



# UKnighted

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## Spring Break Students Make a Difference

*More than 80 UCF students and 10 faculty and staff members volunteered in six states as part of Alternative Spring Break.*

Spring break is often seen as the height of collegiate fun and frivolity. Students plan exotic getaways that provide an experience that takes them far away from the rigors of everyday life. During this spring break, a group of UCF students chose to participate in an opportunity that undoubtedly took them far away from their everyday world. These students took part in UCF's Alternative Spring Break (ASB), sponsored by Volunteer UCF and the Learning and Interacting with New Knights (LINK) Program. ASB places teams of UCF students in communities around the country to engage in volunteer service projects with local non-profit agencies, not simply in the pursuit of pleasure, but in hopes of making a positive change in the lives of others.

This year's ASB trips sent students as far north as Maryland and as far west as New Orleans. Projects involved students in a variety of activities from assisting with the demolition of a house on North America's only elephant sanctuary to working in the classroom with underprivileged children. ASB participants made a difference at the following service sites:

- Mid Atlantic Border Collie Rescue, Chestertown, MD
- Hurricane Katrina Relief, New Orleans, LA (2 trips)
- Habitat for Humanity, John's Island, SC
- Elephant Sanctuary, Hohenwalk, TN
- Environmental and historical preservation, Jekyll Island, GA
- Café 458 (a shelter and restaurant for the homeless), Atlanta, GA
- Cumberland Trails, Crossville, TN
- Junior Achievement, Birmingham, AL

Each trip is comprised of eight students, one student site leader, and one faculty/staff advisor. The site leader goes through an extensive training program and plays an integral role in planning the trip and in the development of the service learning plan for the entire experience. Many students attending this year's ASB are returning participants, some of whom have accepted the additional responsibility of becoming site leaders for their trips. According to Dan Samuels, a senior site leader for one of the two New Orleans ASB trips, "Being a site leader provided me with a great opportunity to take on a leadership experience while working with



Maryland trip: Students cut donated wood for future building projects at the Mid-Atlantic Border Collie Rescue.

students who all share the same passion that I do." The advisor also goes through a training program and assists the site leader in planning the trip; on-site the advisor leads the logistical oversight and group reflection. The role of advisor is also a wonderful opportunity for the university's faculty and staff to interact with exceptional students.

Carita Felipe, ASB student director, has participated in ASB since her freshman year. Reflecting on her own ASB experience Carita said, "I've made life-long friends through ASB, and I think that's one of the main points I try to make on ASB. I think everybody should be interested in ASB, even if it's just for one year, because it's an experience that will mean more to them ten or twenty years from now than any cruise or week spent lying on the beach—and it will also have a lasting impact on those they help while on ASB."

Though it can be difficult to explain how powerful this experience can be, freshman participant, Lisa Cunningham, shares her feelings after working with the children of Birmingham, "ASB was the most inspiring and life changing experience I have ever taken part in. Helping those children feel important and showing them that their dreams are obtainable was beautiful. Within six days, I grew so close with nine strangers that we are practically a family. One week changed the way I think, one team changed the way I work, and one hundred children changed the way I believe."

The participants of Alternative Spring Break display a dedication to community and personal values rooted in a strong sense of integrity that reflect the values exemplified in The University Creed. For more information on ASB, visit: [www.asb.getinvolveducf.com](http://www.asb.getinvolveducf.com) or call the Volunteer UCF office at 407.823.6471, which is located in the Student Union, room 208.



Besides working at the Sea Turtle Center, volunteers performed numerous tasks throughout the island. Katie Brooks, student, landscaped on Jekyll Island.

## Steps Taken to Keep Students Safe at Pegasus Landing

Orlando, Florida, “The City Beautiful,” is most widely known for its many attractions and for being the home to one of the largest universities in the nation, the University of Central Florida. According to *Forbes* magazine, Orlando is one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. With growth comes crime. This increase prompted UCF officials and local off-campus student housing properties to consider some changes to better protect students.

UCF affiliated Pegasus Landing, one of the largest off-campus student housing facilities in the nation, has become a model for other local apartment communities after some recent upgrades to the property. In 2007, under the leadership of the Department of Housing and Residence Life and in partnership with UCF Police Department and College Park Communities, major safety initiatives were undertaken. The first was fencing the entire property; this project took six months and thousands of feet of fence to complete. The second was the addition of 24/7 access control and property patrol. In March, access to Pegasus Landing was no longer public. Only residents and registered guests are able to access the property through decal controlled gates or two 24-hour manned guard houses, which visitors must pass through to gain entry. In addition, security and housing personnel performed patrols around the property and provide resident services as requested.

Within the boundaries of the property, Housing and Residence Life staff work very hard to educate the residents about safety. Residents are provided many types of educational opportunities, including programs hosted by UCF Police that allow students to register and ID their property and learn about drugs, overall personal safety tips and more. In addition, residents are provided passive programming efforts, including monthly bulletin boards, brochures and fliers educating them on protecting themselves and their property, travel safety, holiday safety and making good decisions. These efforts combined with the major property upgrades have made Pegasus Landing a leader in the market.

Crime rates have been on a slow decline since August 2007, and since the gates were activated, there has been no notable crime reported on the property. No person or place is immune to crime, but it is efforts like these that will have lasting impacts on UCF students’ success.



The gate guard talks to a guest while a Pegasus Landing resident travels with ease into the community.

### Students Comment on Safety Prevention Measures at Pegasus Landing

- “My car was broken into before the gates were up, and there was this sense of lawlessness at Pegasus Landing, but now that we have gates, cameras and 24-hour guards, I feel comfortable living here.” –Brian
- “I have been here for almost two years and have always felt safe and have been happy with what the complex offered. The new gates, however, puts it over the top for me. It really shows me that UCF and College Park [management company] are dedicated to their students. I am looking forward to calling Landing my home another year.” –Linda
- “I thought the gates would be a pain and slow me down, but they are quick and easy to go through. Having security guards and cameras monitoring the entrances make me feel much more secure.” –Chad
- “The new gates have made us [residents] feel safer where we live. The guards are very thorough with non-residents and the residents get through the scanners with no problem.” –Chelsea
- “Safety aside, the gates are helpful in other ways. Traffic and parking within the complex seems much lighter now that the gates are working. People might be frustrated that it takes a little longer for guests to enter, but it’s nice to know that the gates are serving their purpose and the courtesy officers really are monitoring who is entering and exiting Landing.” –Amy
- “The first time my friend came to visit, after the gates went down she said she felt that the community feels safer” –Joe



### UCF Outdoor Adventure Journeys to Costa Rica

The Recreation and Wellness Center’s Outdoor Adventure Trips program embarked on their first-ever international trip to Costa Rica. UCF students enjoyed eight days of Costa Rica’s people, natural scenery, local foods and intense outdoor pursuits. Activities included white water rafting in the Sarapiquí River, hiking in the La Tirimbina Rainforest and the Continental Divide, horseback riding around the active Arenal Volcano and a relaxing dip in a hot spring heated by the volcano. In addition, students enjoyed the cool waters of the La Fortuna waterfall, a scenic zip line tour in Monteverde and a tour of an exotic frog sanctuary. At the end of the week, students planted trees in the lowlands.

“We had to drive on a really bumpy road to get up and down the volcano, but oh my, it was amazing. We saw volcanic activity, which apparently is a rare treat; so we got lucky,” said Jeff Herrera, student.

## Rosen Career Expo Has Record-Breaking Attendance

Recently, Rosen College of Hospitality Management held its annual Spring Career Expo attracting 56 leading national, regional and local industry employers, and 1,240 students—surpassing the previous attendance record (set in Fall 2007) by 370 students/alumni. Prior to the expo, Rosen hosted several other events including the First Annual Career Development Day (including employer panels, mock interviews, resume reviews and networking roundtables) attracting over 100 students and 20 employer volunteer participants.

“The success of the event stemmed from the collaborative effort of over 100 faculty, students and staff, who contributed their time and effort to make Rosen College’s Career Expo the most attended hospitality industry specific college career expo in the United States,” said Dave Jenks, assistant director for Career Services. Rosen College’s total Fall ‘07 and Spring ‘08 Career Expo students/alumni attendance increased by 60 percent from 1,250 in ‘06-07 to 2,110.

## Student Assistant Crowned King of the Court

Julia Harper, student assistant for the Registrar’s Office, recently won first place in “King of the Court,” a business pitch competition held by the UCF Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, an initiative of the College of Business.

Harper’s idea for memory foam shoe soles for women, “My Perfect Shoe Technologies,” was the result of five months of work and thousands of dollars invested in pursuing patents. For winning the annual event, Harper will receive \$1,500 and is automatically qualified to participate in the UCF Joust Business Plan Tournament, which awards \$20,000 in cash prizes to the top four finalists.

## UCF Daytona Hosts Health & Fitness Fair

UCF Daytona Beach held a Health & Fitness Fair on February 27, co-hosted by UCF’s Student Government Association, Daytona’s Student Nurses Association and the Student Services Office. UCF participants from SDES included Joanne McCully and Kim Halliday, Recreation and Wellness Center; Bob Wirag, Health Services; Tom Hall, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programming; and David Wallace, Counseling Center. Other Daytona Beach Campus participants included several student organizations, Fitness Center and the Counseling Center. Over 100 students, UCF faculty and staff attended the event despite the cold, windy day. Health-related booths provided information on sun protection, healthy nutrition, blood pressure screening, fat analysis, dental hygiene, tobacco awareness, STDs and sexual health, stress management, spiritual wellness and more. Wallace provided seminars on Question, Persuade, Refer suicide prevention training and stress management. McCully and Halliday led a fitness demonstration. Additionally, SGA provided food, drinks and a scavenger hunt.

## Creative School’s Artwork Displayed in Campus Bookstores

It was time to get messy at Creative School for Children. The Early Experience 2 class enjoyed a morning of artistic and tactile fun as they created a colorful masterpiece on their outdoor patio area on March 18. The children in this class (3-4 years old) combined their love for music and physical movement with sensory expression by creating a red, blue and purple mural. The children dripped, smudged, walked and danced through this fun project that lasted all morning.

“Children learn by doing, and all children can experience the joy of self expression if given the time and space to do so,” says Suzanne Caffery, instructional specialist. “At Creative School for Children we focus on the process, not the product. We want to encourage children to carry art in their hearts as they grow and develop. We want to offer our young learners opportunities to express their individuality everyday. Imagination and curiosity are the channels through

which we work to develop a child’s love for lifelong learning.”

UCF senior philosophy major and Creative School work study student, Amber Viladesau, created a classical/contemporary music mix to enhance the creative movement for this project. “It’s good to see the children having so much fun creating art,” said Viladesau.

The artwork will hang at the UCF bookstore (John T. Washington Center) and the Barnes and Noble (Towers at Knights Plaza) from April 11-18.



## Majors Fair 2008: What’s the Major for Mii?

For the past several years, hundreds of students, faculty and staff have congregated in the Pegasus Ballroom for what has become UCF’s annual Majors Fair. The event is a SDES collaboration with the Learning and Interacting with New Knights (LINK) Program, Registrar’s Office, Transfer and Transition Services, First Year Advising and Exploration, Sophomore and Second Year Center, Multicultural Academic Support Services and the Student Academic Resource Center. On February 13, the tradition continued with over 500 students, a 15 percent increase from last year. Although many aspects remained the same, there were some exciting changes. With the assistance of Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, a raffle was held with the grand prize of a Nintendo Wii system.

“Here in SDES, we strive to keep our students engaged,” said Felix Daniels, assistant director for Career Services. To qualify for the drawing, students were required to meet with faculty and staff from their respective colleges. Faculty noted that although required, students expressed genuine interest in gaining major-related information. Out of hundreds of entries, forensic science major Kerri Keirman walked away with the grand prize.

## Veteran Services Passes Compliance Survey Review

Under the leadership of Jim Middlekauff, assistant university registrar, and Ross Leshinsky, program assistant (Veteran Services), the Registrar’s Office received a perfect result in a Compliance Survey Review. As part of the survey inspection conducted by Kathy Turner, education liaison specialist from the St. Petersburg Office of Veteran Affairs, a random sample of files from 50 students were chosen and checked to ensure certifications were filled out correctly and that no students qualified for Veterans’ benefits are being overpaid or underpaid according to their course load. All 50 files were found to be in compliance. Dennis Dulniak, university registrar, thanked Middlekauff and Leshinsky for their “dedication and attention to detail to provide such excellent service to our veterans.”

## Welcome to SDES

- **Kathy Butler**, assistant university registrar, Registrar's Office (RO)
- **Caryn Garcia**, office assistant, Health Services
- **Janet Johnson**, assistant university registrar, RO
- **Trang Nguyen**, program assistant—Transfer Summary Report, RO
- **Rachida Parks**, senior systems programmer, Health Services
- **Andrea Richardson**, program assistant, RO

## SDES Division Changes

• **Rebecca "Becky" Piety** is now director for the University Testing Center (UTC). For the past three years, Piety has served as assistant director for the UTC. She joined UCF in 1998 and has over 10 years of experience in the field of higher education specializing in testing and academic support services. She earned her Masters of Arts in English Language Arts Education from UCF. Piety is very active on campus through various service committees. She serves as the chair of the Student Success Center Assessment Team, serves on the CLAST Waiver Committee, is a member of the SDES Divisional Review Committee, and serves as the Institutional Test Administrator for the University. Piety's office is located in Howard Phillips Hall, room 107.

## SDES Awards and Recognition

• UCF has earned the **2007-08 Prevention Excellence Award Highest Honors** among universities for its alcohol education program on campus. The Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programming, led by Director Tom Hall, offers students the AlcoholEdu online course that educates them about academic, social and legal consequences of alcohol use and provides information about available campus resources. Outside The Classroom donated \$10,000 to support UCF's alcohol education and prevention efforts. UCF's AlcoholEdu team was commended for their outstanding prevention success. In addition, UCF received national recognition in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' (NASPA) Leadership Exchange magazine. UCF and other award recipients were honored at a reception that took place during the NASPA Annual Conference.

## SDES Presentations

• **Dennis Dulniak**, Registrar's Office, presented "Successful SPEEDE Electronic Document Exchanges" at the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) annual meeting at the Orlando World Center Marriott Resort. Dulniak served as the conference's co-chair of volunteers.

## SDES 10th Annual Breakfast Celebration

April 17, 8 – 9:30 a.m.

### Student Union, Pegasus Ballroom

SDES faculty, A&P, USPS and full-time OPS

are invited to the celebration.

Breakfast buffet will be provided.

Awards/certificates will be presented.

## SDES Reconsidered: The Discussion Continues

### Kerry Welch

Director, Office of Student and Involvement  
Primary Facilitator, SDES Reconsidered

*A vacation is exciting, filled with anticipation about the opportunities that will be available once you arrive at your desired destination. When planning a trip, travel books and glossy brochures are reviewed and ideas are gleaned from many sources. You are filled with enthusiasm as the plane taxis away from the airport and lifts off. However, even the most veteran traveler, while flying for several hours over the ocean with no land in sight, will often have a moment of trepidation when he or she realizes there is no turning back. That may be how some of you are feeling about SDES Reconsidered.*

As we move into the next phase of this process, it is important we not lose sight of the key factors that led to the SDES Reconsidered initiative. As we begin to craft student learning outcomes in each of our respective units, identify how the programs and services we provide are designed to achieve these learning goals, and write Institutional Effectiveness (IE) plans for the coming academic year, let's not forget some basic principles.

First, SDES Reconsidered is much more than an addition to IE Plans or a revision of program goals, it is a *re-vision* of the Division of Student Development and Enrollment Services. It is much more than discussions of student goals or strategic planning for the delivery of programs, it is a change process designed to provide a new lens from which to view our work as student services staff. We need to remind ourselves of our purpose for engaging in a career in student programs and services. Most of us embraced this work because of the opportunity it provided to help students, to offer them advice and assistance as they work through difficult life challenges, as well as to be part of a community that provides opportunities for students to succeed. SDES Reconsidered helps to make those actions intentional, observable,

measurable, and therefore, more rewarding.

Second, we need to consider what we know about student learning, how student experiences in college can affect students' sense of self and others. Recent developments in educational research confirm what we might have intuitively theorized, that knowledge does not exist objectively (a process of attaining information and retaining it), but rather that *learning* includes the construction of meaning, the roles of self in society and the ways in which context shapes perception and relationships. Meaning emerges from inquiry, knowledge acquisition and the relationships and conversations among people. These are the types of learning opportunities we aspire to provide for students who participate in SDES programs and services. SDES Reconsidered is the vehicle for capturing those activities that already exist, and for developing new activities that promote the learning process in our students in the hope they will change, grow and transform.

Third, transformative learning is a process of going beyond gaining factual knowledge alone to instead become *changed* by what one learns in some meaningful way. It involves questioning assumptions, beliefs and values, and considering multiple points of view, while always seeking to verify reasoning. Most people need to find patterns and meaning in what they are learning. Active, experiential learning followed by cognitive processing in emotionally safe environments produces extremely powerful, or transformative, learning experiences. We provide that safety and develop those interventions from which students can make meaning in their lives.

Current unit assessment results across the division have clearly identified the amazing impact we have on students' lives. As we begin to implement SDES Reconsidered using the knowledge, training and planning that have led us to this point, it is important we do not lose focus on the *real* opportunity this initiative provides for each and every staff member in the division: the opportunity to grow as professionals and to impact students' lives in even more powerful and effective ways than we are already.



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