





Photo by Valerie Villa

**John Bailly** (right) is now the Deering Estate Artist in Residence, where his studio is open to visitors who can observe him painting and discuss his work with him. As always, Bailly incorporates his teaching into his work, and now has four student interns assisting with the residency: Valerie Villa, Roxana Vargas, Alejandro Lugo, and Rachel Young, only one of whom is an art major.

For *10,000 Years of Miami*, Bailly conducted field research to explore the history of Miami, revealing how popular perceptions of Miami and its authentic reality are divergent. The interns have joined him in snorkeling, kayaking, hiking to remote areas, networking, and actually painting as they develop this theme collaboratively using the site's archaeological and historical resources. This project was featured in the *New Times*. See filmmaker JC Velazquez 's Vimeo of Bailly at <https://vimeo.com/155489969>

Bailly was also recently given an award of \$300 by FIU Trustee Gerald Grant as the faculty member who brought the most alumni to campus during Panther Alumni Week (PAW). PAW was established by Grant to bring alums back to campus to share their experiences and expertise with current students.



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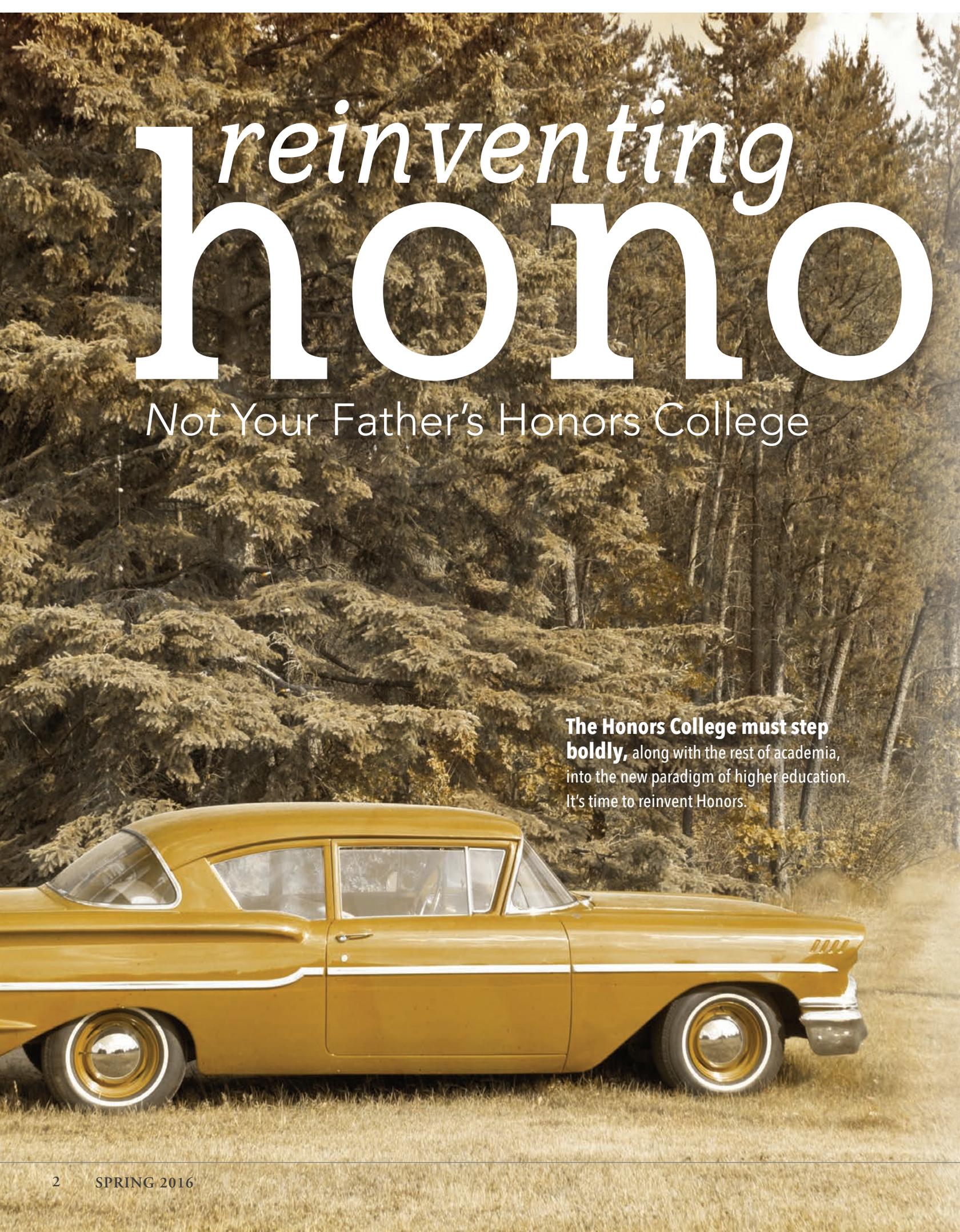
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# *reinventing* hono

Not Your Father's Honors College

**The Honors College must step boldly,** along with the rest of academia, into the new paradigm of higher education. It's time to reinvent Honors.



# rs

by Lesley Northup

**D**id your school have an honors college? Were you in one?

Chances are that your idea of honors colleges back then wasn't very different from how they are still defined today: elite academic programs for top students, designed to provide them with enhanced learning opportunities and a great resume bullet. Within that prototype, some structural differences pop up today; a few honors colleges are separate and self-contained, while most offer little more than somewhat advanced courses in the major. And some, like FIU's, have a full battery of both interdisciplinary courses and co-curricular opportunities. The checklist of options varies from institution to institution, but most honors units pull from the same grab bag: a foundational course or two, study abroad, research theses, invitational lectures, small class sizes, close faculty mentoring, IT labs, set-aside scholarships.

If the content of these programs hasn't changed much from their inception, neither has their real purpose from an institutional point of view: recruiting high-achieving students, creating an elite silo for them, building prestige for the university, and generating a successful cadre of alumni. These days we also talk about their responsibility for promoting critical thinking, a somewhat nebulous skill; as one of our senior Faculty Fellows used to ask, "What other kind

of thinking is there?"

FIU's Honors College has been stalwart—indeed, outstanding—in pursuing these and quite a few other goals over the years, and we are proud of what we've achieved. But the time has come for a sea change. We believe that universities—especially state universities—can no longer afford for honors colleges to be what one former FIU provost called "boutique units." We believe that the longstanding honors model can no longer be sustained, or indeed have significant value, in 21st century education. We believe that the Honors College must step boldly, along with the rest of academia, into the new paradigm of higher education. It's time to reinvent Honors.

"Reinvention" is already a rather hackneyed term; it would be more energizing if there were some bracing new phrase to use instead, something that would convey a sense of urgency and even danger, because that is where we find ourselves. We change or we risk being left behind, as weaker members of migrating tribes were abandoned by the side of the path as the strong moved on. Happily, however, we approach reinvention not fearfully, but with an exhilarating sense of challenge and anticipation. The re-imagining, the re-visioning, of the Honors College is already well underway as we build on the successes of the past while embracing

the promise of a paradigm shift.

First and foremost we are determined to demolish the silo. Silos are for farms. They are not gilded cages for the elite. Honors community does not require segregation, nor does Honors prestige require elitism. Students still want the prestige, but they should earn it, not fall into it by dint of test scores that we know poorly predict student success and disadvantage various student groups. FIU Honors offers prestige, but not elitism. Honors is actually anti-elitist, offering all sorts of young people an opportunity for a value-added education worthy of the Ivy League. Our focus is not on what students did before, but on what they will do with the many opportunities we offer them now. In short, we want students who are eager to participate fully in the Honors experience and contribute fully to the Honors community. In principle, an Honors education should be available to any student who can and will "work the program," and maximize the unique value added it provides. FIU has plenty of Honors-caliber students; they just need to self-identify as wanting what we've got to give them—and we need to reconsider the hoops we make them jump through to be part of Honors.

A corollary to this is that Honors can no longer be a well-kept secret around FIU. We are coming out of the academic closet, recruiting current FIU

# the driver of undergraduate excellence at FIU

At its best, the Honors College is a breathtakingly advanced pedagogical laboratory that the university is only beginning to appreciate. **We are anxious to partner, not compete, with other units.**

students as well as freshmen, showing face wherever the action is, standing up as changemakers. We need to dispel the falsehoods that float around unchallenged: that Honors will bring down your GPA (it usually raises it); that Honors “doesn’t count” (it counts toward core and often toward electives in the major and/or capstone courses); that it’s not relevant to majors (see the article on “Tracks” in this magazine); that it’s “harder” (nope—just better).

Bulldozing the Honors silo will not only benefit our students, but it will also benefit the university, bringing Honors into its

core, where it rightly belongs. Though small, the College can and must be a resource for all of FIU, not just its own students. As our students and

faculty fan out into FIU’s community and classes, they bring with them infectious qualities: excitement about learning, a drive to innovate, eagerness to engage in discourse, facility with teamwork, interdisciplinary problem-solving. Honors is the leaven helping the dough to rise.

At its best, the Honors College is a breathtakingly advanced pedagogical laboratory that the university is only beginning to appreciate. We are anxious to partner, not compete, with other units. For many years, there was a lingering sense that somehow an honors college subtracted from the resources available to other colleges. It is way past time to correct that misconception. Honors has a great deal to share with the FIU community beyond invigorated students who help raise the level of discourse throughout the university’s courses. Honors also brings experience and fine-tuning to today’s hot teaching techniques, many of which we anticipated by years. For example, before they became the “in” thing, we were using and improving team teaching, peer instruction, hybrid teaching, flipped courses, basic student success skills

classes, portfolio assessment, service research, and undergraduate problem-based learning. We will gladly export what we’ve learned to anyone at FIU who’s interested.

For 15 years, we have also offered a full-scale research program, including a six-credit course; training in proposal writing, poster preparation, and presentation; hosting regional undergraduate research conferences as well as our own major annual conference; and sending students to national and international conferences. Now the Honors College has been asked by the Provost to assist with enlarging the scope and quality of undergraduate research throughout the university. This spring’s upcoming Conference for Undergraduate Research at FIU (CURFIU) will feature participants from across the colleges and programs of the university. A new web portal is being launched to consolidate and promote research information and opportunities, to match young scholars and faculty mentors, and to enhance student skills in this crucial aspect of undergraduate education. We’re thrilled to be in the thick of it.

Likewise, the College will be serving the institution by coordinating various types of honors programs, societies, organizations, and activities across campus to maximize cooperation and information for our students and faculty, building an FIU Honors coalition. And perhaps the most exciting area in which we will now be able to serve the university is undergraduate innovation and entrepreneurship, another field where we have well-established courses and programs to share, as well as many students already breaking the curve. FIU’s recent designation as an Ashoka Changemaker Campus, committed to social innovation, is sparking an invigorating emphasis on areas in which we can offer expertise: curriculum, co-curricular programming, mentoring, and organizations for undergraduate innovation and entrepreneurial acceleration.

This major re-visioning will mean our focus will shift outward not only to the university as a whole, but also to the other units within it. With every falling brick in

the silo, another collaboration becomes possible with our campus colleagues. At the moment, we have active partnerships with no fewer than 15 other units, including the Colleges of Medicine and Law, the Frost and Wolfsonian Museums, the College of Business, Athletics, the Center for Leadership, Veterans Affairs, University Housing, the College of Architecture and the Arts, the McNair Program, FIU Online, and the College of Engineering. We are working on at least a dozen new alliances that will bring about productive collisions of talent, experience, and perhaps even fundraising.

The demise of the silo will allow Honors to serve the university by sharing—not imposing—what we do best. But there are other ways in which we can refocus our energies to the benefit of FIU. Perhaps most critically, we can take a more active role in contributing to the metrics the institution must supply to the State Board of Governors. These measures of success have a direct correlation to university funding. Generally, honors colleges are thought to be too small to have an impact on these critical numbers, but that is not necessarily the case. We are working closely with university administration to ensure that we are boosting key metrics.

Underlying all this is an acceptance of the reality that academia must, even if reluctantly, accept basic business principles as the model of effective management. Faculty are not always comfortable with this notion, but it is nonetheless how higher education must now be run—and it is also how Honors

must be run. With this in mind, we are also internally reexamining practices and assumptions that have remained unchallenged far too long, with a view to being stronger, more efficient, and better managed.

While serving the university, we must always stay focused on serving our students. We have listened when our students tell us they want not only an academic and cultural education, but also professional preparation. So we train our students in real-world success skills, which also become habits of thought: oral and written communication; working in interdisciplinary teams; thinking on their feet; negotiating; networking; problem-solving; logical analysis; clear argumentation; leadership; ethics; appropriate grooming and personal interaction; taking creative ideas to implementation; fundraising; finance—well, you get the idea. In addition, they receive interdisciplinary training that is relevant to multiple fields while also being particularly applicable to their majors; for example, our multi-course sequence in social entrepreneurship is of value to almost anyone with a social conscience or awareness of the larger world, while being particularly useful to business majors.

We also give our pre-professionals the best possible opportunities to achieve their dreams. In the last year, we have initiated 6 early assurance pipeline programs for medicine, law, pharmacy, dentistry, osteopathy, and engineering, with more in the works. No other honors program anywhere has so many options for its students to know, two years into

college, that they will indeed be able to take the next big step on their academic and professional career paths.

But that's still not enough. Reinvention never stops. As of now, we are the only major honors program in the country that offers courses online. That's huge. Why? Because we have to meet the students where they are, not where we think they should be. And they're online. They're working two jobs. They're in jobs requiring travel. They're taking care of their families. They're car-less. Or they're stuck in traffic. And they're comfortable online. Nonetheless, the almost universal refrain from honors administrators nationwide is, "But that's not honors." Sure it is! We know it is, because we're doing it. And because we're doing it first, we're going to do it so well that everyone will look at us and say, "Wow. Yeah, that *is* honors!" We believe in this so much that we've introduced Honors College membership to students in fully online degree programs. Nobody in a non-profit university is doing *that*. Next step: revolutionary online pedagogy.

The Honors College is reinventing not only itself, but the model of what honors can and should be. No longer an ivory tower of SAT stars, we are becoming an ever more vibrant, edgy, provocative educational laboratory where innovation never stops and whose discoveries can be shared throughout the university. When, in a recent workshop, FIU deans were asked to briefly summarize their units' missions and goals, we said ours was to be the driver of undergraduate excellence at FIU.

**This is what we're driving. ■**



## GEEK ON A PLANE

by Tara Demren

I was one of those students who didn't really have a particular career in mind. Facing college somewhat blankly, I did what anyone would do—I came up with a plan that sounded respectable. I had always been interested in business. In high school, I headed the largest business organization, through which my team and I competed in developing business plans; for 3 consecutive years we were state finalists. So I decided to be a business woman. I'd work in exports and imports between China and Turkey. I even took a year of Mandarin! But I knew from the first that I was far from "following my bliss."

Once I got to FIU, I had my freshman year to dabble in my core classes and explore random topics. I loved my business courses but my Honors courses became my space to cultivate creativity. Gradually, I became a well-rounded student—a well-rounded student who still did not know what she wanted to do. Then I heard of Startup Weekend, a competition where you and a team have 54 hours to create a company concept and pitch it to a panel of judges. Voila! Something I could put my heart and soul into—creating a new thing from scratch and seeing it through. *That* sounded blissful!

Startup Weekend redefines time, pushes your limits, and tests your taste for competition. It's 54 hours in one room, sardined with 80 people, trying to create, sell, and realize an entrepreneurial idea. Got a great idea? Can you get a team to help you put it together? No? Maybe you want to join someone else's team. Hurry up. Only 45 hours left! With my friend and fellow Honors student, Demetrius Villa, I threw myself into this melee. After

a particularly vicious round of *extreme* rock-paper-scissors (I took a strange pride in being the runner-up in this random, skill-less exercise), my group developed its 10-minute corporate idea: "Fierce Werewolves" would send the family of a really bad bully a werewolf costume to scare their kid into better behavior. Well, that was just a warm-up. Once the ideas became serious, I found I had to switch groups because mine wasn't gaining traction.

The next day, with almost no sleep, I hustled up both body and mind: Go big or go home! It took half a day, but by Saturday afternoon we finally began living out the weekend's slogan, "No talk, all action!" Saturday felt more like a week than a day, but by the end, we thought we had a fighting chance to win. Sunday was a heart-pounding, nerve-wracking experience. We devised the business plan, the app interface, the monetization strategies, the targeted market, and the presentation collectively all within the final few hours. In the end, our group of non-tech business people placed third! Maybe even better, there was an all-around feeling of the best kind of exhaustion—exhaustion from accomplishment.

That event last June proved to be the tipping point in my view of the future. The sheer adrenaline and pressure to deliver under tight deadlines hooked me. Add to that unlimited access to participating mentors, learning from other participants, and that exhilarating sense of being part of the creative process, and I knew entrepreneurship was for me. After that, I felt ready to take on the world. Of course, this did not happen.



At least not right away. Disappointments, distractions, and an episode of passing heartbreak delayed my ambitions. Eventually, however, I drew myself up and reflected that my most important takeaway from Startup Weekend was that, even with limited time, hurdles can be overcome; those who could see past the obstacles and quickly work around them were the winners. This was my wake-up call.

I started attending local tech and startup events. I met a lot of entrepreneurs and other inspirational people and made sure to keep in touch with them. Then, out of nowhere, I got an job offer at a startup company called LiveAnswer, for which I was referred by my Startup Weekend mentor. LiveAnswer, a tech platform providing on-demand phone support, was a strange industry for me to enter, but I seized the moment to throw myself into this exploration of working at a startup, even as a low-level content writer. I resolved I would

not tackle this opportunity just to write or to make money, but to maximize what I could learn and contribute. My new boss made sure of this. I am grateful he kept teaching me how to wear every one of his various hats as an entrepreneur. I didn't feel much like a content writer—more like a CEO-shadow. Seeing the highs and lows first-hand, I gained an insight into entrepreneurship that I probably couldn't have found anywhere else.

Of course, naively but brazenly, I asked for equity before we even determined my schedule. Looking back, I have to laugh at my presumption but it certainly reflected my desire to take ownership of my responsibilities. I persisted, and it actually paid off, as I was soon moved to a full-time position so I could get stock options. By my third month with LiveAnswer, I had become the strategy manager and we had been voted Tech. Co's #1 Startup in Miami. Off we went to Las Vegas to compete nationally, working non-stop to prepare and refine

"Startup Weekend is a competition where you and a team have 54 hours to create a company concept and pitch it to a panel of judges. Voila! Something I could put my heart and soul into—creating a new thing from scratch and seeing it through. That sounded blissful!" said Demren



“Spending each waking hour with influential geeks gave me a bevy of global connections, a new outlook on opportunities, and friendships I will cherish forever.”

our pitch. Out of over 1,000 national applicants, we were voted the #3 Startup of the Year!

And that made possible my participation in Geeks on a Plane (GOAP). The program focused on exploring emerging tech and startup ecosystems in the Middle East and opening doors to international connections with selected entrepreneurs, executives and investors. I felt like I was riding a rocket ship and barely registered how quickly I was moving. Billy Joel’s song “Vienna” was my earworm (“Where’s the fire, what’s the hurry about? You’d better cool it off before you burn it out. You’ve got so much to do and only so many hours in a day...”). I got to see cities from Amman to Cairo to Dubai and to meet with local entrepreneurs and ambitious students. I participated in panel discussions, mentor sessions and startup pitching competitions, and gained enormous insight into the region’s people and their ideas.

I was surprised to see the same entrepreneurial spirit I see in the United States, though with a different end goal. The people in this newly developing region have limited knowledge and resources and must take great risks, so their efforts were largely focused on community problems, no matter how difficult. For instance, in Jordan, I was fortunate to have the chance to mentor startups from Gaza focused on addressing key issues, such as 6-hour electricity restrictions. This became the most intense and humbling experience of the trip for most of us.

GOAP gave me incredible insight into a region I would have otherwise overlooked. Even though the program left me physically and mentally exhausted, I was overflowing with newfound understanding and motivation. Spending each waking hour with influential

geeks gave me a bevy of global connections, a new outlook on opportunities, and friendships I will cherish forever.

Back in the states, my boss and I decided to create a central place for startup and tech-related information and events on a site called MiamiStartup.com. It is a

work in progress, but we are working to build a hub for the tech community.

LiveAnswer may be acquired soon, and I plan on seeing that through. This is the end-goal for most startups, so it is very exciting to be in the middle of it. Meanwhile, my boss and I are starting our next venture, which is going to be a global-scale play. Is this a lot to juggle? Yes, but that’s what serial entrepreneurs do. They are already thinking three moves ahead of the rest. For this venture, I am officially the co-founder of the new company, though I’ll have a lot to learn.

The key traits associated with being an entrepreneur are resilience, a strong sense of self, flexibility, vision, and passion. I believe that every Honors class I have had fostered these traits in me: resilience in completing challenging assignments, a strong sense of self in defending my viewpoints and in writing argumentative papers, flexibility in learning about subjects I disliked, and finally both vision and passion from professors urging us to explore what we want from life. This environment allowed me to take risks while still developing myself.

I am also proud to see my university taking the initiative to elevate the student startup community. The entrepreneurial drive for global reach and impact starts with education and support. My peers have vast entrepreneurial potential and FIU can and must foster it.

And what of the girl who couldn’t imagine the future? I have found that I would much rather take a blind leap of faith for a new idea time after time, despite the chance of failure, than regret never trying and live my life with a big “what if” always hanging above my head. I have found my bliss and I’m enjoying every minute of following it. ■

# NO UNEMPLOYMENT LINE HERE

## Honors Career Center Finds Something for Everyone

Last year, civil engineering major Daniel Irigoyen came to the Honors College Career Services Center looking for an internship. He was disappointed to find we had nothing in his field. The head of the office, Isabel Green, was just as frustrated. “Wait a minute,” she told Daniel. “If you could intern anywhere you wanted, where would it be?” Daniel didn’t have to think long; he wanted Kimley-Horn, one of the country’s premier design consulting firms. “OK,” said Isabel, “Let’s see what we can do,” picking up the phone. In short order, Daniel had his dream position, and Isabel had devised a unique, proactive strategy for getting top placements for our students.

Universities typically wait for companies to come to them with internship offers, then push often-square pegs into round holes trying to fill the openings. Isabel’s innovation, however, has reversed that model; Honors now finds a student-shaped hole in the market for each of its prospective interns.

In 2013-14, we placed just 16 students in internships. This year, we have placed over 250, and that number is still climbing. More importantly, we have placed every student looking to intern. This remarkable turnaround is due largely to Green, who joined Honors in 2014 as a Coordinator—a job she liked but certainly was not passionate about. At the same time, our development efforts were producing successful relationships with many employers who were interested in our excellent cadre of students. As Isabel started filling these new positions with young wannabe interns, she realized she had indeed found a job she loved, and poured her energy, creativity, and concern for students into it. The result is a full-suite employment program that prepares young jobseekers for the future.

Why is this important? A few key factoids: Students who intern are twice as likely to get job offers. Nearly 40% of full-time, entry-level hires are conversions from internships. Graduates who’ve done at least one internship get starting salaries almost \$12,000 higher than those who haven’t. This information has spawned a nationwide paradigm shift emphasizing internships as an integral part of undergraduate education.

Employers want experienced employees. And yet, the social media are filled with memes of college students, heads in their hands, moaning, “So you’re telling me I have to get experience before I get experience?” highlighting the frustration of the millennial generation. The disconnect between the demand and the preparation is dramatic; students today are faced with a dynamically changing



workplace and often feel inadequate to confront it. Preparing them for this challenge is a crucial part of their education and of our promise to them.

Not all university career centers are nimble enough to fully meet these new demands. Gone are yesteryear’s poster boards full of index cards. But despite our proactive placement techniques, to place a student in an internship now is to do only half the job. We resolved to emphasize the process over the end goal, knowing that teaching our students the steps to securing a successful internship—and, ultimately, a job—will better prepare them for life without us. Students must be able to take with them the skills, the resources, and the strategies they need to be able to successfully repeat the search process long after they’ve left college. At Honors, we teach them to fish instead of just handing them a mackerel.

Every student who applies for one of our internships receives, whether in person or not, immediate, personalized communication from a Career Services professional, individual feedback on his or her resume, and training in long-term strategies for success, such as how to stand out from other applicants. Every student with an interview is given one-on-one training in business etiquette, preparation strategies, common interview questions, and best follow-up practices, as well as the option for a mock interview. And a fruitless application is not the end. A student who does not get a desired position receives encouragement and assistance for the next move toward another position.

Our new Career Services Center has already outgrown its small office and word is out that we’ve found a formula that works. We focus on every aspect of the internship process, taking students through all the chutes and ladders from start to finish and beyond—because the search for job fulfillment is never really finished. ■

**WANT A GREAT INTERN FOR YOUR BUSINESS? CONTACT ISABEL AT 305-348-4100.**

## PLANNING THE AMERICAN DREAM

**RALPH ROSADO**

**W**hen Ralph Rosado applied to the Honors College in its inaugural year of 1990, he was disappointed to find that he had been wait-listed. On the first day of classes, however, he discovered that his wait was over: he was suddenly an Honors student, a memory Ralph delights in.

This initial success encouraged him to attempt greater challenges. Within six years he had earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in English and found himself at Princeton University working on a master's degree in public and urban regional planning. He completed his education in 2015 with a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in city and regional planning, with specializations in housing policy and neighborhood revitalization.

Ralph's interest in urban development was piqued by his job working for the City of Sweetwater (now a close engagement partner with the Honors College). Building on that experience, he joined other firms in South Florida and eventually in Washington, D.C., gaining both experience and expertise. This year, his own firm, Rosado and Associates, celebrated its first anniversary as an urban planning and economic development strategy firm.

Not content with merely starting his own successful company, Rosado has also condensed his considerable insight into a forthcoming book by





Penn Press that discusses how citizens can influence land use and real estate development to create more desirable and livable cities. He lives out his advice by serving with, among other things, Friends of the Underline, a group designing the nation's largest under-rail park project here in Miami. He is also active with the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund, helping Hispanic entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

Ralph has received numerous awards, including three statewide honors from the American Planning Association's Florida chapter. He has been named one of Miami's Top Nonprofit Executives by the Miami Foundation, and a Top Latino Leader of Miami by *Latino Leaders* magazine. The affordable housing program he co-designed recently won the Best Program Award for Housing and Affordability in Miami-Dade. He is also one of only thirteen recipients of the inaugural Citi Bank Partners in Progress nationwide grant, and has been given the Grassroots Initiative Award by the Gold Coast APA Chapter for his work on Coral Villas Park with "Neighbors of Schenley Park."

Rosado's savvy in urban affairs has also been recognized by FIU, where he serves as an FIU Metropolitan Center Fellow, and as an instructor in local government and economic development for FIU's Executive Masters of Public Administration program and for the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs. He also served his alma mater for eight years on the Board of Directors of the FIU Alumni Association, and is a steady and enthusiastic presence on campus during special events.

Despite his extensive community involvement, Ralph is first and foremost a dedicated family man, with a wife and three children, as anyone friending him on Facebook will notice immediately. Applying his family values to the elderly, he and a group of friends have launched the Abuelos Foundation, an organization to help needy senior citizens receive vital home renovations while involving multiple generations in solving community problems.

Ralph Rosado has built a career of, in the words of former Florida governor Ruben Askew, "listening to the dreams of Americans" as they build the spaces they inhabit and enjoy. He now looks forward to listening and responding to the dreams of Miami constituents as he seeks a position on the City of Miami Commission. He's pretty good at getting dreams realized. His journey began when one of his own early dreams was fulfilled: that college freshman who almost didn't get into the Honors College is now a proud member of its Community Advisory Board. ■

# FEATURE

## FAST TRACKING

Honors students generally know where they're going. When they get on the Honors express, they usually have a destination already in mind. That's why our Early Assurance Programs (EAPs) are so popular—two years into college, most of our pre-med or pre-law or pre-dental students know what they feel called to do, and are mapping the straightest path to their vocations.

For these and other students with clearly defined professional goals, we must offer a particularly value-added curriculum. Like all Honors scholars, they can choose among many upper-division Honors seminars, but now they also have a more refined option: they can follow a pre-professional Honors track. Tracks help focus these students on their chosen career fields, while still providing the problem-based, interdisciplinary pedagogy at which the College excels and which employers and grad programs prize.

Our first true track was for Honors students on their way to law school. "Law and Jurisprudence" offered an overview of the legal system with an eye toward preparing successful law school candidates. Over two semesters (like all our seminars), the course provided a solid legal foundation and promoted confidence in approaching the all-important LSAT qualifying exam. The success of this first class led to the development of a companion course, "Law School in a Nutshell," a team-taught offering led by Honors alumnus and former SGA president Anthony Rionda, now Chief of Staff for FIU's law school. The course features a wide

array of top guest speakers and practical training. Along with other seminars from our menu, such as "Observing Ourselves," a constitution-focused course taught by Law School instructor and practicing attorney Scott Fingerhut, and Rionda's 9-credit pre- and post-election course, "The Real House of Cards," and bolstered by our accelerated 3+3 Law School admissions plan, the Early Assurance Plan (EAP), and enthusiastic participation in PATH, our pre-law Honors society, the track is making a significant difference in the success of our law school applicants.

We immediately followed with our wildly popular pre-med track, which begins with Dr. Barbra Roller's quintessential "Issues in Healthcare," to which virtually the entire faculty of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine contributes. Also available are Dr. Marin Gillis' "Bioethics," Mary Lou Pfeiffer's online "Major Issues in Biomedical Ethics," and Pioneer Winter's "Public Health, Public Works." Dr. Aileen Marty leads a study abroad program in South Africa focused on tropical disease and epidemiology, and the high-octane student organization STITCH regularly goes on medical missions through the Alternative Breaks program. The track is strengthened by collaborations with the med school through the EAP, unique grad-level classes open to select Honors students, high-level mentoring, and interning and shadowing opportunities. This healthcare track is equally valuable to students pursuing our EAPs with Lake Erie College of Medicine's programs in Dentistry,



Pharmacy, and Osteopathy.

Our latest track is particularly intriguing, as we harness our various classes and activities in the area of innovation and entrepreneurship. Our two top-of-the-line social entrepreneurship courses are taught by former CEO and start-up expert Bob Hacker, who will now be heading up StartUP FIU. Likewise, our Skunkworks course, focused on case challenges, is led by Wifi Fernandez, another innovation leader who will also be leading in FIU's new StartUP initiative. With additional courses in everything from "Strategy, Marketing, and Tactics" to "Maker City" and half a dozen equally relevant offerings, we are more than prepared to provide our young creators and venturers with the academic support they need. An effervescent new Honors StartUP Club; a cadre of several dozen students who already have their own companies; a Community Advisory Board bristling with entrepreneurs who want to work with the students; partnerships with multiple community makerspaces, accelerators, and design labs; FIU's new Ashoka Changemaker Campus status; and a host of other opportunities ensure that this track will soon be turning out not only real "changemakers,"

but patents and start-ups that will truly distinguish FIU in the area of undergraduate innovation.

For many years, the Honors College paired with the College of Business Administration on a highly successful track in International Business. We are re-working a new track to serve our many business and finance majors, who represent about a quarter of our students. A glance at our curriculum indicates at least ten courses of particular value to business majors to accompany our booming Honors Investment Portfolio student organization and the support of our active CAB. Next up: engineering and psychology.

Unlike honors in the major, or the "honorized" courses found in many honors programs, tracks allow Honors College students to continue to benefit from working in teams with students whose diverse methodological training and disciplinary interests bring varied gifts to problem-solving and other group collaborations. Tracks allow students to enhance their career preparation without sacrificing the benefits of learning within a broad-based community. Students on Honors tracks can speed forward without worrying about developing tunnel vision. ■

With additional courses in everything from "Strategy, Marketing, and Tactics" to "Maker City" and half a dozen equally relevant offerings, we are more than prepared to provide our young creators and venturers with the academic support they need.

# PROFILE

THE WORLD  
WOULD

Bb

WITHOUT HER

By Beth Larson

Precociously, Hellen Rivas made her first career move at the age of two, when she was featured on the popular Spanish variety show, “Sabado Gigante.” Even then her outsized personality almost upstaged her talent, as she sang with the confidence of a seasoned professional. Since that first appearance, Hellen has become a multimedia professional. Her early debut in show business is attributable to her enterprising parents, Harol and Helena, who raised their three children, Hellen, Harold and Heily, as El Grupo H, a family ensemble that performs throughout South Florida and their native Colombia.

Hellen’s second career move, while visiting various radio and TV stations promoting her first music album at the ripe old age of 4, shifted her ultimate ambition away from singing. As she was interviewed live, her eyes glistened and her heart rate jumped. She had caught the broadcasting bug. She made numerous appearances on Univision, the largest Hispanic broadcasting network in the U.S., and found her enthusiasm for the field growing exponentially.

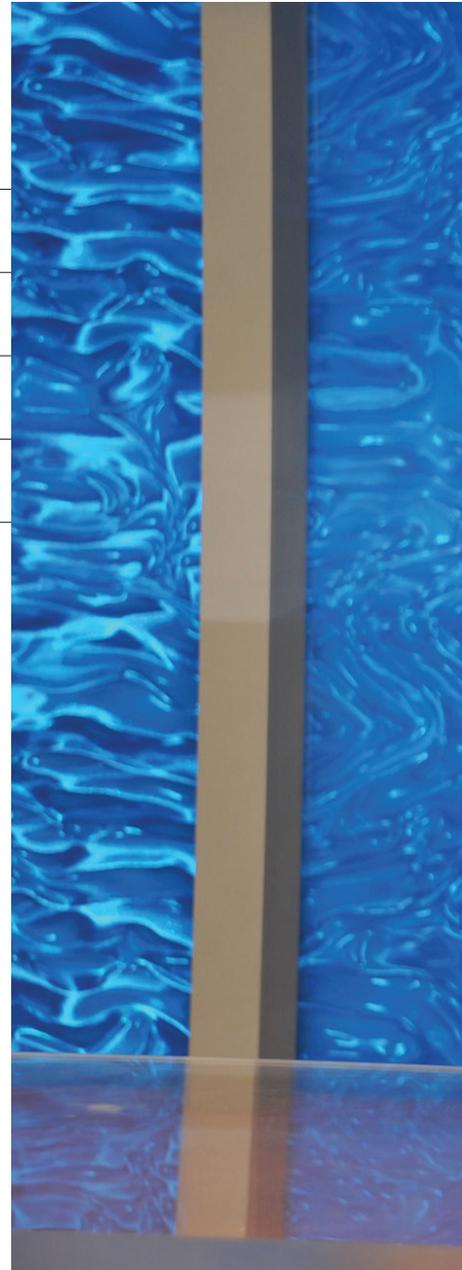
But first—school! In 9th grade, when she decided she wanted a more rigorous education than she was getting at her school, she started home schooling and later dual-enrolled at MDCC, graduating with her A.A. degree a month before obtaining her high school diploma. Now, a Journalism & Mass Communications major, she specializes in broadcast journalism, a career that she says “requires you to know at least a little bit about everything” and looks for “the human voice in the news.” Approaching her career with the same full-on approach she brings to everything, Hellen serves as the president of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, and is also a member of the National Society

of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS) and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP).

A winner of the Generacion 23 contest for young reporters in 2010, Hellen was also selected to represent Florida at the 2013 Al Neuharth Free Spirit and Journalism Conference in Washington, D.C., just months after Neuharth passed away; she sang *Wind Beneath My Wings* at the closing ceremony in honor of the founder of *USA Today*.

Hellen’s motivation to succeed stems partly from talent but perhaps more from gratitude. Her father is a self-taught musician from Choco, Colombia, a district known for illegal gold and platinum mining that has left the rainforest ravaged and the residents impoverished. He left Colombia, formed his own orchestra and settled in South Florida. Here, he and Helena met and married. Their differing theories of the benefits of music are both evident in Hellen. Harol rejoices in music’s ability to unify the family, while Helena believes that Hellen’s academic success results directly from her musical activities. “Music is like therapy,” she says. “It helps neurons make better connections. It helps you with everything.”

Both views have contributed to the success of Rivas Music and Video in Hialeah. The company provides music and dance





lessons as well as live performances, video and photography services, and a recording studio. Hellen, the oldest, has been an important part of the growth of the family firm, through which she has learned how to manage a business. Combining these skills and deep compassion for those less fortunate, she co-founded the Pink H. Foundation, which raises funds to provide educational opportunities to children in foreign countries and helps families in need. Six times the Rivas family has traveled to Colombia to perform for the people, provide food, and give gifts to the children. Says Hellen, “We want to give hope to the people so that they too can break free from poverty.”

Recently, at the BBC campus’s Vice Provost Council Awards ceremony, Hellen was awarded the Aventura Business Council Award of a \$2000 first-generation scholarship to supplement her School of Journalism & Mass Communications’ Actualidad Radio Scholarship. She was also inducted into the Journalism Honors Society Kappa Tau Alpha.

Hellen is still crucial to El Grupo H, both as performer and business manager, and her many charitable commitments make considerable demands on her time. But school is hardly forgotten—she also maintains a 3.93 GPA. Pretty sharp! ■

“Music is like therapy,” said Helena. “It helps neurons make better connections. It helps you with everything.”

# ABROAD

# MY WAY IN

STUDYING IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM





By Leyanis Diaz

The first Friday of the fall semester, those of us interested in studying abroad reported to the Honors College office, deposit in hand.

The line curved outside and around the building. At 9:01 a.m. Luli Szeinblum, the program coordinator, walked out and gave us each a ticket. Since the trips were first come, first served, a ticket reserved your spot. Ms. Szeinblum asked: “Who is here for Italy?” Fifteen students raised their hands and were handed a dark blue ticket. She then asked who wanted to go to France; 20 students received a forest green ticket. When she asked who was going to Cambodia and Vietnam, only two of us raised our hands for a red ticket.

This was the moment I knew I had made the right choice. St. Augustine once said that “the world is a book and those who do not travel read only a page.” The Honors College prides itself on providing an education that is Worlds Ahead, and in keeping with this idea, I felt that my education would not be complete without studying abroad. There were Honors trips to many places, but I thought to myself, “I could go to Europe and the Caribbean whenever I want; when will I ever be able to study in Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand again?”

So, clenching my red ticket, I considered what was ahead. The trip gave promise of traveling first to Bangkok, then to Vietnam to learn about the importance of the U.S.-Vietnam War and key cultural and historic sites. Lastly and most importantly, we would head to Cambodia, where we’d work with local school students and teachers, learning from them as they learned from us, interchanging experiences, cultures, languages, and friendship.

But the trip was so much more than that! This experience got me out of my comfort zone and expanded my horizons enormously. It also helped me understand the world we live in a little better. In short, it surpassed all of my expectations.

There were exotic animals; breathtaking temples; some of the nicest, most polite people you’ll ever encounter; delectable new foods; and memories to cherish for a lifetime. I went ziplining. I rode an elephant and a tuk-tuk. I got my hair washed in Vietnam--a must when visiting. I taught English as a second language at two schools. I was awed by a waterfall. I visited elaborate ancient palaces, temples and ruins. I volunteered with Build Your Future Today, assisting in providing health care and information to people in remote Cambodian villages. I learned new languages, bought some really cute pants, and made friends with locals and tourists alike.

I must admit that at first, I encountered some trials. My dream trip at the beginning was more of a nightmare. Adjusting to the time zone, the climate, new foods, and the fears my mother instilled in me by repeating, “Always explore with a buddy!” made the first few days difficult. Moreover, being away from home for over a month was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done--but one of the most rewarding.

And what have I learned? I learned that my perception of the world wasn’t reality. I learned that standing in line for the newest iPhone is not such a big deal when many people don’t even have reliable access to water. I learned that I have much to be thankful for and that in order to make a difference in the lives of others, you must *understand* the lives of others.

Growing up, my mother always told me that education was “my way out,” but it wasn’t until I spent time on the other side of the world that I realized it was really my way in. ■

# NOTES

## ALUMNI



### **Hector Mujica '11,**

Google's social responsibility regional manager for the Pacific Northwest, has partnered with Seattle Works since 2014, connecting Google volunteers with opportunities to help others in their home city. One of their most successful ventures has been the GooglersGive Local Leadership program, in which workers spend a week volunteering their technical skills at an area nonprofit. More than 27 percent of Google workers in the Puget Sound area volunteered in some capacity last year, Mujica said.



**Jerzy Brodzikowski '07,** is now with AnimationB2B.com, where he will be responsible for expanding new markets abroad. He previously worked as a director for international cooperation in the Lech Walesa Institute Foundation, where he managed projects related to technology (Code for Freedom) and culture (Solidarity Shorts - International Film Contest). He co-organized the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Warsaw in 2013.



**Christian Ochoa '08,** is now a series regular on the ABC drama pilot, "The Death of Eva Sofia Valdez." Described as a sexy "Macbeth" with a Cuban twist, the show centers on an immigrant who rises to become a celebrated Miami entrepreneur and champion of immigrant rights. Ochoa plays lawyer Nicolas Valdez, Eva Sofia's youngest and favorite son. Ochoa is also the male lead in Sydney Freelands' "Her Story," a series about trans women.



**Nalisa Saati '10,** is the Program Director for the Miami-Dade Urban Debate League, a non-profit organization that prepares low income students of color to succeed in college and in their future careers by organizing and supporting competitive debate teams in urban public schools across the country.

**Ganavya Doraiswamy '12,** studied at the Berklee School of Music Seville campus after leaving FIU, and now can be heard singing with the Alfredo Rodriguez Trio on their new album "Tocororo." NPR Music Reviews mentions the album's "international cast of musicians, most enchantingly the Indian singer Ganavya, who soars over Rodriguez's piano trio on the title track." Catch Tocororo at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU70ohLGsUU>.



**Dana Mekler '12,** is the Global Project Manager for the Empathy Initiative for Ashoka, where she manages communications, strategy and fundraising for an initiative spread across 28 countries. Before joining Ashoka she was the founding country manager in the U.S. of Sports for Sharing, a civic education program that uses sports and games to teach children global citizenship and inclusion. Dana graduated with a B.A. in international affairs and a minor in economics. FIU was recently named one of only 35 Ashoka Changemaker Campuses.



**Ana V. Peralta '13,** is now a Digital Account Manager at Walt Disney World, where she works to preserve the branding behind the Disney experience and ensure a harmonious guest experience across the website and mobile app.

Previously, she was a trade representative for the Department of Commerce at the United States Embassy in Costa Rica, and an account executive for a start-up that optimized advertising campaign goals and budgets for major clients.

**Jessica Meszaros '14**, is an anchor and reporter for WGCU News, a National Public Radio affiliate for South Florida.



**Jonathan Michanie '14**, currently a combat paratrooper in the Israeli Defense Force, has been accepted into a master's degree program at Tel Aviv University. Jonathan frequently blogs on issues regarding American foreign policy and its effects on the international community.



**Janet Lopez '14**, is completing her M.A. in international development at Tulane University. This spring she will be interning with the Central America and Caribbean Center of the United Nations Development Programme, following her passion to improve women's rights and reduce poverty.



**Constanza Gallardo '15**, is a digital producer for snapshot on Fusion Television Network.

**What are you up to?  
Let us know!**

Send your news to [Isabel.Green@fiu.edu](mailto:Isabel.Green@fiu.edu) or 305-348-4100



**Adrian N.S. Badana, '13**, graduated Magna Cum Laude and received the Excellence in Civic Engagement Medallion of Distinction. He was the first Honors student to obtain the Certificate in Honors Service-Research and volunteered as a research assistant for the Peruvian Amazon study abroad Program. Since then, he has earned a

master's in Public Health, specializing in epidemiology, from Georgia Southern University, where he was awarded a competitive graduate assistantship that fully funded my studies and enabled him to engage in collaborative research and co-instruct graduate-level courses. He also helped establish one of the first recorded EMR conversion systems in Ghana and Western Africa during the 2014 Study Abroad Ghana Postgraduate Practicum Program. Upon graduation, he was one of the few graduate students inducted into the prestigious Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health.

Badana is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Aging Studies, focusing on aging and health, from the School of Aging Studies at the University of South Florida (USF). He was one of only a few incoming graduate students to be awarded the selective University Graduate Fellowship. He also received the Aging Studies Assistantship. He is currently helping to write a book on healthy aging geared toward the baby boomer population and continues to collaborate on research projects at Georgia Southern as a Research Assistant.



**Ashley Diaz**, a 2015 Worlds Ahead scholar, was the keynote speaker at the recent Donor and Scholar Breakfast honoring the generous benefactors who have helped support FIU students through privately funded scholarships. Diaz is on her way to medical school in another year. Meanwhile, she is working for FIU on its First Generation Scholarship campaign.

## Honors Beta-Tests Innovative Programming Course

by Jenyer Paez

In a world increasingly dependent on computers, understanding how they function has become imperative. While computer programming is often associated with complex cryptic codes, there is, nevertheless, an easy way to learn programming basics that is accessible to anyone. Last year, Charles Benitez and Shahinaz Elmahmoudi, two Honors College computer science majors, presented a unique idea at the FIU Undergraduate Research Conference: a revolutionary approach to teaching programming basics. Charles and Shahinaz believe that programming is actually a set of concepts that everyone already knows and uses in daily life. The code is simply a way to apply these concepts, and can be taught in the same way as teaching a second language. As Charles explains, “Unlike current programming classes that throw students into programming in a sink-or-swim environment, we hold off on the actual programming until a few weeks into the course, opting instead to teach the foundation of programming in an interactive manner that assures that every student is on the same page.”

Having designed a course, “Programming the World,” based on their idea, Charles and Shahinaz now help students overcome the intimidation factor behind learning programming, and teach it in a way that allows for a deeper understanding of concepts rather than rote memorization. During the summer, they tested their research by teaching a class of Honors College students from different majors.

The results of this ambitious experiment were very impressive. Reported Mark Fajet, one of the students, reported that . “For our final project, my group developed a fully functional app to help physics majors with their homework.” The app, “Physics Calculator of the World,” is currently available for download from the Apple Store.

The course was such a resounding success that it is being repeated this school year.

## Truman Little White House

by Mary Lou Pfeiffer

Quite accidentally thirteen years ago, I happened to hear about a conference at the Truman Little White House when I was visiting in Key West. I attended the Friday evening reception on the lawn of the TLWH and the Saturday conference held at the Marriott Beach Resort, as a participant. I was pedagogically hooked. This profoundly scholastic conference is one best kept secrets in South Florida. For years I made attempts to involve FIU and various departments to no avail. Then another attendee, Roy Gonas, an arbitration lawyer from Coral Gables, introduced himself. This fortuitous encounter resulted in a generous grant from the Tweed Foundation for Honors College students to attend the conference each spring. This

intimate gathering, filled with worldwide experts, allowed us all to experience up close and personal contacts with experts in topics, both political and non-political, affecting Truman’s presidency: the decision to drop the bomb and the Hibakusha stories, connections with the Seminoles and Miccosukees, medicare and the ACA, the Everglades, Israel and peace attempts in the Middle East, and other riveting issues.

This March, once again Honors students attended as the enlightening discussion centered on the Korean War, as presented by the former Ambassador to South Korea, Kathy Stephens, and the director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, Dr. Greg Scarlatoiu, along with other renowned speakers and authors.

Dr. Michael Devine, former Executive Director of the Truman Library, and current director of the Truman Little White House Robert Wolz select the topics each year and invite the guests for the conference. Next year’s theme will be Truman’s connection with Latin America and the Caribbean—a topic in FIU’s wheelhouse and of particular interest to our faculty and students. Almost certainly, it will include experts from our ranks.



# Semper Paratus

## The Honors College Teams with the Coast Guard

Like our colleagues in the U.S. Coast Guard, the Honors College is “always ready” to join in new ventures that can benefit our students and our community. Thus, in conjunction with a memorandum of understanding signed this spring between the Coast Guard and FIU, the Honors College has undertaken several key initiatives to advance the mission of both organizations.

An obvious area of collaboration is recruitment, specifically for the USCG College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI), a program that subsidizes students through their college years, with a guaranteed commission as an officer after they graduate. Qualifying students enlist in the Coast Guard, complete basic training during the summer, and receive funding for up to two years of college. That includes tuition, books, and fees, as well as a full-time Coast Guard salary, housing allowance, and medical benefits. While still in college, participants attend classes and train with the Coast Guard, then complete Officer Candidate School in New London, Connecticut, after graduation. Among the opportunities open to them is possible qualification for guaranteed flight training. Honors sponsored a colloquium this spring that brought USCG CDR Ivan Meneses to campus to address interested students—556 of them.

The College also provided the Coasties an opportunity to chat with our more than 350 incoming freshmen at the Orientation Resource Fair in June, with a reserved table next to our own. In addition, they had a chance to meet our transfer students at a new student workshop where officers gave a presentation then stayed to answer questions.

Coming up next: an info session about becoming an M.D. through the military—a no-cost, paid medical education.

These joint activities are just the start of a larger plan that will see Coast Guard and IU researchers sharing their work, open houses at USCG bases, and a further refinement of the pipeline CSPI – Honors partnership.

Welcome aboard!



## Mapping Project

Students in Pioneer Winter and Gretchen Scharnagl’s second-year seminar used the Deering estate as a canvas for an extensive idea-mapping project. Each student devised an individual map system, then worked in small groups refining a map to better understand the connections among key concepts of the course, including evolution, postmodernism, modernism, legal procedure, eugenics, intelligent design, religion, theory, scientific method, degeneracy, artifact, bio-art, myth, historiography, performance, and politics. After working and re-working their maps, the students engaged in a supervised “free-for-all” in which they could add, remove, and/or alter in any way the maps of other groups.

## Honoring Dean Northup

Dean Lesley Northup was honored by the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce with the Education Award from its Hispanic Women’s Society Network. The awards luncheon was held at the Biltmore and brought together many of South Florida’s women leaders.



# NOTES

## STUDENT



This winter, seven students received the Honors College Excellence in Civic Engagement Medallion for service to the community. In order of accumulated service points, they are:

**Lorraine Apolis**  
**Francesca Bacarossi**  
**Isabella Rodriguez**  
**Vanessa Yanek**  
**Javier Zapata**  
**Rebecca Garcia**  
**Leyanis Diaz**

Congratulations to these students who represent the finest standards of the Honors College!

Honors rocked the 2015 national Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in Seattle, WA, where, of the 12 FIU presenters, Honors students **Karla Alejandra Montejo**, **Amanda Vaccarella**, **Marco Zamora Bulla**, **Paola Martinez**, **Brian Garcia Rodriguez**, **Michael Perez**, and Joseph Hernandez presented posters and Ricardo Perez-Dulzaides gave an oral presentation. Among the 5 FIU students nominated for participation in the 2016 conference are Honors members **Jiali Lei** and **Karla Montejo**.

BBC students **Demetrius** and **Darius Villa** and **Aleksandr Khalfin**, the enthusiastic founders of the High Speed Rail America Club, have been featured in the New Times and the Rise Miami News. The group has rocketed into the public eye with a documentary widely viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYON0VPE5BA>. The film explores the impact that historical figures like railroad magnate Henry Flagler had on South Florida, the present failing state of rail travel, and the future of All Aboard Florida and Florida EMMI, a maglev rail plan.



This winter, anthropology major and Honors student **Andrea Mirabal**, a former Miss FIU pageant winner and current president of the GlobeMed organization, was struck by a car in a horrific accident and suffered major damage to her legs. She has been undergoing multiple surgeries and her ultimate prognosis is still unknown. A grassroots GoFundMe campaign has already raised over \$15,000 towards Andrea's medical care.

**Patrick Foucauld** is a graffiti/street artist who meticulously plans each project, envisioning pure movement and subtle freedom. His goal is to break the boundaries that, even within the supposedly liberated subculture of street art, are nonetheless confining. This winter he took part in the very first artist market at the Allapattah Market.



**Bryan Diaz** has been selected from more than 300 students to be a part of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute - United Health Foundation Scholar-Intern Program. The program places students in paid, health-related internships at community-based health organizations. Bryan has been actively involved in CHCI since 2012, when he attended the R2L NextGen; in 2014 he was chosen as CHCI's alumnus of the month.



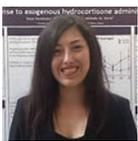
**Joliette Re**, with Professor M.O. Thirunarayanan, presented a paper entitled "An Exploratory Qualitative Study of Students Who Enrolled in and Faculty Who Taught MOOCs" at the 26th International Conference on Teaching and Learning at Florida State College in Jacksonville. The paper has been accepted for publication in the Proceedings of the conference.



**Stephanie M. Victoria** was recently offered a job through the Americorps' VISTA program to work for Partners for Self-Employment, a non-profit that helps low income residents start their own businesses. She will be graduating this spring with a B.A. in sustainability and the environment, and certificates in agroecology, coastal & marine affairs, and social media & e-marketing analytics. One of the first students to take the Honors Costa Rica study abroad course, Stephanie also did a research project on the "Effects of Cultural Priming on Business Ethical Perceptions," which was accepted by the National Council for Undergraduate Research for presentation. She is currently assisting Dream in Green, an environmental education non-profit, to pilot an evidence-based research study.



**Scott Fingerhut's** "Observing Ourselves" course once again held its annual version of the U.S. Constitutional Convention. During the event, teams of students (extra points for costumes) argue for proposed new constitutional amendments to a "senate" composed of FIU law students.



Honors students did very well at the 2015 FIU McNair Scholars Research Conference, open to students from around the world. **Josue Santana**

won first place in the best poster category and third place in the oral presentation category for his biomedical engineering work on "Modeling the Mechanical Effects of Low Magnitude Mechanical Stimulation in Trabecular Bone," completed last summer at the University of Notre Dame. Biology major Jacqueline Moats took another first for her oral presentation on age-related memory decline, and **Vanessa Yanek** won first place for her work in behavioral science. Other awardees from Honors included **Brian Garcia, Daniel Gonzalez, Yanet Ruvalcaba,** and **Ileana Corsi.**



Freshman **Emely Pozo** has been selected as the first FIU Honors candidate in the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM)

Dental Early Acceptance Program. Emely is majoring in biological sciences in preparation for dental school. If she maintains her excellent academic performance, she will be automatically admitted to LECOM's dental school upon graduation from FIU. After dental school she plans to specialize in periodontology.



**Claire Scott-Bacon** has been awarded one of 27 McNair Post-Baccalaureate Fellowships. She plans to enter a dual Ph.D./J.D. program, researching clinical neuropsychology with an emphasis on criminal mental health and personality

disorders. She plans to become involved in criminal law and criminal justice system reform, especially with regard to the death penalty and long term incarceration in relation to mental health issues.



**Cara Whitney** has left her job as a student assistant at the Honors College to take a position at the Niklaus Children's Hospital, where she had been volunteering at their Doral Outpatient Rehab Center. She will now be their part-time Rehab Office Coordinator. The new job is ideal experience for her eventual goal of earning a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.



**Kamila Manzueta,** an International Relations and Political Science major, was honored for academic excellence by being chosen as one of only 5 students to carry the FIU torch during Homecoming's Trail of the Torch.

# NOTES

## FACULTY



**Cecile Houry** won the 2015 Florida Campus Compact Engaged Scholarship Faculty Award. This prestigious annual award recognizes and honors only one faculty member in the State University System for contributing to the integration of service/community-based learning into the curriculum. Houry has also been selected to participate in the highly selective Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education Program; this summer's topic is "Women and Power: Leadership in a New World." As icing on the cake, Dr. Houry was also one of two lucky FIU faculty members randomly selected to receive a complimentary Travel Award Certificate for a ticket on American Airlines in recognition of her timely submission of course materials via the new FacultyEnlight system.



### **Pioneer Winter**

collaborated with filmmaker Tabatha Mudra on a short film that documented his life and work in Miami. It aired on WPBT2 as part of a series on Miami artists under the age of 40. Pioneer also premiered his new work, *Host*, March 3-4 at the Miami Dade County Auditorium On.Stage Black Box. *Host* is an all-male physical theatre work that explores authority, power, control, isolation, and desire.

### **Whitney Bauman**

has been spending the 2015-16 school year in Jena, Germany, working at the Ernst Haeckel archives, researching his next book on the religious foundations of modern ecology.

**Bob Hacker** gave a TEDx talk in Boca Raton this February entitled, "The Poor Know How to Overcome Poverty".

### **Barbra's Roller's**

hyper-popular course, *Issues in Healthcare*, was featured as an excellent example of collaboration as an essential element of global learning in the article, "Defining Global Learning at Florida International University" by Hilary Landorf and Stephanie Paul Doscher, which was published by the Association of American Colleges & Universities.

### **Mary Lou Pfeffer**

was named and pinned as a member of the Vice Provost's Council for the BBC campus at the Council's Awards Ceremony in the Wolfe Center.



## East Coast Building Opens

Community Advisory Board member Alex Mantecon and his company, MV Holdings, celebrated the opening of the new East Coast Building on the Miami River on February 19. A feature of the evening was the ceremonial lighting of the 30' by 70' mural across the front of the building. On hand were the mural's designers—Honors students Alexandra Brown, Ifrah Waheed, Abel Suarez, and Andres Sola, who won a fierce competition among their classmates to create the artwork, which can be easily seen from I-95 and many downtown sites. Mantecon recognized their contribution with one of his own, for first-generation scholarships. Next up for Mantecon and his partners: the new River Walk project in front of the building, with restaurants, retail, and park space.

## Max Potosme Honors Parents with a Legacy Gift

FIU alumnus Max Potosme, Jr., '11, who graduated from the College of Business with a degree in finance, has recognized his parents by creating a scholarship endowment for first-generation Honors College students. The original gift is being doubled by his employer, MetLife, through the corporate matching gift program. The spendable interest earned from the endowment (an average of 4% of the endowment corpus) will be matched 100% by the State of Florida, in perpetuity, as long as the State grant program exists. Four \$1000 scholarships from the new Max and Melba Potosme First Generation Scholarship Endowment will be awarded annually to Pell Grant-eligible Florida residents in the Honors College who are the first in their families to be earning a college degree. Max's generous gift will impact the lives and careers of many promising young leaders!

## Congratulations Ayman!

**Ayman Elyasin '13**, has assumed the role of Alumni Association president. He follows Jonathan Cameron, Certified Financial Planner at Cameron Downing, who has stepped down from the leadership, but will remain co-chair of the Honors College Community Advisory Board. Miami native Elyasin entered Honors as an IB diploma recipient and USDA MSP Scholar. At FIU, he earned a B.A. in economics, a certificate in agroecology, an M.B.A. in international business, and an M.S. in finance. He is now Director of Development (the Americas) for the international recruitment and corporate development firm Norman Alex. He is also a strategic consultant for the New York-based family office Pepper International. He enjoys composing music and performing on drums, which he did often at Honors events as a student.



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**The HEARTbeats** performed on Biscayne Boulevard for the Alzheimer's Walk this fall, with sets before and after the walk. They also appeared on Ch. 6 TV, singing the Marseilles during a student vigil for the victims of the terrorist attack in Paris. And they once again sang the National Anthem and the Marseilles for a ceremony at which World War II veterans were awarded the Legion d'Honneur by the French Consul. <http://honors.fiu.edu/2015/11/19/heartbeats-on-tv-for-student-vigil/>

Photo by Marsha Halper