The Road Less Traveled

SEVEN OF UCF’S BEST BLAZE NEW TRAILS
He is truly a community hero.

Dr. Hitt’s calm and steadfast determination to benefit the Central Florida community serves as an example to all of us for the care and consideration that a university president should and must have for his or her community, and the society at large.

Rick Leedle
President, Florida Senate
2003-2007
Former Florida Governor
2012

Dr. Judy BenSe
Professor of Accounting, College of Business Administration University of North Florida
John Hitt has left an amazing and lasting mark… His efforts to expand the university and our community are extraordinary, his standards of excellence are extraordinary, his determination to benefit the Central Florida community serves as an example to all of us for the care and consideration that a university president should and must have for his or her community, and the society at large.
When Dr. Enrique Puig, director, shows visitors around the Morgridge International Reading Center (MIRC), there are two things that make him enthusiastic bubble over. The first is his collection of elementary reading books, bookcases from 25 years of teaching in the Orange County Public School system.

“She [is] all from around classrooms,” he says, gesturing to the rows of brightly colored spines.

The second is a six-in-the-arm conferencing device equipped with an enormous high definition screen and voice-automated cameras.

“Very cool,” is his succinct hack description.

Clearly, the span is comfortable striking several worlds at once. Growing up by a bilingual household, filled with “people reading all the time,” imparted both a love for reading and the ability to embrace multiple perspectives and ideas. His father read newspapers. His mother read books. His grandfather, a Pan Am pilot, brought home magazines from all over the world. As a result, Dr. Puig gets hooked on the written word in all its forms.

Now that there are more forms than ever, he has become the catalyst for a new generation of readers. As director of the annual UCF Book Festival, Dr. Puig spearheads an event that will bring 11 authors and a projected 4,000 readers to campus this year. And as director of MIRC, he develops educational programs that teach instructors how to teach reading—a complex job now that students rely on so many different resources in so many different media.

But has technology changed his own personal reading habits? “Books are great for traveling,” he says. “But when I come home, I go back to traditional bound books. I just can’t imagine curling up with a tablet.”

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Dr. Jennifer Tucker doesn’t want this story to be true about her. She’d rather it be about her students, doctors of physical therapy candidates who spend their spring breaks sitting on the top of a third-world orphanage instead of lying on a sun-soaked beach. They are part of a joint effort instigated by UCF and SHARE’s International outreach program of the Florida Hospital Foundation to provide physical therapy and education on children’s homes in Kingston, Jamaica. Dr. Tucker, an instructor in the Department of Health Professionals at CORPS, spearheaded the project, and since 2008, 25 of her students have taken the trip. This year, three of them will return as clinicians leading a team of their own.

This story is also about the women who work in those orphanages year-round—mothers and grandmothers from the surrounding village who had the heart not the training to care for sickiled children. Each year, the visiting therapists teach them a little more. And this is definitely the story of Bimbola, a 40-year-old widow with muscular dystrophy who has lived in an orphanage all her life. She’s looking forward to this March, when the therapists will bring her a bigger wheelchair to replace the one she’s worn out.

Still, when it comes right down to it, this story must be about Dr. Jennifer Tucker, who in 1997, answered an ad for a “pediatric therapist with a spot of adventure and a driver’s license,” then went on to create programs that changed the lives of every student, congaiger and child in her path.

More than anything, though, this is a story to be continued.

Nadia Comaneci, she says. Dr. Waldrop sits back, gazes out the window at the crystal blue water and thinks to herself, “Why walk when I can run?” Dr. Waldrop says. “I can’t even remember when I started; it just seems to have forced native ants out of their natural habitats, actually rose to dominance by seeking

population functions solely as “sperm rockets.” A group of female workers tasked with invading their invasive species known as fire ants.

Now, Dr. King is exploring a potential role for ants in ecosystem services (when an organism’s natural functions provide some value to humans). Maybe his discovery will finally answer the question that has plagued him throughout his career: “What good are ants anyway?”

A molehill aluminum cast of an ant’s nest hangs from the ceiling. In the dark, six ant cards are pinned inside a box, swarming identification. Next to them sits a vial of dead termites. Still, the most interesting thing perched in the office of Dr. Joshua King, in the truth.

Considering a queen, executed for not producing enough offspring. A community whose entire male population functions solely as “sperm rockets.” A group of female workers tasked with invading their

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Knights in the News

Transportation Solutions

UCF transportation experts—led by Civil Engineering Professor Essam Radwan—are part of a team that has been awarded $6.5 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish a Southeast-based university research center to study the nation’s transportation needs.

The Southeast regional center is one of 22 such hubs funded for a total of $77 million by the DOT’s Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

More jobs and economic investment may be coming to Central Florida thanks to the creation of the new Center for Microgravity Research and Education. “If we’re going to be exploring and operating equipment and scientific instruments on environments such as the moon or asteroids, it’s essential to understand how things behave in that low-gravity environment,” said Joshua Colwell, the director of the center and an associate professor of physics at UCF.

The center will establish Central Florida and the Space Coast as a national leader in scientific utilization of the emerging commercial suborbital launch industry. Its facilities are at the Kennedy Space Center’s Space Life Sciences Laboratory and the UCF Orlando campus.

The center will conduct fundamental research in ground-based laboratories, on parabolic microgravity airplane flights, with a laboratory drop tower, and on suborbital rocket flights. The center will also develop experiments for the International Space Station.

When Art Meets Science

During the past two years, research students have met with art students to explain scientific breakthroughs and concepts. The artists, in turn, create tangible artifacts to exemplify the ideas.

“Some painting students were inspired to create futuristic visualizations about the wondrous and often abstract theories presented. Others attempted to illustrate the scientific principles,” said Carla Poindexter, an associate professor of art. “Others responding by creating works that sometimes the potential ramifications of the science we discussed.”

Michael Georgiopoulos, electrical engineering and computer science professor and interim assistant vice president for research and commercialization, said the initiative, funded by a five-year National Science Foundation grant, establishes collaborations between researchers from different disciplines.

“Researchers sometimes have a difficult time communicating what they’re doing in scientific terms, but the project involving UCF visual arts students is helping to bridge that gap,” says Georgiopoulos.

Gravity Research Gets Lift

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival awarded junior Kevin Goina “Distinguished Performance by an Actress” for her role as Black Mary in Gem of the Ocean. Be Boyd, associate professor, was awarded “Distinguished Performance by a Faculty Guest Artist” in the same play.

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University of Central Florida

This Day in UCF History: 12/19/1978 UCF women’s volleyball squad claims the AIAW National Championship, which was an early women’s equivalent of the NCAA. Coach Lucy McDaniel predicted early in the season that her team would go unbeaten. They ended the season with 35 wins and no losses.

Energized Hospitality

The Rosen College also participated in a campuswide competition to reduce its consumption of water, electricity and natural gas. The overall results of the challenge exceeded goals and led to more than $10,000 in savings. The college recorded 10 percent savings in electricity, 25 percent savings in water and 20 percent savings in gas for the semester.

First Day on the Job

During his first week, Vice President and Director of Athletics Todd Shanbrom traveled to the Big Apple for the Big East Conference meetings. “I’ve met with a large group of energetic UCF alumni, here are Todd’s reflections on the trip:

The power of the New York media is amazing. The Big East’s huge media platform will present outstanding opportunities and exposure for UCF.

I saw a lot of familiar faces. I know many of my peers in the Big EAST, and those relationships will be a huge help as we make the transition.

Our young alumni in New York are so enthusiastic! I can’t wait to see—and hear—them in the stands when we play in the Big East men’s basketball tournament!

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT FACEBOOK.COM/UCF
It’s great to be a UCF Knight! Thank you so much for your incredibly warm welcome and kind words of encouragement as my wife Karen and I join the Knights family.

Our Golden Knights Club members and season ticket holders are the backbone of our program and among our most dedicated supporters. Thank you in advance for your generous support and loyal commitment to our team and university!

In 2012, our football team will be competing for a record-breaking third C-USA title. And in 2013, we’ll be contending for our first BIG EAST title! Today, outstanding coaches and their support staffs are pushing our student athletes to reach their full potential in modern facilities where fans can enjoy championship performances. And in classrooms, laboratories, courts and fields, leaders are being created because of your generous financial support. In fact, all of our teams improve with your help in funding scholarships, attending games and buying UCF merchandise.

As an incentive to act now, and to cement our commitment to our most loyal fans, we are offering a new, two-season pricing offer for football season ticket holders. As a 2012 football season ticket holder, you will be able to lock in the same discounted, per game pricing next year when you renew your season tickets for the inaugural 2013 BIG EAST football season.

We now must take care of the business at hand and maintain our focus on our final season in C-USA while preparing to make the statement in 2013 that a trip to Bright House Networks Stadium is not a Florida vacation. Thanks again for your loyalty and support. Go Knights!

M. Todd Stansbury
Vice President and Director of Athletics

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