



Clearwater Campus students take a break in the Hard Drive Cafe.

SPC, other community colleges positioned to lead Florida's economic recovery

As most sectors of the state's economy have throttled back, St. Petersburg College and many of Florida's other community colleges have roared ahead, adding new programs and welcoming hundreds of additional students, many of whom had been turned away from other state institutions.

"Rather than shrink from the challenges that faced us, we decided to take an opposite approach and provide additional students with the programs and training they need to get good jobs and be part of the inevitable recovery," said Tom

Recovery, continued on Page 2

Visit the online version of the Blue & White <http://www.spcollege.edu/central/news/blueandwhite.htm> for links to the following weekly columns:

- Birthdays/anniversaries
- Cultural Corner
- Locker Room
- SPC TV
- SPC This week
- Sustainable SPC

February is African American History Month

Check the [events calendar](#) for details on events at your campus.

Former coach, Athletic Director George McCrossin dies at 85



Coach George McCrossin gives his men's basketball team some instructions while they are on the bench.

George McCrossin, former Athletic Director and men's basketball and golf coach for 35 years, died Saturday, Jan. 23, in Clearwater. McCrossin, 85, retired in 1987 after 35 years at the college.

McCrossin joined the St. Petersburg Junior College staff in 1952 as men's basketball coach. During most of his coaching years, SPJC offered no athletic scholarships. In spite of that, McCrossin compiled a 539-369 record, making him the 14th winningest junior college coach ever at the time of his retirement.

As Athletic Director, he spearheaded the building of the college's first gym in 1958, and helped with the formation of a statewide league in 1960.

As a golf coach, his achievements were even more remarkable; he earned national championships in 1968 and 1969, runners-up in 1967 and 1970, and his program produced nine All-Americans. He was named National Junior College Coach of the Year in 1969. He retired in 1987 at the age of 67.

McCrossin, continued on Page 3

Recovery, continued from Page 1

Furlong, SPC's Interim President." History tells us that community colleges are one of the best sources out there for education that leads directly to jobs. SPC and other similar schools are great values as well as shortcuts to success."

In his State of the Union speech this week, President Barack Obama urged the Senate to pass legislation that will "revitalize our community colleges, which are a career pathway to the children of so many working families." [Read this section from President Obama's 2010 State of the Union Address.](#)

Steep economic downturns create great opportunities for community college education, Furlong said. Resources may tighten, but community colleges offer high-quality education for comparatively little money, and graduates often walk right into jobs that offer pay and benefits that far exceed their previous employment.

"One reason for this is the close relationships that community colleges tend to have to business leaders in their home areas," Furlong noted. "If an area needs nurses or bankers or technicians, the local community college usually can turn on a dime, respond to that need, and develop programs that can start serving students almost immediately."

Florida's community colleges served more than 845,000 students in 2009, up 9.6 percent from 2008. Enrollments for 2010 are expected to be even higher. As of this week, St. Petersburg College enrollment for the Spring 2010 term is up 14 percent.

Community College Week's annual Top 100 report, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, said Florida community colleges were among the top in the nation last year when it came to awarding associate degrees.

Will N. Holcombe, Chancellor of The Florida College System, said Florida's community colleges are determined to keep their doors open to students in spite of ever-tightening budgets.

"Often times, entry into our system is the first opportunity for students to achieve higher education," he said, "and I'm proud of the work our institutions have done to provide a quality education to a diverse student body during tough economic times."

One reason for the expanding role of community colleges is the steep enrollment increase among veterans. A new GI bill provides more than \$62 billion in education benefits across the country, and vets with three years of active service can receive full tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and \$1,000 a year for books and

supplies. The legislation has contributed to a 76 percent increase in veteran enrollment at Florida colleges.

"Think back to the post-World War II days, when thousands of returning veterans enrolled in colleges across the country and then took the lead in rebuilding the American economy in a way that had never been seen before," Furlong said. "We have a similar opportunity now, and it is very exciting to consider the role that SPC and other similar institutions can play in that."

St. Petersburg College began offering bachelor's degrees in 2002, initially offering programs in nursing, education and technology management. Today, the college offers [22 bachelor's programs](#) and adds new ones every year. Among similar schools statewide, 16 new bachelor's programs were created at seven colleges last year. Another 19 new programs at nine Florida colleges have been proposed for this year.

"For more and more students of all ages, SPC and other community colleges are where higher education begins, and higher education means better jobs and enhanced income," Furlong said. "We understand the role that we play in a stronger future economy, and we're excited about the challenge we face."

Presidential candidates down to eight semifinalists

The SPC Presidential Search Advisory Committee named the semifinalists for the position of SPC President on Jan. 7. The committee will convene at noon Feb. 4 at the EpiCenter to narrow the field to three to five people. Each of the 13 committee members will nominate four candidates as finalists. They will not rank their choices in order of preference. After the nominations are tallied, committee members will decide how many finalists to recommend to the college's Board of Trustees for final selection. Profiles of each candidate, including a cover letter, resume or curriculum vitae, official college application and videos for each candidate are available online at <http://www.spcollege.edu/central/news/presidentialsearch/applicants.html>.

McCrossin, continued from Page 1

At the Bay Area's 1986 Sports Salute banquet, he was named Sports Personality of the Year. He was inducted into the Florida Community College Basketball Hall of Fame in 1991 and the Florida



Former Athletic Director and Clearwater Campus Associate Provost Jeff Davis, right, presents Coach McCrossin with a plaque for his induction into the Florida Association of Community Colleges Hall of Fame.

Community College Activities Association Hall of Fame in 1995.

McCrossin played basketball and was team captain at the University of Pittsburgh in the late 1940s and early 1950s after serving as a Marine in the South Pacific during World War II.

"He was a heck of a player," Ed Long, who succeeded McCrossin as SPJC Athletic Director, said in a 2006 interview. "He was an All-American at Pitt, got a pro tryout, and I understand he was the last player to be cut by the Boston Celtics."

McCrossin said in 2006 that he remembered his players with fondness.

"We just had a great group of kids," he said. "For what they had, they got everything out of it. They were dedicated. And they enjoyed the challenge."

In a 2006 story in *SPC Today*, the college's semi-annual alumni magazine, a number of those former players remembered their one-time coach:

"When I played, Coach McCrossin

was bringing a lot of African-American guys here, including me, and I remember he was a really even-keel guy. He showed a lot of fairness. He was a strategist as a coach. I didn't consider myself a prize-winning player, but learned a lot, and as a team we did really well. I applied what he taught me and it worked out very well." -- **Terry Byrd, St. Petersburg, center, 1967-68 and 1968-69.**

"Back then, in order to get enough games, we played in the city A-league. When we played those games, Coach McCrossin would also play – point guard." -- **Ed Evans, Clearwater, guard/forward, 1957-58 and 1958-59.**

"He would keep fit by going through the same routine as we did. He taught us to juggle – tennis balls, basically, then other things – to improve our hand-eye coordination: That's a talent I still possess. And I juggle things in life." -- **Lars Hafner, St. Petersburg, guard/forward, co-captain, 1979-80 and 1980-81.**

Graveside services are scheduled for 12:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29, at Sylvan Abbey Memorial Park, 2853 Sunset Point Road in Clearwater.

Meeting Notices

The **St. Petersburg College Board of Trustees** will hold a [public meeting on Feb. 12](#) at 9 a.m. at the EpiCenter, Room 1-153, 13805 58th St. N., Largo, FL.

The **St. Petersburg College Foundation, Inc.** will have a Planned Giving Committee Meeting on Feb. 16 at Noon, in the President's Dining Room at the District Office of St. Petersburg College, 6021 142nd Ave. N., Largo. These meeting will be to consider routine business.

The **St. Petersburg Alumni Association, Inc.** will have a Board of Directors Meeting on Feb. 16 at 6 p.m., in the President's Dining Room at the District Office of St. Petersburg College, 6021 142nd Ave. N., Largo. These meeting will be to consider routine business.

Alumni help students' dreams come true

The St. Petersburg College Alumni Association, Inc. celebrated a night of "Making Students' Dreams Come True" on Jan. 22, at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art in Tarpon Springs. About 80 alumni and friends came together to catch up on old times and share in the successes of the Dollars for Scholars thrift store.

[Dollars for Scholars](#) awarded more than \$20,000 in scholarships for St. Petersburg College students including:

\$15,000 for the First Generation in College Scholarship
\$3,500 for Women on the Way students
\$4,800 for SPC campuses to purchase books for Male Outreach Initiative members.

STARs (Striving for Top Academic Rewards) Scholarship naming rights were awarded to Stephen Sobeck and Carol Shade. The STARs scholarship award program recognizes students for their achievements in the classroom and their potential for making a difference in our college, our community and our country. Each \$10 donation to the STARs scholarship gives you the opportunity to enter a drawing to have a scholarship named for you or your family for a year.

For more information about the St. Petersburg College Alumni Association, Inc. or the [Dollars for Scholars thrift store](#), please contact [Tiffany Stallard](#) at 727-341-3055.



Pictured above, representatives from each campus accept \$4,800 in scholarships from Dollars for Scholars for books for campus Male Outreach Initiative programs. From left, Psalms Mack, Associate Provost, St. Petersburg/Gibbs Campus; Michele Piccione, Founder of the Dollars for Scholars Thrift Store and a member of the SPC Alumni Association Board of Directors; Tina O'Daniels, Associate Provost, Tarpon Springs Campus; Brenda Shears, Business Office Manager, Seminole Campus; Kathleen Griffin, Associate Provost, Clearwater Campus; and Greg McLeod, Associate Provost, Health Education Center.

Consular Corps College luncheon

Tom Furlong, Interim President of SPC, thanks honorary consul members for attending the Tampa/Hillsborough International Protocol Office luncheon that the SPC Consular Corps College hosted on Jan. 20.

The event, which took place at the District Office, included speakers from the United Mexican States, the Principality of Morocco, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Consular Corps College is a non-profit, non-political professional organization serving the foreign consular community in the U.S. through education, information sharing and networking.



Interim SPC President Tom Furlong addresses the Consular Corps College visitors.

New payment plan makes students more proactive

Paying tuition has become a lot easier, thanks to the college's new payment plan.

In December, SPC partnered with the National Education Loan Network, a third-party education planning and financing company based in Lincoln, Neb., that offers tuition payment processing and student loans at colleges and universities nationwide.

For a small enrollment fee, NelNet allows students to pay their spring tuition in three or four interest-free installments.

Doug Duncan, Vice President of Administrative and Business Services at SPC, said the payment plan will save students time during peak registration periods.

"It can all be done online without them ever coming to campus," Duncan said.

The college implemented the payment plan as a method of offering students an interest-free alternative to standard student loans. To qualify, students must pay up to 50 percent up front and an enrollment fee of \$25 or \$35 depending on when they apply. Duncan said more than 1,000 students utilized the outsourced financier for the spring term.

"We were pleased with the overall turnout," said Mike Meigs, Director of Student Accounting and Business Services. "As students get used to it and word spreads, I would foresee continued growth."

Meigs said the new outsourced payment plan has been a more efficient process than its college predecessor.

"The old plan was a paper promissory note that required staff time and resources to fill out," he said. "It also required the student to get a co-signer, which usually resulted in them leaving and coming back."

Meigs said the online payment plan allows students to be more proactive in the payment process.

"Students can go through MySPC, click on the tuition payment plan link and follow the directions to start the process," he said. "Last term, we were having some serious bottleneck issues in the student service areas. Students were having to wait up to three hours in the MAP centers."

Pat Rinard, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management, said the internal payment system also was more costly.

"The new NelNet payment plan does not involve our staff at all, and that saved us about 160 man hours," Rinard said.

Whether the new payment system will help lower the number of students purged during registration for non-payment has yet to be determined.

"We dropped fewer students for non-payment than we have in the past, but I am not sure I would attribute that to the NelNet plan," he said.

Direct deposit to replace all payroll checks as of March 1

As of March 1, the college no longer will issue paper payroll checks except in cases of demonstrated hardship. As of that date, employee pay will be distributed **only through direct deposit**.

The Board of Trustees voted at its December meeting to adopt revised payroll procedures requiring employees to have their payroll checks deposited through the college's Direct Deposit Program. Employees must fill out a Direct Deposit Authorization Form identifying where their payroll checks are to be direct deposited.

Employees who close their accounts, or who move their accounts to other institutions, must notify the college by filling out a new authorization form.

Employees who fail to promptly complete the form may experience delays in receiving their checks.

Employees who can demonstrate a hardship may be exempted from the Direct Deposit Program. Requests for exemption must contain clear explanations of the reasons why, and include supporting documentation.

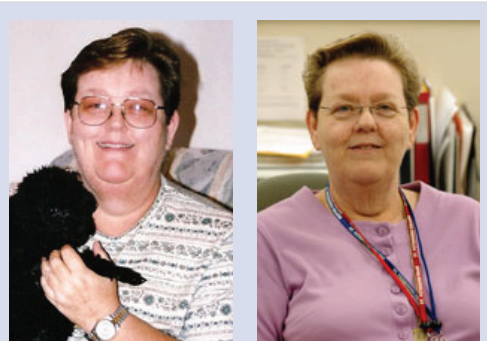
Link to the [Direct Deposit Authorization Form](#) (pdf) and [Direct Deposit Hardship Form](#) (pdf) here or from the [Human Resource Web site](#).



For Bev Grundset, weight loss helps her gain control of her life

Losing weight is rarely an easy task. But with some support from her family and fellow Weight Watchers community members, Beverly Grundset is determined to do just that.

"I was a dedicated couch potato," said



Beverly Grundset in August 2002, with Jett, her poodle.

Beverly Grundset now, after losing 65 pounds and dropping three medications and cutting back on a fourth.

Grundset, academic chair of Biological Science and Wellness at St. Petersburg/Gibbs. Two years ago, the then 56-year-old was struggling with cholesterol, pre-hypertension and diabetes but was not motivated to change her lifestyle.

Then her niece, Michelle, and Michelle's mother began a diet program prescribed by Michelle's cardiologist.

When news about their weight loss plan reached Grundset, she decided to make a change and joined a local Weight Watchers group.

"I didn't want to be the only fat person left in my family," Grundset said with a laugh.

"Weight Watchers has really been the way I have decreased my weight," said

Grundset. She lost 58 pounds the first year and another seven the next. Because of the weight loss, she no longer needs her cholesterol and diabetes medications, and she was able to stop taking one of her pre-hypertension medications and cut back the other.

"I have lost three medications and another one has been decreased," Grundset said. "And that's just from 65 pounds. My goal is to decrease these medications to the minimum amount so that I don't have to be taking as many."

By the time SPC started its Wellness Challenge in the fall, Grundset said she was already ahead of the game.

"I actually started my Wellness Challenge before the college decided we should do it," she said. "By the time we started the Wellness Challenge, everything they were telling me to do, I had already done."

Grundset said the key to losing weight is to know your individual serving size.

"Once you can understand what a serving size is and how much you are supposed to be eating, then you can appropriately address the calories that you put in your mouth," Grundset said.

"Now I know that the first time I hear that little voice saying, 'Beverly, you're full,' I start turning off," Grundset said. "When I go into a restaurant now, if I'm eating a full portion by myself, I immediately take half of it off my

plate and put it into a to-go box."

Before dieting, her eating habits included a lot of drive-thrus and French fries.

"It's a lot easier to go out and eat off the dollar menu in McDonald's and have junk than it is to eat good stuff because fruits and vegetables cost more money," she said.

Motivating co-workers to get fit

She said her co-workers in the Natural Science office encourage her healthy lifestyle and keep her in line.

Marcia Castle, a Staff Assistant in the office, said Grundset has been a motivator for her to lose weight.

"She has been very supportive of me and has given me ideas," said Castle, who joined Weight Watchers in October and plans to continue her healthier lifestyle.

Financial benefits of healthy living

Although the Wellness Challenge is a way for people to save money on their health insurance premiums, Grundset hopes other SPC employees will be motivated to make a change to a healthier lifestyle for themselves and not just for the discount.

Not only can employees save money by earning the employee discount for their wellness efforts, but because SPC's health insurance is a self-insured plan, the college saves money when it pays out less in claims. In spite of rising health care costs, St. Petersburg College saw a decrease in claims paid out in December 2009 in comparison to the same time period in 2008.

Register now for Narrowing the Gulf Conference – Free for SPC faculty and staff

SPC's Critical Thinking Institute and the Florida Association on Higher Education and Disability (FL-AHEAD) present Narrowing the Gulf for Underrepresented Students in Postsecondary Education on March 18-19, at the EpiCenter. Conference details and registration information are available online at <http://www.spcollege.edu/central/ossed/conference.htm>.

Onward and Upward

SPC faculty publish article on Nursing faculty job satisfaction

Kathleen A. Lane, Joni Esser, and Marie Anne McCusker, associate degree Nursing faculty, along with former SPC faculty member Betty Holte, published an article in the January 2010 issue of *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, the official publication of the National Organization for associate degree Nursing.

The article, [*A study of nurse faculty job satisfaction in community colleges in Florida*](#), represents a qualitative study of data sampled from 23 Florida community colleges that offer a nursing program.

The data offers insight into the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to stay, and could provide information for administrators to address the faculty shortage.

Seminole Campus named Business of the Year

The Seminole Campus has been named 2009 Seminole Business of the Year by the Greater Seminole Area Chamber of Commerce.

Provost Jim Olliver accepted a plaque at a recent Chamber banquet. The plaque read, "Presented in recognition of excellent business practices, customer service, and community advocacy."

The Seminole Campus also was the recipient of a second Chamber award, the Education Partner President's Award. Olliver accepted that certificate, which read: "Supporting Entrepreneurship and Small Business – St. Petersburg College."

The Blue & White

Editor: Mike O'Keeffe | Web Designer: Barbara Wolter | Writers: Casey Feldkamp and Bill Frederick

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Equal Opportunity

St. Petersburg College is dedicated to the concept of equal opportunity. The college will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or marital status, or against any qualified individual with disabilities, in its employment practices or in the admission and treatment of students. Recognizing that sexual harassment constitutes discrimination on the basis of sex and violates this rule, the college will not tolerate such conduct. Should you experience such behavior, please contact the director of EA/EO at 727-341-3261; by mail at P.O. Box 13489, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3489; or by e-mail at ea_eo_director@spcollege.edu.

February 2010 Birthdays/Anniversaries

Birthdays

02-01	Marylou VanCott	02-08	Sandra Malkin	02-17	Nerina J. Stepanovsky	02-22	Alan B. Shapiro
02-01	S.C. Opper	02-08	Christopher J. Gilberti	02-17	Barbara J. Heier	02-22	Aissa Y. Scott
02-02	Mary E. Hearn	02-08	Leslie A. Newton	02-17	Levi Harris	02-23	Carol Barber
02-02	Denise D. Kerwin	02-09	Linda J. Kelsey	02-17	Danijel Jakupovic	02-23	Joanne N. Duncan
02-02	Bonnie L. Jefferis	02-09	Kimberly P. Wolff	02-18	Rachel A. Marks	02-23	Julia M. Rawa
02-02	Richard A. Hutchinson	02-10	Larry R. Martin	02-18	Irma E. Fenley	02-24	Sean W. Woodruff
02-02	Sarah A. Strom Kays	02-10	Cheryl Kerr	02-18	John T. Vaughan	02-24	Catherine E. Carr
02-03	Sharon I. Merrefield	02-10	Inna O. Isbell	02-18	Dawn M. Janusz	02-24	Patrick W. Filson
02-03	Harry J. Coyle	02-10	Kevin A Gaffrey	02-18	Kristina M. O'Daniels	02-25	Nancy Watters
02-04	Karen L. Fritch	02-11	Gregory F. Andrews	02-18	Theresa R. Dimmer	02-25	Elaine M. Abruzzo
02-04	Kevin D. Murray	02-11	Sara Bird	02-18	Kellie M. McElroy	02-25	Rosanne Boyer
02-04	Deborah C. Lauman	02-11	Kathy A. Mitchell	02-18	Marcus D. Thomas	02-25	David V. Creamer
02-04	Josephine A. Wright	02-12	Diana M. Gatz	02-18	Christina L. Blackman	02-25	Melissa Mari
02-04	Steven E. Moody	02-12	Marjorie I. Greene	02-18	Lauren E. DuPont	02-25	Kimberli P. Bower
02-05	Randall VanRiper	02-12	Cora K. Wilkerson	02-19	Sandra J. Campbell	02-25	Michael J. Alvarez
02-05	Alice L. Deluca	02-12	David K. Benjamin	02-19	James A. Wallis	02-26	Roger G. Watts
02-05	Wende J. Huehn-Brown	02-13	Jeanette E. Siladie	02-19	Patricia C. Jones	02-26	Nora L. Coles
02-06	Veronica L. Murphy	02-14	Kimberly Felos	02-19	Maria Drew	02-26	Patricia Thielemann
02-06	Martin VanBourgondien	02-15	Cynthia Thomas	02-19	Pamela Danielle Flesher	02-27	Cynthia Tully
02-06	Matthew S. Desantis	02-15	Carol Kepner	02-19	Jacqueline R. Lawler	02-27	Valerie L. Carter
02-07	Lolita D. Brown	02-15	Gina D. Profit	02-20	Marja P. Beaufait	02-27	James D. Waechter
02-07	Barbara L. Truett	02-15	Stanley O. Vittetoe	02-20	Joanne Goot	02-27	Gary R Clay
02-07	Don D. Drew	02-15	Maria Greene	02-20	Deborah Robinson	02-27	Alexandra Rowe
02-08	William R. Grey	02-17	Mary Y. Ortiz-Rosario	02-20	Kelly E. Malizia	02-27	Yana Matiyuk
02-08	Jane L. Jeffries	02-17	Debria E. Montalvo	02-21	Linda S. Chang	02-28	David N. Pano
		02-17	Jane E. Till	02-21	Johnny Roundtree	02-28	Hector R. Perez-Gilbe
		02-17	Lavester P. Miller			02-28	Deborah D. Ford
						02-29	Lynn Dean Grinnell

Anniversaries

30	Barbara L. Kieta	9	John Dillinger	5	Antoinette Rodi	3	Jean M. Lee
27	Sheryl S. Peterson	9	Leneice A. Bryant	4	Madeleine Bohrer	3	Sheryl A. Ogorek
22	Alice M. Marks	8	Barbara O'Neil	4	Paul Jean	3	Leslie A. Barna
19	Anna M. Hausdorf	8	Linda M. Boyette	4	Rachel A. Marks	3	Eric Folsom
19	Anna Goree	8	Patrick T. Meegan	4	Kellie M. McElroy	3	Tao Van Cao
18	Virginia A. Scala	8	Jamie Gray	4	Iris D. Ramos-Polanco	3	Carol A. Mashburn
17	Mary O. Bellomo	7	Lun D. Soumpholphackdy	4	Samuel R. Williams	2	Phillip A Bailey
17	Teresca F. Clark		Timothy A. Weston	4	Melissa Hudak	2	Wilma Norton
16	Sammie H. Elser	7	Zaharoula Grivizas	4	Brian J. DiVita	2	Maycill M Powlett
16	George Parker	7	LaNona G. Robinson	4	Cynthia E. Donnelly	2	Sandra Rager
16	Julie R. Stott	7	Elizabeth B. Webster	4	Kara L. Schrader-Smith	2	Elena Freeman
14	Cecelia Abrahamsen	6	Huyen Chu	4	Cheryl Kerr	2	Nicholas Grimaudo
13	Michael C. Meigs	6	April Giraldi	4	Jeremy S. Peplow	2	William T. Ballo
12	Lynne V. Wolf	6	Sharon E. McManus	3	Kevin W. Thomas	2	Starla R. Metz
11	George E. Carbart	6	Charles P. Rewald	3	Brett L. Drysdale	1	Brian Loper
10	Theresa M. Graham	5	Carlos Rodriguez	3		1	Berta Royer
10	Tammy Cappleman	5				1	David J. Pawlowski