FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
EIGHTH HONORS COLLEGE CONVOCATION

OCTOBER THIRTEENTH ~ TWO THOUSAND EIGHT
Honors College Reflections Series

Keynote Address:

Dr. Charmaine DeFrancesco
HONORS COLLEGE FACULTY FELLOW
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION
Eighth Convocation of the Honors College
CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE
October 13, 2008 ~ 2pm ~ GRAHM CENTER BALLROOMS

Processional

National anthem
FIU Marching Band

Welcome
Lesley A. Northup, Dean, Honors College

Musical performance
Robbed by a Flute with Nikolas Balseiro

Call to Excellence
Ronald Berkman, Provost and Executive Vice President

Musical performance
Marlene Palomo and Bradley Samore

Admission of New Fellows
John Kneski, Associate Dean and Fellow

Musical performance
Ayman Elyasin

Convocation Address
Charmaine DeFrancesco, Honors College Fellow

Recognition of Student excellence
Andrew Grof, Honors College Fellow

Musical performance
Neveroff with Noel Hernandez

Recessional
Charmaine DeFrancesco came to FIU in 1989 as the Counseling Consultant for the Athletics Department after developing one of the first academic support programs for student-athletes at FSU. In 1991, she joined the College of Education as a faculty member and since then, has received several awards for her excellence in teaching. As a certified consultant in the area of Sport Psychology, she has had the opportunity to train athletes, coaches and teachers from the youth to professional levels. She has been a member of the United States Olympic Committee's Sport Psychology Registry. She has published and presented several papers related to her scholarship interests, which typically focus on individuals and groups often absent from the sports limelight: the exploited (collegiate student-athletes); the forgotten (injured athletes); the mistreated (children and youth); and the trivialized (females). She is very much interested in the academic success of students and the social aspects of the teaching and learning process throughout the lifespan. Examples of her scholarship can be found in *The International Journal of Sport Psychology, The Journal of Sport Behavior, The College Student Journal, The Sport Psychologist, The Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Strategies*, and *Education.*
EIGHTH HONORS COLLEGE CONVOCATION  
OCTOBER 13, 2008  
ADDRESS  
CHARMAINE DEFRANCESCO

Good afternoon. In late August, I received an email from Dean Northup inviting me to speak at convocation today. At first, I was quite thrilled – and then I inquired about the speech parameters: speak 5-10 minutes about something I am passionate about – that created quite a challenge for me – those of you who know me, know I can’t speak about anything within a 10 minute time frame – and this character trait gets more pronounced when I’m speaking about something passionate…. I was leaning toward declining the offer, but then read the rest of the dean’s message, “do it, or I’ll make you chairperson of the parade committee again” -

So, I had no choice but to say o.k.

Honestly, I am truly honored and humbled to have been invited to speak to you today – and as I just self-disclosed, I am long winded, so to stay within the dean’s guidelines, I decided that I will do something I have never done before: read my speech –

Weeks ago, I began to conceptualize my message for today knowing that it takes a lot of time to write anything that is clear and concise and meaningful.
I began thinking about my task with some self-reflection…. I asked myself, what is it that I am passionate about…. And so many things came to mind…

Animal rights

Human rights
Realizing that this was an inefficient exercise, I decided to use a more familiar strategy. I asked myself to finish the statement that I ask my students to finish at the beginning of each semester:
I am……

Typically, the comments I get from my students provide me with insight into who they are – and - their answers often highlight the contexts and constructs to which they most identify.

So, I wasn’t surprised that when I filled in the blank my first reaction was not “an Irish, Italian, Scottish-middle aged American woman – or – a die-hard cubs fan from the north side of Chicago

I also wasn’t surprised that I did not answer: I am a daughter, a sister, an achingly old athlete, a partner and particularly at this moment in time, a primary care giver – what I answered, will be of no surprise to many of you – I answered: I am a teacher!
And i am passionate about teaching my students to learn about themselves and the world in which we live to make it a better place for everyone and most everything that inhabits it.

To help fulfill my passion, i do what many most of my colleagues who teach in the honors college do - i ask a lot of questions. I try to instill in my students that it is best to “reflect” then “act” instead of impulsively “reacting” to questions and problems, both real and hypothetical.

I begin by asking my students a simple question:

have you ever done something really stupid, and afterwards ask “what was I thinking”? 

THOSE OF US WHO CAN – TEACH -AND THOSE OF US WHO CAN’T, GO INTO SOME LESS SIGNIFICANT LINE OF WORK
And like myself, most of my students say “yea”.

Then I challenge them to challenge themselves to be proactive and reflective in their thinking, acting, and self-development.

**WHAT AM I THINKING?**

**WHY AM I THINKING THIS WAY?**

I require my students to ask themselves “what am I thinking” and then I ask them to reflect on “why” they’re thinking that way?

My students know that answers of “because” or “because she said so” typically result in academic and unfortunately, societal failures...

As a teacher, I believe that everyone, especially you FIU honors students, who will become the leaders of tomorrow, need to engage in self-exploration to develop a much greater understanding of why you think the way that you do in *every domain* of human development.
It is only after you discover that you have a good understanding of why you think the way that you do can you begin to address problems and issues within “the big picture”.

So, given that my 10 minutes is up, I challenge all of you to be curious about why you think the way that you do –

Many of you will find, as most of us in academia have, that we are constantly influenced by the past, by our families, by our friends, teachers, spiritual leaders, the media – and of course, the internet.
I challenge you to examine your thinking and your perceptions.

Do you think the way that you do because you have a grasp of the big picture and the whole truth?

Do you think the way that you do because of the imagination, interpretation and truth provided by others?

Have you personally experienced a situation one time and have made generalizations regarding that experience?

Do you think the way that you do because you don’t know what to think?
Most-likely, at this stage in your development, some of your answers will be very clear and others will fall into that grey area -

And that’s o.k. –

I urge you to question yourselves and others – ask for the data, the proof – study the interpretations of many wise people – don’t be quick for form an opinion or hypothesis – an yes, even during family gatherings and dinners, be brave enough to “stir the pot”.

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.
The important thing is not to stop questioning.

Today, i challenge you to develop your metacognitive skills – and to be as fully mindful of yourselves and your inner workings as you are about memorizing the periodic table of the elements, reading Plato’s republic or examining the data presented in freakonmics for the first time.
I also challenge you to challenge others to do the same – our futures and in particular, your futures depend on your skills to think independently and reflectively about how your personal decisions and those of our leaders will affect the big picture tomorrow.

Thank you and have a great year!
The Benefits of The Honors College

The Honors College at Florida International University in Miami offers the best of two worlds. It is a small community of outstanding students, dedicated scholars, and committed teachers who work together in an atmosphere usually associated with small private colleges. Yet, we do so with all the resources of a major state university, which is one of the nation's top doctoral / research extensive universities. Only 152 universities in the United States hold this superior rank.

The Honors College provides a broad foundation for dedicated students who want to get the most out of their undergraduate education. The undergraduate experience it provides is significantly enhanced by the broad interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum and opportunities to work closely with expert faculty and in the community. The opportunities for graduate or professional study and for employment are greatly expanded because of the range of unique activities and academic experiences made available to students in the College.

The Honors Curriculum

A student may pursue almost any major available in the University and at the same time complete the honors curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes the following activities: critical, integrative, and creative thinking; group and independent research; oral presentation; close contact between students and faculty; and integration of class work with the broader community.

Outstanding Professors and Researchers

“Knowledgeable, caring, enthusiastic, and approachable”. These are some of the characteristics students use to describe the diverse honors faculty. Carefully selected from the more than fourteen hundred faculty members at the University for their accomplishments as both teachers and scholars, members of the honors faculty take great pride in their close association with their students and are committed to excellence.

Honors Place at Panther Hall

Honors Place, a living-learning community in Panther Hall, University Park, is the “in” place to live on campus. Provided space is available, all Honors College students are eligible to live in this great community of local, national, and international students. These multi-talented and multi-interested students are what makes Honors Place the “Best Living and Learning Community” in the state, as recognized by Florida Leader magazine.
Study Abroad Opportunities

The Honors College has been conducting study abroad programs since 1994 and currently offers opportunities for its students in Spain, Italy, and Jamaica. They are all designed to fulfill one year (six credits) of The Honors College curriculum requirement. The Honors College Study Abroad Programs offer students the opportunity to experience immersion in another culture while pursuing a rigorous academic program integrated with the Honors curriculum. Instruction is in English in all the programs.

Additional Opportunities in The Honors College

- Scholarships ~ Special Study Abroad Programs
- Priority Registration & Special Advising
- Research and Artistic Initiatives Program
- A Special Community of Students and Faculty
- Excellence Lectures & Forums with Leading Scholars & Policymakers
- Outstanding Professors and Researchers
- Interdisciplinary Curriculum
- Team-taught and Individually-taught Seminars
- Special Residence Hall at Honors Place
- Library Borrowing Privileges as Graduate Students
- Student Information Technology Centers
- Gamma Epsilon Phi, the UP Honors College Student Society
- Tau Sigma Alpha the BBC Honors College Student Society
- Funding to Attend National and International Conferences
- Small Classes and Close Relationships with Professors
- Honors Convocation with Recognition of Student Excellence
- Internship, Mentoring, and Service Learning Opportunities
- College Presence at Both University Park and Biscayne Bay
- Awards Assembly for Graduating Seniors
- Special Recognition at Commencement

Notation on Transcript: “Graduated through the University Honors College”
MISSION & AIMS OF THE HONORS COLLEGE

The mission of the Honors College is to provide an intellectual community where outstanding students and dedicated teachers and scholars pursue intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and personal and professional enrichment marked by excellence in all engagements. It is guided by the FIU Value Statement, which espouses a commitment to: freedom of thought and expression; excellence in the pursuit, generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge; respect for the dignity of the individual; respect for the environment; honesty, integrity, and truth; diversity; and service excellence.

The aims of the Honors College are to

1. attract the "best and brightest" students from within and outside FIU and provide them a high quality trans-disciplinary educational experience.

2. enable students to develop critical, integrative, and creative thinking skills and to make connections among domains of knowledge.

3. facilitate engagement of students in applied and other research collaboration with the finest research faculty as learners and teachers in the scholarly community.

4. provide mentoring and internship experiences to complement and enrich the knowledge acquired in the classroom and through research collaboration.

5. offer scope for service learning engagement as a way to build bridges between domains of knowledge and service activity that enhances civic responsibility.

6. foster a sense of community among students and faculty as citizens with special talents and responsibilities to self, the scholarly community, and society.
The Honors College Administration

Administration
Lesley A. Northup, Ph.D. (Catholic University), Dean & Fellow
John S. Kneski, M.Arch. II (Syracuse University), Associate Dean & Fellow
Juan Carlos Espinosa (University of Miami), Associate Dean & Fellow
Jose Rodriguez, M.S.Ed (University of Miami), Assistant Dean

Office Staff
Sachin Gursahani, Coordinator and Medical Education Advisor
Nicole Stratten Coordinator of Student Services
Meaghan Bradshaw, Coordinator of Student Enrichment
Rosie Barredo, Administrative Assistant
Lourdes Pereira, Program Assistant
Jayne Klein, BBC Coordinator
Juan C. Lopez, Information Technology Coordinator
Rachelle Galindo, Development Assistant
Jillian Torres, SRAI Program Assistant
David Aviles, Program Assistant
Leif Elliott, IT Officer
Omar Santos, UP Office Receptionist
Ana Perez, UP Student Assistant
Katherine Bennett, BBC Student Assistant
Antonina Shachar, BBC Student Assistant
2008-2009 Honors College Faculty Fellows

Daniel Alvarez, M.A., M.T.S. (Harvard University), Economics
Regina C. Bailey, M.F.A. (Pratt Institute), Art and Art History
John Bailly, M.F.A. (Yale University), Art
Martha M. Barantovich, EdD. (Florida International University),
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
William K. Beesting, Ph.D. (Florida State University), English
Manuel J. Carvajal, Ph.D. (University of Florida), Economics
David C. Chatfield, Ph.D. (University of Minnesota), Chemistry
Helen Z. Cornely, Ph.D. (Florida International University), Physical Therapy
Gwyn Davies, Ph.D. (University College London), History
Charmaine DeFrancesco, Ph.D. (Florida State University), Education
Grenville Draper, Ph.D. (University of the West Indies), Earth Sciences
Leonard Elbaum, EdD. (Florida International University), Physical Therapy
Stephen M. Fain, Ed.D. (Teachers College, Columbia University),
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
H. Scott Fingerhut, J.D. (Emory University), Law
Stephen M. Fjellman, Ph.D. (Stanford University), Anthropology
Rubén Garrote, M.A. (Florida International University), Religious Studies
Fernando Gonzalez-Reigosa, Ph.D. (Florida State University), Psychology
Andrew Grof, M.A., M.L.S (Fordham University), English
Caryl Myers Grof, M.S. (Florida International University), English
Arthur W. Herriott, Ph.D. (College of Wooster), Chemistry
Marilyn Hoder-Salmon, Ph.D. (University of New Mexico), English
Robert H. Hogner, Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh), Marketing and Business Environment
Scott Kass, MA, MS (Florida State University), Library
Peter A. Machonis, Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University), Modern Languages
Pete E.C. Markowitz, Ph.D. (College of William and Mary), Physics
Florentin Maurrasse, Ph.D. (Columbia University), Earth Sciences
DeEtta (Dee) Mills, Ph.D. (George Mason University), Biology
Ana Pasztor, Ph.D. (Darmstadt University), Computer Science
Brian Peterson, Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin-Madison), European History
Joyce Peterson, Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin-Madison),
History and Humanities Program
Mary Lou Pfeiffer, L.L.M., M.A. (Florida International University), History
Darden Pyron, Ph.D. (University of Virginia), Environmental Studies
James R. Riach, Ph.D. (University of Georgia), Religious Studies
William Ritzi, M.S. (Florida International University), History
Bennett Schwartz, Ph.D. (Dartmouth College), Psychology
John Tsalikis, Ph.D. (University of Mississippi), Marketing
M.O. Thirunarayanan, Ph.D. (Arizona State University), Education
The Honors College wishes to express its gratitude to all those who have contributed to making its eighth Convocation a success.

SPECIAL THANKS

Flamingo Gardens
Florida Marlins Baseball Club, LLC
Maroosh Mediterranean Restaurant
Rusty Pelican
Vizcaya Museum
Sam Ash Music
Regina Bailey
Juan Carlos Espinosa
Scott Fingerhut
Jose Rodriguez
Lesley A. Northup
Mary Lou Pfeiffer
THE HONORS COLLEGE
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS, DM 233
BISCAYNE BAY CAMPUS, AC1 200
WEB: HONORS.FIU.EDU