

November Newsletter

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KEEP THOSE GRADES UP!

Remember, in accordance with St. Johns County district standards, Academy students must keep their Academy course semester grade at a 70 or higher, and they must hold at least a 2.0 overall GPA. If you need any academic help, students can get FREE tutoring in any subject from the National Honor Society. Tutoring sessions take place from 4-5 pm on Tuesdays & Thursdays, or during Excel Time in the Media Center.

If a student can't make it to tutoring after school on Tuesdays or Thursdays or during Excel, NHS also offers tutoring before school or during lunch, but an appointment needs to be made in advance. See Mrs. Milian in the Media Center for more information.

Teachers are also available to assist students during Excel periods on Wednesdays. Students can get help in their Academy, Math, English, Computer or World Language classes during Excel A. They can get help in their Science, Social Studies, Arts, ESE, and PE classes during Excel B.

Academy Students and Parents,

With one quarter of the school year already behind us, the Academy students are in for a second 9 weeks filled with unique experiences. Our Academy calendars are filling up with field trip and guest speaker dates. A recap of some of the recent events is below.

Wishing our Academy students and their families a happy and healthy Thanksgiving holiday!

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at Jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

Thank you!
Jaime Combs
Academy Coordinator

STELLAR ACADEMY STUDENTS TOUR UNF'S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING



For Stellar Academy of Engineering students, options to study engineering at the college level are plentiful. The University of North Florida, right in our own backyard, offers fantastic opportunities for students to study Civil, Electrical, or Mechanical engineering....or be a part of their newest major: Advanced Manufacturing. Students

ACADEMY WEBSITE

www.neaseacademies.com

had the chance to learn more when they toured UNF's School of Engineering. The group started off in their Introduction to Engineering classroom, where they met with Dr. Osama Jadaan, Director of the School of Engineering and a Stellar Academy of Engineering Advisory Board member. Dr. Jadaan shared with the students that engineering is a "noble profession which makes our lives better." He discussed how UNF's engineering programs are different than what other Universities have to offer. He noted the Jacksonville location provides a variety of internship and job opportunities due to the number of engineering firms in our city. He shared that the smaller class sizes featured at UNF means that students really get to know their professors. Finally, he pointed out that not only does the College focus on



project-based, hands-on learning, but that they also emphasize the need for clear and confident communications skills among their engineering students. This meets the needs of the firms who are looking to hire engineers who can not only design and build, but also work in teams and communicate effectively with co-workers. When asked about scholarships, Dr. Jadaan told the group that above and beyond accepting state scholarships like Bright Futures, the college also offers specialized scholarships for local students seeking to continue their Engineering education at UNF. All the student needs to do is reach out to the college to learn more about potential opportunities. Next, the

students heard from a College of Engineering advisor, who discussed the courses students would take in the program and answered student questions about the which courses to take in high school in order to be best prepared for college.

Next, the students got to tour the Engineering School to visit several of their featured labs. They met with a Mechanical Engineering professor, an Electrical Engineering professor, a Civil Engineering professor, and a professor in the Advanced Manufacturing lab. Students got to learn a little more about each program, see student projects, and ask questions. The tour was truly eye-opening, and the students really got a feel for the opportunities provided by the University of North Florida's Engineering majors. We thank Dr. Jadaan for inviting our students to tour the school and learn more!



FULL SAIL UNIVERSITY BRINGS HIGH-TECH TOYS TO NEASE

On October 26th and 27th, Communications Academy students were invited to take part in a unique opportunity, when Full Sail University brought their mobile experience bus to Nease's campus. All Digital Design and TV Production students were invited to



tour the Full Sail Bus, which was packed with the latest video game, design, film and audio equipment. Full Sail representatives met with the students to talk about majors featured by the college, and then let Academy our students get hands-on with all the equipment on the truck. Students got to mix audio tracks, control cameras, play Oculus games, and compete head-to-head in video game challenges.



HOSPITALITY ACADEMY STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT HERITAGE TOURISM AT CASTILLO DE SAN MARCOS

On a blustery November day, Introduction to Hospitality and Tourism students spent their morning on site at the Castillo de San Marcos, with National Parks Ranger Amelia Vela. Mrs. Vela, who has been stationed at the Castillo for several years, took the students on a tour unlike any other. Instead of the usual historical tour of the Castillo, students learned about the fort's part in St. Augustine history as a tourist destination. On a tour of the exterior of the site, students learned about the many people involved in the maintenance,



upkeep, reinvention and daily operation of the Castillo. Students were able to get insight into the creation of the exhibits featured and the tourism changes forced by the COVID-19 pandemic (total shutdown, then reduced capacity which also meant a 50% reduction in revenue to keep the fort going). As it is an intriguing historical site, the students were also able to ask Mrs. Vela historical questions about the Castillo, and got lots of background information, unknown details, and even had some ghost stories debunked thanks to her wealth of knowledge.



NEASE GRAD SHARES HIS WILD RIDE THROUGH THEME PARK CAREERS



While Universal Studios theme parks are a vacation destination to most people...for Nease graduate Case Scherer, it's just another day at the office. Case, a class of 2014 grad, visited Nease to share his story with both Academy of Hospitality & Tourism juniors and seniors and Stellar Academy of Engineering students. As a guest speaker, he has the distinction of straddling two worlds which don't collide all that often: Hospitality and Engineering. Case has always loved theme parks. After graduating from Nease, he started his college career at the University of Central Florida, studying engineering. He also got a part-time job at Universal, working as a ride attendant on the Kong ride. He then moved up to the opening team for Hagrid's Motorbike Adventure and watched as that ride was built from the ground up. But, right before that

ride opened, Case earned an internship with Universal Studios industrial engineering department...bringing his interest and experience in engineering together with his love of the parks. He spent over a year in the role, working on various projects within different departments and getting a look at the life of an industrial engineer. He headed up research studies and crunched numbers, he helped advise on Halloween Horror Nights haunted house guest efficiency, and exercised the skills he learned in college. But, when COVID hit, his internship was shut down, and he headed back into the world of attractions. He realized that this was his true love: utilizing so many of the skills he had learned within his industrial engineering training, but taking them into the hospitality realm. Now, Case works as an entertainment coordinator during Halloween Horror Nights, and sees a future in attraction management. The Academy students were fascinated to hear about his professional journey and had the chance to ask Case questions about not only his engineering education at UCF and his thoughts on completing the IB program while at Nease, but also enjoyed some behind-the-scenes stories and information from a theme park insider. We thank Case for coming back to Nease to share his story with our students!



ENGINEERING GUEST SPEAKERS BRING THEIR EXPERTISE INTO THE CLASSROOM

One of the missions of the Stellar Academy of Engineering is to expose students to a variety of potential engineering fields. Recently, the Academy welcomed two engineers into our Intro to Engineering classes to share their professional backgrounds, and answer student questions. Aerospace Engineer Alexis Alexandris joined us in the morning to discuss her job as an engineer working on F/A-18 Super Hornets at the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast. A Nease graduate, Mrs. Alexandris studied Aerospace Engineering at North Carolina State before being hired by the Department of Defense. After working at a base in North Carolina, she got a job back in Jacksonville and has loved her experience working on aircraft. In one of the stories she shared, she was flown via "Fat Albert" from Jacksonville to Pensacola, along with two other engineers and aircraft artisans, in order to do an emergency repair on a Blue Angel aircraft before it was scheduled to take part in the first-ever Delta formation flyover of the Army-Navy game. She also shared that in addition to working with other aerospace engineers, her job has her interacting with mechanical, materials, and chemical engineers often.



In the afternoon, another Nease graduate, Andrew Stricklin, joined us to share his experience as a Biomedical engineer. After his time at Nease, Mr. Stricklin studied biomedical engineering at the University of Florida before getting a job back in Jacksonville at KLS Martin. He shared that the company has been focused on designing and manufacturing devices for "neck-up surgeries." He designs items which are used for facial/cranial reconstruction or repairs, for use in patients from day-old babies to full-grown adults. Mr. Stricklin shared the process by which the items are designed after meetings with surgeons, and then how the items are manufactured in-house via a variety of methods. He also brought in some items for the students to pass around so they could get a closer look. Students were able to ask questions on why Mr. Stricklin was drawn to biomedical engineering, a fairly new program at UF, and what he does daily. Mr. Stricklin encouraged the students to learn about multiple types of engineering disciplines, and shared that most engineering programs have common pre-requisite courses before a student starts specializing, so there are opportunities to change paths if there's another discipline they feel a deeper interest in pursuing.

ACADEMY STUDENTS TAKE PART IN "TRACK OR TREAT" COMMUNITY EVENT



Nease's Career Academies offer more than just specialized classes, they also bring Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) onto campus. These clubs offer a chance for students to use what they're learning in class and apply it to other aspects of their lives through extracurricular activities. In the case of Nease's "Track or Treat" event, Academy students involved in CTOS like DECA, along with more than a dozen other clubs and organizations, including the National Technical Honor Society and the Nease Transportation Technology club, showed their school spirit by getting into the Halloween spirit. The event, hosted by Nease students, invited families from the community to bring their children to a fun Halloween event where kids got to play games and collect candy. All students, both young and old, had a great time while bringing the community together for a fun evening! A huge thank you to Academy teachers and club sponsors Mrs. Amato, Mrs. Soto, and Mr. Beale for getting their groups involved!



INTENT TO RETURN PROCESS IS COMING UP IN DECEMBER



In December, all Academy students will be asked to indicate if they want to remain in their Academy for the 2022-23 school year by signing an Intent to Return roster. If the student checks "Yes," then that student will be automatically re-enrolled in the Academy for 2022-23. The student will also receive a recommendation to move on to the next level Academy course, as long as he/she is meeting Academy requirements. Academy requirements include maintaining at least a 70% grade in his/her Academy course as well as a maintaining a minimum 2.0 overall unweighted GPA. Students must also sustain a good behavioral record.

If an Academy student checks "No" on the roster to indicate that he/she does not want to continue in the Academy next year, a Program of Choice Drop Form will be sent home for the student and a parent to sign after winter break, confirming that the student would like to be removed from the Academy for the 2022-23 school year.

Students who will be zoned for High School III in 2022-23 but are returning Nease Academy students can remain at Nease. These students will then be designated as out-of-zone Academy students. The St. Johns County School District does not generally provide transportation to students attending an out-of-zone school, however the district did decide to offer transportation to Academy students who were zoned Nease, and then Toco Creek, when it opened in August 2021. So, it is possible that the district may allow Academy students who are zoned for High School III to apply for a transportation waiver to continue being able to ride a school bus to Nease, but we have not gotten confirmation of that at this point. Families should consider that they may have to provide transportation for Nease Academy students zoned for High School III.

If you have any questions about the Intent to Return process, please reach out to Academy Coordinator Jaime Combs at Jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us

