

FEF FOCUS

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President's Message



Dr. Lawrence Morehouse

One hallmark of effective organizations is their pattern of incorporating practices that reflect the current world, rather than transfixing on nostalgia and chaining themselves to the past. Such organizations, equate change with growth and growth with sustainability. Each year, the FEF proves its sustainability by improving existing programs, taking advantage of new and forever changing technologies, and making timely, highly creative adjustments to our management and delivery systems.

Severe budget cuts at all levels of educational programs have led to a substantial decline in after school and summer academic programs and reduced the amount of financial aid available to defray the cost of earning a bachelor's or graduate degree. These cuts have forced us to devise new mechanisms to continue to achieve our goals. Through new Web-based software and our in-house innovations and research, we have developed and now offer online learning opportunities at both the pre-college and graduate levels. In this edition of the *Focus*, you will learn that, through the synchronous virtual classroom incorporated into our learning management system by Vice President Lyra Logan, Esq., we now are able to stem summer learning losses, provide year round tutorials for our pre-college students, and offer our graduate students sophisticated writing assistance online, connecting them to highly trained scholars, professional editors, and consultants.

Realizing online learning cannot completely replace face-to-face interaction with experts, again this year and in keeping with our collaboration and networking goals for our Annual Meeting and Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference, we have called upon McKnight alumni

not only to serve as speakers, professional consultants and mentors, but also, in their positions as university, corporate and government administrators, to provide job opportunities for newer McKnight graduates.

Successful programs invariably benefit from such a body of supportive, well-positioned alumni, as well as from continued excellent and dynamic leadership. You will read in this edition of the *Focus* how the 2012 Centers of Excellence (COE) Director of Year Jose Filpo dynamically led the South Florida COE through one of its most successful years, tapping the talents of graduates in the area, nearly doubling the number of students participating in COE Programs, enhancing parental involvement, expanding student academic projects, and producing the 2011 Statewide Middle School Math Brain Bowl Champions.

Because of the commitment of our COE Directors, parents and teachers, 100% of our students graduate from high school and a significant percentage qualify for Florida Bright Futures, university, corporate and foundation scholarships and gain admission into colleges and universities all over America, including some of our most prestigious institutions, as illustrated in this edition of the *Focus*.

We are proud to present to you a sampling of our compelling success stories, illustrating the significance and impact of inventive, carefully designed and skillfully implemented academic and leadership programs. These stories reveal the transcendent power of individual will enabled by programmatic and financial support. They reiterate the importance of perseverance when faced with significant challenges. They give testimony to the success of our conferences, workshops, and other support services. And, more importantly, they show that investing in people always pays the greatest dividends.

2011 Annual Meeting Introduces Fellows to Highly Regarded Members of the Academy

Ohio University President Dr. Roderick McDavis Outlines the Path to Education Administration



Dr. Roderick J. McDavis

Before he became the first African American President of Ohio University, Dr. Roderick J. McDavis held many positions, including serving as Dean at the University of Florida, McKnight liaison, and Director on the FEF Board. His background thus affords him a unique connection to the

continues on page 3

Brandeis' Dr. Thomas Shapiro Presents Seminal Research on U.S. Wealth Disparities



Dr. Thomas Shapiro

To demonstrate the significance of high quality research that impacts policy, the FEF routinely invites respected scholars to the Annual Fellows' Meeting to discuss their work. At the 2011 Meeting, Dr. Thomas Shapiro shared his research on wealth disparities with Fellows and other guests.

continues on page 3

Inside this Issue:

McKnight Alumni Success	2
McKnight Annual Meeting Highlights	3
FEF Online Learning Projects	4
National Achievers Society Highlights	5
National Achievers Society Graduates	6
Centers of Excellence Director of the Year	7
Contact Information	8

McKnight Alumni Success Stories: Varied Pathways to Tenure and Promotion

The primary mission of the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship Program is not only to support students as they earn their Ph.D.'s, but also to prepare them to eventually earn tenure and promotion at colleges and universities. To help matriculating McKnights and junior faculty understand the dynamics of the tenure-earning process, the FEF invited three recently tenured and promoted McKnight graduates, Drs. Nigel Malcolm, Tiffani Williams and Mildred Maldonado, to speak at the Annual Fellows' Meeting on a panel moderated by McKnight graduate Dr. Anthony Burrow.



Dr. Nigel Malcolm

present outstanding research and publication records.

Thus, if scholars plan to secure tenure and promotion at teaching-oriented universities, they should consider the advice offered by Dr. Nigel Malcolm, who recently received tenure and promotion at Keene State College in New Hamp-

shire. Malcolm stated that he decided before graduating from USF that he wanted to work at an institution that placed greater emphasis on promoting excellent teaching than on research and publication. To develop a competitive portfolio, he began to cultivate and hone his teaching skills before graduating by developing courses and teaching while completing his dissertation. His experience at USF not only prepared him for a teaching position at Keene State, but also helped him publish his first book, *One More River To Cross*.

In contrast, Dr. Tiffani Williams, the first female to earn a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Central Florida, decided to follow her passion for research and invention and pursue employment at a university with the capacity to promote research. Thus, before accepting a faculty position, Dr. Williams pursued post-doctoral fellowships at the University of New Mexico and Harvard. According to Dr. Williams, her post-doctoral experiences not only helped her develop a focused research agenda, but also allowed her to im-

prove her writing skills as well as develop a highly competitive publication record. Because of that record, she received a tenure track appointment at Texas A&M University and, during the spring of 2011, earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.



Dr. Mildred Maldonado

In lieu of pursuing post-doctoral experiences, Dr. Mildred Maldonado, who also preferred to work at a research university, applied for and received a McKnight Junior Faculty Fellowship, which allowed her to take paid leave from teaching to focus all efforts on writing for publication. As a result of the Fellowship, Dr. Maldonado completed several writing projects that helped her develop a successful tenure and promotion portfolio. In 2011, she became one of

the first Hispanic scholars to receive tenure in the University of Florida's Department of Epidemiology and Health Policy and the Institute for Child Health Policy.

At the end of the panel discussion, each graduate pledged to mentor Fellows and alumni who desire further guidance on preparing for the tenure-earning process. Each can be reached through the MDF Directory at fefonline.org.

The panelists explained the critical relationship between graduate studies and readying oneself for tenure and promotion and emphasized that there is no single pathway to achieving those goals.

They also noted that standards for securing tenure and promotion may vary, depending upon the mission of the college or university. Smaller universities and colleges tend to grant tenure and promote professors who demonstrate outstanding teaching skills, with minimal research and publication success. Larger, research-oriented universities, on the other hand, reserve tenure and promotion for individuals who



Dr. Anthony Burrow

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Dr. Tiffani Williams

Discussants Highlight Benefits of Presenting at MDF Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference

Each year, the FEF invites McKnight Fellows to present their research to a multidisciplinary group of peers as well as expert discussants at the Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference. In 2012, thirty-one Fellows signed on to write and submit abstracts and papers, develop presentations, discuss their findings, and receive public critique from professors in their fields—discussants chosen from among the FEF's network of scholars.

Discussants reviewed and provided feedback on students' draft dissertation proposals, articles, and papers and offered on-site feedback to each of the speakers presenting on ten discipline-specific panels. FEF Publications Manager Rachael Nickie spoke with discussants immediately following their panels about the benefits to students of writing and then presenting their research for public critique.

"The Conference allows Fellows to develop their research, writing and presentation skills in a safe environment. As a past student presenter, I know from experience that receiving insightful and detailed feedback at the Conference can help a Fellow improve a paper/presentation so that it will more likely be selected for and successfully

delivered at a professional conference/symposium," attested MDF alumna Dr. Patrice Reid, Director of Research, Simulation & Learning and Research Psychologist for the U.S. Department of Defense.

Another discussant, University of Florida-College of Engineering Teacher of the Year Dr. Scott Banks, who has published more than 300 peer-reviewed articles over 20 years, elaborated on the advantages STEM students garner from presenting their research in the Conference format: "Learning to communicate science to a general audience and explaining how scientific research can impact society is important to secure funding, enables interdisciplinary research and collaboration, and fosters professional networking." Dr. Banks also noted the added value speakers receive from having discussants review their papers in advance and offer suggestions on both the written and oral presentations at the Conference.



Alumna Dr. Patrice Reid

2011 Annual Meeting Introduces Fellows to Highly Regarded Members of the Academy

McDavis, continued from page 1

McKnight Doctoral Fellowship program and the commitment to help scholars strengthen communities by “Forging Pathways to Impactful Careers.” He outlined those pathways at the 2011 McKnight Annual Fellows’ Luncheon.

Dr. McDavis first identified four keys to success at all levels in the academy—outstanding teaching, scholarship, leadership, and fundraising—and advised Fellows to become proficient in each area. Teaching is “the heart of what we do,” and a solid teaching record is essential for attaining tenure/tenure-track or upper level administrative positions in higher education. Notable scholarship—original research, writing and publication—remains an important criteria in hiring, promotion and tenure decisions. Pursuing research and compiling a strong publication record also helps young academics define themselves and creates connections that open doors to teaching, leadership, and grant opportunities. Leadership—serving on committees in departments, colleges, and universities—sharpens communication, organizational and negotiation skills and develops areas of expertise that are invaluable for promotion and career advancement. Finally, fundraising—the ability to generate resources, write successful grants, and fund projects—has become increasingly more critical for candidates for all academic positions, particularly in harder economic times, and successful members of the academy are both comfortable with and adept at asking for money.

Dr. McDavis went on to delineate strategies Fellows can begin to implement now to make themselves competitive for faculty positions. He advised them to seek work with professors in their departments, which can lead to research, grant, and publishing opportunities as well as future employment. He suggested they join national associations related to their disciplines, become active, and eventually move into leadership positions. He also encouraged them to present their research at professional conferences as often as possible.

Dr. McDavis also provided guidance for faculty who look to move into administration. He suggested they seek opportunities to grow as leaders by serving on department, university, and association committees and working with organizations that focus on their research interests. He also advised them to serve on community and non-profit boards, where they can expand their skill sets and assist with fundraising.

In concluding, he noted that young scholars should be aware of how the internationalization of higher education has placed new demands on resources and created new expectations. The global marketplace has resulted in additional competition for students and faculty, particularly in STEM fields.

“You are a few among a few, and we need more like you in this nation,” he said, urging his audience to consider careers in higher education administration. A vast array of administrators will retire in the next five to ten years, he said, and “you need to replace them.” Furthermore, with people of color becoming a majority by 2040 or 2050, “it’s time for us to get ready for that America... because these changing demographics will surely influence the future of institutions of higher learning.”

Shapiro, continued from page 1

He outlined findings from a study in which he and the Institute for Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at Brandeis University charted the economic lives of a group of American families between 1984 and 2007, documenting a startling four-fold increase in the wealth gap between white and minority families during the period.

Shapiro explained that he and his research

team analyzed wealth—the amount of assets minus debts—rather than income, because the former allows families and communities to become economically secure and able to save money, start businesses, buy homes, and afford college for the next generation. The disparity between white and minority wealth has always greatly exceeded the income disparity.

Studies from the Pew Research Center corroborate and update IASP data, showing that by 2009 the median wealth of white households was 20 times that of black households and 18 times that of Hispanic households. Even among families with similar incomes, the racial wealth gap persisted. In fact, IASP data showed that from 1984 to 2007, the wealth of *high income* African Americans decreased from \$25,000 to \$18,000, while the wealth holdings of *middle income* whites increased from about \$18,000 to \$74,000.

According to Dr. Shapiro, several factors hamper African Americans and Hispanics from translating their earnings into wealth. Often lacking savings, investments, or inheritance, young members of these communities more likely rely on loans for their education and begin their careers with debt. When they seek to buy homes, they are at least twice as likely as whites with similar incomes to receive high cost mortgages. Finally, they are much less likely to benefit from the government’s asset building incentives, which disproportionately help wealthier individuals through the tax system.

To close the gap, Dr. Shapiro suggested a mix of policies, including tax code reforms; community investment strategies to provide living wage jobs; “baby bonds,” mimicking the British government program that sets aside nest egg money for children at birth; Individual Development Accounts; and enforcement of existing laws which prohibit discriminatory practices.



McKnight Fellows and Graduates at the 2011 Annual Fellows' Meeting



Left: BNY Mellon Wealth Management’s Sean Maguire, CFA, and Lea Levines, CFP, advise Annual Fellows’ Meeting guests on developing effective investment strategies. Right: Dr. Lawrence Morehouse delivers the 2011 State of the Fund address.

Discussants Highlight Benefits of Presenting at MDF Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference

continued from page 2

One of several other STEM discussants, University of South Florida Biological Oceanography Professor Dr. Frank Muller-Karger, also extolled the benefits of Fellows having the opportunity to practice reporting on their work in the same format they will experience in more high-stakes settings throughout their careers. "This is a chance to begin to develop a highly professional delivery style and ensure everything is accurate, clear, and encapsulated within the allotted time," he asserted. "Each year, the MDF presenters are extremely enthusiastic about their work, which excites me as well," Muller-Karger added, "so I spend a great deal of time provid-

ing feedback that will help them refine their message."

University of Miami Sociology Professor Dr. Marvin Dawkins, another veteran discussant, stated, "this is a training ground for students to deal with common presentation fears, like stage fright, time restrictions and articulation, but in a friendly setting...In 20 minutes, they must submit clear, defensible problem/research statements, real data to support their claims, and techniques used



Discussant Dr. Frank Muller-Karger provides feedback to Fellow Amanda Tazaz.

to solve problems." Dawkins continued, "This is an invaluable experience for doctoral students who can borrow techniques from their peers and make necessary adjustments before they move to the next phase—presenting at professional conferences or sitting for oral qualifying exams and the dissertation defense."

The FEF will convene the next Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference in February 2013. To present or to chair a panel, Fellows should contact MDF Program Manager Charles Jackson at 813-272-2772.

FEF Presents on Synchronous Online Learning Projects at National and World Conferences

To exchange information with scholars and practitioners in the emerging field of synchronous virtual learning, over the past six months, FEF Vice President Lyra Logan, Esq., has presented brief papers on the FEF's recent forays into the virtual classroom at national and international conferences.

In October 2011, Logan presented "Tutoring Middle School Students in the Synchronous Virtual Classroom" at the World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education. Speaking on the Instructional Design track, Logan outlined the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation stages of the process used to initiate and direct the FEF's statewide middle school math tutoring experiment. She also shared preliminary observations on the successes and challenges associated with conducting the project wholly online via the virtual classroom's real-time Web videoconference, text chat, and interactive white board technologies. The FEF will use feedback offered at the Conference to refine and expand the project.

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http://www.fefaccess.org

Distance-rate-timeWordPro...

5) A cattle train left Miami and traveled toward New York. 14 hours later a diesel train left traveling at 45 km/h in an effort to catch up to the cattle train. After traveling for four hours the diesel train finally caught up. What was the cattle train's average speed?

$D = rt$ (km)

D=dirt
Diesel 180=d+(4)(14+4)
Train 180=R(18)
d=45x4
45x4=R(18)

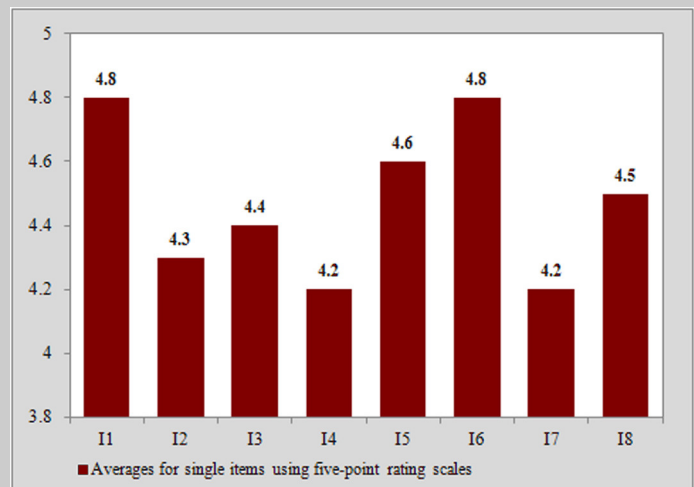
Cattle Train 180=d+(4)(14+4)
180=R(18)
180/18=10
R=10

What are the units for R?

McKnight Doctoral Fellow Fedena Fanord helps a middle school student tackle word problems.

Presenting a few months later at the February 2012 New Learning Technologies Conference, Logan detailed an early study on the effectiveness of the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship Program's online writing workshops. In a paper/presentation entitled "Replicating Interac-

tive Graduate Student Writing Workshops in the Virtual Classroom," Logan discussed the FEF's strategies for infusing both asynchronous and synchronous interaction in online workshops that keep Fellows engaged and help them sharpen skills, in part by mimicking the collaborative writing they laud in FEF live workshops. She concluded by reporting the results of Fellows' evaluations of the first eight online offerings, noting many comments that indicated students valued most the interactivity facilitated by synchronous group sessions in the virtual classroom and the one-on-one office hours via Skype. Incorporating thoughts and suggestions from colleagues at the Conference, the FEF plans to continue offering, analyzing and enhancing opportunities for Fellows to work collectively to hone their skills online.



- I1- The presenter provided timely feedback
- I2- I would rate the quality and amount of interaction between myself and the presenter as ...
- I3- The workshop readings and assignments were relevant and contributed to my learning
- I4- The office hours with the presenter contributed to my learning
- I5- The group virtual classroom sessions contributed to my learning
- I6- I would rate the level of technical support received as ...
- I7- I would rate the degree to which skills learned in the workshops helped me in current coursework or with my current writing project as ...
- I8- I would rate the overall effectiveness of the workshops as ...

Middle School Achievers Pen Compelling Essays to Define Their Laws of Life

For the FEF's 2012 Laws of Life Essay Contest, a number of middle school students submitted outstanding essays that responded to the following quotation by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

We reprint excerpts from the top four essays below:

Samantha Crawford, Tallahassee Coalition COE, 7th Grade

Moments of crisis bring out a person's true character, and the times of challenge I have faced have helped me discover hidden talents I would never have realized.

One of the moments of challenge I confronted happened last summer when I was one of thirty-two students nationwide selected to receive a scholarship to attend the Sphinx Summer Performance Academy at Oberlin College's Music Conservatory in Ohio. The Academy is an intensive program of study for young strings students, and the program attracts participants from across America. We participated in private lessons, group sessions, and master classes with members of the renowned Catalyst Quartet.



Samantha Crawford

I felt unsure of myself at the beginning, as this was my first time living away from home. I gained confidence as I realized how much I was learning from being around talented strings students my age. They made me aware of how much I need to practice in order to be a better performer and helped me grow in my ability to master the complicated musical selections we studied. Our final project included a performance of the challenging songs we worked on during the week. Because of my experiences at Oberlin, I learned the importance of moving out of my comfort zone.

In short, although it is tempting to shy away from challenges, without them we would not be able to develop our God-given potential.

For this reason, I am thankful for the opportunity to overcome each test that life brings.

Danasia Peets, Atlantic Coast COE, 6th Grade

I believe that, at times, bad things may happen, but we must keep striving to meet our goals even in the face of bad times.

I had been in private school since the age of three and never took the FCAT. Before 5th grade, as I prepared to move to a new school, I learned the FCAT would be mandatory for all 3rd through 8th grade students. My goal was to make at least a level four in FCAT reading and math and all A's on my report card.

When school began, the work looked totally different from what I had seen in my old school.

The math looked more like reading to me. On my first practice FCAT, I bubbled in the wrong section, and my scores were in the level one range. I wanted to go back to my old school and be the smart girl with all A's and the best SAT score.

After talking with my mom, I decided that, even though things looked like never before, I am a smart girl, and I would meet my goals. It was not easy. I cried at my homework table more nights than I want to remember, but my hard work paid off. By the end of 5th grade, I had the equivalent of all A's, scored a level four in math and reading, and felt like a world champion, The Greatest.

Freud Francois, Jr., South Florida COE, 8th Grade

I can personally relate to Dr. King's quotation because I have overcome major challenges that define who I am today. For instance, I was involved in a major car accident earlier this year. I was trapped in the car, helpless. When the fire rescue finally got me out, I had to be airlifted and spent ten days in the hospital. I suffered a broken clavicle and a shattered pelvis. When the doctor told me it would take six to eight months to possibly fully recover, I was devastated.

I am very independent, but, after the accident, I had to rely on others to do everything for me.



Freud Francois, Jr.

Being in a wheelchair was very difficult. At first, I felt discouraged and hopeless. But one day, I decided to stop feeling sorry for myself and started to do some things on my own. With the prayer and support I received from family and friends, and all the efforts that I put in, I fully recovered within two months.

This experience changed me completely and has prepared me for future challenges that will come my way. I am learning that life is full of challenges, and they can make a person stronger or weaker, depending on that person's ability and will to overcome, strive, and move forward.

Kiera Berry, South Florida COE, 7th Grade

Failure teaches many of life's most valuable lessons. How you chose to deal with failure determines future success.

Learning through failure has occurred throughout history. Moses failed at convincing Pharaoh to let his people go before leading them to the promised land. Walt Disney's animation company went bankrupt before becoming a worldwide leader in entertainment. President Obama lost a congressional race before being elected President of the United States. These individuals and many others first learned to overcome failure before obtaining great success.

I too have overcome failure. My first attempt at joining my elementary school's art club didn't go as I planned. After creating what I thought was an astonishing art piece, I learned that I was not selected. I was so angered by the situation that I tried to give up my passion for art. Soon I realized, though, that I couldn't just give up on a hobby that I loved. I practiced every chance I got and applied again the next year. I made it in! Because of my failure, I learned commitment, perseverance and later earned entry into the art magnet at my middle school.

In closing, some of the most remarkable life stories begin with failed attempts. Failure can be the foundation of legacies if people who experience it understand that failure is not final.

National Achievers Society Again Celebrates 100% Graduation Rate

Although Florida's high school graduation rate hovers at just over 80%, this June, 100% of the members of the Florida National Achievers Society (NAS) Class of 2012 will receive their high school diplomas. Many also already have earned college credit from dual enrolment and Advanced Placement courses, and almost all have at least one college acceptance letter in hand, some with scholarship offers.

From Tallahassee to Miami, this year's seniors prove once again that the FEF's Centers of Excellence (COE's) uphold their mandate to offer programs and services that increase the pool of students motivated and qualified to enter college. A number of this year's seniors credit the COE's and NAS directly will helping them achieve their success:

Brandi Johnson from the Tallahassee Coalition COE notes, "Our COE leaders expect nothing less than for us to be exemplary role models in academics. With this in mind, throughout high school, I have taken honors, Advanced Placement and college courses, successfully maintained a 4.0 weighted GPA, and ranked at the top of my class."

Santa Fe College COE's Damek Fitz-Coy adds: "The National Achievers Society has motivated me to excel in academics and has had a great

impact on my work ethic. It has influenced me to give my best at all times while I work towards earning my Associate's degree along with my high school diploma."

NAS State Vice President Ashly Andrews from the South Florida COE expresses similar sentiments: "Being a National Achiever has helped me realize that, academically, I can do well. It has taught me to believe in my capabilities and has led me to pursue my high school diploma and A.A. degree simultaneously, as well as gain acceptance into 14 universities."

In the fall, Brandi, Damek, Ashly and many other members of the NAS Class of 2012 will continue their studies at Florida public colleges and universities, Bethune-Cookman University, Nova Southeastern University, and the University of Miami. Others will enroll out-of-state at Brown, George Washington, Howard, Morehouse, Spelman, Notre Dame, Vanderbilt, Xavier, Yale and other institutions.

They have chosen to pursue a wide array of fields, from accounting, engineering, law and medicine, to biochemistry, forensic psychology, international affairs and public relations.

A Few of Our Stars...★★★

 <p><i>Ashlin Thomas</i> Brown University</p>	 <p><i>Herby Raymond</i> Yale University</p>	 <p><i>Damek Fitz-Coy</i> University of South Florida</p>	 <p><i>Ashly Andrews</i> FAMU School of Pharmacy</p>	 <p><i>Brandi Johnson</i> University of Florida</p>	 <p><i>Sharae Baez</i> University of Central Florida</p>
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Four High Achievers File for NAS State Presidency

Every other year, the Florida National Achievers Society (NAS) elects new student officers. This year, four candidates have filed to run for president: 10th grader Tyler Daniels from the South Florida Center of Excellence (COE), 11th grader Kezra Johnson from the St. Petersburg College COE, 11th grader Syclair Jones from the Pasco-Hernando COE, and 9th grader Priyanka Patel from the North Florida COE. All have actively participated in NAS for at least two years, met NAS annual community service requirements,



Tyler Daniels
South Florida COE

competed on Brain Bowl teams, submitted essays for the Laws of Life Contest, participated in the annual NAS State Summit, and been recommended for the presidency by teachers and community leaders.

As part of his candidate platform, Daniels pledges to raise awareness of NAS through social media advertising, help raise state NAS and chapter funds, and initiate a NAS Alumni Association to keep Achievers engaged and supportive after they graduate.

Johnson wants to implement programs that will help Achievers improve



Kezra Johnson
St. Petersburg College COE

test-taking skills and to initiate community service projects at each NAS Chapter.

Jones plans to ensure the organization provides students with even greater guidance on preparing for college and to encourage more high school Achievers to join her in tutoring middle school students on NAS Online or participate in other service projects.

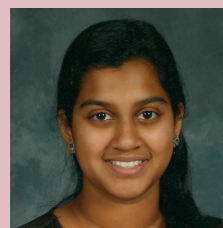
Patel's platform centers on helping raise awareness of NAS to increase both community and statewide support for the organization and encouraging more Achievers



Syclair Jones
Pasco-Hernando COE

to participate in NAS programs and projects.

All candidates will address electors at the NAS State Summit on March 24, 2012, after which fellow high school NAS members will vote. The candidate who receives the greatest number of votes will win the presidency, while the second, third, and fourth highest vote-getters will serve as vice president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively. They will preside over NAS annual State and leaders' meetings and represent NAS around the State for two years or until they graduate from high school.



Priyanka Patel
North Florida COE

South Florida's Jose Filpo Voted 2012 COE Director of the Year

FEF's 2012 Centers of Excellence (COE) Director of the Year, Mr. Jose Filpo, has dedicated his 20-year career to helping underrepresented youth pursue and attain higher education. After graduating from Wesleyan University, he served as Assistant Dean of Admission there for three years before committing himself to widening the pipeline of students of color applying to selective colleges. He next served as Associate Director of the Wight Foundation in Newark, New Jersey, a program which facilitated a boarding school education for students from the inner city.



Mr. Jose Filpo receives largest parent and overall delegation trophies at the 2011 NAS Summit.

South Florida COE. Under his leadership, student and parent participation has resurged: in 2011, the COE won awards for bringing both the largest parent and largest overall delegations to the NAS State Summit and entered teams and/or individual competitors in every one of the FEF's Brain Bowl and other academic contests.

His supervisor at FIU, Ms. Sofia Santiesteban, could not approve more of Filpo's hard work, commitment and success. "We are delighted that our colleagues have chosen Jose as the COE Director of the Year," she says.

"Indeed, they have confirmed the sentiment of our parents and students. The best praise we can earn as educators is when our students recognize and value our efforts. Definitely, Jose is recognized by South Florida COE students and their parents whenever there is an opportunity. He deserves the acknowledgement: our programs require empathy and dedication, and he possesses both."



Filpo poses with the 6th-8th Grade Math Brain Bowl Champions at the 2011 Awards Banquet.

He then joined the staff of New York's Oliver Scholars Program, where he rose from counselor to Deputy Director. Having been a Prep scholar at the Collegiate School as a student, he enjoyed placing students from similar backgrounds at highly selective independent schools and supporting their growth

Local NAS President and State Vice President Ashly Andrews, a 12th grader, agrees. "I feel fortunate to have Mr. Filpo's full support in helping NAS achieve our goals. He welcomes fresh ideas, and he advocates for and assists with implementing new

educational workshops, community service projects, and the annual youth empowerment summit," adds local NAS Parent Association President Lauris Paige. It's clear to all of us that Jose takes great interest in our students' success: he often talks with them about their



Filpo with South Florida 2011 COE Award winners: Ms. Lauris Paige, Jody Spencer, Jean-Phillippe Nau and Dr. Sherian Demetrius

future plans and then helps them reach their goals of gaining admission to FIU and other schools."

Filpo's work preparing pre-college students to enter and succeed in diverse college environments directly complements his efforts over the last decade helping coordinate the annual Student Diversity Leadership Conference sponsored by the National Association of Independent Schools. Both will contribute to enhancing America's economic competitiveness by making effective use of the talents and abilities of people from all backgrounds.

"The best praise we can earn as educators is when our students recognize and value our efforts. Definitely, Jose is recognized by South Florida COE students and their parents whenever there is an opportunity. He deserves the acknowledgement: our programs require empathy and dedication, and he possesses both."

-- Sofia Santiesteban, Director, FIU Pre-College Programs

and progress. Seeking new challenges, he moved to Miami in 2004 and served as founding Administrator of the Life Skills Center of Miami, a charter school option for students who had dropped out of high school, one that allowed them to return in an individualized, computer-based program designed to operate at their own pace.

In January 2011, he joined the staff of the Pre-College Programs Office at Florida International University and began directing the

service projects and programs, and this has made NAS membership more attractive to and fulfilling for potential and existing Achievers."

"I also credit Mr. Filpo for working collectively with the parent association to plan



Filpo, students and parents at the 2011 NAS State Summit

Upcoming FEF Events

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| June 29-30, 2012 | MDF New Fellows' Orientation, Tampa |
| July 29-Aug. 4, 2012 | MDF Summer Research and Writing Institute, Tampa |
| October 2012 | MDF Annual Fellows' Meeting, Tampa |

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Ms. Rachael Nickie
*Research & Development Coordinator/
 Publications Manager*

Ms. Monica Olivera
*Executive Assistant
 to the Vice President*

Ms. Phyllis Reddick
*Executive Assistant/
 Communication Specialist*

Ms. Katelyn Sengsoulya
Administrative Assistant

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Layout & Design: Lyra Logan, Monica Olivera
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 Staff Writing: Lyra Logan, Lawrence Morehouse, Rachael Nickie,
 Phyllis Reddick
 Staff Photography: Charles Jackson

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.

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FEF

201 East Kennedy Boulevard
 Suite 1525
 Tampa, Florida 33602

Phone: 813-272-2772
 Fax: 813-272-2784

Visit Our Web Site at
www.fefonline.org