

# LEADERSHIP HAS



GRAPHIC • MONICA WIERUSZESKO

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## Leadership has benefits.

This fall, those benefits grew significantly for some student leaders at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

In early August, the student senate approved five housing stipends designated for "student leaders." The vote was 7-0. The stipends will pay the full cost of living in the residence hall, approximately \$5,600 per student.

Dr. Kent Kelso, regional vice chancellor for student affairs, appealed to the senate to authorize the stipends and will select the recipients at his discretion.

Funding for the awards, which will cost about \$28,000 per year, comes from the student activities and service fees, included in the tuition of all USF St. Petersburg students.

The student government president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary, as well as the Harborside Activities Board president, were all offered stipends for the 2007-2008 school year.

Student government president Christian Bockler and vice president David Stote accepted stipends. The other three recipients have yet to claim theirs. If they decline, Kelso will consider other student leaders.

The stipends were proposed to raise the compensation of student leaders to the level of their responsibility, accountability and expectations, Kelso said.

"For the amount of hours they work and their level of responsibility, they are compensated in an insignificant way," he said. "They could basically make more money working at McDonald's"

Buckler receives \$8 per hour for 15 hours of work each week. He said he regularly puts in 30 to 40 hours each week.

The vice president and secretary make \$75 per week and the treasurer receives \$77.50.

The total compensation package for the student body president on the Tampa campus is around \$20,000 per year, Kelso said.

Kelso also said having student leaders on campus will help facilitate the transition of USF St. Petersburg from a commuter campus to a more traditional, campus-oriented environment.

"There is a significant need for student

leaders to be available, accessible and visible on campus," he said. "The housing stipends make it easier to have them here."

Kelso said he often needs to find student leaders on short notice and he finds them more easily if he knows where they are. "All I have to do is call Akins (the residence hall director) and have him knock on their door if I need them," he said.

It also makes student leaders more available to students and keeps them engaged in what is happening on campus, Kelso said.

"How can you expect leaders to plan things for the campus if they are not on campus?" Kelso said.

Buckler said that living in the residence hall makes him a more effective student leader.

"I can't even put it into words; it helps so much," said the student government president. "I never imagined how much more I could do living on campus."

Buckler said without the stipend, he could not afford to live in the residence hall.

Florida statutes require student government to control revenues generated from activities and service fees at state universi-

ties. Student fees amount to about \$880,000 at USF St. Petersburg.

Kelso said Florida is one of the few states that give students complete control over student fees. In most states the administration allocates those funds with student input.

Kelso proposed and lobbied for the stipends, but it was up to the senate to approve the awards.

No senator was offered a stipend.

While some may question the propriety of the student senate approving a stipend that directly benefits student leaders, Dr. Deni Elliott said compensation for leadership is not unusual and leaders must authorize compensation for themselves because there is no other legitimate body to do it. Elliott serves as professor in the mass communication department at USF St. Petersburg and specializes in practical ethics.

Student government should be a model for democracy, Elliott said, and students need to be aware of what their government is doing in their name.

"We want things to be aboveboard and transparent," she said.