

Student Affairs



Spring 2011

A Message From Patricia McKinley

Vice President, Student Affairs

Now that we are into the spring semester, I thought that I would remind parents that there is something that just doesn't change at the University of St. Thomas. We are firmly rooted in our core values of goodness, discipline, knowledge, and community. Whether student, faculty, or staff, when you sign on at St. Thomas, you are making a commitment to demonstrate these values in your everyday life. This is not to say that we go around talking about our values daily—some days we do—but through our actions we show that we are living our values.

The Student Affairs team provides activities and support services that allow students to internalize and strengthen these core values. As an example, the annual President's Day of Service, which is held in February, offers the opportunity for our community to work together to help others and to improve our own surroundings. This year, we planted a memorial garden at Guinan Hall, painted walls in Crooker Center, cleaned benches on campus, made pillows for children in hospitals,



and made blankets for caregivers to help comfort children in crisis. We worked together as a community of goodness. In Student Affairs we do not formally teach, however we do provide academic and developmental support to our students that allows them to grow in knowledge. That support may come through the Tutoring Center where students can find tutorial assistance that can help

them be successful in the classroom. Or, it could be through Counseling and Disability Services where students can seek support to help them cope with challenges that may be interfering with their academic success or personal development. We offer opportunities to engage in activities that will help our students develop personal responsibility, accountability, and integrity, thus reinforcing the importance of discipline in their lives. They may serve as a resident assistant in one of our residence halls, participate in 24-hour Adoration, mentor a Freshman Symposium group, play on an intercollegiate or intramural team, or become a student leader in student government or one of our clubs or organizations. They can choose from a wide variety of opportunities to grow in goodness, discipline, knowledge, and community.

I hope that you will read further to learn more about these out-of-class opportunities. You are always welcome to email us at studentaffairs@stthom.edu or call us at 713.525.3570.



Campus Life: Finishing Strong

Matt Prasifka, Assistant Vice President of Campus Life



The Department of Campus Life consists of the Office of Student Activities, the Office of Recreational Sports, the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness and the Office of Residence Life. These departments stay busy coordinating events throughout the semester.

On Tuesday, March 1st, the Annual Health Fair took place on the Crooker Patio and in the Old Bookstore. Some of the vendors present were UT Health Services, Innate Chiropractic, Tru Meals, UST departments and much more. Free health screenings and vaccinations were available. Many UST students, faculty and staff were in attendance to make it a successful event.

On Saturday, April 2nd, the Inaugural Concert in the Courtyard took place in the UST Student Life Mall. The Office of Residence Life, Student Government Association and local Houston bands came together to support a worthy cause; all admission proceeds went to the Houston Food Bank to help put food on the tables of local Houston families in need. Concertgoers were asked to bring \$1 or one canned good to gain admission to this great benefit concert.

In addition to planning many events, the Office of Residence Life is now accepting reservations for students to take advantage of living on-campus for the 2011-

2012 academic year. Convenience, safety, friendships and a welcoming atmosphere are just a few of the exciting pieces that students talk about when they choose to live on campus. Talk to your student today about the on-campus advantage and stop by our main housing office for a tour. We are excited to welcome you home!

On Sunday, May 1st, the 9th Annual Leadership Banquet will be held. At the banquet, students will be recognized and awarded for their efforts during the 2010-2011 school year. There are six distinguished individual honors bestowed including the Presiden-

tial Leadership Award. There are also a number of club/organization awards given such as the Outstanding Club/Organization of the Year. The day consists of a brunch and the award presentations in the Scanlan Room of the Jerabeck Activity and Athletic Center.

On Wednesday, May 4th, the 8th Annual Stay Afloat for Finals will take place at the Jerabeck Pool. This event features food, music, prizes and contests. The highlight of the day will no doubt be the Belly Flop Contest. Other activities include a sand volleyball tournament and a basketball spot shot competition. This event provides students a chance to blow off some steam and relax by the pool before they start to study for final exams. Please direct any questions to:

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Director of Student Activities

Jessica Domann, domannj@stthom.edu
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Coordinator for Health Promotion & Wellness

Yolanda Norman, normany@stthom.edu
Director of Residence Life & Conference Housing



Athletics

Todd Smith, Athletic Director, Head Basketball Coach

The University of St. Thomas' athletic department is growing with the additions of Women's Basketball and Men's & Women's Golf starting in the fall of the 2011 academic year. The Women's Basketball program will hit the court led by new head coach Mike Ricks.

Ricks has been a volunteer assistant coach for the Celts Men's Team for the last two years. Prior to his arrival at UST, Coach Ricks led both the boy's and girl's teams at Northeast Christian to state titles. Matt Luther was named Head Men's and Women's Golf Coach on March 7th. Coach Luther has also worked as an assistant golf coach at Houston Baptist University.

With the start of these three new programs, the UST Athletic Department will double in size. The Women's Volleyball program is the oldest program

and recently finished its 5th season. The Lady Celts captured its third straight Association of Independent Institutions (A.I.I.) Conference Title with a 24-16 record and qualified for the NAIA National Tournament for the third straight year.

Men's Soccer finished their 4th and most successful season to date. The Soccer team competed in its first ever NAIA National Tournament and finished second in the A.I.I. with a 10-7-2 record. The Men's Basketball Team, in just its second year, completed their regular season with a .500 record before losing a two-point nail-biter in the conference tournament. The Celts ended the year 13-14.

These additions will begin the process of the Celts joining the Red River Athletic Conference, which will allow the teams to compete with more schools in



the region. More information about the Athletic Department and the individual teams can be found on the website: www.ustcelts.com.

Connecting with Students

Rose Signorello, Ph.D., Executive Director of Counseling & Disability Services

Counseling and Disability Services (C&DS) works to build community and enhance the UST learning environment not only by providing individual counseling and disability support for students, but by sponsoring various campus events.

Each year programs are organized in recognition of national awareness dates, such as National Autism Awareness Month and National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. For National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, we covered portions of mirrors in bathrooms around campus with affirming statements. We encouraged people to think about their internal self-worth and qualities as opposed to their external appearance. In some locations, people chose to spontaneously write their own affirmations underneath ours. We were happy to be part of such a positive dialogue regarding self/body-image.

We also continue our long-standing tradition to host our finals stress relief event with the Health Promotion and Wellness



Department, Express Your Stress. The spring Express Your Stress takes place on Thursday, April 28th, 2011, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m., in Crooker Center. As usual, we will offer free chair massages, stress-relieving activities, snacks and a drawing to win a movie gift card for a study break.

In addition, we will have therapy dogs visiting us for this event. Therapy dogs are known for their calming and uplifting influence, and we're excited to have them on our campus for the first time.

In April, in recognition of National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, C&DS

will be presenting The Clothesline Project: A visual testament to the problem of violence against women. Colorful t-shirts will be displayed in Crooker Center this month that were created by the victims of domestic violence. This visual display is powerful and sobering, and is a way to start people talking about how to prevent violence in their communities and homes.

We will host private workshops where students can create a t-shirt if they choose. Counselors will be available to provide support and education. Anyone interested in attending a workshop to create a shirt should contact our office at 713-525-2169.

The mission of C&DS is to be a campus resource, easily accessible for problem-solving, counseling, consultation and disability-related support services. With creative supportive services, C&DS strives to enhance student success from initial college transition through degree completion.

A Fruitful Spring Semester

Department of Campus Ministry

The seeds planted at the beginning of this academic year are bearing fruit. Campus Ministry began the 2011 Spring Semester with the traditional Mass of St. Thomas Aquinas, the patron saint of UST, praying for his guidance and help during the Spring semester.

A growing number of our students are participating in daily Mass and Confession and this semester 60 students, faculty and staff are participating in weekly 24-Hour Eucharistic Adoration, a fundamental element of the spiritual life on the UST campus. Many students have shared that spending an hour each week before the Holy Eucharist makes a real, positive difference in their lives.



The Chapel of St. Basil continues to be the heart of the mission of UST. New this year, several students are serving as Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist and lectors at the Sunday 10:30 am Mass in addition to the Sunday 7:30 pm Mass and the 12:30 pm Thursday Mass in Spanish. We welcome students who are interested in being trained to serve in these ministries as well as in the altar server and music ministries.

The UST community is enjoying and supporting the Campus Ministry fundraising activities for students going to the August 2011 World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain. Fr. Michael Buentello, UST Chaplain and Director of Campus Ministry, is continuing his famous barbecues and has added a new fish fry. The Campus Ministry Second Annual Chili Cook-off was even larger and more delicious this year with nine teams competing and more students, faculty and staff enjoying the varieties of chili.

During Lent, we are sponsoring spiritual retreats for men and women students. Fr. Mike is taking the men to Palacios, Texas (his hometown) for a weekend retreat and Sister Mary Roberta Connors with Campus Ministry and Augustine Without Walls is hosting a day retreat for women with the Catholic Daughters at the home of the Franciscan Sisters.

We are also preparing students in our RCIA Class to receive their sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil. Also new

this year, Campus Ministry is sponsoring Divine Mercy Sunday on May 1 and inviting the Basilian parishes near the Houston area to join UST in a lecture, Confession, Mass, and picnic. In conjunction with this feast day, UST will be celebrating the Beatification of Pope John Paul II.

Faith and reason are flourishing at UST and growing, "deep in the heart of Houston!" For more information, contact our office at 713-525-3589 or email us at campusministry@stthom.edu.



Career Chatter

Lindsey McPherson, Dean of Students, Director of Career Services and Testing

The Career Services Center is your student's one stop for career planning, job search, resume assistance, etiquette tips, plus anything else career-related.

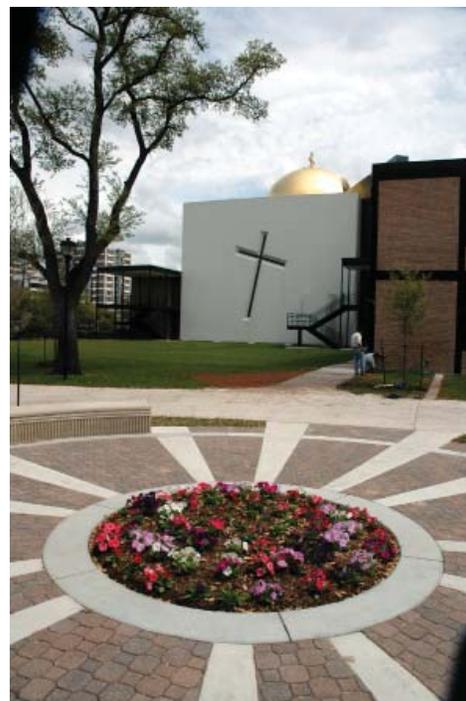
This year, we are excited to announce that students now have access to the Business Journal Online, which includes the Houston Business Journal and 41 other Business Journals throughout the United States.

This resource allows students to conduct research for job interviews, receive daily email updates, have access to networking events throughout the city, research industries, and expand their networks, plus so much more. Your student can access this resource at anytime through our website, www.CeltCareers.com.

With less than half a semester left before summer, we are wrapping up what has been an exciting and eventful year, full of career fairs, networking events, recruiting events, and workshops and trainings on various career related topics.

This year, we've started using social media to promote events, share resources, and announce various opportunities. If you are active on Facebook or Twitter, we invite you to follow us! You and your student can also watch our website, www.CeltCareers.com, for career resources and career events.

While on our website, don't forget to check out our parent section for tips on helping your student be successful both during college and upon graduation.



Students Helping Students Succeed

Constantina Michalos, Ph.D., Director of Tutorial Services

The Tutorial Services Center (TSC), formerly The Learning and Writing Center, is located in 207 Crooker and offers free, comprehensive, personalized instruction from trained student tutors and staff professionals. No appointments are necessary. Peer tutors are available Monday - Thursday from 9:00-7:00 and Friday from 9:00-2:00. Not all subjects are covered each day. Students must check tutor schedules posted in the TSC for their specific course needs.

Subject areas we cover include: Accounting, Finance, Computer Programming, Mathematics, Biology, Bioinformatics, Philosophy, Chemistry, Political Science, English, Psychology, Greek, Latin, Public Speaking/Communication, History, Spanish, International Studies, Theology, and Writing, both general and subject-specific. In addition to one-on-one assistance, the TSC also offers monthly workshops in thesis development, the research paper process, writing a successful essay examination, usage errors, and identifying academic integrity issues. Please check Campus Announcements and the TSC website for these dates. We now also

offer assistance in French, and English as a Second Language (ESL). By spending several hours a week tutoring in all language levels, the French tutors are earning Service Learning credit in Dr. Felisa Reynolds's class. We hope that more faculty will institute Service Learning components in their classes and afford their students the opportunity to tutor in the TSC to earn those credits. This way, we can expand the number of subject areas in which we provide assistance.

Our ESL tutor is fluent in Asian and Spanish dialects. She assists many of our international students for whom English

is not a first language. Her work definitely helps these students better understand their subject content areas and succeed in their studies. In addition, she is working with Education majors and graduate students who will be working with non-native speakers of English in their future professions. All of the tutors participated in an ESL workshop conducted by Dr. Paul Mandell, assistant professor of Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition at UHD, during which he described how and why second language learners process, learn and use English. As a result of this workshop, all of the tutors are now able to serve our non-native speakers more effectively. Recently, Dr. Randy Soffer, Education, conducted a workshop during which he discussed learning differences among students, how the tutors can best identify those differences, and which strategies are most useful under individual circumstances. Through these workshops, the tutors in the Tutorial Services Center augment their strong academic skills with information and strategies that will make them better tutors and the TSC a stronger resource for all the students of the University of St. Thomas.



Academic Advising

Sara Laidlaw, Director,
Academic Advising

As many of you know, the UST Core Curriculum has been revised for the 2011 - 2012 academic year. Many of these changes will affect your student's academic plan. Our office is here to help.

Please make sure your student schedules an appointment to meet with our Academic Advisors if they have not already done so. We want to make sure everyone is aware of the changes, and to help students plan so there are no surprises when it comes time to plan for graduation. Our office is located on the 2nd floor of Crooker Center. Please call us at 713-525-3494 or come by to make an appointment.

Commencement

Office of the Registrar

Baccalaureate Mass

- Location: Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
- Date & Time: Friday, May 13, 2011, 6:30 p.m. (Participants should arrive by 6:00 p.m.)
- Regalia: Students will wear caps & gowns (no hoods) and process as a group to their seats.

Graduation Reception

- Location: On Campus
- Date & Time: Friday, May 13, 2011, following the Baccalaureate Mass (approximately 8:00 p.m.)
- For questions: Please contact the Alumni Relations office at 713-525-3115.

Commencement Ceremony

- Location: Reliant Arena
- Date & Time: Saturday, May 14, 2011, 10:00 a.m. (Participants should arrive at 9:00 a.m.)
- Regalia: All participants are expected to wear full academic regalia. For the procession, students should wear caps & gowns, but should carry the hoods over their arms. They will be hooded as part of the ceremony. Regalia is available at the UST Bookstore. For additional information, contact the bookstore at 713-525-3806.
- Parking: Parking at Reliant Arena costs \$10.00 per car (subject to change). Easiest access is the Naomi entrance from Fannin St.

Fostering a Culture of Student Success

Ricardo Montelongo, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Student Success

This is an exciting time at the University of St. Thomas. In addition to the numerous opportunities for students to become involved with their campus and communities, there continues to be development and growth in programs aimed to enhance the academic involvement of students. I'm enthusiastic about UST's efforts to help students reach their college academic goals.

One such effort is a formal referral process that can be used by faculty members to inform students and their academic advisors of academic difficulty. This process, known as Academic Warning Notice, gives students detailed information on how to improve their performance. The notices can include referrals to on-campus resources like Counseling and Disability Services or the Tutorial Services Center, or specific comments with further advice on how to overcome their academic difficulties. Students receive the notices through their stthom.edu email addresses. During Fall 2010, over two hundred notices were produced to reach out to 175 UST students. This statistic is evidence that our faculty want our students to succeed. As this program continues to grow, we are paying attention to its results.

Other initiatives to promote a stronger academic learning environment include the Mendenhall Summer Institute, now going into its fourth summer of giving UST students a "head start." The Institute includes a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics track (commonly referred to as "STEM") to prepare students for college majors and careers in these areas. Great outcomes came out of the 2010 Mendenhall Summer Institute cohort. Fall term and overall GPA averages were a little over 2.9 for these students. In addition, Mendenhall students who enrolled in their first UST English and Mathematics courses on average performed better as a group compared to all freshmen who enrolled in these courses. Exciting results are emerging from this program and soon we will see its first group of UST graduates!

These are just a couple of strategies highlighting UST's efforts to improve student success. With the help of the professionals that comprise the Mendenhall Achievement Center and the many faculty, staff and administrators that contribute to making our campus a supportive one for student learning, our campus will work hard to help students persist to achieve their goals.



Edited by Jennifer Shannon. Special thanks to Ronnie Piper for pictures, and Gwen James and Patty Amaya for proofreading.