

SunTrust Foundation kicks off USF lecture series on global economics with speech by acclaimed cybersecurity author

TAMPA, Fla. (March 4, 2014)—Marking its dedication to support the University of South Florida's cybersecurity initiative, the SunTrust Foundation today presented USF with a \$1 million check to endow a partnership lecture series on global economics, beginning with a lecture focused on the importance of cybersecurity education in an increasingly web-dependent global economy.

The inaugural lecture featured cybersecurity expert P.W. Singer, director of the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence at the Brookings Institution. Singer is the co-author of "Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know," a book called "an essential read" by Google's executive chairman and "the most approachable and readable book ever written on the cyber world" by the former supreme allied commander at NATO.

In his keynote address, Singer emphasized cybersecurity's vital place in personal and corporate security, as well as the importance of understanding the human side of cybersecurity threats and solutions.

Following the keynote address, a panel discussion with business leaders in Florida's energy, health, banking and retail sectors highlighted the changing nature of cybersecurity challenges. Panelists included David Pizzo, Florida Blue's market president for West Florida; David Rowan, senior vice president and director of enterprise technology risk management for SunTrust Banks; Gordon Gillette, president of Tampa Electric & People's Gas; and Mandy Shaw, Senior VP for Technology and Chief Accounting Officer at Bloomin' Brands, the parent company of Outback Steakhouse, Carrabas and Bonefish.

A broad range of participants from government, statewide and local businesses and defense underscored the event's significance. This event is one of many to come at USF as the university takes advantage of the ever-expanding opportunities cybersecurity provides to help Florida carve its place in the nation as "the cyber state."

Cybersecurity at USF continues with a lecture on May 12 by Jane Holl Lute, the president and chief executive officer of the Council on Cybersecurity, an independent, global organization committed to an open and secure Internet. Lute most recently served as Deputy Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security.

The University of South Florida is a high-impact, global research university dedicated to student success. USF is a Top 50 research university among both public and private institutions nationwide in total research expenditures, according to the National Science Foundation. Serving more than 47,000 students, the USF System has an annual budget of \$1.5 billion and an annual economic impact of \$4.4 billion. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference.

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University of South Florida graduate wins first place in national IBM computing contest

Mugdha Kadam beat out more than 5,601 competitors in the 2013 Master the Mainframe Contest, earning a spot in the contest's world championship.

TAMPA, Fla. (Feb. X, 2014) – Competing with thousands of students from more than 400 different schools, USF College of Business graduate Mugdha Kadam took home the top prize in an IBM mainframe computing contest the company called its biggest and toughest ever.

The 2013 IBM Master the Mainframe Contest drew 5,601 students from across the U.S. and Canada. During the course of three months, Kadam bested her competitors in a series of increasingly difficult mainframe programming tasks representing the type of real-world challenges faced by today's leading companies.

“Sometimes it took days to complete one challenge,” Kadam said. “I never thought I could get it. When they announced the winners, I was shouting, ‘I won! I won!’ I didn’t believe it.”

Kadam, 28, graduated from USF in December 2013 with a Master’s Degree in Management Information Sciences. An international student from India, she earned her undergraduate degree at Mumbai University and gained five years’ experience as a software engineer with Accenture Technologies before coming to the United States. Kadam mastered mainframe computing—which businesses use to operate secure databases, transaction servers or applications—as an analyst for HealthPlan Services in Tampa. She competed in the IBM contest while interning with PSCU Financial Services and finishing her master’s degree.

“Mugdha’s maturity and the ability to balance schoolwork, a job and this contest is very reflective of the kind of students we want to see at USF,” said Dr. Balaji Padmanabhan, chair of USF’s Information Systems and Decision Sciences Department. “Earning accomplishments is one thing, but she should also be lauded for taking the extra step—investing time and energy into an activity that is not part of the curriculum, but that adds to her overall educational experience.”

Kadam’s first-place prize includes a tablet computer and a trip to New York City in April to compete in the Master the Mainframe World Championship with 40 other students from around the globe. IBM executives, press, analysts and clients will be in attendance.

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University of South Florida gains another gold ‘STAR’ for sustainability efforts

Student Green Energy Fund initiatives secured high marks from AASHE, the nation’s leading advocacy group for the green campus movement.

TAMPA, Fla. (Feb. 28, 2014) – Showcasing student involvement in environmental efforts and the University of South Florida’s ongoing commitment to sustainability, the university earned its second gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

The achievement seals USF’s position as the only university in Florida whose sustainable campus and cutting-edge programs merited gold in AASHE’s Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System, known as STARS.

“USF’s dedication to sustainability education and putting that into practice highlights the interdisciplinary expertise we work hard to cultivate,” said Dr. Kalanithy Vairavamoorthy, dean of the Patel College of Global Sustainability. “We received top scores across the board, from reducing water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions to sustainability policy advocacy and community partnerships. A lot of that is thanks to our students. This award belongs to them.”

The STARS Gold Rating follows the recent re-approval of USF Tampa’s Student Green Energy Fund, a student-controlled fee of \$1 per credit hour that has provided more than \$1.5 million to projects like the Smart Bike Sharing Program, solar panels powering multiple buildings on the Tampa campus, and the installation of power management software on more than 8,000 USF computers, effectively cutting energy consumption by 95 percent.

“We make sure student dollars get the highest possible return on investment—these projects are saving the university hundreds of thousands of dollars,” said Joseph Michalsky, director of public relations and communications for USF Student Government. “We envision USF becoming the smartest green university, and it is. Through the SGEF, USF integrates and optimizes energy, water, waste and transport, creating a smart campus infrastructure. We work hard to make this happen, and it’s really nice to be recognized.”

USF won its first STARS Gold award in 2011, the same year the Student Green Energy Fund went into effect and the university established the Office of Sustainability at the USF Patel College of Global Sustainability. Since 2011, USF has sponsored three Earth Day celebrations; doubled its scores in sustainability literacy; vastly reduced its greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption; and increased the number of faculty engaged in sustainability research by more than 500 percent.

USF has repeatedly been named to the Sierra Club’s list of the “Coolest Schools” in the nation for sustainability and the Princeton Review’s 2014 Green College Honor Roll.

Learn more about USF's sustainability efforts through the Patel College of Global Sustainability, <http://psgs.usf.edu/office-of-sustainability>.

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