

Compass

Winter 2009

Armstrong State University

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Recommended Citation

Armstrong State University, "Compass" (2009). *Compass*. 17.
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Award winning

winter 2009

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**THE
STUDENT
SUCCESS
ISSUE**

A publication of Armstrong Atlantic State University

About this issue

There are many factors that determine student success on any university campus. Each student brings a unique set of skills, experiences and personality, which together influence how she or he performs. In addition, every single faculty and staff member on the campus plays an important role in shaping student performance, not only academically, but also across the board. In this issue of *Compass*, we look at some of the efforts currently underway at AASU that were designed specifically to help students achieve their dreams. We also profile a handful of current students and recent graduates who are wonderful examples of achievement and inspiration.

As usual, we present Class Notes and, in this issue, a profile of an alumnus who is living the dream as captain of his own charter boat off the Costa Rican coast on the Pacific.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Please share with us stories of success about students, alumni, faculty and staff. Send to Francisco.Duque@armstrong.edu.

—Editor



President Bleicken embraces AASU: Shares views on student success

Since her arrival on campus on July 1, President Linda Bleicken has been busy getting to know the students, faculty and staff. Over the summer and fall, she has had plenty of opportunities to meet with community leaders and learn about the impact that AASU has on the community and the contributions the university makes to the region.

On August 10, she welcomed back faculty and staff during her first opening convocation, and a week later she began teaching a graduate course in the Master of Arts in Liberal and Professional Studies program. At her encouragement, most university deans and vice presidents also assumed teaching roles in the fall.

Since joining Armstrong Atlantic, Bleicken has made it clear that her focus for the university includes community outreach, regional economic development and student success. The latter, in particular, has gained most of her attention recently, especially as the university deals with budget cuts issued by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. But even beyond the temporary budget challenges, Bleicken feels strongly that all areas of the university can help achieve student success.

“Student success requires that everyone at the university play a role in ensuring that it happens. This must be a seamless process that begins even before a student arrives through the messages that we send and the services we provide,” she said.

In her view, student success begins with the initial impression that students get when they first set foot on campus.

“The warmth and information provided by our team during our Navigate orientation must be matched by the experience a student has upon enrollment,” she said. “Everything sends a message: the people, the service, the facilities, and the quality of instruction.”

The Student Union and the new freshmen residence hall, Windward Commons, due to open in spring and fall of 2010, respectively, are examples of campus improvements that speak directly to students.

“They are tangible examples of attention to student success,” Bleicken said. “Not only will they meet important dining, recreation and housing requirements, but they will be our first green buildings on campus.”

As students have voiced a desire for a greener campus, the Student Government Association has joined with the Staff Council in “Makin’ Maroon Green,” an initiative begun in 2008 to make the campus more environmentally friendly, a top priority for the current academic year.

“These are the kinds of linkages that say to students that they are in a university whose values are congruent with their own,” Bleicken said.

“Student success requires that everyone at the university play a role in ensuring that it happens. This must be a seamless process that begins even before a student arrives through the messages that we send and the services we provide.” — Linda Bleicken

Over the summer, Bleicken had the opportunity to witness students, including some 17 incoming freshmen, engaged in academic research in university laboratories. It was another indication of the type of activities that support student success.

“It was an impressive example of student-faculty research that took place as part of a \$1 million NSF-funded STEP grant. This was serious research in which rising freshmen and faculty together addressed important issues ranging from contaminants in seawater to cancer. Such research provided excellent opportunities for both students and faculty and exemplified the strong tradition of academic excellence that exists here,” Bleicken said.

The First Year Experience, a new AASU initiative this year that supports freshmen as they make the difficult transition from high school to college life and adulthood, is a welcome addition to campus programming.

“This type of program has a proven track record of fostering student success throughout the country,” Bleicken said.

But additional work remains to be done. There must be a focused effort to continue growing programs, such as health professions and education, while balancing the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students.

“We need to engage the campus in a conversation,” she said. “We should look at ways to move forward with our undergraduate and graduate programs and continue to find ways to remain focused on providing services—including greater online capabilities—to nontraditional students.

“We need to be saying, ‘We know that you have jobs and families, and we are trying to help you make school a manageable part of your life,’” she said. “This will very likely include additional online offerings in the coming years.”

Looking beyond the campus, Bleicken sees Savannah and the surrounding coastal region as presenting excellent opportunities to AASU.

“I see where we are positioned geographically and believe that environmental issues are so front and center for us,” she said. “We have a wonderful opportunity to do some important things.

Look at OssaBest in partnership with the Ossabaw Foundation and the public schools [see www.armstrong.edu/ossaabest]. It is only one of many ways that we can partner with community organizations.”



As a part of ensuring student success, AASU needs to strengthen the bonds it has established over the course of its history with the community.

“Whether it is through providing healthcare professionals, teachers, scientists or cultural enrichment, AASU has long been important to this community. Our role, linked with our community partners, should be to provide even more opportunities for economic and job growth in the future.” Bleicken reminds us that all faculty and staff members on the campus contribute to student success.

“We all have a role. Often we think that student success is the responsibility of the faculty or the staff in student affairs or student activities who have the most contact with the students. In reality, we all play a part in role modeling, whether it is I, or a plant operations staff member working in one of the gardens on the campus. Everyday we help to make students successful by demonstrating civility and helpfulness.” ☸

—Barry J. Ostrow and Francisco Duque

Pictured opposite page: President Linda M. Bleicken presents Christina Nieves, a sophomore criminal justice major at the Liberty Center campus, with a Regents' Foundation Scholarship.

Above: President Bleicken talks with Mendi Kallum, a biology major, during last summer's STEP research program for entering freshmen.



FRESHMAN LEARNING COMMUNITIES: Start right—Finish strong

Armstrong Atlantic now has two programs for freshmen—Freshman Learning Communities (FLCs) and the First Year Experience (FYE)—to help them make the transition from high school to college and success. Both have a common goal of engaging students in common experiences that help them bond in their new environment.

FLCs, in their current form, have been around Armstrong Atlantic since 2002 with about 1,300 student participants in the last seven years.

“The whole premise of freshman learning communities is to make this big university seem a little smaller [to entering students] so that they can meet other students, take courses together and get to know their professors better,” explained Greg Anderson, director of academic orientation and advisement.

There are eight learning communities with appealing themes based on majors such as nursing and education, or special interests such as leadership and ecology. Each FLC accommodates 25 students.

Anderson says the three major goals of the FLCs are to:

- :: Generate social and academic interaction among entering freshmen
- :: Demonstrate the interconnectivity of courses
- :: Help students make better connections with the faculty

FLC students tend to be more successful. University data show that

over the years, students in the FLCs consistently attain higher grade point averages and are more likely to return to AASU for their sophomore year than their non-FLC peers.

FYE engages freshmen with a Common Read

In the fall of 2009, the First Year Experience was introduced to the campus under the guidance of three energetic English professors, MaryAnne Brock, Bonnie Emerick and Jane Rago.

At the center of the FYE is the fall semester Common Read. Over the summer, all entering traditional freshmen received a copy of the novel *When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka and were expected to read it before starting classes. The book relates the story of a Japanese-American family that was interned during the early stages of World War II.

When the freshmen arrived on campus, they were greeted with a weeklong film festival featuring five documenta-

ries and a drama directly related to the Japanese-American wartime experience. They also found themes of the book woven into many of their classes across the curriculum. The book was a natural for English and history classes. But other disciplines contributed to the experience. Biology students read about the development of antibiotics during World War II, while chemistry students studied the effects of the dry, gritty air of the salt flats of the western United States, where many Japanese Americans were detained. Some education majors wrote poems based on the book.

Supporting activities for the fall semester culminated in November with a two-day campus visit from Julie Otsuka, the author of *When the Emperor Was Divine*, who read from her novel.

Pictured above: Margarita “Maggie” Smith (left) and Alice E. “Liz” Grantham get playful with the camera during the 2009 Celebrate AASU Day. Both were enrolled in the Freshman Learning Community, What does it Mean to Go Green, and took three classes with 21 other students.

FLCs in the community

An important part of the Freshman Learning Community curriculum is participation in activities outside the classroom. These are designed to create community service opportunities and social experiences for the students. For some, it may be a tour of Historic District monuments or a trip to Ossabaw Island. This year, AASU was able to purchase passes to all of the Telfair museums for the 200 FLC participants. In past years, students have enjoyed dinner together in a Cuban restaurant, and some have experienced the satisfaction of raising funds for or putting on shows at local children’s hospitals.



WINDWARD COMMONS

The new face of freshman living

In August 2010, Windward Commons, Armstrong Atlantic's newest residential facility, will open—but with a difference. This 567-bed suite-style facility will be the first residence hall built specifically for freshmen who, for the first time, will be required to live on campus. Vicki McNeil, vice president of student affairs, said, "Significant studies on entering freshmen have found that the most important characteristic associated with finishing college was living on campus during the freshman year."

The new residence hall will create a comfortable sense of community for freshmen. Living on campus will afford more contacts with faculty and convenient access to an array of academic support services.

"Also, students have a higher satisfaction with their college experience and are more involved in co-curricular activities. The advent of a new residence hall for freshmen will make a big difference in the life and culture of the campus," McNeil said.

Windward Commons includes all the state-of-the-art amenities including semi-private or private suites shared with only one other person. Some other features include card-access-only entrances and elevators, video surveillance at building entry points, building-wide Wi-Fi, laundry and meeting rooms and social areas such as a patio with barbecue grills.

—Barry J. Ostrow



Windward Commons as it is conceived and as it appeared in November.

THEN AND NOW

The need for Windward Commons is driven by many factors:

- :: Enrollment has grown from 5,668 in 1999 to 7,539 in 2009.
- :: The percentage of traditional students has grown from 50% in 1999 to 66.7% today.
- :: New academic offerings, such as the AASU-Georgia Tech Engineering Alliance, have attracted new students.
- :: In 1999, 76% percent of students came from Chatham and three nearby counties, compared to 61% today.

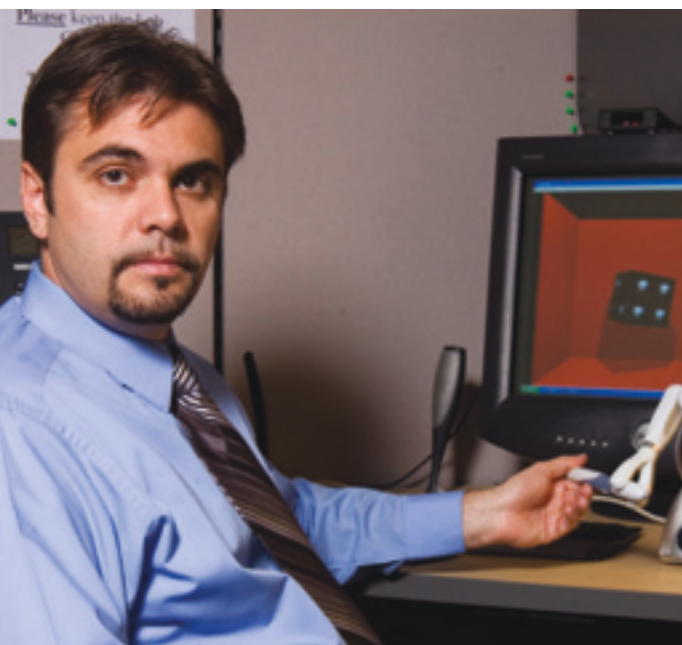
Since 2000, the growth of students living on campus has spurred a new interest in student life:

- :: Student organizations, including Greek societies, have grown from 39 to 85.
- :: The Recreation Center and Health Clinic opened.
- :: The intramural fields have been lighted, increasing the popularity of soccer and rugby.
- :: In spring 2010, a new Student Union will open. (See back page.)

TEAMING UP ON RESEARCH



Top photo: Freshman Amber-Kay Barnes is working on breast cancer research in her chemistry classes.



Bottom photo: Felix Hamza-Lup, assistant professor of computer science, worked with two students over the summer conducting research in the field of haptics, the science of incorporating tactile sensation in computer applications.

A flurry of significant grants awarded recently to AASU's College of Science and Technology (CST) by the National Science Foundation has opened the doors for an unprecedented number of undergraduate students to conduct research.

Over the summer of 2009, some 50 students, including 17 incoming freshmen, conducted research under the guidance of 22 faculty members across all academic disciplines. It was the first time that undergraduate students received summer stipends – up to \$3,000 for 10 weeks of full-time work – and the breadth of the research ran the gamut from how clouds form to the potential of using nanoparticles and sunlight to fight environmental pollutants.

Amber-Kay Barnes, an incoming freshman honors student majoring in rehabilitation science, devoted many hours in the chemistry lab researching a protein that inhibits breast cancer in women who become pregnant by the age of 27. A gifted student throughout high school, Barnes is working under the guidance of George C. Shields, dean of the College of Science and Technology.

"It's been hard work," said Barnes, who was invited by Shields to participate in the research. "The project involves trying to identify the active part of the protein so that additional drugs with lesser side effects can be developed." In August, Barnes presented her research at a national conference in Clinton, NY, hosted by Shields.

Over the summer of 2009, some 50 students, including 17 incoming freshmen, conducted research under the guidance of 22 faculty members across all academic disciplines. It was the first time that undergraduate students received summer stipends – up to \$3,000 for 10 weeks of full-time work.

Earlier this year the NSF awarded two RUI (research at undergraduate institutions) grants to the College of Science and Technology totaling \$450,621. During the spring semester, the NSF also granted a five-year, \$1 million grant that specifically supports undergraduate research. This latest grant allowed freshmen to conduct research over the summer and will support up to 20 incoming undergraduates over the next five years.

"In a time of declining state revenues, the ability of our faculty to write grants to improve our teaching laboratories and increase the number and quality of research experiences for our undergraduates is extremely important," said Shields.

Further supporting undergraduate research, Shields and his faculty are establishing the Office of Scholarly Excellence and Advancement (SEA) to promote research and scholarship among faculty and students. The initiative is supporting faculty research—and thus student research—by making it possible for faculty members to increase the amount of time that they can devote to summer research projects directly involving students.



Shields; Steve Jodis, assistant dean; Delana Nivens, associate professor of chemistry; and Sabrina Hessinger, associate professor of mathematics, provide leadership for SEA along with faculty members in the departments of psychology, mathematics, chemistry/physics, information/computing and engineering and biology.

"The office is currently under development, but its goals will be to assist faculty and students in research and teaching endeavors," said Nivens. "More specifically, we envision helping faculty with grant writing as well as reviewing college-wide internal grants. We also want to help students connect with faculty doing research that is of mutual interest."

The summer's research projects, Nivens added, gave students an understanding of what it is like working in a laboratory setting.

"Students also realized that much of science is not found in a textbook. It was also good for faculty, many of whom accomplished great research and had the chance to work one-on-one with incoming freshmen," Nivens said.

In early September, 23 faculty members in the college presented their research projects during the first College of Science and Technology Faculty Symposium on Excellence in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Most of them will submit summer research grant proposals of their own to help support student stipends and additional expenses. Assisting the faculty in this effort is Susan Arshack and Tina Leggett in the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, who provide support in grant writing.

"The faculty in CST have committed to writing more than 20 research grants in 2009-2010," said Shields. "These research grants, combined with other teaching/research grants, will give us the funding to improve the quality of our program despite falling revenues."

THE REWARDS OF RESEARCH

Nivens is planning a student research colloquium for fall 2010, when students can present their research findings. One of those presenters is likely to be Elizabeth Murrell, a sophomore computer science major, who has been working with Felix G. Hamza-Lup, assistant professor of computer science.

Murrell's summer research focused on simulating the physical forces of a gyroscope or any rotating body that maintains its orientation, such as a bicycle wheel. "I've learned more from working with the gyroscope than I learned in my physics introduction course," she said. "I have also learned about programming languages."

Shields sees the integration of teaching and scholarship as enhancing the students' understanding of science and technology and he predicts that more faculty will choose collaborative research projects in the future.

"It is a way to bring the excitement of science and technology to students, as well as increase the number of highly educated science, technology, engineering and mathematics majors necessary for the knowledge-based economy that we live in," Shields said. 🌟

—Francisco Duque



Research boosted by \$2.1M in grants

Since July 1, 2008, the College of Science and Technology has received \$2,149,621 in National Science Foundation grants that promote faculty/student research:

- :: \$1 million Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Talent Expansion (STEP) grant
- :: \$255,200 for Research at Undergraduate Institutions (RUI)
- :: \$278,000 for a Major Research Instrumentation grant for acquisition of a liquid chromatography mass spectrometer - time of flight
- :: \$229,000 for a Major Research Instrumentation grant for a high performance computer
- :: \$195,421 for another RUI grant
- :: \$192,000 for a Curriculum and Laboratory Improvement grant

Beyond the books

Each of these students is representative of thousands of successful AASU students and alumni. Their stories are repeated again and again in many fields of study. Each leaves a legacy of excellence to be attained by those who come behind them.



MICHAEL CATO '11

Hometown: Savannah, Georgia

Major: Computer/Electrical Engineering

REACHING FOR THE STARS

When Michael Cato tells you he wants to go to Mars, you believe he'll do it. Time is on his side and his prep work has already garnered attention at NASA.

In the summer of 2008, Michael was one of only 21 students nationwide to be selected for a NASA internship in robotics. While based at the Goddard Spaceflight Center in Maryland, he flew to Marshall Spaceflight Center in Texas where, he said, "We got to see some really impressive robots." Another trip, this time by train, took him to Boston and MIT. Other trips took him to Carnegie Mellon, the University of Maryland and several specialized robotic companies. In Maryland, he visited the zero buoyancy (underwater) research lab.

In a lab at AASU, he and three other students worked on a fluid dynamics project that they had proposed to the NASA Reduced Gravity Student Flight Opportunities Program. The project's goal is to optimize water filtration in a zero gravity aquatic environment. In the long term, their research could be a piece of the puzzle of farming fish for food in the weightlessness of space and on other planets.

In fall 2009, Michael transferred to Georgia Tech's Atlanta campus under the Regents Engineering Transfer Program, which is a collaborative program between Georgia Tech and AASU for Georgia students interested in engineering studies.



KRISTIN BURTON '10

Hometown: Ocala, FL

Major: Rehabilitation Science

SOCCKER STAR

Armstrong Atlantic State University soccer star, Kristin Burton, is a two-time Peach Belt Conference Player of the Year and the league's record holder for scoring. Kristin didn't quite envision this when she stepped on campus. She knew, however, that AASU was a perfect place to combine athletics and academics.

Balancing the rigors of academics and college athletics, she is the first AASU student athlete to earn ESPN/CoSIDA Academic All-American honors three times in her career. This hard-working senior also excels at courses in human anatomy, sports medicine and physical therapy, maintaining a consistent 3.6 GPA.

After graduation in 2010, Kristin plans to set her cleats aside and pursue a doctorate degree in physical therapy. As a student-athlete she has learned to take chances on and off the field in pursuit of her dreams. "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take."



PATRICK SANOU '07, '08

Hometown: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Majors: Biology (B.S. 2007) and Master of Arts in Liberal and Professional Studies (2008)

A LONGING FOR HOME

A desire to go back to Africa and help tugs steadily at the heart of Patrick Sanou. He has been studying in the U.S. since 2003, having attended community college in Arizona prior to enrolling at AASU a year later.

A towering figure with a 6-foot-6 frame, Patrick found a home in the Pirate's basketball squad for four seasons, helping the Pirates to a 17-11 record in 2008. Athletic scholarships made it all possible. Along the way, his heart's desire has not wavered: to return to Africa and provide service to his country.

"I want to help my country. We can make Africa better. There's much work to be done and I want to do my part."

For now, he is continuing to prepare and lay the groundwork so he can meet his life's goals. The son of two medical doctors serving in Burkina Faso, Patrick is now enrolled in the Ph.D. program in microbiology and cell science at the University of Florida. His focus of research is in an area that could greatly benefit his country and the world. He is helping to advance work on a vaccine that someday will turn the tide on the AIDS pandemic. His family and his country will be blessed to have him back.



JARRETT WALSH '03

Hometown: Hardeeville, SC

Majors: Chemistry and Mathematics

A RENAISSANCE STUDENT

If there is any such thing as a Renaissance student, then his name is Jarrett Walsh. With a double major in chemistry and applied mathematics, and active as a student leader, photographer, and sometimes actor, Jarrett did it all.

His lengthy resume includes many academic awards and honors, including the university's coveted Golden A Award. He received the 2003 Georgia Academic Day Award that recognizes one graduating student from each of the state's universities.

Jarrett conducted chemistry research in Austria and mathematics research in New Zealand. Prior to graduating, he co-authored articles with faculty members that appeared in *Chemical Educator* in 2003 and the *Journal of Undergraduate Chemistry Research* in 2004.

Jarrett graduated with honors and an American Chemical Society-certified degree. After graduation he entered the M.D. / Ph.D. program at the Medical University of South Carolina and is working in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. His most recent article, on head and neck cancer, appeared in *Current Treatment Options in Oncology*.

ADRIAN ANDERSON '08, '09

Hometown: Richmond Hill, GA

Majors: Master of Health Services Administration and Master of Public Health

GAINING NATIONAL ATTENTION

Adrian Anderson, a recent graduate of the Master of Health Services Administration program, was selected for a two-year, post-graduate, administrative fellowship with Catholic Healthcare Partners (CHP) at its Youngstown, Ohio location.

Adrian will be involved in operational and strategic initiatives with the opportunity to work with senior-level executives at the local, regional and national levels to plan, develop, execute and evaluate strategic initiatives for the healthcare system.

But this isn't the first time she has been recognized nationally. Adrian, who maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average, has been cited before. She received the Bugbee-Falk Award, sponsored by the Association of University Programs in Health Administration, completed an administrative internship with Duke University Medical Center and was selected to represent AASU at two national health administration case competitions sponsored by the National Association of Health Services Executives and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Adrian has certainly had a healthy start to her career.





You know Shearouse Plaza but do you know Shearouse?

Shearouse Plaza. To thousands of alumni and current students, Shearouse Plaza conjures up fond memories of barbecues, mini-concerts and even salsa lessons. It's where students gather to socialize or study on a sunny day, where student organizations recruit and where faculty and staff go to unwind at the end of the academic year.

The man whose name the plaza bears would be pleased with all of these activities and memories. Although a generous bequest to his alma mater in 1991 established the Jesse Shearouse Scholarship for computer science and mathematics, many who enjoy the plaza have not heard the story behind the namesake.

Shearouse was born in Effingham County in 1936 and grew up in Savannah, attending public schools and Armstrong State College for two years. Then he moved to Atlanta and graduated from Emory University in 1958 with a degree in accounting.

Following graduation, he went to work for a family-owned company that made Vicks Cough Drops. In 1985, Vicks was bought by Procter & Gamble. Shearouse worked in a variety of positions at P&G throughout his business career. He was the chief international auditor, working mostly in Paris, and controller of P&G's Japanese subsidiary. In 1987, he was brought back to P&G headquarters in Cincinnati to be manager of the U.S. field audit.

He became ill with an inoperable brain tumor in 1990 and died in Norwich, CT six months later, in 1991, at the age of 55.

Jesse Shearouse never had any siblings nor was he married, so he was concerned about his family name passing on with him. Charlton Clark, the trustee for Shearouse's estate said, "His primary purpose in setting up the trust was to perpetuate the family name."

Shearouse provided in his will that ten percent of his estate should be set aside as a perpetual charitable trust. Of that, ninety percent of the income was to be paid quarterly to Armstrong. To date, the students of Armstrong have benefited from scholarship funding in excess of \$100,000 thanks to Shearouse's generosity.

For information on planning a legacy gift for Armstrong Atlantic State University, please contact Gail Rountree in the Office of Advancement at 912.344.2710 or visit www.armstrong.edu. ☼

—Barry J. Ostrow

Note: Attorney Charlton Clark was the primary source for this remembrance of Jesse Stuart Shearouse.

Pictured above left: Jesse Shearouse in Paris, 1975

Above right: Shearouse Plaza is a popular location for events, studying and socializing.

ALUMINARI [*Living and working in Paradise*]

Chris Watkins '06 is livin' the dream. While his peers are settling into more traditional careers, this criminal justice major from Atlanta is captaining a charter fishing boat in the Pacific off the coast of Costa Rica's lush Guanacaste Province.



Chris' career started off traditionally enough. Through an internship, he counseled drug and alcohol abusers at Savannah's Men's Transition Center. Crediting his psychology courses, he later went to work as the sales manager for Pet Goods Manufacturing, a pet supply company in Dahlonega, GA. Soon after, he met Peter Heidenreich, who would later become his business partner, while the two were motor boating on Lake Lanier.

Chris and his family had been fishing in Costa Rica on

and off for about 12 years. This led to his experience as a charter fishing boat captain off Savannah. He and Heidenreich—who had previously worked in the finance industry—thought they could parlay their love of the sea into starting their own charter fishing business. "People come from all over the world to fish here," Chris said in a telephone interview from his office in Costa Rica. "We wanted to come down here and build something where we set the ground rules."

Armed with some Spanish he had picked up at AASU, Chris and his partner took a short scouting trip to Costa Rica looking for a place to start and decided on Playa Tamarindo,

the western-most point in the country. On their second trip, they bought a 2000 model 30-foot Luhrs fishing boat—the newest in the port.

Most of their fishing takes place five to 15 miles off shore. In contrast, sailing from Savannah they would have to go out some 60 miles to reach the Gulf Stream, which makes for a very long day. "Down here you can see land all the time. You'd be

catching marlin and seeing butterflies flying over the boat," Chris said.

Typically, they work four or five days a

“ I think I read too much Hemingway growing up. ”

week taking out six to eight guests at a time. Their clients bring back all manner of game fish ranging from 60-pound migrating sailfish, to tuna, mahi mahi, and wahoo, plus striped and blue marlin that can range up to 1,000 pounds.

Their passengers range in age from 4 to 86 years old with the largest contingent coming from Canada. "This year, we've had people from Colombia, Russia, South Africa and France. They range from pro football players to people who manufacture coffee makers in Germany," Chris said. "Remember, this is a big coffee growing country."

"We're already taking reservations into next year for repeat

business,” Chris said. “It’s a good feeling to know that what you are doing is impressing people enough that they come back year after year.”

Playa Tamarindo is a town of just 3,000, but its beautiful beaches lure thousands of international tourists. Still, one wonders what Chris and his partner do in their down time in such a small locale. “Outside the working aspects, it’s kind of like a summer camp for adults down here,” Chris explains. He fills his time zip lining, visiting the volcanoes lining the eastern side of Guanacaste, sampling the annual festivals in each small town, exploring the reefs and sometimes, “just sitting on the beach drinking piña coladas.”

One of his favorite pastimes is observing and “talking” to the howler monkeys and musing about how mankind could really be descended from these little creatures.

What Chris misses most in Paradise is his family. “My brother and sister-in-law had a baby and I missed that,” he said wistfully.

Tackling the big game fish by day and sipping tropical drinks by night may sound exotic to the folks back home in Georgia, but to Chris Watkins it’s all in a day’s work. “I think I read too much Hemingway growing up.” You can hear the smile through the phone line.

—Barry J. Ostrow

Ready for your Costa Rica fishing adventure? Chris’ Go Fish Costa Rica can be reached at www.gofishcr.com.



Reunion in Costa Rica

Last year, Bill Daugherty, associate professor of political science and his wife, Susan ’86, ’07, vacationed on the Costa Rican Pacific coast. They inadvertently booked a charter fishing boat captained by Chris Watkins ’06. Daugherty had previously arranged to meet with two of his former students— Keely Collette ’07 and Frankie Smith ’08—who were now living in Costa Rica. They all met to feast on a mahi mahi caught by Susan. Daugherty recalls, “Here was an AASU mini-reunion, four alumni and me, gathered in a small Pacific coast village enjoying a fantastic dinner in an open air, tropical restaurant. It was truly an evening to remember.”

From left: Frankie Smith ’08, Bill Daugherty, Chris Watkins ’06 and Keely Collette ’07



Catch of the day. Chris Watkins (right) and a customer pose with one that didn’t get away.

Opposite page: **Captain’s Paradise.** Chris Watkins pilots his charter fishing boat in the Pacific off Costa Rica.

class notes

'50s



Mary Craik '53 received her A.A. from Armstrong State College and went on to earn a B.A. and a M.ED at the University of Texas and a Ph.D at the University of Iowa. She taught in the psychology department at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota where she was plaintiff in several successful trailblazing gender discrimination lawsuits. Retiring in her 70s, she reinvented herself and now has a new career as a fiber artist with her own gallery in the East Market Art Zone in downtown Louisville, KY.

'60s

Patrick King '68 is the director of teaching and learning in the Texas Tech School of Pharmacy.

'70s

Gynndon Ord Jones '71 retired in May 2009 after 34 years in federal service as a mathematician at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Panama City, FL. Jones wrote scientific computer programs and technical reports.



Drew Ernst '74, a partner with HunterMaclean in Savannah, has been invited to join the prestigious American College of Environmental Lawyers. Ernst

has extensive experience representing clients on wetlands issues and coastal development matters arising under various facets of Georgia's Marshlands Protection Act and Shore Protection Act. He also represents clients before regulatory agencies in obtaining permits under the Clean Water Act. Ernst has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America for Environmental Law* since 1997.



Harry Hunter, Jr. '75 was included in the third edition of *Who's Who in Black Detroit*. Hunter has headed the State of Michigan Employee Service

Program since 1999. He had been the administrator of Harbor Oaks Hospital in New Baltimore, MI, a 64-bed acute care psychiatric hospital. For 20 years Hunter served on the board of directors for the National Council on Alcoholism and other Dependencies of the Greater Detroit Area. In recognition of his achievement, he received the Spirit of Detroit Award from the City Council of Detroit.

William Scarborough '75, '77 recently received two Director Awards at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Special Awards Ceremony in Washington, DC. The awards honored outstanding contributions related to financial fraud investigations of public companies that violated federal securities law. Scarborough is an associate chief accountant with the SEC Enforcement Division and is a certified public accountant and fraud examiner.

'80s

Michael Barker '84 was presented with the Robbie Robinson Award in recognition of outstanding personal contributions to the goals of professional service, protection of the rights of individuals and the promotion of justice through law by the Savannah Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. Judge Barker also received an Award of Achievement for Outstanding Service to the Profession by the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia.

Donnie C. Brannen '84 became pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Kingsport, TN in February 2009 after 20 years pastoring in the Savannah area. He and his wife **Heidi Futch Brannen '82** have two children, Christopher, 16, and Elizabeth, 21, a senior at Brewton-Parker College.

'90s

Jill Lepo-Wieniewitz '92 is program coordinator and lead lab instructor for the Thunderbolt Elementary School Marine Science Academy. She was recognized by the *Cambridge Who's Who* for demonstrating dedication, leadership and excellence in marine science curriculum development and implementation.

Mike Harner '93 is the new boys' basketball coach at Savannah Country Day School (SCDS). He is returning to SCDS after spending several years coaching at Holy Innocents' Episcopal School in Atlanta.

Hillary M. Clark '95 received her Ph.D. in experimental psychology, with a specialization in research design and statistics, from the University of Memphis in 2004. She is presently an assistant professor in the applied psychology program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Whitney A. Cram '96 graduated from George Washington University with an Ed.S. in higher education administration. She is currently an academic counselor at Penn State University. She has a son, Josh, 14, and a daughter, Rebekkah, 2.

Holly Merriman Jordan '97 was promoted in January to the rank of major with the Glynn County Sheriff's Office. Her duties include the supervision of clerical staff, dispatch and public relations.

'00s

Dawn Hostetler '00 completed her Doctor of Audiology from the George S. Osborne College of Audiology at Salus University in Elkins Park, PA. She has been the owner of Coastal Audiology in Pooler for the past five years.

Audrey Gregory '01 is the chief nursing officer at Delray Medical Center in Delray Beach, FL.

Jessica Amanda Jenkins '04 graduated with a DVM from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine.



Melissa McMurry '04 was commissioned in the Navy Nurse Corps following graduation. She was stationed at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD from

2004-2008 caring for returning wounded soldiers. In 2007, she was afforded the opportunity to go on a humanitarian deployment on the USNS Comfort to Central and South America. During that tour she worked with Operation Smile and Project Hope. She recently completed a seven-month tour with Operation Iraqi Freedom and will enter the Family Nurse Practitioner program at Duke University in January 2010.

Share your memories

All alumni are invited to share their memories of going to Armstrong in preparation of our 75th anniversary in 2010.

Do you remember nickel Cokes at The Dump? How did you earn your \$200 annual tuition in 1947? Did you make the drive "way out to the end of Abercorn" when the new campus opened? Were you in the audience when Burt Reynolds helped dedicate the opening of the Fine Arts Auditorium? Everyone has an Armstrong memory. What's yours?

Become part of the 75th anniversary celebration. Send your memories to www.armstrong.edu/departments/alumni/alumni_75_memories, email Beth.Crovatt@armstrong.edu or call her at 912.344.2586.

AASU helps boost test scores

In the fall of 2008, the Alumni Association began a partnership with East Broad Elementary School in the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools' Read Aloud program. Once a month, at least 10 Armstrong Atlantic volunteers read to East Broad students for one hour. Volunteers included AASU alumni, students and staff. Volunteers put in an estimated 100 hours last year.

RoxAnne Jupe, a fourth grade teacher at East Broad Elementary School, said, "We were all extremely delighted to hear that the students we read to not only showed an increase in fluency, but also showed a significant increase in their reading scores on the Criterion Referenced Test. In addition, each students' excitability toward reading increased dramatically."

This year, Beth Crovatt, alumni coordinator, hopes to recruit at least 25 volunteers per month to meet the enthusiastic response by East Broad's teachers. To volunteer, email Beth.Crovatt@armstrong.edu or call her at 912.344.2586.



Sandy Jones '65, '98, president of the AASU Alumni Association Board reads to students at East Broad Street Elementary School.

Lisa P. Colvin '05 has opened a new photography company in Savannah after several years of apprenticing. Lisa Colvin Photography specializes in wedding and family photography.

Darcey C. Krug '05 is a clinical sales specialist with Allied Orthopaedic Associates, Inc, a medical device company in Arlington, VA.

Megan Moore '05 is the private duty coordinator for Coastal Home Care in Savannah. She is also the chapter alumnae advisor for the Eta Rho chapter of Sigma Sigma Sigma at AASU, and the president of the Tri Sigma alumnae chapter for Greater Savannah.

Jennifer Lynn Fiser Torrescano '05 graduated with a DVM from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine.

Callie V. Beevers '07 and her husband moved to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. She's starting a new career as an accountant for a Middle Eastern company.

Madison Mesco Ralston '07 is the assistant director for student activities at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Adrian Anderson '08, '09 has been selected for a two-year post-graduate administrative fellowship with Catholic Healthcare Partners at their Youngstown, OH location.



Ben Wolfe '09 is director of performing arts at Hilton Head Preparatory School.

pairings

Jacqueline W. Bobbitt '06 to wed Caledon Alexander Poullain Smith

weddings

Peggy S. Williams '04 married Michael A. Clifton on March 14, 2009.

Megan Moore, '05 married John Holland in 2007.

Madison Mesco '07 married John David Ralston.

notable happy birthdays

Charles M. Waldrop '39* celebrated his 90th birthday on April 26, 2009. He and his wife **Elizabeth C. Waldrop '40** both graduated from Armstrong Junior College. Their daughter, **Jessica Elizabeth (Waldrop) Harris '74** and son-in-law **Peter K. Harris '79** both graduated from Armstrong State College.

passings

Frances R. Cox '37*, July 29, 2009
Julian Michels '39*, January 14, 2009

Susanne V. Alexander '47, '80*, May 25, 2009

Billie Sue Sheahan '47*, May 6, 2009

Margaret Lorraine Crovatt Street '47*, May 4, 2009

Ethel S. Welch '53*, February 2, 2009

John W. Hall '82, June 4, 2009
Mary A. Jones '86, February 4, 2009

Randy B. Nail '96, May 9, 2009
Lottie Copeland '03, February 23, 2009

Richard A. Young '04, February 18, 2009

*Golden Graduate (1937-1959)



Orange William Hall, the first department head for the Armstrong State College business program passed away in October 2009.

correction

The graduation year for **Mary Jane Sullivan Sheldahl '68** was incorrectly reported in the last Passings section.

Master Teachers named

Teshewanda Shuman '03 and **Oatanisha Dawson '04** were awarded 2008 Master Teacher designations by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. The award recognizes Georgia's best teachers, identifying them as educators who have positively influenced student achievement in the classroom.



Office of External Affairs
Armstrong Atlantic State University
11935 Abercorn Street
Savannah, Georgia 31419-1997
www.armstrong.edu

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For questions about admissions or application contact the Office of Admissions at 912.344.2503 or admissions.armstrong.edu.

6.7%

That's the increase in
enrollment over fall 2009.

Compass is produced in
Marketing & Communications with
support from the Armstrong Atlantic
State University Foundation.

BARRY J. OSTROW
FRANCISCO DUQUE
Writers

JOAN LEHON
Designer

KATHERINE ARNTZEN
Principal photographer

KAREN COOPER
Editorial assistance

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

If you would like to comment on anything
you read in *Compass*, or if you have ideas
for future stories, please email
Francisco.Duque@armstrong.edu.

To see past issues of *Compass*, please go to:
[www.armstrong.edu/About/
news_and_events/compass](http://www.armstrong.edu/About/news_and_events/compass).



Student Union goes “under roof”

Ahead of the curve. This fall, the sweeping curved entrance of the Student Union emerged as a prominent feature of the Student Union. Craftsmen are now focusing on the external brickwork and interior of the facility due to open in spring 2010. The final roof beam was autographed and raised into place during a topping off ceremony in June.

