

The Florida International University Honors College Review

# SUMMA CUM LAUDE

SUMMER 2013



## Global Honors

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**FIU**

**Honors  
College**

# The Florida International University Honors College Review

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There was a time when changing the name of Florida International University to something like “The University of Florida in Miami” was under serious consideration. Now, years later, FIU’s somewhat unusual name describes not just an institution with a large number of students from Spanish-speaking countries—the largest Hispanic-serving academic institution in the country—but also an academy with a significant presence in China and other countries, students from around the world, and a carefully cultivated global consciousness. Indeed, global learning is the focus of FIU’s ten-year Quality Enhancement Plan. The Honors College, with its long-established advanced study abroad programs and intentional curricular integration of global awareness, has been well ahead of that curve, and continues to lead the field.

The latest *Summa cum Laude* focuses on the many ways in which we foster not only an understanding of other cultures, but a sensitivity to the interconnectedness of all peoples, nations, and environments. From highlighting a few of our international students to looking at the work of some of our faculty overseas to reporting on our latest study abroad opportunities, this issue demonstrates the crucial importance of the “International” in our name and our work. Over and over, we learn anew how much richer our students’ education is when they expand their awareness beyond their local communities.

So firmly do I believe in this aspect of our mission that my key fundraising priorities are scholarships to help students study abroad, and scholarships that will allow us to recruit high-quality students from other countries. We know that befriending and studying beside learners from other cultures increases the value of our students’ education exponentially. But getting such students here is made difficult by the high tuition for out-of-state applicants and their need to pay for local housing. The Honors College must step up its cutting-edge contributions to the international focus of FIU by becoming an increasingly competitive educational destination for the best and brightest students from around the world.

Enjoy reading about the travels and experiences of our students, faculty, and alums as we help build a better world, one student at a time. The Honors College is truly Worlds Ahead!

Lesley A. Northup  
Dean

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Help us help the many deserving students who could benefit from our Worlds Ahead research-oriented programs in other countries.

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Honors College Student Patricia Trainer giving an on-site presentation on the ancient libraries of Angkor Wat for the Honors College’s Vietnam and Cambodia study abroad program

# “Studying abroad changed my life!”

Scratch the surface of just about any Honors grad who’s done a study abroad program, and she’ll tell you it was the best experience of her undergraduate career. Time and again, students report that no other class had the life-changing impact of learning about, living with, and exploring the lands of other peoples.

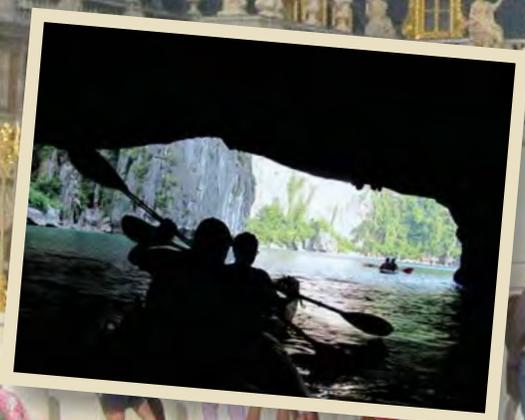
Educators, parents, and employers have long known the benefits of having students spend meaningful time in another country. Students gain perspective not only on a new culture, but on their own as well. They have an entrée into the phenomenon of globalization, and many increase their language skills or are motivated to do so. Studying abroad helps them test their interests, make new friends, and increase their network of contacts. And it helps young people develop in ways that build character and responsibility.

Recent studies of thousands of students who studied abroad found that almost all respondents said overseas study enhanced their worldview, self-confidence, and maturity; influenced their choice of classes and majors; and made them more culturally sensitive. Well over half the respondents said it helped them find the right career path.

The old model for this kind of experience was the “foreign exchange” program, in which, after learning each other’s languages, students from two countries swapped homes, schools, and lives for a semester or year—a successful template that is still operative, but no longer the norm for international student travel. Another model—the 2-4 week cultural tour—is more affordable, more compact and, for most students, more practical. A month may be a short time to absorb a great deal about a country or region, but if the trip is handled right, it can have as great—or greater—an impact than an exchange.

In the Honors College, several novel approaches ensure that Honors study abroad programs have the greatest and most lasting value possible. First, we eschew “cultural tourism.” Each Honors international program has a theme—that is, it is a course in its own right. Students aren’t just paraded around the ordinary tourist sites while they’re abroad. The Honors trip to France, for example, focuses on war, democracy, and human rights as students immerse themselves in the country’s destiny at the crossroads of European imperial ambitions. With this focus, they visit not only Paris, but the Normandy beaches and cemeteries and the resistance tunnels in Lyons, and they have time to speak with a noted author and Holocaust survivor.

A second unique feature of Honors opportunities abroad is that each month-long trip is preceded by a 3-credit prep course that gives students a working knowledge of their destination and its culture. Each of these courses involves extensive research and some language acquisition. Once on site, these travelers have the background to go beyond the surface of what they see, asking probing questions, pursuing individual interests,



and gaining an in-depth understanding of their host culture.

The Honors College has also introduced its service-research approach into studying overseas. This innovative feature means our students not only perform meaningful service projects while traveling, but also that they root those projects in serious, community-based research principles. Each trip offers students a hands-on experience with lasting value for their host communities. For example, during their recent trip to Cambodia, participants worked directly with teachers' college students in Siem Reap, helping them build crucial English language skills.

With this kind of impact, study abroad should be available for every student who wants to go, though it is still beyond the means of many. The College is continually seeking inventive ways to keep costs down and has developed partnerships with travel agencies and foreign partners that have helped make this vital educational tool affordable.

We have also had, for the first time, Honors-only Alternative Break programs, shorter yet very affordable possibilities for foreign study for those students who otherwise would not be able to travel. This year, two groups of students—one from STITCH, the Honors Pre-Med Society (see page 10), and one from the Honors living-learning community, Honors Place—performed service projects in Nicaragua over spring break.

This complements the outreach of our student-led organization, Helping Our World, which makes an annual 7-10 day trip to a small town in an underserved country, bringing school supplies and other necessities acquired through their own fundraising.

“Studying abroad with the Honors College was the single most important part of my undergraduate education.”

To turn the impossible into the inevitable, in the words of FIU President Mark Rosenberg, and to give every Honors student an opportunity to study abroad, we have named study abroad our No.1 fundraising priority. Panorama Travel, whose owner, Norman Uriarte, is an Honors grad, recently established the Honors College Panorama Travel Study Abroad Scholarship Fund with a very generous \$100,000 gift that has already allowed several students to travel who otherwise could not have gone. With this excellent kick-start, our hope is to grow the fund so that, eventually, all Honors students will be able to have this priceless experience. Our goal is to provide 100%

of Honors students with a study abroad experience as an integral part of their undergraduate education

One new initiative is study trips, led by our experts, for paying adults, the first of which will be this coming April along the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The dozen or so fortunate travelers who sign up to walk this deeply affecting historical pilgrimage route will have an experience much richer than that depicted in the feature film, “The Way.” And they will do so at an extremely reasonable price that will also include scholarship money earmarked for Honors students going abroad. The next such trip is planned for Cambodia and Vietnam.

Twenty-first century education must be, in every sense, international. Our students must gain the perspective and skills to succeed in the global marketplace. Lectures about the realities in other lands cannot substitute for actually being there and participating in the life of the country. Every Honors student deserves to have this life-changing experience! □





## First-person Account: Pablo Currea Explores New Guinea

Honors College student Pablo Currea accompanied a recent expedition to Papua New Guinea, serving as cameraman on the film crew and working on films that will be used in Honors courses. Here is his report:



Over spring break, I had an amazing opportunity. The Honors College sent me as its representative to film Religious

Studies Professor Tudor Parfitt (“the British Indiana Jones”) and a crew of FIU students and staff as they conducted anthropological and theological research on the Gogodala Tribe in Balimo, Papua New Guinea. The trip was one of the most beautiful and challenging experiences of my life.

The Gogodala, though indistinguishable from other natives of the

area, claim to be one of the Lost Tribes of Israel. This particular group, unusually, is associated with Messianic Judaism, a movement that is largely rejected by the greater Jewish community—and the country of Israel. Two rabbis who accompanied us explained that Messianic Jews believe Jesus is the Messiah and accept the New Testament as holy. Yet they maintain Jewish customs and holidays, as they believe their ancestors did in ancient times.

The Gogodala want to be recognized as a Jewish community, in part, because they could then be eligible to make Aliya, and repatriate as Jews in Israel. One of their traditional stories tying together the stories of their ancestors and those

of the Old Testament is that, among the hundreds of islands in the lagoon upon which they live, one is the actual Garden of Eden. If many of the Gogodala were happy living in this paradise, near such a holy place, then why did they want to be considered Jewish? It seemed to be an issue of identity.

Papua New Guinea was first colonized by Christian missionaries, who offered the natives the promise of a life of wealth, education, and freedom from hunger. However, they discouraged many Gogodala customs and beliefs. Based on my exchanges with some of the people around the village, the Gogodala were polytheistic, with mystical beliefs in men and women who had power over aspects



of nature. The missionaries suppressed these beliefs (though some still hold them), along with such customs as partial nudity and polygamy. Stripped of their ancestral identity, the Gogodala are trying to reclaim a sense of identity. Ironically, by claiming to be Jewish they are repeating the work of the missionaries, forcing themselves to abandon the Christian beliefs they adopted in the last century. They have not, however, been able to shake their belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

This messianic strain was important to our journey because, as we gradually discovered, Professor Parfitt was being welcomed with open arms as the prophesied savior of the Gogodala Israelites, come to return them to their

homeland. Parfitt, an expert on the Lost Tribes and Judaising groups, has worked with other tribes throughout the world on verifying similar claims and has investigated the Gogodala. Sadly, his DNA research on this tribe was, at best, inconclusive, putting him, and us, in an awkward position.

With other members of our expedition, I could not help but commiserate with the tribe, wishing that they could accept their beliefs as unique to themselves and re-establish their own religion and identity. Our visit with the Gogodala challenged every one of us, including the rabbis, to think about the importance of religious belief, while noting differences in cultures and similarities in humanity. We all seek some

form of identity, and it seems when we lose one, we reach for another to fill the void.

Thanks to the Honors College, I had the opportunity to experience this firsthand and to record it on camera. I am producing several films about the trip, collaborating with another filmmaker and with Professor Parfitt. The films should serve as a wonderful anthropological tool, illustrating the subtleties of the Gogodala culture in ways that these brief words cannot.

The experience has made me think about my career and becoming a filmmaker, taking the opportunity to travel and film other cultures. That's the literal change. But I've also become more interested in other cultures now that I have seen how different they can be. □



The native fer-de-lance, a venomous pit viper, became the symbol for moments of great strife, a stand-in for atrocities much worse than the danger of the snake.

## Timeline Map of the Yagua People:

A collaborative project of the Honors College and the Art and Art History Department of CARTA

In the summer of 2011, Gretchen Scharnagl gave her art students an assignment based on the research Honors students were doing in the Peruvian Amazon with Professors Jim Riach and Devon Graham. The result, a collaboration between the Honors College and the College of Architecture and the Arts (CARTA), was an amazing, 64-foot-long mural incorporating the botany, zoology, iconography, and culture of the area. "A Timeline Map of the Yagua People" is now on permanent loan to the College of Medicine, displayed in the first-floor hallway of the AHC2 building at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus.

Scharnagl, the Honors College's newest full-time instructor with a joint appointment in CARTA, became interested in the research being done by Honors students during their study abroad program in the region. Her thirty drawing students did some preliminary research and sketches, and then Riach and Graham spoke with them about Yagua culture, providing history, photographs, and artifacts for the artists to reference. After studying Yagua cosmology, background, and present-day humanitarian and environmental problems, the students decided collectively to create their timeline map of the culture.

The Yagua, or Ñihamwo (the people), as they refer to themselves, have lived in the Peruvian Amazon for thousands of years. They tie their identity to the trees and believe they owe their existence to the Amazon River. In 1542, Europeans arrived in the region looking for gold and precious spices, introducing diseases that eliminated close to 95% of the original native population by the mid-eighteenth century. Not long after, the rubber industry further displaced these indigenous peoples. The survivors joined remnants of other groups and married across ethnic lines, resulting in a loss of cultural identity.





Since the end of the rubber boom, mining and hydrocarbon industries have severely damaged the ecology of the Amazon and the health of its native peoples. It is estimated that 84% of the Peruvian Amazon is zoned for hydrocarbon activities. As a result, the indigenous people must fight for ownership rights of tribal lands. In 1994 the Yagua found a friend and advocate in Project Amazonas, Inc., a non-profit organization that has worked with them on legal, health, environmental, and cultural issues. In 2011 Manuel Ramirez, a Yagua elder and spokesperson, came to FIU to publicize the plight of the Yagua.



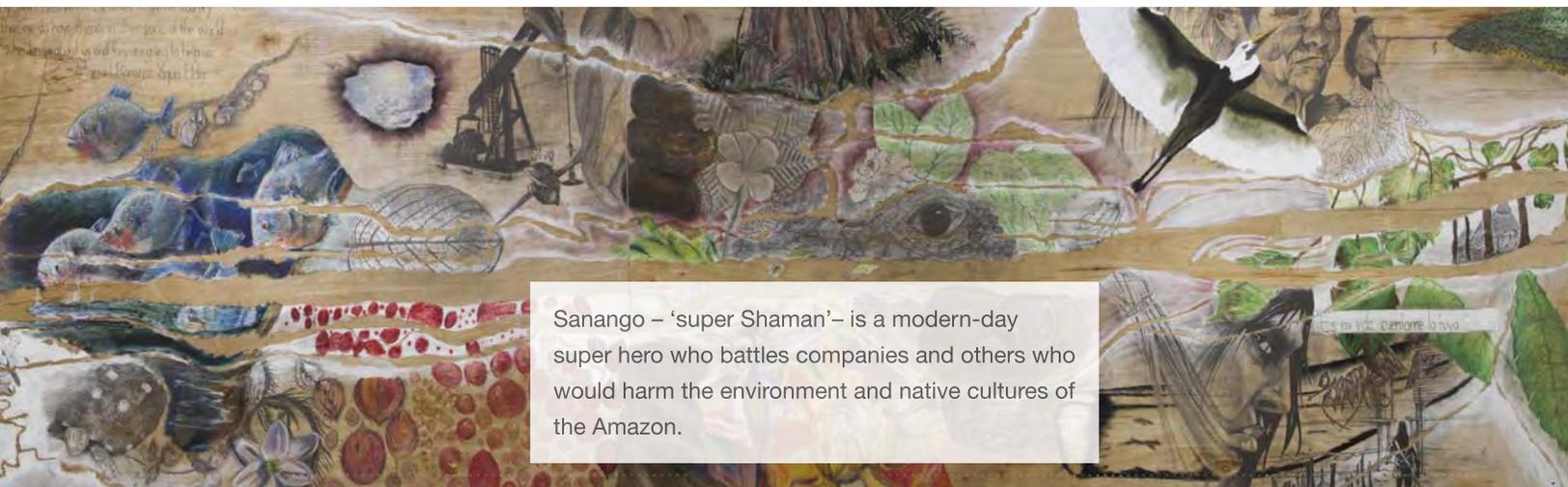
Honors College Fellow Gretchen Scharnagl

With the help of Project Amazonas and the Honors College, the Yagua are now poised to make radical progress in improving the health, education, and social empowerment of their people. Projects include a Yagua-produced video documentary, rainwater collection systems, scholarships for high school and university education, and cultural archives.

Recently, Honors student Danny Tapanes spurred the creation of a medical clinic for the peoples of the Orosa River, a project that is finally going to become a reality this year. The Nourish International student group from the University of New Mexico will be going to the region this summer to work

on construction, and are currently in full fund-raising mode for construction materials. This clinic has long been envisioned for the Yagua and other peoples in the area, who currently have no local medical care.

Riach and Graham are heading efforts to form a coalition of interested FIU faculty and students to continue working on behalf of the Amazon's indigenous peoples. □



Sanango – ‘super Shaman’ – is a modern-day super hero who battles companies and others who would harm the environment and native cultures of the Amazon.

# Reimagining Cambodia and Vietnam



For baby-boomers, “Vietnam” evokes uncomfortable images of a war that defined their high school and college years. For those in the following generation, images of atrocities in Cambodia dominated the news. For students of the Honors College, these places have acquired entirely new associations—beauty, charm, and history. For one parent, Dana Choi, visiting these lands was a bucket-list opportunity to re-imagine these images with her Honors College son, Sky. Because Sky, the youngest person ever to graduate from FIU, was under 18 years old (and despite his frequent solo world travels), FIU decreed a parent had to accompany him on his study abroad trip, so Dana enthusiastically joined in.

The new Vietnam-Cambodia Study Abroad program sent eight students to Southeast Asia this winter with expert Harry Roberge, Associate Dean J. C. Espinosa, and CARTA Artist-in-Residence Xavier Cortada.

Bangkok, where they arrived after a long trans-Pacific journey, was the jumping-off point for the group. After some rest and shopping, the contingent flew to Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. There, they visited sites particular to the Communist revolution and subsequent Vietnam War, including the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh and the Hanoi Hilton, the notorious prison where American prisoners-of-war (including Senator John McCain) were held and tortured. An overnight boat trip on uniquely stunning Ha Long Bay lightened the mood of the group. The students then flew south to visit the picturesque town of Hoi An, near Da Nang and famous China Beach. The students explored this well-preserved port town and UNESCO World Heritage site, settled in the 15th century.



The last portion of the nine-day Vietnam visit took the group to Ho Chi Minh City, the former Saigon. They found that the energy, colors, and entrepreneurial spirit strongly contrasted with the more conservative Hanoi. Enormous traffic jams of motorbikes moved somehow through the streets of the city, miraculously avoiding accidents. One of the most valuable lessons the students learned was how to cross the amazingly congested streets, a critically important survival skill akin to a challenging video game. Students met and talked with young Vietnamese, shopped in the famous Chinese Market, and descended into the Cu Chi tunnels, an immense underground network used by the Viet Cong guerillas during the Vietnam War.

Next stop: Cambodia, a very different experience. From the city of Siem Reap, our adventurers explored the ancient temples of Angkor and discussed the intertwining of Buddhist and Hindu culture there. They visited many temples during their almost two-week stay in the area, but the arrival at Angkor Wat in the cool air and soft light of the early morning was magical. Each day brought new wonders,

always with the sounds of birds in the trees and the insistent children selling trinkets. In the city, students roamed the markets buying souvenirs and trying tropical fruit and exotic foods from the ubiquitous street vendors. Transportation was by tuk-tuk, a motorcycle towing a small cart.

Perhaps most importantly, as part of the service-research program, students worked each afternoon as English language tutors at a teachers' college in the city, helping young teachers in an educational system still reeling from the effects of the Khmer Rouge purge of intellectuals. Cambodia's severely impoverished children all yearn for a good education and gladly try to learn new English words and phrases. Although the Honors students were nervous at first, they soon took to their new roles, working with classes of about 30 young people with only rudimentary English skills. After a few days, the students began to bond and unique teaching styles emerged. The college hosted a farewell dinner complete with fireworks and Cambodian dancing.

Dana Choi spent Christmas Day on an ATV with a Cambodian friend, delivering

school supplies to 380 children in small country villages. They stopped by a rice field to catch the sunset when four boys approached. She remembers distributing the remaining supplies while they photographed themselves with her camera, singing and dancing to Psy's Gangnam Style (photo above).

The trip concluded on a somber note in the capital city of Phnom Penh, where the group visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the Choeung Ek, a memorial center at a mass grave for almost 10,000 victims of the Khmer Rouge (1975-1979). The horrors of Cambodian history that the students had read about and Dana had seen as a child on TV were made real at these places, where pieces of clothing and human bones still emerge from the ground daily.

The program did not end when the group returned to the U.S. The experience inspired Dana, Sky, and Harry to form a non-profit to continue addressing the educational needs of the children in Siem Reap. Their organization will send supplies and computers to rural schools. Dana has also generously established a study abroad scholarship for Honors students embarking on the trip next winter. □

# Alternative Breaks in Nicaragua

## First-person Account:

### Medical visits in Esteli and clinical help in Gusmapa and Ciudad Antigua

by Ephraim Mansour, Honors pre-med student and STITCH co-president

This Spring I traveled with other members of STITCH (Students Taking Initiative Through Collaboration in Honors), the Honors pre-med organization, to Nicaragua, where we started our careers performing medical duties.

The trip lasted seven days. The first day was spent in Managua visiting the surrounding towns, a volcano, local shops, a convent, and a series of small islands. On the second day we moved to Esteli, where we stayed for the remainder of the trip.

There, we met with the director of the UCATSE (Universidad Católica Agropecuaria del Trópico Seco) Medical School, Dr. Jorge Ali. We visited the medical campus, including the dental clinics and anatomy room, and Dr. Ali spoke to us about the healthcare system in Nicaragua. Over the course of the first

three days in Esteli we visited and worked in various facilities alongside doctors and nurses, learning how the healthcare system in Nicaragua is organized.

Then we set to work in a health outpost, a maternity house, and a hospital. The outpost focused on pregnancy, asthma, diabetes, and hypertension (high blood pressure). We aided doctors by distributing medicine, creating prescription papers, doing pap smears, and forming a list of needed supplies for the next aB trip to bring.

The maternity house, Casa Materna, offers lodging for mothers-to-be once they reach 37-38 weeks to prevent them from getting stranded in the village far from any medical treatment at the time of delivery.

At the facility we learned the alternate methods used to analyze the pregnancy

(tape measure to estimate weeks, as well as physical massaging of the belly to find the baby, since they lacked an ultrasound). In addition, we taught a lesson led by participant



Natalie Cortez, in which we discussed the basics of baby care, including proper swaddling technique, burping, cloth diaper making (they lack disposable diapers), and breast feeding.

Next we visited the main campus of UCATSE, exploring the chemistry and microbiology laboratories, and checked out the neighboring Hospital San Juan de Dios. At the hospital we met various faculty and were taught how to analyze our own blood to identify A, B, and O blood types.

For the last days of the trip, in collaboration with the UCATSE dental students, we set up field clinics in the rural villages of Cusmapa and Ciudad Antigua. Our group screened patients for high/low blood pressure and irregular heart rate, and the dental students performed extractions. All the services were free of charge. □





## Reforestation in the Maderas Nature Reserve

This past March, a group of Honors College students traveled to Nicaragua's Isla de Ometepe for a week-long reforestation effort as part of FIU's alternative Break program. The students and Honors College coordinator David Aviles spent several weeks meeting to organize and raise funds in preparation for their trip.

Once in Nicaragua, the group traveled two hours from Managua, the capital, to San Jorge, a port city on the coast of Lake Nicaragua, where a one-hour ferry ride took them to Isla de Ometepe. They were met by their host, Jamie Carson, owner of Hotel La Omaja in the small town of Mérida.

On their second day on the island, the group met with local community leaders

and explored the areas where deforestation has had a drastic effect on the island's ecosystem. That afternoon, they began gathering horse manure to be mixed with dirt to create rich planting soil.

Seed gathering took place on days three and four. The group was asked to collect as many seeds as possible for 13 different species of trees. After two days of hiking through the forests of Volcán Maderas, the group was able to gather over 3,400 seeds for 9 different species of trees.

The group spent the next two days mixing soil, filling bags and planting seeds. After two days of work, the group planted over 2,300 seeds and created a small nursery at Hotel La Omaja.

On their final night on the island, the local residents prepared a dinner to thank the volunteers for all of their hard work. "This is really the best part of the trip. It's great to see how happy they are that we gave up our Spring Break to help with the reforestation of the island," said Aviles.

Carson and his staff will be watering and caring for the nursery until next March, when the next group of aB students will return to help distribute the saplings to the local residents. Many of the students from both Honors aB trips were coordinated by Panorama Service Expeditions, a travel company specializing in service projects in Nicaragua, owned and operated by Honors alumnus and CAB member Norman Uriarte. ■



Student  
Profile

**max**  
staedtler



# Global Scholar of Business

From Germany to Miami is a long way. International Business major Max Staedtler grew up in Germany but came to FIU Honors for college in 2010. He figured that studying in a different country would give him more opportunities to develop than would attending a local university.

As easily as he moved from Europe, Max has moved up the ladder to establish himself as one of our most successful business majors, if invitations to prestigious competitions are any gauge. Already, Max has participated in the Google Case Competition in Atlanta; the Johnson & Johnson University Case Competition in New Brunswick, NJ; the CUIBE International Business Case Competition in Boston, MA; the HULT Prize Social Entrepreneurship Competition in Boston, MA; and the ENACTUS Regional Social Entrepreneurship Competition in Atlanta, GA—perhaps a record for any undergraduate. In fact, in many of these match-ups, Max and his teammates successfully went head-to-head with grad students, often from major Ivy League universities, and advanced several levels beyond other public schools.

The lessons to be learned from these events were not lost on Max. Business case competitions are opportunities for students to apply the knowledge they have learned from their peers, by themselves, or in the classroom to a business situation, and receive free feedback on their business concept by experienced judges. Depending on the type of competition, participants might receive a certain business scenario to react to, or be given a challenging problem that requires a scalable, sustainable, entrepreneurial solution. Teams of 4 – 7 students usually develop the solutions, business concepts, and presentations. Hence, competing is a great way of learning from and learning how to work with other students. “Through competing,” Max notes, “I was able to meet entrepreneurs, business executives, corporate recruiters and very successful students from around the country. These networking opportunities alone can help find an internship or career opportunity. In my case, I used the skills I practiced during these competitions to impress at various job interviews.”

Max’s reputation not only in competitions but as a campus leader—he was president, for example, of the International Business Honors Society—resulted in his being asked to be one of only three presenters (all Honors students) to speak at the 2012 Freshmen Convocation. Max also was chosen for a

coveted summer internship at Goldman Sachs in New York, where he returned again this year.

Despite his achievements and impossible schedule, Max has also found time to be involved with Honors opportunities. His sophomore year he was the Resident Assistant for Honors Place, the College’s living-learning community in Lakeview South. That experience gave him his favorite Honors memory—taking his residents to their first Honors College Convocation.

It is easy to see why Max is such an academic star—he is one of the few who see the Big Picture: “My primary takeaway from having been part of the Honors College is the importance of distinguishing between education and training. Success in most professions or academic disciplines requires a mix of qualitative and quantitative skills, passion and perfection, left-brain and right-brain activity. The Honors College challenged me not just to seek mastery of business, but also to understand and appreciate the importance of the study of thought, art and storytelling.”

This past year, Max worked with Prof. Robert Hacker as an undergraduate teaching assistant with Hacker’s Social Entrepreneurship course. “Working with Professor Hacker is a unique and challenging learning opportunity,” Max says. “He constantly challenges our preconceived notions and pushes us to apply academic curiosity to a problem, fully understand it from every angle, and then develop a scalable business concept to alleviate the social issue at hand. My primary responsibility was to ensure that both Professor Hacker – who spends most of his time managing the large social enterprise One Laptop Per Child – and his students, who in true Honors College fashion are a blend from all academic disciplines, develop insights together. I frequently found myself helping students by encouraging them to be bold when writing their papers, thinking about how to solve a problem, or getting an important message across during in-class presentations.”

As for the future, Max intends to follow a career in financial services or strategy consulting in New York. He will also pursue a graduate degree in business, math, or design, possibly at an Asian university, where he can achieve fluency in at least one Asian language. His long-term goal is to work in the professional services/business sector, social entrepreneurship, or corporate management. □



Dr. Davies is assisting in the setting up of an excavation square at the site of the Roman bath house at Yotvata.



The Roman fort at Yotvata from the air.

## All His Dig Sites Lead to Rome

Archaeologist, historian and Honors Faculty Fellow **Gwyn Davies** has a passion for the past. He studies sites of what was once the Roman Empire, specializing in Roman military fortifications at dig sites in the Middle East. He has also worked on Bronze Age digs in Wales and with a survey of a World War II defense line in Hong Kong that was soon to be inundated by a reservoir.

Davies appreciates the value of meeting the people and learning the cultures in the Middle East, given the negative reputation it often has in the West. Last summer he took seven FIU student volunteers with students from other universities to help in an exploratory excavation of a northern Israeli coast dig. During an earlier trip Davies traveled with students to Sinai and camped with some Bedouin. Davies particularly enjoys the chance to meet and bond with the typically small groups of students and volunteers who help on his excavations; they usually work together for a month or two, and everyone gets to know each other fairly well.

In the future, Davies plans on excavating an untouched Roman fort in southern Israel that was the site of a Roman road station and is now a UNESCO world heritage site. He describes the process of unearthing and exploring our past as an unpredictable adventure of discovery. “You start an excavation, but you don’t really ever know what you’re going to find.... You’ve got to be adaptable.... You have to be flexible and be prepared to work with whatever you find as you’re going along.” □

## From the Rice Fields of Arkansas to the Rice Fields of Java



**Whitney Bauman**, Honors Fellow and Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies, has a passion for exploring world religions and cultures. The Arkansas-born, cradle Episcopalian turned vegetarian, agnostic, gay eco-ethicist studied theology and ethics in graduate school.

His first trip to Asia was in summer 2011 on a Bhagwan Mahavir Junior Faculty Fellowship. He traveled to Jaipur, Jodhpur, Delhi, and other cities in India to study how various Jain communities integrate their religious beliefs with modern science. Recently, he attended a conference on religious pluralism marking the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu monk who introduced Indian Vedanta and

yoga philosophies to the West and raised interfaith awareness.

His commitment to the East, however, has been most evident in Indonesia, where for the past several summers he has been teaching a course on Religion, Nature, and Globalization at the University of Gadjah Mada, exploring how globalization is affecting religious identities and human-earth relations.

Next summer, Bauman will lead Honors students on a study abroad trip to Jogjakarta and to Bali. Jogja is the cultural heart of the island of Java, and the group will spend three weeks looking at various religious traditions of this predominantly Muslim culture. They will examine how these traditions shape attitudes toward gender, the natural world, politics, and society. After three weeks in Jogjakarta, the travelers will visit Bali, a predominantly Hindu Island in Indonesia long associated with myth and mystery.

Bauman’s infectious enthusiasm for his topic, encyclopedic knowledge, commitment to students, and terrific sense of humor already are a key contribution to the Honors first-year seminar, “Origin of Ideas and Ideas of Origin,” and he’ll no doubt bring these to Honors’ newest study abroad program in Indonesia. In the meantime, he’s not slowing down—he’s leading a group of FIU alternative break students to Durban, South Africa, to work in a clinic for children affected by HIV/AIDS. □

## Don't Move the Artifacts!

This fall, the Honors College will welcome new Faculty Fellow **Dr. Jill Baker**, an archaeologist whose research focuses on the Bronze-Age tomb complex at Ashkelon, Israel, and who has worked extensively with the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. Dr. Baker will be offering a course entitled Ancient Technology, which will examine technology that was adapted and developed by ancient civilizations from approximately 3,000 BCE to the first century CE. Students will compare modern technological advancements and their impact on society, and the possible applications of the principles of ancient technology to our own to make it more efficient and cleaner.

What captivates Baker most about the ancient world “is the moment of innovation; that instant when a person or a people-group made a discovery, invented something new, or introduced an idea that effected change and propelled human society forward.” She is currently working on a textbook on the archaeology of ancient Israel, focusing on the development of culture and civilization in the area (Canaan) from the Canaanite through the Chalcedonian.

An experienced traveler, both throughout the Near East and the U.S., Baker is committed to the educational and formative value of international travel. This commitment has led her to

design a hands-on study abroad course for our students who would like to do some archaeology themselves. The trip, tentatively planned for Turkey (students are not allowed to travel to Israel for safety reasons), is scheduled for summer 2015. Students on the trip will help excavate a working site.

Baker’s travels have brought home to her two key insights. “First,” she notes, “despite how we may perceive ourselves as Americans, the reality is that we share many commonalities with peoples of other nations and cultures: birth, marriage, disease and death; family, friends and community as the sinew that binds peoples together; and the pursuit of life, liberty and prosperity.” She continues, “More importantly, it is revealing to view our nation and culture through the eyes of others, who see us quite differently, and to appreciate the American way of life from the perspective of a broader historical and cultural context.” □



Dr. Baker working at Tel Zahara, an archaeological excavation in northern Israel directed by Dr. Susan Cohen of Montana State University.

## The Amernet String Quartet: Ambassadors of Music

FIU’s musical Artists-in-Residence, the Amernet String Quartet, are also Honors Faculty Fellows who for the third year will be “Exploring World Cultures and Societies through the String Quartet” in an Honors seminar. The Quartet is comprised of violinist **Misha Vintenson**, violinist **Marcia Littley**, violist **Michael Klotz**, and cellist **Jason Calloway**.

As touring professional performers, they travel frequently, something which has given them a context for their musical understanding and a new sense of perspective. Members of the Quartet reflect that, among their fondest memories of travelling abroad are those related to the impact music can have on their audiences. Whether performing for a group of children in a gymnasium in Bucharest, working with university students in Medellin, or playing for an audience of Holocaust survivors in Jerusalem, the emotional feedback is a gift they cherish.

Likewise, the Quartet’s members have found that teaching in the Honors College has profoundly affected their work. Since their course is built upon the principle of understanding great musical works by examining them within the cultural milieu in which they were conceived, foreign travel has enhanced their knowledge of these issues, and allowed them to bring to the classroom their explorations. Much of their repertoire is central European,



so performing abroad has helped them link their concert work directly to their teaching.

Among the Quartet’s current projects, perhaps the most exciting involve opportunities to present new repertoire. At home and abroad, they are offering programs of Jewish diaspora composers, from those who wrote liturgical music to those who perished in Nazi concentration camps. This initiative is providing them “a vibrant sense of discovery for all of us as artists as well as for audiences.” □

## Honors International Students



**Christine Caldwell** is a senior from the United Kingdom with a major in Finance. As a military dependent, she chose FIU because it is military-friendly and has a strong reputation in business. She also enjoys South Florida. She believes that her experience with the Honors College has broadened her horizons and given her a global competitive edge. Her involvement with the Honors College, especially through the ARCH Program and the Aesthetics and Values course, have honed her research, organizational, and leadership skills, which will allow her to realize her goal of becoming an executive for a leading financial institution. □



**Nebojsa Zlatic** is a senior from Germany and Serbia who is currently studying Accounting, Finance, and International Business. He came to FIU because of its reputation as a great school for business and a university with many opportunities. His experience with the Honors College has given him the opportunity to realize these experiences, and although he believes that the future is very volatile, he is confident that his involvement with the Honors College and FIU will bring him success. □



**Daniela Blagoeva** is a sophomore studying International Relations. Originally from Sofia, Bulgaria, she feels very comfortable with the diversity of South Florida. Daniela believes that the Honors College breaks the monotony of major-related courses and allows her creative side to shine. Focused on education and academics, she plans to attend graduate school, but remains open to where the path of life will lead her. □



**Emmanuel Okwor** is a Nigerian-American senior studying Construction Management and Business Administration. Emmanuel originally chose FIU for its diverse demographics, and his involvement with the ARCH Program of the Honors College has given him many opportunities to make connections and conduct research. His ultimate goal is to make the world a better place, and he believes that the Honors College has given him the tools to deal with the problems of everyday life. □



**Arian Sheremeti** is originally from Southeastern Europe, specifically from Kosovo. Over the past 10 years, he lived in several countries, including Kosovo, England, Canada and currently the U.S. Some moves were by choice and others by necessity, such as when he fled Kosovo during the last Balkan civil conflict, which also interrupted his studies. He did continue to learn as much as he could about the American education system on his own, and committed himself to continue his education in the U.S. His plans were delayed, however, when he was compelled to help rebuild his family home that was destroyed during the conflict in Kosovo.

In 2011 while visiting his sister in Miami, he had the opportunity to tour FIU's MMC Campus and sit in on classes. He felt inspired by the environment of learning and self-improvement. Fast forward two years later and he is a senior who will graduate with a B.A. in Business Administration in April 2014, and subsequently plans to earn a master's here at FIU. He has his sights firmly set on applying his acquired professional skills and knowledge to giving back to his native community in Kosovo. During his time at FIU, Arian has also managed to work part-time, be an active member of Beta Alpha Psi, and even serve as a volunteer for the Honors College. He is grateful to the many people and organizations who helped along the way.

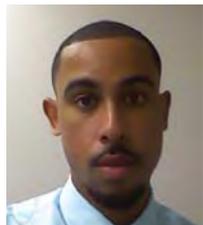
"I would like to single out the Honors College, headed by Dean Northup, who awarded me a scholarship at the most critical time of my academic career and literally allowed me to continue my journey. I can only hope to repay this kindness someday as a proud FIU alumnus." □

## Kudos to Our Students!



**Daniel Tapanes** was selected as this year's recipient of the Martin Luther King Peace Award, given annually at FIU's MLK Breakfast. □

**Both Oscar Vela and Richard Barrios** have received prestigious Gilman Grants to study abroad. Oscar will be doing Honors study abroad in France, and Richard will be going to Italy. □



**Dennis Gibson** has been selected as a finalist for a \$1000 Awesome Foundation – Miami Award for his idea to develop a reading

project based in Sweetwater. □



**Randall Deané** is scheduled to graduate after only 3 years this August. Over the summer Randall worked full-time for CNA, a

commercial property and casualty insurance provider. She was one of only 9 interns in the highly selective CNA Enterprise Internship Program. □



**Andira Ramos** was recently awarded an NSF Graduate Fellowship to continue her research in physics at the University of Michigan. □

**Joseph Tardanico** has received a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Scholarship to research his

senior honors thesis in the Department of Animal Ecology and Tropical Biology at the University of Würzburg. □



**Susan Tapia** has been chosen as an FIU Worlds Ahead Graduate, and was recognized by President Rosenberg at the spring commencement for

her outstanding academic and personal achievements. Susan was president of Helping Our World and Aesthetics & Values, and secretary and fundraising director of Rotaract's FIU Chapter. She has represented FIU at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference, the Clinton Global Initiative University Conference, and the Rotary Youth Leadership Conference. She is a member of Gamma Epsilon Phi, Sigma Iota Rho, the Italian Club, the Asian Student Union, and Phi Beta Kappa. □

## 2013 Honors College Graduates: What are they doing next?

**Sky Choi**, the youngest-ever graduate of FIU, will be attending Harvard to earn a master's in math education.

**Chelsie Rachelle Mora** has been selected as the first-place winner in the Undergraduate Non-Fiction category of the 2013 FIU Literary Awards Competition. She plans to be a copywriter.

**Paul Nunez** is entering the University of Miami on scholarship to earn a joint J.D./Ph.D. in environmental science and policy.

**Daniel Ghanem** and **Giovanny Alfonso** are headed to Bank of America in Charlotte, NC, as financial analysts.

**Viviana Lowe** will be pursuing her J.D. at George Washington University Law School.

**Luis Masieri** has accepted a position as Program Manager with Microsoft in Seattle.

**Daniela Saczek** will be working for Justice for Domestic Workers as an organizer at the Miami Workers Center.

**Dalisi Otero** has received a scholarship to study at the University of Miami School of Law.

**Saul Milian** will be joining Deloitte & Touche in their Enterprise Risk Services division.

**Bradly Hammond** is going to the University of Michigan to study at the Rackham Graduate School and Center for Japanese Studies.

**Jonathan Ricci** is starting his career with Target as an Executive Team Leader.

**Clara Alvarado** will be pursuing a master's in clinical psychology at FIU.

**Ehren Sixon** has accepted a position at Samsung in computer engineering.

**Carolina Alvarez** has received a research assistantship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for a master's in Biostatistics.

**Melissa Rodriguez** will be pursuing a J.D. at the Penn State School of Law.

**Horacio Aguirre** is joining J.P. Morgan's private bank as a financial analyst.

**Kirk Villalon** will be attending FIU's College of Law with a full scholarship and a stipend.

**Ayman Elyasin** has taken a position with State Farm Insurance.

**Mariafernanda Lopez** will be working toward her master's in Mental Health Counseling at FIU.

**Thomas Pupo** is working as a creative director at Arango Design.

**Colleen Quinn**, a member of FIU's swimming and diving team, will enter FIU's occupational therapy program.

**Emily Bello-Pardo** has been accepted into the master's program in Latin American Studies at FIU.

**Axel Miranda** will be attending Northwestern University Law School in Chicago.

**Tatiana Pandiani** will attend Columbia University to earn a Master's in Fine Arts in Directing.

**Jorge Cabrera** will be pursuing a doctorate in computer science at FIU.

**Greg Aranea** is headed to the University of Hawaii to pursue a Ph.D. in physical oceanography.

# Leonor Anthony

Honors College Artist-in-Residence



After decades of devotion to lunchboxes, teacher meetings and driving lessons, artist Leonor Anthony now focuses on her spirituality, her education, and her art. Exhibited worldwide today, her pieces reflect her life experience, passion, and personal expression, demonstrating that art does indeed imitate life.

Born in Cuba, Leonor relocated to Miami with her family while still a young child. Growing up, she was far more interested in climbing trees, kicking soccer balls, and “drawing everything I could get my hands on since I got a pencil” than in dressing up and applying makeup. Nevertheless, her family encouraged her to participate in the Miss Latin USA beauty pageant at the age of 17, and she promptly won her first and only beauty pageant. Unexpectedly, this accomplishment would change her life. The year that followed was a whirlwind tour of Latin America, meeting people and experiencing new cultures and places. It opened her eyes, and enriched her passion for art and expression.

Since then, Leonor has refused to let boundaries – whether imposed by culture, family, or herself– affect her dreams and ambitions. That can-do spirit motivated her as she raised three children while successfully pursuing a career as an in-demand actor and model. In 2004, when her youngest children – twins – started to drive, she finally found time for her art. She threw herself into developing as an artist, studying technique, painting prolifically, defining her own style, and gaining more education. She earned two bachelor’s degrees--in Psychology and Art History--and a master’s in Religious Studies, all from FIU. Meanwhile she painted, donating pieces to local charities and businesses to increase her exposure, applying for every juried competition, and pursuing every opportunity to expand her audience.

This year she is showing in the Beijing International Art Biennale, and two of her paintings were selected by the judges

for the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW) to be featured in the group’s magazine and website. (NLAPW is the oldest women’s organization in the US, founded in 1897 for artists, musicians and writers). She also placed a painting in the top 15 entries—out of 10,000--in All Women International Art. Last year, she exhibited at the Twitter International Art Exhibit and Snap to Grid juried shows in L.A., and in May she participated in the Seoul, Korea, International Art Fair.

As her work becomes increasingly respected, she has turned toward helping others who share her background, founding Young Urban Cuban Artists



(YUCA) in order to “show the world what Cuban artists are doing outside of Cuba.”

Dedicated wholeheartedly to promoting education, she also co-founded the Himalayan Community Project (HCP), which benefits children and families in desperately poor Nepal. HCP helps fund classrooms, school buildings, and maintenance, as well as sponsoring children’s school enrollment and empowering them as individuals. Working with the Honors College to develop a student study abroad trip to Nepal, where they would work first hand with HCP, Leonor is helping to shape the children of

the next generation, as well as broaden the horizons of our students. She holds a special regard for the Honors College at FIU, which she calls “a jewel, the university’s best kept secret.” She joined the Community Advisory Board in 2012 and has been a vibrant and enthusiastic promoter of Honors.

Recently, she donated one of her large works, “Infinite Dance,” a re-imagining of a Matisse classic, to the College; it is now on loan to the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, and is displayed in the main lobby of the new Academic Health Center #4 building. Leonor also arranged for the donation to the College of a Jose Marti sculpture by famed Cuban artist Tony Lopez, which has been placed on loan to the City of Sweetwater outside the Jorge Mas Canosa Community Center. The College was honored that she accepted an appointment as Artist-in-Residence this year.

Leonor works extensively with charitable organizations, including Big Brothers-Big Sisters, United Way, Miracle Makers, Loving Soles, and many others, receiving the 2012 Humanitarian Award at Tiffany’s Miami Beach International Fashion Week. Her philanthropy, education, and most importantly, her art, are all driven by that first experience of expanding horizons. Leonor refuses to let roadblocks limit her – instead, she says, “Get out and find out what’s out there!” She has followed that credo and now travels extensively, showing her paintings and experiencing the world from Italy to China, from Amsterdam to South Korea.

Next spring, Leonor will lead a trip along “The Way” to El Camino de Santiago, another life-changing journey she first took in 2011 with her daughter, Alexandra. This time she will combine her religious studies background, artistic sensibility, and trip savvy, taking adults down the famous pilgrimage path to Compostela as part of the College’s outreach (see inside front cover). Driven by passion and joie de vivre, Leonor continues to learn, give, and grow. ■

## Alumnus Gives Back



Honors College alumnus **Norman Uriarte**, owner of the Panorama Travel agency, has stepped up to the plate to help ensure that Honors students have the opportunity to travel abroad. His \$125,000 scholarship fund is one of the College's larger gifts, and comes at a time when it is sorely

needed. In addition, part of the funding will go to first-generation Honors students who need help with tuition and fees.

Through his generous contribution, many Honors students will be able to study in Europe, Asia, or South America, where

they will enhance their education and global understanding. Already, the fund has enabled the travel of students to Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand over the winter break.

Through Panorama, which specializes in student travel trips, Uriarte has been arranging travel for other FIU units and has long supported FIU's Alternative Breaks program by planning trips and helping students with costs. This past spring, he set up two aB programs for Honors students—one for STITCH, the pre-med society, and another for Honors Place, our living-learning community.

Uriarte also serves as a member of the College's Community Advisory Board, for which he is planning a winter trip to his native Nicaragua. Discussions are also under way for a future study abroad class there, where students would focus on ecological questions.

The Honors College salutes Norman Uriarte and his gift of the best in education. □

## New Community Advisory Board Members



Honors alum **Joel Gandara** is founder of Underwear Station, Inc., a wholesale distributor and manufacturer of men's underwear and swimwear that has 100+ employees, a factory in Colombia, and clients in European markets. During his time at FIU, he served as President of the FIU Chapter of the American Marketing Association and as a consultant for FIU's Athletic Department, working on alumni awareness. □



**Tony Garcia** is president of Menda Group Advertising, an agency that handles media and creative services for a number of national and local clients. Tony has over 20 years of experience in fields ranging from marketing and advertising to graphic design and multimedia production. □



**Irene Korge** has been active in many non-profit organizations, including the American Cancer Society and the Humane Society. She has received many

honors for her philanthropic work, including the Red Cross's 2013 Outstanding Philanthropic Leader in the Community award. Irene is an avid supporter of the Democratic Party and has hosted fundraising events on its behalf. Thousands of children in Miami-Dade County have had an enhanced educational experience due to the efforts of the Korge family. Irene hopes her philanthropic work will inspire others to give back. □



**Heidi Marcelo-Calero** is an attorney at Marquez & Marcelo-Robaina, PA. A graduate of the class of 2001, she attended Duke University and received a degree in International Law in 2004. She currently resides in Miami with her husband, Eddy Calero, and son. □



**Pedro Pavón** practices in Carlton Field's Corporate, Securities and Tax practice group, with a focus on information security, privacy, and federal policy, as well as corporate immigration law. Prior to entering private

practice, he was counsel to the Assistant Attorney General of the U.S. Justice Department, attorney advisor and program manager at the U.S. Department of Energy, and attorney advisor and judicial law clerk at the Department of Justice in Miami. He also served in the military as a paratrooper and special operations officer. This fall he will teach an Honors seminar on the Western Legal Tradition. □



**Norma A. Quintero** has been a quintessential force in the Miami philanthropic community and the world of publishing. She is president of The Vizcayans and Jackson Cancer Care, sits on boards for the United Way, and also hosts charity galas and other arts events at her home. Under her leadership, *Social Affairs* has become the premier philanthropy magazine in South Florida and New York. She has received numerous awards for her community work, including "Women of Substance and Style" and the Red Cross Spectrum Award. □

# Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our home fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage and devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good luck! And let us beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

SIGNED: Dwight D. Eisenhower



Every year, each student in Professor John Bailly's France study abroad group undertakes a mission: to develop a personal relationship with one of the fallen at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. Each student selects one person interred, researches his/her life, locates the grave, and on location presents a brief summary to the class. The group also participates in an official ceremony lowering the flag at the end of their day at the cemetery.

Often the project—which regularly brings students to tears—has unexpected consequences, like this note from the staff of the Cemetery about one student's research:

"The idea of Maria Galeano was very nice. It was very interesting to see so many pictures compiled with care in her small notebook. This is also a very easy-to-use source of information when we do guided visits. We will welcome Ollie Reed, Jr.'s son in May and I am sure he will be delighted to see that someone in the United States is still thinking about him."

Maria has now contributed to the collective memory of Ollie Reed and Ollie Reed, Jr. Visitors from across the world that visit the Cemetery see her journal, which enhances their understanding of the Reeds and of American contributions to the war effort.

The Normandy Project, which developed organically with a little initial assistance from a grant from the European Union Centers of Excellence, has grown over the past three years into a unique and meaningful experience. Some students create small items to commemorate the sacrifice of the individuals buried in the Cemetery, and these are now part of the American Battle Monuments Commission files dedicated to those people. □

## Inaugural Poet and Honors Instructor Continue Collaboration

"Place of Mind: The **John Bailly-Richard Blanco** Collaborative Project" was featured in an exhibition that opened March 31 at the University of Maine Museum of Art in Bangor.



The exhibition featured the mixed-media art of Bailly, Senior Instructor in the Honors College. He created the series of works, starting in 2007, in collaboration with Blanco, the poet who read at President Obama's inauguration. Bailly and Blanco, an FIU graduate, worked together to create 25 works that incorporated Blanco's poetry into Bailly's painting.

"They started this project as a way to explore the creative process in different media — the visual and literary arts — and how they inform each other," said George Kinghorn, director of the UMaine Museum of Art.



Blanco, a long-time friend of the Honors College, has frequently given talks for Honors students and read his poetry for guests at the College's first annual Food for Talk event. The Bailly-Blanco artworks are currently on display around the country. □

A photograph of Ernesto Alfonso, a young man with dark hair, smiling and wearing a green and white striped V-neck t-shirt. He is standing in a lush green garden with a fountain in the background. The name "Ernesto" is written in large red letters, and "alfonso" is written in large white letters below it. The year "'11" is written in white to the right of the name.

# Ernesto alfonso '11

My time at FIU was an incredibly rewarding experience, not only because of the fruits of my labor as an undergraduate but also because of the myriad opportunities my alma mater offered. Among these unique possibilities were my senior-year cultural revitalization research project in the Peruvian Amazon with the Honors College, a rewarding diplomacy class with a U.S. Diplomat-in-Residence, and my involvement in community service. All of this prepared me to apply for and receive Rotary International's Ambassadorial Scholarship, a program valued at \$27,000, to pursue my graduate studies in South Africa. Thus, by the time I graduated, I knew where I was headed.

Always aimed at a career in the U.S. diplomatic corps as my pinnacle goal, I searched for opportunities at FIU that would help me achieve my dreams. Even though I was not yet a U.S. citizen while I attended FIU, there were projects, clubs, research and a variety of other things I got involved with. To many, not being a citizen represents a barrier, but it should not. I made certain to utilize the near-limitless opportunities FIU and the Honors College had to offer.

When I graduated from FIU with a B.A. in international relations and a minor in economics, I still had one year before my commitment with Rotary International began. I packed my bags and went to

Washington, DC. In our nation's capital I was fortunate to work for the FIU Office of Federal Relations as an intern during the fall of 2011. As a Latino and first-generation immigrant, I was extremely proud to represent our Hispanic minority in DC. On my first week working there, I visited congressional offices on my own, knocking on our senators' and representatives' office doors to introduce myself to their staffs. Everyone loves FIU! Every time I stepped into a congressional office, they made me feel right at home.

During the internship I focused on engaging foreign missions and involving our university even more in the international arena. I worked closely with a visiting delegation from the Republic of Georgia on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education issues, and was charged with organizing the visit of the Georgian Vice Prime Minister to our main campus. The success of this event eventually led to the current partnership between Georgia and FIU's School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

In the spring following the end of my internship, I remained in DC working as a public policy fellow for a lobbying firm in the area. I worked on different projects related to the firm's clients in the areas of national defense, energy, commerce, education and public health. My experience working for

the firm exposed me to the intricacies of how our government operates.

While working in DC, I finally became a proud citizen of the United States. Now, with doors wide open, I decided to apply for the U.S. Department of State's Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship. FIU's Senior International Officer, Hilarion Martinez, offered the crucial guidance and support that led to my being awarded this prestigious fellowship. The program provides \$40,000 per academic year for pursuing my master's degree, two internships (one domestic and one abroad) and a career as a U.S. diplomat upon graduation. Although I interviewed along with recent graduates from Harvard, Yale and Georgetown, I knew that the support network my alma mater had to offer made me a strong contender.

Currently, I am attending graduate school at Columbia University in New York City, where I am pursuing my master's in international affairs with a concentration in international finance and economic policy. Upon graduation, I will join the U.S. Foreign Service. My richly diverse experience as an immigrant, a Latino, a political refugee, and an American has shaped my adult values, while my experiences at FIU and the Honors College have forged my academic and professional drive. These will be my greatest assets while representing our country in other nations. □



### Jerzy Brodzikowski '07

Jerzy Brodzikowski, an international alum of the Honors College, is now living in his native Poland. He believes that “travel is at the core of our understanding of who we are in the world,” and “getting to know yourself is the highest form of education.” Studying from books and the Internet may give you theoretical knowledge, but the only true way to find out about the world, Jerzy believes, is to experience it first-hand. When he first moved to Florida, he was overwhelmed by the differences in culture, but his relationship with the Honors College allowed him to overcome his apprehensions and learn to appreciate diversity. His stay at FIU inspired him to dedicate his professional life to international relations and travel. ■

### Gillian Chang '05

Honors College alum Gillian Chang is from Jamaica. Since graduating, she has returned home to be with family, but her experience studying abroad at FIU broadened her horizons even further. Moreover, being a Resident Assistant in Honors Place opened her eyes to the diversity of culture at FIU. Now, her experiences in the Honors College have been incorporated into her professional life as a financial advisor. ■



### Stephan Mothe '09

Stephan Mothe is currently studying in Beijing, China, for his MPA in International Development at the School of Public Policy & Management at Tsinghua University. Stephan has been in China for four years since graduating from FIU, first in Zhejiang province, and now in Beijing, though he also travels a lot to other provinces. One of the highpoints of his stay in China was a trip with the International Poverty Reduction Center in China to the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in April 2012. Accompanied by a classmate, he joined a delegation of Nepali and Kenyan officials participating in a seminar on development in rural areas. He was struck by the natural beauty of Guangxi, as well as “its human beauty.” The accompanying picture was taken on this trip at a mountain known as the Tea Pyramid. Stephan is shown here with a classmate and a young woman of the Zhuang ethnic group. For Stephan, traveling and living abroad are the ultimate learning experiences. He says, “A student can learn about things from books or in a classroom, but can only really know what he experiences first-hand.” While Stephan was in the Honors College, he whetted his wanderlust by participating in a National Student Exchange at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. He believes that graduating from the Honors College—and Associate Dean J.C. Espinosa's recommendation letter—“probably played a big role in my acceptance to Tsinghua University for my master's program.” ■

# WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?



**Aston Wilson Jr., '05**, who received his B.A. in Political Science and his J. D. from FIU's College of Law in 2011, has opened his own law firm, Aston Wilson, P.A.

Wilson, who played on FIU's first football team and worked as a student assistant for the College, is an NFL sports agent and a criminal defense attorney. □



**James Richardson, '11**, talks about his internship with FPL, which led to a full-time job: "Being a member of the inaugural class of the

FIU/FPL Student Partnership Intern program allowed me to earn money while in school and work on campus with a flexible schedule. It also let me use and develop the tangible skills learned in my Honors College courses (research, problem solving, outside-the-box thinking, critical analysis, and continuous intellectual challenge). I was immediately given a position with FPL. In less than two years, I have moved up the corporate ladder five times. Today, I don't even think about working for another company." □



**Yamily Arab, '11**, has won a \$100,000 Pickering Fellowship, the Cadillac of national awards. The grant funds a two-year master's program and two paid

internships, one in DC at the State Department and one at an embassy abroad. She is also guaranteed entry into the U.S. Foreign Service. Yamily will enroll at American University next fall. Currently, she is on a Rotary Ambassadorial Fellowship (\$30,000), completing a master's program at the University of Manchester in England. □



**Jesus Borrero, '12**, who majored in Political Science, now works for the City of Sweetwater as a grants administrator. The job followed from his internship

through the Honors College-Sweetwater Partnership program, where he worked in the mayor's office. □



**Emma Lopez, '12**, recently published an article in *Latina Style* magazine. Emma, an environmental engineer, is currently a Congressional

Hispanic Caucus Graduate STEM Fellow in Washington, DC. She has been accepted in the environmental engineering doctorate program at the University of South Florida, where she will work with Dr. James Mihelcic, a State of Florida 21st Century World Class Scholar, on research in green engineering, sustainable development, and global water/sanitation issues. Emma is a member of the Hispanic Society of Engineers and the Society of Women Engineers. □



**Simone Worsdale, '10**, was recently hired as Assistant Director of Communications for the FIU Office of Alumni Relations, handling e-mail marketing, social media management and content management of FIUalumni.com. She is engaged to Andrew Pego '12, a graduate of the College of Arts and Science. They plan to marry in 2015. □



**Ralph Rosado, '96**, is Executive Director of the South Florida Community Development Coalition, a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to building communities and developing assets in Miami-Dade County. Previously, he was Director of Urban Design and Neighborhood Revitalization for a large architecture, engineering, and city planning firm. He is currently completing a doctorate in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania, with a focus on affordable housing policy and neighborhood revitalization strategies, and completed a master's of Public Policy & Urban and Regional Planning from Princeton University. Ralph is running for the Miami City Commission, District 4. □

## WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

Share your story at [honors.fiu.edu/share](http://honors.fiu.edu/share)

# Food for Talk

The fourth annual Honors College Food for Talk fundraiser was held at Café Avanti in Miami Beach on April 18, 2013. This year's event had the largest attendance ever. The program included twelve different community and FIU leaders, including *Miami Heat* TV host Jason Jackson, radio and TV personality Javier Romero, and FIU researcher and "British Indiana Jones" Tudor Parfitt. During the cocktail portion, guests were treated to wine compliments of Varela Imports and later sampled Café Avanti's renowned Italian cuisine with their table leaders during dinner. All proceeds from the table sponsorships and silent auction, held during the event, went to scholarships for Honors College students. □



## Jose Martí Statue Dedication



On the 111<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cuban independence, May 20, 2013, the Honors College and the City of Sweetwater unveiled a larger-than-life statue of Jose Martí by the late Cuban master sculptor Tony Lopez. The sculpture, donated to the College by the artist's family, is on permanent loan at the Jorge Mas Canosa Community Center in our neighbor city. □

## Honors College Everglades Day

Alumni from the Honors College and the FIU College of Business participated in the third annual Everglades Excursion on January 12, 2013. They removed overgrown patches of invasive cattail plants near the Ernest Coe Visitor Center in Everglades National Park during the first part of the day. Participants then went for a "slough slog" through Everglades wetlands and into a cypress dome. □



## Honors College Study Abroad Reunion

On November 3, 2012, the Honors College invited all alumni who have ever participated in all the College's study abroad programs to a reunion dinner held at the MARC Pavilion at the Modesto Maidique Campus. This event allowed alumni to reminisce about their study abroad experiences and learn about new Honors College travel opportunities as well as the launch of a new Honors College study abroad scholarship website. The website, [honors.fiu.edu/studyfund](http://honors.fiu.edu/studyfund), profiles alumni and students who have benefited from the study abroad experience and offers ways to help needy Honors students fulfill their study abroad goals. □



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# Cambodia & Vietnam

December 11, 2013 - January 5, 2014

The Honors College is pleased to announce the second year of this exciting study abroad program to Vietnam and Cambodia. The first Honors foreign study program to be offered in Southeast Asia, and the first held in the winter, features the culture, history, and art of Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, as well as service opportunities.

The program will travel to Bangkok, Thailand for 3 days, Vietnam (Saigon, Danang, Hoi An, Hanoi) for 9 days, and Cambodia (Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Phnom Penh) for 13 days.

This program is open to both students and alumni. [honors.fiu.edu/vietnam-cambodia](http://honors.fiu.edu/vietnam-cambodia)

Join our Facebook group and reconnect with friends as you share photos and stories from your trip. [honors.fiu.edu/StudyAbroadGroup](http://honors.fiu.edu/StudyAbroadGroup)

Travel Services Provided by



Study Abroad Partner of The Honors College