

# USF St. Petersburg Town and Gown

Minutes of Meeting - Friday, March 12, 2021

TEAMS Virtual Meeting

## WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

**Ashley Gairing**, President, called the Winter Meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. She welcomed everyone to Town and Gown's second virtual meeting. After thanking **Alexis Searfoss**, USF SP Town and Town Liaison, for her outstanding support, Gairing reminded everyone to share USF SP's ongoing, exciting news with family, friends, and the community. She added that today's meeting would be recorded and the link provided (see Addendum). Next, Gairing presented the executive team and asked **Dawn Sumner**, Vice-President – Programs, to introduce today's guest.

## PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

*(In deference to the schedules of our distinguished guest speakers, the session order has been reversed in our virtual settings for 2021. Program is first, followed by Business.)*

Sumner introduced **Thomas K. Frazer, Ph.D.**, Professor and Dean of the USF College of Marine Science (CMS) and summarized his biographical notes.

## PRESENTATION

Dr. Thomas Frazer provided background information as to how he came to study the Gulf of Mexico. Originally from California, some of his graduate work at the University of Florida included examination of artificial reefs off Cedar Key. At UC Santa Barbara in the 1990s, research took him to Antarctica. Here scientists were at the forefront of recognizing the global impact of sea ice and temperature change on world ecosystems (including our food web). Dr. Frazer added that CMS experts have also been working in Antarctica for decades. Eventually, he returned to investigating the Gulf of Mexico and its critical role in the environment, economy, and support of food sources. Later, as Florida's Chief Science Officer, his goal was to take scientific research and insert it in meaningful ways to aid state leaders in making informed policies. Among these policies was the Clean Waterways Act.

Dr. Frazer returned to the academic world as the new CMS Dean in 2020. He recognized that CMS is among the Top 10 such programs in the country. CMS is amazing in its diverse studies and extraordinary faculty, students, staff, and researchers. St. Petersburg's thriving arts community was also an attractive incentive. Organizations such as the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, SP Innovation District, Ocean Team, etc., support both the arts and ocean sciences in creative, important ways.

CMS has a myriad of stellar ongoing projects. Dr. Frazer highlighted several:

1. A \$3 million estate gift from the late **Werner and Anne Von Rosenstiel** (Anne was a Town & Gown member) offers long-range support of CMS research.
2. The **City of St. Petersburg** gave a \$125,000 gift to CMS's "Bridge to the Doctorate" fellowship endowment to attract underrepresented students of color who are African

American or Black, Hispanic or Latinx, Pacific Islanders, Native American or Alaska Native.

3. **Dr. Steve Murawski** and his team received \$9 million award from NOAA to develop the Center for Coastal Mapping. The Center will help manage vital resources, provide better forecasts for flooding and the like, and work with the U.S. Department of Defense on coral reef restoration. Other academic partners may include the Florida Institute of Oceanography, Stanford University, Florida Institute of Technology and others.
4. CMS has many valued partners in the Tampa Bay area. Some are: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, U.S. Geological Survey, Tampa Bay Estuary, and leading NGOs such as the Ocean Conservancy.
5. The future is exciting – USF is investing in the Environmental and Ocean Sciences at the USF St. Petersburg campus. More collaboration with programs in Engineering, the Arts, and Business are also envisioned.

In conclusion, Dr. Frazer answered several questions and noted that CMS is always open for guests.

### **CAMPUS UPDATE**

As Regional Chancellor Dr. Martin Tadlock was unable to attend the meeting, **Patti Helton, Ph.D.**, Regional Vice Chancellor for Student Success, provided the campus update.

1. **USF President Steven Currall** has indicated that USF plans to return to in-person classes and activities in Fall 2021, guided by all health and safety protocols.
2. USF SP is cautiously optimistic about achieving its enrollment goal for the Fall semester as early application numbers are strong.
3. The academic clusters are under development. No precise timelines are established yet. More information will be shared as available.
4. A new campus initiative, USF PEARLS, will afford assistance to teens emerging from the foster care system. The program will offer guidance and ongoing support to students in life skills, financial education and budgeting, academics, independent living, maintaining well-being and good mental health.
5. Another new initiative from the College of Education is Call Me MISTER, a national program aimed at developing minority male teachers.
6. Update on Support-A-Bull Food Pantry – 203 students used 4275 lbs. of food; 4622 lbs. of food were collected; and about 350 lbs. of pet food were available via a partnership with the SPCA Tampa Bay. A Wish List is on the Amazon website: [bit.ly/USFSPMarket](https://bit.ly/USFSPMarket)

7. The Bishop Center is offering Executive-Level Training for Women. For additional information: <https://www.usf.edu/business/centers/ethical-leadership/>
8. Congratulations to several campus leaders who have recently received prestigious national awards:
  - Regional Chancellor **Dr. Martin Tadlock** - NASPA 2021 President's Award (the highest award from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators)
  - **Kaya Van Beynen**, Associate Dean of Library Research and Instruction - 2021 American Library Association - Education and Behavioral Science Section's Distinguished Education and Behavioral Sciences Librarian Award
  - **Dwayne Isaacs**, Director of Student Life & Engagement - 2021 Legacy Leader Award from the Association of College Unions International (ACUI).
9. Current plans call for 50% of classes to be in-person beginning with Summer Semester B (starts on June 28). 100% of faculty and staff will likely return to campus by July 1.

Additional discussion followed about the PEARLS Program. Helton said that USF SP is excited to be developing this program and it is still new to us. We are currently building local connections. Advancement is raising funds for a program coordinator. We aim to connect with foster system students at an early age to facilitate making a university education part of their future. Rachael Russell DeVicente mentioned that furniture donations can be made to a foster agency to support students who are aging out and need items – this group is working with the Pearls program. She can share that contact information with interested members.

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

**President Ashley Gairing** asked the executive team to present their reports.

**Secretary's Report: Sudsy Tschiderer** requested approval of the Minutes of Meeting from January 22, 2021. The minutes were approved by general acclamation.

**1st Vice President's Report – Programs: Dawn Sumner** said that additional questions for today's guest may be given to Alexis Searfoss for Dr. Frazer. Dr. Tony Silvia, Department of Journalism and Digital Communication, will be the featured speaker at the next meeting on April 16. Suggestions for future speakers and topics are always welcomed.

**2nd Vice President's Report – Membership: Howard Rutherford** reported that there are currently 61 paid members. A big thanks to all for your committed support! He announced a new membership initiative. Each member is essential in helping to identify prospective members. Complete details are forthcoming in the mail.

Current membership year is: Nov. 1, 2020 – May 31, 2021. Next membership year is: June 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022.

***HIGHLIGHT: We wished member HELEN LESLIE a heartfelt Happy Birthday! She will have a Milestone Birthday (100) in early April. Congratulations, Indomitable Helen!***

**Treasurer's Report:** **Judy Stanton** stated that the January account balance was \$5749.39. The current balance is \$6711.89.

**Old Business:** Ashley Gairing requested reports from Committee Chairs.

- **Pam Hatton**, new Chair of the Award Committee, was unable to attend this meeting. After thanking Hatton for her willingness to serve as Chair, Ashley asked Sumner to give the update in Pam's place. There is about \$6,000 available for Award distribution. Suggestions are solicited asap. The Committee is also looking for two more members. Please consider volunteering.
- Advisor and Immediate Past President **Rachael Russell DeVicente**, Chair of the Nominating Committee, said she is working on the slate of potential officers and will present this at the April meeting. Please answer the phone when she calls.

**New Business:** Gairing reminded us that this year's theme for T&G is "Membership and Service." The Drive Thru - Drop Off project to benefit the Support-A-Bull Food Pantry is under development. More information is forthcoming. Please contact Searfoss if you have any suggestions for the Annual Award or if you wish to receive a hard copy of the latest *USF Innovation* magazine (it is also online). Reminder: the next meeting will be virtual, but we are optimistic that we can return to in-person gatherings in the Fall.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ashley Gairing adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

***Next Meeting: Friday, April 16, 2021 with Dr. Tony Silvia, Professor, Department of Journalism and Digital Communication***

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sudsy Tschiderer, Secretary*

## **ADDENDUM**

- **Link to Recorded Meeting:** [bit.ly/SpringMeetingVideo](https://bit.ly/SpringMeetingVideo)
- **Link to sign-up for College of Marine Science Newsletter:** <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/Alfct18>
- **USF St. Petersburg campus Newsroom Story includes reference to Town and Gown**

<https://www.stpetersburg.usf.edu/news/2021/textbook-affordability-initiative-saves-million.aspx>

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