accredited for ten years instead of the normal five-year term and the report is now being used by SAIS as a model for other independent schools.

“This fellowship brings me to the national arena,” she said. “I am now in a position to, perhaps, be a part of the solution to the STEM education crisis in our nation.”
1980s


Lawrence J. Bellack (Political Science, 1986) has been appointed Vice President of Multifamily Sales by The Rainmaker Group, leader in automated revenue management software and services.

Mark Kaplan (Political Science, 1988) has been appointed by the Governor to Florida’s State Board of Education.

Mark W. Klingensmith (Political Science, 1982; J.D., 1985) was elected Mayor at the Sewall’s Point Town Commission’s organizational meeting.

Russell A. Sabella (Psychology, 1987; Ed.S School Counseling, 1990; Ph.D. Counselor Education, 1995) is the recipient of the 2010 Florida Gulf Coast Senior Faculty Individual Service Award.

Karl L. Smart (Ph.D. English, 1989) has been serving this past year as Interim Associate Dean in the College of Business Administration at Central Michigan University. Prior to his appointment, he had been a full professor and served as department chair in the Department of Business Information Systems.

John V. Tucker (Philosophy, 1988; J.D., 1991) was a featured panelist at the 2010 Annual Disability Law Conference of the National Association of Disability Representatives in Chicago.

1990s

Brian D. Burgoon (Political Science, 1994) has been elected to the Board of Directors of the University of Florida Alumni Association. In addition, Burgoon has been re-elected to the Florida Bar Board of Governors.

John A. Ferko (Astronomy, 1990) was recently promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the US Air Force. Ferko is a Missile Defense Officer and Planner assigned to the Missile Defense Future Operations Branch of Headquarters, US Northern Command at Peterson AFB, CO.

Gavin Handwerker (Political Science, 1991; M.A. Political Science, 1993) was recently appointed a member of the Westfield Board of Health and was also appointed by the Mayor of Westfield to act as the town’s Public Defender.

Carolyn Kluwe Holland (Zoology, 1992; M.Ed Secondary Science Education, 1994) has completed a fellowship in Pediatric Emergency Medicine at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and is now serving as Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine and Clinical Pediatrics at University of Cincinnati.

Mian Wajahat Hussain (Ph.D. Botany, 1992) is currently working as Professor and Chair, Biological Sciences Department, Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) Lahore, Pakistan.

David Kochman (English, 1993; M.A. Political Science, 1995) has been named Public Relations Director at Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina.

Robert McCormes-Ballou (Political Science, 1992) recently received certification as a Certified Professional in Supply Management (CPSM) by the Institute for Supply Management, and was also recognized by Minority Business News as one of the “Best in the Decade” for commitment to supplier diversity.

Tad A. Yates (Criminal Justice, 1991; J.D. 1994) was elected President-Elect of the Board of Trustees of the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association and was appointed to the Florida Bar’s Criminal Procedure Rules Committee by Florida Bar President (and fellow Gator), Mayanne Downs.

2000s

Aisha S. Khan (Microbiology & Cell Science, 2006) is completing her third year of medical school at Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

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Research Abroad Awards

Five doctoral students in the Center for African Studies have received Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grants this year, more than any previous student class from the center. This program provides grants to colleges and universities to fund individual doctoral students who conduct research in other countries from six to twelve months in modern foreign languages and area studies. “In the eight years I have been here, we have never had more than two in one year,” said Leonardo Villalon, Director, Center for African Studies.

The winners are…

Jessica Morey, Department of History, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Amy Schwartzott, School of Art and Art History, College of Fine Arts
Meredith Marten, Department of Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Cara Jones, Department of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Steve Lichty, Department of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

2010 Outstanding Young Alumni Awards

The University of Florida Alumni Association established the Outstanding Young Alumni Award to recognize alumni who have distinguished themselves in their profession and community early in their career. We are proud to announce that three of the 29 awardees were from CLAS.

Congratulations to…

Stephanie Toothaker (Political Science, 1991) Attorney & Partner at Ruden McClosky
Will Setliff (Religion, 1993) Vice President, Marketing, Target
Mohamed Al-Khairy (M.A. Linguistics, 2000; Ph.D. 2005) Dean of Development and Supervisor of Computer and Information Technology Center of Taif University in Taif, Saudi Arabia
Jay Atkinson’s *Paradise Road*: Jack Kerouac’s Lost Highway and My Search for America

Back in the 80s at the University of Florida, strolling between a Hare Krishna in an orange robe and a street preacher wearing a business suit, I crossed the green of the plaza, reading from the paperback edition of *On the Road*—the one with a clichéd but somehow meaningful setting sun on the cover. Catching sight of a friend, I waved the open book, “Have you heard the word of Kerouac today?”

In *Paradise Road: Jack Kerouac’s Lost Highway and My Search for America,* Jay Atkinson retraces Kerouac’s iconic journey through the America of the late 1940s. Fifty years later, Atkinson (M.A., English/Creative Writing, 1982) discovers lost towns where the American dream is still alive, cheerfully pursued, and sometimes even captured. This America isn’t so different from the one of half a century ago, and if this strikes you as all too sentimental...well, when a blushing sweet farm girl on the prairie hands you a bowl of homemade peach ice cream...I expect you’ll say thanks.

What Atkinson creates, astonishingly, is a whole new *On the Road.* Having written for *The New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*—and with the sweeping novel, *City in Amber* and the bestselling nonfiction, *Legends of Winter Hill* on his shelf—Atkinson leaves Methuen, Massachusetts, a few miles from Kerouac’s hometown, and hitchhikes into New York City.

On why he gambled his personal safety on this trip, Atkinson writes, “It occurs to me that I’ve been trying, over these action-packed years, to preserve my life, through rest and reading, proper nutrition, abstinence, persistence, and Zenlike stillness, to extend the foreground. Now, I should be trying to throw it away; at age fifty, surviving mostly intact, I have to crank up the intensity of what I’m doing... Otherwise, there’s no point in making it this far with so much energy waiting to be burned up in pursuit of what’s left. That’s Kerouac’s message, as I read it and hear it.”

Atkinson’s book is about juxtaposition, then, illumination—the light from the suture of two personalities, each shining through his writing. *Paradise Road* crackles with a prose and rhythm like sparks from a California campfire. “Hitchhiking and staying in fleabag motels and driving all night are exciting when you’re young. The world is rife with possibilities, and you’re seeing it for the first time. But doing all this at my age is about endurance. It’s about measuring yourself and seeing if your early idealism, your ‘beginner’s mind,’ as Kerouac called it, has held up over time.”

Both writers are informed by the same love of literature and fondness for what Arthur Miller called “the common man”—but Atkinson, the man in the present, does not, in any way, except religion, resemble Kerouac, the man in the past. And this contrast makes *Paradise Road* a page-turning good yarn.

Both writers are products of the Catholic tradition where alcoholism is the only acceptable form of suicide. And at the age of forty-seven, Jack Kerouac chose it. Out of the sin of despair, the celebrator of the holy aesthetic embraced the anaesthetic, crushed by his own fame and writer’s block, a fate avoided by Atkinson, who refers to Christ as “one tough hombre.”

In San Francisco, while Kerouac indulged a bizarre sex life, drank himself into alternate personalities, and popped amphetamines, Atkinson buys whole-wheat pitas, organic fig bars, crisp green apples, and pedals a bicycle up San Francisco’s impossibly steep hills. The first lifestyle may sound more dramatic, but as Kerouac often pointed out, it was the interior, examined life that mattered, and Atkinson’s observations of California, Mexico, and New York are as sweetly melancholic and life affirming as anything in *On the Road.*

Because for all its wild travels, *Paradise Road* is a tale of two fathers—one successful, one failed. Kerouac’s indulgence in alcohol and tobacco, in such wild quantities, meant he neglected his daughter Jan, who died at forty-four, also an alcoholic. While on his road, Atkinson remains chaste, eats protein bars, and counts his beers, insuring that he return home in time for his son Liam’s birthday, whose hockey team he coaches, and whose birthday he wouldn’t miss for all the literary fame in the world.

Atkinson graduated from UF before I arrived, but twenty-four years ago, I was sitting in Harry Crews’s apartment in the student ghetto, reading *On the Road.* When I raved about the book, Harry chuckled and said, “Yeah, it caused quite a stir in its day.” The gruff, tough Crews wasn’t given to “chuckling.” But considering *On the Road,* he did—chuckle, that is, in a
melancholy way. On the Road has that effect: it hits you differently depending on your age. For me, at twenty-two, the book shocked my hands with its electricity — this was a manual on how to live, and, most of all, be cool.

But from Crews’s perspective, at fifty-one then, celebrated and cast aside like Kerouac, it wasn’t the book’s day he was talking about — the one that caused a stir — but his own, youth, that is, and ours too, that frontier of adulthood, where the future is all magic and possibility. This is Kerouac’s gift to his reader, which Atkinson renews and refreshes and rejuvenates in Paradise Road.

Atkinson’s book ends looking forward, into health and longevity, into coping and even triumphing over the hard knocks of middle age, whereas On the Road looks backward, informed by gratitude for all the blues bars and free-spirited women and wild-hearted poets — an elegy, especially, for that long-gone youth, Neil Cassady, dead on a railroad track in Mexico.

Both writers show us life’s terrible sweet beauty, but for this century, the road is Atkinson’s — sensible, serene, healthy — and not Kerouac’s — romantic, sure, but also insane, selfish, and moribund.

Atkinson’s story celebrates enthusiasm, defying the easy pose of sarcasm infecting our culture. Like Kerouac, he makes you high on the poetry of Mexico, the junkyard parade, the chicken feet sticking out of your soup. Nearly broke, Atkinson discovers wonder in a town’s dusty street and a stranger’s grin.

That’s the philosophy of this book — same as Kerouac’s — wake up and roll the dice before it’s too late. This long gone lost lovely journey, this life: it’s over way too soon. So dig it now. On that much, Atkinson and Kerouac agree.

— David Johansson, author of Skin of Sunset, (M.A., English/Creative Writing, 1986)

Merging her two interests, science and publishing, one UF CLAS graduate has started her own company. **Dawn Cusick.** (English, 1989) publisher and founder of EarlyLight Books, has written and published Bug Butts and Animal Tongues, two children’s books with a biological science focus.

From there, she worked for a craft book publisher writing and editing books about jewelry, quilting, knitting, and dried flowers. “It’s much more fun to do crafts than to write about them,” Cusick said. While working there, she took science classes during her lunch break at University of North Carolina—Asheville, eventually earning her Certificate of Post Baccalaureate Major in Biology in 2001. “After using the creative side of my brain for work all day, it was exhilarating to approach subjects more analytically in science coursework,” she said.

She then earned her master’s degree in Biology from Western Carolina University in 2008. While her two sons were young, Cusick often volunteered in their classrooms and as chaperone on field trips. “I would sit in the back of the bus with the kids and just could not believe their endless joking and story telling about butts,” she said of her book Bug Butts.

In biology class, she would sit and think about how the science she was learning could fit into a children’s book. “When you work in publishing you have books on your mind almost every waking moment — you just can’t help yourself — so there was no way to sit in biology classes and not think about books,” she said.

Her books have gotten flattering reviews and have garnered interest for foreign translations, with more than a dozen publishers in Germany, the Czech Republic, Finland and Italy requesting quotes and sample copies. Cusick is currently in development for the company’s second season of books, which will include another one of her titles, Animal Eggs. EarlyLight is located in Waynesville, North Carolina and on the Web at www.earlylightbooks.com. “Viewing my science coursework through the eyes of children and in the format of nonfiction books was just a natural blending of two important parts of my life,” Cusick said.

**UF CLAS graduate Robert Venditti** (Political Science, 1996) is the author of a critically-acclaimed graphic novel that has been adapted into a major motion picture starring Bruce Willis. The story, called The Surrogates, is set in 2054 where humans interact with the world and each other only through technological substitutes. Detective Greer, played by Willis, investigates crimes committed by someone who wants the world to return to when people had genuine interactions with one another.

Venditti received his master’s degree in Creative Writing from UCF, according to a USA Today article. While in school, he thought comic books were immature and did not read a graphic novel until his final year of graduate school. The Surrogates mini-series was published in July 2005 by Top Shelf Productions. Disney released the movie in 2009.

“It’s one of the most exciting things I could ever think of. I mean, my grandmother is watching TV in the afternoon and suddenly sees a movie trailer of something that her grandson created — it’s just beyond comprehension. She’s excited to see it — everyone around me is excited about it. It’s a nice feeling to know that you can do something like that for your family and friends,” he was quoted as saying in the USA Today article.
Faye V. Harrison, Joint Professor of Anthropology and African American Studies, Receives Two Awards

At the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Dr. Harrison received the 2010 Legacy Scholar Award from the Association of Black Anthropologists (ABA), which celebrated its 40th anniversary. She was given this recognition for her contributions to the ABA, the discipline of anthropology, and mentorship of students and junior faculty.

“The Legacy Scholar Award means a great deal, because it acknowledges the past three decades of hard work in research, teaching, mentoring, and service to my profession,” she said. “The Legacy award tells me that my variegated work is recognized and appreciated.”

Dr. Harrison has also been selected to receive an Andrew W. Mellon Visiting Fellowship at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. During Spring 2011 the Department of Social Anthropology will host a month-long stay in which she will present on urban violence, human rights, and crime in a republic in the world on the basis of an ethic of mutual care, tolerance and stakes in our earthly co-existence.”

Discourse Rekindles Debate on Origins of Multi-Cellular Life

A recent discovery by a University of Florida geologist may lend support to the theory that one of the defining moments of evolution may not have occurred as currently thought.

While studying the ancient microcontinents that make up the geography of central Kazakhstan in Asia, geological sciences professor Joe Meert and colleagues uncovered evidence that multi-cellular organisms may have evolved 100 million years earlier than previously thought, well before the Cambrian Era. His findings are published online today in the journal *Gondwana Research.*

Meert discovered the fossilized remains of two Ediacara fauna, *Nimbia occlusa* and *Aspidella terranovica,* in a rock formation that predates the earliest glacial period by more than 50 million years. “I am sure that the fossils will be controversial due to their enigmatic nature and the fact that they are more than 100 million years older than similar fossils,” Meert said.

While the findings may support the theory that metazoan life developed much earlier than previously assumed, the exact nature of *Nimbia occlusa* remains a subject of controversy. Scientists are split as to whether it is a multi-cellular animal, a bacterial colony, or a microbial mat. The new fossils are identical to those that appear in the fossil record up to 150 million years later, meaning it passed through tectonic, climatic, oceanic, and atmospheric events without significant change. The research was supported by the National Science Foundation.

Researchers Use Math, Maps to Plot Malaria Elimination Plan

Two University of Florida researchers and their international colleagues have used mathematical models and maps to estimate the feasibility of eliminating malaria from countries that have the deadliest form of the disease. Andrew Tatem led a study that appears online and in the November print edition of the British medical journal *The Lancet Malaria Elimination Series.* “People need to know that the money they are spending is having an effect,” said Tatem, an assistant professor with joint appointments in UF’s department of geography, Emerging Pathogens Institute and Center for African Studies.

David L. Smith, a UF biology professor and co-author of the paper, says the data suggest that *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria, the deadliest parasite, could be eliminated in most parts of the world in 10 to 15 years, including most areas in Asia and the Americas, if transmission could be reduced by 90 percent from 2007 rates.

“Civil and economic strife is always good for malaria and bad for the people.”

Smith is associate director for disease ecology at the UF Emerging Pathogens Institute and an associate professor of biology.

For five years, Tatem and Smith have collaborated with a team of scientists, geographers, statisticians and on-the-ground health workers to create a single worldwide database for mapping and modeling *P. falciparum* transmission.

Their analysis may give the public health community a tool it needs to most effectively allocate financial and technical support for regions whose citizens suffer with the disease. Tatem and Smith’s research is partly funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
Grant to Help Astronomy Department Search Skies for Habitable Planets

At a time when astronomers are searching for Earth-like planets, the University of Florida has received a grant for $500,000 to lead the pack. The grant was donated by the Dharma Endowment Foundation of Alachua to further humankind’s knowledge of the universe and continue the search for extra solar planets that are capable of harboring life.

“If we are lucky, we will be able to find more habitable planets by nearby bright stars,” said Jian Ge, astronomy professor and main beneficiary of the grant.

The grant is providing the momentum to build the third extremely high precision Exoplanet Tracker to form an initial network. The goal is to have a total of seven network instruments for searching the sky over the 24-hour base instead of only nightly base with the traditional planet search using a single site telescope.

The Exoplanet Tracker technology has been developed by Ge’s team over the past 10 years. This system, using the Doppler technique, which is responsible for discovering 80 percent of known planets by precious instruments, will be quicker, more reliable and cheaper than the previous technology to detect exoplanets, especially low mass planets. “Our aim is to have the network completely functional by 2014 but hopefully earlier if we can raise enough money,” Ge said.

There is an Exoplanet Tracker in Arizona already working and investigating the skies. The second Exoplanet Tracker is packed and ready to be sent to China for first light in early December. The third Exoplanet Tracker, which is what the grant supports, will be created and installed at one of the network telescopes by the end of 2011. If Ge reaches his final goal of seven instruments, his team would be able to cross-reference data and check for errors.

Ants Take On Goliath Role in Protecting Trees in the Savanna from Elephants

Ants are not out of their weight class when defending trees from the appetite of nature’s heavyweight, the African elephant, a new University of Florida study finds. Columns of angered ants will crawl up into elephant trunks to repel the ravenous beasts from devouring tree cover throughout drought-plagued East African savanas, playing a potentially important role in regulating carbon sequestration in these ecosystems, said Todd Palmer, a UF biology professor and co-author of a paper published in the journal Current Biology.

“It really is a David and Goliath story, where these little ants are up against these huge herbivores, protecting trees and having a major impact on the ecosystems in which they live,” Palmer said.

“The mixture of trees and grasses that make up savanna ecosystems are traditionally thought to be regulated by rainfall, soil nutrients, plant-eating herbivores and fire, he said. “Our results suggest that plant defense should be added to the list,” he said. “These ants play a central role in preventing animals that want to eat trees from doing extensive damage to those trees.”

“One predicted outcome of global warming is more frequent and intense droughts, which will force desperate elephants to eat everything they can to survive,” Palmer said. “With more droughts, the extent to which elephants destroy and remove trees may increase and potentially shift the ecosystems back to grasslands. Ants’ role in saving trees is critical with the interest in slowing the accumulation of greenhouse gases since trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.”

UF Study Shows Carnivore Species Shrank During Global Warming Event

A new University of Florida study indicates extinct carnivorous mammals shrank in size during a global warming event that occurred 55 million years ago.

The study, which appeared in the December print edition of the Journal of Mammalian Evolution and is now available online, describes a new species that evolved to half the size of its ancestors during this period of global warming.

The hyena-like animal, Palaeonictis wingi, evolved from the size of a bear to the size of a coyote during a 200,000-year period when Earth’s average temperature increased about 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Following this global warming event, Earth’s temperature cooled and the animal evolved to a larger size.

“We know that plant-eating mammals got smaller during the earliest Eocene when global warming occurred, possibly associated with elevated levels of carbon dioxide,” said lead author Stephen Chester, a Yale University doctoral student who began the research at UF and co-wrote the study with Jonathan Bloch, curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Florida Museum of Natural History and associate professor of anthropology, geological sciences, and biology.

“Surprisingly, this study shows that the same thing happened in some carnivores, suggesting that other factors may have played a critical role in their evolution.”

Researchers discovered a nearly complete jaw from the animal in Wyoming’s Big Horn Basin in 2006 during a fossil-collecting expedition, led by Bloch. Bloch said the new findings could help scientists better understand the impact of current global warming. “Documenting the impact of global climate change in the past is one of the only real experiments that can inform us about what the effects of global warming might have on mammals in the near future.”

Bloch has studied this climate change event for nearly a decade.
Florida Ridges’ Mystery Marine Fossils Tied to Rising Land, Not Seas

In a paper appearing in the June edition of the journal *Geology*, Peter N. Adams, a UF assistant professor of geological sciences, says his computer models of Florida’s changing land mass support this theory: The land that forms the sandy Trail Ridge running north to south from North Florida through South Georgia, as well as lesser-known ridges, was undersea at the time the fossils were deposited. These ridges rose over time, reaching elevations that exceeded later sea level high stands.

“If you look at the best records, there’s no evidence that global sea level has come close to occupying the elevation of these fossils since the time of their emplacement,” Adams said, referring to Trail Ridge’s elevation today, nearly 230 feet above modern sea level. “The only thing that explains this conundrum is that Trail Ridge was underwater, but later rose to an elevation higher than subsequent sea levels.”

Today, the land surface of Florida is rising at a rate of about one-twentieth of a millimeter annually, far more slowly than sea level rise estimated at approximately 3 millimeters annually. Adams notes, “Florida’s rise is not nearly rapid enough to counteract sea level rise – and society should be mindful that low-lying coastal areas are threatened.”

American History Teaching Grant Awarded

Louise Newman, associate professor of U.S. women’s/gender history, has been involved in the federally funded Teaching American History program in the Marion County public schools for the past three years. As part of this program, she has organized summer workshops for high school and middle school teachers conducted here at UF.

Most recently, Newman helped the Marion County school board obtain another three-year Teaching American History grant to provide workshops for fourth- and fifth-grade teachers. The grant is for nearly one million dollars, a portion of which will fund future summer workshops at UF under Prof. Newman’s direction.

UF Alumna Redefines an Ecosystem

For over a quarter decade, an aggressive campaign has been underway in the American Southwest to eliminate the saltcedar, an invasive shrub thought to crowd out local plants and destroy ecosystems by using all available water. Now studies by a UF alumna has overturned those beliefs and multi-million dollar eradication plans are now under review.

Pamela Nagler (Geography, 1989), a research physical scientist for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), developed an innovative method for estimating plant water usage. By analyzing data from instruments that measure moisture passing from plant leaves into the atmosphere, Nagler’s research showed that the saltcedar actually uses less water than many native species, and has potential as a beneficial low-water user that grows in salty soils and supports local wildlife.

Nagler’s estimation methods are being widely applied by scientists in arid and semi-arid ecosystems for local, regional, and continental scales of measurement. In recognition of her work, Nagler was recently awarded a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor granted by the United States government to early career scientists and engineers.

Biodiversity Loss Correlates with Increases in Infectious Disease

Habitat destruction and species extinction may lead to an increase in diseases that infect humans and other species, according to a paper in the journal *Nature* co-authored by a University of Florida ecologist. UF biology professor Robert D. Holt and his colleagues reported that by reviewing studies from a wide range of systems, including data from plants, animals and bacteria, they were able to relate dimensions of environmental loss, and in particular species loss, with incidence of infectious disease. The study, which was led by biologist Felicia Keesing of Bard College, focused on diseases on the rise, such as West Nile virus, Lyme disease and Hantavirus.

The general degradation of biodiversity because of land use transformation, combined with climate change, overharvesting, and so forth, is likely to have many perverse consequences for emerging pathogens,” said Holt, a UF Eminent Scholar associated with the Emerging Pathogens Institute.

“You have to think both as an ecologist and an infectious disease specialist to grapple with questions like this.”

Some pathogens can flourish under less biologically diverse conditions, such as in areas where top predators or other key species become extinct.

“When a clinical trial of a drug shows that it works,” said Keesing, “the trial is halted so the drug can be made available. In a similar way, the protective effect of biodiversity is clear enough that we need to begin implementing policies to preserve it now.”

Civilization in the Amazon’s Heart

The untrained eye would tell you that the heart of the Amazon was a virgin forest – the elements too harsh to have been habitable by man. Researchers at UF believe this to be utterly false, instead saying that the heart of the Amazon was once home to an advanced, spectacular civilization that was able to harness the resources of the forest to feed their population estimated to be in the thousands. In fact, the researchers believe that as many as 20 million people inhabited the Amazon centuries ago.

Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo, Nigel Smith and Michael Heckenberger of UF were three of the researchers on this multi-disciplinary research team. Heckenberger discovered a series of waterways, canals, and moats that date back to A.D. 800.

Archaeology in the region is challenging, as there is a lack of stone, so anything built with wood would be quickly taken over by the jungle. But Oyuela-Caycedo and Smith have been focusing thus far on the soil and landscape transformations. “The only thing the inhabitants had to do was to change and transform the landscape,” Oyuela-Caycedo said. “And that is what they did.”
In recent decades, several Latin American nations have experienced political transitions that have caused a decline in tourism. In spite of—or even because of—that history, these areas are again becoming popular destinations. This work reveals that in post-conflict nations, tourism often takes up where social transformation leaves off and sometimes benefits from formerly off-limits status. Comparing cases in Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru, Babb shows how tourism is a major force in remaking transitional nations. While tourism touts scenic beauty and colonial charm, it also capitalizes on the desire for a brush with recent revolutionary history. In the process, selective histories are promoted and nations remade. This work presents the diverse stories of those linked to the trade and reveals how interpretations of the past and desires for the future are promoted and nations remade. This work continues to raise the standard of what the critic can do.

**Spatial Turns: Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literature and Visual Culture.**
Barbara Mennel (Languages, Literatures, and Cultures)

The phrase “spatial turns” signals the growing importance of space as an analytical and representational category for culture. Mennel addresses such emerging modes of inquiry by bringing together essays that engage with spatial turns, spatiality, and the theoretical implications of both in the context of German culture, history, and theory. Migrating from fields like geography, urban studies, and architecture, the new centrality of space has transformed social-science fields as diverse as sociology, philosophy, and psychology. In cultural studies, productive analyses of space increasingly cut across the studies of literature, film, popular culture, and the visual arts.

**The Eastern Archaic, Historicized.**
Kenneth Sassaman (Anthropology)

Sassaman’s work offers an alternative perspective on the genesis and transformation of cultural diversity over eight millennia of hunter-gatherer dwelling in eastern North America. He examines evidence which demonstrates Archaic people were routinely associated with other groups throughout eastern North America and expressed themselves materially in ways that reveal historical links to other places and times. Starting with the colonization of eastern North America by two distinct ancestral lines, the Eastern Archaic was an era of migrations, ethnogenesis, and coalescence—an 8,200-year era of making histories through interactions and expressing them culturally in ritual and performance.

**Counseling and Diversity: Counseling African Americans.**
William L. Conwill (African American Studies)

A counseling psychologist, Dr. Conwill has worked in many clinical and community settings with diverse populations in the United States. In Counseling and Diversity he examines globalization’s impact on mental health among African Americans and African immigrants and the mental health implications of 9/11 and homeland security on Muslim women.

**The Tourism Encounter: Fashioning Latin American Nations and Histories.**
Florence Babb (Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research)

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**Our Savage Art: Poetry and the Civil Tongue.**
William Logan (English)

The most notorious poet-critic of his generation, William Logan has defined our view of poets good and bad, interesting and banal, for more than three decades. Our Savage Art features the corrosive wit and darkly discriminating critiques that have become the trademarks of Logan’s style. Opening with a defense of the critical eye, this collection features essays on Robert Lowell’s correspondence, Elizabeth Bishop’s unfinished poems, the inflated reputation of Hart Crane, the loss of the New Critics, and a damning—and already highly controversial—indictment of an edition of Robert Frost’s notebooks. Though he might be called a cobra with manners, Logan is a fervent advocate for poetry, and Our Savage Art continues to raise the standard of what the critic can do.

**Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation.**
Howard Louthan (History)

Prior to the Thirty Years’ War, almost all of Bohemia’s population lay outside the Catholic fold, yet by the beginning of the eighteenth century the kingdom was clearly under Rome’s influence. Bohemia offers a unique window for examining the Counter-Reformation and the nature of early modern Catholicism. Louthan assesses the Catholic Church’s re-establishment in the Czech lands, arguing that this phenomenon was less a product of violence and force than of negotiation and persuasion. Ranging from art, architecture and literature to music, philosophy and hagiography, Louthan’s study reintegrates the region into the broader European world where it played a prominent role in the early modern period.
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Can’t afford to join the Dean’s Circle at this time? We still need your help, even if you only have a few dollars to share. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated and may be eligible for a charitable income tax deduction.

2nd Lieutenant Michael E. McGahan Memorial Scholarship/Fellowship

Tim and Carolyn McGahan, along with Ladd and Leslie Tsukamoto, have established an endowment in loving memory of their son and son-in-law, 2nd Lt Michael E. McGahan. A 2009 graduate of UF, Mike died in service to his country on June 6, 2010, the 66th anniversary of D-Day.
Thank You To Our Dean’s Circle Members!

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FY2010 Dean’s Circle members as of June 30, 2010

What is Florida Tomorrow?

CLAS alumni, Jim Jardon, tells why he gives back to his alma mater.

“I feel that every alumnus needs to realize at some stage of their life what the value of the education they received truly is,” says Jim Jardon (Mathematics, 1965), CEO of JHT Inc. “I think that alumni of great institutions should never forget where the foundation of their success emanated and should try to help those who came after to enjoy success,” which is why he donates to the Dean’s Fund for Excellence—so the dean can apply the funds where they are needed most.

“Why UF? Those were some of the best years of my life, and I have bled Orange and Blue since.”

Along with annual cash donations to CLAS, Jardon and his wife Renee, generously included the college in their estate plans. Additionally, they provided the funding to create the James and Renee Jardon Craniofacial Speech Camps in the College of Public Health and Health Professions.

“I fully expect UF to continue to flourish as one of the premiere academic and research institutions in the world,” Jardon says. “I am confident that UF will sustain its very high standing as a top public university and will continue to attract the brightest of the bright.”

Campaign Progress as of Dec. 31, 2010

CLAS Goal $65 million
Raised $62.4 million
UF Goal $1.5 billion
Raised $1.22 billion

There are many ways to support the university programs, research, faculty, and students. To learn more visit www.floridatomorrow.ufl.edu/clas
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CLASnotes is changing the way we do things — how we tell the story of the college and its faculty, students, alumni, and staff. How we bring these stories to you. Please take a few minutes to complete our short online survey.

Those that respond before midnight on May 30, 2011 are eligible for a drawing for college and university related gifts. One grand prize winner will receive a Gator Football piggy bank signed by recently retired coach Urban Meyer.