Thank You Patti MacKown For Your 35 Years at UCF!
UCF’s Common Reading Program:
Read it. Love it. Live it.

The incoming FTIC [First Time In College] class had something new to talk about this summer—“UCF’s Common Reading Program.” Coordinated by the Office of First Year Experience, every incoming student received a copy of the same book at orientation to read over summer, and then had the chance to participate in events throughout the year relating to the theme of the book.

The first book selection was Garbology: Our Dirty Love Affair with Trash by Edward Humes. The author discusses the 102-ton legacy of trash and how everyone can work to lessen their own trash legacies. He provides startling facts along the way such as:

- “Americans throw away 96 billion pounds of food per year. Approximately, 4M people a year could be fed with just 5% of that waste.”
- “694 water bottles are thrown away by Americans every second.”
- “5.7M tons of carpet is sent to landfills each year—all of it could be recycled, but mostly it’s not.”

Humes addressed the incoming class at the Convocation on August 17. A film series, sponsored by the Unifying Theme, was shown on September 26. Other programs will include the National Recycling Week and Volunteer UCF events. Scholarship contests will occur during the school year.

“In addition to programming, several classes have and will continue to incorporate the Common Reading Book into their courses,” said Abby Nobili, coordinator for FYE. “During summer, the freshman seminar course SLS 1501: Strategies for Success used the book in all sections, and Dr. Hernandez encouraged students to read the book and offered extra credit on exams in CHM 2041: Chemistry Fundamentals IIB classes. During fall, SLS continued on with the book and Dr. Reilly’s EGS 1006: Introduction to the Engineering Profession has incorporated the book as well.”

Nobili added, “With over 300 colleges and universities in the U.S. using the Common Reading program, the FYE staff was excited to add this program to campus.”

Students will learn how they can work to lessen their own trash legacies.

PRIME STEM/Student Support Services has launched its first learning community. The PRIME STEM Learning Communities is a resource designed to support scholars to succeed in their coursework and promote overall academic success. “Think of this as study groups by subject,” said Rebekah McCloud, director SDES TRiO, PRIME STEM/Student Support Services.

The PRIME STEM Learning Communities are scholar facilitated (and can be aided by peer tutor/mentor staff). Each learning community or study group organizes its meetings and participants bring their own study materials. The PRIME STEM/Student Support Services office is available for scholars to use as a resource center including study materials, study spaces, computers, free printing and access to program tutors and mentors.

The learning community also includes study aids for biology, chemistry, trigonometry, calculus and algebra. Additionally, there are study skills materials such as note-taking, effective studying techniques, and test-taking tips and core group of modules for program participants. Some modules include: How to Form a Study Group, Making Connections and Adjusting to Challenges.

“Since we have instituted the learning communities, we have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of scholars who come into the office to meet with study groups, utilize resources and/or meet with a peer tutor or mentor,” said McCloud.

For those scholars who prefer to meet virtually, PRIME STEM was recently awarded an Information Fluency grant to expand its web course (PSP1000) through Canvas. In the future, the program will expand the course offerings to develop major-specific virtual learning communities. These communities will be supported by tutors. Additionally, this grant will assist the program in developing a number of modules that will address fluency (information, textual, scientific and mechanical).

Students Get Smart at Summer Social

The Sophomore and Second Year Center held a Summer Social on July 2 for Accelerated FTICs (students coming to UCF for the first time with 30 hours or more college credits) at Academic Village in the Nike Programming Center.

The theme was “Get Smart.” Students met with academic advisors from SSYC, support staff from the Student Academic Resource Center, Career Services and Study Abroad.

Attendees learned about valuable academic resources, strategies for academic success, and heard from a student panel who discussed their UCF experiences and gave advice to incoming students. The panel also included an active question and answer session, followed by an interactive Trivia game played by the students attending this session.

Panel L-R: Ri-Enne Grant, Samuel Ortiz, Richard Jarrell and Daniel Mashburn

The initiative began because PRIME STEM staff noticed that students (especially the biomedical sciences majors) were changing their majors to Health Sciences and the program was no longer able to service them. The National Center for Education Statistics at the Institute of Education Sciences (U.S. Department of Education) noted that some 28 percent of beginning bachelor degree students…entered a STEM field at some point during their enrollment…and 48 percent had left these fields by either changing their majors or leaving college altogether without completing a degree or certificate.

“It is imperative that we are proactive in doing all we can to assist our students to pursue a STEM major. I do not want any of them to become a statistic,” said McCloud. “Of the 180 students PRIME STEM has served, prior fall semester 32 (17%) have changed their majors. Clearly not as high as NCES reports, this number is still cause for concern, informal dialogue with PRIME STEM ‘major changers’ revealed that the overwhelming majority changed their majors because they experienced failure with math and sciences courses (most among the GEP), particularly calculus, trigonometry, and chemistry. We are hopeful that these learning communities will help students to increase their academic performance,” McCloud added.
First-generation college students face a myriad of challenges when they are the first in their family to take the leap from high school to higher education. College can be exciting, but it can also be filled with anxiety and uncertainty. Most of these college students don't have anyone in their families to offer support and first-hand advice on how to succeed in post-secondary education. Many first-generation students are also members of an ethnic minority group, and not only need academic advice, but guidance necessary to navigate day-to-day campus life.

Student Development and Enrollment Services staff member, Dr. Cyndia Morales serves as the assistant director for Multicultural Academic & Support Services, where she coordinates the programs, First-Generation and Multicultural Transfer. She is passionate about her work and understands these students as she was a first generation college student as well. She persevered through life’s barriers—financial, personal, emotional, social and educational—to achieve her dream. Now she guides and advocates for first-generation students to continue their education.

Morales, a daughter of Puerto Rican parents, was born in Brooklyn, New York in an area known as Bedford-Stuyvesant. She was raised in a Spanish-speaking home and had to learn the English language when she began school. Morales said she took pride in doing well in school and enjoyed the attention of being student of the month and certificates she would receive. Her parents, who completed 4th and 7th grade levels, were not able to provide her with academic guidance, but were extremely supportive of her education.

“My neighborhood motivated me to further my education,” said Morales. “It was inner city poverty, where most families were on public assistance…you would hear gun shots fired frequently. My parents were treated badly, they were invisible; my mom didn’t speak English.”

Morales had overheard some commentary about college over the years and thought, “I needed to do something good, make my family proud.”

As a high school senior, Morales went to her guidance counselor to inquire about applying to Binghamton University, but was discouraged to do so, because of her SAT scores, and was recommended to apply for a community college. Luckily, a visiting counselor from a local non-profit organization saw her crying and asked her why she was upset. He advised her to inquire about the Educational Opportunity Program, a six-week summer bridge program, in the State University of New York system. The EOP is similar to UCF’s Access Program [SOAR and Pegasus Success six-week academic, on-campus summer programs for selected groups of freshman who receive additional academic preparation before attending classes in the fall].

The visiting counselor told her everything she had to do and assisted her in filling out the forms including FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid]. He even placed them in a stamped envelope for her to mail. Everlasting friendships are made when someone makes a positive impact in one’s life. Morales and the visiting counselor are still in touch today.

A few months later, she began her college classes at SUNY Binghamton by way of the EOP program. Campus speakers would talk about the resources and offices that would be helpful to students at the program’s forums. Most of all, the bridge program helped prepare her for the cultural shock she was going to experience. She grew up in New York City always surrounded by people “like” her. Morales said, “The program prepared me to face the fact I would now be part of the ethnic minority…that there may only be 1 to 2 Latinos or blacks in my classes.”

Having successfully completed her summer bridge program in 2003, she went on to pursue a Bachelor’s in Sociology. During her time at Binghamton, she served as a on-campus housing Resident Assistant and pledged a sorority. In 2005, she was accepted into the McNair Scholars Program, a federal TRiO program dedicated to assisting underrepresented minority and first-generation, low-income students in gaining admission to graduate school.

With the support of the McNair Scholars Program, Morales went on to pursue a master’s degree in 2006 at St. John’s University near her home. She was fortunate to receive a research assistantship through this program that covered her tuition; she also received a stipend. Frank Biafora, director of St. John’s McNair Program at the time, encouraged Morales to go on for her doctorate at a different institution, as it would demonstrate open mindedness and a will to take risks. While at St. John’s University, she also had the opportunity to study abroad to the Dominican Republic, as a Fulbright-Hays Scholar.

A year later, she was admitted to UCF to pursue her doctoral studies, and was awarded both the McNair Graduate Fellowship, as well as the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship- a fellowship dedicated to the sponsorship and development of African American and Latino Ph.D. students.

She says she feels fortunate to have the opportunity to work with and for multicultural and first-generation students in MASS, advocating for their needs. Morales inspires students when she shares her story. She attributes her success to the caring individuals who believed in her and the support programs that provided her with the necessary steps and resources to move forward. She is proud of her accomplishments as a first-generation Latina and aspires to pave the way for others.

Morales advice to first generation students is “It starts in you, ‘I can do this.’ Believe in yourself and convince yourself you are worthy to go to college. Make a decision and set goals, be proactive, intentional, follow up and be consistent. Take advantage of the resources to help you succeed. Surround yourself with positive people who have your best interest in mind.” Most of all, she says it is persistence and resilience that is needed, “You’re going to make mistakes, but those set backs are not the end.”

Morales understands the students in MASS, she has walked in their shoes. She knows how to help them and is a pillar of inspiration of “You can do it!”

UCF Capped Off Summer 2014 with Two Commencement Ceremonies

UCF's alumni ranks expanded once again last month as over 2,300 graduates took part in the two Commencement ceremonies held August 2.

Both ceremonies saw charter members of the UCF Board of Trustees serve as Commencement speaker with Judy Albertson speaking during the morning ceremony while Phyllis Klock addressed the graduates in the afternoon. Both also received honorary doctorate degrees with Albertson receiving a Doctor of Humane Letters degree while Klock was presented with a Doctor of Commercial Science degree.
Student Development and Enrollment Services staff had the opportunity to interview the 2014-15 Student Government Association Student Body President Weston Bayes and Vice President Sydney Altfield.

Both Weston-Sydney served in leadership roles during their UCF collegiate years such as with UCF Homecoming, Knight-Thon and the SDES Advisory Board. Sydney came to UCF from Miami, and is a senior majoring in event management. Weston’s hometown is Naples; he is a senior studying political science-prelaw. They met early at UCF in their freshman year in the SGA Student Body President Advisory Committee and mentorship program. They have been friends ever since. Now this team in the role of SGA president and vice president will oversee a budget of $17.5M.

SDES: What does your campaign slogan, “Stand Uknighted,” mean to you and how are you going to apply it during your term?

“The campus has great departments and agencies but they don’t often cooperate very efficiently together. We want to be that ‘glue,’ to unknight them, and work collaboratively.”

There are many items on the platform but Weston-Sydney said the #1 priority is campus safety which encompasses the:

- Mobile Blue Light App provides students a new measure of security and safety. It’s not a panic button but more of a safety precaution timer. Weston used this example: “If someone wanted to get from the library to the arena late at night, they could set a timer of 10 minutes on the app. If 10 minutes go by and he/she has not checked in through the app, then the UCF police will be contacted to go check on your whereabouts.”

- KnightLYNX: The late night shuttle runs Downtown Orlando Friday and Saturday from 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. and is free for students with a UCF ID. “We are trying to publicize this initiative to do better in school. Weston would like to “Use space that we already have” such as unused rooms in the Student Union that students aren’t even aware of. These empty rooms could be posted online for availability. SGA would also like to connect students to one another for increased tutoring options. Students learn very well from one another. Raising scholarship awareness to all eligible students, providing a variety for leadership positions, service and needs. SGA would like to diversify scholarships and provide more creative scholarships such as the ‘Fresh Start’ scholarship which is available to students who have a 2.5 or below to give them the initiative to do better in school. Opening up a Resource Center for Registered Student Organizations in the Student Union for more collaborative space for school organizations. SGA wants to make it easier for RSOs to find space within UCF such as unused classrooms. Currently, the Office of Student Involvement accommodates approximately 60 organizations; there are over 500 RSOs. Expanding on the Multicultural Student Center and LGBTQ+ will now be a branch of Social Justice and Advocacy. The mission of Social Justice and Advocacy (SJA) is to promote an equitable campus environment where all are assured that diversity, in its many forms, is valued. For more information about SJA, visit: sjau.ucf.edu.] Promoting new services and programs that UCF holds through surveys and social media. Weston wants more students involved, and goes on to say, “We are trying to get more than just the same 300 students to show up.” Promoting healthier lifestyle changes such as providing students with recipes that are easy and inexpensive that could be supplied by the Health Center and Recreation and Wellness Center. These recipes could be hung in the common areas of on-campus residence halls.

- “Becoming first zero-emission and Decreasing carbon footprint would definitely be a long-term goal but we can start out small hoping to one day achieve a bigger change,” said Weston-Sydney. SGA wants to promote activities to be more green-sensitive. A small step in that direction is to promote students to reuse their water bottles by filling up at the water fountains in the Student Union and RWC.

Weston-Sydney would like to create more pride for UCF and are passionate about a cultural change working toward the university’s goal of becoming the first zero-emission. They are looking for that long-term affect. The 2014-2015 academic year will be a busy one to ‘unknight’ and assist departments to collaborate more for common causes.

One of the projects started last year that Weston-Sydney would like to continue is the bike rentals throughout UCF and expand the service near on-campus residence communities as well.

Whether it will be short term or long term accomplishments, it will take one step at a time. From implementing completely new initiatives or expanding on others, Weston-Sydney Stand Uknighted to make this academic year a great one at UCF.


U.S. Representative John Mica, whose congressional district includes UCF, visited the Veterans Academic Resource Center (VARC) on August 8 to find out more about how UCF is helping its student veteran population. Associate University Registrar and VARC Director Paul Viana presented an overview of the VARC’s services while Alzo Reddick, assistant vice president for University Relations and director of Defense Transition Services, presented Rep. Mica with information about UCF’s Soldiers to Scholars program. Vice President University Relations Dan Holsenbeck; University Registrar Brian Boyd; Career Services’ Director of Career Development Bill Blank; and various student veterans were also on hand to speak with Rep. Mica and answer questions. Rep. Mica plans to return to UCF in the future to attend a VARC programming event. More information, visit: varc.sdes.ucf.edu.
RWC Seniors Accepted GA Positions Nationwide

The Recreation and Wellness Center continues to improve on its reputation for developing students as the next generation of campus recreation professionals. Five of RWC’s graduating seniors have accepted graduate assistant positions at various universities across the country.

Twenty-two seniors from the RWC student staff have accepted campus recreation graduate assistantships the past three years. Graduate assistants play a vital role in helping recreation facilities to reach annual goals. GAs gain experience in operating recreation programs while having a chance to earn their master degrees. Institutions waive their tuition in exchange for their work.

The seniors and their new universities include: Melissa Lewis, Fitness (University of South Carolina); Jamie Mineart, Intramural Sports (Texas A&M University); Patty Suarez, Intramural Sports (Ohio University); Kelsey Vance, Fitness (Purdue University); and Billy Waechter, Intramural Sports (University of Georgia).

The 2014 GAs are some of the most honored and recognized student staff members at the RWC: Lewis, is the 2013-14 RWC Program Employee of the Year, Suarez was honored as a National Campus Recreation Basketball Tournament official and officiated her first Division III College Basketball game in the spring, Vance is a former fitness lead supervisor, and Waechter is the February 2014 RWC Employee of the Year and a National Flag Football Official of the Year and a Regional Flag Football Tournament official.

Mineart is the 2013-2014 RWC IM Sports Supervisor of the Year. The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association [NIRSA] also honored her, with the William Wasson Student Leadership and Academic Award in 2013-14. Mineart, a two-time All-Tournament Official at NIRSA's Regional Flag Football Tournament, says the RWC has really helped her carve out a career path, “I got involved with the IM program by chance, but it was one of the best things that happened to me at UCF. Not only did I meet amazing people but the professional and personal development I gained is priceless.”

UCF Kappa Sigma Fraternity, One of Nation’s Top Chapters

For the first time in its history, the UCF Lambda-Epsilon chapter received the fraternity’s Founders Circle award, the highest award any Kappa Sigma chapter can receive. Only eight out of 314 chapters nationwide received this award from the Kappa Sigma International office. For a chapter that had reorganized in 2010, the evening reflected the culmination of hard work over the past four years.

The chapter won additional awards at the Kappa Sigma Leadership Conference including the Outstanding Single Community Service Event (Chromsakkuh-Benefitting Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Florida), Chapter Intramural Achievement Award, Top 25 Recruiting Chapter, as well as individual awards. Brandon Schwab received the Outstanding Grand Treasurer award and Dennis Hooper received the Outstanding Grand Master Award. Kappa Sigma also received its fifth Founders Award for Chapter Excellence.

Dennis Hooper, president of the Lambda Epsilon chapter, had some proud words to say about his fraternity: “This has been a long journey. It started when I pledged in fall 2011 when we just got back on campus. We set goals, stayed committed, and achieved more than we could imagine. It wasn’t easy, but the end result was the motivation to keep pushing.”

UCF Lambda-Epsilon receives high recognition.

Registrar’s Office Receives Diversity Grant

The Registrar’s Office applied for and received a Diversity Activity Grant for this academic year from the UCF Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Diversity and inclusion will be the key theme to a Registrar’s Office staff training event in January, and the grant will help cover costs related to training supplies and a dynamic speaker.

“Diversity and Inclusion are an important part of the UCF culture, the priorities of SDES, and the priorities of the Registrar’s Office,” said University Registrar Brian Boyd. “We are very excited to have received this grant that will help us further our professional development.”

According to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Diversity Activity Grants “assist organizations and units in sponsoring diversity speakers, programs, and activities in support of the UCF goal ‘to become more inclusive and diverse.’"
SDES Promotes Healthy Knights

Knights of All Ages Share Their Personal Stories during First Ever “Coming Out” Discussion

Direct, honest, gracious, appreciative, disappointed and apprehensive were the range of emotions UCF students and staff members experienced during an intimate look at the lives of colleagues, friends and classmates. LGBTQ Services and the RWC collaborated to host a special panel discussion on coming out to celebrate Gay Pride Month.

Nine panelists, student, faculty and staff alike, shared their personal stories of coming out to family and friends. Lacey Carter, chair of the RWC Diversity Committee says the goal was to educate the campus community, “We just wanted to give students a chance to ask questions to help them possibly navigate through the coming out process themselves or with a family member or friend, as well as show the variety of different experiences each person that comes out goes through.”

UCF Health Services Ranks No. 2 Among Nation’s Universities, Colleges

UCF’s Health Services was ranked No. 2 in the nation from among more than 2,500 universities and colleges, according to a survey of students released by The Princeton Review.

UCF’s ranking was included in the education company’s annual guide, The Best 379 Colleges, which was based on responses from 130,000 students nationwide.

Health Services’ goal is to provide excellent health care and promote lifelong well-being in the UCF community. It maintains an accredited practice that offers a wide range of medical services that students need most. These include primary care, women’s health, psychiatry, sports medicine, and specialty services such as clinical dietitian services, physical therapy, dental services, alcohol and drug intervention services.

The center is a one-stop shop for student health and includes a pharmacy, lab and radiology services all in one convenient location. Health Services serve UCF’s large and scattered student population by providing another pharmacy in Knights Plaza and smaller clinics on a number of the university’s regional campuses so that students are near the care they need to remain healthy.

“We pride ourselves on continually improving through research and understanding our patients’ needs so that we can be their health care resource of choice,” said Dr. Michael Deichen, Health Services director.

Health Services averages about 6,000 patient visits each month and soon will begin an expansion project to add dedicated space for international student health, a travel health clinic, and programming space for alcohol and other drug-intervention services. The 12,000-square-foot expansion is scheduled to be completed by fall 2015.

Nearly 80 students and staff members attended the session including students from Christine Hanlon’s Gender Issues in Communication class. The panelists included:

- Tyler Sims, Student Union
- Hank Lewis, Information Fluency
- Stephanie Preston, Counseling and Psychological Services
- Kelsey Jones, senior
- Arthur Ugalde, senior
- Cecilia Chik, Pride Coalition
- Kayla Deskins, junior
- Nikki Hankins, senior
- Michael Nunes, junior

The panel was part of the RWC Knights Leadership Series which is a monthly education and development session for student staff members. Pride Faculty and Staff Association, CAPS, SU, and SDES members helped market the event.

Knight Camp Welcomed 150 Newly Admitted Students to UCF

A week prior the fall semester, Knight Camp welcomed 150 newly admitted students to UCF by providing them the opportunity to meet incoming and current students, learn UCF traditions, and grow personally and professionally through activities and games. Students were placed into Knight Camp House groups and were knighted by Knightro.

In its second year, this three-day, two-night program had a change from last year’s agenda with a new volunteer project and a highly immersive diversity activity. Knight Camp partnered with the “No Child Hungry” organization and students packed approximately 17,900 meals. Through meal-packing events and financial support, No Child Hungry is able to provide nutritious food for children. Students also participated in a diversity activity called the Game of Life, where they were “put in the shoes” of someone of a different socio-economic status, gender, and other aspects of society. This activity introduces dialogue and provides awareness to the diverse population that surrounds “us.”

After Knight Camp ended, participants volunteered in UCF Housing and Residence Life’s early move-in program to help welcome incoming students as they moved into their residence halls. For more information, visit: osi.ucf.edu/knight-camp.
Marc Mero, former WWE wrestler, motivational speaker, and founder of Champion of Choices spoke at UCF. He addressed both the attendees at the Case Manager Drive in Conference representing over 13 universities across the State of Florida, along with UCF staff, students, faculty and administrators. In addition, as an SDES professional development opportunity, he presented a special workshop for SDES staff members.

Mero shared personal struggles and the current trends he has seen regarding student mental health issues, bullying, harassment, and suicide and how we can come together as a community to support our students in need. He shared a presentation similar to the one he shows for the middle and high schools nationwide, and the overwhelming responses he receives from students that are going through many of the struggles that he himself experienced. He has worked with many K-12 school systems, attempting to implement better follow-up care for students in distress, and discussed that many of these distressed students may be transitioning into institutions of higher education and that we need to be aware of how to support them.

A good introduction to Mero’s work and initiative is available in this CNN clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXMBCu-sxS0&feature=youtu.be.

Mero is founder of the nonprofit organization Champion of Choices. The goal of Champion of Choices: Positive choices are the key to the healthy development of America’s youth, and lay the foundation to strengthen families and society. The goal of the Champion of Choices School Program provides a motivational learning experience for youth that builds positive life skills, improves school cultures, and strengthens family relationships.

World Jump Rope Competition
From Trinidad and Tobago to France and Tanzania ... over 600 participants from more than 12 countries resided in the UCF residence. The UCF Housing Conference Services team hosted the 2014 World Jump Rope Competition that began on June 30.

The housing conference team said “it was an exciting challenge” as this group was not only on a ‘linen plan’ but many of the athletes did not speak English. The team was busy with many tasks including translating general housing signage for the groups.

“Seeing the amazing talent of these dedicated individuals was such an inspiration,” stated Lisa Roney, Association of College and University Housing Officers-International intern. “We really enjoyed working with them.”

The Housing Conference Services team reported they were pleased that hosting this group was such a success.

A Rugby Repeat for the Knights
Underdogs one year and a national juggernaut the next; either tag is just fine with the UCF Men’s Rugby Team. On their way to a 2013 national championship experts considered the Knights longshots to win a rugby national title. A year later, UCF rolled into Palo Alto, California and Stanford University as the heavy favorites to win a second consecutive championship. They did not disappoint, UCF shook a slow start in the USA Rugby Men’s Division I-AA title match against the University of Arizona to defeat the Wildcats 64-13. This is the UCF Recreation and Wellness Center’s eleventh Sport Club national title and a second in a month. The UCF Paintball team won a national title in April.

The biggest impact of the back-to-back titles is the exposure to UCF’s Rugby program, “I’ve met kids in high school that know about our program,” says Chiffoleau, “it gives them a reason to come to UCF.” Ross says it’s put them on the map in the international community too, “Students from France have contacted me about playing here. Players who normally would be interested in UF’s [University of Florida] and FSU’s [Florida State University] programs now say, ‘I’ll go to UCF to play rugby’.”

UCF Sport Clubs are part of UCF’s Recreation and Wellness Center, funded and supported by the Student Government Association.

Creative School for Children Now Accepting Infants, Toddlers

The Creative School for Children has expanded opportunity to more of the children of UCF students, faculty and staff members. Starting August 18, UCF’s early education school serves infants and toddlers ages 6 weeks to 24 months. The children of parents who are UCF students will be given first priority.“There is an increased demand for high-quality infant and toddler care across Orange County. Even as providers increase services, waiting lists exist at all accredited programs,” said Amy Hesse, director of the CSC. “This leaves UCF students and staff unable to secure a place for their youngest learners while the parent strives to improve their family’s future through higher education and employment,” Hesse said. “That’s why we’re providing a single location for families to receive the best learning environment for all children.”

In 2011, the school was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The accreditation recognizes the school’s quality, accountability and service for parents and children in child care programs, reflecting the best practices in early childhood education and development.

The school encourages children to become lifelong learners by giving them opportunities to reach their highest potentials, while providing them with meaningful experiences that help them develop critical thinking and communication skills.
Welcome to SDES

New employees or employees who changed positions within SDES: May–August 2014

- Tracey Boywid, office manager, Registrar’s Office
- Courtney Buzan, coordinator, Office of Student Involvement
- Amethyst Castro, financial aid specialist, Student Financial Assistance
- Ashlee Companion, coordinator, Housing & Residence Life
- Dana Glenn, coordinator, SFA
- Jonathan Hall, coordinator, Career Services
- Diana Houle, advanced registered nurse practitioner, Health Services
- Joshua Rasheed Johnson, coordinator, Registrar’s Office-Veterans
- Cyndi Kirk, executive administrative assistant, SDES
- Lindsey Lombardi, program assistant, Undergraduate Admissions
- Ana Maia, assistant director, Student Union
- Kaityln McEconomy, coordinator, H&RL
- Yung Nguyen-Siddiqi, physician, HS
- Brenda Posey, coordinator, Activity & Service Fee Business Office
- Chanda Postell, coordinator, Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Ashli Ransome, coordinator, H&RL
- Katie Riley, coordinator, Academic Services for Student-Athletes
- Neal Robinson, assistant director, CS
- Edgar Robles, admissions specialist, UA
- Seth Scott, senior web designer, Information Technology
- Limbachia Silpa, accountant, HS
- Jena Smith, coordinator, First Year Advising & Exploration
- Daira Torres, office manager, RO
- Shaketha Threats, financial aid specialist, SFA
- Jessica VandenBerg, teacher’s aide, Creative School for Children
- Jonathan Villadolid, web applications programmer, IT
- Lamar Walker, coordinator, OSI
- Valerie Wexler, coordinator, Recreation and Wellness Center
- Marcie Wiseman, psychologist, CAPS

SDES Changes

- Erin Butler is the director for First Year Experience.
- Craig Froehlich is the director for SDES Information Technology.
- Edwanna Andrews is the director for the newly formed Social Justice and Advocacy office which oversees LGBTQ Services and Multicultural Student Services.
- Tava Bingham, formerly in Office of Student Involvement, is now assistant director for LEAD Scholars Academy [formerly Student Leadership Development].

SDES Staff

SDES on the Move—AVPs Relocate

SDES was involved in an organizational review process for several months. This review was conducted to evaluate how the assimilation of three new departments—Undergraduate Admissions, Student Financial Assistance, and Student Outreach Services—would impact leadership, structure, communication, and operations within the division.

As a result of the review, SDES relocated its senior leadership team members and their executive administrative assistants to offices within the SDES suite, Millican Hall 282:
- DeLaine Priest—MH 277
- Gordon Chavis—MH 278
- Kerry Welch—MH 268

There was additional moves among the assistant vice presidents and their executive administrative assistants:
- Chanda Torres—CSEL, room 227
- Belinda Boston—SU 207
- Mark Gumble—SU 305
- Dave Pavlounis—MH 270, SDES suite

Thanks to Rick Falco and his Student Union team, specifically Gary Campbell and Jaime Morales for facilitating these moves. Thanks to the SDES IT team for their assistance in relocating computer equipment and working with CS&T to transfer phones. Phone numbers will remain the same.

Training Enhances Teaching Skills

LEAD Scholars have the opportunity to learn about leadership studies and leadership development from student affairs professionals and faculty members from across disciplines here at UCF. There are four classes offered in the LEAD Scholars Academy curriculum and the Leadership Studies minor and certificate program which provide knowledge, skills and leadership experience using classroom and service learning opportunities.

These instructors attend a yearly summer training meeting to enhance teaching skills and leadership education. Staff from the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Center for Distributed Learning, and LEAD Scholars provide interactive presentations and sessions for LEAD instructors.

USPS Employee of the Month, Year

Jim Sullivan won USPS Employee of the Year. L-R: Vice President Bill Merck, Jim Sullivan and President John C. Hitt

Cynthia Almanzar, senior financial aid specialist Student Financial Assistance, was selected as USPS Employee of the Month for May and awarded USPS Employee of the Year. His co-workers say, “He has one of the most positive attitudes regarding his work duties combined with an extremely great work ethic that makes him a phenomenal employee.” “One of Sullivan’s greatest attributes is his ability to adapt to all the changes and fast pace of work orders.”

Cynthia Almanzar (middle) with co-workers Dawn Herrod and Rafael Durand

Hidden Artists Exhibit at UCF

UCF has many talented employees who use their creativity in their daily jobs. Some of these employees are “visual artists” who create artwork on their own time for themselves, their families and/or the public. They are the “Hidden Artists.”

The Hidden Artists exhibited their artwork at the John C. Hitt Library from August 1-September 29 and featured the talents of: SDES Dawn Herrod, Simona Loh, Meredith Malkin, Linda Milner, Russ Muller, Judy Bragg Pardo, Brian Pate, Diane Colvin Retitz, Bridget M. Savage, Tina Tran and UCF Jacqui Johnson and Fiona Murphy.

The Hidden Artists group was formed by Judy Bragg Pardo in 2007. This was the 6th year exhibiting artwork at the UCF library. “Art is a language spoken visually and each viewer can relate to the artwork differently. Each creation is a part of us that we share with you,” said Pardo, coordinator.