Pink Flamingos Flock UITS

Throughout our buildings you are sure to come across hundreds of decorative paper flamingos, hung on doorways, pinned to bulletin boards, or adorning desks and cubicles. What’s with all the birds, you might ask? In support of this year’s UA Cares Campaign, Sandy Guntner and Troy Villasenor, UITS UA Cares Coordinators, hatched the plan to sell pink flamingos as a lighthearted way to raise important funds. Inspired from the popular “flamingo flocking” method of fundraising, in which friends’ yards are overrun with obnoxious plastic flamingos, the UITS twist is to clutter friends’ cubicles or offices with the pink birds which are each brightly and uniquely decorated with feathers, fluff, and various art materials. Sandy says it is a fun idea.

UofA Downtown Campus

In the heart of downtown Tucson, stands the distinctive Roy Place Building, a structure which is not only named in honor of Tucson’s most notable architect, but now also boasts the University’s most recent expansion. The UA Downtown facility is a professional work and study environment for faculty, staff, and students of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA), as well as for those from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Offering two spacious classrooms, UA Downtown is the product of effective teamwork and renovation.

While the focus on the cosmetic end of the fixes concluded with positive results, the task of converting an older retail building concludes with positive results, the task of converting an older retail building MORE pg 4

Sandy Gutner, UA Cares Coordinator, displays some of the brightly decorated flamingos

Ron Landis, Classroom Technology Services Media Services Manager inspects a new display
UIT’S Jimmy Ferng
Volunteers with Chinese Dance Company

Mesmerizing, athletic, and inspirational: all words to describe the world tour put on by Shen Yun, a world-class performing arts company. Audiences watching Shen Yun’s performance experience ancient Chinese culture portrayed through dance, music, and 3-dimensional backgrounds. It can be so impressive that some first time viewers, such as Jimmy Ferng, have been compelled to volunteer to help Shen Yun attract a broader audience. Jimmy first saw Shen Yun three years ago; the cultural values woven throughout the show reminded him of early life in his native country, Taiwan. Jimmy originally emigrated to the US from Taiwan to pursue his education. Starting as a UA graduate student, he worked his way up into the position he now holds in High Performance Computing.

"Everything seemed to come naturally," he says, "I did not have any problem adapting myself to the friendly working environment and the society here." However, he missed the traditional values that he learned in Taiwan. This is why each year Jimmy takes his two children to see Shen Yun. Jimmy says, "sometimes these values aren’t taught in school and people can learn about the Chinese traditions from this show."

Shen Yun has worked to put on a production that revives five thousand years of classical Chinese culture. Annually they embark on a world tour. For each tour, Shen Yun creates an entirely new production featuring original orchestral compositions, classical Chinese dance, extravagant costumes, and digital backdrops. Jimmy believes that the visual arts as well as the deeper message within the show are not to be missed. He says that it is inspiring and will be the experience of a lifetime.

Shen Yun will be performing in a few months at the ASU Gammage Theater. They will offer three performances on January 27, 28, and 29th. The cultures and values in Shen Yun are extremely important to Jimmy and he wants to share them with as many people as possible. He will be making a trip to Tempe with a group of coworkers to see Shen Yun and encourages others to experience the Chinese culture. If you would like to join Jimmy contact him at ferng@email.arizona.edu.

While these shows feature historical events and lessons from Chinese culture, they are suitable for both Chinese and English speaking audiences and many of the values are common worldwide. Jimmy says that people of all ages will take something away from this show. He tells us that Shen Yun can be food for the soul; in fact the first time he saw Shen Yun he says he left “feeling good inside and hopefully others will too.”


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as “there are a lot of jokers around in the building and,” she adds, “they’re the ones buying the flamingos to liven up the cubicles.”

Employees are encouraged to engage in a little mischief in tagging friends with a flamingo, or even to compete in who can acquire the greatest workspace flock! “Aren’t they fun? I have them stashed,” one employee discloses, “I’m going to tag my team members!” The sale runs now through November 23rd. All proceeds raised from the $2 purchase of these bright little birds will go to the United Way in the interest of bettering Tucson communities. With the UA Cares Campaign in full gear and sights set high for exceeding last year’s giving, Sandy is pleased to say that sales are doing very well and as of this week, 197 flamingos have been sold, raising $394 so far.

Even at this month’s Geeks Gather and Gab (G3), employees continued to respond generously, buying and decorating flamingos. Anonymous matching donors meant purchasers at G3 got 2-for-1 for their donations. Other flamingo activities included an opportunity for employees to correctly guess the number of plastic flamingos in a jar—an event won by Marketing Specialist Lisa Stage who guessed the closest at 175, from the actual 176. Lisa says she will “reinvest her winnings in more flamingos.”

Later this month, you are encouraged to enjoy the Pink Flamingo bake sale, on Friday, November 18. Please help us reach our goal of $600! Making a colorful impact on both the workplace and the community—now, what can be better than that?
OSCR's Amazing Race

Every semester, students are hired by the Office of Student Computing Resources (OSCR) as staff for the general computing labs, multimedia labs, and Gear-to-Go Center, and every semester OSCR holds Staff Days to train the new employees and bring returning student staff up to date.

This year OSCR's Operations Team Lead, Karina McCune, decided she wanted to do something different to make the Fall Staff Days more engaging for the students—she hit on the idea of having a day following the format of the TV show The Amazing Race. “We didn’t want to do anything that could be done through an online tutorial,” she says. “Staff Days is an opportunity to get student staff working together. And it’s a good time to learn things that really need to be hands-on.” Multimedia Tech Specialist Gregory Anderson adds, “We needed an intense learning experience that doesn’t feel like learning.”

The first day of Staff Days, staff planned to introduce students efficiently to basic things everyone would need to know, like customer service expectations, working with dual-boot computers, and iMovie and Photoshop basics. The second day was reserved for the Amazing Race.

McCune and Anderson developed the race activities with the assistance of Operations Leads, student workers who help oversee student lab staff. They invented challenge tasks representative of work in the labs, such as logging in to the time clock, setting up projectors, working with PowerPoint, and arming and disarming the lab security system. Then they assigned tasks to locations and participated in dry runs to test the race.

The organizers drew up nine teams of three people each, not including anyone who had worked on the race development. Each team had at least one returning student so that experienced staff could work with new hires. The teams were named after various apes, inspired by the recent Rise of the Planet of the Apes movie.

The Friday before the semester start the race was on. Students developed ties with their cohorts, learned hands-on tasks, and got a tour of all OSCR's locations—everything McCune was hoping to accomplish. They also had a great time. McCune says the feedback from this year’s Staff Days was the most positive it has ever been and returning staff especially noted their approval of the new format.

One unique participant in the race was Mike Clancy, OSCR’s newly-hired manager to oversee OSCR—in fact he was so new, he drove in from Fort Lauderdale, FL on Thursday to participate in the Amazing Race on Friday. He says, “The Amazing Race was an amazing experience, as an introduction to the University and to OSCR. I really appreciated the opportunity to see the things student staff see and experience what they experience. So often a manager doesn’t know what the day-to-day work is for the staff.”

The race ended in the Games Room in the Student Union cellar, where everyone was given tokens to have fun. Three of the nine teams successfully completed all the tasks. A judges panel of two career staff and one student worker calculated the fastest times in order to award prizes to the winners: remote control helicopters for the first place team, thumbdrives for second place, and earbuds for third place.

Coming off the most successful Staff Days ever, McCune and Anderson are worried about just one thing—how to top the experience next semester.
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formerly a Walgreens drug store, into a technologically up-to-date learning space was a challenge for the team from the Classroom Technology Services (CTS).

The UITS team, consisting of Media Services Manager, Ron Landis, John Owen, the Sr. Network Technician, Richard Brindamour, the Instructional Specialist Coordinator, and Timothy Kelch, Sr. Instructional Specialist, worked together to provide classroom technology support and to ensure that projectors and accompanying audiovisual (AV) equipment was installed and in working order.

What makes this project a bit more challenging than the usual was the tight deadline for making the building’s transition, from retail into education, run smoothly. The biggest challenge for CTS was to have UA Downtown completed just in time for fall courses. “Normally,” says Landis, “the AV equipment is the last thing to be done, so in this renovation, you had to be ready to roll as soon as everyone was out of the way.” To achieve this, the team worked quickly and first evaluated the building to determine where power and data ports were needed. Next, they specified the equipment required that could be delivered in time for the project. Finally, the installation proved interesting, considering the approximate four mile round-trip from UA Downtown to Main Campus made it an absolute priority to double-check every tool and material necessary for the job! Ron addressed this head-on: “We made a list and checked it thoroughly because it was off-campus. We also had two techs down there and if they needed anything out of the ordinary, they could radio me.”

Aside from the off-campus location, even the older building’s architecture proved challenging, as an unusually low ceiling in one classroom prevented them from installing the classroom video projector and screen. This hurdle was addressed with their decision to install a huge flat-screen monitor as a suitable alternative. “We ordered a 70” LCD panel,” he says, “because of how many people would be looking at it in that area, a regular projector screen would have been too low. It worked out well,” adds Landis.

Ultimately, the project’s original aim of having two fully equipped classrooms has proven successful as plans continue for an additional upstairs room in the future. Until then, a big thanks to the CTS team and their unique approach to the technology installation just in time for current classes, as UA Downtown can continue to confidently open its doors to eager students for semesters to come.

Gear-to-Go Refresh

The Office of Student Computing Resources (OSCR) Gear-to-Go Center is increasingly popular. Students, faculty, and staff can check out cameras and audio equipment for free, and demand can be high.

Fortunately OSCR has regularly scheduled refreshes to keep its equipment up to date, and this summer was able to purchase new gear. Since the old equipment was still in excellent working order, the additional gear expands Gear-to-Go’s offerings and will help ensure equipment is available during peak use times, such as before semester final projects are due.

When preparing to order, OSCR took into account client input on what type of new equipment they wanted to see more of. The responses included more camcorders, more cameras that filmed in HD, a variety of microphones, and more tripods. The last item, especially, was something Gear-to-Go ran out of frequently, and they’ve now ensured that there will be enough tripods for people checking out cameras.

Equipment added during Gear-to-Go’s refresh includes:

- 10 Canon Eos Rebel T3i cameras, a single lens reflex camera for still shots which also takes high-definition video
- 5 Canon HV40 camcorders
- 10 Zoom H2 audio recorders, which have some stereo and surround sound capability
- 5 Beyer condenser mics
- 4 Rode shotgun mics
- 5 wired lapel mics
- 23 more tripods

Multimedia Tech Specialist Gregory Anderson says, “We chose the equipment we thought would provide the best quality output for the best price. We later showed our order list to people from the Media Arts department and they were really impressed with our choices. That reassured us we made the right purchases.”

Students wanting to check out gear must get an instructor sponsorship each semester; faculty, GTAs, TAs, and staff are be able to self-sponsor. More information on equipment and policies is available at oscr.arizona.edu/gear.