

Civil and Environmental Engineering Team Win an EPA P3 Award



TAMPA, Fla. (October 14 2009) – A team of graduate and undergraduate students (Joniqua Howard, Erlande Omisca, Ken Thomas, Trina Halfhide and Daniela Soledade) under the direction of Dr. Maya Trotz, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering, was one of six university teams nationwide to win an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) People, Prosperity and Planet (P3) Phase II award competition, which encourages college students to apply technology in innovative ways to tackle global environmental challenges. This P3 Award was judged by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) panel with final decisions by the EPA.

The project started in 2008 under a \$10,000 Phase I grant titled “Water Awareness Research and Education in East Tampa” (WARE-East Tampa, www.ware-easttampa.com) contributes to a storm water beautification project undertaken by the East Tampa Community Revitalization Partnership (ETCRP), transforming three of the community’s 31 storm water pond areas into community-friendly green spaces. The collaborative effort between Young Middle Magnet for Math and Science, Lockhart Elementary, King’s Kids, USF departments of Civil and Environmental Engineering and USF School of Architecture and Community Design, USF Engineers for a Sustainable World www.eswusf.com and the Health Environment and Social Services Committee of the ETCRP provides learning opportunities for students in K3-8 schools as well as community members.

Dr. Trotz says, “Given USF’s commitment to community engagement, this project has opened many new opportunities for my own research and I have submitted much larger proposals that build on the existing collaborations. Our USF students spent Friday afternoons with a class at Young in spring 2009, participated in many community events like the East Tampa Community Survival Day and arranged field trips for the kids. I think the community support has been very encouraging, especially after they see presentations of the project which feature the students. This year we have expanded to other schools and are working with community members on curriculum development and on the design of an educational kiosk that will be built by the end of this year.”

Two ponds have been completed. The close proximity of the ponds to local schools provides a natural fit for building curriculum around the ponds. The field site locations provide students the opportunity

to learn about science and engineering as well as provide a service to community.

According to graduate student Joniqua Howard, “The P3 EXPO held on the National Mall in Washington D.C. was inspiring. We saw so many great projects, met many students from around the country, and got a chance to discuss our project with Dr. Lisa Jackson, the EPA Administrator. It was our first time at the EXPO and we plan to return to showcase our project in 2010. We plan to organize it so that the kids whom we work with get a chance to experience it, as it’s really about them.”

The \$75,000 award is given to the best student designs, providing an opportunity to further the designs, implement them in the field and move them to the marketplace. The competition is focused on benefiting people, promoting prosperity, and protecting the planet through innovative designs to address challenges to sustainability in both the developed and developing world.

If you would like to get more involved in this project plan on attending:

USF Day Institute on Engaged Scholarship and Community Redevelopment

October 30, 2009, 9am – 3pm

USF - Gibbons Alumni Center

Agenda

8:30 – 9am Continental breakfast, registration and networking

9 – 9:15 **Welcome** and introductions – USF Provost’s Office

9:15 – 10am **Keynote:** Henry Taylor, Professor Urban and Regional Planning, and Director, Center for Urban Studies, University of Buffalo

10 – 11am **The East Tampa Story** – panel of community & faculty members

11am - noon ***Integrating S-L into Your Syllabus** – Susan Greenbaum

Noon – 1pm Luncheon on site (catered)

1 – 2pm **Building Reciprocal University-Community Relationships** – Judi Jetson

2 - 3pm ***Creating Reflections and Final Presentations** – Robin Jones

3pm Adjourn

* these are participatory workshops

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 \$380.4 million in research contracts and grants in FY 2008/2009. 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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