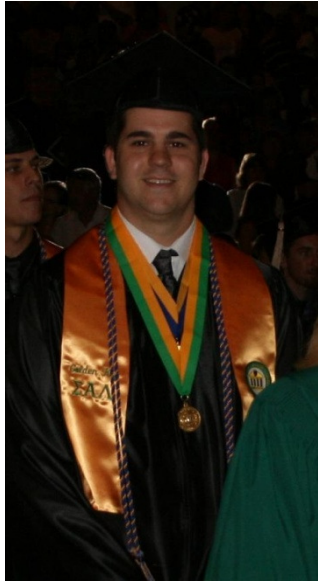


For Immediate Release
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USF Sarasota-Manatee student accepted into NASA internship program

SARASOTA, FL (May 6, 2009) – Jessie Jones, 23, received his bachelor’s of science in Information Technology from the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee on Sunday, May 3. Next stop—the Kennedy Space Center.

Jones, a North Port and recent Sarasota resident, was recently selected from over 100 applicants to do an internship through NASA’s Space and Aeronautics Internship Program. The program will run June through August and pay a stipend of \$4,000. Each intern is paired with a mentor at NASA who will designate an individual project that the intern will work on the majority of the program. Jones will find out his project during the first week, at orientation.

“Jessie is a pro-active and self-learner,” said Sunita Ludwig, Information Technology Faculty member at USF Sarasota-Manatee who taught Jones in several courses. “He enjoys a challenge, gets on board running, and sees things through to completion, and he’s going to do a great job.”

The Space & Aeronautics Internship Program (SAIP) is an intern placement program that recruits high quality students attending Florida universities for internships at the Kennedy Space Center.

“The point of the program is to help students potentially start off their careers and recruit new hires,” said Brendan Gannon, program coordinator for the Florida Space Grant Consortium, who sponsors the internships. “We want to keep high quality students in the high tech industries working in the state of Florida.”

Jones should fit right in with the “rocket scientists.” He graduated Summa Cum Laude from USF Sarasota-Manatee with a 3.97 grade point average. Humble about his honors, he attributes his success to the recommendation letters sent by his professors and advisors and hopes to be offered a full time position at NASA when the internship is over.

“It’s sort of a recruitment effort, so hopefully if I do well they’ll offer me a job,” he said. “Just getting the work experience is great. In this economy it’s amazing to get any kind of job, never mind getting to work for NASA.”

For more information about the NASA internship program, visit www.spaceflorida.gov/saip.php.

For more information about USF Sarasota-Manatee, visit www.sarasota.usf.edu.

USF Sarasota-Manatee is an upper-level campus for those with an associate's or bachelor's degree interested in pursuing a baccalaureate or master's degree, professional certification, or continuing education credit. The regional campus offers the prestige of a nationally ranked research university with the convenience of a hometown campus, including classes in south Sarasota County at Manatee Community College Venice.