

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2021



INSIDE THE ISSUE

MESSAGE FROM SPSA PRESIDENT	4
FACULTY AND STUDENT PUBLICATIONS	5-6
FACULTY AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS	7
SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER	8
FASP CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS	10
NASP CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS	11
STUDENT LEADERS & AWARDS	12
2021-2022 STUDENT E-BOARD	13
DR. KELLINA LUPAS- SPSA FACULTY ADVISOR	14
SPSA COMMITTEES	15
SPSA EVENTS	16
GRADUATE, RESEARCH & TEACHING ASSISTANTS	18
FALL 2021 INTERNS	19
INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE	20-22
MEET THE FIRST YEARS	24-26
CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES	28-29
2020-2021 LESSONS LEARNED	31
STUDENT LIFE UPDATES	32
SPSA PETS	33



**PANTHER
TERRITORY**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello faculty & friends!

I can't believe it's already been a year! The challenges that 2020 and 2021 have brought us were beyond what any of us could have anticipated. Last summer, not only were we at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning, but we were also met with civil unrest that erupted following the murder of George Floyd (RIP <3).

In the face of these happenings, the executive board knew it was nonnegotiable to plan activities to keep everyone engaged and supported—even through our computer screens. We rose to the challenge and successfully coordinated events to connect with your peers through town halls, game nights, Nearpods discussions, professional

developments, social justice talks and guest speakers. I cannot thank Denisse Gonzalez (Vice President), Alexis Davis (Secretary), Manoela Suarez (Treasurer), and Eugenia Romero (CSO representative) enough for all the creativity, work and effort you all have poured into the SPSA & our program.

This year our program also continued to grow in the best way. We welcomed an incredible group of new faculty members who have supported us every step of the way, and a new cohort of students who have been determined and hardworking. We revived and developed new committees and saw student leaders arise in their roles as committee chairpersons.

Together, we've endured summer courses, sociopolitical tension, an election year, school psychology conference season, practicum experiences, being stripped of our spring break, and the myriad of physical and emotional challenges that come with living during a global pandemic. But most of all, this year has showed us that we do not need physical proximity in order to make deep connections. We've laughed, cried, studied, learned and made lifelong friends through the lens of our Zoom screens, while effortlessly accomplishing our goals despite the encounters that came our way.

As we continue to transition back to campus and some sense of normalcy, I know that the incoming executive board is passionate and more than capable of taking the SPSA to new heights. The SPSA e-board and I are honored and grateful to have served our program and field this year. We wish you all a safe and successful 2021 - 2022 academic year!

With love & light,
Renee Bastian, President

FACULTY & STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Dong, Q., Garcia, B., & Lazarus, P. J. (2020). Helping children in schools in the aftermath of intimate homicide suicide. *The School Psychologist*, 74(3), 14-27. <http://apadivision16.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/TSP-Fall-2020-compressed-1.pdf>

Griffith, S. F., Maynard, D. M., & Bagner, D. M. (2020) Barbadian teachers' identification of social-emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges in young children. *International Journal of School and Educational Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2020.1802377>

Lazarus, P. J. & Costa, A. (2021). Teaching emotional self-regulation to children and adolescents. In P. J. Lazarus, S. Suldo, & B. Doll (Eds.), *Fostering the emotional well-being of our youth: A school-based approach* (pp. 264-281). Oxford University Press.

Lazarus, P. J. & R. E. Cash (2021). We must be champions for the emotional well-being of our youth. In P. J. Lazarus, S. Suldo, & B. Doll (Eds.), *Fostering the emotional well-being of our youth: A school-based approach* (pp. 523-531). Oxford University Press

Lazarus, P. J. & Sulkowski, M. L. (2020). School psychology in the time of COVID-19. *Voices from the field. Communiqué*, 48(8), 1. & 23-25. <https://www.nasponline.org/publications/periodicals/communique/issues/volume-48-issue-8/school-psychology-in-the-time-of-covid-19-voices-from-the-field>

Lazarus, P. J., & Costa, A. (in press). Natural disaster response. In L. Theodore, M. Bray, & B. Bracken (Eds.). *Desk reference in school psychology*. Oxford University Press.

Lazarus, P. J., Crepeau-Hobson, F., Sievering, K. & Paine-Kennedy, C., (2021). Providing evidence-based supports to students in the aftermath of a crisis. In P. J. Lazarus, S. Suldo, & B. Doll (Eds.), *Fostering the emotional well-being of our youth: A school-based approach* (pp. 413-434). Oxford University Press.

Lazarus, P. J., Overstreet, S., & Rossen, E. (2021). Building a foundation for trauma-informed schools. In P. J. Lazarus, S. Suldo, & B. Doll (Eds.), *Fostering the emotional well-being of our youth: A school-based approach* (pp. 313-337). Oxford University Press.

Lazarus, P. J., Suldo, S. & Doll, B. Introduction: Are our youth all right? (2021). In P. J. Lazarus, S. Suldo, & B. Doll (Eds.), *Fostering the emotional well-being of our youth: A school-based approach* (pp. 1-19). Oxford University Press.

FACULTY & STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Lazarus, P. J., Suldo, S., & Doll, B. (Eds.). (2020). *Fostering the Emotional Well-being of Our Youth: A School-based Approach*. Oxford University Press.

Neimy, H., & Pelaez, M. (2020). Early interventions for infants at risk of autism spectrum disorder. In C. Drossel, T. Waltz, & A. Maragakis (Eds.), *Application of Behavior Analysis to Healthcare and Beyond* (pp. 1-52). New York: Springer.

Pelaez, M., & Novak, G. (2020). Returning to school: Separation problems and anxiety in the age of pandemics. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 13, 521-526. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-020-00467-2>

Pham, A. V., Lazarus, P., Costa, A., **Dong, Q., & Bastian, R.** (2020). Incorporating social justice advocacy and interdisciplinary collaborative training in the recruitment and retention of diverse graduate students. *Contemporary School Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-020-00322-9>

Sullivan, A. L., Pham, A. V., Nguyen, T., Weeks, M., & **Dong, Q.** (2021). Enfranchising socially marginalized students. In P. Lazarus, S. Suldo, and B. Doll (Eds.), *Fostering the Emotional Well-being of Our Youth: A School-based Approach*. Oxford University Press.



FACULTY & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Bastian, R., Dong, M., Lazarus, P., Pham, A. V., & Costa, A. (2020, November). Promising practices in recruitment and retention of diverse graduate students. Presented at the Florida Association of School Psychologists annual convention.

Bastian, R., Zavalía, M., & Pham, A.V. (2021, February). Pre-service education professionals' knowledge and perceptions about ADHD. Presented at the annual national convention of the National Association of School Psychologists.

Cumming, M., Pham, A. V., Poling, D., Qiu, Y., Daunic, A. P., Corbett, N., & Smith, S.W. (2021 April). A validation study of the BRIEF-2 among Kindergartners and first graders at-risk for behavior problems. Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting.

Dong, Q., Zavalía, M., Mavrakis, A., Lopez, J., Del Campo, A., & Pham, A. (2021, February). Cultural considerations in promoting social-emotional learning with K-12 students. Paper presented at the annual national convention of the National Association of School Psychologists.

Griffith, S. F., Hagan, M., Hart, K. C., & Bagner, D. M. (2021). Managing screen time for children with externalizing behavior: Low-income parents' experiences in a pilot intervention. The Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Child Development.

Lazarus, P. J., Crepeau-Hobson, F., Sievering, K., Kennedy-Paine, C., & Costa, A. (2020, November). Evidence-based elements of crisis intervention and 21 lessons learned. A poster session presented at the Florida Association of School Psychologists Virtual Convention.

Lazarus, P., **Dong, M., Bastian, R.,** Costa, A. & Pham, A. V. (2020, November). Sustaining a social justice committee in a school psychology program. Presented at the Florida Association of School Psychologists annual convention.

Pelaez, M., **Valle, E., Pelaez, R.,** & Neimy, H. (2021, July). Mothers' speech and maternal vocal imitation as reinforcers of infant vocalizations: A program of research. Women in Behavior Analysis annual conference.

Pham, A. V., Lazarus, P., Costa, A., **Dong, Q., Bastian, R., Bus, J., Desir, S., Walker, D., & Lopez, M.** (2021, February). Integrating social justice advocacy and interdisciplinary collaboration training in graduate training. Paper presented at the National Association of School Psychologists annual convention.

Rodriguez, G., & Lazarus, P. J. (2020, November). Supporting the education and well-being of undocumented students. A poster session presented at the Florida Association of School Psychologists Virtual Convention.

Sook Hyun, M. & Pham, A. (2021, February). Use of self-regulated learning to promote elementary school children's reading. Presented at National Association of School Psychologists annual convention.

SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER

BY ALEXIS DAVIS

Chello!

I am Alexis Davis, the Social Justice Committee Chair of the 2020-2021 school year. 2020 was a rough year with the civil unrest and COVID-19 outbreak, and 2021 has not improved both situations by much; however, the Social Justice Committee has been able to keep our program engaged and informed through Social Justice Talks via Zoom.

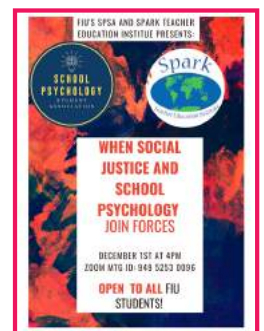
The Social Justice committee is a student-led committee that discusses important and/or current issues and relates them to the field of school psychology. The committee has meetings to discuss these issues and plans events to involve the rest of the program in the discussion.

The committee aims to improve school psychology graduate students' capacity to engage in advocacy to address social justice issues on local, state, and national levels (brought to you by Dr. Lazarus who started the committee).

As the social justice committee chair, I had the honor to serve with this committee and I am very excited to watch this committee expand, grow, and evolve.



"THE MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE IS TO PROMOTE NON-DISCRIMINATORY AND EQUITABLE PRACTICES IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TO ENSURE THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND WELL-BEING OF ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES— ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHOSE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES HAVE BEEN MARGINALIZED"





FASP CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 13, 2020-NOVEMBER 14, 2020

The theme for the 2020 FASP Annual Conference was "Focus on the Future." This conference highlighted how school psychologists can continue to provide services in unforeseen circumstances and support the ever-growing needs of students, families and educators across the state of Florida. The virtual conference was designed to allow attendees to experience critical traditional components of a FASP conference, such as exhibit space, a poster corner, annual business meeting, awards ceremony, networking opportunities, and the Children's Services Fund, Inc. (CSFI) silent auction. Some of our fellow classmates and faculty had the opportunity to present virtually at the 2020 FASP Annual Conference.



2020 FASP PRESENTATIONS

The mission of the social justice committee is to promote non-discriminatory and equitable practices in school psychology to ensure the educational rights, opportunities, and well-being of all children and families—especially for those whose voices and experiences have been marginalized.

Philip J. Lazarus, Quennie Dong, Renee Bastian, Annala Costa & Andy V. Pham
School Psychology Program, Department of Counseling, Recreation and School Psychology, College of Arts, Sciences & Education

SUSTAINING A SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE IN A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

Steps to Building & Sustaining a Social Justice Committee

1. Survey interest among SP students regarding their desire to have a social justice committee (SJC).
2. If there is interest, find a faculty member willing to serve as an advisor.
3. Develop a leadership core within the student body committed to social justice.
4. Gather information about social justice from the FASP website and from other sources of information.
5. Develop a vision and mission statement that can be endorsed by the students.
6. Develop goals for the first year and for the first three years.
7. From these goals, develop priorities – both short and long term.
8. Develop activities for the first year.
9. Recruit new student leaders every year.

Sample Social Justice Committee Activities

- Departmental Retreat
- Community Outreach
- Professional Development
- Multicultural Educational Treatment

PROMISING PRACTICES FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DIVERSE GRADUATE STUDENTS

Demographics of School Psychology

The demographic makeup of the profession currently consists of 47% White, 4% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Black/African American, and 23% Asian/Pacific Islander (Muller et al., 2016). Additionally, the National School Psychology Program Database Survey, there were an estimated 10,137 graduate students, including both specialist level and doctoral level, enrolled in school psychology programs from the 2017-2018 academic year. However, only 28% of students across both programs applied to be in a study about (Gibbs et al., 2018).

Challenges & Barriers

- Lack of visibility and understanding of the profession in comparison to other graduate-level psychology disciplines (e.g., clinical or counseling psychology) (Barnes et al., 2015).
- Undergraduate students in historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) demonstrate a significant awareness of the school psychology field (Chenille 2017; Gayles & Singh, 2008).
- Racial and ethnic diversity within students may experience financial barriers that require them to work full-time and take lower classes (Gibbs & Hancock, 2016).
- Clear, identifiable, and flexible program pathways may conflict and put off potential applicants from applying, including institutional, full-time teachers in serving a other change).
- A lack of student competency with career, curriculum and program expectations may discourage students to continue their academic program (Gibbs et al., 2016).
- Experience of microaggressions, cultural mismatch, misalignment with professional goals and equities relations with faculty are some factors to be considered reasons towards the attrition rate of African American graduate students (Proctor & Trickett, 2012).

The critical shortage of school psychologists nationwide and the need to diversify the profession call forth the importance of recruiting and retaining culturally and linguistically diverse graduate students in school psychology training programs.

Renee Bastian, Quennie Dong, Philip J. Lazarus, Andy V. Pham & Annala Costa
School Psychology Program, Department of Counseling, Recreation and School Psychology, College of Arts, Sciences & Education

Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Recruitment Strategies

- Develop a recruitment strategy that includes a mix of traditional and non-traditional recruitment methods.
- Utilize social media and digital marketing to reach diverse populations.
- Partner with community organizations and cultural centers to promote the program.
- Offer virtual information sessions and open houses to accommodate students with scheduling constraints.
- Provide financial aid and scholarship information to address economic barriers.
- Create a supportive and inclusive campus environment for diverse students.

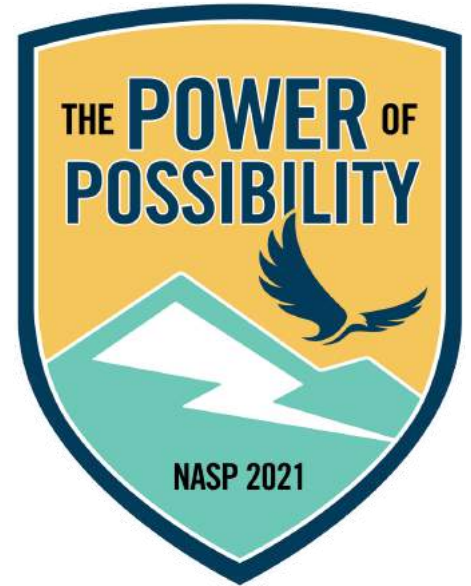
Retention Strategies

- Provide ongoing mentorship and support for students throughout their graduate journey.
- Offer flexible program options and part-time enrollment opportunities.
- Foster a sense of community and belonging among students.
- Monitor student progress and provide timely intervention for students at risk of attrition.
- Encourage student involvement in research and professional development activities.

NASP CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 23, 2021-FEBRUARY 26, 2021

NASP is the largest annual gathering of school psychologists and related professionals in the world. The convention included more than 1,000 educational presentations and special events related to education and mental health issues affecting children and youth. In the throes of COVID-19 and the rise of the advocacy for antiracist policies and procedures, the theme of the NASP 2021 virtual conference corresponded with these paramount issues, “The Power of Possibility.” The focus for this conference was to provide resources and identify possible solutions to common problems found in the field of school psychology and education. Keynote speaker, Steve Gross, MSW, discussed the relationship between caregivers and educators and using the power of optimism to build and strengthen relationships with the children and youth. Participants were able to attend presentations, network, and engage with one another through the Whova Event App.



2021 NASP PRESENTATIONS

Integrating Social Justice Advocacy and Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Graduate Training

Presented by:
 Andy V. Pham, PhD Annela Costa, EdD
 Philip Lazarus, PhD Jessica Bus
 Renee Bastian Stephanie Desir
 Quennie Dong Dominique Walker
 Monika Lopez
 February 2021



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Pre-Service Education Professionals’ Knowledge and Perceptions of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Presented by:
 Renee Bastian, Milagros Zavalia & Andy Pham, PhD
 NASP Convention
 February 2021



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



Cultural Considerations in Promoting Social-Emotional Learning with K-12 Students

PRESENTED BY:
 Quennie Dong
 Milagros Zavalia
 Athena Mavrikis
 Johanna Lopez
 Aiyssa DelCampo
 Andy V. Pham, Ph. D.

STUDENT LEADERS & AWARDS

SPSA President-Elect

Elisa Valle

SPSA President

Renee Bastian

Student Resilience Award: Recognized for Her "Grit" & Resilience

Joelishia Banfield

Patty Del Valle Humanitarian Award

Renee Bastian

NASP Student Representatives

Alexis Davis

Eugenia Romero

FASP Graduate Studies Award-Specialist Level

Quennie Dong

2020-2021 CASE Graduate Student Award in Academic Achievement

Byron Garcia

Renee Bastian

Quennie Dong

FASP Student Representative, Student Advocacy Leader

Elisa Valle

FACULTY AWARDS

Division 16 Jack Bardon Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Philip Lazarus

SPSA Lifetime Achievement

Dr. Philip Lazarus

SPSA All Seeing Eye Award

Dr. Martha Pelaez

SPSA Zoom Superstar

Dr. Shayl Griffith

SPSA Most Supportive

Dr. Amanda Allen

SPSA Mentor of the YEAR

Dr. Andy Pham

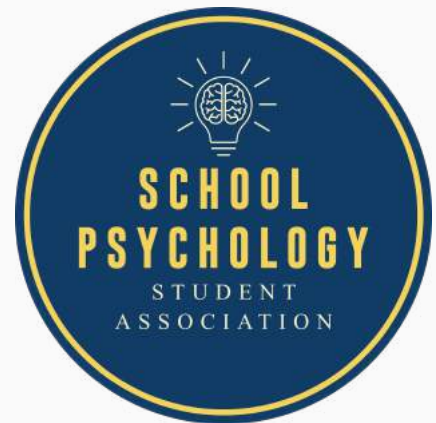
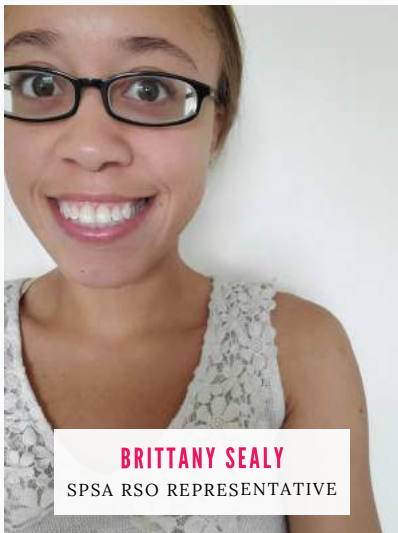
SPSA Rockstar Rookie

Dr. Kellina Lupas



2021-2022 STUDENT E-BOARD

Dear students, we are so excited to take on these roles and make the 2021-2022 school year the best yet. Most importantly, we want to focus on engagement and creating a sense of community within our program. Throughout the school year, we will be planning several fun, educational, and community-based activities for everyone to attend and enjoy. SPSA should be an organization in which everyone feels important and heard, so we welcome you to join us in making this a successful year!



SPSA FACULTY ADVISOR

Dr. Kellina Lupas



I am immensely excited to work with our student leaders to coordinate events, training opportunities, and support.

Over the year I have been with the School Psychology program at FIU, I have come to deeply value and appreciate our students. They are some of the most hard-working, determined, and resilient people I have ever met. School psychology attracts helpers, and our students are preparing to be some of the best. I believe that fostering the capability of youth (whether in age or in adopting a new vocation!) is one of the most direct ways that we, as faculty, can inspire change within our schools and communities. As the new faculty advisor for our school psychology student association, I am immensely excited to work with our student leaders to coordinate events, training opportunities, and support. In its best iteration, the SPSA can profoundly expand our students' social network, developing collaborations for classwork, social support, community engagement, and career development. I appreciate this opportunity, and will work diligently to show our students the same energy, enthusiasm, and creativity that they demonstrate in our program!

SPSA Committees

This student-led committee brings awareness to important and/or current issues related to school psychology and the people we serve. This committee works together to plan events for SPSA members to become involved in important discussions.

**SOCIAL
JUSTICE**

**PUBLIC
RELATIONS**

The public relations committee is dedicated to bringing awareness about events, projects, and anything SPSA! Additionally, this committee is responsible for all SPSA social media handles and Panther Connect event flyers.

Previous SPSA students have greatly benefited from scholarships. The scholarship committee is responsible for browsing scholarship opportunities in and outside of FIU.

SCHOLARSHIP

**SOCIAL &
EVENTS**

The social events committee is passionate about working in and around Miami communities or organizations. This committee not only develops opportunities for students to be of services to others but also plans fun FIU and/or SPSA events.

SPSA EVENTS

Doctoral Study in Psychology Panel



Learn from a panel of Psychologists about the journey to a doctoral degree

When: March 16th, 2021 **Time:** 3:30PM **Zoom Meeting ID:** 934 0240 3965

open to all FIU students

STRESS AND ANXIETY MANAGEMENT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

WITH FIU'S COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES AND DR. PHILIP LAZARUS

March 1st @ 4pm

ZOOM ID: 294501996 PASSWORD: 2RIM74

OPEN TO ALL FIU STUDENTS



FIU SPSA TOWN HALL

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14TH
3:45PM-5PM
MEETING ID: 933 8074 4976



OPEN TO ALL FIU STUDENTS

FIU SPSA PRESENTS
FINDING YOUR WHY
WITH INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER
KARINA LE BLANC

FEBRUARY 22ND 4PM MEETING ID: 294501996
open to all FIU students



THANKSGIVING DRIVE

NOVEMBER 2-23

DROP OFF LOCATIONS:
DUM FRI SPSA OR INSTAGRAM
FOR MORE INFO: @FIU_SPSA &
@FIU_PSYCHOLOGY

OPEN TO ALL FIU STUDENTS

VISION BOARD BRUNCH



November 21 @12pm





Graduate & Research Assistants



ELISA VALLE

RESEARCH ASSISTANT
DR. VALERIE RUSSELL,
REHABILITATION COUNSELING



HANNAH LEFFORD

GRASUATE ASSISTANT
DR. AMANDA ALLEN AND
DR. AARON KUNTZ



GIGI ROSSI

MANAGING EDITOR
HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY



GISELL RODRIGUEZ

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCESS
& SUCCESS



I love the opportunity to engage in research that aligns with my interests, and to network with other professionals in psychology and education!

-RENEE BASTIAN

Being able to assist parents with providing extra homework supports for their children is one of the many reasons why I enjoy being a GA.

-EDWIN ALVAREZ

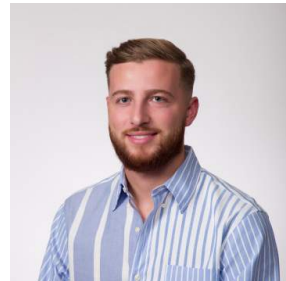
I love being able to apply what I learn in class into my lesson plan so I can have an inclusive classroom that addresses different learning styles to help first generation college students.

-GISELL RODRIGUEZ



ASHLEY HANSON

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
DR. ELIZABETH CRAMER,
SPECIAL EDUCATION



EDWIN ALVAREZ

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
HOMEWORK HELPERS



RYAN DELL'AQUILA

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
HOMEWORK HELPERS



ATHENA MAVRAKIS

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
DR. SHAYL GRIFFITH AND
DR. KELLI LUPAS



ALEXANDRA ARANGO

RESEARCH ASSISTANT
DR. MICHELLE CUMMING,
PROJECT PATHWAYS



CHRISTINA CRIADO

RESEARCH ASSISTANT
DR. MICHELLE CUMMING,
PROJECT PATHWAYS



EUGENIA ROMERO

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
MS. MELANIE MORALES AND
DR. PATTY BARBETTA
SPECIAL EDUCATION



RENEE BASTIAN

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
DR. ANDY PHAM,
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY



MARIO CAMPOS

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
DR. HYEJIN BANG AND
MS. TANIA SANTIAGO PEREZ
RECREATION & SPORT MANAGEMENT

2021-2022 Interns

ASHLEY HANSON

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EUGENIA ROMERO

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RACHEL CASANAS

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RENEE BASTIAN

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SARAH ABULKHEIR

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MARIO CAMPOS

COLLIER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DENISSE GONZALEZ

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ALEXANDRA ARANGO

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MATTHEW NETTINA

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ALEXIS DAVIS

PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

ALEXANDRA LUMARQUE

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH
COUNTY

ATHENA MAVRAKIS

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH
COUNTY

MANOELA SUAREZ

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH
COUNTY



MY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

BY TARA FITZGERALD, ED.S

I was lucky enough to find a placement with the Minnesota Consortium of School Psychologists Internships (MCSPI), which is associated with the University of Minnesota (UMN). I was compelled to apply for the consortium because I am a Minnesota native, and I attended UMN for my undergraduate studies. MCSPI placed me with KIPP Minnesota, a charter school in North Minneapolis run by a nationwide non-profit network of public charter schools.

Shortly after making the decision to move across the country, the nation fell into a crisis. Class meetings on campus turned into discussions over zoom. Nonverbal communication was greatly limited; now we could silently send a few options of “reaction” emojis to describe how we were feeling about something someone shared.

Then, on May 25th, George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis. This sparked an international antiracist movement, and large questions about policing policy reform. There was an uprising in the city where I was about to go. Some of my friends and new colleagues described their protest battle stories while others were too scared to leave their apartments for fear of contracting COVID. The entire world watched.

A lot of locations were closed or under curfew. Although I felt lonely, it seemed like the most responsible option to stay in my home unless I acquired necessary items like groceries or to exercise. I took up biking around my neighborhood in the evenings and zoom fitness classes through the FIU rec center. As I prepared to leave, all of my Miami bucket list items were no longer options. I was unable to properly say goodbye to my classmates and professors, and many of my friends.





I drove across the country, with all of my belongings packed inside of my car, during a pandemic. I arrived in Minnesota and met all of my new colleagues covering half of my face and avoiding handshakes. It all felt tremendously awkward. Many colleagues built rapport by sharing the stories of their summer protests, describing teargas or run-ins with the national guard. The gym was decorated with several murals, painted by students, related to the Black Lives Matter movement. Teachers wore BLM shirts and masks and decorated their classrooms with posters supporting the movement. Our KIPP uniform shirt donned a quote that read, “If you are neutral during situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

Through MCSPI, I was able to participate in their semi-weekly meetings and didactic sessions along with a cohort of students at UMN who were completing internships around the nation as Ed.S. or Ph.D. students. We had extensive case consultation and shared useful resources with each other. Many of our discussions focused on social justice, and we read books based on abolitionist teaching.

I quickly discovered that many of my colleagues (and even school leadership) did not quite understand what a school psychologist’s role entailed. Because the charter school was in its first year of operation, a lot of the roles had not been clearly defined.

Luckily there is another KIPP school in Minneapolis, and they have been in operation for several years. Their MCSPI intern last year was now their full-time school psychologist, so she could share a lot of details about the students, staff, and the consortium requirements. We spent the first few weeks of school going through our inventory of protocols and test kits. Our school chooses to use the KABC-II because it has the smallest racial disparities, and can also provide the Mental Processing Index (MPI) that includes four broad abilities but eliminates the Gc Knowledge index, which is heavily loaded with language and culture.

The first few weeks of school were heavily focused on following COVID protocols on sanitization, social distancing, and proper mask wearing. Our primary school students were in hybrid mode, with half of the class attending school for two full days per week. Our middle school students were fully distant, but they came to school once a week for “orientation” and material pick-up. Building rapport with students and families happened while sanitizing our hands and checking our temperatures at the front door.

I was given the list of students whom I would evaluate over the course of the year, and the number seemed so small. However, as the year progressed, we acquired many more students from new enrollment. Our sister school has a reputation in the area for being ideal for students with extensive services in their IEPs. Many students transferred from our sister school, and they were familiar with some of the teachers in the middle school who also made the switch. Many other students transferred from other charter schools, and getting proper documentation of previous evaluations or IEPs was often a fruitless task.

I was tasked with planning, writing, editing and finalizing evaluations and organizing deadlines for other service providers to input their portions. I monitored progress, wrote behavior intervention plans and created new goals for IEPs.

Working in a first-year charter school had its challenges. Systems for evaluation and intervention were essentially nonexistent, and by the time the fall screening measures had identified students who would be ideal candidates for intervention, our school leaders were instead focused on preparing to shift our students to a fully distant model through the long winter months. We had several model shifts over the course of the year. For several weeks, all students were set to return in-person before spring break, but a spike in numbers caused us to change our plan three days before their return date.

Due to the stress and unpredictability of model shifts, our school also experienced a lot of staff turnover. However, this allowed me to experience a plethora of roles as a school psychologist intern; I also took on the responsibilities of a school social worker and an interventionist. These experiences allowed me to learn a variety of skills through direct service to students and families.

I performed one full cycle of online literacy interventions with first and second graders. Some students lacked a working microphone or a stable internet connection. Some students had issues with attendance, or would become distracted and leave their desks. Others were

merely unresponsive black boxes with only their name displayed. Some students chose to come to school in-person, which made interventions much more simple in their planning and implementation, but some students chose to remain online. Unsurprisingly, those who came in-person showed much better progress than their online counterparts.

It was a year unlike any other, but I can say that I now feel prepared for any challenge ahead. Your internship year will be exciting, as it is filled with so many opportunities for growth and continued learning. Here are some pieces of advice that I'd wish I had known on my first day of internship:

- Problems don't need to be solved immediately. It is okay to take time to make a good decision as opposed to a quick decision. Internship is a marathon, not a sprint!
- Everything feels huge the first time you deal with it, so allow yourself time to learn! Confidence will grow with experience.
- No one expects you to know everything, don't be afraid to admit that you are still learning. You are allowed to ask questions. You can respond with, "I don't know the answer right now, but I'll get back to you on that."
- Manage tasks one day at a time, and make daily or weekly to-do lists.
- Take your lunch break and try to leave work at work.
- Switch tasks and come back to whatever you feel stuck on. Sometimes changing what you do can help you move-on from other tasks.
- Develop a routine for when you fill out routine paperwork (e.g., organize hours at the end of each day, etc.) and block off writing time on your calendar.
- Spreadsheets with timelines and deadlines! Then back these up with calendar reminders for you and related colleagues.



2021-2022 INCOMING STUDENTS



PRISCILLA ALFARO

B.S. in Psychology from Florida International University

Where are you from?: Miami, FL

Interests: Painting and writing

Why School Psychology? To help as many kids as possible. I've always wanted to work with kids and try to have a positive impact in their lives as much as possible and I believe I can do that by being a School Psychologist.



SAMANTHA CASANOVA

B.A. in Psychology from State University of New York at New Paltz

Where are you from?: New York

Interests: Yoga, reading, and dancing.

Why School Psychology? I care about helping kids get the best learning and social experience possible.



YIUSALIN DEL CUADRO

A.A. from Miami-Dade College & B.S. in Psychology from University of Miami

Where are you from? Cuba and Miami, FL

Interests: I enjoy road trips, spending time with my family and listening to music.

Why School Psychology? I am passionate about guiding children and adolescents successfully through developmental, social-emotional and mental health issues. It takes a team to work through the process of establishing, implementing and monitoring progress for the specific needs of these students. Therefore, I plan to work collaboratively with teachers and other involved personnel to facilitate a conducive, academic and social-emotional learning environment. Throughout this process my goal is to provide each individual student with the tools they need to succeed in school and in life.

2021-2022 INCOMING STUDENTS



JILLIAN DELISLE

B.A. in Psychology from La Salle University

Where are you from?: Orlando, FL

Interests: Going to the beach, playing sports and hang out with friends.

Why School Psychology? I want to be a school psychologist because I have always had a love for school and school psychologists are the ones that make school a safe nurturing environment for children of all backgrounds and abilities. Children are the future and deserve to be set up for success.



GABRIELA GONZALEZ

B.S. in Psychology from University of Central Florida

Where are you from?: Miami, FL

Interests: Reading, taking photos, and hiking.

Why School Psychology? As a school psychologist my goal is to work in the Miami-Dade County school system servicing at risk students. I want to work with school personnel, and parents to find the best way to help students achieve their full potential by addressing educational needs, individual concerns, and unique family dynamics.



SOLOMON KAMARA

B.S. in Psychology from Valparaiso University

Where are you from? Born in Sierra Leone, grew up in Chicago suburbs

Interests: Working out, going out with friends, spending time with family, learning about people and where they come from.

Why School Psychology? To uplift students that struggle and are discouraged when it comes to their mental health, social-emotional health, and their education.



SHANIYA MORRIS

B.A. in Psychology and Sociology & M.S. in Developmental Psychology

Where are you from?: New York

Interests: Reading, binge watching TV shows and docuseries.

Why School Psychology? After 6 months of being an ABA therapist, I watched one of my clients flourish into a high performing Kindergartener. This experience embedded a passion for working with children and the desire to help them conquer their academic, social, and emotional challenges within the school setting.

2021-2022 INCOMING STUDENTS

ERIN PIERAGOWSKI

B.S. in Psychology and Education from Florida Gulf Coast University

Where are you from? Kentucky

Interests: Working out, roller skating, tennis, hanging with my friends, family, and cat.

Why School Psychology? I grew up with a sister constantly struggling in school both with staff and students not being able to understand her or have the patience for her. I've always wanted to be that person that can intervene and be that person to support them when no one else can.

WILLIAM WILSON

B.S. in Psychology from Florida State University

Where are you from? Longwood, FL

Interests: Coin collecting, reading about History.

Why School Psychology? I want to be a school psychologist to help children succeed academically and socially. My college experience caused me to consider the question of whether there is a better method to help children with learning difficulties integrate into the classroom in a way that challenges them in an inviting and friendly manner.

DAMIAN HAWKINS

B.S. in English Education from Florida State University

M.S. in Counseling from Florida Atlantic University

Where are you from? South Florida

Interests: I enjoy watching plays and movies.

Why School Psychology? I am interested in exploring the school psychologist's role in addressing the increasing rates of academic suspensions affecting children of color and the school psychologist's role in addressing the academic and psychosocial functioning of the children of addicted parents.







Graduates of 2021





CARLOS CHAVARRIGA, ED.S
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, CA



MILAGROS ZAVALIA, ED.S
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FL



SAMANTHA MENDA, ED.S
BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FL



KEILA TUCKLER, ED.S
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FL



QUENNIE DONG, ED.S
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, CA



JOELISHIA BANFIELD, ED.S



TARA FITZGERALD, ED.S.
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MN



HEIDY ZETINA, ED.S
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FL

“
Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good.

MINOR MYERS JR.



JOHANNA LOPEZ, ED.S
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FL



BYRON GARCIA, ED.S
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FL



2020-2021 Lessons Learned

Zoom learning has pros and cons, resting is just as (if not more) important than working, even if you're an introvert, isolation isn't that cool and you need friends!

The main lesson that I learned during this school year was to set aside some time for mental health.

There are many things the I learned during the 2020-2021 school year but the most important would have to be to cherish and spend time with our families as well as prioritizing our mental health.

I learned how critical it is to be grateful for every day of health, to appreciate the people I'm fortunate enough to have in my life, and to give myself a break from time to time.

This year I learned that it's OKAY to prioritize yourself! Self care is non-negotiable in order to be happy & healthy.

I learned not to take the most important aspects of life for granted. We are not promise tomorrow, so take a chance and go on an adventure. Carpe Diem (Seize the Day)!

This year has brought many lessons. The most important lesson learned is that things may not always go according to your plan and that is okay.

1. Take no time for granted and to start doing the things I have always said I wanted to do.
2. Our world and the people in it are more adaptable than we think!

It's okay if you're not your best because we're in a pandemic... even if we weren't, you can't expect to always give your best because then that'll be your "normal."

This year I learned that it's OKAY to prioritize yourself! Self care is non-negotiable in order to be happy & healthy.

Student Life Updates



EDWIN ALVAREZ
GOT ENGAGED!



ISA GUARAGNA
STARTED COMPETING IN
SAILING WITH HER DAD!



ALEXIS DAVIS
NEW PINK BRAIDS!



RENE BASTIAN
NEW PUPPY JASPER!



ELISA VALLE
GOT MARRIED ON THE BEACH!



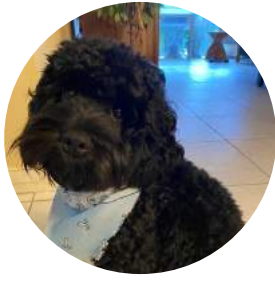
MANOELA SUAREZ
FAMILY TRIP TO THE WEST
COAST!



IBIS MENDOZA
CREATING MEMORIES WITH FAMILY!



SAMANTHA MENDA
GOT MARRIED ON THE BEACH!



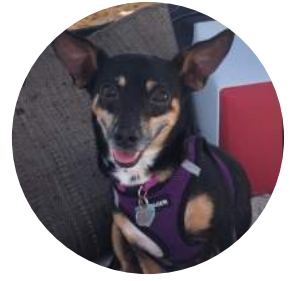
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BENNIE



CODY



PEANUT



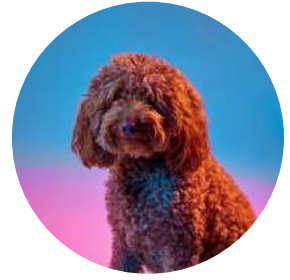
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EMMA



OAKLEY



BLAKE

SPSA PETS



HENRY



BINX



LUNA & JASPER



DESMOND



ZOEY



BERNIE



BEN & JERRY



KIRBY

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