

# FEF FOCUS

Volume 11, Issue 2 Spring 2013

## President's Message

The FEF's purpose is to support doctoral and pre-college students who not only have the capacity to meet their academic requirements but ultimately use their skills and knowledge to serve humanity. We are thus gratified when we witness that service and, in this edition of the Focus, share several recent examples of our students' fulfilling that goal.

You will first meet our graduates Dr. Antoinette Smith and Judge Ian Richards, both of whom exemplify the success of our alumni. Smith, who recently earned tenure at Florida International University, has established a thriving career in the academy while conducting seminars around the country to help others succeed in careers and relationships.

Richards, who has earned the title of "hero" for protecting victims in his courtroom and moving cases more expeditiously through the system, takes great pride in his work off the bench helping develop children in his community.

You will read about the FEF's focus on encouraging our Doctoral Fellows to engage in research meaningful to society. We do so in

part by presenting colloquia on important issues, such as our discussion on the nation's new Affordable Care Act at the MDF Annual Meeting, and by convening the annual Mid-Year Research & Writing Conference, where Fellows present their own studies of some of the more challenging topics facing the world today.

You will learn that many of those Fellows recently answered the FEF's call to tutor and mentor pre-college students, and they now volunteer online, along with several high school National Achievers, to help middle schoolers master math. Those National Achievers have become mentors in their own right, leading younger students to join in local service projects and guiding them, both live and online, to attain their academic goals.

We at the FEF are proud of our students' and graduates' commitment to sharing their time, skills, and knowledge. It bodes well for them, our communities and our world.



Dr. Lawrence Morehouse

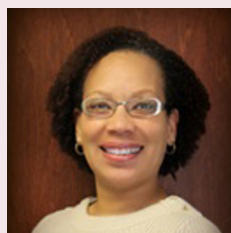
## Experts Discuss America's New Affordable Care Act at the MDF Annual Meeting



Dr. Richard Clarke

Although the U.S. healthcare system is by far the most expensive in the world, consuming 17 cents of every dollar and costing a yearly average of \$8,000 per capita, Americans trail many developed nations in key health indicators, including life expectancy. To help Fellows and guests understand some of the dynamics and complexities of our healthcare crisis, the FEF invited two distinguished experts to the McKnight Annual Fellows' Meeting (AFM) to discuss the Affordable Care Act (ACA), University of Florida Associate Professor Dr. Allyson Hall and Dr. Richard Clarke, a forty-year veteran of healthcare finance, administration, and governance.

Dr. Hall, who teaches in UF's College of Public Health and Health Professions, directs UF's Master's in Healthcare Administration program, and has investigated, analyzed and consulted on health policy and management for years, spoke about the role of health services research in reform debates.



Dr. Allyson Hall

Dr. Clarke, who helmed the Healthcare Financial Management Association for 26 years and currently chairs the Board of Directors for CHRISTUS Health, one of the ten largest Catholic healthcare systems in the United States, discussed issues that will impact whether the ACA can achieve the desired goal of increasing access to health insurance while improving the quality and cost of care.

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## MDF Alumna Dr. Antoinette Smith: Towards a Balanced, Purposeful Life



Dr. Smith at the 2012 AFM

Vivacious and personable, Dr. Antoinette Smith, Associate Professor in the Florida International University School of Accounting, defies the stereotype of accountants as awkward wallflower types. Conversely, on the Tenure and Promotion panel at the 2012 McKnight Annual Fellows' Meeting, she emphasized her success with and the importance of networking.

"Get to know everyone in your department," she said, "and make personal and professional contacts outside of your department as well. You never know whom you will work or connect with." Networking, she explained, allows individuals to introduce themselves, talk, ask the right questions and learn about others, while also learning about themselves. Drawing from personal experience, Dr. Smith also stressed that networking can lead to professional collaboration and its benefits—working as a team, sharing a workload, and tapping into diverse talents for publication and research.

In addition to building a network, Dr. Smith advised McKnight Fellows to brand themselves early at their universities by showing professors they are serious and hard working. She further

suggested they become familiar with the work of the top ten scholars in their fields, develop a sound professional reputation, and keep publications in the pipeline. According to Dr. Smith, the tenure clock begins the moment a student enters a doctoral program, with selection of an advisor and program focus.

She concluded her remarks by urging the audience to strive to live balanced lives even as they work to forge impactful scholarly careers. Now married with a blended family, she recounted how raising two daughters alone during her doctoral program helped her maintain balance. As a single parent, she made the time to ensure her children enjoyed well-rounded childhoods, while simultaneously studying for her degree full time. "Having them around also kept me structured and motivated," she added. "I needed to be a role model, so I couldn't ask them to do their homework if I wasn't also doing mine."

Dr. Smith's recent second marriage has added yet another dimension, one that has led her to focus intently on giving the best of herself to all components of her life. She shares lessons learned in her 2012 memoir *You're More Than What Meets The Eye* and in workshops she offers to groups around the country.



## MPLE Alumnus Judge Ian Richards Protects and Serves

FEF's Minority Participation in Legal Education Scholarship Program (MPLE) alumnus Judge Ian Richards recently began his fifth year on the bench as a Broward County Court judge. The first MPLE graduate to win judicial election, unseating an incumbent, Richards ran for office after just six years practicing law to "stop complaining about the courts" and "take action."

He began his judicial career as the only misdemeanor domestic violence court judge in Broward, handling cases in one of the most delicate and dangerous court divisions. He took the bench with over 1,100 cases on his monthly docket, one of the highest criminal caseloads in the County. To address the backload, Richards

immediately implemented an innovative trial strategy that attempted to bring all cases to trial within 90 days, while affording victims and all parties an opportunity to be heard. The strategy has reduced his active caseload by more than half and resulted in Richards ranking among the top three jurists for the number of jury trials resolved in Broward for the past four years. He has handled tens of thousands of misdemeanor/felony cases and presided over hundreds of jury trials since taking the bench.

Referred to by some as a "hero" and "no-nonsense" judge,



Judge Ian Richards

Richards made news in 2009 when he jumped over the bench in his courtroom to keep a domestic violence suspect from striking his girlfriend. He could not sit by and let others protect the victim and says he aims "to remember the human element in all of this [the court system]. There is a reason we have people administering justice instead of robots or computers, which can be programmed only with facts and data."

Richard earned his bachelor's degree from Florida International University and his Juris Doctorate from the University of

Miami School of Law. He began his legal career as a prosecutor with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office and then opened a private practice, representing clients on real estate, felony, misdemeanor, landlord-tenant, and immigration matters.

Richards is a member of several Bar-related associations and also maintains a strong commitment to his community. He speaks regularly at schools and churches and has assisted in local school book-bag giveaways, a youth football camp, essay writing contests, and the Broward High School Mock Trials. Richards is married and the proud father of one daughter and two sons, ages eight, three, and one.



## Experts Discuss America's New Affordable Care Act at the MDF Annual Meeting

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*MDF alumnus Dr. Rony Francois, Director of Public Health Services at the Naval Health Clinic, adds his observations to the health care discussion, drawing on years of service as the appointed Florida Secretary of Health and Georgia State Health Officer.*



As Dr. Hall explained, many policy makers consider those three factors—access, quality and cost—to have an “iron triangle” relationship, where any significant change to one factor impacts the other two. In her current work on a team evaluating Florida Medicaid reform, she hopes the findings will inform efforts to increase access to Medicaid under the ACA while maximizing quality and keeping costs down.

According to Dr. Clarke, the ACA aims to significantly change the whole “iron triangle.” The law seeks to increase access to insurance coverage; cover costs by reducing provider payments and imposing new taxes; and enact payment reforms, chiefly by shifting emphasis from volume (e.g., fee-for-service) to value (quality outcomes).

These reforms promise to help reverse several alarming statistics. For instance, in 2009, the U.S. Census and the *New York Times* estimated that over 46 million Americans are uninsured, which results in approximately 45,000 adult deaths each year. Also, Families USA, an advocacy group, determined in 2008 that the average family pays more than \$1,000 yearly in higher premiums to help cover the uninsured.

With the ACA, an additional 32 million people should have health insurance by 2019, and insurance reforms will take ef-

fect to protect and maintain that access. Some of these reforms include ending arbitrary insurance rescissions and coverage limits for essential services, extending coverage for dependents to age 26, and expanding Medicaid coverage.

The cost of the ACA, projected at \$788 billion through 2019, will be financed largely by existing sources, including Medicare and Medicaid. The financial success of the ACA may depend upon reforms such as reducing annual Medicare fee-for-service payment rates, cutting Medicare Advantage rates, cutting Medicare Disproportionate Share Hospital payments, and increasing the Medicare tax on high-income taxpayers. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the ACA should reduce Employer Sponsored Insurance rates about four percent, and most analysts agree there will be small net changes in premium costs.

Dr. Clarke highlighted three reforms ACA launched in 2012 and would initiate in 2013. Starting in 2012, health providers were allowed to organize into local Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) to manage the full continuum of care for their patients and take advantage of Medicare savings. ACO payments continued to be fee-for-service. Beginning in 2013, the U.S. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will begin to develop systems for bundling Medicare payments by episodes of care rather than fee-for-service. CMS also will oversee up to eight states as they convert to Medicaid bundled payment systems.

According to the experts, the challenge of reforming the U.S. healthcare system is daunting, but the ACA is moving in the right direction with initiatives to ensure health coverage for more citizens, bundle costs, and coordinate quality care.

*MDF alumni Drs. Juan Blandon, Sanford-Brown Institute of Ft. Lauderdale; Antoinette Smith, Florida International University; Jonathan Gayles, Georgia State University; and Claude Villiers, Florida Gulf Coast University, Moderator, discuss “How Graduate Education Creates Pathways to Post-Doctoral Positions, Tenure Track Appointments, Tenure, and Promotion” at the AFM.*



### AFM Highlights



*Fellows and guests attend the 2012 Annual Fellows' Meeting (AFM) opening plenary session.*



*Dr. Lawrence Morehouse presents Drs. Dovie Gamble, UF, and Peter Harries, USF, with the 2012 President's Awards.*



*MDF Program Manager Charles Jackson presents the 2012 Russell V. Ewald Award for Academic Excellence to USF Fellow Corliss Heath, and Vice President & General Counsel Lyra Logan presents the Dr. Carl Crawford Award for Outstanding Pre-College Support to FSU Fellow Amanda Tazaz.*



*MDF graduates pose with Charles Jackson after the annual Jacketing Ceremony.*



*MDF alumnus Dr. Claude Villiers and Dr. Ronald Toll from Florida Gulf Coast University recruit Fellows at the AFM.*

## FEF's Mid-Year Research & Writing Conference: Helping Fellows Become Scholars

For scholars, conferences represent singular opportunities to participate in forums on the latest research in their fields. Each year, the FEF's Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference serves as an early stage opportunity for McKnight Doctoral Fellows to present research publicly, explain it to experts, other scholars, and lay people, and receive expert critiques and public commentary. Participation helps students improve research, writing, and presentation skills while also sharpening the focus of their work.

This year, nearly half the Fellows who presented research also submitted full papers for review, an important achievement given



*Dr. Piyush Koría, USF, and Rosa Cintron, UCF, serve as Mid-Year Conference discussants.*

the difficulty of completing doctoral work while engaging in this supplemental activity. They received feedback on their writing from professors in their fields.

The FEF tapped 12 of those Fellows to serve as panel chairs, who, as in professional academic conferences, worked to recruit presenters and organize presentations into panels grouped by discipline and topic. The chairs also helped recruit discussants, usually university professors or administrators, who provided immediate critiques of each panelist's presentation and research.

On this year's 13 panels featuring 39 presentations, STEM fields were most heavily represented, with six panels, two in engineering, two in health and medical sciences, and one each in physical and marine sciences. Five social science panels covered humanities, history, psychology, government and public affairs, anthropology, sociology, and ethnomusicology. Two additional panels focused on business and education.

Chairs worked with presenters to ensure all panels responded to the Conference's multi-year theme, "Research that Impacts Policy and Practice." The theme has been the FEF's constant call to Fellows to conduct research that contributes to our understanding and resolution of major issues confronting local, state, and national communities. This year's panels demonstrated that McKnight Fellows are at the forefront of such research.

For example, in his presentations before both a multidisciplinary, lunchtime audience and the more specialized Marine Sciences panel, Sennai Habtes discussed his studies of bluefin tuna spawning habits and provided compelling evi-



*MDF Fellow Sennai Habtes*

dence that current fishing regulations, based on faulty assumptions, will probably not adequately protect this valuable resource for future generations. The loss of this resource could have daunting implications for the commercial fishing market and the marine system's ecological balance.

In health and medical sciences, panelists discussed health beliefs, behaviors, and other factors that thwart interventions to prevent cancer and sexually transmitted diseases as well as an innovative approach to cancer screening in rural India that might signal the first steps to new medical screening and treatment protocols.

In engineering, Fellows described their work building network queuing models to alleviate hospital emergency room congestion; examining a treatment to detoxify swine waste and produce a clean effluent suitable for discharge and irrigation; devising an algorithm to enhance large scale face-recognition systems; analyzing cellular level growth; and advancing the technology to produce biological-based fibers.

In addition to support on impactful research, the Mid-Year Conference facilitates meaningful contact among Fellows, promoting collaboration on research projects and the sharing of ideas, while reducing time spent working in isolation. The FEF believes such "meetings of the mind" foster innovation and creativity.

This year's Conference revealed at least two strong possibilities for interdisciplinary collaboration. Fellows in the sciences, mathematics, and education are studying course design, online education, assessment, and interventions, all to address minority underrepresentation in STEM fields. In addition, Fellows in an-



*MDF Fellows Crystal Chapman, USF, and Ariana Magdaleno, UM, present.*

thropology and public administration are examining the effects of post-Katrina policies on New Orleans public schools and on states' adoption of Common Core education standards. Observing each others' presentations over the Mid-Year weekend may well lead these scholars to work together to craft solutions to these critical societal problems.

Although the Mid-Year meeting is one of the smaller FEF yearly conferences, it provides invaluable experience to panel chairs and presenters and a wealth of ideas and information to all who attend. To participate in 2014, contact the FEF's Charles Jackson.



## MDF Fellows Help Expand FEF's Middle School Online Homework Help Project

Earlier this year, when the FEF asked our McKnight Doctoral Fellows whether they would tutor FEF pre-college students, you might say we—or students around the State—hit the proverbial jackpot. Over 50 Fellows said yes, with close to 30 volunteering to tutor math. In pretty short order, FEF staff linked those math volunteers with the middle school Online Homework Help Project, instantly enlarging the program's capacity.

Now, a student who enrolls in Homework Help may work with an original "Study Guide," a superior high school member of our National Achievers Society with an "A" average in Math, or with one of our Fellows, a current Ph.D. student in science, technology, engineering or math, who likely possesses a Master's de-

gree in a math-related field and may have actually taught math to secondary and/or college students.

The Fellows began working with students when the 2013 Homework Help Project kicked off on February 6, national Digital Learning Day.

Through the Project, middle school students meet with Study Guides one-on-one in the FEFaccess virtual classroom via web videoconference to practice solving problems on the interactive white board. Study Guides conduct Homework Help sessions on Monday through Thursday evenings from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. To enroll or become a "Study Guide," contact the FEF's Lyra Logan.

## Florida NAS Chapters Show Collective Compassion During the Holiday Season



Atlantic Coast Center of Excellence, Ft. Lauderdale

In addition to maintaining high grades, students inducted into the National Achievers Society (NAS) must work in their communities to help the less fortunate. During this year's Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, NAS chapters around the State fulfilled that mission with service projects that required students and parents to collect donations; prepare boxes, baskets, and bags full of food and toys; and deliver or serve them to needy children, families or the elderly.



South Florida Center of Excellence, Miami



North Florida Center of Excellence, Lake City



Santa Fe Center of Excellence, Gainesville



Tallahassee Coalition Center of Excellence

## FEF Receives Grant for Career, College and Test Preparation Materials and Workshops

For 2013, the FEF has won a grant from the College Board of close to \$75,000 to purchase products and services from Kaplan K12 Learning Services. In addition to buying student and teacher career exploration and test preparation books and materials for FEF SAT strategies courses and FCAT/SAT camps, the FEF will offer Kaplan-taught professional development seminars for FEF instructors who will teach from Kaplan books.

FEF also has presented and will continue to present free Kaplan-led workshops for students and parents at selected monthly meetings at the FEF's ten pre-college Centers of Excellence around the State. Workshops will cover the following topics: ACT, SAT or PSAT Test Strategies to Raise Your Score; Accepted: Getting into Your Top-Choice School; How to Write a Great College Application Essay; How to Impress a College Admissions Officer; Paying for Col-

lege Without Breaking the Bank; SAT vs. ACT: Which Test Should You Take?; What Juniors Need to Know; What Sophomores Need to Know; and Why Should I Go to College? (Middle School Only).

Centers began offering the workshops in February 2013 and have hosted nine sessions to date, with just over 300 students and parents attending.

## In the Members Only Forum @ NAS Online

If you log into *NAS Online*, the NAS members' web portal, and click into the Members Only Forum, you will find several active Achiever discussions in progress right now. Credit goes to NAS State President Syclair Jones from the Pasco-Hernando Center, Vice President Tyler Daniels from the South Florida Center, and Secretary Priyanka Patel from the North Florida Center, who started the conversations and help keep them going.

Since early 2013, they have initiated lively, informative discourse on "Previous NAS Summit Experiences," "College Plans," "Brain Bowl & Summit Competitions," "SAT/ACT Preparation," "Teen Summit Ideas," "NAS Community Involvement," and "Being A National Achiever."

### NAS State President Syclair Jones Shares College Prep Advice

President Syclair Jones recently announced on the home page of *NAS Online* that she has been accepted to her first-choice school, the University of Florida! As one of this year's Achievers to emulate, with a 4.37 G.P.A., highly competitive ACT and SAT scores, and several college acceptance letters in hand, she has generously shared invaluable advice in the Forum on preparing for college and applying for scholarships.



Syclair Jones

*On college planning:* "Start early, because all of high school counts when the time comes to apply for college. If you haven't already, I would advise you to visit collegeboard.com and fastweb.com. Collegeboard has information about nearly every college, different majors, all kinds of careers, and scholarships. And fastweb matches you with scholarships based on a profile you create."

*On including a resume with college and scholarship applications:* "One thing I would certainly recommend you do is prepare a resume. When you apply for college, it is almost like you are applying for a job, so you want to show the admissions counselors all of the great things you've done. On your resume, I recommend you include your leadership roles, extra-curricular activities, community service, work experience, etc. These are things you will be asked about on your applications, and, if you include them on a resume, you can simply copy and paste...You will use this resume for scholarships, college applications, jobs, everything! Having a resume can really get you bonus points when you apply for something for which a resume is not required; it will make you stand out from the other applicants."

*On applying for scholarships:* "Most scholarships require you to write essays with prompts such as "Why Do You Deserve this Scholarship?", "What are your goals and plans for the future?", or "Describe Something that has had a significant impact on your life." Definitely start brainstorming and constructing essays now, and, once you start your scholarship applications, you can use these essays over and over again on the different forms. You will be glad you wrote them out ahead of time, because your senior year will be busy!"

*On the ACT and SAT:* "One difference between the SAT and ACT is that the ACT tests science. Also, on the ACT, the writing component is optional, while writing is mandatory on every SAT. Another difference is the way the tests are scored. For the ACT, I recom-

mend you mark an answer for every question, whether you know it or not, because you will not be penalized. On the other hand, you lose 1/4 of a point on the SAT for each incorrect multiple choice answer. So, unless you can eliminate a few of the answer choices, it may not be best for you to guess."

### High School Students Express What It Means to be National Achievers

NAS State Vice President Tyler Daniels recently posted a picture of his NAS jacket large enough to fill the *NAS Online* screen and asked "What does it mean to you to be a National Achiever? How does that title make you feel?" The top four responses follow:

NAS State President Syclair

Jones: "It is great to be able to go somewhere with your NAS jacket on and make a connection with a current or even former Achiever!

Being a National Achiever means being a part of a group of high-achieving minority students. At times I've been picked on for being a part of honor societies and taking my studies very seriously. But, as a National Achiever, I am surrounded by other students who too are committed to achieving!"



NAS State Vice President Tyler Daniels: "I must say every single time I put on my jacket I feel as if I'm on top of the world. I feel like being a National Achiever makes others view me differently. I'm not just that funny intellectual kid: I become "that kid with a purpose" or "that kid who is definitely going to succeed in life." I've never been more proud to be or do anything in my life since October 6, 2007--the day I was inducted."

NAS State Secretary Priyanka Patel: "Being a National Achiever has many benefits, but the supreme one is pride. As National Achievers, we are treated as dignified scholars, and we get help and guidance to become successful. Being a National Achiever is not just another title, but a name with a meaning...I like the feeling that we all can come together under this unified umbrella of college-bound students."

Eddie Oliver, Atlantic Coast Center: "Being an Achiever makes me feel accomplished since not many people are walking around with this jacket. Furthermore, it makes me feel more confident about my future when I know my mayor and principal have a jacket in their closets as well."



## Center of Excellence Director of the Year Marie Sanches

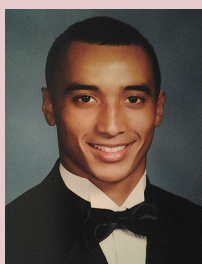
Marie Sanches has spent the past decade—her second career—serving the youth of Palm Beach County. She started as a teacher for a non-traditional private school, where she taught English to at-risk children. There, she developed a genuine desire to guide students and help them achieve academic success. She later worked as an adult education guidance counselor, where she helped students earn GEDs and then coached them as they pursued post-secondary degrees and certifications at the local community college.



Marie Sanches

and I have the privilege to help each one shine.”

Mrs. Sanches is passionate about making sure all youth, despite their socioeconomic background, have access to higher education. Through sponsorships, she has provided Palm Beach County Achievers with premiere SAT tutoring opportunities and formed partnerships with college planners and universities to ensure Achievers and their parents understand the process for applying to institutions of higher learning.



NAS Senior Thomas Coates

Achiever Thomas Coates, who will attend the University of Chicago on a full scholarship in the fall, notes, “I can say from personal experience that Mrs. Sanches really cares about the students in Palm Beach NAS. In addition to making NAS

Mrs. Sanches has three children, all of whom have been members of the National Achievers Society (NAS). She began working with the Center of Excellence and NAS as a parent volunteer, then joined the staff and, in 2009, earned promotion to the position of Director of Youth and Education at the Urban League of Palm Beach County.

She manages a number of Urban League programs, but the one most near to her heart is the Center of Excellence. She wishes a similar program had existed when

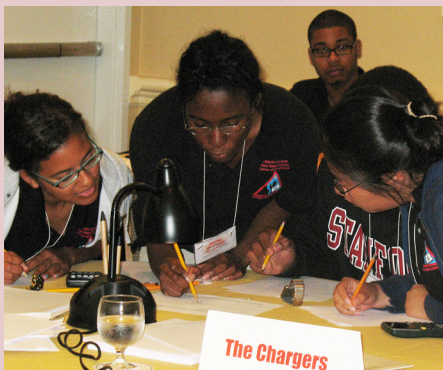
she was growing up in New York City. As she asserts, “The program is very positive, every child in the program is like a light,

*“I can say from personal experience that Mrs. Sanches really cares about the students in Palm Beach NAS. In addition to making NAS meetings more student-focused and engaging, she has provided us with many opportunities, ranging from connecting us with full scholarships and paid internships to offering test preparation and college planning.”*

*-- National Achiever Thomas Coates*

full scholarships and paid internships to offering test preparation and college planning.”

When Mrs. Sanches is not helping Achievers gain entry to schools like Stanford, Harvard, Yale, or the University of Chicago, she enjoys spending time with her former high school sweetheart who is now her husband of 21 years. She also enjoys reading, cooking, studying the Bible, and listening to classical music.



Sanches' 2010 11-12th Grade Math Champions



Sanches encourages the Lost Tree Foundation to donate laptops to graduating seniors.

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### Upcoming FEF Events

- June 14-15, 2013      MDF New Fellows' Orientation, Tampa
- July 28-Aug. 2, 2013      MDF Summer Research and Writing Institute, Tampa
- October 25-27, 2013      MDF Annual Fellows' Meeting, Tampa

FEF Focus is a semi-annual publication of the Florida Education Fund.  
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Volume 11, Issue 2 Spring 2013

Layout & Design: Lyra Logan, Monica Olivera  
Editing: Lyra Logan, Monica Olivera, Phyllis Reddick  
Staff Writing: Lyra Logan, Lawrence Morehouse, 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.*

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

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