

SPSU

THE MAGAZINE | SPRING 2009



Where We've Been...Where We're Going

SPSU

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 2 From classmates to spouses
- 4 Milestones Week Celebration
- 6 Dr. Walt Thomas: then and now
- 13 Engineering Technology Center ground breaking

ACADEMICS

- 8 Academic Plan
- 14 Distance Learning
- 16 Globalizing the curriculum
- 17 New MBA concentration

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 12 Faculty/Staff Campaign results
- 18 The fresh faces of fall 2008

ATHLETICS

- 20 Soccer team makes big stride in second season



**Southern Polytechnic
State University**

1100 South Marietta Parkway
Marietta, GA 30060-2896
678-915-7222

Editor: Sylvia Carson,
Director of Public Relations

Contributing Writers:

Dr. Zvi Szafran
Sylvia Carson
Donna Harris

Vice President of Advancement:

Dr. Ron D. Dempsey

Photographer: Gary Meek

Designer: Garon Hart



4



6

Dear supporter of SPSU,



Southern Polytechnic State University is the product of all the people, programs, and dreams that have been part of this school's 60-year history. The students, faculty, staff, graduates, and supporters have all helped make SPSU what it is now – and what it will be in the future. This issue of the SPSU Magazine holds up a mirror that reflects both the school's history and the University's possibilities.

This particular issue looks at the past and future from the perspective of a number of people, including graduates, faculty, staff, and new students. They look back at friends, classes, buildings, and activities. They remember their classmates, including, in some cases, future spouses. They consider where the University is today. And they look forward at new academic programs, new athletic teams, new technologies, and, increasingly, growing enrollment.

SPSU has seen remarkable growth over the last few years. Multiple factors have contributed to this. We have added a number of attractive new programs, including construction engineering, psychology, and mechatronics engineering. We are doing a better job of marketing the majors we already have. We are working harder to support student success, which increases the retention of current students. And, historically, we also know that more people turn to higher education during economic downturns, whether because people are looking to develop new skills, acquire current knowledge, or simply pursue their education closer to home. Regardless of which of these reasons brings students to campus, we welcome them all to the Southern Polytechnic family.

Beyond everything else, this University is about the people. This publication is a wonderful reminder of all the people who make this school so special – whether you know it as The Technical Institute, Southern Technical Institute, Southern College of Technology, or Southern Polytechnic State University.

I hope you enjoy reading about these SPSU people in the pages that follow.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa A. Rosssbacher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa A. Rosssbacher, Ph.D.
President

From Classmates to Spouses

Three alumni couples got more than just an education from a university with an unusual male-to-female ratio.

Tim Thornton, Carl Frinzi, and Derick Davis knew the pool of female students at the technology engineering-focused Southern Polytechnic State University would be small, but each of them defied the odds and found his lifelong soulmate while earning a degree.

Tim Thornton and Ellen Calloway met in 1974 in a blueprint architecture class at SPSU (then Southern Tech) but didn't start dating until a year later.

They each were dating someone at another state school and would make the six-hour round trip together once or twice a month to see their significant others.

"We became great friends, and at some point, we just started dating each other," Ellen said.

She thought he had a "great sense of humor and made me laugh" but also wasn't intimidated by an independent woman. He found her independence

attractive because she "didn't necessarily need me but wanted me." She also was beautiful, smart, and determined.

The couple got married April 1, 1978, even though Tim hadn't anticipated finding a girlfriend, "much less a wife," at the predominately male school.

"I look back on the whole experience, and it's a little mind-blowing," he said. "To find your life's partner in such a small group is amazing."

From left to right: Carl and Pam Frinzi, Derick and Melissa Davis (on top), and Tim and Ellen Thornton on top of "The Rock."



Earning associate's and bachelor's degrees in civil engineering technology in 1975 and 1977, respectively, Ellen "thought it was fun" being one of only seven women on campus in 1974.

"I used to take some kidding, but all in all, it was a great experience," she said. Since graduation, she's worked for three different firms and now owns a construction consulting services company.

Tim graduated in 1982 with a bachelor's degree in architectural engineering technology and got his first job in construction management with Hensley-Schmidt, where he worked while in school.

He's now a preconstruction manager for Humphries and Co., in Atlanta.

Carl Frinzi is another SPSU alumnus who found love on campus. Carl met Pam Pitner at an orientation leader's training session in 1980, and they began dating shortly thereafter.

Pam thought he was a "typical fraternity guy" but was drawn to his smile and personality. Carl thought she was beautiful but "seemed a little snobby at first." He ended up, however, being attracted to her beauty, personality, and "those awesome blue eyes."

Carl believed the "odds were not very good" that he'd find his soul mate at a technology school. "At the time, I really wasn't thinking about finding a wife," he said. "It was hard enough to find a girl to date."

Pam said the student body was less than 10 percent female then.

Pam and Carl graduated in 1983 with bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering technology and civil engineering technology, respectively. Pam also earned a master's degree

in electrical engineering technology in 1994.

They were married Sept. 22, 1984, and live in west Cobb. They have two college-age children, Kristina and Joey. Joey is carrying on the family tradition as a current student at SPSU.

Carl is senior vice president of Balfour Beatty Construction. Pam returned to her alma mater in 1987 as an electrical and computer engineering technology associate professor.

She had told the ECET department head, one of her mentors, that she was looking for a part-time engineering job, and he "offered me a job, and I haven't looked back."

For Derick Davis and Melissa Cherry, their first impression of each other could be classified as intense dislike at first sight when they met in 1995 at SPSU's Summer Workshop Opportunity Orientation Program (SWOOP) for incoming minority freshmen.

"I really did not care for Derick at all," Melissa said. "He seemed to feel that he knew everything and had a deep desire to share that knowledge with the world."

"It's no secret that Melissa and I frankly couldn't stand each other," Derick said. "I took her as someone who portrayed herself as completely independent and superior to others."

In 1997, however, they began dating, broke up, then got back together in 2000, when they were "able to realize the connection between us was something very special," Melissa said.

She was attracted to his motivational skills, his desire to fight for the underdog, and his "incredibly handsome" looks.

"Those greenish-brown eyes of his got me even when I did not really care for the rest of the person," she said.

He was drawn to her drive and determination, her academic priorities, and her West Indian accent.

"She's a sophisticated woman with limitless potential," he said.

They ultimately overcame their mutual dislike and married Aug. 18, 2001. Derick earned a bachelor's degree in technical communications in 2000 and a master's degree in IT in 2005, while Melissa earned a bachelor's degree in CET in 2002 and an MBA in 2005.

He is a wireless equipment engineer for Alcatel-Lucent, and she is a civil project engineer with Pond & Co. They live in Canton with their two young children: Damien and Dawson.

These couples demonstrate that a diverse atmosphere can and does exist among SPSU's student population. Women are steadily entering in the "traditionally male-dominated" fields of engineering, construction management, and technology. To stimulate the rate even more, SPSU collaborates with various organizations to spur young ladies' interest in math and science, including the Girl Scouts of America, Society of Women Engineers, and Women in Electronics. The Atlanta chapter of Women in Electronics even provides a scholarship to a SPSU female student each year. Today, women make up more than 21 percent of the University's enrollment, and that number continues to grow.

For more information on SPSU's academic programs and student life, visit www.spsu.edu.

Milestones celebration

Last fall, Southern Polytechnic State University celebrated its 60th anniversary and the 10th anniversary of Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher as president. During her tenure, Pres. Rossbacher has led the campus through significant growth and expansion. Enrollment has grown from 3,678 in 1998 to 4,818 students in 2008. The retention rate of freshmen students has increased by 12 percent, and the athletic program gained two new intercollegiate sports, men's soccer and women's basketball. In addition, multiple new academic programs have been added, and six new buildings have been constructed on the campus.

To commemorate these milestones, a three-day celebration was held that included a convocation, two symposia, an art show auction, a community dinner, and a campus cookout.





DR. WALT THOMAS LOOKS BACK... AND AHEAD

In his 32-year tenure, Dr. Walt Thomas has witnessed the growing pains that have transformed Southern Polytechnic State University from a branch of Georgia Institute of Technology into a unique blend of engineering and engineering technology.



Dr. Thomas, a professor in the Industrial Engineering Technology department, was associated with SPSU even before he became a faculty member. He attended his first quarter of college at Southern Technical Institute, before it moved from Chamblee to Marietta.

Three decades ago, the east Cobb resident was hired by Georgia Tech to teach apparel and textile engineering classes at both institutions after working several years in the textile industry and federal government.

Since then, he's seen the school become an independent entity that's evolved into a university, after undergoing two name changes, adding numerous degrees, increasing its enrollment, and expanding its campus.

"In the early days, STI was a special mission institution that offered engineering technology degrees, and that's about all," Dr. Thomas said. "It was kind of unique in those days to have an engineering technology-type program that was geared toward employees somewhere between managers and engineers. We were the only institution that really provided those types of degrees at that point in time."

In 1980, Southern Tech became the 14th four-year college and 33rd independent institution within the University System of Georgia.

"Today, Southern Poly is more applied engineering and is geared toward taking theoretical technology and applying it to the industry."

Through the years, however, the University brought in other degree programs like mathematics, chemistry, technical communication, and computer science and just recently "evolved into pure engineering" by offering mechatronics engineering, software engineering, construction engineering, and systems engineering programs.

"Southern Poly has expanded rather extensively and continues to extend that mission of engineering technology that's existed for many, many years."

Dr. Thomas, who has seen the school's name change to Southern College of Technology and Southern Polytechnic State University, also has seen the composition of the student body change significantly.

"When I attended STI, we had one female student," he said. "We've been able to evolve to more than 20 percent female enrollment now."

The total enrollment has grown from a few hundred students to more than 4,800 students during his tenure, and although the University initially was a commuter school, it now houses nearly one-fourth of its enrollment on campus, he added.

The campus has changed dramatically since Dr. Thomas joined the faculty in 1976, growing from about 125 acres with 10 buildings to more than 200 acres with 35 buildings.

Major additions have included the W. Clair Harris Textile Center, a new architecture building, classroom additions, the Atrium Building, the Joe Mack Wilson Student Center, the Recreation and Wellness Center, and two student housing complexes.

"We've expanded rather tremendously in terms not only of degree types but in buildings that were added," he said.

As for what's ahead, Dr. Thomas said he thinks SPSU should expand its research effort and bring in more research dollars.

"I'm quite involved in research for the (apparel and textile) industry," he said. "That's what I see that would be most beneficial."

The professor said he's pushing for the University to become a technology transfer center that can disseminate the research technology it develops to industries, businesses, and the government, and he would like to see the University create a business-ethics center.

He's also excited about the completion of the \$33 million engineering technology building that's now under construction.

Based on the progress being made at Southern Polytechnic, the University's future will be "very, very strong," Dr. Thomas said.

"I think in a metro area like this that the growth will be rather significant," he said, adding the combination of new degrees and several other factors will continue to attract students. "I think the growth will continue to increase over the next 10 to 12 years."

"Today, Southern Poly is more applied engineering and is geared toward taking theoretical technology and applying it to the industry." – Dr. Walt Thomas

Developing SPSU's Academic Plan

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, Southern Polytechnic State University has entered a period of strong growth and diversification. A new mission statement and University Strategic Plan were approved in 2006, setting a goal of becoming a more comprehensive university. New academic programs have been developed and approved in construction engineering, mechatronics engineering, systems engineering, chemistry, and psychology.

While the larger enrollment has challenged SPSU's physical resources, the University has taken steps to improve the situation. In 2006, the SPSU Foundation purchased five acres of adjacent land formerly belonging to the Elks. The former Elks Lodge was rehabilitated in 2007, and it is the current home of the Extended University and the Southern Polytechnic Applied Research Center. Following the completion of a University Facility Master Plan in FY 2007, the University received construction funds for a new Engineering Technology Center and for the adaptive reuse of the Studio Building into new architectural studio space. Construction on both projects is expected to be completed in 2010.

Along with a new Facility Master Plan, SPSU is also developing a new Academic Plan to accommodate for the growth on campus in its academic programs and to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing our University.

CHALLENGES

1) Matching Growth in Student Demand with Resources

Since state funding has historically lagged both student body and program growth, SPSU must move forward in an environment of limited resources. Recent trends in the economy meant that SPSU faced a budget reduction in 2008-2009 and perhaps beyond. This not only impacted the number of new faculty that could be hired to meet a growing demand, but also the number of staff and administrative personnel that could be added to meet student needs.

2) The Challenge of Rapidly Advancing Technology

Much of the instruction that SPSU provides requires advanced technology.

Failure to aggressively update will result in our education becoming outdated and irrelevant. Many of our programs are in cutting edge fields such as mechatronics engineering, engineering technology, computing, information technology, and systems engineering. The challenge will be to ensure that the equipment and facilities in these areas are adequate to deliver a quality education.

3) Changing Balance of Traditional/Non-Traditional Students

Historically, SPSU has attracted a mostly commuter, non-traditional student body. Many of our students work in full- or part-time jobs during the day and attend classes in the evening. Recently, we have experienced a moderate shift and are attracting more traditional students directly from high school. This trend has accelerated as we have broadened our academic offerings. The on-campus housing occupancy exceeded 100 percent in 2008. It is expected that this trend will continue.

4) Greater Need To Support a State-Wide Technology Mission

With the State of Georgia seeking to attract new industry to locate here, and with many of Georgia's existing businesses facing rapid technological advancements, SPSU increasingly will be called upon by industry to help expand the size of the state's technological workforce, as well as to help modernize the skills of the existing workforce. To meet this challenge, SPSU will need to develop better collaborative relationships with the other educational units in the state, especially the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG).

5) Increasingly Diverse Student Body Requiring a More Global Perspective

SPSU is experiencing rapid enrollment growth, with increasing percentages of international students. Additionally, SPSU serves businesses that are facing a much more global marketplace, characterized by worldwide manufacturing sites, multinational procurement issues, and international political requirements. As a result, SPSU will need to continue to improve the global perspective in all of its academic programs.

6) Escalating Cost to Providing a Technological Education

SPSU is currently experiencing difficulty in hiring qualified faculty in

several specialty areas. Salaries in these areas have risen much faster than national norms, creating shortages of qualified faculty for existing and future programs. The problem is exacerbated by fewer and fewer American students earning advanced degrees in technical areas. These areas currently include business, construction management, engineering, and engineering technology. With budgetary pressures currently being felt from state funding sources, SPSU will need to develop alternative funding opportunities to address these increasing costs in the future.

7) Requirement for More Specialized Education

It is anticipated that more specialized programs in technical education will be sought by business and industry in the future in Georgia. As the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age, business and industry will face a need for a workforce with specialized skills to replace them. Now more than ever, SPSU will be relied on by industry to produce a highly trained, professional graduate with the ability to contribute immediately upon employment.

8) Need for Stronger Advising and Mentoring of Students

Studies such as the National Survey of Student Engagement indicate that the area of lowest student satisfaction is advising. Both nationally and within the University System of Georgia, there is an increasing recognition that universities need to develop stronger advising and mentoring programs. In 2006, an advising task force was established to make recommendations as to how advising might be improved at SPSU.

SOLUTIONS

To address the eight challenges listed above, five general academic strategies were established for the university, intended to carry us forward for the next five years.

Strategy 1: Continue to provide quality instruction flexible enough to meet rapidly changing societal, business, and industry needs.

Strategy 2: Become a more comprehensive university in scope of programs, courses, and student body.

Strategy 3: Increase the amount of non-state funding through new funding initiatives.

Strategy 4: Identify and serve student, local, regional, state, ethnic, and professional community needs.

Strategy 5: Strengthen graduate programs at SPSU.

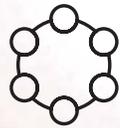
Each of these strategies has multiple components and goals. The progress will be analyzed each year, and updates to the plan and its components will be determined.

"In the meantime, it is our goal to ensure SPSU's academic curriculum continues to be as comprehensive as possible so we can better support the development of the next generation of professionals in the state of Georgia," said Dr. Zvi Szafran, vice president for Academic Affairs.

For more information on SPSU's academic plan, visit www.spsu.edu



Where all your
communications
needs come
together.



The **EPI** Companies

Creative
Digital
Display
Print
Premiums
Logistics

EXPRESSION
in motion



**Accounting
Solutions
Group, LLC**

*Providing Non-Profit
Financial Solutions*

Christina L. Paloski, CPA
President

(770) 312-4231

www.accountingsolutionsgroup.com

CAMPUS INITIATIVES

Faculty and staff give back big

Each year, as part of SPSU's fundraising program, a Faculty and Staff Campaign is launched. The campaign allows employees to support the University and its students. Contributions help support scholarships, faculty travel, research and awards, student activities and competitions, departmental projects, plus much more.

In recognition of Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher's 10th year as the President of SPSU, additional donations to benefit the President Rossbacher Scholarship Endowment were solicited. The final tally of the 2009 Faculty and Staff Campaign pledges totaled \$50,089.08. More than 240 faculty and staff contributed to the campaign. Additionally, the President Rossbacher Scholarship raised \$8,576.08 and will be awarded as a scholarship for the first time in the 2009-2010 academic year. The SPSU Foundation thanks everyone who contributed this year and appreciates the support of the entire campus.



Woodline solutions
Sustainable Construction and Program Management Solutions

3695F Cascade Road #2152 ; Atlanta, GA 30331
Phone: (404) 478-6445 Fax: (404) 478-6446
www.woodlinesolutions.com

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
LEED CONSULTING
DIVERSITY INTEGRATION



Excellence Ingrained...



Governor helps break ground for engineering technology

Last fall, SPSU president Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher, along with staff, faculty, and students, welcomed Georgia governor Sonny Perdue to campus to break ground on an expansion of the Studio Building and a new Engineering Technology Center (ETC).

Gov. Perdue's attendance at the event demonstrated his continued support of SPSU and this project, as in spring 2008 he signed the 2009 fiscal year state budget,

which included \$33.3 million for the project.

When complete, the ETC building will provide 123,000 square feet of laboratories, classrooms, seminar rooms, and a lecture hall. Five of SPSU's academic programs will be housed in the building including electrical, computer, and telecommunications engineering technology; mechanical engineering technology; and mechatronics engineering.



Going the distance with SPSU's Distance Learning Program



Attending classes on campus isn't the only way for students to study at Southern Polytechnic State University. The Distance Learning Program gives students the option of earning undergraduate or graduate degrees or certificates by taking classes online rather than sitting in a classroom.

During the fall 2008 semester,

909 students took advantage of the program by enrolling in at least one online class.

"One reason that a lot of people participate in the program is they are employed full time and going to school part time," according to Dawn Ramsey, director of the academic support center, which oversees the program. "They may not be able to come to

the campus because they live outside metro Atlanta or travel a lot in their jobs. The Distance Learning Program reaches out to people who can't necessarily stop what they're doing to move closer to campus."

The online classes, which have been offered at SPSU since 1995, allow students to earn the following degrees or certificates:

- a bachelor's degree in information technology
- master's degree in information design and communication
- master's degree in information technology
- master's degrees in systems engineering and quality assurance
- advanced graduate certificate in communications management
- advanced graduate certificate in content development
- advanced graduate certificate in instructional design and visual communication and graphics
- graduate certificate in information technology
- graduate certificate in software engineering
- graduate certificate in systems engineering
- graduate certificate in technical communication
- graduate green belt certificates
- graduate transition certificates for the MBA
- graduate transition certificates in computer science and information technology
- undergraduate certificate in specialty construction.

Certificate programs are a set of classes that give students a "certain body of knowledge" that may be part of an undergraduate or graduate degree program, according to Ramsey.

"Graduate transition certificates allow students who, for instance, want to get a master's degree in an area that's different from their bachelor's degree to take classes that will bridge the information gap between their two areas of study," she said.

These areas of study can be completed fully online or, depending on the program, more conventional students may elect to take certain

classes or semesters online rather than on campus.

Many programs have an on-campus version and an online version that are the same program. Certificate programs require anywhere from 15 to 21 total credit hours, which may end up being three to five classes. The online bachelor's degrees are four-year, full-time programs while the master's degrees usually require two years of full-time work.

Besides being ideal for students who work full time or live outside

"With most online instruction, there are no set hours," Ramsey said. "Classes are asynchronous. Students can do the work at a time that's convenient for them."

metro Atlanta, the online programs are perfect for "returning adult students" who want to work on a graduate degree or for professionals who want to change careers.

"They can be working in one career and want to prepare for another career, and an online program in that field is obviously one way they have to prepare for a professional reinvention," she said.

Online classes also permit a stay-at-home mom, for example, to do her schoolwork in the evening after her children have gone to bed or a night owl to log class time in the wee hours

of the morning.

"With online instruction, there are no set hours," Ramsey said. "Classes are asynchronous. Students can do the work at a time that's convenient for them."

But online classes may not be for everyone. The learning style of an individual determines whether he or she should go the online route, and the SPSU Web site has a self-assessment on the Distance Learning page, which students can do to see if it's the right option for them.

"Some people are better prepared, because of their learning style, to be successful in online programs," she said. "Other people may not. But there's nothing that says online programs can't work as well as traditional programs. We have had students completing online certificates and degrees successfully since 1999."

Students who decide to take online classes should check the Web site for information on programs offered, applying for admission, registering for classes and financial aid options.

All applicants must meet the University's admission requirements to participate in online degree or certificate programs.

Taking classes through the Distance Learning Program could be just the thing for SPSU alumni who might want to return to the world of academia to further their education.

"Online degrees and certificates are something our alumni might want to consider," she said. "Even though they might have moved out of the area, there are options for them to still continue their work at SPSU."

For more information on SPSU's Distance Learning Program visit dl.spsu.edu.

SPSU establishes new MBA concentration in accounting

Southern Polytechnic State University's master's of business administration program began offering a concentration in accounting in spring 2009.

The concentration has been developed to meet the increasing demands for highly trained accounting professionals. The program is geared toward those professionals who wish to possess knowledge and understanding of the issues facing businesses today in light of all of the legal and regulatory changes in the field brought on by the current economic market.

Completion of this concentration is designed to qualify students to sit for the Certified Public

Accounting Exam (CPA). The program offers courses in Advanced Management Accounting, Advanced Accounting Information and Control Systems, Emerging Auditing Technologies, Taxation of Entities, Fund Accounting, Professional Judgment, Financial Statement Analysis, and International Accounting. An MBA with a concentration in accounting can lead to various positions in industry and government, including CFO, CEO, Controller, Treasurer, Internal Auditor, and Financial Analyst.

"We have worked with advisors from corporations to tailor these curriculum tracks to meet the demands of the real-world business environ-

ment," said Dr. Ronny Richardson, SPSU's Business Administration department chair. "The program gives students the knowledge and skills to pursue careers in numerous areas of accounting. Graduates with expertise in accounting are in short supply and have many attractive opportunities."

As with the other new academic offerings that SPSU has made available in the last three years, the accounting concentration provides yet another platform for continued growth in enrollment and curriculum.

For more information on SPSU's graduate programs and advanced degrees, visit www.spsu.edu.



The Freshman Faces

This past fall, the newborns of 1990 turned into the freshman class of 2008. A record 600 freshmen began their college

careers at Southern Polytechnic State University –representing a 21 percent increase from incoming freshman the previous fall.



These students have never known what the world was like before computers and other forms of instant communication, and now they will use this technology to carve out careers as architects, computer specialists, fashion designers, physicists, and software, mechanical, electrical, civil, industrial, and telecommunications engineers.

Even though these young adults who are barely old enough to vote may be rookies in the working world, they may actually have an advantage over their older, more experienced counterparts as far as competing in an ever-tightening job market that thrives on rapid communication and computers. Because most jobs now require the use of various technological skills, members of the Class of 2012 have a definite edge because working with computers is something they have done since their preschool days.

Leann Walker of Canton, Ga., came to SPSU in the fall as the first step in pursuing her interest in industrial engineering technology.

of Fall 2008

“I chose to attend a technology school because I am very interested in science and math and love applying it to my everyday life,” she said. “I want to work at DuPont in their research and development field and help to create new materials that can act stronger and be lighter and still offer the same protection, if not more.”

A lifelong interest in technology is what led John Gibson of Kansas City, Kan., to enroll at SPSU.

“The reason I chose SPSU is it was one of the few schools that seemed to best fit me,” the software engineering major said.

Every degree program at SPSU uses computers to some extent, but many programs rely heavily on them, which requires the University to constantly upgrade its computers and software to keep its students with access to relevant technology.

But keeping up with all the changes and upgrades is one of the strengths of this computer-savvy class, and these students aren't afraid of a challenge. Their majors aren't the only areas of diversity for the new fall freshman class. As the curriculum at SPSU continues to broaden, so does the cross-section of students who enroll at the University. Besides pursuing a number of different academic programs, the 600 freshmen also come from all sorts of demographic backgrounds from across the country and represent six different cultural and ethnic groups: African-

American, American Indian, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Multiracial.

Although they feel comfortable in the technology-driven environment of the University, some members of this year's freshman class may not be as at ease about being away from home for the first time and getting their initial taste of adulthood.

“I chose Southern Poly because I heard it was a good school to get used to college life and to get the same experiences as a larger university offers,” said Walker, who lives on campus. “My biggest challenge has been adjusting to not having my mom and sister there when I need them and trying to manage my time without being told to do so.”

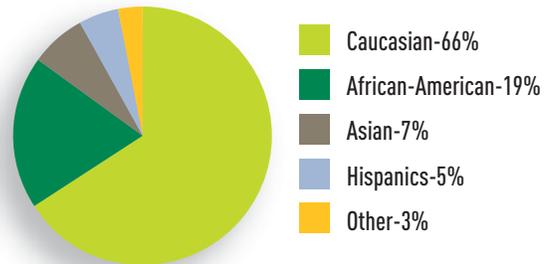
“Being by yourself” and “no longer (having) parents telling you what to do” also have been Gibson's major chal-

lenges as he enters adulthood.

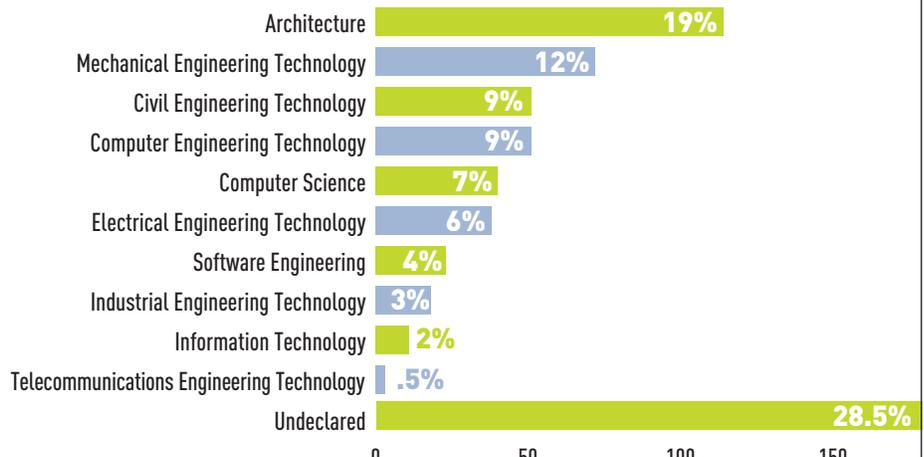
Gibson and Walker's new academic ventures also have presented some surprises along the way.

“My biggest surprise so far has been that for such a small school, there is always something fun going on and always something to do,” Walker said, noting she joined a sorority and has made some of the best friends she could ever have.

“Whether it's in the Greek community or an event hosted by the school, there is never a lack of things to do, like I thought there would be at a smaller school.”



2008 FRESHMAN CLASS BY MAJOR



Soccer team makes big strides

The SPSU soccer team completed an outstanding second season with a second place finish in the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC). After a respectable 8-8-2 finish in their debut season in 2007, the Hornets took a big step forward in the 2008 season with a final record of 12-5-1 for the conference and 20-13-3 overall, with huge wins against teams from Faulkner, Berry, Emmanuel, and Reinhardt.

The team also qualified for the SSAC tournament for the first time and achieved a NAIA national ranking, climbing as high as 18.

“We were very happy with this past season,” said Soccer Head Coach Kom Momeni. “We played a tough schedule and beat some very good teams. A couple of games we won in overtime and some games we blew out our opposition. I am extremely proud of the new and returning players who contributed to such a great season.”

Leading the team on the field were sophomore Mamadou “Futty” Danso and senior James Grant.

Both players received recognition from the SSAC Men’s Soccer Coaches and were honored for their play as they helped set records for the team.

“In only our second year, we managed to have the top scorer (Danso) and playmaker (Grant) in the league. We are very happy for both guys as they deserve these awards. They not only helped set high standards for our program, but helped us win 12 matches this year,” added Coach Momeni.

Danso was voted as the “Player of the Year” and “Offensive Player of the Year” in the SSAC, while capturing his second straight “First Team All-Conference Selection.” Grant was named to the “Second Team All-SSAC.”

Not willing to rest on the laurels of this past season, Momeni and his team are focused on building on their success as they look forward to their third season in August.

In addition to the great second season performance, SPSU’s men’s soccer team received national recognition for its star player, Mamadou “Futty” Danso. Danso was honored by the NAIA as a member of the 2008 All-America Honorable Mention Team.

Danso’s season for the Hornets was truly remarkable. He led the SSAC in goals, shots, shots on goal, and points per game. He was also the only person in the nation to be in the top five in all those categories. The amazing part is that he did all of this while playing as a Center Back for the last seven matches of the season. Equally impressive is that he was named the SSAC Offensive Player of the Week and SSAC Defensive Player of the Week in the same season.

Danso ended the 2008 season with 19 goals, and 6 assists in only 14 matches. He helped the second-year Hornet program to a 12-5-1 overall record and a 7-2 SSAC record.

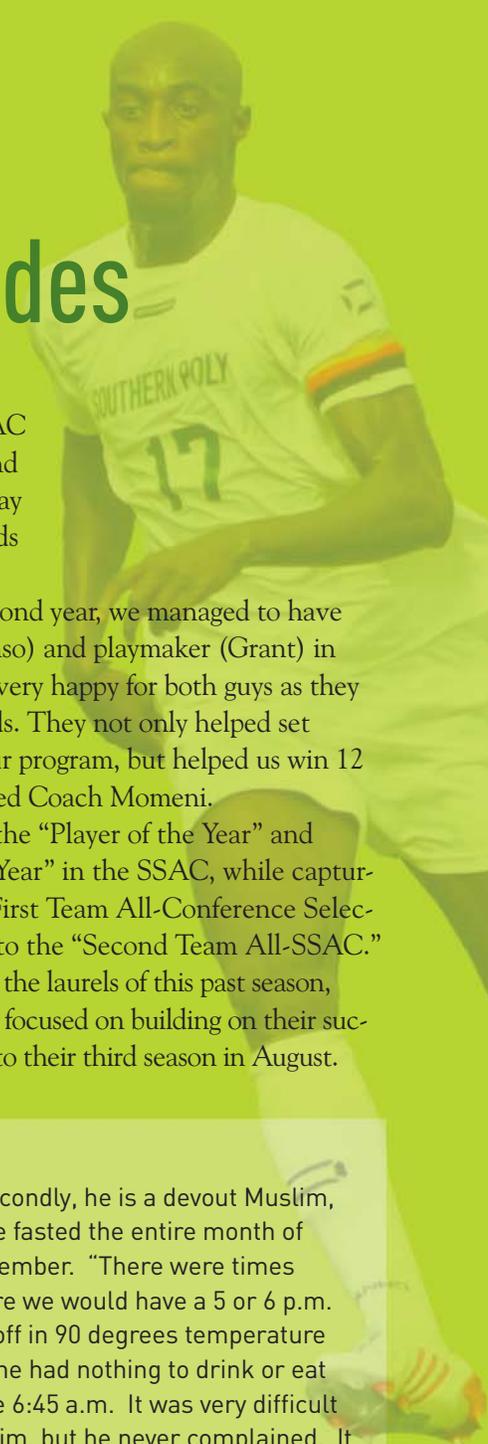
“I am truly happy for Futty for getting this award. He has always been very reluctant to play as a Forward, as his natural position is a Center Back. He just did it because it was best for the team,” said SPSU head coach Kom Momeni.

Danso’s story just doesn’t end there. Few people know of the adversity that he has gone through during the season. First, it started off by his missing preseason work-outs. He did not participate one day of preseason because of some issues in his home country Gambia. He adjusted but did not start a single match until the twelfth match of the season.

Secondly, he is a devout Muslim, so he fasted the entire month of September. “There were times where we would have a 5 or 6 p.m. kickoff in 90 degrees temperature and he had nothing to drink or eat since 6:45 a.m. It was very difficult for him, but he never complained. It showed how mentally and physically tough he is,” said Coach Momeni.

Finally, he suffered a neck injury during the Milligan match that required an ambulance ride, a series of X-rays and MRI’s, and a neck brace for two weeks.

“Futty’s story is pretty interesting. It is great what he has done on the soccer field, but when you put it in the context of all he has gone through, it is truly amazing. I am honored to call him our (Hornet’s) first All-American!”





BUILD ON THE FUTURE

HELP TOMORROW'S STUDENTS BY REMEMBERING SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN

BY INCLUDING SPSU FOUNDATION IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS, YOU CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON FUTURE GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS. A BEQUEST IS ONE OF THE MOST THOUGHTFUL WAYS OF PROVIDING FOR SOUTHERN POLY STUDENTS: IT IS A GIFT THAT SHOWS YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY'S TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE AND ALLOWS OUR STUDENTS TO THRIVE ACADEMICALLY TODAY AND PROFESSIONALLY TOMORROW.

For more information about designing and building your legacy at SPSU, please contact the Office of Advancement at:

**1100 SOUTH MARIETTA PARKWAY
MARIETTA, GA 30060
678.915.7351**



In an effort to be more environmentally conscious and to continue being good stewards of our donor and state dollars, SPSU will no longer be printing and mailing our alumni newsletter, Polytechnic Today. Instead, we will be distributing this newsletter by e-mail only. Please make sure you don't miss a minute of news regarding campus, students, and faculty by going to www.spsu.edu/alumni and then clicking on "Update your Information." We look forward to receiving your e-mail address and to keeping in touch!



Public Relations Department
1100 South Marietta Parkway
Marietta, Georgia 30060-2896
www.spsu.edu

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Marietta,
Georgia
Permit No. 318