

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2023 Newsletter



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR Dr. Andy Pham



As we head into the 2023-2024 school year, the School Psychology program is committed to promoting children's mental health, advancing research and practice, and providing support to schools and families in our diverse communities. Although recent education bills and state legislation pose challenges that may make it more difficult for us to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in K-12 and higher

education, it only means that our work and efforts are more important now than ever in Florida and in the nation. I continue to be impressed with our faculty and students' achievements, as we develop new initiatives and projects that emphasize school mental health, interprofessional collaboration, culturally responsiveness, and evidence-based practices. I believe it is important that we engage in both cultural and intellectual humility. Without these aspects, it would be difficult to learn from, collaborate with, and feel inspired by our amazing educators, mental health professionals, and students at FIU and in our school systems.

I also want to congratulate our 19 graduates who completed their internships this school year, as this is one of the largest cohorts we have had in the program. This includes our inaugural cohort for Project SPECIAL (School Psychologists and Educators Collaborative Interventions for All Learners), our grant-funded cohort supported by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the FIU University Graduate School. These graduates received specialized training in interprofessional collaboration with the Special Education MS program through shared coursework and field experiences. Our second and final cohort of SPECIAL is now entering the second year of the program and are eagerly applying for internship - how fast time flies!

In addition to SPECIAL, our program was recently awarded a five-year \$1 million OSEP training grant, Project CRYSTAL (Culturally Responsive Youth Services in Teaching, Adaptation, and Language), which funds 12 full-time students (6 per cohort) to work with diverse populations for five years. Moreover, in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the FIU School of Social Work, the program was awarded a five-year \$6 million grant, Project DIG (Demonstration Improvement Grant) funded by the US Department of Education, Bipartisan Safer Communities Acts, which aids to support future mental health professionals in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The goal of these federally funded projects is to expand vital mental health services and support to high-need schools to promote safer, more inclusive, and positive school environments for all students, educators, and school staff.

I also want to acknowledge additional highlights this past year:

- Students have presented posters, papers, and mini-skills workshops at national conferences including the NASP convention in Denver, CO in February 2023.
- **Project SPECIAL students** were featured in The Miami Times news article "[Confronting the mental health crisis in our schools](#)"
- **Dr. Griffith** was recognized as FIU Top Scholar for her grant-funded research on digital media use with families.
- **Dr. Pelaez** received the 2023 APA Division 25 ABAI Nathan H. Azrin Distinguished Contribution to Applied Behavior Analysis Award.
- **Dr. Lazarus and Dr. Pham** were interviewed by [CBS 4 News](#) regarding Project DIG.
- The inaugural cohorts of Project CRYSTAL and Project DIG will be starting their first semester of classes in Fall 2023.

We will also continue our efforts to develop a PhD in School Psychology, given the great interest and need to expand training and opportunities in the Miami area.

I love being a school psychologist as it is my goal to ensure that we enhance the quality of learning and life for children and families. Please feel free to reach out as I would love to chat about school psychology, education, or even anything non-school psychology related is fine too! I would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Andy

MESSAGE FROM THE SPSA PRESIDENT Shaniya Morris

Dear Faculty and Friends,

Wow, what a whirlwind of a year it's been! The 2022-2023 school year turned out to be way more than we bargained for. Even though COVID-19 wasn't as big of a problem this year, we still had our fair share of challenges including the current political climate. Coming out of the remnants of COVID-19 and into polarized political warfare, our remarkable executive board wanted to make sure we all felt connected and supported. We successfully planned fun game nights, conducted mental health check-ins, and organized community service activities to promote a sense of solidarity.



We started the year with a get-together to establish a strong rapport and an open line of communication. With the seemingly ever-growing laws affecting education passing this year in Florida, we wanted to make sure we could talk about it openly. It was important for us to stay informed and involved as legislators made decisions about our education.

Unfortunately, the program experienced a dwindling of faculty this year, but we didn't let that stop us! We faced our academic challenges head-on and used this opportunity to become even closer as a group. We supported each other and grew professionally together. We also welcomed a fantastic group of first-year students who have already shown their panther pride and have accomplished so much!

I want to take this moment to express my sincere gratitude to my e-board team: **Samantha Casanova** (Vice-president), **Jillian Delisle** (Secretary), **Gabriela Gonzalez** (Treasurer), and **William Wilson** (RSO representative). We worked so well together, tackling all the challenges we faced with determination, grace, and enthusiasm. Despite the obstacles, we accomplished quite a bit this year including raising over \$800 for Autism Walks!

But just like that, 2022-2023 is done! I can't wait to see what our incoming e-board has in store for the program. I don't have a single doubt that they will do incredible things and make our department proud. As some of us move into internships, others continue undertaking classes and the new students settle in, I hope we all carry the knowledge we gained during this year and continue to be leaders and promote integrity, collaboration, and compassion.

Sending you all the best,

Shaniya



FIU

STEVEN AND DONOTHEA GREEN LIBRARY

FACULTY & STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Goforth, A. N. & Pham, A. V. (2023). Culturally responsive school-based practices: Supporting mental health and learning of diverse students. *Oxford University Press*. 342 pages.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/culturally-responsive-school-based-practices-9780197516928?cc=us&lang=en>

Griffith, S.F., Casanova, S.M., & Delisle, J.H. (2023) Back-and-forth conversation during parent-child co-use of an educational app game. *Early Child Development and Care*. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2023.2199173>

Griffith, S.F., Casanova, S.M., Delisle, J.H., & Mavrakis, A.A. (in press) Remote schooling and screentime during COVID-19: Exploring the experiences of low-income families with young children. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*.

Griffith, S.F., Delisle, J.H., & Casanova, S.M. (in press) Parent perceptions of technology-facilitated learning for young children: Associations with parent and child characteristics. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*.

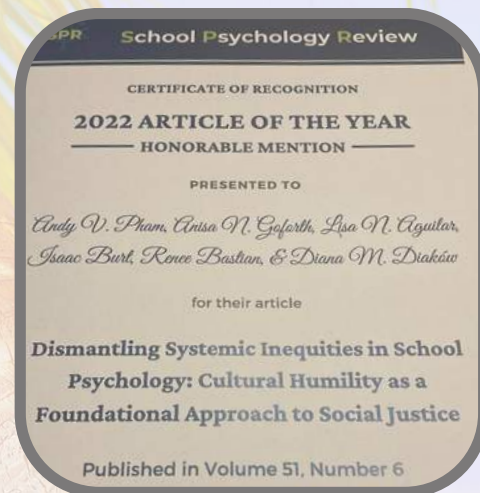
Pham, A. V., & Charles, L. (2023). Racial disparities in autism diagnosis, assessment, and intervention among minoritized youth: Sociocultural issues, factors, and context. *Current Psychiatry Reports*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-023-01417-9>

FACULTY & STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Cumming, M. M., Poling, D. V., Qiu, Y., Pham, A. V., Daunic, A. P., Corbett, N., & Smith, S. W. (2023). A validation study of the BRIEF-2 among kindergarteners and first graders at-risk for behavior problems. *Assessment*, 30(1), 3–21.

RECOGNIZED BY NASP AS ARTICLE OF THE YEAR

Pham, A.V., Goforth, A. N., Aguilar, L., Burt, I., Bastian, R., & Diakow, D. (2022). Dismantling systemic inequities in school psychology: Cultural humility as a foundational approach to social justice. *School Psychology Review*, 51(6).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2021.1941245>.



FACULTY & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Bus, J. & Wood, B. J. (2023, February). Students' feelings of safety at schools and perceptions about SROs. Poster presented at the annual convention of the National Association of School Psychologists, Denver, CO.

Casanova, S.M, & Delisle, J. H. (2023, February). *Remote schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic: A caregiver's perspective*. Poster presented at the annual conference of the National Association of School Psychology, Denver, CO.

Casanova, S.M, & Delisle, J. H. (2022, November). *The experiences of low-income families with young children with COVID-19 remote schooling*. Poster presented at the annual conference of the Florida Association of School Psychology, Daytona, FL.

Dong, Q., Kim, J., & Pham, A. (2023, February). Promoting transformative social-emotional learning for educators. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Association of School Psychologists, Denver, CO.

Goforth, A., Pham, A. V., Violante A. E., Brooke, E., Hawkins, D., & Lopez, M. A. (2023, February). Going Deeper: Culturally Responsive Assessment for Minoritized Students. [Mini-skills workshop]. Presented at the National Association of School Psychologists, Denver, CO. [Selected as President's Strand]

FACULTY & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Griffith, S.F., Casanova, S.M., Delisle, J.H. (2022, August) Back-and-forth conversation and reciprocity during parent-child co-use of an educational app. Poster presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Convention.

Lopez, M. A. (2023, February). Identifying and mitigating conduct problems in minoritized youth. Poster presented at the annual convention of the National Association of School Psychologists, Denver, CO.

Morris, S. K., Pieragowski, E., Piscitello, J., Robertson, E. L., Ou, B., & Lupas, K. (2023, February). Making informal STEM learning more effective: Will wearable cameras help? Poster presented at the annual conference of the National Association of School Psychology, Denver, CO.

Wood, B. J., Ellis, F. E., & Bus, J. (2023, February). Educational stakeholders' feelings about arming teachers within schools. Poster presented at the annual convention of the National Association of School Psychologists, Denver, CO.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Martha Pelaez



Recipient of the **Nathan H. Azrin Distinguished Contribution to Applied Behavior Analysis**

This award recognizes innovative and important research on applications of behavioral principles to address socially significant human behavior.

Dr. Martha Pelaez is a Frost Professor at the School of Education and Human Development, Florida International University. She received her PhD in 1992 in Developmental Psychology, winning the International Dissertation Award from the International Society for Infant Studies for research on “Infant learning to reference maternal emotional expressions.” After completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Miami, in 1994, she became an Assistant Professor of Psychology at FIU, Associate Professor in 1998, and full professor in 2004. She received the Frost Professor Award in 2006, a College of Education formal recognition for excellence in research and scholarly work. She has supervised students’ doctoral dissertations and master theses, teaches courses in Educational Psychology, Child and Adolescent Development, Applied Behavior Analysis, Single Subject Designs, and directs infant and early childhood research. Dr. Pelaez was the past Program Chair for the American Psychological Association, for Division 25 and past Program Co-Chair for the Association for Behavior Analysis. Dr. Pelaez has served as the

Legislative Liaison with the Florida Legislature. In 2005 and 2006, she chaired the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates of Florida (ACFS) and was a member of the numerous program review and search committees. Between 2003 and 2006, she served as a member of the ACC (Articulation Coordinating Committee) of the Florida Department of Education, chaired the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates ACFS representing Florida SUS faculty, and served as member of the Florida Board of Governors.



During this Summer 2023 we are happy to share that Dr. Pelaez and her students are collaborating on an international research study. Dr. Ian Stewart and Jacob Neufeld have worked with Dr. Pelaez in the past. Recently Jacob Neufeld, Dr. Ian Stewart and Dr. John McElwee submitted research on the topic of relational framing in young children. Using their research published as “Training temporal relational framing in young children” as a template, Dr. Pelaez, and her students Yiusalin Del Cuadro, Solomon Kamara, and Clara Reyes will be replicating the original studies in order to add to current data as well as consider the addition of other components such as intelligence testing. The pilot was already successfully conducted. Our international team then met via zoom to discuss the details and evaluate the best approaches and adaptations for our summer directed research study.



J.E.D.I CORNER

Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

This year the Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (JEDI for short), formerly known as the Social Justice Committee was led by Samantha Casanova, with Jessica Paul and Marsha Francois serving as officers for the committee. The JEDI committee hosted meetings and events in hopes of creating a learning community that emphasized awareness and understanding of inclusion and equity among all students, faculty, staff, and the community. JEDI focused on topics regarding the LGBTQIA+ community, race, intersectionality, and education.



JEDI facilitated a Safe Zone Training in which students were given the opportunity to learn to better understand the unique needs of and concerns LGBTQ people face (specifically in higher education), as well as increase their own knowledge, skills, and abilities to create a more inclusive and affirming campus.

FASP HIGHLIGHTS



L.E.A.D

This year's conference theme was LEAD (Leadership, Equity, Advocacy, Determination). With an emphasis now on school psychologists as leaders and advocates for the children and families we serve, the conference focused on leadership, social justice, advocacy, and the skills we need to improve equitable educational and mental health outcomes.



Unfortunately, due to Hurricane Ian, the conference was moved to a virtual format. With Ian devastating southwest Florida, FASP mobilized to raise funds and provide crisis response for families in need. Our own Dr. Lazarus was a leader in these efforts, providing a webinar titled "Preparing, Responding, and Recovering from Natural Disasters: Lessons Learned."

PRESENTATIONS

Samantha Casanova and Jillian Delisle submitted a poster about "*The experiences of low-income families with young children with COVID-19 remote schooling.*"

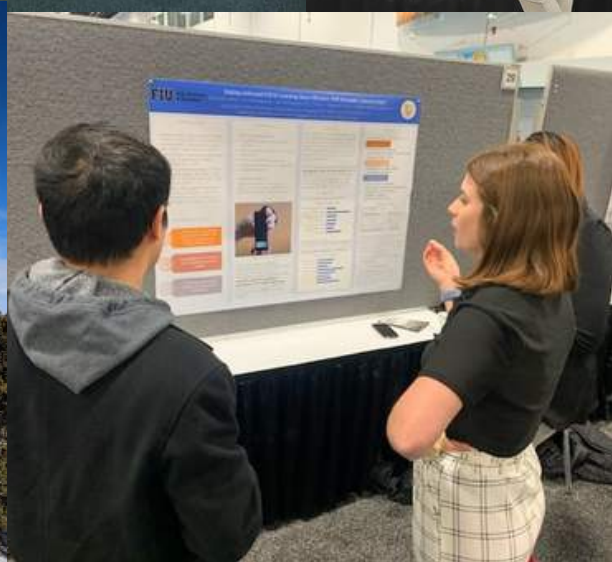
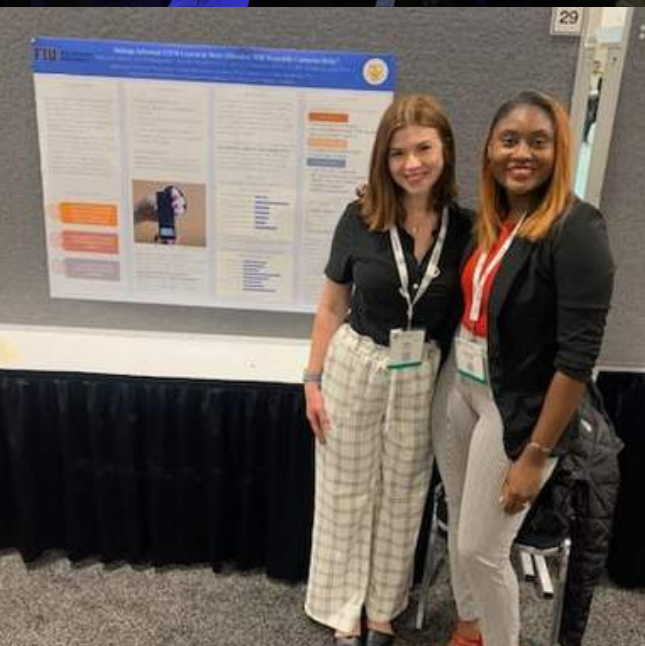
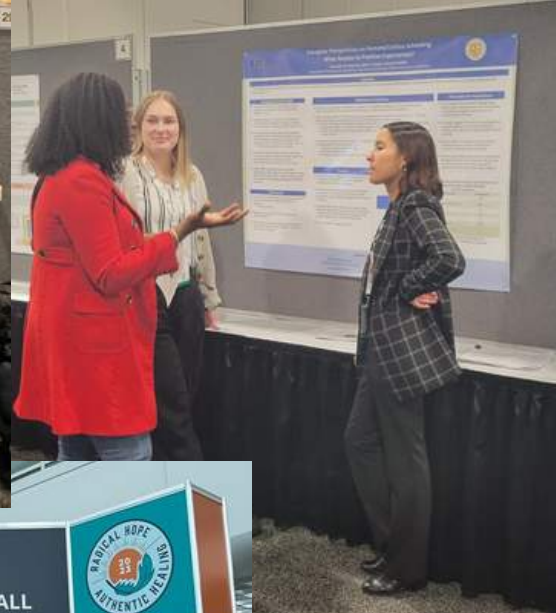
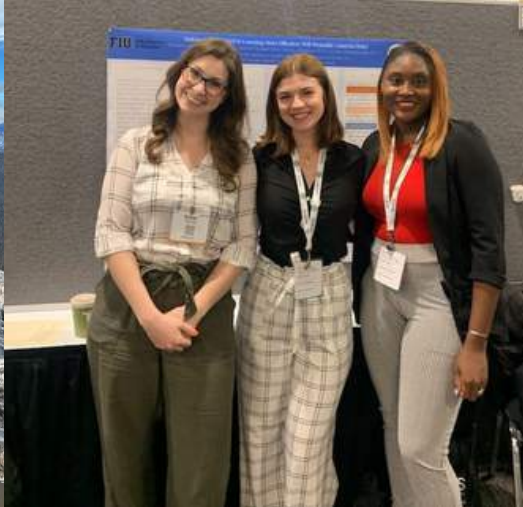
NASP HIGHLIGHTS

February 7 - 10, 2023 - Denver, CO



RADICAL HOPE & AUTHENTIC HEALING

During this year's conference, NASP President Celeste Malone shared her vision for Radical Hope & Authentic Healing during the General Session at NASP's 2023 convention in Denver. Her remarks speak to our collective responsibility to create community and advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion in partnership with BIPOC individuals, particularly the BIPOC school psychology community and the children and families they serve.



NASP 2023 ANNUAL CONVENTION

FEBRUARY 7-10, 2023 | Denver, CO | Colorado Convention Center



NASP HIGHLIGHTS

Presentations

Samantha Casanova and **Jillian Delisle** presented a poster on "Remote schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic: A caregiver's perspective."

Shaniya Morris and **Erin Pieragowski** presented a poster on "Making informal STEM learning more effective: Will wearable cameras help?"

Jessica Bus presented posters on "Students' feelings of safety at schools and perceptions about SROs" and "Educational stakeholders' feelings about arming teachers within schools."

Queenie Dong and **Dr. Andy Pham** presented their paper "Promoting transformative social-emotional learning for educators."

Dr. Andy Pham, **Damian Hawkins**, and **Monika Lopez** presented a workshop on "Going Deeper: Culturally Responsive Assessment for Minoritized Students."

Monika Lopez presented a poster on "Identifying and mitigating conduct problems in minoritized youth."



FIU

Student Leaders & Awards



PATTY DEL VALLE HUMANITARIAN AWARD

- William Wilson
- Gabriela Gonzalez
- Madelyn Llaneras

PROJECT DIG SCHOLARS

- Yinette Santos-Almeida
- Hali Eisenberg
- Indira Rabelo
- Amanda Ratigan
- Rachel Peters
- Shammahbel Saint-Louis
- Guillermo Gonzalez

PROJECT CRYSTAL SCHOLARS

- Maria Mejia
- Brooke Casanas
- Raquel Gutierrez
- Eric Sanchez
- Kenya Lesperance
- Isabella Sanchez
- Evan Cortes

NASP & FASP STUDENT LEADERS

- Samantha Casanova
- William Wilson
- Jillian Delisle

SPSA PRESIDENT ELECT

- Kaitlyn Weaver

SPSA PRESIDENT

- Shaniya Morris



Incoming 2023-24 SPSA E-board



PRESIDENT: KAITLYN WEAVER

I look forward to growing SPSA's community involvement as well as continuing to grow the relationships between both new and old members. Additionally, I am excited for our professional skills, knowledge, and portfolios to continue to expand as we meet with previous FIU students and current practitioners in the field. The e-board has lots of exciting plans for this year and I cannot wait to see it all come to fruition!

VICE PRESIDENT: MARSHA FRANCOIS

As the Vice President of the SPSA at Florida International University, I am thrilled about the opportunity to plan and organize engaging workshops and seminars that will enhance our members' knowledge and skills in the field of school psychology. Additionally, I am excited to

foster a supportive and inclusive community where students can connect, share experiences, and build lifelong friendships with like-minded individuals who share a passion for school psychology.



Incoming 2023-24 SPSA E-board



SECRETARY: JESSICA PAUL

I'm really excited to foster a sense of community amongst all of the cohorts. I'm looking forward to mentoring the incoming first years.

TREASURER: ALEXIS AHUMADA

I plan to ensure the funds available to SPSA are used responsibly to provide opportunities for students to expand their experience and gain valuable insight into their careers. I would love to see SPSA involved in community charity work, self-care workshops, and networking events to develop one's professional portfolio. I look forward to working with our fantastic e-board.



Incoming 2023-24 SPSA E-board

RSO: MADELYN LLANERAS



I aspire to support the SPSA leadership team and SPSA members and plan to continue to foster and strengthen the collaborative efforts established by the current SPSA E-Board. I seek to focus on relationship-building opportunities to boost our School Psychology Programs

presence and work with our existing and new upcoming cohort of aspiring School Psychologists where we can all collectively connect with faculty, members of the community, and fellow students.



SPSA 22-23 EVENTS



SPSA 22-23 EVENTS

Fall 2022

AUTISM SPEAKS WALK



Over 70 million children and adults are affected by autism. Autism Speaks is an organization dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. Their work involves advocacy and support, increasing understanding and acceptance of people with autism, and advancing research into causes and better interventions for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions. Autism Speaks Walk is the world's largest autism fundraising event dedicated to supporting the needs of people with autism and their families throughout their life's journey. The Autism Speaks Walk brings together people with autism and their parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, relatives and providers in a network of friendship and support. Funds raised help fuel innovative research, advocacy, and critical programs and services. **Big SHOUTOUT to our e-board for raising over \$800!**

SPSA 22-23 EVENTS

Fall & Spring 2022-23

FEEDING SOUTH FLORIDA



One out of nine people in South Florida experience food insecurity. Feeding South Florida is the largest, most efficient food bank serving Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties. SPSA members volunteered to assist with food bank packaging during the holiday season. We are proud to announce that during Fall 2022 our SPSA members helped package 608 food care packages for senior citizens struggling with food insecurity in Miami Dade County.



Our SPSA members volunteered again in Spring 2023. We are proud to share that we helped package over 1200 food care packages for people struggling with food insecurity in Miami Dade and Broward Counties. Approximately 24,000 pounds of food was packaged which equates to about 20,000 meals provided. Our members worked at our own station in which we packaged 756 boxes on our own.



SPSA 22-23 EVENTS

Spring 2023 Banquet



Graduate & Research Assistants



JILLIAN D. & WILLIAM W.

Graduate Assistants
Office of Academic Planning
& Accountability

SAM CASANOVA

Graduate Assistant
Dr. Shayl Griffith

SHANIYA MORRIS

Graduate Assistant
Dr. Amanda Allen
Dr. Tameeka Hunter



ALEXIS AHUMADA

Graduate Assistant
Dr. Michelle
Cumming

LESLINE CHARLES

Graduate Assistant
Dr. Andy Pham

SOLOMON KAMARA

Graduate Assistant
Dr. Alena Prhidko
Dr. Emily Messina



INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE



Stephania Desir

I completed my internship at Citrus County (located in central Florida, in a rural area). I decided to accept the internship opportunity at Citrus because I have spent the majority of my educator career in both Miami-Dade Public School and Broward Public School Districts. All of the students receive free lunch since a good portion of the families that reside in the county are low income. I am truly grateful for this experience because the school psychology department is small and I received a significant amount of attention, support and exposure to various

testing kits that were not exposed to us in the program. At Citrus County, I had four supervisors and I worked at two elementary schools, one high school, and one alternative school. I was challenged to write reports that were family friendly, which was a struggle at first, but became very helpful. I truly enjoy growing and building my professional skill and confidence. My suggestions to upcoming second year students who will embark on the journey to apply for internship for the next school year are to think about what skills you have to offer, what skills you want to expand on, what population you are interested in working with, and whether you are willing to move to a different county in the state of Florida or a different state. I wish nothing but the best of luck to upcoming interns in their field experience as school psychologists and everyone in the program. You got this! As for my fellow cohort we did it and we are off to a new adventure in our career, yay!

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Alyssa Del Campo



I had my internship with Collier County this past school year. In the beginning, I wasn't sure what to expect, but I knew that I would learn a lot more and get a sense for what it feels like to be a school psychologist. Throughout the year, I had to push myself out of my comfort zone to try new things and grow even though I was nervous and anxious about it. I got the chance to rotate and spend time at an elementary, middle, and high school. It was difficult at first to transition to a new school and new staff, but it was worth it.

You definitely will learn and be challenged the most during internship. I'm not going to lie; there were moments I felt like giving up, but I have my classmates I could reach out to vent to and for support when I needed it the most. Once I pushed myself, it helped me gain more confidence and was truly life-changing. I grew a lot professionally and even personally throughout the year. I feel like it was only the beginning as now soon I will embark on the challenge of being an official school psychologist. The learning will definitely never end, but with my experience I feel more ready than ever to begin this new journey and at the same district I started with! Just keep going and don't give up. It's hard, but you can do hard things. Remember why you are doing it, and it will be worth it in the end. There were many moments that made me think about how much I love my job and can't wait for more.



FIU

DIRECTORY
STUDENT UNION

Incoming Students 2023-24

Name: Yinette Santos-Almeida

Where you're from: Miami, FL

Hobbies/Interests: Spending time with my children and husband in our magical place, Disney!

Why School Psych: I've been an ESE teacher for 11 years and have seen the change occurring in the classroom with mental health. I found the school psychologist's role interesting and finally decided to make the decision to pursue that pathway.

***Project DIG Scholar**



Name: Indira Rabelo

Where you're from: Cuba

Hobbies/Interests: Traveling, biking, outdoor adventures, family time, watching movies, dancing, playing dominoes, enjoying the beach, learning new things.

Why School Psych: As School psychologists, we have the gift of creating a roadmap to success, and that is what I want to do. Each person, student, and family matters; we can either be a positive influence and help them transition and see them blossom into their full potential or not. The choice is and will always be ours. "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." - Gandhi

***Project DIG Scholar**



Incoming Students 2023-24

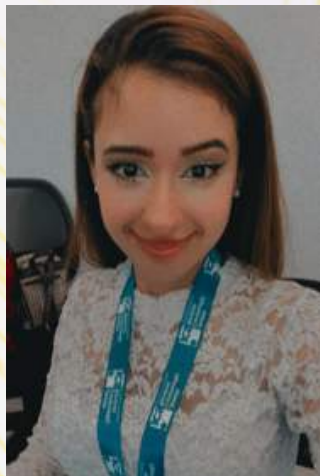
Name: Raquel Gutierrez

Where you're from: Orlando, FL

Hobbies/Interests: I love to go to the beach with my friends or try new places to eat. I also enjoy reading fiction books and watching TV.

Why School Psych: I chose school psychology because I have a passion for mental health and the education system. I want to help children reach their potential, which means supporting them through whatever social, emotional, or behavioral challenges they may have. I have worked with children with disabilities on a smaller scale and believe that becoming a school psychologist will allow me to have a greater positive impact on students' lives.

***Project CRYSTAL Scholar**



Name: Sabrina Valencia

Where you're from: Venezuela

Hobbies/Interests: Watching Formula 1 and reading Spanish literature

Why School Psych: I want to support trauma-exposed children in building their resilience both through research and therapy.

Incoming Students 2023-24

Name: Amanda Ratigan

Where you're from: Spring, Texas

Hobbies/Interests: Reading, trying new recipes (also known as eating), shopping, helicopter parenting, and being a moderately competent gardener.

Why School Psych: As a teacher for 10+ years, I was ready for a change, yet wanted to remain in public education. School psychologists are able to offer more targeted guidance to students, families, and teachers to help ensure the student's success.

***Project DIG Scholar**



Name: Maria Mejia

Where you're from: Clewiston, FL

Hobbies/Interests: I enjoy hanging out with friends, watching movies/shows, going to concerts, and exploring new places.

Why School Psych: It involves my passion for both education and psychology.

***Project CRYSTAL Scholar**

Incoming Students 2023-24

Name: Rachel Peters

Where you're from: West Palm Beach, FL

Hobbies/Interests: Traveling, reading, and baking

Why School Psych: I chose school psychology because I want to make a positive impact on the lives of students. My past experiences with undergraduate research and as an intern in a special needs classroom taught me that individuals can succeed when they have the resources and support they need. I have a passion for working with children, and I want to help them reach their full potential.

***Project DIG Scholar**



Name: Eric Sanchez

Where you're from: Miami, FL

Hobbies/Interests: I like to read, write music, play games, spend time with family and friends.

Why School Psych: I want to help society be better, and I believe that starts with the future generations to come.

***Project CRYSTAL Scholar**

Incoming Students 2023-24

Name: Shammahbel Saint-Louis

Where you're from: Miami, FL

Hobbies/Interests: Reading and gardening

Why School Psych: I like the idea of working with children and using my expertise to help them in the school setting.

***Project DIG Scholar**



Name: Kenya Lesperance

Where you're from: Miami, FL

Hobbies/Interests: Shopping, watching movies, working out (i.e., HIIT Training), traveling, and eating

Why School Psych: I want to learn how to assess and evaluate individual differences to identify intervention strategies.

Increase knowledge in instructional practices to promote and support for human diversity around the school environment. Above all, I chose school psychology to have the tools and knowledge to analyze and interpret system-level data to make informed and sound decisions.

***Project CRYSTAL Scholar**

Incoming Students 2023-24

Name: Isabella Sanchez

Where you're from: Miami, FL

Hobbies/Interests: Pilates, cycling, going to the beach, reading, and horseback riding

Why School Psych: I have always loved working with children since a young age. That is why I decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in elementary education. When I was an undergraduate student, I took an Introduction to School Psychology course and I enjoyed it. This drove me to shadow a school psychologist. I realized it was the career path for me because I am very passionate about providing students with mental health services to help them become the best version of themselves.

***Project DIG Scholar**



Name: Guillermo Gonzalez

Where you're from: Caracas, Venezuela

Hobbies/Interests: Music, hanging out with my cats, doing nothing. My favorite is doing nothing, but I rarely get to do that.

Why School Psych: In a nutshell, because I enjoy helping others.

***Project DIG Scholar**

Incoming Students 2023-24

Name: Hali Eisenberg

Where you're from: Miami, FL

Hobbies/Interests: I have been a dancer nearly all of my life so attending a fun dance class at my studio is always something I look forward to! I also really love going to the beach and laying out in the sun while reading a good book!

Why School Psych: I have always known that I wanted to work with children in my future career. Once I began taking psychology courses late into high school and through out college I realized that I loved learning about the various subjects such as abnormal psychology, clinical and counseling psychology, developmental psychology and much more. The opportunity to take such pressing psychology topics and use them for the greater good by helping children reach their fullest potential within the school system is something I am extremely passionate about. I want to make sure that every child has equal opportunity to receive intervention and assessment methods so that they can be successful contributors to society.

***Project DIG Scholar**

Name: Brooke Casanas

Where you're from: Hollywood, FL

Hobbies/Interests: My hobbies include any activity that takes place on/in the water.

Why School Psych: School psychology aligns with my professional goals and academic interests. This career will allow me to better support the diverse learners that make up our classrooms.

***Project CRYSTAL Scholar**

Good luck to our 2023-24 Interns



Samantha Casanova
Jillian Delisle
Gabriella Gonzalez
Solomon Kamara
Shaniya Morris
Erin Pieragowski
Lisette Sanz
William Wilson

Clarkstown Central School District
Miami Dade County Public Schools
Miami Dade County Public Schools
Rocketship Public Schools
Cleveland County Schools
Oldham County Schools
Miami Dade County Public Schools
Lake County Schools

Congrats to our 2023 Graduates



Jessica Bus	Broward County Public Schools
Cristina Criado	Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Alyssa Del Campo	Collier County Public Schools
Ryan Dell' Aquila	Broward County Public Schools
Stephania Desir	Citrus County Public Schools
Amy Garcia	Hillsborough County School District
Isabel Guaragna	Broward County Public Schools
Elisa Lage	Broward County Public Schools
Rosalina La O	Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Hannah Lefford	Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Monika Lopez	Montgomery County Public Schools
Ibis Mendoza	Miami Dade County Public Schools
Edwin Munoz	Collier County Public Schools
Rebeca Pelaez	Broward County Public Schools
Gisell Rodriguez	Palm Beach County School District
Vicky Sanchez	Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Brittany Sealy	Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Melissa Torres	Hillsborough County School District
Dominique Walker	Denton, TX

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SPSA Newsletter Committee: Samantha Casanova,
Jillian Delisle, Shaniya Morris, Kaitlyn Weaver