

SPSU

Magazine

SPRING 2012

2011 Indy 500 winner
DAN WHELDON



ALSO INSIDE

Alumnus and racecar owner

STEVE NEWEY P.26

gets back on track

Rubble House: building houses to withstand earthquakes. PAGE 8

Twin brothers graduate with honors in chemistry. PAGE 22

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Rubble with a cause

SPSU helps test the structural integrity of houses made of rubble to aid humanitarian efforts in Haiti



The chemistry of twins

Isaiah and Joshua Gober are the first set of twins to share top scholars honors from SPSU

SPSU



Alumnus Steve Newey

Mourns Dan Wheldon and prepares for next Indy 500

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Greetings from SPSU!

Spring commencement here at Southern Polytechnic was a wonderful recognition of our students' accomplishments, and, across campus, we are celebrating a number of great things happening here at Southern Polytechnic State University.

In this issue of our magazine, you'll read about recent student achievements in academics, automotive design, the construction and testing of safe buildings, and the creation and implementation of social-business models. These successes build on the historical strengths of the university and reflect our continued focus on the practical application of knowledge to solve real-world problems.

For example, SPSU students and faculty are bringing their unique skills and experience to addressing the issue of clean-up and new housing needs after the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Working together, they created a model structure that would provide safe, low-cost housing out of the debris created by damaged buildings. After creating the structure, they tested its strength as they slowly knocked it down again. This design has the potential to have a powerful positive impact in places around the world affected by natural disasters.

In this magazine, you'll also read about students and faculty who have developed plans to address other social needs, as well. A group of undergraduate and graduate students developed a proposal to help abused women achieve independence and stability in their lives. The students' dynamic presentation has won statewide awards and attracted the interest of venture capitalists -- and their proposal has the potential to make the world a better place.

I am proud to be part of a university community where so many people are working toward a brighter future. SPSU's unique linkage of education and application is a distinctive element of our mission. The slogan on the university's official seal says it well:

Imagination. Innovation. Application.

I hope you enjoy this issue - and that your travels bring you back to campus soon!

With very best wishes,

Lisa A. Rossbacher, Ph.D.
President



UNIVERSITY NEWS BRIEFS



SPSU schools undergo big changes for 2012

Southern Polytechnic State University has added a fifth school to its academic structure by elevating the home of its engineering programs from Division of Engineering to School of Engineering.

Nearly one in five SPSU students major in engineering. This represents close to 1,100 students, and they generate more than 20 percent of the credit hours at the university. Dr. Thomas R. Currin, the dean of the new school, describes the change in status as the next logical step in the development of SPSU's engineering programs.

Dr. Zvi Szafran, vice president for Academic Affairs at SPSU noted, "We have six bachelor of science degree programs, a Master of Science in Systems Engineering, and additional programs in preparation." "Our Construction Engineering program recently became the first SPSU engineering program to be accredited by ABET, and we'll be seeking accreditation for the mechatronics engineering programs soon."

Beginning in August, the new school will establish three departments:

- **Civil & Construction Engineering (CCE)** will serve students in the bachelor's programs in civil engineering and construction engineering;
- **Electrical & Mechatronics Engineering (EME)** will serve students in the bachelor's programs in electrical engineering and mechatronics engineering; and
- **Mechanical & Systems Engineering (MSE)** will serve students in the bachelor's programs in mechanical engineering and systems engineering and the master's program in systems engineering.

All of SPSU's School of Engineering programs are unique within Georgia; the programs in mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and civil engineering

are the state's only evening engineering programs. The bachelor's degree programs in construction engineering, mechatronics engineering, and systems engineering are the only such programs offered in the state.

University administrators also made official two other changes involving SPSU's schools. The Civil Engineering Technology (CET) program is now part of the **School of Engineering Technology and Management**. The former School of Architecture, Civil Engineering Technology and Construction Management will now be known as the **School of Architecture and Construction Management**.

The other schools at SPSU are:

- **School of Arts and Sciences**
- **School of Computing and Software Engineering**

For more information about SPSU's academic programs, visit www.spsu.edu.

WebBSIT ranks among top 20 'Best Buys' in online education



Southern Polytechnic State University's online Bachelor of Information Technology (WebBSIT) has been ranked as one of the top 20 "Best Buys" in the country by the education web site GetEducated.com, a consumer group that rates, ranks, and verifies the cost and credibility of online college and university programs.

SPSU's program is offered through the Department of Information Technology under the School of Computing and Software Engineering. Known for its quality, affordability, and commitment to student service, the program is designed to meet the needs of busy professionals who see the benefits of continuing their education, but would find it tough to juggle career and family responsibilities with a standard class schedule.

To learn more about the WebBSIT program, visit <http://www.spsu.edu/itdegrees>.



MSIT program earns top honors



U.S. News & World Report released a report ranking Top Online Degree Programs and, in the category of Graduate Computer Information Technology (CIT) Programs, Southern Polytechnic State University's Master of Science in Information Technology earned the number one spot for student engagement and accreditation.

"Quality computer information technology programs promote student participation in classes, allowing them opportunities to readily interact with their instructors and fellow classmates—as is possible in traditional classroom environments. In turn, instructors not only are accessible and responsive, but they also are tasked with regularly assessing the quantity and quality of students' submissions, and implementing policies that ensure their students are only getting credit for doing their own work," the magazine's editors noted. "The strongest online degree programs for a masters of CIT also have a corresponding ABET-accredited undergraduate program and make it easy for students to interact with classmates as well as instructors."

U.S. News defines online programs as those that have at least 80 percent of their course content available online. Out of 220 schools offering master's degrees in computing that completed the U.S. News survey, 26 reported offering online CIT degree programs during the 2010-2011 academic year.

Other top-ranked online graduate CIT programs included:

- North Carolina State University-Raleigh (admissions selectivity)
- Pennsylvania State University- University Park (faculty credentials and training), and
- Johns Hopkins University's Whiting School of Engineering in Baltimore (student services and technology).

SPSU was one of only two Georgia institutions ranked by U.S. News with regard to online graduate CIT programs (Georgia Southern was the other).

To view the complete list of rankings, visit www.usnews.com/education/online-education/computer-information-technology.

UNIVERSITY NEWS BRIEFS

SPSU Gets Tagged!

Bennie Sue Houck, a longtime employee in Student Records, was the first person in the state to sport the new Southern Polytechnic State University license tag on her vehicle after word went out that they were ready for purchase at tag offices.

"It's a GREAT looking tag," she said. "I am proud to have it on my vehicle."

Every day more SPSU tags are popping up on vehicles in campus parking lots, but the university has provided extra motivation to apply for a new tag now rather than later. The first 100 people to post a photo of themselves with the new tag on their vehicles on the SPSU Alumni Facebook page (www.facebook.com/spsualumni) and/or e-mail the photo to events@spsu.edu will be entered into a drawing to win an iPad.

Many tag offices do not yet have the SPSU tags in stock, but they are being mailed from the warehouse to motorists who request them.

For those who have already celebrated a birthday in 2012, there is a \$35 special



tag fee to get one. If not, motorists can wait until their birthday, at which point they will have to pay their ad valorem tax, the usual \$20 tag fee, and the \$35 special tag fee. If a request is made for an SPSU tag before a person's birthday, he/she will have to pay the \$35 special fee a second time when their birthday comes around.

Please note that the \$35 is an additional fee that will have to be paid each year in order to keep the SPSU tag. A portion of this fee is sent to the university each year, so displaying the tag supports SPSU in multiple ways. For more information on the SPSU license plate tag, call 678-915-7351.

Welcome Sam Conn, new CIO



Dr. Sam Conn has joined Southern Polytechnic State University as the new chief information officer.

Dr. Conn has more than 22 years of professional and industry experience in the field of technology and information systems, including having served as director of the Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and as chair of the Computer Information System Department at Regis University in Denver. He also has extensive experience in the corporate world, having worked with a wide range of organizations and clients including a mortgage/real estate services company,

health care information systems, a Russian-American software development company, and the parent company of NASCAR.

He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration, a master's degree in computer information systems, and a doctorate in information systems. He is widely published on the topics of information systems, educational technology, e-learning networks, system development methodologies, and epistemic belief research.

Dr. Conn was previously the vice president for information technology and director of online learning at Georgia Military College in Milledgeville.

UNIVERSITY NEWS BRIEFS

Home Depot CEO speaks to SPSU students



Frank Blake, CEO of The Home Depot, [second to the left] with SPSU administrators Dr. Ronny Richardson [left], Dr. Jeff Ray, and faculty member Dr. Joyce McGriff.

Frank Blake, CEO of The Home Depot, gave a presentation on "Leadership with Integrity" to Southern Polytechnic State University students, alumni, faculty, and staff in March.

Hosted by the Business Administration department and the School of Engineering Technology and Management, Blake shared his insight on The Home Depot business model with the audience.

Blake has been with The Home Depot since 2002 and has served as vice chairman of the board of directors and executive vice president for business development and corporate operations. During this time, he was responsible for real estate, credit services, store construction, and strategic

business development and growth initiatives. He became the chairman and CEO of the company in 2007.

Prior to joining the senior management of The Home Depot, Blake served as deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and was responsible for leading departmental policy decisions and managing a \$19 billion annual budget. He also previously served as the senior vice president of corporate business development at General Electric (GE). There, he orchestrated worldwide mergers, acquisitions, dispositions, and the identification of strategic growth opportunities. Blake also served as general counsel and head of business development for GE Power Systems.

In addition, Blake has served as general counsel for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), deputy counsel to vice president George Bush and law clerk to Justice John Paul Stevens of the U.S. Supreme Court. He holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard University and a law degree from Columbia University School of Law. Blake also serves on the board of directors for the Georgia Aquarium.



Dr. Meg Dillon receives Fulbright Specialists Award



Dr. Meghan I. Dillon, professor of mathematics, has been selected to participate in a Fulbright

Specialists project in France by the United States Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

The Fulbright Specialists Program provides short-term academic opportunities to prominent U.S. faculty and professionals to support curricular and faculty development and institutional planning at post secondary academic institutions around the world.

Dr. Dillon, who will be at the Université de Technologie Belfort-Montbéliard (UTBM) for most of May and June, will teach a mathematics course in the institution's

English language program. She will also give a series of lectures on mathematics history and pedagogy.

Dr. Dillon has visited the French institution twice since 2010 and hopes that this project paves the way for more exchanges between students and faculty at Southern Polytechnic State University and UTBM.

A member of the SPSU faculty since 1992, Dr. Dillon has written research articles on infinite dimensional Lie algebras, co-authored an upper-division textbook on geometry, and is now developing a project with a Chicago artist. Dr. Dillon was SPSU's 2000-2001 Teacher of the Year.



Dr. Deidra Hodges awarded NSF BRIGE grant



Dr. Deidra Hodges, an assistant professor of electrical engineering in the School of Engineering, was awarded a competitive National Science Foundation (NSF) Broadening Participation Research Initiation Grant in Engineering (BRIGE).

She received a two-year grant of \$175,000 for her proposal, "CZTS Thin-Films and Solar Cells by Liquid-Based Techniques."

The BRIGE program provides research funding to beginning engineers with the goal of increasing the diversity of researchers in the engineering disciplines. Dr. Hodges, who completed her doctorate in December 2009 at the University of South Florida, is doing research that could lead to lowering the cost of fabricating high-efficiency solar cell devices through the use of abundant, low cost, non-toxic elements such as copper, zinc, tin, and sulfur (CZTS).

SPSU's first CGDD grad lands job in industry



Billy Olden, Southern Polytechnic State University's first graduate in the Computer Game Design and Development (CGDD) program, has landed his first job in the gaming industry.

The May 2011 grad is working with Kiz Studios, maker of Planet Muck, as a lead programmer on a mobile application. He also plays a role in developing a multi-player online battle arena (MOBA) style game for kids called SmashMuck Champions, which should be entering the testing stage soon.

Olden started out as a computer science major in 2008, but switched over to CGDD when SPSU began to offer this degree in the fall of 2009.

"I think the CGDD program is unique," he said. "Not only has it taught me how to program, but also how to interact with users of my games, how to develop gaming



programs across multiple platforms with different inputs (console vs. phone vs. computer), and how to think outside the box for creative development ideas."

Currently the CGDD program has more than 137 students enrolled.



Southern Polytechnic State University students benefited from an unprecedented opportunity for **hands-on learning regarding the ins and outs of construction and collaboration** when the university agreed to build and conduct research on a crude dwelling made of concrete rubble for the humanitarian relief organization Conscience International (CI).



[ABOVE]

Some of the students and professors involved as volunteers in this project include: (Back row) Jeffrey Lytle, Dr. Metin Oguzmert, Jacob David, (front row) Bri Mason, Dr. Fatih Oncul, Dr. Wasim Barham, and Christian Bourguillon.

[BELOW]

Dr. Oncul (center) examines the rubble house structure after testing was complete.



“ THIS TRULY WAS A CAMPUS-WIDE PROJECT, AND IT HAS BEEN A TERRIFIC EXPERIENCE. WE HAD GREAT STUDENT INVOLVEMENT, AND WE ACCOMPLISHED THE WHOLE PROJECT. ”

DR. FATIH ONCUL



OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, CI HAS BEEN

building rubble houses to replace housing destroyed by the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010. But the organization sought reassurance that these unique houses were more earthquake resistant and, therefore, safer than traditional Haitian structures built with relatively brittle cinderblock walls.

With the backing of scientific evidence, CI officials also knew they would stand a better chance of attracting sufficient funding to build rubble houses for other countries in need of such assistance, so they asked SPSU's Dr. Fatih Oncul, a professor of civil engineering technology, to help them do formal studies on the durability of the rubble house. These dwellings are quick and inexpensive to build and use material typically readily available in areas hit by natural disasters — rubble or broken chunks of concrete.

Marshaling faculty members from SPSU's construction management, surveying and mapping, and civil engineering technology programs along with more than 100 student volunteers from a wide range of majors, were Dr. Oncul, and Dr. Wasim Barham

and Dr. Metin Oguzmert, assistant professors of civil and construction engineering.

“This was truly a campus-wide project, and it has been a terrific experience. We had great student involvement, and we accomplished the whole project without injuries, despite all the hazards involved in the construction and testing phases,” said Dr. Oncul.

They also had the strong support of several local engineering, surveying, and equipment companies, including Applied Technical Services, Inc. (ATS), a company run by SPSU alumnus Jim Hills '77 that contributed more than \$40,000 worth of services in the form of two professional engineers (also SPSU alumni) and a variety of equipment.

One of the students who volunteered to help build and test the rubble house had a more compelling personal reason than most — Christian Bourguillon, a freshman, is from Haiti. He and his family were eyewitnesses to the horror that gripped the tiny Caribbean country in the wake of the magnitude 7.0 temblor, which left one million people homeless.



The rubble house project took several weeks to build and test, and became an interdisciplinary effort involving the entire campus.

Fortunately, Bourguillon’s family members survived the disaster and temporarily moved to the United States, but the need to help less fortunate countrymen “is mainly why I decided to participate” in the rubble house project, he said. As traumatized Haitians strive to regain their footing, “people don’t want to return to [traditional cinderblock] houses because they are afraid. They’d rather live in tents than risk having a house collapse on them again,” he explained.

“If rubble houses are as strong as they’ve performed in our tests, then they will be very beneficial to Haiti,” Bourguillon said. “If we can show people in Haiti proof that we’ve tested these rubble houses and they are much sturdier [than traditional construction in Haiti], then perhaps they will feel safer.”

Drs. Oncul, Barham, and Oguzmert initially rallied a modestly sized group of student workers. They all joined CI Program Director Jeremy Holloman on a green in the middle of the campus to break ground on the rubble house in the blistering heat of late August 2011.

The project was slow going at the start, working with very simple tools in keeping with the way rubble

houses are being built in Haiti. But a sign they erected on the site explaining the purpose of the construction attracted more and more onlookers, a number of whom volunteered to help.

“This was a great way of building camaraderie with people you wouldn’t ordinarily have contact with,” said senior civil engineering technology student Jacob David, who worked on the SPSU rubble house as Dr. Oncul’s assistant.

“It was a fun experience — I learned to use a sledge hammer. But it also enhanced my ability to think critically. And this project has convinced me that civil engineering is what I want to do. ▶▶

CHRISTIAN BOURGUILLON

“It was a civil engineering project that turned into an interdisciplinary, collaborative experience between a non-profit organization, academic researchers, students from all different majors, and private companies. It has been an awesome and amazing research experience.”



SPSU SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

The RUBBLE-HOUSE Research Project
 (A Joint Research Effort Sponsored by SPSU and Conscience International, Inc.)

RUBBLE-HOUSEs are environmentally friendly structures for families left homeless by the earthquake in Haiti. RUBBLE-HOUSEs recycle the rubble from destroyed buildings to build the walls, and are engineered to be earthquake resistant. The construction methods and tools used in making RUBBLE-HOUSEs are designed with local conditions in mind to minimize the cost, while maintaining the safety of occupants.



“ The building and testing of rubble house integrated what we have learned in class and allowed us to apply that knowledge in a real-life setting. ”

JACOB DAVID

Over the course of three weeks, the students and faculty members worked with Holloman to dig the foundation of the 14-by-20-foot house and then — following CI’s tried-and-true formula — constructed “walls” out of tall, skinny wire baskets that were filled with very specific sized chunks of rubble. The walls were later covered with a relatively thin coat of cement.

Along the way, the group collaboratively came up with suggestions to make CI’s construction techniques more efficient, and the rubble house even more durable. By adding diagonal reinforcements to the wire baskets, the stability of the walls and wall connections were improved.

“We got a lot of different ideas on how to improve the construction process,” Holloman confirmed. “Great input. And it was good for the students to see the logistical issues you face in a project like this, as future construction managers.”

“The project’s sponsors got very involved and really engaged us in coming up with solutions to problems,” David noted. “The building and testing of the rubble house integrated what we have learned in class and allowed us to apply that knowledge in a real-life setting.”

When construction was complete in early October, the team had the structure surveyed extensively and performed a series of static load tests on the walls to measure their ability to withstand pressure of varying degrees.

The group also hit the freestanding demo walls with a battering ram and carefully documented the difference in the damage between a traditional cinderblock wall (destroyed in short order) and a wall made of rubble (only localized surface damage).

When all was said and done, the students collectively logged more than 600 hours on the construction and testing, according to Dr. Oncul.

If sponsors can be secured and sufficient funds raised, the team intends to conduct a comprehensive, full-scale shake-table test simulating actual earthquake conditions. The University of Buffalo (N.Y.) and the University of California – San Diego are the only two facilities with a table large enough to accommodate a full-scale rubble house weighing 70,000 pounds.

Dr. Barham estimates it will cost upwards of \$200,000 to secure the table for the 45 days needed to build the

house, test it, and clean up the debris. The research data already collected in Phase One of the project may prove instrumental in obtaining this funding, and the team secured a post-graduate research fellow from Turkey this spring to conduct lab tests and more numerical modeling.

This interest is no coincidence. Turkey is another earthquake-prone country that recently experienced a significant disaster, Dr. Oncul said, noting that the research fellow’s salary was paid by his own country.

In January, the team delivered presentations on their work to local meetings of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the Surveying and Mapping Society of Georgia (SAMSOG). In February, they also tested a small-scale replica of the wall on a seismic shake table at ATS. Later this year, presentations will be made on a national scale before ASCE and the American Society for Engineering Education, and a journal article is on the horizon.

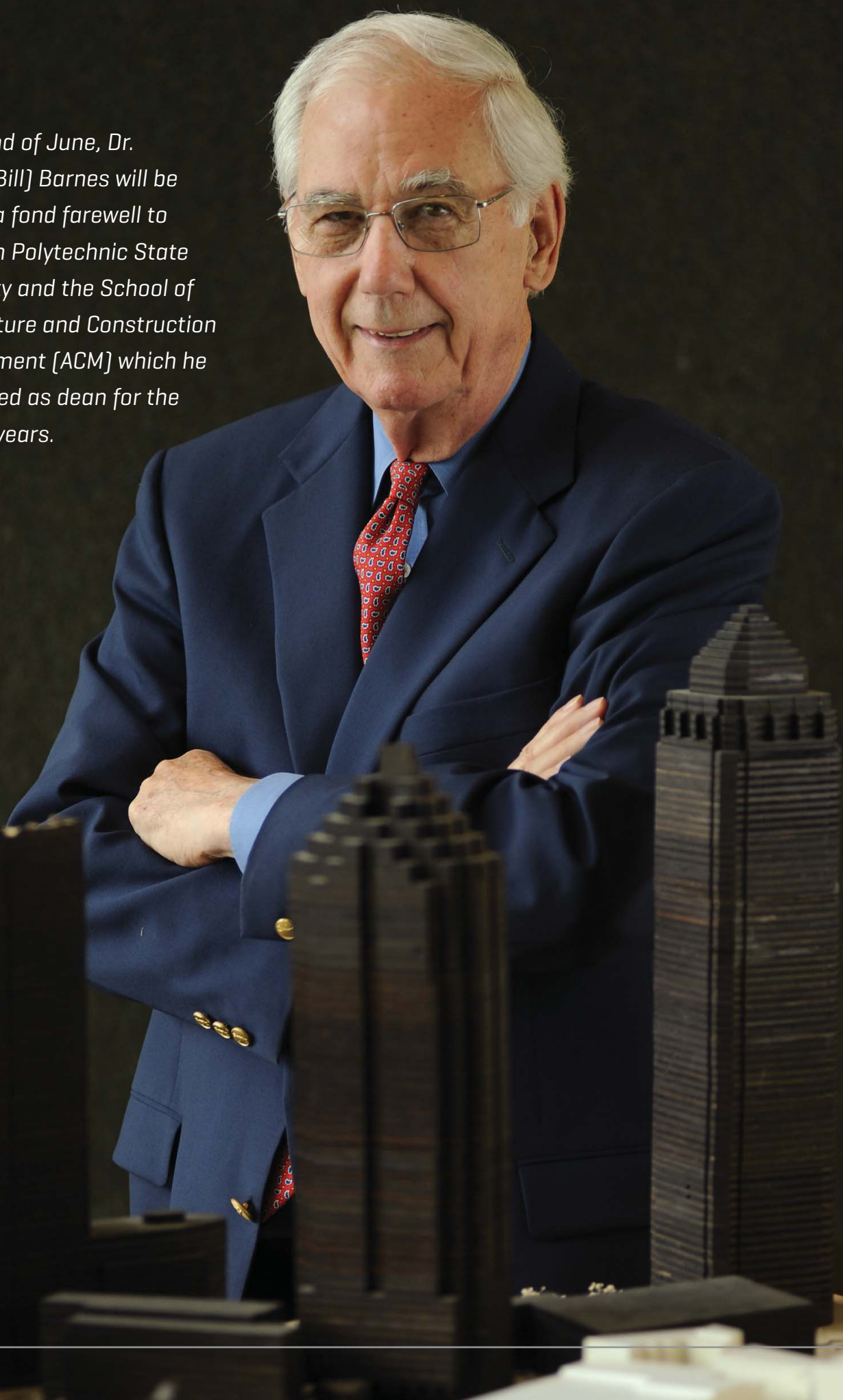
David and other student participants now are clamoring for more hands-on projects like the rubble house.

“It’d be great to have some central place on campus not just for this project but for others involving student/faculty/industry projects,” David said. “I’d love to see a think tank of sorts set up to work with industry officials in coming up with the solutions to problems they’ve identified. And I’d love to make it an interdisciplinary collaborative by getting other schools and departments at SPSU involved in these projects.”

“It was a fun experience — I learned to use a sledge hammer,” said Bourguillon. “But it also enhanced my ability to think critically. And this project has convinced me that civil engineering is what I want to do.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SPSU AND THE RUBBLE HOUSE PROJECT, VISIT www.spsu.edu/rubble-house.

At the end of June, Dr. Wilson (Bill) Barnes will be bidding a fond farewell to Southern Polytechnic State University and the School of Architecture and Construction Management (ACM) which he has served as dean for the past 11 years.



Moving beyond the blueprint...

SPSU says goodbye to Dean Bill Barnes

"I will miss the students – I enjoy working with younger people," he said. "But I am tired and ready to stop. It has been a productive and enjoyable time in my life."

Dean Barnes – who, in keeping with the tradition of SPSU faculty, enjoyed a lengthy career in industry (in his case as an architect and engineer) before he became an academic – said he kept working well past traditional retirement age because "there have been a lot of exciting things going on here. I have been swept along with the river."

That excitement includes running a school that boasts the only nationally accredited professional Bachelor of Architecture degree in Georgia – a five-year program that includes two years of design

"We have developed a wonderful faculty in this school. I'm very proud of that"

foundation and three years of professional courses, and one of the longest-running construction management (CM) programs in Georgia. The excitement also included having the number of students enrolled in the school's programs peak at more than 1,500 before the construction industry contracted during the current recession.

Other highlights of his lengthy career include the construction of the multiple-award-winning Design II building to provide studio space for second-year architecture students and two rounds of renovations to the older Design I building, the most recent of which is scheduled for completion this fall. During his years at SPSU, a number of certificates and concentrations have been added to the CM program, and a Master of Science in Architecture program is set to debut in January 2013.

The school also boasts some high-profile student competition teams, a fact illustrated by a huge victory this spring when CM students won the national Mechanical Contractors Association of

America (MCAA) Student Chapter Competition.

A reorganization this past winter shifted the Civil Engineering Technology Department from his oversight, and into SPSU's School of Engineering Technology and Management. But, well before that happened, Dean Barnes helped in the development of a Bachelor of Science in Construction Engineering. More recently, he also secured approval to add a Ph.D. faculty position in civil and spatial geomatics to the department as part of developing a proposal for a master's degree in geomatics.

"We have developed a wonderful faculty in this school. I'm very proud of that," Dean Barnes noted.

"Architecture and construction firms are starting to hire again as the economy improves. The construction management program in particular enjoys exceptional industry support, thanks to the quality of its graduates. Both the university and ACM are on solid footing and poised for significant accomplishments and continued recognition in the future," he said with satisfaction.

Dean Barnes has also been a leader in construction education well beyond the SPSU campus. He has been an active member of a national accreditation organization, the American Council for Construction Education (ACCE), since 1992, and served as its president from 2003 to 2005. Earlier, he served as the Standards Committee chair, capping prior work as the leader of a group that conceived and developed a uniform and rigorous curriculum standard for the ACCE. This standard has now been in use for 12 years.

Dean Barnes is looking forward to being able to devote more time to scholarly activities in retirement and perhaps some consulting work. The third edition of a book to which he contributed a chapter – *Temporary Structures in Construction* – is about to be published, and he anticipates more of that sort of activity in the future. And then, of course, there are books to be read, movies to watch, and family members to reconnect with.

"My wife has great plans for my retirement," he said with a rueful smile.

Credentials: Ph.D., American Institute of Architects
/ Fellow of Chartered Institute of Building

Service: President of a national accreditation body, the American Council on Construction Education (ACCE), 2003-05 / Member, board of Trustees, ACCE, 1997-05

Professional Career: Principal, Barnes Associates, Architects, 1975-05 / Campus architect, Florida International University, 1980-84 / President, Barnes Associates, Architects, 1972-89

Academic Career: Dean, SPSU School of Architecture and Construction Management, 2001-12 / Professor, SPSU Department of Construction, 2000-12 / Associate professor, SPSU Department of Construction, 1995-00 / Assistant professor, Florida International University Department of Construction Management, 1990-95 / Visiting professor, Florida International University Department of Construction Management, 1989-90

Education: University of Central England, Ph.D. in Construction Law, 2000 / Harvard University, Master in Architecture, 1968 / University of Pennsylvania, Master of Arts in English, 1962 / United States Military Academy, Bachelor of Science in Engineering, 1954

ENGINEERING GRADUATES

“This has been
a long time coming
for Southern Polytechnic,”



said Prof. Lance Crimm, program director for electrical engineering, of the awarding in May of SPSU's first bachelor of science degrees in civil engineering and electrical engineering. “Work to add these degree programs began in the 1980's. Then we realized in the early 2000's that we needed to start building our curriculum with niche engineering fields, including majors in mechatronics engineering, construction engineering, and systems engineering within the bachelor of science degree program. In 2009, the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents authorized us to offer Bachelor of Science degrees in Civil Engineering (CE), Electrical Engineering (EE), and Mechanical Engineering (ME). In May we celebrated our first graduates with Bachelor of Science degrees in Civil Engineering and Electrical Engineering.”

Marietta's Mike Jones, 52, earned his first degree from [what was then] the Southern Technical Institute in 1984 and immediately entered the workforce. He returned to his alma mater for additional study years later, and registered to pursue the EE degree shortly after it became available. He graduated as one of the first

students to receive the degree from SPSU this spring, thanks to the option of taking evening classes.

“The campus and the field of electrical engineering have both changed a great deal over the past three decades,” Jones said. “The campus has nearly doubled the number of buildings, the curriculum has expanded, and students now come from around the world to study here.”

Twenty-five years ago, most of SPSU's students came from north and northeastern Georgia. Today, more than 5,800 students represent 38 states and 66 countries. In fact, nearly 15 percent of enrolled students are considered international. Approximately one-third of the student population is non-traditional working professionals. More degrees and programs have been added to reflect today's technology-based economy, giving SPSU graduates a leg-up in the job market because of the practical education they received.

The on-campus career-placement office works hard to ensure that students are exposed to a variety of job opportunities. Students also come to know potential employers through active Industry Advisory

Boards in these programs.

“We as faculty meet with our Industry Advisory Boards once a year to ensure that we're up to date on the latest technology and industry needs,” said Dr. Ilseok Oh, program director for CE. “They are invaluable partners and work with us as we grow the School of Engineering.”

Many of the program's professors spent years in industry before joining the faculty, giving them further insight into the demands of the work world.

“All three of my degrees (doctorate, master's, and bachelor's) are in civil engineering,” Dr. Oh said. “My job is providing better infrastructures and facilities to our society and educating the future workforce in the same field. What could possibly be better than that? It is just awesome. Also, as a program director of the CE program at SPSU, I need to make sure that we have an outstanding group of faculty and staff who are all dedicated to the best possible education of our students, and this program prepares students for leadership in the profession.”

Woodstock's **Jessica Nash** is the first female to earn a civil engineering degree from Southern Polytechnic State University. The HOPE scholar began her studies at SPSU so she could attend college in Georgia and be close to home.

CHOOSING SPSU

It is this kind of dedication and commitment that brings students to the campus, where classes are small and not taught by graduate assistants, and where they can receive personal attention from faculty members.

"SPSU has good credentials and a great reputation among universities in Georgia," said recent EE graduate Taofeek Orekan from Nigeria. "I wanted to be part of such an amazing environment, and I'm really glad I enrolled here. The school's cultural diversity is noticeable, and classes are small so that you get easy access to your professors if you have a problem with your studies."

Woodstock's Jessica Nash, who graduated in May as the first woman to receive a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from SPSU, chose the college because of her interest in architecture in high school.

"I realized that I wanted to learn more about what makes things work from a structural standpoint than from an architectural view," said the 22-year-old HOPE Scholar.

She said she was drawn to the Cobb County campus because she could attend classes close to home in Georgia. "SPSU has small classes, and it's easy to get to know people," Nash said. "But it's not so small that you know everyone."

For Nash, being one of the first female graduates in one of the new engineering programs was just part of life. "At first I had to get used to being on a campus where there were so many guys all the time, but I quickly realized that we were all here to learn and do our best." She secured a job at an Atlanta-based engineering firm shortly before graduation in May.

Bao Nguyen, also one of the first graduates in the EE program, praised SPSU and the camaraderie on campus.

"I loved all of the electrical engineering faculty members," Nguyen said. "When it comes to academic work, I enjoyed studying with my fellow engineering students."



LOOKING TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

Southern Polytechnic's forward-thinking approach to education is keeping the pipeline filled with qualified professionals. Even in tight economic times, the job outlook has remained positive as technology continues to advance at an ever-quickening pace.

"Graduates can look forward to employment by construction companies, city and county engineering departments, state and federal transportation organizations, and civil engineering consulting and design firms," Dr. Oh said. "Graduates have the qualifications to enter careers in areas such as, but not limited to, transportation engineering, structural engineering, environmental engineering, geotechnical engineering, water-resource engineering, and construction engineering related fields. Typical job titles for graduates may include construction engineer, project engineer, project supervisor, construction manager, and design engineer."


The same type of opportunities hold true for EE graduates.

"Adding the electrical engineering undergraduate degree program at SPSU complements our already growing number of engineering major options for our students," Prof. Crimm said. "Further, the demand for electrical engineers in the state of Georgia as well as the nation was and continues to be extremely high, while the supply is quite low. SPSU offers the bonus of providing evening study options so that non-traditional students can take the courses needed for the EE degree. They're prepared for a variety of positions and have a bright future ahead of them."

For more information about SPSU's School of Engineering, visit www.spsu.edu/engineering.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

“Destroying” appliances prepares Engineering Technology Student of the Year



As a child growing up in Savannah, Christopher Cutter loved to take things apart so he could put them back together again.

“I destroyed a vacuum cleaner, a microwave, a TV, bikes, scooters, you name it,” the recent Southern Polytechnic State University graduate recalled. “I took my siblings’ toys apart, not mine – I wasn’t stupid.”

That may have been the first sign of his love of all things mechanical, a love that has earned him two Georgia Engineering Foundation scholarships and now the distinction of being named Georgia’s 2012 Engineering Technology Student of the Year.

“Christopher’s grade point average of 3.46 places him in the top 15 percent of seniors in the Mechanical Engineering Technology (MET) program,” MET Department Chair John Sweigart noted in nominating him for the statewide honor from the Georgia Engineering Alliance. “He is well liked by students and faculty. He will be an outstanding asset to the engineering profession.”

Asked about his strong academic achievement, Cutter smiled. “I come from a strange, nerdy family. I’m the oldest of four

kids, and we’re very competitive. Report-card time is the best time of the year. If you bring home a B, you get teased endlessly about it, so that’s not a good move.”

No worries. The 22-year-old was invited to join the National Honor Society, earned a Georgia Certificate of Merit and made the Dean’s List, along with Who’s Who Among American High School Students and Who’s Who Among American University and College Students.

“Chris is a bright and determined student, someone who always takes the initiative and is not a follower”

“Chris is a bright and determined student, someone who always takes the initiative and is not a follower,” said Assistant Professor of MET, Simin Nasseri. “He can work efficiently within a group and direct the group towards its goal.”

Cutter chose to major in MET because he “really enjoyed using the machinery and

equipment.” Also, computer-aided design (CAD) software really captured his imagination.

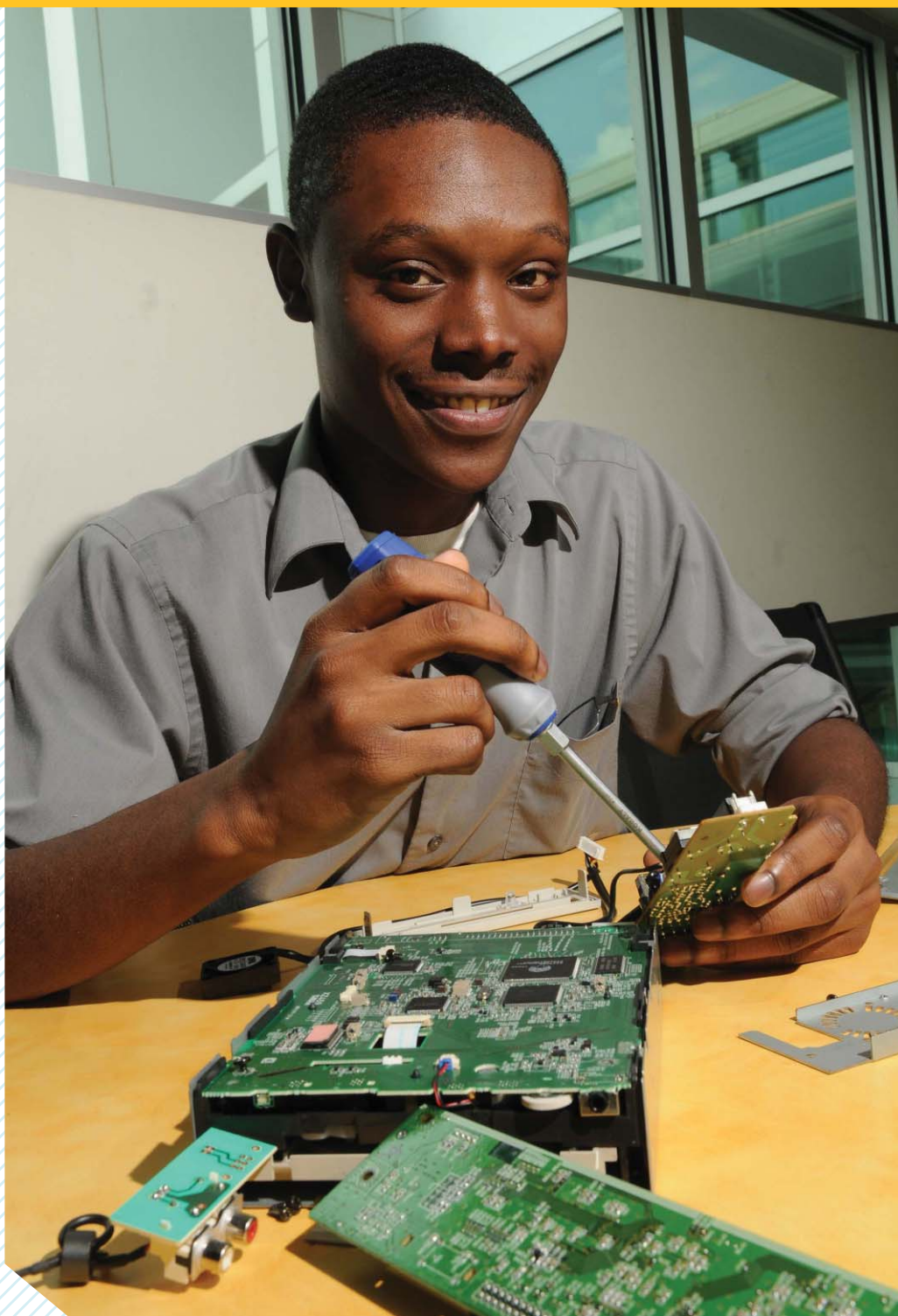
“It’s really cool to be able to bring your ideas to life with computer software,” he said with obvious enthusiasm. It is no surprise that Cutter has worked for most of the past year as an engineering CAD operator for an automotive parts firm, where he prepares drawings and other documentation for braking systems.

Cutter had “excellent analytical and engineering problem-solving skills,” according to Assistant Prof. Randall Emert. “Not only did he perform well in the Manufacturing Processes Lab, but he took the knowledge he gained and used it in extracurricular design activities. He led the machining for the SPSU Autonomous Underwater Vehicle

Team, an organization made up of a variety of engineering and engineering technology students.”

That’s not his only extracurricular involvement. Cutter also spent his senior year as secretary of the campus chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers.

He is modest about being singled out



as the state's Engineering Technology Student of the Year. "When I first received word about the award, I didn't know the magnitude of it," he confessed. "Then, a professor put my photo up on the screen in class and announced that I'd won. I was shocked."

What's next for Cutter? "I'm weighing whether to go to grad school or take a job," he

said. "My passion is [computer-aided] design, and I can do that kind of work for many different industries, so I have lots of options," he noted. "SPSU has groomed me to the point where I can go out into the world with confidence. My education here has given me the tools I need to succeed."

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

In his current incarnation, Garrett Bailey, 43, is Georgia's 2012 Engineering Student of the Year and on track to graduate this summer from Southern Polytechnic State University's Mechatronics Engineering program with a 4.0 GPA that he maintained throughout his tenure at the university, along with a wife, three young children, and a small business.

In his "spare" time, Bailey - who also received SPSU's inaugural Engineering Innovation Scholarship - volunteered every year at competitions hosted by the campus such as

BEST robotics and Science Olympiad, was an active member of the SPSU Undergraduate Research Club, taught classical Latin to home-schooled, challenged, and autistic children; and coached youth sports. He also volunteered for the Marine Corps Association of Georgia Lawyers and the Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Greater Atlanta, all while running a business that provides administrative support for real-estate attorneys.

Flash back 10 or 12 years, and you'd meet an entirely different Garrett Bailey - a ferry boat captain and mechanic with an undergraduate degree in philosophy who lived and worked on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, and in his spare time was a volunteer fireman and took courses in small craft naval architecture.

Who knows what the future holds for this man so eager to experience everything that intrigues him? Although Bailey plans

In his current incarnation, Garrett Bailey, 43, is Georgia's Engineering Student of the Year, who graduates this summer from SPSU's Mechatronics Engineering Program with a 4.0 GPA that he maintained throughout his tenure at the university.

to pursue a graduate degree and put his engineering education to good use, he jokes, "Maybe I'll become a priest - I haven't done that yet!"

Meanwhile, his professors praised him for his work ethic, leadership in group projects, creative problem-solving skills, outstanding oral presentations, preparedness, and active participation in class and labs.

"Garrett is one of the best undergraduate engineering students that I have ever known in my teaching and research career. His enthusiasm for engineering is infectious," said Dr. Cyril Okhio, who teaches both mechatronics and mechanical engineering and is one of several SPSU professors who recommended Bailey for the statewide student of the year honor. "Garrett was often discussed during our faculty departmental meetings as one of our most outstanding student stars most likely to become an illustrious alumnus."

Another of Bailey's professors, Lance Crimm, director of the Electrical Engineering program, commented, "His curiosity and motivation for lifelong learning is so evident that I believe he will be extremely successful in whatever engineering pursuit he follows after graduating."

"[Bailey] grabbed my attention from the first class as an exceptional student who is not only excellent in class, but also dedicated to further learning through extra work," said Dr. Chan Ham, director of the Mechatronics Engineering program. "His genuine effort always has him interfacing his classroom learning with real engineering practices through volunteer projects."

Dr. Ham was so impressed with Bailey's capabilities that, during Ham's transition from faculty member to director of the Mechatronics Engineering program in 2011, he made Bailey his personal assistant. This opportunity allowed Bailey to participate in the final negotiations, logistics, acquisition, and installation of the sophisticated robots donated to SPSU by a Texas firm.

"Those robots will provide invaluable opportunities for research and the training of future engineers at SPSU," said Bailey, who, as part of a capstone senior project worked with other students to ensure that use of the robots was integrated into the university's mechatronics engineering curriculum.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE



“Garrett is one of the best undergraduate engineering students that I have ever known in my teaching and research career. His enthusiasm for engineering is infectious.”

Bailey was thrilled to win the SPSU Engineering Innovation Scholarship in December 2011. “As I worked full time, went to school full-time, and was raising three children,

that \$1,000 scholarship was extraordinarily meaningful to me,” he said. “I was also immensely honored to have had it presented to me by my personal hero, the late Prof. Glenn Allen [the scholarship’s creator who retired in 2011 as the original program director for mechatronics engineering, and passed away in April 2012 after a courageous fight with cancer]. His caring guidance molded so many budding engineers and his determined dedication developed the Mechatronics Engineering program from a mere concept to reality. I am tremendously proud of the program.”

Bailey said when he received word in January that the Georgia Engineering Alliance would be recognizing him as Georgia’s Engineering Student of the Year at its annual black-tie banquet at the culmination of Engineers Week (also known as E-Week), the full significance of the honor hadn’t sunk in.

“Then, I was walking past a classroom and the professor pulled me in and said, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, I want to introduce you to the state’s 2012 Engineering Student of the Year,’ and other professors I didn’t even know stopped me in the hall to shake my hand. I started to realize at that point how much being named the Engineering Student of the Year means to the institution.”

Bailey grew up in Georgia, as did his wife, Rachel, and obtained his philosophy degree at Georgia State University. He comes from a family with “a long history of sea captains,” and said his love of the water led him to become an underwater cave diver and then a licensed boat captain. For three years in the late 1990s, he piloted a passenger ferry and a car/truck ferry between Fernandina Beach, Fla., and Cumberland Island, Ga. Then he and Rachel moved to Martha’s Vineyard, where he spent the next four years piloting and maintaining the Chappaquiddick Ferry.

After their first child was born in 2004, the Baileys moved back to Georgia “to be closer to our families” and launched the niche business, Aardvark Digital Solutions, serving real estate attorneys. Exploiting his knowledge of computers, Bailey said he streamlined and modernized the coordination of numerous records required for the closing process on real estate sales.

One day, Bailey got into a conversation with a recent SPSU graduate. When Bailey spoke about his interest in engineering, the man urged him to check out SPSU, a recommendation supported by his wife and father. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The CHEMISTRY *of the* GOBER BROTHERS

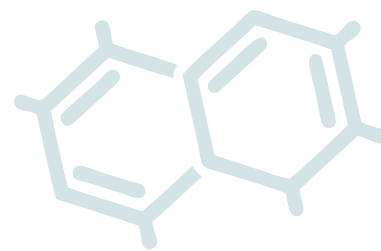


ISAIAH

JOSHUA



Identical twins Joshua and Isaiah Gober are alike in more ways than just their physical appearance.



The recent Southern Polytechnic State University graduates were both honored during the spring 2012 commencement exercise as the university's first dual recipients of the President's Distinguished Scholar Award, which is awarded to the graduate with the highest overall GPA.

Finishing at the top of the class is not unfamiliar for the brothers. They were valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, at Flowery Branch High School in 2008.

"We were the first brothers/twins to graduate No. 1 and No. 2 in their class," Isaiah said. "It was also the first time that both valedictorian and salutatorian were African-American students. It was exciting to be a part of my high school's history."

Their academic excellence continued into their college careers and the brothers have again made history, as the first people to share the distinguished scholar award at SPSU.

"I hadn't really thought that much about (graduating with top honors)," Isaiah said, noting he focused on finishing his undergraduate degree on a strong note and getting ready for graduate school.

Joshua, who is three minutes older than Isaiah, said his goal for college was to do the "very best I could," so he could attend graduate school.

"I'm happy that all of my hard work has paid off in the end," he said. "It is rewarding to see this recognition on my diploma."

The twins' academic success also won them recognition as SPSU's 2012 Academic Recognition Day Representatives, an award given by the Georgia General Assembly to honor the top students from the 35 institutions in the University System of Georgia.

Joshua and Isaiah received a commendation letter from Chancellor Henry Huckaby, who called them individuals who "best represent the highest scholastic ideals" of SPSU, as well as signed resolutions from the Georgia Senate and House of Representatives.

"It was amazing to be recognized for our scholastic achievements," Joshua said, adding he thought their parents were more excited about it than they were.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The 22-year-olds credit their parents, Corrine and Gregory Gober, with instilling a “work-first, play-later” mentality in them at an early age, Joshua said.

“I think a lot of it has to do with my upbringing,” he said, noting he spent “long hours and many sleepless nights” studying. “From a young age, I was encouraged to excel academically. We have carried with us into adulthood the good study habits that our parents helped us develop as children.”

“I think that once a person develops a habit of striving for academic excellence, it comes naturally,” said Isaiah, who “definitely” had to work hard for his grades. “I think that developing good habits makes it easier to do well in school even if the material is difficult. I always want to do the best that I can, and when you consistently set high expectations for yourself, it is easier to stay motivated and driven.”

While siblings often compete against each other, Joshua and Isaiah said they actually helped each other.

The Maryland-born twins both earned bachelor’s degrees in chemistry, had 4.0 grade-point averages and plan to pursue doctorate degrees.

“We’ve never been very competitive with each other,” Joshua said, noting they’d also played on sports teams together. “We’ve always preferred to work together, than to try and outdo one another. We’ve helped each other with homework and projects, and even taken notes for each other if one of us had to miss class. I think that inside the classroom or out, we’re strongest as a team.”

The Maryland-born twins, who moved to Georgia at four months old, have more in common than just graduating with honors from the same university. Both earned bachelor’s degrees in chemistry, had 4.0 grade-point averages, and plan to pursue doctorate degrees.

They became fascinated with science at an early age, which pointed them toward a career in chemistry.

“Even as a youngster, I was quite the thinker, always asking questions and wondering why things function the way they do,” said Joshua, who considered majoring in pharmacy but felt chemistry would give him more career options. “In middle school and high school, I took special interest in biology and chemistry because they helped me to better understand scientific phenomena in nature and the world around me.”

Isaiah added that his high school chemistry teacher, Dr. Payne, “strongly influenced my decision to pursue chemistry.”



The twins, who shared a room on campus, chose to study at Southern Polytechnic at the suggestion of a friend.

“We visited the campus with our family after being accepted, and it seemed like a great fit,” Joshua said. “We all felt an inner peace about the school, and the administrators and professors we met made an outstanding first impression. After our visit, we knew that this is where we were supposed to be.”

Isaiah said his college experience has been a “relatively peaceful and very manageable four years.”

“I have really enjoyed the small, close-knit community,” he said. “I didn’t really know what to expect when I first arrived, but looking back on everything, I am definitely satisfied with the way everything turned out.”

With bachelor’s degrees in hand, the brothers plan to pursue Ph.Ds in chemistry.

Isaiah, who wants to focus on organic or bio-organic chemistry, has been accepted into graduate programs at Georgia Tech, the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, and Virginia Tech while Joshua has been accepted at Emory University and UNC.

As much as the twins are alike, they also have their differences.

“We have different tastes in music,” Isaiah said. “I prefer hard rock and metal; Joshua listens to more soul, pop, and R&B. I play and watch sports more frequently than Joshua does. He is more artistic than I am, especially with designing things.”

FUN FACTS



JOSHUA

ISAIAH

Favorite class at SPSU:

Tossup between organic chemistry I and II and medicinal chemistry

Tie between organic chemistry II and medicinal chemistry

Hardest class you had:

Physical chemistry

Physical chemistry

Favorite professor:

Tie between Prof. Jack Duff and Dr. Rajnish Singh

Tie between Dr. Rajnish Singh and Prof. Jack Duff

Toughest professor:

Dr. Lu Kang

Dr. Lu Kang

Hardest test/exam you took:

Physical chemistry midterm

Physical chemistry midterm

Favorite place on campus:

The Honors House

Health and Wellness Center (the gym)

Favorite way to burn off stress:

Finding something funny to watch, like a TV sitcom or a funny movie

Weightlifting

Favorite school tradition:

SPSU bathtub races

SPSU bathtub races

Favorite activity at the college:

Helping with the annual Earth Day events for the Girl Scouts

Weightlifting and basketball

College honors:

Peach State Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (PSLSAMP) Scholar, Dean's List, Honors Student of the Year, first place oral presentation at 2010 PLSAMP Fall Symposium and Research Conference, second place oral presentation at 2011 PLSAMP Fall Symposium and Research Conference, Academic Recognition Day Representative

Academic Recognition Day Representative, PLSAMP Scholar, nominated for Alpha Chi Honor Society, nominated for National Society of Leadership and Success, first place oral presentation at 2010 PLSAMP Research Conference, Dean's List

What you'll miss most after graduation:

My classmates and professors

My friends and the professors that I have worked with closely

Alum

STEVE NEWWEY

LIVES LIFE

ON THE

FAST TRACK



ALUMNI PROFILE

Southern Polytechnic State University alum Steve Newey always dreamed of life in the fast lane. So when the aspiring race car driver's initial plan went off track, he chose a new route to keep him close to the action.





In the months leading up to the race, the team works on refining the aerodynamics by wind tunnel testing, developing shock absorbers, and testing at the race track.

Newey, a 1984 SPSU graduate, partnered with Bryan Herta three years ago to form Bryan Herta Autosport. The racing team entered the spotlight in 2011 when its driver, Dan Wheldon, won the Indianapolis 500.

Wheldon's win was a "big surprise," since he was considered an underdog in the race, Newey said. "We did a lot of jumping up and down, yelling, and screaming. It was pretty amazing."

Some might find it just as surprising to learn how much behind-the-scenes work goes into preparing a driver for a single race. That's where Newey, Herta, and a group of about 20 professionals come in. The team spends the months leading up to the Indy 500 preparing its cars and drivers for the race.

While IndyCar Series cars are not designed from scratch – they are manufactured by Dallara Automobili in Italy – Newey and his team put plenty of work into modifying them for their drivers.

"It's a very technical exercise," said Newey, whose staff includes four race engineers. "I'd consider it similar to aircraft maintenance," he said. "You can't afford to have a mechanical failure from a championship standpoint or a safety standpoint."

In the months leading up to the race, the team works on refining the aerodynamics by wind tunnel testing, developing shock absorbers, and testing at the race track.

During the winter, "We're in Florida a lot, testing for the season," Newey said.

"Each individual race has its own strategy," he explained. Strategies are based on factors such as the car's fuel mileage and the number of pit stops that will be required during the race.

"It's kind of a mixture of science and guess work," said Newey, whose drivers are prepared for a range of scenarios, such as hazardous track conditions. "You can never predict the outcome. You have to be prepared for any situation."

This year's Indy 500 in May comes with yet another challenge. In the past, IndyCar Series vehicles used Honda engines. This year, new race cars have engines from Honda, Chevrolet, and Lotus. Bryan Herta Autosport's car is equipped with a Lotus engine.

"We have an entirely different car and different engine than last year. That creates a lot of work for us," Newey said.



In the past, IndyCar Series vehicles used Honda engines. This year, new race cars have engines from Honda, Chevrolet, and Lotus. Herta Autosport's car is equipped with a Lotus engine.

Newey is no stranger to hard work or the challenges presented by the racing industry.

"When I was growing up in Atlanta, I raced motorcycles in the Motocross Series," said Newey, whose interest transitioned to racing cars after spending his high school summers working at a gas station alongside a race car enthusiast.

"I went to some events with him, and just kind of fell in love with the sport," he said. "I basically wanted to be a driver, but didn't have the funding or sponsorships I needed."

After high school, Newey attended college for a year before taking two years off to work in the racing industry. But without the financial backing for a career as a driver, he made a small detour. "I thought the next best thing to being a race car driver would be to design race cars," he said.

That's when he headed to SPSU to pursue a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering technology.

The school "definitely provided the fundamentals and the engineering skills that are required to be effective as a design engineer in a very competitive business," said Newey, who was soon hired to design Jaguar race cars in Michigan. "The design of a race car is very complex. There are a lot of factors that make a race car a high-performance vehicle."

Newey later moved to England to serve as a race engineer for Arrows Formula One, where his driver, Derek Warwick, finished fourth in the World Championship.

By the mid-90s, Newey had been hired as a manager and has

remained in team leadership roles ever since. As co-owner of Bryan Herta Autosport, he oversees the entire operation, including financial management and sponsorships

On race day, Newey helps address his drivers' needs, coordinates their pre-race appearances, and accommodates the team's VIP guests.

He also continues to learn, he said, from drivers such as Dan Wheldon, who joined his team in early 2011 and died in a crash less than five months after his Indianapolis 500 victory.

"I was really amazed at his work ethic and how driven he was, so to speak, to win that race. It's amazing how determined he was to make a mark at that particular track," said Newey, who also reflected on Wheldon's easy interaction with fans.

"He always had time to give an autograph. He never turned anyone away and I think that endeared him to the fans," he said. "He was quite a guy. He had a lot of people in the sport that admired him. He touched a lot of lives."

"He just loved doing what he was doing."

This year, Bryan Herta Autosport will be represented in the IndyCar Series by Alex Tagliani, a veteran driver from Canada. His car has been named "DW12" in Wheldon's memory.

Last year's success doesn't place any additional pressure on the team for the 2012 race, Newey said.

"The expectations are always the same," he said. "We expect to win. That's what we plan for and try to accomplish."



BUSINESS with a CONSCIENCE



WITH LESS THAN THREE WEEKS' LEAD TIME,

a team of Southern Polytechnic State University students on a mission to help battered women took first place last fall in a statewide business plan competition marshaled by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents and Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus, who pioneered the social business concept. Since then, the students have moved through several additional levels of competition in the quest for a \$50,000 investment in their business by venture capitalists.

Dr. Yunus, who spoke at SPSU in the fall of 2010, describes social business as a new kind of capitalism that serves humanity's most pressing needs – businesses with a social rather than financial objective that do not personally profit the individuals who run them. Instead, they provide low-interest loans to people in need through a business model now known as microcredit.

The recent business plan competi-

tion, which attracted approximately 1,200 Georgia university students, was part of the Georgia Social Business and Microcredit Forum, hosted by the University System of Georgia (USG). Students were charged with developing a plan for a business that would address a pressing community issue.

On learning of the Oct. 17 competition in late September, Dr. Zvi Szafran, SPSU's vice president for Academic Affairs, enlisted the help of Dr. Don Ariail, SPSU associate professor of business administration, Prof. Greg Quinet, assistant professor of management, Dr. Joyce McGriff, associate professor of marketing, and Dr. Sandra Vasa-Sideris, professor of management. Together they assembled a team of 10 students. Some were graduate students in the business administration program, but one was a high school student with dual enrollment in SPSU's honors program.

Working on their own time without course credit, members of the SPSU Social Business Team and their faculty advisors settled on domestic violence as a worthy

issue to tackle. In researching the topic, they discovered that the primary reason battered women stayed in abusive living situations (or return to them after seeking emergency services) is because they lacked the finances to establish their independence. This conclusion was supported by statistics, and the revelation that 57 percent of Georgia municipalities report domestic violence as their No. 1 cause of homelessness.

"So often, women in these situations don't have the money or the credit needed to buy a car, get an apartment, or get the education needed to make a decent living," said Dr. Ariail. "They can stay at a shelter for a short time, but then reality sets in, and they wind up going home to the abuser."

The team hit upon the idea of providing small, low-interest "microloans" to help abused women get back on their feet by securing housing, education, and employment or even starting a small business. They named their business model Restoration Trust. "One Woman. One Community.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Connected." is the organization's motto.

"There is no organization in Georgia that currently provides a microloan to survivors of domestic violence," the team stated in its business plan. "Restoration Trust will fill an important void that exists beyond what state, local agencies, and shelters currently provide."

At the October 2011 competition, Sonal Doshi, who obtained a Master of Science in Accounting (MSA) this past winter, and Fred Arnold, an MBA student, gave two separate presentations on Restoration Trust before judges that included Dr. Yunus and the leaders of companies such as Starbucks, PayPal, Church's Chicken, the Intel Corporation, and Motorola.

"Our students did a wonderful job in the three short weeks they had to put together a business plan and presentation," said Dr. Szafran. "I was proud to be there to see them win against some very strong competition." There were 38 institutions at the event, including the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business and Kennesaw State University's Coles College of Business.

In addition to Doshi and Arnold, members of the SPSU Social Business Team

taking part in this competition included: Chris Estrada (MBA), Becky Stringer (MBA), Joelle Day, who graduated this winter with a Master of Science in Accounting (MSA), Arthur Vaughn (MSA), Lauren Tyus, an honors student in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program, James (Ben) Fulghum, also a student in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program, Tiane McKoy, a student in the Bachelor of Apparel and Textiles program, and Sana Yasmeen, a high school student.

The top six teams from the competition - SPSU, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia Gwinnett College in Lawrenceville, Valdosta State University, Fort Valley State University, and Gainesville State College - were invited to a workshop in March 2012 in which Doshi, Arnold, Day, Estrada, and Stringer presented their plans and received feedback from a group of venture capitalists. After some quick modifications, the teams then delivered their presentations to a larger group of venture capitalists, which weighed the merits of each plan.

When all was said and done, the judges selected SPSU to move on to the next phase of the competition, where the team

competed with more than 20 entrepreneurs from outside the University System of Georgia for a chance to participate in 10 weeks of entrepreneurial training leading up to the Village Capital-Atlanta Funding Competition. The best proposal presented at the June 2012 event will win \$50,000 from venture capitalists with which to bring the businesses to life.

Doshi, Day, Estrada, and Stringer established Restoration Trust as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization this spring and are working to secure grants and private and corporate donations.

"We got some really good feedback on our plan from the mentoring session [at the competition in March]," Stringer noted. "We're ready to move forward."

Stringer estimated that since last September, the team has spent well over 200 hours working on the project but remained enthusiastic about the good Restoration Trust can do in Cobb County and, eventually, statewide.

"We don't plan on stopping now," she declared. "Right from the start, our philosophy in entering these competitions has been that we're in it to win it, not to place!"

The team hit upon the idea of providing small, low-interest "microloans" to help abused women get back on their feet by securing housing, education, and employment or even starting a small business.



The winning team of SPSU students and faculty pose with Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus during a statewide business plan competition.

Hornets buzzed to second round of NAIA



The Southern Polytechnic State University Runnin' Hornets wrapped up another impressive season by making their 14th appearance in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Division I Men's Basketball Championship and chalking up noteworthy statistics as a team and as individuals.

ATHLETICS

After going 24-5 in the regular season, the Hornets advanced to the quarterfinals of the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) Championship and earned a trip to the national tournament in Kansas City, Mo., where they powered into the second round.

"I am extremely proud of our team this year," said Interim Head Coach Tommy Dillon. "They fought through adversity and really did something special that no one can ever take away from them. We defeated seven nationally ranked teams, finished in the top 16 of the NAIA national tournament, and beat two NCAA Division II teams on their home courts."

The Hornets began the 2011-12 season ranked No. 20 nationally in the NAIA Top 25 Coaches Poll and rose as high as No. 3 at the beginning of the post-season. The team was undefeated at home during the 2011-12 season. One of the most memorable games was a last-second win over No. 1-ranked Shorter University.

During post-season action, the Hornets received a first-round bye to the quarterfinals of the SSAC tournament in Rome, Ga., where the No. 3-West seed Blazers from Belhaven University defeated the No. 2-East seed SPSU 71-69 in an upset victory.

But the early loss in the conference tournament did not prevent the team from securing an at-large bid to compete in the NAIA Division I Championship, marking the Hornets' third straight NAIA appearance. In the opening round, the Hornets stung University of the Cumberlands (Ky.) 66-60 in a tense battle. However, SPSU fell short in the second round of the single-elimination tournament, losing to Louisiana State University Shreveport 71-84.

SPSU ended the season ranked sixth nationally.

During this season, the Runnin' Hornets chalked up notable statistics both in the SSAC and nationally. They scored a total of 2,537 points for the year with an average of 79.28 points per game, ranking them No. 2 in the SSAC in scoring offense. With a total of 1,262 rebounds and an average of 39.44 per game, SPSU was No. 1 in the conference in total rebounds. The Hornets were also No. 2 in assists per game (15.0) with a total of 480.

The 2011-12 team included some very talented student athletes. Junior guard Trey Payne ranked No. 9 in NAIA Division I in steals per game (2.931) and had 85 total steals, making him No. 15 in that category. Payne also led the team in assists with an average of 3.45 per game and 100 total.

TEAM NATIONAL RANKING

# 1	Division I team average steals per game (14.469)	
# 2	total steals (463)	3-pointers per game (10.156)
		offensive rebounds per game (16.0)
# 3	turnover margin (6.406)	total number of 3-pointers made per game (325)

"I am extremely proud of our team this year. They fought through adversity and really did something special that no one can ever take away from them."

- Tommy Dillon, Interim Head Coach

Leading the team in points per game (15.29) was junior guard Bobby Smith. Smith ranked No. 7 nationally in steals per game (3.07) and No. 8 in total steals (95). He was also named to the First Team All-SSAC. Junior guard/forward Cortex Irby led the team in rebounds with an average of 8.36 per game and 259 total and was also named to the First Team All-SSAC.

SPSU, the SSAC, and the NAIA named junior guard C.J. McElrath a Champion of Character. Ashton Pitts, a senior forward, led the team with an average of 1.71 blocks per game. He ranked No. 20 in NAIA Division I in total blocks (48).

Coach Dillon entered the 2011-12 season as the interim head coach after serving as assistant coach for the previous two years. Dillon was joined on the coaching staff by assistant coaches Frankie Willingham in his second season, and Ervin Herron and Darrien Beaucham, both in their first seasons.

"It was a tremendous first year for me as the head coach," Dillon said. "I would like to thank my administration for having the faith in me to continue SPSU's great tradition on the basketball court. The faculty and staff have been extremely supportive of the team all year, and I love the fact that everyone had a hand in making this a very successful season. SPSU is a special place. My staff and I are extremely happy to be a part of it."





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Save These Dates

June 6-8, 2012

4th Annual Polytechnic Summit

Come explore what makes polytechnic universities unique and important.

Register online at www.PolytechnicSummit.org

August 4, 2012

Summer Graduation

10 a.m. in the SPSU Gymnasium

August 15, 2012

First Day of Fall Classes

December 15, 2012

Fall Graduation

10 a.m. School of Arts and Sciences, and School of Engineering Technology and Management

2 p.m. School of Architecture and Construction Management, School of Engineering, and School of Computing and Software Engineering

Both sessions will be held in the SPSU Gymnasium.



For more information about these events and dates, please contact the Advancement Office at 678-915-7351



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