

May 2013**Volume 1, Issue 1****Special points of interest from our first issue:**

- Graduation and Internship announcements!
- Who are our students?
- Get involved in SPSA and program-related events!

Inside this issue:

Special Introduction	1
Join us in Hawaii!	1
End-of-the-Year Luncheon	2
Graduation Spring 2013	3
Job/Internship Updates	3
Welcome New Students!	4
Words of Wisdom	5
Alumni Spotlight	6
Graduate Student Wellness	6
What is SPSA?	7
Announcements	7

Special Introduction: Our First Newsletter**By: Andy Pham**

I am very pleased to announce the first issue of the FIU School Psychology/SPSA's official newsletter! I hope this newsletter will become an important (yet fun!) medium for communicating events, interests, and other happenings within the School Psychology program and profession. With our program director, Dr. Phil Lazarus, and faculty member, Dr. Martha Pelaez, our students have had a busy and eventful year as we celebrate internships, presentations at research conferences, end-of-the-year luncheon, and our spring commencement to honor our graduates. The student organization, the School Psychology Student Association (SPSA), has worked diligently this past year. Some of their achievements include obtaining funding through the Council of Student Organizations, participating in the *Autism Speaks* Walk in April, and presenting in undergraduate classrooms on school psychology during our national School Psychology Awareness week last November.

The faculty also have been productive

this past year. This is our first year since Dr. Lazarus returned from his year as being president of the National Association of School Psychologists, that all three of the core faculty have come together. In addition to the newsletter, other achievements and projects we are working on include (i) coordinating weekly field practicum at the Center for Children and Families, as well as Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Broward County Public Schools, (ii) applying for NASP program approval, in which we plan on submitting the application in the very near future, and (iii) students presenting at APA and NASP conferences this year. Although we are entering the summer semester, I am very proud to be part of the school psychology community since I started at FIU in August 2011, and I am already very much looking forward to the start of the 2012-2013 school year (after a bit of vacation of course!).

Join us in Hawaii!

Aloha! We are excited to have FIU school psychology students at the APA annual convention as they present their research and enjoy the beaches in Honolulu, Hawaii, July 31–August 3, 2013. Congratulations to Edil Deleon, Tiffany Griffin, and Alexandra Riviere who will be presenting there this summer!

End-of-the-Year Luncheon!

Every year, the School Psychology program hosts a traditional luncheon at Perricone's in downtown Miami recognizing interns and students for their hard work and commitment to the program. With friends, family, significant others, and wonderful food, it is a great time to relax and celebrate the end of the semester. Special congratulations to our interns: Yosy Gallo, Rita Diaz, Nicole Mancini, Shamika Patton, and James Stuckey for completing the program! Each intern received a goodie bag filled with basic school psychology essentials (e.g., clipboards, notebooks) as they start their new careers. We can't wait to see what fantastic things they will accomplish!



Our group of interns



Yosy holding the Del Valle Award Plaque

Congratulations to Yosy Gallo for being awarded the Patti Del Valle Humanitarian Award! This award is given annually to one Florida International University's school psychology student or intern, nominated by peers, and who resembles Dr. Del Valle in that they demonstrate compassion, empathy, and warmth to everyone they encounter.

"Yoselin is a warm and kind person. It does not matter how busy she is, Yoselin always takes time to help others".



Graduation Spring 2013



Job/Internship Updates

Congratulations to everyone who were able obtain an internship or job position. We are all very proud of your accomplishments!

Off to Internship!

Tara Barron—Miami Dade County Public Schools

Martha Carias—Miami Dade County Public Schools

Edil Deleon—Broward County Public Schools

Katherine Fajardo—Miami Dade County Public Schools

Sheree Hazle—Palm Beach School District

Alexandra Perez—Miami Dade County Public Schools

Got a Job!

Rita Diaz —School Psychologist at Hanford School District, CA

Nicole Mancini— Guidance Counselor at American Heritage, FL



Welcome New Students!

We are pleased to welcome our new students who will be joining us this Summer/Fall 2013!

Rose Gourdet

My name is Rose Gourdet, and I recently completed my B.S. in Special Education at Miami Dade College.

Fun Fact: I like to travel and collect owls. I have an Owl shelf at my house where I stack all of my owls. About 90% of the owls I've collected have all come from different states within the U.S. or places I've traveled to. Owls remind me of myself; very observant and nocturnal: two qualities to complete the School Psychology program. :)



Vanessa Sitterberg

I graduated from Florida Atlantic University with Bachelor's Degrees in Psychology and Criminology. I am originally from Germany and continue to speak fluent German. I have been a Nanny for two children for six years now and look forward to meshing these experiences with future experiences as a School Psychologist.

Widline Pierre

My name is Widline Pierre and I am a young proud Haitian-American woman. I am currently working as an ESOL Guidance Counselor and also a Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern. My legacy is to influence others in many positive ways that they will not forget especially children and adolescence. I am very humble when it comes to helping others in my field. I find true happiness when I help others especially seeing a child reaching his or her full potential. I enjoy helping at my church, I have a great sense of humor, down to earth, love dancing, watching old movies like The 12 Angry Men or anything with Danielle Steel or Catherine Cookson. Lastly, one of my favorite author and psychiatrist once said "The point is not what we expect from life, but rather what life expects from us." By Viktor Frankl. I am excited and looking forward to a new experience at FIU.



Welcome New Students! (cont.)



Talia Boxman

Talia Boxman received her B.S. in Psychology from the University of Central Florida. During her undergraduate studies, she also spent a year in Israel studying and volunteering her time. Talia is very excited to begin the School Psychology program at Florida International University and is looking forward to meeting all of her new professors and classmates. In her free time, Talia trains as an aerial gymnast/acrobat and especially loves spending time with her family.

Annela Costa

Hi everyone! My name is Annela Costa and I am excited to be starting this fall in the school psychology program at FIU. I graduated this summer from Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, Fl. with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Minor in Education. I have lived in Fort Myers for eight or so years but I am a Miami native. In my free time, I enjoy writing and spending time with my growing family. From this program, I hope to grow as a student and as a professional as I work towards my educational and professional goals.



Not Pictured: Rossaelyn Castano, Nathaly Ossa, Jonathan Hershkowitz

Words of Wisdom

Our current students were able to share some tips and suggestions on how to get through their first year in the School Psychology Program:

"Don't be afraid to lean on each other and learn together as a team with your fellow classmates. It will not only enhance your learning experiences and relationships but it will help keep you sane."
- Tiffany G.

"It is important to make connections either personally or professionally with institutions that work with children. You will be required THROUGHOUT your career to have access to kids and families for various activities each semester." - Tiffany G.

"My main advice would be creating time management skills. I think it's really helpful to write down due dates for all major assignments in an agenda at the beginning of the semester. If there are weeks where anything isn't due, take that time to get ahead on an upcoming assignment so that everything does not pile up near the end of the semester. Also, if the new students begin to feel overwhelmed, they shouldn't be afraid to reach out to someone regarding how they are feeling. Don't be afraid to ask for help from the professors either if something does not click right away. I'm sure anyone from our cohort would be willing to talk the new students through stressful moments. Really, I just think time management and eliminating procrastination as much as possible will provide for the smoothest first semester. Hope that helps!" - Lindsay P.

Alumni Spotlight



**Sandra Olsen, Ed.S.
Support Specialist
FIU Center for Children and Families**

I am currently a clinician at the FIU Center for Children and Families. I am working on a clinical research trial that evaluates a summer preparatory program for rising sixth and ninth grade students with ADHD to promote healthy transitions to new secondary school environments. Some of my responsibilities include; completing full battery assessments on incoming students, serving as a clinical supervisor for the summer treatment program for adolescents, conducting parent trainings to help manage academic and behavioral concerns in the home setting, and serving as a consultant to provide academic and behavioral support services at schools within MDCPS. I feel fortunate to have found an opportunity where I am utilizing many of the skills I learned in the FIU School Psychology Program. My tips for incoming

School Psychology students: gain as much related experience as possible prior to applying for internship, attend FASP and NASP conferences to learn, present, and network; cherish the friendships you make with fellow students, and don't forget to ENJOY being a graduate student before entering the field as a school psychologist!

Graduate School Wellness: A Reflection

By: Andy Pham

When I started the School Psychology program as a graduate student almost a decade ago, I remember one of my fellow student mentors said to me, "Graduate school is a stressful time for everyone, and at some point during our graduate school career, every one of us had cried." Being able to balance your time with coursework, research papers, practica, while thinking about whether you'll get a job after graduation, can cause worry and apprehension for many. Although discouraging, I never cried when I was in graduate school, (not because I am male), but I do believe that there are healthy ways to handle stress and to keep your sanity as a graduate student. One of my favorite quotes that my mentor, John Carlson, would impart to us was: "*Disequilibrium equals growth.*" In other words, if we experience an uncomfortable challenge, then our discomfort is a catalyst for emotional or intellectual growth. That has helped me

to see a different perspective of the pressures of graduate school, whether my advisor expressed disappointment in me for not submitting a research proposal on time, or if I did not attain an error-free WISC-IV protocol for my cognitive assessment class. However, in retrospect, all of these seemingly negative experiences have helped me to become a better researcher, practitioner, and educator. It was well worth it.

What also helps is to find humor in things, particularly in graduate school. If you have not done so, I would encourage each of you to read once a week some of the comic strips of Jorge Cham, Ph.D. at <http://www.phdcomics.com/comics>. It is amazing how reading one of his comics reflects accurately the life of a graduate student humorously!

What is SPSA?

Congratulations to the new Executive Committee Chairs for 2013-2014!

President: Tiffany Griffin
(tlogriff@fiu.edu)

Vice President: Sean Pascale
(seanpascale@yahoo.com)

Secretary: Diana Arce
(dmore002@fiu.edu)

Treasurer: Glanel Reyes
(greye037@fiu.edu)

Community Service: Alicia Boland
(abola002@fiu.edu)

Special Projects: Lindsay Piontkowski
(lpion001@fiu.edu)

Social: Nicole Diaz
(ndiaz007@fiu.edu)

Faculty Advisor: Phil Lazarus
(philaz1@aol.com)

FIU's School Psychology Student Association (SPSA) is a student organization which seeks to build community and provide resources for students in school psychology. The goal of this organization is to provide opportunities for connections between other members of SPSA, other universities, and the community. SPSA is a great way to meet your fellow students, ask questions, and get answers. There are many opportunities to become involved with leadership and service. In addition, we have committees for community outreach, student support, diversity, newsletter, fundraising, and social activities. Most importantly, SPSA members manage to have a lot fun! If you are interested in becoming part of our organization, please contact any of the committee chairpersons via email.

We have a Listserve!

Email Dr. Andy Pham, for more information on how to get on our program listserve

Announcements

The NASP 2014 Annual Convention Call for Presentation Proposals is Open!

If you are interested in submitting a proposal, more information can be found here: <http://www.nasponline.org/conventions/2014/call-for-presentations.aspx>.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Wednesday, June 12, 2013
(noon and 6pm)**

Pearson Assessments will be holding two presentations at Nova Southeastern University on using the Q-Interactive (e.g., iPads) for school psychology assessment instruments. All students are encouraged to attend!

Please contact Dr. Andy Pham (avpham@fiu.edu) for more information.

SPSA and School Psychology faculty will hold an orientation/welcoming for new students before the Fall semester. We will email you with more information!

**HAVE A SAFE AND
HAPPY SUMMER!**

SEE YOU IN THE FALL!