



**Johnson**

### **Zach Johnson Elected Student Government VP**

*The chemical engineering senior won last month's election with running mate Matt Diaz*

**Tampa, Fla. (March 7, 2011)** – February 24 marks a day in USF history that holds particular importance for the USF engineering community — it's the day Zachary Johnson, a senior engineering student, was elected to be Student Body Vice President.

After three weeks of intense and grueling campaigning, Johnson and his running mate Matt Diaz won the Student Government election with more than 51 percent of the vote.

Winning in the first round of SG elections is highly unusual. In the past decade, it's only happened twice. On both those times, only two tickets entered the race so that outcome was guaranteed. In this case, there were four tickets and a run-off was expected.

"Getting elected took an unbelievable amount of effort. Our primary focus was engaging as many people as possible, personally talking to as many students as we could. The week of the election, we were out 12, sometimes 15 hours a day. I wouldn't dream of trading the experience away though, the feedback we got from meeting so many of our peers was daily motivation to succeed," Johnson said.

Johnson and his running mate, Matt Diaz ran on the platform that the President and Vice President are student servants whose jobs are to enact the agenda of students instead of their own. They decided to seek office out of their desire to further unite the students.

"In my two years serving as the students Chief Financial Officer, I've had the ability to work hand in hand with some of our USF administrators on issues related to student fees and budget allocations, which is critically important when considering the financial status of our state university system. Matt and I identified a huge opportunity to help engage students on these challenges, in addition to the various social, political and university issues. We both agree that there needs to be focus on improving the engagement of our students on these topics, it just kind of made sense to run."

Johnson is a senior chemical engineering student who's very active within the engineering community at USF. This semester he coordinated an Engineering Leadership Conference with Theta Tau Engineering Fraternity and Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society, hosting 200 students from the Southeast United

States. He is also active in the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Engineering College Council and Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity.

Johnson believes that his background as an engineering student will make him a valuable voice within student government.

“Having the engineering perspective is not something we often have at this level of the university. The engineering community deserves someone who can voice their interests at that level. My role as vice president will enable me to impact both the academic affairs and student life of USF for years to come.”

Diaz and Johnson take office as President and Vice President May 9, 2011.

*The University of South Florida is one of the nation's top 63 public research universities and one of only 25 public research universities nationwide with very high research activity that is designated as community engaged by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. USF was awarded \$394.1 million in research contracts and grants in FY 2009/2010. The university offers 232 degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, specialist and doctoral levels, including the doctor of medicine. The USF System has a \$1.8 billion annual budget, an annual economic impact of \$3.2 billion, and serves more than 47,000 students on institutions/campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee and Lakeland. USF is a member of the Big East Athletic Conference.*

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