

**Software Technologies Distinguished Lecture Series 2011  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
Academic 7 – Auditorium 114  
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**From FGCU to NASA:  
A Graduate's Journey to Becoming a Software Engineer**

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*Abstract.* What does a typical day in the life of a recently graduated FGCU student working at NASA look like? It begins at 8:00am with to-do lists, meetings, returning emails, and phone messages. By 11:00am it involves pouring through code and designing testing scenarios and procedures. Finally, around 3:00pm it involves defining RDL (Record Definition Language) files and reviewing lengthy documents. It is important to realize what one is getting himself/herself into when choosing or finishing a degree. In my case, I have found that I am good at what I do and find it rewarding, but this is not the case with all graduates. Rather than focusing on testing aspect, this discussion will focus on the following topics: Why become a software engineer? Pros/Cons. How did I get here? What do I do? How did FGCU help me? How else could I have prepared? How do I keep advancing through my profession?

*Speaker's Bio.* Jaime Zabala graduated Magna Cum Laude from Florida Gulf Coast University in May of 2010 with a BS in Computer Science, Concentration in Software Engineering, and Minor in Business Management. During his time at FGCU he worked in the School of Engineering as a lab monitor, teacher's assistant, and project developer. He also lead the 2009-2010 FGCU team participating in the Florida University Satellite (FunSat) Competition as well as designed and implemented systems using RFID, robotic arms, robotic wheelchairs, and embedded servers. He began working for Vantage Systems, Inc. at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center only a week after graduation on the Magnetospheric MultiScale (MMS) Project. He is currently performing unit testing and build verification testing on the Interface Manager of the satellites Flight Software. Prominent future goal is a Masters in Computer Science from John Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab.