

# SPSU

THE MAGAZINE | SPRING 2010



## Enterprising Initiatives

# SPSU

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**Southern Polytechnic  
State University**  
1100 South Marietta Parkway  
Marietta, GA 30060-2896  
678-915-7222

**Editor:** Sylvia Carson,  
Director of Public Relations

**Contributing Writers:**

Eric Pollard  
Cristel Mohrman  
Sylvia Carson  
Donna Harris  
Paul Sassone

**Vice President for Advancement:**

Dr. Ron D. Dempsey

**Photographer:** Gary Meek

**Designer:** Garon Hart



**THE MAGAZINE FOR SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY**

Dear supporter of SPSU,



During 2009, a committee of faculty, staff, and students worked together to develop a new strategic plan for Southern Polytechnic State University. As I write this, the plan is being reviewed by the University community and finalized into goals that will guide the institution for the next three years. In following this plan, the University will focus on three major strategic goals: to increase the number of graduates who are well prepared for work and for life, to increase the resources available to support the University's mission, and to increase the sense of community within the University and between the University and the region.

Each of the goals in this new strategic plan contributes to Southern Polytechnic's support of students' entrepreneurial and enterprising initiatives. Through the curriculum, faculty and student research, and partnerships with other institutions, SPSU pursues the goal of nurturing the success and achievement of students. In this way, we are increasing the number of successful graduates, raising additional resources, and adding to our sense of community.

This issue of the *SPSU Magazine* focuses on the entrepreneurial spirit of our alumni, students, faculty, and staff. As you read, please look for linkages to the strategic goals of the University. For instance, you will immediately recognize the stories about graduates who are well prepared for work and for life. You will read about "Southern Tech's" first African-American graduate, Willie Hope, and how his training on campus four decades ago engaged his interest in technology and prepared him for a successful career. You will also learn about how recent graduates Vanessa Jimenez and Jason Shapiro turned a class project into a real-world venture whose total sales now exceed \$1 million.

SPSU continues to see great success and growth. Your interest and support help make this possible. I look forward to working with you and the Southern Polytechnic community as we accomplish our strategic goals with a spirit of entrepreneurship.

I hope you enjoy reading about enterprising initiatives, in a variety of forms, in the pages that follow. And I invite you to review the entire strategic plan, which can be downloaded at <http://www.spsu.edu/irpa/planning.htm>

With very best wishes,

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

Lisa A. Rossbacher, Ph.D.  
President

# From classroom to marketplace

Two Southern Polytechnic State University graduates have found a way to turn sustainability into profit – and it all started with a SPSU marketing management class.

Vanessa Jimenez (BS '03) and husband Jason Shapiro (MBA '05) launched their small business endeavor, TransactionTree, in early 2009. It offers retailers electronic receipt solutions in order to save money and reduce their carbon footprint. The e-receipts work with retailers' current checkout systems, giving customers the option to have receipts printed or emailed. This saves retailers on the cost of paper and ink for printed receipts, while saving consumers the hassle and aggravation of losing or sorting through piles of accumulated paper. Most importantly, it helps the environment. And because TransactionTree doesn't collect confidential information or sell email addresses, consumer privacy is assured.

"In the MBA class, our assignment was to create any type of product or service as long as it was environmentally friendly," explained Jimenez of her group's decision to pursue the idea. The project required students to create a full marketing plan based on either a new idea for a product or ser-



Vanessa Jimenez (BS '03) and husband Jason Shapiro (MBA '05) turned a class project into a successful business venture.

vice, or an existing product or service that has been enhanced in meaningful ways. Whatever was decided had to contribute significantly to the improvement of the quality of life through social responsibility, environmental friendliness, value, and profit.

"We were very excited with the opportunity to create something that would have an environmental impact,"

added Jimenez. "I happened to be in a group that loved shopping but hated the idea of carrying a bunch of receipts in their purses or pockets. And the timing could not be better to learn and create a product that would serve the 'green need' and the business world."

"My goal for assigning this type of project was to help develop the thinking of my students to be more holistic as managers. I want them to begin thinking about how they can make the world a better place for the customers they serve," said Dr. Joyce McGriff, instructor of the class and assistant professor in the business administration department.

Coming up with an idea was the easy part, but taking it from the classroom to the

corporate world required a little more work. "That's when Jason stepped in," continued Jimenez. "He saw potential in the idea and turned it into a proven, working solution."

"The concept of digital receipts was sound. The idea just required some fine tuning," noted Shapiro, a fourth-generation entrepreneur. "I moved this concept away from a piece of hardware

and turned it into a piece of software to allow for a more simple solution with a much lower cost of entry. After doing some research, I was able to integrate existing technologies in order to build the backbone of the solution.”

“This solution extends beyond just retail shopping,” explained Jimenez. “Consumers normally keep receipts for insurance, warranties, taxes, and other miscellaneous needs, but they pile up and create a mess. With Transaction-Tree, accumulation of receipts is a thing of the past.”

Developing the business wasn’t always easy. “We went through a few failed concepts until we had a working prototype,” added Shapiro. “At that point, we took it to market to see what kind of interest was out there. Many retailers loved the solution and could not wait to use it.”

TransactionTree currently works with Stanford University’s apparel store and Gelvani Liquors in Connecticut and expects sales in excess of \$1 million this year.

“I’m extremely proud of Vanessa,” said Dr. McGriff. “She was one of the students who make you, as a professor, feel like you’re doing the right thing. I try to encourage my students to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, but Vanessa was one of the few who actually did it.”

So what do Jimenez and Shapiro suggest for anyone else looking to start their own business?

“First, build a great team. Look at the people around you and understand what type of value they can add. You need to also understand the market before you make the jump. You may have a great idea, but if you don’t do your homework the market will eat you alive. And most importantly, don’t be afraid to ask for advice or guidance.”

## Engineering entrepreneurs

**Big businesses are scaling down, reducing the options of employment for college** graduates looking for their first jobs. But it’s not just the economy that has SPSU professor Greg Quinet’s entrepreneurship class overflowing; it’s the genuine desire of students to own or operate their own small businesses.

“There is a theory that a lot of businesses are created out of necessity,” said Quinet, assistant professor in the business administration department. “This year, we have over 40 students and a wait list, just in my course alone. Every section of our [undergraduate and graduate] entrepreneurship courses is filled.”

Rather than focusing solely on theory, the class applies practical knowledge toward creating a business model. Teams work together to decide the type of business they want to create and the output at the end of the semester is a business plan that is viable and is able to raise capital to begin operating.

“Entrepreneurship requires a different kind of mindset than management theory – how do you run a small company versus a big company? Working for and managing a company of 20 or 30 employees that makes \$1 million in revenue versus a company that makes \$1 billion in revenue requires different skills,” explained Quinet. “We have several professors who want to promote entrepreneurship and make sure that we’re covering the differences between starting and running a small business versus going to work for a large corporation.”

Among them is Dr. Joyce McGriff, assistant professor in the business administration department. Her marketing management course is a requirement for graduates in the MBA program. “Most students come to my class so they can get a job or become better managers. But we want students to have a broader goal and consider the path of entrepreneurship,” she said.

“Most businesses are small businesses with 500 employees or fewer, so they are the economic backbone of our country,” added Quinet. “Entrepreneurship is not just about creating a business, but is also about managing small businesses. A lot of our students may not start their own companies, but they will work with those small businesses out there.”

Currently, the entrepreneurship course is offered as an elective for both undergraduate and graduate business majors with a number of requirements that deter students from other disciplines from taking it. However, there is a push in the business administration department to create an entrepreneurship course for non-business majors that would have fewer prerequisites and encourage others to enroll in the course.

“We want to provide all of our students with the knowledge and skills to successfully start and operate small businesses,” said Dr. Zvi Szafran, vice president for academic affairs. “By creating businesses, they help stimulate Georgia’s economy.”



Prof. Greg Quinet (MS '92) teaches SPSU's growing entrepreneurship class.

# Four decades of success thanks to an SPSU education

**A successful business owner with a penchant for technology, Willie Hope (AS '67) attributes many of his accomplishments to the education he received at Southern Polytechnic State University.**

Willie Hope said he was drawn to the school — then called Southern Technical Institute — in 1964 because it was on the cutting-edge of technology.

The school had just received a mainframe computer from IBM and was offering a class about the semiconductor, the forerunner to the computer chip.

“What I learned at SPSU probably didn’t get to other schools until several years later. IBM was working with Georgia Tech and Southern Tech because of who they were. I think Southern Tech was probably the first school that IBM gave that much technology to as teaching tools,” Hope said.

Hope recalled being the only African-American student during his first year at the school.

“When I got to SPSU, unfortunately, racism was still a factor in public education. I was sort of the lone wolf for the first or second semester,” he said. But after being the sole African-American student in the Teletype and radio repair classes he took while serving more than three years in the Army, he didn’t let racism stand in the way of his education.

Taking morning classes and working nights as a flight-test technician, Hope earned distinction

in 1967 as the school’s first African-American graduate. He received an associate degree in electrical engineering technology, with a specialization in electronics.

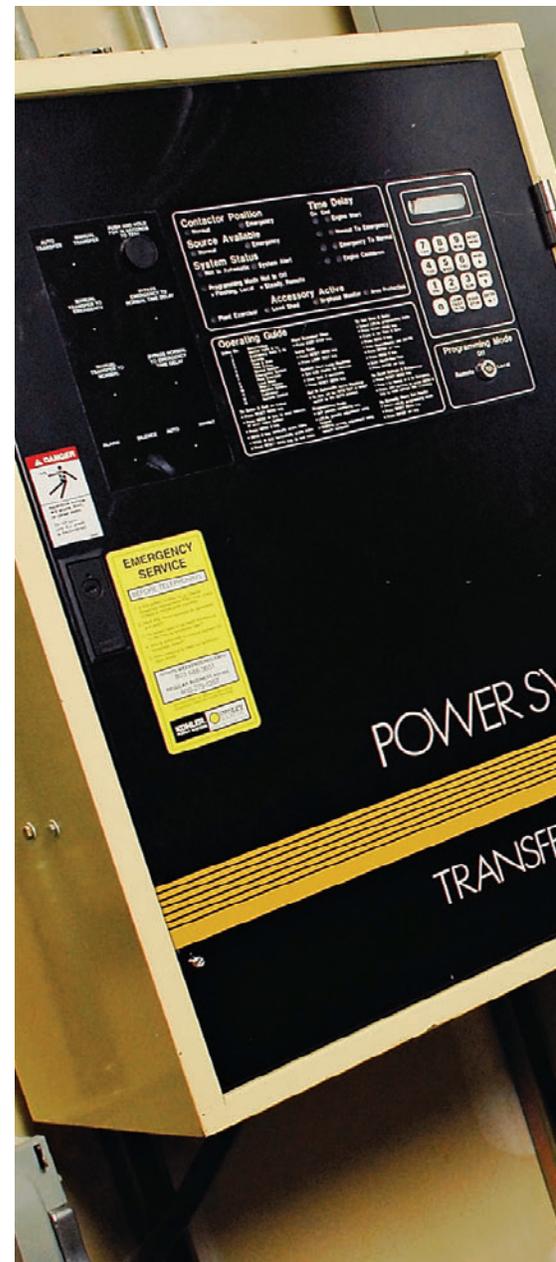
He said SPSU’s strong reputation, along with the job-search assistance it offered to students, helped set him apart from other potential hires.

“When I interviewed at IBM and some other places, they were surprised to see SPSU on my resume. That got me more attention than I would have received, had I graduated from some other school.”

Hope found himself with several job offers. He accepted a position at IBM and later worked as a technician and estimator in the construction industry before launching his own business.

Since 1975, he has operated Atlanta-based Hope Electric Enterprises, Inc. The company employs electrical subcontractors who complete commercial and industrial wiring for clients, such as the Federal Aviation Administration, City of Atlanta, Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Coca-Cola Company.

His college education benefits him to this day, he said, in that he learned both the practical and theoretical aspects of electricity.



As a result, he has stronger analytical skills and has a deeper understanding of technology, even as it evolves.

“I’m always reading magazines to learn what is going on in the industry. Having a real in-depth knowledge of the theory, I can follow some of the more advanced innovations. Without attending SPSU, I don’t think that would have happened. I have a greater appreciation for the advances being made in the industry,” he said.

Hope later returned to his alma mater to take an estimating course and a handful of continuing education classes required to maintain his contractor license.

He noted that his affiliation with SPSU has continued to be an asset to his professional life.

More than 40 years after graduating, Hope occasionally attends alumni events, which have allowed him to network with fellow graduates now working in the construction industry.

“Even now, when I’m almost ready to retire, there is some positive effect,” he said.

As technology continues to evolve, Hope keeps a memento from his college years to remind him how far it has come. Among other advances, during his years at Southern Tech, slide rules were replaced with calculators.

“I still have my slide rule in my office drawer,” he said. “It’s a relic.”



Willie Hope (AS '67) credits his affiliation with SPSU for his career success.

**As the Latino population in Georgia and the rest of the country continues to grow, Southern Polytechnic State University is working to ensure those residents have access to a college education.**

SPSU is using a \$450,000 grant from The Goizueta Foundation to fund scholarships and other programs for Latino students for the next three years. Established by the late Roberto C. Goizueta, CEO and chairman of the board of directors of the Coca-Cola Company, the foundation assists organizations that empower individuals and families through educational opportunities to improve the quality of their lives.

SPSU juniors Juanetta Oliver and Ronald Rodriguez are among

two of the nearly 75 students at SPSU that have benefitted from the Goizueta Scholarship. “Receiving this scholarship really does inspire you to do well in school, as it gives you a sense that someone else out there really cares about your success as a student,” said Oliver, who is majoring in civil engineering technology.

“I began my collegiate career without having any scholarships other than those through federal programs,” Oliver added. “With the Goizueta Scholarship, I am able to reduce the financial burden on myself and my family, and that was a huge blessing for me.”

“Receiving the Goizueta Scholarship has allowed me to focus more on school,” explained Rodriguez, a mechatronics engineering major. “It has also allowed me to become more involved with clubs and organizations around campus and not stress about aid or tuition costs.”

Since 2002, SPSU has received \$1.75 million in grants from The

Goizueta Foundation to help boost enrollment of Latino students. Over the past eight years, SPSU has used the grants to offer financial aid to Latino students. The university plans to use its 2009 grant to further those efforts.

“With this most recent grant from The Goizueta Foundation we plan to hire a bilingual enrollment adviser for recruiting efforts and advisement of Latino students and their families. By 2012, we hope to boost our enrollment of Latino students to 7 percent as we transition into an institution that strengthens its recruitment and support of all students within the state,” said Dr. Ron Koger, vice president for student and enrollment services at SPSU.

“By 2022, Latinos are expected to make up 25 percent of the population, both in the U.S. and in Georgia. For this reason, it is crucial for colleges to focus on reducing barriers for Latinos to enroll in and graduate from college, including financial aid,” Dr. Koger added.



**PROVIDING  
OPPORTUNITY  
AND REMOVING  
BARRIERS**

“Financial aid plays a critical role for many students enrolling in college. Without the scholarships and grants available to them, many would not have the opportunity that thousands of others have to receive an advanced education,” said SPSU president Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher.

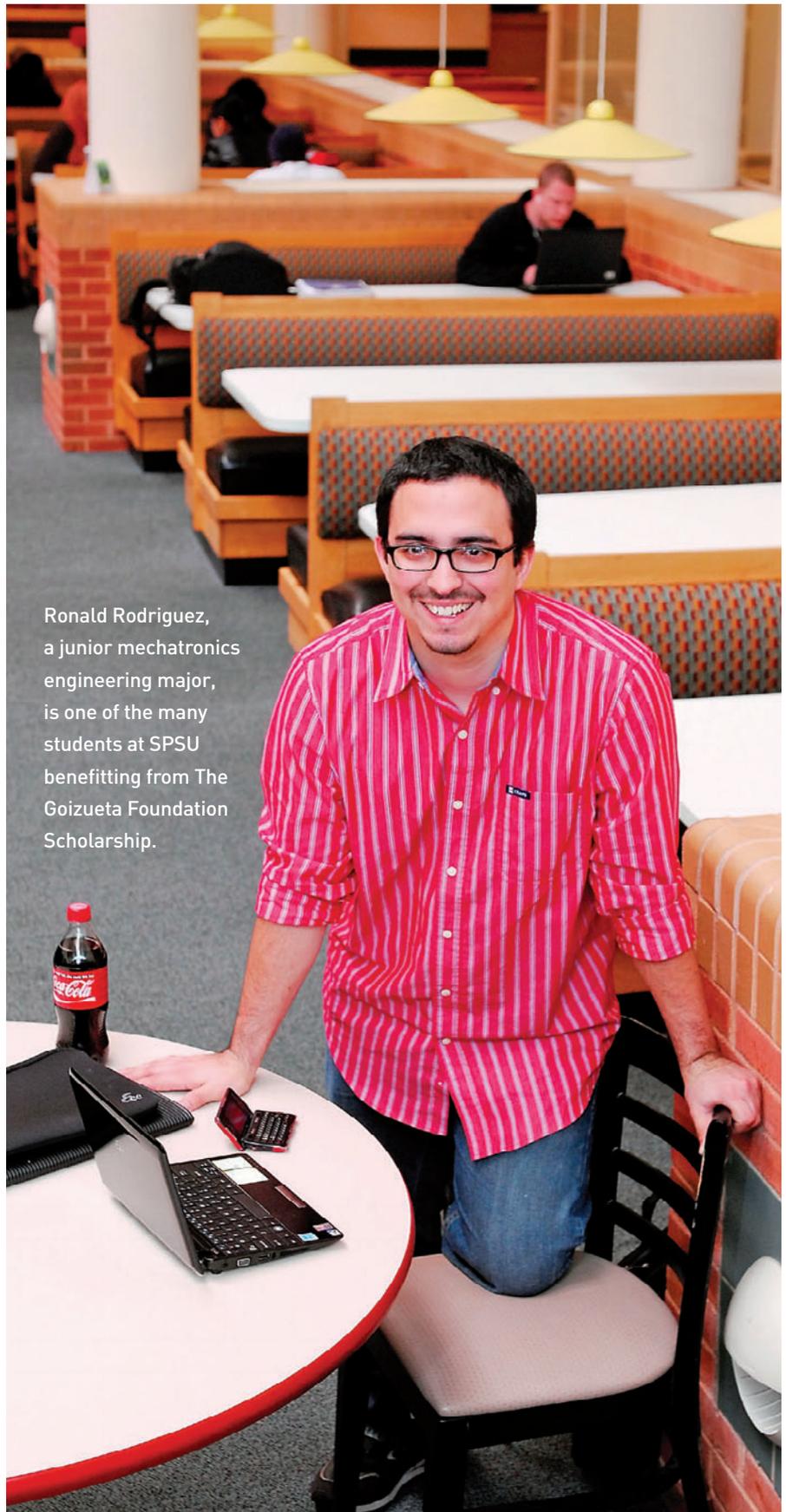
Dr. Rossbacher pointed out how pivotal the family is within the Latino culture when it comes to education. “When we are recruiting and supporting students, it is important that the conversation includes the whole family.”

Oliver said her family inspired her to enroll at SPSU. “My daughter, a senior at Georgia State University was my inspiration for wanting to finally go to college. I wanted her to be an engineer but she wouldn’t, so I decided to do it myself.”

Meanwhile, Rodriguez’s education has inspired some of his relatives to follow a similar path. “The opportunity that the Goizueta Scholarship provided me has encouraged others in my family to pursue a college education,” Rodriguez said. “Just recently, my father started going back to school.”

Latinos represent approximately 15 percent of the U.S. population, but only account for 3.5 percent of the total enrollment throughout the University System of Georgia. At SPSU, Latino enrollment stands at 5.6 percent.

“With the increase in recent years of the Latino population in the United States, it is critical that these students have the opportunity for a college education,” Dr. Rossbacher said. “Funding from philanthropic organizations, such as the Goizueta Foundation, helps to strengthen our ability to recruit and support these outstanding and deserving students.”



Ronald Rodriguez, a junior mechatronics engineering major, is one of the many students at SPSU benefitting from The Goizueta Foundation Scholarship.

# SPSU's articulation agreement gives technical college students a place to go

**Karen Hart feared she had wasted her time earning her associate degree from a technical college. Fortunately, a new agreement between Southern Polytechnic State University, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), and the University System of Georgia (USG) has alleviated her fears.**

Leaders from the three bodies and 22 state technical colleges have signed an articulation agreement that allows TCSG students to apply their associate degree credits to one of five technology-focused baccalaureate degrees at SPSU.

Students who graduate with specific associate degrees from one of Georgia's technical colleges and have a 2.5 GPA can use those credits toward a bachelor of applied science in industrial engineering technology, mechanical and electromechanical engineering technology, manufacturing process, information technology, or management.

"Because the TCSGs are technically oriented and SPSU is



SPSU President Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Zvi Szafran join representatives from the TCSG and USG in signing a joint articulation agreement.

a polytechnic university, which places great emphasis on applied technology, it seemed like the perfect partnership," said David Caudill, SPSU's associate vice president for academic affairs. "We truly believe this is a win-win for SPSU, the TCSG, and the students of Georgia."

"This agreement is designed to provide a smoother transition for technical college students who want to further their education," Caudill said.

"They are guaranteed admission and credit for their work at the TCSG," he said, noting the "50-50 partnership" allows students to earn 60 credit hours at each institution. "Additionally, in the past, the associate degree was often viewed as a terminal degree. We wanted to

provide the opportunity for further study to these students."

Hart, 51, said she had almost finished her associate degree in computer networking from DeKalb Technical College in 2005 when she received news that "made me sick, absolutely sick."

"When I started at DeKalb Tech, I had absolutely no idea that other schools wouldn't accept what I was doing there," said the Lawrenceville, Ga., resident. "I realized I went to the wrong school. It was a crushing blow."

When Hart learned she could earn a bachelor's degree in information technology from SPSU without having to start from scratch, "it was like somebody threw me a lifeline, I can't tell you what that meant to

## “This agreement is designed to provide a smoother transition for technical college students who want to further their education.”

David Caudill, SPSU’s associate vice president for academic affairs

me,” she said. “Being able to transfer credits is extremely important. People in two-year technical schools have to have a place to go.”

After being laid off last year, Hart decided to enroll in an online class at SPSU in the spring semester.

“I worked 12 years in IT, and the last seven, I felt like I’ve been stuck, not really moving forward,” she said. “I felt that my associate degree was holding me back.”

Losing her job made it “very clear to me that some way, somehow, I had to do this,” she said, noting she hopes to finish her degree by 2012.

Caudill estimated 50 to 100 students have enrolled at SPSU due to the articulation program, “which is pretty good since it only officially started last fall.”

“Obviously, we have gotten some very good students who we would not have gotten without the articulation,”

he said. “It has helped us better fulfill our statewide mission by making more of our technically oriented programs available throughout Georgia. More importantly, it has given us the opportunity to become better known throughout the state since the TCSG have local contact with students in their area.”



Karen Hart’s technical college credits transfer with ease to SPSU, thanks in part to the recently inked joint articulation agreement.

# SPSU student lands NASA internship

Samuel Turner, a junior mechanical engineering technology major, spent his summer interning at the Kennedy Space Center working for NASA.



## For SPSU student Samuel Turner, his heritage, as well as the course work at SPSU, were the twin paths to a NASA internship.

Turner is a junior mechanical engineering technology major. He is a scholarship recipient from the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) because his maternal grandmother and great-grandmother are Inupiat, the native inhabitants of north Alaska, the North Slope.

"I've never been to Alaska, though I'd love to go," Turner said. "I got my scholarship because of my heritage."

The ASRC not only provided Turner with a scholarship to SPSU, it helped him secure an internship last summer with NASA at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Last year, ASRC contacted Turner to gauge his interest in a four-week, paid summer internship at the Kennedy Space Center.

"The answer was a quick yes," he said.

"I spent the first three weeks there learning to speak acronyms. Everything is an acronym at NASA," Turner explained.

He credits his class work at Southern Polytechnic with preparing him for the challenges he faced during the internship.

"The courses really helped me," he said. "A lot of things I'm doing at SPSU fit in with what I was doing at NASA."

What Turner was doing at NASA was working on Ares 1-X, which is part of the Constellation program. "I worked on building the testing module for it and I helped test simulators to make sure the rocket could withstand the forces it would be exposed to. The broad background I got in mechanical engineering technology courses at SPSU really came in handy."

Constellation is NASA's manned flight program that will succeed the space shuttle. The program's ultimate goal is to send astronauts back to the moon, and even to Mars.

The Ares 1-X, which resembles a Bic pen standing on end, is a booster rocket, which will have the function of launching astronauts into orbit. Though no Ares were sent up during his NASA tenure, Turner was on hand for the *Endeavor* space shuttle launch. He calls it the highlight of his internship.

"Watching the *Endeavor* hurtle into space was a bittersweet moment since the shuttle program will end this

year. And the Constellation program is facing a funding fight," he said.

But that isn't deterring Turner, "I'm already filling out the papers to do it again next summer." NASA officials have told him they want him back.

A resident of Fayetteville, Ga., Turner graduated from Whitewater High School in 2007. He received a scholarship from ASRC and chose to attend Southern Polytechnic State University.

"I'm a hands-on, mechanical person," he said. "SPSU offered the curriculum and courses that fit in with my abilities. It was the best option for me."

He decided to major in mechanical engineering technology because, "it's a broad engineering category. It gives you the broadest engineering background. With a few more classes, a little more education, you can branch out into many kinds of engineering."

Following his next NASA internship, Turner will concentrate on completing his degree at SPSU. After graduation he will apply for work — perhaps in construction management — with ASRC.

ASRC is an Alaska-native owned for-profit corporation that represents the interests of the Inupiat people.

Headquartered in Barrow, Alaska, the corporation not only seeks to preserve and foster Inupiat culture, ASRC employs 6,000 people, has a shareholder population of 9,000, and has title to approximately 5 million acres of land. ASRC has businesses in engineering, coal production, petroleum refining, and distribution, and civil construction, among others.

The North Slope is where Alaska's past and future meet. Its oil fields provide 16 percent of the United States' domestic oil supply and a whopping 90 percent of Alaska's revenues.

The North Slope also is home to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. As owners of some of this oil-rich land, the Inupiat are a potential economic force in Alaska. Giving credit to what he has learned at Southern Polytechnic, Turner likes his chances for landing a position at ASRC.

# Sustainability initiatives

**From construction to the classroom to daily operations, Southern Polytechnic State University has been doing its part to be a more environmentally responsible campus.**

Since 2007, SPSU has implemented several sustainability initiatives, including establishing recycling programs, encouraging bike-sharing and carpooling, incorporating sustainability into the curriculum, and making energy-efficient improvements to the infrastructure. These sustainability efforts resulted from the University's participation in the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment initiatives sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. SPSU president Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher was one of the first signatories of the Commitment from Georgia.

"This Climate Commitment encourages us to be more environmentally responsible and to lead in our communities by example. We have an opportunity and responsibility now to educate people and help them develop the resources to address current and future climate concerns," Dr. Rossbacher said.

The Commitment was designed to provide an opportunity for higher education to take a leadership role in addressing the causes of climate change, specifically by identifying greenhouse gas output, developing a plan to reduce those emissions, and ultimately achieving carbon neutrality.

The most notable advancement toward these objectives occurred in 2008 when Jim Cooper was given responsibility for SPSU's sustainability initiatives. In this position, he reinforces the University's commitment to reduce consumption of natural resources, to conserve energy, and to reduce its carbon footprint, as part of its sustainability initiative.

Reducing waste and encouraging recycling have been among Cooper's primary goals. Although SPSU has had recycling programs, waste audits have shown that 56 percent of waste generated was recyclable, or compostable.

"This showed that our recycling program needed improvement," Cooper said. "Since the initial audit, we have made efforts to increase awareness of the recycling program among faculty, staff, and students by providing larger, labeled bins in higher visibility areas to distinguish trash bins from recycling bins. And more efforts are in the works."

In partnership with SPSU's dining services provider, Chartwells, a number of new practices have been adopted to increase environmental sustainability.

Going 'trayless' decreases the amount of food going into landfills, reduces chemical usage for washing trays, and conserves energy by eliminating the need for heated water in the washing process. Project Green Plate, another effort by Dining Services, encourages students to reduce food waste by only taking what they will eat. In a three-week timeframe, students reduced almost 300 pounds of food waste as a result of the program. Elimination of plastic foam containers and trayless dining are just two of the ways in which SPSU has become more conscious of its environmental impact.

One of the University's newest efforts under its commitment to energy efficiency is the Bike Share program, implemented at the beginning of the fall 2009 semester. Students with a valid student ID who are currently enrolled at SPSU or Georgia Highlands College are allowed to borrow bikes free of charge from the Student Center, Recreation and Wellness Center, and the Office of Housing and Residence Life. "This is SPSU's way of encouraging students to go green and bike more as well as providing alternative means of transportation on campus," explained Cooper.

New construction on campus also emphasizes the green trend. Over \$100 million of construction

# make campus greener

started in 2008 to expand the campus, including the completed 863-space parking deck and road infrastructure improvements. The new Engineering Technology Center, Architecture Building Annex, and Hornet Residential Village are currently being constructed. Each building is being built according to certified LEED silver or higher specifications, a policy established by SPSU's sustainability committee. LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. When complete, these buildings will be the first on the campus to have LEED certification.

Sustainability has also been a growing trend in the curriculum with LEED-certified instructors. Several courses in architecture, civil engineering technology, and construction management have a focus on designing and maintaining sustainable, environmentally friendly structures.

"We already had academic programs in place that address issues of developing a sustainable environment," added Dr. Rossbacher. "Integrating sustainability in the campus curriculum and in its physical infrastructure are just two of the ways in which SPSU maintains its commitment to the environment."

SPSU has participated in many other sustainability initiatives over the past three years, including promoting carpooling, serving as a flagship campus for Earth Hour, hosting Earth Day activities for Girl Scouts, and closing campus on Fridays in the summer to reduce energy usage. Going forward, the University remains strong in its commitment to increasing sustainability through retrofitting current buildings, targeting the potential of public transportation for students and community members, and using renewable energy sources.

A lot has been accomplished at SPSU in the last three years, and a lot more is in store for the future.

# SPSU officer receives prestigious service award

Southern Polytechnic State University Police Sgt. Clifton Halten insists his achievements, which include saving lives and an active role in decreasing alcohol-related problems on campus, are simply in the line of duty.

His efforts set him apart from his colleagues, however, when he received the 2009 Public Safety Employee of the Year award from the Cobb Chamber of Commerce. The award is the highest honor from the Chamber, which chooses recipients based on skill, expertise, innovation, and results. Through his service at SPSU, Halten has demonstrated success in each of those areas.

Halten, who works the night shift, said officers were responding to alcohol-related domestic disputes and property damage complaints a few times per week. In one instance, a student nearly died from blood loss after punching through a double-pane window and cutting himself following a night of drinking. When Halten arrived on the scene, he knew he couldn't wait for paramedics to arrive. He quickly fashioned a tourniquet from a bath towel, fastening it with his baton. Doctors later told him that his quick thinking saved the patient's life.

To prevent similar incidents in the future the SPSU police department has done even more to educate students about the dangers of alcohol abuse. Officers focused on being more proactive by increasing their presence and stopping minors from drinking, and their efforts soon paid off. "Only a few alcohol-related problems were documented from July 2009 to January 2010," he said.



SPSU Police Sgt. Clifton Halten (center) received the 2009 Public Safety Employee of the Year award. On hand to congratulate him are: (from left) SPSU's Capt. John Bauer, SPSU President Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher, Sgt. Dane Freeman, and Sgt. Chad Hurston.

Halten helped save the life of another person last year when he was flagged down by a woman whose husband was having a heart attack. The woman had called 911, but because she was unfamiliar with the area, just off campus, she was unable to provide an accurate location for responders. Halten provided the dispatch center with the victim's location and directed an SPSU officer to escort the medics to the scene.

Halten, who was the first SPSU police officer to ever receive the Chamber's Public Safety Employee of

the Year award, was selected from a pool of 17 nominees from police, fire and other public safety departments across Cobb County. The award was announced at the Chamber's annual Public Safety Appreciation breakfast, which featured University of Georgia graduate and NFL legend, Herschel Walker.

"It took a second for it to sink in," said Halten, who was nominated by SPSU Police Capt. John Bauer. "A pat on the back or a handshake would have been enough for me. I think it's more a victory for the department

than it is for me,” Halten said, noting that as a result of his award, city police now hold their campus counterparts in higher regard. “This award being presented to me in this fashion forced a lot of departments to accept that we are their equals. I find that really awesome. It’s definitely been a blessing,” he said.

Halten joined SPSU’s police department in 2006 and, as a Marine Reservist, was called to duty in late 2007. After a tour in Iraq, he returned to his SPSU post in January 2009.

Though he’s relatively new to the campus police department, Halten has long been familiar with SPSU. His mother, Dr. Bernice Nuhfer-Halten, has worked as a language professor at the university since he was a child, and Halten met many SPSU employees during his frequent summer visits to campus.

While he’s already left his professional mark on campus, Halten emphasized that his public service work has just begun.

Thrilled that his efforts to reduce underage drinking are paying off, Halten said he plans to build upon the awareness efforts. He also wants to do his part to reduce theft on campus.

Awards aside, the job is a rewarding one, he said.

“Tonight I might be a counselor for a troubled youth, tomorrow night I might have to arrest somebody, and after that I might escort a dignitary on campus. I’ve been called an adrenaline junkie, but getting that rush has nothing to do with it. It’s the not knowing that draws me to it,” he explained.

“Having an impact gives me a sense of purpose and I can’t see myself doing anything else.”

## Introducing the new SPSU Alumni Association President

Alda Stephens (BS '86, MS '95) received a bachelor of science in industrial engineering technology in 1986 and a master of science in technology management in 1995, both from SPSU. She has been an active member of the Alumni Association, serving previously as secretary/treasurer prior to taking over as president last year.

“I became actively involved because I am proud of the University. I wanted to give back and contribute to the growth not only of the Association, but also the school itself.”

Her primary goal during her tenure is to increase awareness and visibility of the Alumni Association.

“We are already very involved with several student competition teams through our financial support,” said Stephens. “But, we want to be involved in other activities, including sporting events and Science Olympiad, too. Also, we want to reach out to alumni across the country to encourage their active participation, which may in turn lead to corporate sponsorship of alumni events.”

The Alumni Association has already started increasing its visibility by participating this past summer in student and parent orientations. “Although the Association is for graduates, we wanted to make freshmen and current students aware of it so they become more involved. We want them to actively seek us out, see what we’re about, and see how we can help them when they graduate,” she said.

Increasing visibility also has other benefits: active participation. “This school has seen tremendous growth under Dr. Rossbacher’s leadership. I want the Association to see just as much success,” added Stephens.

Stephens brings great leadership experience to the Alumni Association. After receiving her bachelor’s degree, she spent 12 years with GE Capital Technology Management Services as Director of Environmental Health & Safety before starting her own engineering consulting company, ABS Management, Inc. During the past five years, she has been operating a specialty food brokerage company, S&S Sales, LLC, a company started by her father-in-law.

“GE’s leadership program taught me to be the best in the industry and that’s something I want to bring to the Association. If you don’t raise the bar, you won’t know how far you can go.”

The Alumni Association funds several projects including scholarships, networking events, and reunions. Students automatically become members of the Association upon graduation and are encouraged to actively participate in its functions. To date, over 20,000 graduates are part of SPSU’s alumni base.

For more information on how to become active with the Alumni Association, call 678-915-7351.

Alda Stephens  
President,  
SPSU Alumni Association



# Historic moments for Hornets basketball

The 2009-10 season is one for the record books for Southern Polytechnic State University's men's basketball program.

## After securing their 12th conference

championship in the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) tournament, the Hornets made history in their first semi-final appearance in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) tournament in March.

"It's exciting for the school and the program because it's the first time we've ever gone that deep in the tournament," SPSU athletic director Karl Staber said.

Strong players and leadership from the coaching staff have made this a spectacular year for the Hornets. During the tournament's quarterfinals, held at Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Mo., from March 17-23, the 29-5 Hornets defeated highly-ranked teams Oklahoma City University (#16) and Mountain State University (#1), along with John Brown University on their charge to the semi-finals. SPSU was the only unseeded team to make the Fab Four before being eliminated by Azusa Pacific University (#13). Led by fifth-year head coach Jeff Jones, who recently secured his 100th career victory with SPSU during the NAIA tournament and was named the Georgia Basketball Coaches Association's (GABCA) NAIA 2010 Coach of the Year, the team looked to win their first national championship.

This year was a massive rebuilding year for the Hornets. With only two returning members to the team,



senior Jas Rogers and junior Brent Jennings, the coaching staff was able to assemble a top-notch team that recorded an impressive regular season record of 23-5 (12-2 conference), the best record for the school since the 2004-05 season. The Hornets ranked as high as eighth in the NAIA Top 25 Coaches Poll, the highest ranking ever for the team.

Rogers and Jennings, along with newcomer Xavier Dawson, averaged over 15 points per game. Rogers also ranked in the top 10 nationally for total steals, steals per game, and assists. He was named to the second team All-American, NAIA All-Tournament Team, and GABCA All-State Team; won the NAIA Charles Stevenson Hustle Award; was named GABCA Player of the Year; and was selected to play in its Senior All-Star game.

Several players were also recognized at the SSAC pre-

tournament awards banquet with Rogers being named the 2009-10 SSAC Player of the Year. Rogers, Dawson, and Jennings were also named to the All-Conference Team.

Jordan Lemons, a junior in his first year with the Hornets, was named to the SSAC and GABCA All-Academic Team, while junior Darrien Beacham was named 2010 Musco Lighting Champion of Character.

Rogers, Jennings, and Lemons also received SSAC tournament honors. Along with Rogers, Dawson and Jennings were named to the All-Tournament team, while Jennings was selected as the tournament MVP and named to the GABCA All-State Team.

"I'm really proud of what we've been able to accomplish this season," said Jones. "We've got a great group of guys with a lot of heart. They just simply played hard and it showed."

# Slamming the competition

## In a season filled with so many firsts,

women's basketball head coach Nate Teymer and the Southern Polytechnic State University Lady Hornets added one more to the ever-growing list: Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) champion.

The women of SPSU's basketball team set new benchmarks this past season, being ranked in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Top 25 Coaches' Poll for the first time. At their peak this season, the Lady Hornets were ranked 16th and maintained the longest winning streak in program history.

The Lady Hornets dominated the competition with an average margin of victory of 23.4 points. A 63-point victory over Truett-McConnell College of Cleveland, Ga., and a 40-point victory over conference rival Brewton-Parker College of Mount Vernon, Ga., propelled the Lady Hornets to a 16-0 start. Two months into the season, they were one of only two teams in the NAIA that were undefeated.

Through the second half of the season, the Lady Hornets went 10-4, bringing their overall record to 26-4 and securing their spot in the SSAC tournament. No question that this year's team was a great one, led by senior Dione Parks and juniors Marisa Stotler and Crystal Davis. Parks, returning for her second year, led the NAIA with a 3-point field goal percentage of 50. Stotler, a new player on the team, averaged over 18 points and 8 rebounds per game. Davis, a 2008-09 SSAC All-Conference and



All-Academic team member, averaged 10 points per game and a team-high 2.5 steals per game.

The addition of Janie Mitchell as assistant head coach also contributed to the team's success this year. As a player, Mitchell led Georgia Tech to back-to-back NCAA tournament appearances in 2007 and 2008, winning the tournament championship in 2007. And she continued to generate success as a coach. "She is a rising star in the coaching profession," said Teymer. "She brings a great deal of energy and passion to the game of basketball that has been very contagious."

At the SSAC Awards banquet on March 3, Teymer and several players received recognition for their performance during the regular season. Teymer was honored as the 2010 women's basketball Coach of the Year. Stotler received the Newcomer of the Year award and was named as SSAC Tournament MVP, while Parks received the Newcomer of the Year and Sixth Man awards. Both players were also selected for the All-Conference Team. Aurielle

Morgan received the Musco Lighting Champion of Character award. Brittany White was named to the All-Freshmen Team, while Crystal Davis was named to the All-Academic Team for the second year.

After the SSAC conference, Teymer was also honored by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association as the NAIA Region 6 Coach of the Year and ultimately the NAIA National Coach of the Year.

After the Lady Hornets' SSAC tournament victory over number one seed Lee University in the finals of the 2010 SSAC Women's Basketball Championships, the team competed in the NAIA National Championships in Oman Arena in Jackson, Tenn., advancing to the second round before elimination by number one ranked Union University of Tennessee.

As a bittersweet end to a phenomenal season, Teymer resigned from his position at SPSU to accept the women's head coaching position at Augusta State University in Augusta, Ga. The search for his replacement is in progress.

# SPARcing collaboration

New research centers provide opportunities for faculty and establish SPSU as a leading center of applied technology.

## Southern Polytechnic State

University has taken major steps to become a leader in the area of research. Southern Polytechnic's Applied Research Center (SPARC) has opened eight new research centers – bringing the number of on-campus centers to 10 – to provide more growth and research opportunities for faculty members and to establish the university as a leading center of applied technology.

“SPARC’s mission is to support Southern Polytechnic faculty in research, development, and the application of technology within their areas of expertise,” said Dr. Ruston Hunt, interim dean of SPSU’s Extended University and director of SPARC. “Our support includes the identification of opportunities, development of proposals, and the administration of grants and contracts upon award. By allowing faculty to organize and run centers, we ensure that they are involved in pursuing their own research agendas.”

The centers are:

- Alternative Energy Innovation Center, which conducts research and educational outreach programs and promotes good practices in energy conversion, storage, and delivery.
- Biometrics Recognition Research Center, which evaluates and develops commercial products that use facial-recognition technology and conducts facial-recognition research for innovative products.
- Center for Information Security Education, which develops new information security curricula at the undergraduate and graduate levels,

conducts research, and develops information assurance and security systems.

- Center for Nuclear Power Generation, which offers education, training, and certification to students in the industry’s regulatory codes and standards.
- Georgia Pavement Research Center, which provides educational and training courses in pavement to lab technicians/engineers.
- SPSU eGov Center, which conducts research and development on electronic government (eGov) processes, services and technology.
- Supply Chain Risk Management Center, which blends applied-operations research, technology research, education, student involvement and industry participation.
- Usability Center, which helps institutions and industries identify ways to better design products with a user-centered, task-oriented focus.
- Center for Applied Gaming and Media Arts, creates game and media applications for enhancing K-16 learning, corporate training, entertainment, and public policy advocacy.
- Visualization and Simulation Research Center, to promote collaborative multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and to create a robust training environment for faculty and students.

“These research centers allow faculty members to collaborate on projects of mutual interest that support SPSU’s mission and promote interdisciplinary approaches to solving

problems that will benefit the residents and industries in Georgia,” Hunt said.

Among the projects faculty members are working on are: improving algorithms for face recognition used in physical access control and personal information security; planning a series of workshops and continuing-education courses for the resurgent nuclear power industry; providing asphalt-testing services that aren’t available anywhere else in Georgia; providing usability testing for products being distributed worldwide; and developing an immersive display technology to support research in treating human phobias for the U.S. Army.

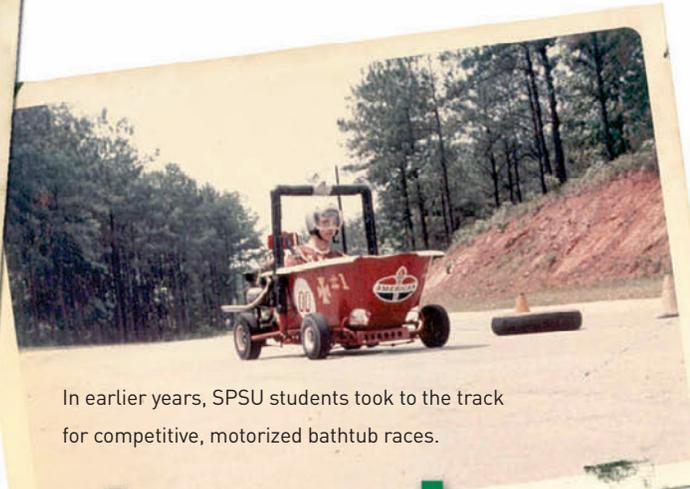
“Research centers allow faculty members to collaborate on projects of mutual interest that support SPSU’s mission and promote interdisciplinary approaches to solving problems that will benefit the residents and industries in Georgia,” Hunt said.

“Centers are self-funded through grants, contracts, and donations,” Hunt explained, adding most centers pay for their own activities and also “contribute a share of their revenue back to the University.”

In 2009, faculty members received more than \$725,000 in funding from such sources as the National Science Foundation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Hunt said a proposal for another center, the Center for Advanced Materials Research and Education, is being reviewed.

For more information on SPSU’s Applied Research Centers, visit [www.spsu.edu/sparc](http://www.spsu.edu/sparc).



In earlier years, SPSU students took to the track for competitive, motorized bathtub races.

# 2010: We start again

On Saturday, March 27, the Southern Polytechnic Bathtub Races re-emerged on campus after a 20-year hiatus. Thanks, in part, to dedicated alumni such as Daryle Higginbotham (BS '89) and his company Marietta Nondestructive Testing, the Bathtub Races tradition continues.

**The races began as an annual event on the SPSU campus** in 1966. The tradition started when some engineering students converted an old cast iron tub into a cooler for beer for weekend fraternity parties. The thirsty students soon discovered that the tub, filled to capacity, was too heavy to carry. They added wheels to the bathtub, creating the world's very first rolling bathtub cooler. It soon became a huge success at weekend parties.

The following fall quarter, it was suggested that all the fraternities build their own bathtub coolers and have a race. The challenge was immediately accepted by all

fraternities. The rules were simple:

1. Tubs must have wheels.
2. Tubs must be powered by fraternity pledges, limited to a maximum of six pledges.
3. Each tub must have a driver inside.

The only stipulation by the school officials, at the time, was that all resulting debris must be removed by the fraternity that created it. So with the administrative approval, a challenge was put forth to all fraternities to join in the great Southern Tech Bathtub Races. And engineers being engineers, motors soon followed.

Continued on next page.



Over the years, the Great Southern Tech Bathtub Races became widely known and drew huge crowds from the local community. The race course, lined with spectators and old tires, ran around the perimeter of the campus. In the early 1990s, due to expansion on campus and increased liability, the races ended.

“Their legacy continues to be an important part of Southern Tech lore. I was excited to have re-introduced the races during this year’s alumni weekend. All of us realize the important history of this event for SPSU and the endless

possibilities for new student recruitment, alumni relations, and school publicity,” said alumnus Higginbotham.

For more than six months, he oversaw the production of two matching tubs for the Greeks to use during the race. “Over the years, I hope that other teams will start building tubs for the event,” he added. “We may also consider different classes for the students and alumni in future events.”

The 2010 winner of the Southern Polytechnic Bathtub Races was Kappa Sigma fraternity, with the fastest time of 114.3 seconds.

The return of the Bathtub Races featured non-motorized tubs, but offered the same competitive spirit for students and alumni.







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Public Relations Department  
1100 South Marietta Parkway  
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## Save These Dates

**Saturday, May 8, 2010**

### **Spring Graduation**

For the first time, graduation will take place in two sessions, in order to better accommodate the number of guests who will visit the campus for these events.

10:00 am – School of Arts and Sciences and School of Engineering  
Technology and Management

2:00 pm – School of Architecture, Civil Engineering Technology and  
Construction and School of Computing and Software Engineering

Both sessions will be held in the SPSU Gymnasium .

This year's spring graduation speaker will be Michael Sizemore, AIA,  
The Sizemore Group, lead architect for the Lawrence V. Johnson Library at  
SPSU.

**Friday, May 14, 2010**

### **SPSU Alumni Night at the Atlanta Braves**

Take in an exciting Atlanta Braves game versus the Arizona Diamondbacks with some of your SPSU friends. The evening wraps up with fireworks after the game. Tickets are \$25 and seats are located in the Field/Terrace Pavilion section. To purchase tickets call us at 678-915-7351.

**May 20, 2010**

### **Young Hornet Happy Hour**

Join us for a young alumni happy hour! Your first two drinks are on us.

6:30-8:30 pm at Pappadeaux in Marietta.

Let us know you're coming by sending an email to [events@spsu.edu](mailto:events@spsu.edu).

**As these events draw near, information about them will be posted  
at <http://go.spsu.edu>.**

