Taiwanese Students Visit Florida Tech

The Florida Tech Humanities and Communication Department hosted 20 students from Taiwan this summer. The students spent three weeks learning about American culture, history and politics. While many of them learned English in grade school, they got to practice their English when they came to the United States.

The students represented multiple Taiwanese universities, including Feng Chia University, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Tunghai University, Tamkang University, National Sun Yat-sen University and National Cheng Kung University.

As part of their tour, the students visited local attractions, including the Kennedy Space Center, Disney World and even took a day trip to Miami.

In addition, two of the students celebrated their birthdays in the United States.

New Facebook Page!

By Eric Savage

Recently, the Humanities and Communication Department launched its own Facebook page under the title: Florida Tech Humanities and Communication Department. The page features news of what the faculty and students have been up to, as well of photos of events and students who have accomplished notable things such as getting an internship, presenting at a conference or perhaps the most important: graduating.

We encourage you to “Like” the page if you haven’t already so you too can stay current on all of the department’s events, news and even the occasional inspirational or funny quote. We also encourage people to get more involved with the page, so if you feel there is something you can contribute, please do!

After all, a page is nothing without its members.
From the Chair

This issue of The Communicator not only chronicles another year of accomplishments for the Humanities and Communication Department, but also shows that we are becoming increasingly global in our activities and outlook. An example of this is the successful conclusion of our first American Studies Institute for 20 undergraduate and graduate students from several Taiwan universities. These delightful young people attended American history and foreign policy lectures on campus and toured central and south Florida for three weeks. Hopefully we will see many of them again as Florida Tech students.

The faculty also operates on a global scale with their scholarship and activities. As I write, Humanities and Communication professors are in China, Holland, Great Britain and Italy, or attending seminars in distant Hawaii. Stay tuned for future plans for more study-abroad options and alumni trips to these exciting destinations!

Another exciting item to report is that the Humanities and Communication Department has joined the rest of the 21st century with a social media presence. Our new Facebook page is rapidly becoming a great place to keep up with all the things our students, faculty and staff are doing. Let’s hear from all our alumni through this stimulating medium.

Bob Taylor

“Another year of accomplishments... also we are becoming increasingly global in our activities and outlook.”
Communication Department Launches New Graduate Degree
By Eric Savage

This fall semester marks the debut of the new Master of Science degree in Global Strategic Communication. It replaces the former degree, Technical and Professional Communication, and is a natural progression for the newly revised undergraduate communication degree that focuses on strategic communication.

Core classes for the new graduate program include Communication Theory, Strategic Communication, Mass Communication and Society, Global Communication, and Communication Research Methods. Students have a choice of several other courses to round out their degree, such as International Political Communication and Global Politics, New Media and Strategic Communication, and Argumentation Within and Across Cultures. In order to complete their program, students have the option to complete a design project, thesis or comprehensive exam. To see the full curriculum, visit the Humanities and Communication website.

The original Technical and Professional Communication program began in 1989, and met the needs of the space center and all the high-tech industry that supported it. Recently, however, students have requested more emphasis on strategic communication, new media and various forms of corporate communication. National trends in the communication industry indicate an increased focus on strategic communication and the internationalization and globalization of business and industry throughout the U.S.

Employment of public relations specialists (also called strategic communicators) is expected to grow 24% from 2008–2018, which is much faster than the national average for job growth. The need for good public relations in an increasingly competitive world and the global business environment should spur demand for these workers, especially those with specialized knowledge or international experience.

For students to get more international experience, at least one course will be offered with an overseas component. The first study-abroad course will be offered in summer 2012 at the Eindhoven University of Technology in The Netherlands.

The communication undergraduate degree also launches its updated curriculum in the fall. The program was revised to be more responsive to current trends. Undergrads who are planning to continue their education into graduate school will be well-equipped to deal with the challenges of the Global Strategic Communication master’s degree program.

College graduates with experience, a high level of creativity and strong communication and computer skills should have the best job opportunities. In particular, employers will seek those who have the skills to conduct new types of advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations and sales campaigns involving new media, particularly the Internet.

For more information about the Florida Tech Communication programs, go to http://cpla.fit.edu/hu-com or contact the Humanities and Communication Department at (321) 674-8082.

New Textile Minor

Aided by the extensive resources of the Ruth Funk Center for Textile Arts on campus, students at Florida Institute of Technology may choose to minor in textiles starting fall 2012. A student must complete 20 credit hours for the new minor.

Five required courses, for 11 credit hours, will include Fundamentals of Color 1 and 2, Introduction to Textiles, Survey of the Textile Industry and Introduction to Textile Conservation. For an additional nine credits, students may choose the Business Track, Conservation Track or Textile Arts Track, each offering three courses.

This fall Florida Tech presented the first of these courses, Introduction to Textiles, taught by Lesa Lorusso, interior designer. The course, TEX1001, is on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5–6:15 p.m. in P133 auditorium in the Evans Library on the Florida Tech campus. The course is open to community members at the special non-credit tuition rate of $325. For course and registration information, call or email the Department of Humanities and Communication at (321) 674-8082 or humevent@fit.edu.

Lorusso is a Florida licensed interior designer and instructor. She owns and operates LNL Designs, an interior design firm, and currently teaches Textiles, Historic Preservation and Advanced AutoCAD at Brevard Community College (BCC). She has also taught AutoCAD and interior design courses at Wellesley College and the New England School of Art and Design in Boston, Mass. She is a member of the Florida Tech Friends of Textiles and a faculty adviser to the BCC Interior Design Club.

For more information about the textiles minor, contact Robert Taylor, head, Department of Humanities and Communication, rotaylor@fit.edu.

Restauradora de Sueños by Alejandrina Cué—textile collage with oil paint, 2011—part of INTERWOVEN, currently on exhibit at the Ruth Funk Center for Textile Arts.
May 2011 Graduates

HUMANITIES

Patrick Harrigan completed his degree in humanities and conducted research for his capstone project, “Patton: History into Film.”

Anna Vodopiyanova earned a bachelor’s degree in humanities, completing her capstone on “Religion and Early Chinese Emperors.”

Cole Rasmussen also graduated with a degree in humanities. His capstone project included interviews and historical research culminating in the document, “History of Florida Tech Athletics.”

Jillian Knight did a historical and literary capstone project, “The Literary Lenin.” She earned a degree in humanities in May.

Marie Kasten, a multidisciplinary science major, completed a humanities capstone as part of her degree program, researching and writing about “Pre-Columbian Pyramids and Mounds.”

COMMUNICATION

Emily Demsem: “I really enjoyed my time at Florida Tech. The professors in the Humanities and Communication Department truly made my undergraduate university experience memorable. I plan to use my bachelor’s degree in business and marketing communication to pursue a master’s degree in business administration. That is the beauty about such a versatile degree—the opportunities and choices ahead of you are endless.”

Dean Faithfull: “I am from Southampton England. I was on the men’s soccer team at Florida Tech. Enjoyed the communication program as it allowed me to express myself. I enjoy writing and would like to pursue a career in travel writing. I was involved in the production of video campaigns for FITV, including a campaign video for University Park Elementary (a local elementary school). The goal was to attract more students. I also presented a video for FITV, interviewing faculty about student activities on campus. I enjoyed Florida Tech as I got to know some of my professors well and work personally with them.”

Gustavo Fernandez: “Life at Florida Tech was a time I will remember for the rest of my life. I came from a school with 50,000+ students, so I was more than excited to be part of Florida Tech. At Florida Tech, there is a personal touch that I could not get anywhere else. Knowing that I was going to walk into class on a daily basis and not be a student number, but an actual human being with feelings to my professors made me feel welcomed. The administrators, faculty, students and everyone else who was a part of Florida Tech were family. Not only did I feel at home, but with the top-of-the-line technology at my fingertips, I was able to strive and excel in more than one way in my major. Life as a student was excellent and I could not have asked for anything better. Besides a perfect academic program, I was given the luxury to be part of the athletic department that was beyond expectations. Through the practices, meetings, traveling and playing, Athletic Director Bill Jurgens and the coaching staff were there every step of the way. I felt a sense of security at Florida Tech both academically and athletically that I would recommend Florida Tech to anyone.”

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Michelle Veerkoy completed a design project for Sandwatch, a program in which children, youth and adults work together to scientifically monitor and critically evaluate the problems facing their beach environments. Kathleen Rettich’s innovative design project was focused on training engineers to write collaboratively on the wiki and using a wiki to deliver software documentation. Michelle McLean wrote a thesis investigating what effect specific messages about texting while driving have on the public.

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Communication Logo

Last spring, the communication program held a T-shirt design contest to highlight the undergraduate program’s emphasis on strategic communication and celebrate the launch of its new graduate degree in Global Strategic Communication. Students were encouraged to create a T-shirt design that captured the vision of the strategic communication degrees. Students in Dr. Sohn’s graphics graduate and undergraduate classes created designs as a class project, but all communication students were eligible to participate. In April, communication students voted on the designs. The winner was Heather Macy. The runners up were Gustavo Fernandez and Brandon Linquist. Congratulations to the winners, and thank you to everyone else who participated.
Faculty Profile: Ted Petersen, Ph.D.
By Rory Allen

Ever had a professor tell you that he originally went to college to major in rockstar?

“It’s not that I flunked, I just didn’t pass!” said a laughing Ted Petersen, Ph.D., the new assistant professor of communication at Florida Tech.

Petersen, born and raised in the upper Midwest, relocated to Florida after he received his bachelor’s degree in communication from Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minn.

“I wanted to link music and communication through working in a recording studio,” Petersen recalls. “I did not like the late nights and knew that this was not suitable for starting a family.”

His first stop in Florida was receiving his master’s degree in communication from the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa. While at USF, Petersen took night classes in Tampa and worked at a golf course in Gainesville to support himself and his wife.

While a student at USF, Petersen began his love for Bob Dylan by reading a book written by the musical artist called Chronicles 1.

“He was a civil rights activist and a philanthropist, yet he wrote a book about how he was portrayed in a totally different light,” said Petersen.

After USF, Petersen was able to finally secure a job that enabled him to write in a journalistic setting while finishing his doctoral degree from the University of Florida (UF). “I was so glad to finally write for a publication,” recalls Petersen. “I was also very glad the chair of the journalism department was a Bob Dylan expert and enthusiastic!”

While completing his Ph.D. in mass communication at UF, Petersen worked as a journalist, writing for publications including The Gainesville Sun, the Independent Florida Alligator and Florida Engineer.

Petersen posits that journalists, specifically, can learn a great deal from listening to Bob Dylan’s music. Not only did Dylan retell events and stories in his music, but he lyrically expressed contemporary issues of national prominence during that time period.

“I want to make the form and aesthetics of music applicable to journalism,” said Petersen. “I also want to know the impact on listeners who gained their understanding of current events through music.”

Petersen is now an assistant professor at Florida Tech and says he thoroughly enjoys teaching Journalism, Scientific and Technical Communication, and Publishing and the Internet.

“First, I will always strive to be a good teacher,” he said. “That part is easy because I really love coming to work.”

Petersen, who started in August 2010, said he is happy to be a part of a maturing communication program at Florida Tech. Furthermore, working with great students and fellow faculty has helped him remain positive.

As a professor, he wants to distinguish himself as an instructor who uses past and contemporary popular culture as an applicable tool in the classroom.

In his free time, Petersen enjoys running, playing racquetball, reading and time with this wife and two children.

This semester, Petersen is the faculty adviser who oversees the campus newspaper The Crimson and is tasked with organizing the Communication Department’s new media impact on campus, a Facebook fan page dedicated to the education of and participation in new social media.

Pattersons Enjoy China Field Seminar

Professor Gordon Patterson and his wife Joy took part in a three-week Asian Studies Development Program China Field Seminar this summer. The highly competitive program is co-sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Education, Peking University and the Asian Studies Development Program, a joint project of the East-West Center and University of Hawaii.

The seminar, “Frontiers: Culture, Nature and Industry from China’s Northeast to the World Expo,” is an activity of the China-U.S. Faculty Exchange Program. The couple traveled to Yanji, Yanbian and Ha’erbin in the Northeast.

The Pattersons explored modern Chinese history, culture and politics. They spent time in Beijing and Shanghai before and after the field study in Northeast China. “These are considered frontier cities in terms of China’s global outreach economically and culturally,” said Gordon.

Northeast China, where some of the country’s dynasties were established, is among the country’s most culturally and historically interesting. During the Sino-Japanese conflict of the early 20th Century, the area was referred to as Manchukuo. Home to generations of Chinese-Korean and Chinese-Russian minorities and with borders adjoining Russia, North Korea and Mongolia, the Northeast remains an important geo-political frontier.

Joy Patterson is an adjunct faculty member in Humanities and Communication as well as the senior faculty member in the English Department at Melbourne Central Catholic High School (MCC). She is MCC English Department Chair Emeritus. In January, she was awarded the Catholic Educator of the Year Award for secondary educators in the Diocese of Orlando.

Gordon and Joy Patterson spent three weeks in China as part of an Asian Studies Development Program Field Seminar.

Gordon Patterson has served on Florida Tech’s faculty since 1981. He is the university’s historian and documented its history in a College History Series book. Author of three books documenting the history of mosquito control, in 2010 he received the Presidential Citation Award from the American Mosquito Control Association at its annual convention, where he also delivered the keynote address.
Facility News

Andrew Aberdein:
Associate Professor Andrew Aberdein published several entries in Key Terms in Logic, edited by Federica Russo and Jon Williamson. He published three articles: “Strange bedfellows: The interpenetration of philosophy and pornography,” in Porn: How to Think with Kink, Dave Monroe, ed., and “Argumentation schemes and communities of argumentational practice,” and “Commentary on Menashe Schwed, A Wittgensteinian approach to rationality in argumentation,” both in Argument Cultures: Proceedings of OSSA 2009, Juho Ritola, ed. Professor Aberdein made six presentations this past year at international and regional conferences, including three international presentations this summer.

Gabriella Baika
Assistant Professor Gabriella I Baika has two forthcoming articles: “Com’altri piacque: Myth, Weltansicht, and Rhetoric of Otherness in Inferno 26” (from “Romannische Forschungen”) and “Tongues of Fire and Fraud in Bolgia Eight” (From “Quaderni d’Italianistica”). Last fall she organized a panel at the SAML Convention (Atlanta) on the use of the technology in teaching foreign languages, and at the same event gave a paper titled: “Welches Monster ist das?: Student Imagination at Work in the Foreign Language Class.” In May, she organized a panel on Jean de Meun at the 46th International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI) and gave a speech on Dante: “Pride, Wrath and Inverted Grammar in Inferno 14-16.”

Heidi Hatfield Edwards
Associate Professor Heidi Hatfield Edwards was the program chair and vice-head of the Public Relations Division for the 2011 Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in St. Louis. She will be the head of the Public Relations Division in 2011-2012. Dr. Edwards was also awarded a NEH grant to attend a summer institute on Southeast Asia at the East-West Center on the University of Hawaii campus.

Chris Frongillo
Assistant Professor Chris Frongillo presented “Giving the Tragic Boot to the Comic Sock: The Recoding of Christopher Marlowe’s Tamburlaine from Low to High Culture” at the Craft/Critique/Culture Conference at the University of Iowa.

John F. Lavelle

Lisa Perdigao
Associate Professor Lisa Perdigao recently published a book, From Modernist Entombment to Postmodernist Exhumation: Dead Bodies in Twentieth-Century American Fiction (Ashgate, 2010). She had two articles published in Slavoj: The Journal of the Whedon Studies Association in its summer/fall and winter editions: “This one’s broken: Rebuilding Whedonbots and Reprogramming the Whedonverse” and “I hear it’s best to play along: The Poststructuralist Turn in Buffy the Vampire Slayer.” In addition to the publications, Dr. Perdigao presented two papers at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association convention in Atlanta last fall. Last spring she presented papers at the Northeast Modern Language Association convention in New Brunswick, N.J., and at the American Literature Association conference in Boston. In November she will present a paper at the Florida College English Association conference hosted by Florida Tech, and present a paper and chair a session at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association convention in Atlanta in November 2011.

Ted Petersen
In August, Assistant Professor Ted Petersen presented a paper, “Prisoners and Guards: Bob Dylan’s Contribution to the Popular Memory of George Jackson,” at the 2011 Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in St. Louis. In the spring, Dr. Petersen was also named Florida Tech’s Student Life Faculty Advisor of the Year for his role advising the university’s student newspaper, The Crimson. He also received an ACITC minigrant for his proposal, “Supporting the multiplatform communication concentration in our strategic communication program.” With the grant, he bought two Flip video cameras and two digital audio recorders to enhance the communication courses.

YJ Sohn
Assistant Professor YJ Sohn had her article, “Toward Building the Relationships-Reputation Integrated Model” published in the International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications.

She co-authored another article published in the Journal of Public Relations Research, and has an upcoming article slated for the same journal.

Judy Strother
Professor Judy Strother, chair of the graduate communication program, was honored by Florida Tech in April for 35 years of service to the university.

Robert Taylor
Professor Robert Taylor, department head, gave public lectures at the De Groodt Library, “Washington Crossing the Delaware”; the Orange County History Center and the Tampa Bay History Center, “Florida in the Civil War”; and the John’s Island Book Club, “The First Tycoon: The Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt.” He also wrote an Op-Ed piece for Florida Today on the Civil War 150th anniversary. He is currently working with Matthew Ruane on the manuscript, Florida: A Military History.

Angela Tenga
Assistant Professor Angela Tenga’s article, “Dexter Morgan and Christian Troy: Wielding Knives in Miami” appeared in Florida Studies: Proceedings of the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Florida College English Association (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2010). Dr. Tenga presented three papers at regional PCA/ACA conferences and one paper at the Florida College English Association conference. She is the vice president of the Florida College English Association, and chair of the 2011 FCEA conference, which will be held in Melbourne in October.

Fontaine Wallace
Writing instructor Fontaine Wallace was honored by the university in April for 20 years of service to Florida Tech.

Wanfa Zhang
Assistant Professor Wanfa Zhang has a book chapter forthcoming in China: A New Stage of Development for an Emerging Superpower, edited by Joseph Cheng. This summer he made presentations at The Association of Chinese Political Studies (USA) meeting in London and the 2011 Meeting of China’s Academic Consortium of Political Science and International Relations in Beijing. Dr. Zhang also served as chair of the Best Paper Selection Committee of the 23rd annual meeting of The Association of Chinese Political Studies (USA) last year in Boston.
Florida Tech’s Creative Writing Institute (CWI), a one-week seminar dedicated to the creative side of writing gives writers an outlet to channel and express their imaginations. It has been doing this for a total of three consecutive years.

In 2009, the Humanities and Communications Department debuted the institute under the direction of Robert Taylor, department head. In 2010, the institute forged new ways in which to attract a more diverse group of interested writers and it proved to be a success! Assistant professors Jason Harris, Marcia Denius and John Lavelle organized the institute once again.

“We were a success story when we filled enough classrooms for only 50 participants,” says Denius, who teaches Creative Writing. “Now that it’s our third year, we’ve had plenty of time and practice to guarantee a good time!”

This year, the team also employed similar advertising tactics used in 2010. Since the majority of the participants were from the adult writing community, word was spread through book clubs, book stores and local writing groups.

The 2011 CWI kicked off May 22 with an address from keynote speaker and featured author Susan Hubbard. Hubbard, praised among novelists for her unique writing style, expanded upon mixing genres in her opening address titled “Transcending Genres: the New Hybrids.”

A week full of classes on everything from advanced fiction and novel writing to beginning playwriting followed. The courses were offered at various times throughout the week to provide flexibility with scheduling.

The increase in the number of visiting authors also increases the diversity of courses offered. The CWI offered new courses in journalism, writing military thrillers, mystery and horror writing.

Annette Clifford, a former columnist with Florida Today, instructed students on how to craft a personal essay suitable for newspaper or magazine publication. Michael Salazar, a Florida Tech student who also is a published military thriller author and writer in residence, shed light on navigating safely through the story writing process.

The anticipation of repeating last year’s success was motivating for the organizers. “We’re very excited about what we have to offer to writers of all ages in the community,” Denius says.

Planning for the fourth year of CWI is already in the works, and promises to be even better than the third. The CWI is open to everyone. For more information about the institute, visit the CWI website at http://411.fit.edu/cwi.

Although the Florida Tech Music program has only been around for four years, it has made great strides in a short time, and continues to grow and improve.

One of the music program’s goals for next year is to create a music minor. While the program has in the past offered courses that can be taken for credit, having a full minor would mean more diverse classes, as well as scholarships for students.

To have a music minor at Florida Tech, Program Director Jamie Younkin says they need to offer two more three-credit courses and, most importantly, offer studio lessons under “applied music.”

The studio lessons are imperative because it is a system of musical instruction that properly evaluates a student’s capability and then places them with an instructor or class accordingly. It is a system that caters to all students of all music levels.

Besides increased time with an instructor, the music program at Florida Tech offers six showcase concerts for students per year and is striving to activate a performing arts series. The Performing Arts Series, scheduled to open in the fall of 2011 (found on the department website), will provide an interactive teaching setting for students, professors and musicians of the university and community.

“While we do not have showcase concerts in which students can receive credit, we award students with certificates regardless,” said Younkin positively. “Awarding a certificate allows the student to list the performance in future résumés and gives that student a sense of accomplishment.”

In addition to the minor, the music program also plans to start a marching band to coincide with Florida Tech’s new football team.
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