Hello and welcome to the first ever newsletter for the Provost’s Scholars Program (PSP). I am Kari Piatt, founding editor-in-chief of Breaking Stereotypes. Those of us involved in Breaking Stereotypes hope to create a newsletter that captures our PSP events, our successes, and our issues as we manage to do our university experience in three years rather than in four years. In our newsletter, we will highlight the accomplishments of PSP students, such as the remarkable service trip Jennifer writes about and the education abroad experience Sean tells us about in this issue. Our advice columnist Cristina will be offering sage advice to all PSPs.

In the Fall of 2011, the PSP began as a way to provide an opportunity to students to graduate USF in three years. Some requirements exist to enter this program, such as entering USF with at least 18 credits and having a certain GPA in high school. However this program provides many other great opportunities such as invites to attend exciting events and funding to travel abroad. Another opportunity provided by PSP that is not to be forgotten is the special dinners and lunches with the Provost and the President of USF. This gives us direct access to these university leaders and we learn from their experiences how to navigate our future. PSP is extremely worthwhile and I know I am always proud to explain to my peers what it is all about!

We hope to provide you with a “sense of community” through this newsletter. The first class of PSP that will graduate next year (2014) and they have been so helpful to the cohort destined to graduate in 2015. When the time comes, we hope to also use this newsletter to welcome yet another class into the PSP, the class of 2016!

If ever you as a student in PSP have any concerns about being a part of this program or have anything that you would like to share about your experience, this is the place to go. We plan to fill this newsletter with exciting stories and inspirational ideas about how to make the best out of the three years we will be spending at USF.

Dr. Fogel and I are very excited about the future of Breaking Stereotypes and hope that as it grows, it will reflect all of the greatness that is the Provost’s Scholars Program. Keep an eye out for upcoming editions and if you would like to help in any way, please feel free to contact me! Inquiries, comments, and ideas are always welcome.

Go Bulls!

Upcoming Events

→ April 4 – Citizenship Initiative Speaker Series: Dr. Paul Cloke in Grace Allen Room (LIB) at 2pm
→ April 9 – Provost’s Scholars Spring Semester Dinner in Lifsey House at 5pm
→ April 10 – Job Fair in SVC Breezeway at 10am
→ April 10 - USF Fulbright Alumnae Meet and Greet in ALN 252 at 11:45am

Always be on the look out for emails from Dr. Fogel for more exciting opportunities!
Breaking Stereotypes

Honors students’ Puerto Rico trip spreads the USF Commitment to service

Jennifer Steinbeck

Each year, the Honors college offers alternative spring break trips to provide unique and exciting travel opportunities to students and their fellow honors classmates.

This year, a group of fifteen students along with Honors advisors Mr. Mejias and Mrs. Sturrock traveled to Puerto Rico on a service trip. After landing at the airport in the capital of San Juan, the students traveled to the well-known surfing town of Rincon where they stayed in a beachside villa. For the first half of their week-long stay, the students traveled daily to the city of Ponce, the second largest city in Puerto Rico, to volunteer at El Hogar de Los Ninos de San Miguel, a local home for boys. San Miguel houses fourteen boys who range in age from eight to eighteen years of age. Many of the boys at San Miguel have come from difficult family situations of abuse and neglect and several have special care needs due to disorders like autism.

Prior to arriving in Puerto Rico, the students coordinated fund-raising efforts to bring much needed hygiene and school supplies to San Miguel and to cover the cost of home improvement projects and the children’s wish-list items.

At the end of three days of work, USF students were able to paint the entire exterior and the majority of the interior living areas of the home and present supply and cash donations in the amount of $1500. In addition to their volunteer work, students were able to enjoy the Puerto Rican culture and experience the beauty of what is nicknamed the Island of Enchantment. Some of the attractions students visited included the Arecibo Observatory which is the largest single-dish radio telescope in the world and El Yunque which is the United States’ only national rain forest. Other excursions included zip lining through the jungle, soaking in natural hot springs, exploring the cities of San Juan and Coamo, and taking a guided tour through the Rio Camuy Caverns.

The Honors College Alternative Spring Breaks provide students an exciting and meaningful chance to make a difference, experience new cultures, and bond with their peers. Upon their return to USF, the students on the Puerto Rico trip unanimously agreed that it was an unforgettable experience and each would love to do it all over again.

Slovakia Experience of a PSP Student

Sean McNulty

This past summer I studied abroad in Slovakia, and let me tell you, it was a fantastic experience! I studied the Fundamentals of International Business and the Challenges of Transition Economies, and although they kept me busy and I had work to do, at the same time I was able to enjoy the country. We also visited different businesses just about every day, including the Dell headquarters in Bratislava and Eset (an antivirus software company. We even saw the ambassador from the U.S. to Slovakia and listened to him talk to us about what it’s like to be an ambassador, and what Slovakia was like and what it’s becoming.
As great as the main program was though, it’s the little experiences that make the trip. For example, traveling to Skalica on our bus gave us a beautiful view of the countryside, and when we got a flat tire, it wasn’t so bad to just sit in the nearby shade and look at the big fields scattered with the occasional windmill. I also got the chance to talk to some Slovaks after a HUGE hockey game when I was hanging out at McDonald’s. When they addressed me in Slovak, I had that initial awkward moment of telling them “Sorry, I don’t speak Slovak,” but they were very understanding and spoke enough English to carry on a conversation. In the end, they got a video with me because they wanted to show their other friends later, and they gave me a Slovak flag to commemorate our visit.

All in all, I had a great time studying abroad, and although the program and classes were great, it’s really the experiences you have in the country that make the study abroad trip worth remembering.

Consult Cristina

Cristina Andersen is a second year Provost Scholar. She is a Psychology major with two minors in Criminology and Applied Behavior Analysis. She enjoys giving advice to her friends and helping people who need it. She has been successful in taking full class loads every semester as well as working 10 or more hours per week and participating in events on or around campus. Feel free to ask her any questions you may have about the Provost Scholars Program or life in general.

You may ask her questions by email: candersen@mail.usf.edu

If you prefer for your name not to appear in the newsletter please let her know and your question will be asked and answered anonymously.

Dear Cristina,

With a full class load, study abroad applications, a job, and extracurricular activities; I sometimes feel like I have more on my plate than I have time to do. What can I do to lower the amount of stress I have, and feel like I can actually accomplish everything I need to?

Sincerely, So Much To Do So Little Time

Dear So much To Do So Little Time,

I think this is a problem that not only us PSP’s experience but most people do. Time management is one of the most important things you will learn through your college experience. Strategies vary from person to person; you have to find what works for you.

Personally, I like to utilize technology to help me. With smart phones, tablets, and the internet; there is a wide variety of tools available to help you manage your time. Try making a list of everything you need to do and include the times you want to have it done by. Once you complete a
Consult Cristina (Con’t)

task, mark it off and move on to another one. This will help you realize that you are actually getting things done and as the list gets shorter, you will feel more confident in your ability to time manage. If you have trouble remembering to look at the list, set alarms on your phone. Most phones are capable of labeling alarms; for example set an alarm before an assignment is due and label it with the name of the assignment.

Again, the important thing is to find out what works for you and use that. It is very easy to start to feel overwhelmed and stressed over everything that needs to get done. Just take a second to breathe and create your strategy, and I guarantee you will find that you feel less stressed out.

Remember, when in need, consult me!

Dear Cristina,

I know that graduating in three years will save me money and will benefit me in the long run, however sometimes I feel like I am going to miss out by not going to college for four years. Am I the only one who feels this way?

Sincerely, Is 3 Really Better Than 4?

Dear Is 3 Really Better Than 4,

You are NOT alone. I struggle with this every day and I know other PSP students do as well. I’m sure that when you decided to join the Provost Scholars Program you thought about all the pros and cons and your decision was not one to be taken lightly. Let’s be honest, finishing in three years is not an easy road, but we were chosen because we have the ability and the willingness to put in the effort. That is what is going to benefit us. Employers or graduate schools are going to look at the fact that we were able to commit and work hard to do what most people do in four years, in three years. Coming into college you were already ahead, so continuing with that really isn’t much of a change. If you are anything like me, you probably enjoy being ahead and doing well in school. Sometimes I do get swept up into all my responsibilities and goals and I just have to take a step back and remind myself to have fun and enjoy life.

Whenever I start to feel weary about missing out on that fourth year of what most people call “The best years of your life”, I just remember that that year of my life isn’t going to go away, I’m not going to skip being 21 or (whatever age you will be at graduation), I’m just taking that part of my life on a new route. The best advice I can give is to always remember that you are your own person and this decision felt right for you, so just take some time to yourself once in a while and do whatever makes you “feel young” again. Graduation isn’t the end of our lives; it is the beginning of an exciting and thrilling journey that we get to have a head start on!

Remember, when in need, consult me!

If you are in PSP and would like to contribute to the newsletter, please email Kari Piatt with your name and interest.

Dr. Sondra Fogel
Advisor

Cristina Andersen
Advice Columnist

Kari Ann Piatt
Editor-in-Chief
kariannpiatt@mail.usf.edu

Jennifer Steinbeck
Staff Reporter

Breaking Stereotypes Staff