

FEF FOCUS

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President's Message

The FEF recognizes the importance of enhancing our students' abilities to write dissertations and complete their Ph.D. programs as quickly as possible. Thus, for 2013-2014, we have expanded our professional development workshops, increased our mentoring services, and improved instruction in our online writing workshops. We expect this enhanced support to help maximize student performance from the time a new class of Fellows attends the McKnight Orientation until the group graduates.

You will read in this edition of the *Focus* how this year's new class of 85 Fellows is the largest ever, with 29 students selected to receive a new one-year STEM Dissertation Fellowship and 56 chosen as part of our largest group of new full McKnight Doctoral Fellows since 1984. They and our other matriculating Fellows will have access to our copy editing services for course and conference papers, dissertations, and articles for publication and to writing workshops offered both online and live at each of our conferences throughout the year. Post-conference evaluations indicate these workshops not only help our Fellows improve their skills, but also provide an opportunity for them to network

and collaborate on research projects and perhaps publish before graduation, thereby developing a more competitive employment portfolio.

Indeed, as this edition of the *Focus* illustrates, McKnight Fellows often graduate having already distinguished themselves through research and innovation. You will read how Jacqueline Rodriguez and Calvin Stewart received the University of Central Florida's prestigious Order of Pegasus award, Jacqueline for developing a promising mixed reality lab for training teachers and Calvin for amassing 20 publications in recognized journals and conference proceedings, both while making time to mentor undergraduate and FEF pre-college students.

I'm always gratified by the success of our pre-college students, and this edition of the *Focus* presents an array of stories demonstrating the benefits they derive from our cutting edge programs. This past summer, to ensure students are aware of the requirements for possible career options, we successfully piloted a Virtual STEM Speakers Series that we soon will offer throughout the academic year. The Series minimizes the costs of presenting career speakers live on location and allows us to ensure more stu-

dents understand the correlation between their course work and various job opportunities.

You will meet some of our pre-college students in this edition of the *Focus*, winners of our 2013 state academic contests. I congratulate them and thank the Florida colleges and universities that donated 4-year scholarships to the members of the Math and History champion teams. Offering scholarships as competition prizes serves as an effective incentive for students to work to improve their skills in and after school and during the summer. Through the Competitions, students learn the value of team work as well as the importance of fulfilling their commitments so others can meet their goals. Academic mastery also becomes the main focus of the group, thereby continuing to instill FEF's expected culture of achievement, where knowledge and skill development become the guiding and driving force.



Dr. Lawrence Morehouse
President & CEO

FEF Awards McKnight Program's Largest Number of New Fellowships

Studies demonstrate that the longer it takes a student to write a defensible dissertation, the greater the likelihood she or he will become what is commonly referred to as a permanent ABD (having written "all but the dissertation"). Thus, a significant percentage of students pass all required doctoral course work



New Fellows at the June 2013 McKnight Orientation

but fail to complete their dissertations. This failure results from a lack of adequate financial support, unstructured timelines for completing the dissertation, and insufficient coaching through the difficult process of conducting and analyzing meaningful research and completing a manuscript.

Inside this Issue:

McKnight Alumni Profiles	2
MDF Class of 2013-2014	3
MDF Fellow Profiles	4
Pre-College Academic Contests	5
Pre-College Summit Highlights	6
Pre-College Summer STEM Camps	7
Contact Information	8

continues on page 3

MDF Alumnus Dr. Sergio Iñiguez Strives to Inspire Others to Pursue Ph.D.'s

Just months after completing his Ph.D. in Neuroscience at Florida State University, followed by a productive Research Fellowship in the Psychiatry Department at Yale University, Mexican American McKnight Doctoral Alumnus Dr. Sergio Iñiguez has made his way back to where his American journey began. He was born in Riverside, California, spent his formative years in Mexico, then moved back to the United States to attend high school in Indio and study for his bachelor's and master's degrees at California State University at San Bernardino. In the fall of 2011, he returned to Cal State-San Bernardino as an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology.

Iñiguez' observations and experiences, having grown up in largely homogeneous Mexico and then returning to the United States where he immersed himself in American culture and English as a second language, led him on a path of exploration. He became interested in the reasons people from different cultures think about and experience life differently. This quest for understanding eventually led him to study psychology, earn his B.A. and M.A. in the field, and go on to pursue his Ph.D.

Iñiguez began his doctoral studies as a McKnight Doctoral Fellow in 2007



Dr. Sergio Iñiguez at the MDF Mid-Year Meeting

and focused his research on how early exposure to psychotropic drugs (e.g., Prozac) may influence behavior as an adult. His work is important because more studies are needed to determine the long term effects these powerful drugs have on adolescents. He has written extensively on the subject and now has 16 peer-reviewed publications to his credit. He also has won a number of awards, most recently a National Hispanic Science Network on Drug Abuse Early Career Leadership Award.

Iñiguez credits a lot of his success to the MDF program. He says receiving the MDF afforded him more time to publish and research, because he didn't have to work outside the university like others in the department, and he appreciated the supportive environment the Program provides.

"Being one of only two Latinos in my Neuroscience program at FSU made the social part of the doctoral program navigation difficult at times," he says. "When I came to the McKnight meetings, I felt 'normal' being around other underrepresented minorities and comfortable sharing challenges I experienced in my program."

"Having a Latino professor in my bachelor's and master's programs helped me make the decision to pursue the Ph.D. and go into academia," he notes. "Here at Cal State, our student population is 51% minority, and part of the plan for my career is to provide that same inspiration for many of those students." Wanting to "pay it back," Iñiguez epitomizes what the MDF program is all about—standing on the success of others so you can help others stand on yours.

"When I came to the McKnight meetings, I felt 'normal' being around other underrepresented minorities and comfortable sharing challenges I experienced in my program."

-- McKnight Alumnus Dr. Sergio Iñiguez

Alumni Share Expertise at FEF's Summer Research & Writing Institute

At the 2013 Summer Research and Writing Institute (SRWI), four McKnight alumni—Drs. Mark Dawkins, Diane Allen-Gipson, Winifred Scott, and Guitele Rahill—provided practical guidance to help a new generation of McKnight matriculants and other students understand the intricacies of graduate research and writing. They shared their expertise and experiences through workshops on the process of getting published in scholarly journals, overseas employment opportunities, National Science Foundation grant writing, and the Atlas-ti software program. In doing so, they brought the McKnight support system full circle.



Dr. Mark Dawkins

Mark Dawkins, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Associate Professor of Accounting at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business, earned his Ph.D. in Business from Florida State University in 1994. He has published widely in respected journals and developed textbook cases

on strategic management issues. At SRWI, he presented "The Realities of Getting Published: A Focus on Refereed and Non-Refereed Journal Articles," part of which illustrated the exhaustive process of submitting writing for publication by reviewing 17 months of his correspondence with a journal, starting with his

initial submission and culminating with the article's acceptance. Dr. Dawkins has delivered the journal writing workshop at SRWI for five consecutive years and has consistently been one of our highest rated presenters.

Like Dawkins, Diane Allen-Gipson has become an anticipated SRWI fixture, having presented the NSF grant writing workshop for three summers prior to this one. A prolific and successful grant writer who has won grants totaling over \$1.2 million, Allen-Gipson instructed students on how to develop a project summary, locate in-



Dr. Diane Allen-Gipson

FEF Awards Largest Number of Fellowships

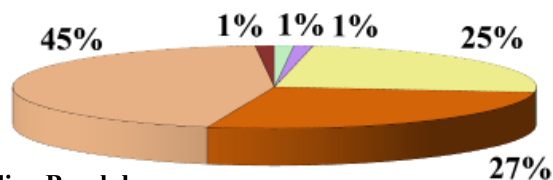
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The FEF addresses these problems by providing McKnight Fellows with ever-expanding mentoring and professional development opportunities. This fall, we began offering that support to a record number of students through both a new one-year dissertation fellowship program for recent ABD's and the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship Program's largest class of new five-year Fellows since the program's inception.

New McKnight Dissertation Fellows

For the 2013-2014 academic year, to help reduce the severe shortage of students pursuing degrees in STEM fields, the FEF selected 29 STEM doctoral students to receive a new one-year Dissertation Fellowship that includes up to \$12,000 for the academic year. These Dissertation Fellows were chosen through a rigorous selection process from a pool of applicants with financial need who have passed their comprehensive examinations and had their dissertation proposals accepted by their committees as well as their dissertation completion timelines certified by their chairs or advisors. All Fellows plan to defend their dissertations and graduate by the summer of 2014.

As part of the Dissertation Fellowship award, Fellows participated in an orientation and regular workshops presented during the FEF's 2013 Summer Research & Writing Institute. They also must attend the October McKnight Annual Fellows' Meeting and present their work at the 2014 Mid-Year Research & Writing Conference. In addition, they are eligible to receive all other McKnight support, including writing assistance and possible research travel grants.



Discipline Breakdown

- Business (1)
- Humanities (1)
- Social Sciences (21)
- STEM-Engineering/Computer Sciences (23)
- STEM-Health/Life/Physical Sciences (38)
- STEM-Mathematics/Statistics (1)

2013-2014 Doctoral Fellowship Class

This year's class of 56 new Doctoral Fellows consists of students recruited from Florida universities and from many colleges around the country, including the University of Central Missouri, the University of Pittsburgh, Georgia State, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at Greensboro, Emory, Loyola, San Jose State, Spelman, the University of Washington, Pepperdine, South Carolina State, Brooklyn College, Stanford, the University of Texas - Pan American, and eight students from the various campuses of the University of Puerto Rico.

After meeting in Tampa at the mid-June McKnight New Fellows' Orientation, the Fellows began their doctoral studies this fall, pursuing degrees in diverse disciplines ranging from engineering to political science, neuroscience, marketing, cultural anthropology, genetics, history, forensic chemistry, public affairs and more.

Alumni Share Expertise at SRWI

continued from page 2

formation on intellectual and broader impact requirements, and write a competitive grant proposal in a hands-on, interactive setting. She also provided feedback and support to students who brought their draft proposals to the session. When Dr. Allen-Gipson isn't writing grants and presenting workshops, she is an assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences with affiliate and adjunct appointments at Moffitt Cancer Research Center and the Department of Internal Medicine. Allen-Gipson earned her Ph.D. in Pharmacy from Florida A&M University in 2000.



Dr. Winifred Scott

This year's SRWI featured the FEF's first presentation on employment opportunities abroad by Dr. Winifred Scott, recently promoted to Associate Professor of Accounting at Zayed University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Now in her third year overseas, Dr. Scott received her doctorate in Business from FSU in 2000. In 2011, she won a Research

Incentive Award for her proposal comparing the regulatory agencies of the United States and UAE. Her SRWI discussion integrated practical considerations with the lure of travel and living in a foreign country, including tax breaks, other financial advantages, tips on researching overseas employment, and inviting photos taken in the Near East and Europe. Given the uncertain employment market in the United States, the FEF anticipates more graduates will venture beyond this country's borders, following Dr. Scott's example.

Dr. Guitele Rahill also debuted at the Institute this year, presenting two sessions of the inaugural workshop on Atlas-ti, a qualitative data analysis software program. Dr. Rahill's presentation covered the foundations of qualitative research, compared Atlas-ti to other systems, and provided hands-on training.



Dr. Guitele Rahill

Dr. Rahill earned her Ph.D. in Social Welfare from Florida International University, where she was also a Presidential Fellow, in 2008. Now an assistant professor of social work at the University of South Florida, Rahill has partnered with local and national Haitian organizations, organized forums, lectured at national and international conferences, and returned to Haiti on humanitarian missions after the 2010 earthquake. Her research aims to eliminate health disparities of the poor and underserved, specifically among Haitians, and includes groundbreaking research on *picuristes*, traditional injectionists, in Haitian communities in South Florida. This summer, she and Dr. Ceilia Lescano, also of USF, won a five-year, \$2 million NIH grant to help faculty and scholars at the State University of Haiti develop research skills to combat HIV in youth. Using a syndemics approach that addresses co-occurring social problems, Rahill and her colleagues will train their Haitian counterparts *via* the web and in person.

Two McKnight Fellows Inducted into UCF's Prestigious Order of Pegasus

This year, the University of Central Florida inducted 19 students into the Order of Pegasus, the highest honor it bestows on select members of its student population of close to 60,000. It is, therefore, no small feat that, of only five graduate-level inductees, two—Jacqueline Rodriguez and Calvin Stewart—are McKnight Fellows. They were nominated and recognized for demonstrating exemplary university and community involvement, leadership, academic achievement, and community service.

Jacqueline Rodriguez

With a bachelor's degree in International Affairs and Latin American Studies from George Washington University and a master's in special education from American University, Jacqueline Rodriguez merged seemingly disparate



MDF Graduate
Dr. Jacqueline Rodriguez

"I plan to engage in research on special and inclusive education, as well as advocate for innovative education programming that benefits all students."

-- McKnight Alumna Dr. Jacqueline Rodriguez

interests in her doctoral studies, where her work focused on global inclusive education policy and practice, STEM education for students with exceptionalities, and the use of technology and simulated environments to train teachers.



Jacqueline presents "Innovative Collaboration: A Mixed Reality Teaching Lab as a Teacher Preparation Tool for the Digital Age" at the 2012 MDF Mid-Year Conference.

Jacqueline conducted important, innovative research in pursuit of these interests. She helped develop a mixed reality lab, Teach-LivE™, which uses avatar students to advance teachers' content and pedagogy skills, and presented the project both nationally and internationally. She also interned at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency Inclusive Education Unit for Palestinian refugees in the Near East, where she supported international inclusive education policy while collecting data for her dissertation.

During her time at UCF, Jacqueline also served the university and broader communities by mentoring students, participating on the Dean's Education Student College Council, chairing the national Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Student Committee, and serving as the student representative to CEC's International Division.

Since her Order of Pegasus induction, Jacqueline has earned her Ph.D. and moved to Virginia to join the faculty of the College of William and Mary as an assistant professor of education.

Calvin Stewart

From designing LEGOs vehicles to devouring science fiction novels, Calvin Stewart's childhood seemed to foretell a career in STEM. Instead, he was drawn to writing, and he didn't feel he was good at math. Just before college, his mother involved him in UCF's SPACE, the Summer Program for Academic Careers in Engineering, and his activities and performance there convinced him to major in engineering. When Calvin completes his doctorate this year, he will have earned all three of his mechanical engineering degrees (bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D.) from UCF.



MDF Fellow
Calvin Stewart

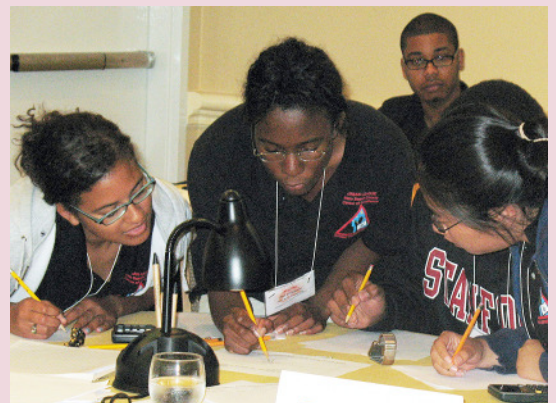
At UCF, Stewart's mentor introduced him to the Undergraduate Research Experience, through which he began to develop skills crucial to building an impressive record of research and writing. Today, Stewart has published seven articles in internationally recognized journals as well as 13 in conference proceedings and has traveled extensively to present his work. In addition, in 2012, he won the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Widener Literature Award for Outstanding Technical Paper.

During his UCF tenure, Stewart has volunteered with the Southeastern Consortium for Minorities in Engineering and mentored freshman engineering students. He also has served as a game official and role model at the FEF's annual statewide Math Brain Bowl.

Later this year, he will complete his dissertation on experimental, theoretical and numerical mechanics; graduate; and join the University of Texas in El Paso as assistant professor. A main reason he wants to teach there is because the campus serves a diverse (77% Hispanic) and mostly first generation population, students he looks forward to helping achieve their goals.

"As a professor, I will have the opportunity to improve society and create opportunities for others, following the great example set for me by UCF."

-- McKnight Fellow Calvin Stewart



Calvin officiates at the FEF's Brain Bowl Math Competition.

FEF's 2013 State Academic Contest Champions Demonstrate Skill Mastery

In August 2012, more than 500 students at 10 Centers of Excellence (COE's) around the State began studying and practicing to compete in FEF-sponsored County and Regional History & Culture, Math, Word Wizard (Vocabulary) and NAS Voices (Oratory) contests. By February 2013, 199 of those students had triumphed in Regional matches and continued preparing to demonstrate their mastery at State. On March 22nd and 23rd, 24 of those remaining competitors emerged as State champions at the FEF's 28th Annual Brain Bowl & Summit, winning trophies, gift cards and/or cash and 4-year college tuition scholarships.



3rd-5th Grade Word Wizard participants pose with their certificates alongside winner Kenjela Mullings from Palm Beach County COE.



Left: NAS Voices Contest winner Christiana Dillard, UCF-McKnight COE; Right: 6th-8th Grade Word Wizard Winner Sidney Lyght, Tallahassee Coalition COE



11th-12th Grade Math 1st Place winners, Team Neutron, Palm Beach County COE. Top: Jamila Picart and Camille Sanches; Bottom: David Gouge, Kevin Kasper and Suyash Matoli



9th-10th Grade Math 1st Place winners, Charger 1, Palm Beach County COE. Top: Ali Younis, Daniel Gouge and Matthew Liang; Bottom: Bisma Masudi and Bhumika Sood



6th-8th Grade Math 1st Place winners, The Brainiacs, Hillsborough County COE. Top: Shanelle Mack, Varun Singh and Cejae Charlemagne; Bottom: Vincent Johnson and Lenny Cardona

Champion History & Culture Brain Bowl Team Expresses Gratitude

For the first time in at least a decade, the coach and each member of a winning Brain Bowl team wrote letters to express their gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Competitions and earn prizes, including 4-year scholarships contributed by Florida colleges and universities. The text of the letters from the coach and team captain appears below:

• The members and coaches of Team Umoja! appreciate the work done by you and your team in preparing for the History & Culture Brain Bowl and the manner in which the officials conducted the competition. We enjoyed the meals, the lodging and the opportunity to interact with members of the other teams. Our gratitude is extended to you and the institutions for providing the awards received by our team members to help them in their educational pursuit. We hope the services you provide for the youth of Florida will continue for many years to come.

• I am writing this letter to express my gratitude for all the hard work and time you put into the Brain Bowl program to make it a

success. By providing a 4-year tuition scholarship, the Brain Bowl program has given me the financial backing necessary to attend the University of Central Florida without having to worry too much about where the funds will come from. With this scholarship, I am able to spend more time in the library studying and less time in the financial aid office. This will play a huge role in my success at UCF.



History & Culture Champion Team Umojah!, UCF-McKnight COE, competes. From left: Brian Higgins, Zacchaeus Lewis, Asa Abbey, Brittany Bailer and Brandon Bailer

Student Leaders Present a Triumphant Annual Pre-College Summit



Grades K-2 "Safety" Workshop



Grades 3-5 "Mixing It Up With Science" Workshop



Grades 9-12 "Teen Summit"



Grades 6-8 "Health & Nutrition" Workshop



Parents "Education Roundtable"

Student leaders from around the State conducted another activity-filled Annual National Achievers Society (NAS) Pre-College Summit in March 2013, attended by a total of 791 parents and students. The Summit included an Opening Ceremony led by state and regional NAS officers, workshops for students and parents, and a College Fair featuring a record 21 colleges and universities. The event culminated with a Teen Summit, Talent Extravaganza, and Awards Ceremony.

During the Awards Ceremony, in addition to congratulating academic competition winners and outstanding Achievers and parents, the FEF acknowledged three COE's for unparalleled participation. FEF presented trophies to the South Florida and UCF-McKnight COE's for bringing the largest parent and overall delegations to the Summit, respectively, and the North Florida COE for the most active involvement in forum discussions, comment posting, and academic games on the Members Only web portal-NAS Online.



Achiever Sidney Lyght, winner of the Talent Extravaganza, dances to the rhythm of Michael Jackson's "Smooth Criminal."

Students and Parents Visit with 2013 Summit Recruiters

A record twenty-one recruiters from the following colleges and universities attended the 2013 NAS State Summit to talk with students and parents about higher education plans: Bethune-Cookman University, Carleton College, Colby College, Daytona State College, Florida A&M University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, Florida Memorial University, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Florida State University, Full Sail University, Jacksonville University, Northwood University, St. Petersburg College, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of Miami, University of North Florida, University of South Florida, University of West Florida, and Valencia College.



Florida A & M University



Florida State University



University of South Florida

Miami-Dade Robotics Camp Students Venture Into the Field

To enhance the experience of students attending our Miami-Dade Math & Robotics Camp at North Dade Middle School, the FEF arranged for students to take several field trips this summer, to Florida International University and to cultural and scientific venues within their greater community.

Students talked with admissions advisors at FIU; explored Opa-locka's Moorish architecture at the History Miami Museum; learned more about science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on exhibits at the Miami Science Museum; and interacted with a variety of animals and plants at the Jungle Island zoological park.

While students spent most of their Camp days in class reviewing math and building and programming robots, the field trips added a layer of adventure and realism to their studies that all applauded in Camp evaluations.



Jungle Island



Miami Science Museum



Florida International University



History Miami Museum

FEF Pilots Live, Online STEM Speaker Series

Through the years, some of our career speakers at various summer camp locations have received such exemplary reviews and so greatly inspired students that we have often wished they could talk with all our summer camp students around the State. We simply haven't, however, had the resources to present them at every camp venue. That changed this year, as we piloted a Virtual STEM Speaker Series that brought four professionals from Miami, Tampa, and Orlando live and online, via the FEF's virtual classroom, to students attending our North Florida Applied Math Camp in Lake City and our Robotics Camp in Miami-Dade.

Orlando Computer Scientist Arup Guha summarized the pilot's general outcome: "Everything worked reasonably well. It's definitely a different beast doing the presentation online vs. in person. It's a big adjustment when you can't physically affect the mood of a class. You need to be prepared to ask and answer additional questions and have more of a conversation rather than lecture. The nice thing on my end is that it's really less of a demand in terms of time." Students responded favorably as well, with most naming the Series as a Camp component they valued highly.



Lake City Campers talk with Tampa architect Joe Harrington and McKnight Doctoral Fellowship graduate Dr. Dawn Martin, a Miami-based NASA Aerospace Engineer. Not pictured: conversations with Orlando Electrical Engineer Thaddeus Jones and Computer Scientist Arup Guha.

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Upcoming FEF Events

Feb. 28-March 1, 2014	MDF Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference, Tampa
March 21-22, 2014	29 th Annual Brain Bowl Competitions and Florida National Achievers Society Pre-College Summit, Tampa

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The FEF's mission is to strengthen the larger community by creating and implementing programs and services that lead to greater educational advancement for historically underrepresented groups.

For information on how you may support FEF programs, please call 813-272-2772.

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