

F.E.F. FOCUS

Volume 13, Issue 2 Spring 2015

President's Message

We live in a country founded on the principle that an educated people will act for the common good. Thus, at the FEF, we strongly encourage our students at both the doctoral and pre-college levels to use the knowledge we help them acquire to benefit their communities and live purposeful lives.

As this edition of the *Focus* demonstrates, both students and graduates are heeding that call.

You will read about esteemed McKnight Doctoral Fellowship Program graduate Professor Thomasenia Adams who has devoted her career to helping the many students in Florida who are failing to progress in math—a subject she defines as “the gateway” to studying and eventually pursuing jobs in most Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields. She has researched and developed strategies for teaching math and continues to share her knowledge by writing widely-adopted textbooks, authoring scholarly publications, and going into classrooms to show teachers how to instruct children from various cultural backgrounds.

You also will read here about our graduates who have successfully pursued meaningful careers in the government and private sectors and returned to McKnight to advise others who might choose similar paths. Many of our alumni have contributed greatly to our society through important work at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Northrop Grumman Corporation, the National Science Foundation, NASA and other agencies and companies.

We believe they have helped to inspire our current matriculating Fellows to volunteer their time so generously at the varied entities they serve throughout the academic year. You will read about the

almost 6,000 hours Fellows have donated in service to foundations, government offices, counseling centers, elementary schools, prisons, youth programs and others. They have served and continue to serve, all while they are pursuing Ph.D.’s full time and working part-time at their universities as instructors or teaching, graduate or laboratory assistants.



Dr. Lawrence Morehouse
President & CEO

Our Pre-College students serve generously as well, even as they excel academically, with 96% of graduating seniors enrolling in college this fall, many on academic scholarship. And we are perhaps most proud that they have begun to serve their communities not just to earn required high school hours but because they realize how important it is to help the many people in need. Each year they exceed their required volunteer hours and, in the process, gain invaluable life skills and experience that will help them reach their education goals.

Indeed, the FEF remains committed to continuing to prepare these students to graduate from high school and college and eventually become part of our Doctoral Program. We also remain steadfast in our efforts to enable more Doctoral Fellows, with the help of dedicated mentors like those showcased in this edition, to not only earn degrees, but join the growing number of McKnight graduates highlighted on these pages, who, as college and university professors and administrators and staff of entities in the private and government sectors, enable the FEF to fulfill its mission to strengthen the larger community through the graduates we produce.

Fellows Explore Non-Academic Career Opportunities at McKnight Annual Fellows' Meeting

In recent years, doctoral graduates around the United States have experienced a new, major challenge—the declining academic job market. In fact, studies indicate that more than half of current Ph.D. graduates fail to secure tenure track faculty appointments, and most receive scant guidance on pursuing alternative positions in the private and government sectors. At the



Dr. Chanza Baytop

2014 McKnight Annual Fellows Meeting (AFM), FEF therefore ramped up its efforts to fill the void of information on securing employment in non-academic positions, by inviting speakers to describe their career paths and offer best practices for Fellows in similar job trajectories.

Dr. Chanza Baytop, Senior Associate for Public Health and Epidemiology in the U.S. Health Division

Inside this Issue:

McKnight Alumni News	2
Annual Fellows' Meeting Highlights	3
Annual Fellows' Meeting Keynote	4
National Achievers Society Service	5
Laws of Life Essay Winners	6
Center of Excellence Director of the Year	7
Contact Information	8

continues on page 3

Alumna Dr. Thomasenia Adams Develops Innovative Strategies for Teaching Math

What you put in your head, no one can take away from you.

Highly respected math education Professor Dr. Thomasenia Adams says her mother and father drilled that notion into her mind when she was a child. It and limited opportunities as the youngest of eight children in her rural hometown of Saluda, South Carolina, persuaded her to go to college. There she embarked on what would become a lifelong focus on mathematics, choosing to major in the subject along with computer science. She earned her B.S. from South Carolina State College in 1987 followed by a Masters and Ph.D. in Instruction & Curriculum for Mathematics Education as a McKnight Fellow at the University of Florida in 1990 and 1993.

Since graduate school, she has worked hard to become a full professor and a renowned expert on the intersection of multiculturalism and the teaching and learning of mathematics. Now an accomplished scholar and administrator, Dr. Adams began her professional career in 1993 at UF as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education. Since then, she has published seven books, three refereed book chapters, over 45 refereed journal articles, numerous concept papers, and many other professional works, including conference proceedings, presentations, curricula, and professional development modules. She also has written successful applications for over \$3.1 million in research grants funded by the National Science Foundation, the Florida Department of Education, and other sources. In addition, she teaches undergraduate and graduate mathematics methods courses as well as courses at the doctoral level.

On the administrative side, Dr. Adams currently serves as the UF College of Education's Associate Dean of Research, Faculty Development and Graduate Education and has held a number of other College of Education positions, among them the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Holmes Scholars Program Coordinator; Leader of the Mathematics and Science Teacher Initiative at the Lastinger Center for Learning; Leader of the Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate; Director of the Office of Graduate Studies; and Graduate Coordinator for the School of Teaching and Learning.

All the while, Dr. Adams has continued to help develop tools to teach mathematics to the many students



Dr. Thomasenia Adams

who struggle to grasp the subject. "I still see too many children who are not achieving in mathematics and science, and that is very disturbing," Dr. Adams says. "Mathematics is the gateway to a lot of other disciplines—to accounting, to science, to engineering. It's impossible to operate in those fields without mathematical literacy."

Accordingly, her published work includes mathematics curricula, with much of her research addressing the achievement gap between underrepresented minorities and others. One such publication, a chapter

entitled "Meeting the Challenge of Engaging Students for Success in Mathematics by Using Culturally Responsive Methods" from the book *Responding to Diversity, Grades PreK-5*, presents a case study in which Culturally Responsive Mathematics Teaching resulted in appreciable student gains in math comprehension and scores. She spends considerable time sharing that and other knowledge gleaned from her research by working in the field with teachers and students to improve math instruction and by co-authoring manuscripts like the recent *GO Math! Florida* elementary school textbook, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and adopted by many Florida school districts.

"I still see too many children who are not achieving in mathematics and science, and that is very disturbing. Mathematics is the gateway to a lot of other disciplines—to accounting, to science, to engineering. It's impossible to operate in those fields without mathematical literacy."

-- Dr. Thomasenia Adams

Married with three children ages 21, 15, and 11, Dr. Adams

manages to balance her professional accomplishments and goals with dedication to family. She also readily makes time to support the FEF and McKnight by speaking on conference panels, contributing financially, and mentoring Fellows. In so doing, she epitomizes the type of well-rounded, supportive scholar the MDF Program both seeks to help produce and relies on to ensure opportunities for those who follow.

FEF Graduates Record 44 Fellows in 2014

At the 2014 McKnight Annual Fellows' Meeting, FEF jacketed 21 of the 44 Fellows who graduated in 2014, a record number. During the Jacketing Ceremony, the new graduates, most accompanied by family, spoke eloquently and emotionally about their paths to the Ph.D. before receiving their McKnight jackets and felicitations from FEF President & CEO Dr. Lawrence Morehouse.



Dr. Thomasenia Adams during the 2014 Annual Fellows' Meeting.



Dr. Lawrence Morehouse jackets new graduates Drs. Otonye Braide and Francisco Ortega.

Fellows Explore Non-Academic Career Opportunities at McKnight Annual Fellows' Meeting

continued from page 1

of Abt Associates, spoke at the Meeting's Opening Reception. When she pursued employment during her doctoral studies at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, she said she constantly sought informational interviews and networked, so much so that these activities became a part-time job. "Know what interests you and what your dream job looks like," she urged. McKnights have the advantage of being a hot commodity in the private sector, she added, because doctoral graduates have transferable skills, and the number of minorities in the sector is low. "It's not what you can do with your degrees," she advised; "it's what you can do with your skills, experiences, knowledge and education."

The next morning, a panel of four McKnight graduates echoed and elaborated on many of Dr. Baytop's observations. Moderated by Dr. Keisha John, Assistant Dean of the Florida State University Graduate School, the panel consisted of Dr. Quenton Bonds (2010, USF, Engineering), a Research Electronics Engineer at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and founder of The Accelerated Destiny Initiative, which seeks to steer children exposed to violence and poverty towards STEM careers; Dr. Camille Feanny (2010, UF, Applied Anthropology), who currently works in her pre-doctoral position as a CNN producer and assignment editor but would prefer a job in the academy; Dr. William L. Jeffries IV (2009, UF, Sociology), who considers it a privilege to serve through his work as Epidemiologist at the

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and Dr. Ernest L. McDuffie (1995, FIT, Computer Science), who founded The Global McDuffie Group after his recent retirement from almost two decades in government positions.

Their advice can be grouped into four categories: having the right mindset, determining one's path, building one's skill sets, and networking.

Developing the Right Mind-set

The panel encouraged the audience to take responsibility for their own careers and make themselves aware of both obvious and hidden opportunities. They advised the group to think collaboratively rather than competitively, as grants and other opportunities are often team-based. They also noted that, in today's market, it is often necessary to relocate and be willing to change plans. Indeed, Dr. Feanny said she declined a good position because of prior commitments, but, given another chance, would have found a way to accept the position.



MDF Alumni Drs. William L. Jeffries IV and Quenton Bonds

Determining the Path

The panelists recommended Fellows engage in continuous self-analysis; research multiple potential career avenues early during their studies, before beginning time-consuming tenure track positions; and follow their passions. They also noted that it is easier for a student than a graduate job-seeker to contact experts and secure interviews. They suggested Fellows consider working for the National Sci-

ence Foundation, where half of the program managers are on two-year rotations. They also counseled the group to think about the commercial viability of their research, make sure it is needed, and be prepared to move abroad, where goods resulting from their work may be produced more cheaply than in the U.S.



MDF Alumni Drs. Camille Feanny and Ernest L. McDuffie

Building Skill Sets

The panelists exhorted the Fellows to continue building their skill sets, including skills they do not particularly favor.

All agreed that research skills are critical, transferable and useful in any work setting and advised the group to build leadership skills, which are not standard and will set them apart from their peers. Some panelists suggested Fellows take business courses and consider becoming entrepreneurs. They also acknowledged that, for some disciplines, postdoctoral appointments are required or useful to supplement training, but cautioned the group to avoid spending more than one or two years in those positions.

Networking

All panelists noted the importance of mastering the "soft" skill of networking and counseled the group to be genuine; maintain quality relationships; and always reciprocate, giving 75% and taking 25% of the time. They encouraged the Fellows to join professional associations and online networks with international as well as local and national contacts. They also encouraged the audience to always let people know the kind of work they are capable of doing.



Left to right: Dr. Peter Harries (USF), MDF Alumna Dr. Thomasenia Adams (UF), Dr. Peter Wolcott (University of Nebraska-Omaha) and Dr. Tony Barringer (FGCU) provide advice on obtaining university administrative posts; Former Ambassador to Iraq Christopher Hill and Dr. Mohsen Milani discuss the rise of ISIS; and FEF President & CEO Dr. Lawrence Morehouse presents the Dr. Israel Tribble, Jr., Award to McKnight Alumnus Dr. John Warford.

Dr. James C. Renick Challenges Fellows to Pursue Impactful Careers at AFM

Dr. James C. Renick, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs at Jackson State University, has been called one of this country's best educators. His 38-year career as an administrator and professor includes two stints as Chancellor, first at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and later at North Carolina A&T University. Under Dr. Renick's leadership, both universities dramatically increased funding and enrollment, expanded academic programming, and made extensive infrastructure improvements to their campuses.



Dr. James C. Renick

In a lively speech at the 2014 McKnight Annual Fellows Luncheon, Dr. Renick used his own experiences to illustrate key lessons for smoothing the path to a thriving academic career. Having navigated the tenure process at five different institutions, Renick advised students that they will "find that making money is the easiest part." On the other hand, he acknowledged that "salary compression in the professoriate is real," and said one solution is to move around, negotiating a higher salary with each relocation.

"The real challenge lies, after you earn your degrees and land your first jobs, in making an authentic difference with the work that you do," he said. "Today, you are most concerned with what you are accomplishing and how you go about it, but eventually you'll need to connect with why you have gone through this process so you can optimize your experience and impact." Renick stated that this has been a constant question throughout his years as an administrator, and he is still "trying to figure out how to live a purposeful life and stay connected to others who share the same goal."

On the subject of establishing such a network, Renick said, "it's not the quantity but the quality" of your relationships that matters and urged students to write their professors, keep in contact with committee members, and share their work. Sharing, he said, is unlikely to be a risk and helps establish relationships.

According to Renick, the most valuable advice he can offer students is to maintain a curious mind. "A curious mind will take you farther in life than you believe," he said. "And as educators, you ought to enliven students' curiosity and at least keep from squashing it by the third grade. For instance, you have a choice—to teach them aerodynamics or to teach them to fear flying." A self-described life-long learner, Renick feeds his curious mind by reading often outside of education—biographies, business practices, and enrollment management.



Dr. James C. Renick talks with Fellows during the 2014 Annual Fellows' Meeting.

"Today, you are most concerned with what you are accomplishing and how you go about it, but eventually you'll need to connect with why you have gone through this process so you can optimize your experience and impact."

-- Dr. James C. Renick

Matriculating Fellows Log Close to 6000 Volunteer Hours this Fall

In addition to studying and working at their universities, matriculating McKnight Fellows routinely provide extensive volunteer service to unrelated individuals, schools, government agencies and not-for-profit corporations in Florida. For the fall 2014 semester, they volunteered 5,923 hours, performing both professional services (services requiring specialized skills, provided by individuals possessing those skills) as well as more clerical, non-management, non-supervisory activities for people and entities around the State.

Fellows' performed 3713 hours of professional service, which ranged from reviewing articles for academic journals; tutoring elementary, secondary

and undergraduate students; developing business plans; conducting psychological assessments; translating Haitian Creole; teaching dance; and providing therapy to veterans experiencing sleep difficulties.

Their 2,211 additional volunteer hours included such varied activities as answering phones, copying, filing, entering data, driving, providing childcare, setting up meeting

space, registering conference participants, running errands, helping teach Jiu-Jitsu, and serving food to homeless individuals.

Each year, the FEF reports the value of Fellows' volunteer service as well as their work at their universities to funders and supporters to document the value Fellows provide to the State, even before they earn their Ph.D.'s.



Fellows Orlando Pizana (USF, 2009) and Jessica Wilson (USF, 2014) volunteer as officials at FEF's 2014 State Brain Bowl Championships.

Pre-College Students Develop Valuable Skills Through Community Service

Research has shown that civically-engaged teenagers make greater academic progress during high school and subsequently attain higher levels of education than their otherwise similar peers. They also develop leadership, communication, organizational, problem-solving and decision-making skills; learn to work with people from different backgrounds; succeed in areas other than academics and sports; build self-esteem from positive results of their service; and develop a sense that citizenship requires them to actively participate in their communities.

That's why FEF asks the Centers of Excellence to regularly engage students in community service projects and each year provides them the opportunity to tout work that has had great impact.

For this school year, Atlantic Coast COE Achievers from Broward County volunteered in the Family Fun Zone at the second annual Burger King Beach Run 5K, where parents took their children to play while they walked/ran. Achievers also cheered on participants and handed out water to over 1000 runners at the end of the 5K course. Their efforts helped raise funds to support local South Florida students through the Burger King Scholars program.

Hillsborough County COE Achievers/Believers and parents supported the Tampa Salvation Army in feeding 250 homeless individuals with a nutritious lunch and helping pack and distribute gift bags containing hygiene supplies.

North Florida COE Achievers in Lake City prepared 200 packages of school supplies for children in Kindergarten through 12th grade. The packages were distributed to

low-income students in Suwannee, Hamilton and Columbia Counties by the District Congress of Christian Education.

St. Petersburg College COE Achievers/Believers handed water bottles to over 5000 runners/walkers as they passed by the refreshment station at the "Race for a Cure" local Breast Cancer run.

Santa Fe College COE Achievers in Gainesville helped organize and distribute 32,000 pounds of fruit, vegetables, nonperishable foods and frozen meats to 1,556 people through the Farm Share food bank. They also helped publicize the Farm Share event.



An Achiever from Atlantic Coast COE prepares cups of water for runners at the Burger King Beach Run.



Achievers from Santa Fe College COE who helped organize and distribute food to 1,556 people through the Farm Share food bank

South Florida COE Achievers in Miami-Dade collected clothing, toys, toiletries and gift cards to send to the children of His House Children's Home during the holidays.

UCF-McKnight COE Achievers sorted food donations, which included checking containers for damages and expiration dates. The sorted donations were then provided to local nonprofit organizations in six Central Florida counties.

NAS Members Share Feelings About Service @ NAS Online

@ NAS Online, Achiever Sidney Lyght from the Tallahassee Coalition COE started a discussion forum on "Volunteer Work," where students wrote about past and upcoming volunteer activities and expressed their feelings about service. Selected comments follow:

Dason Kelly, South Florida COE (Miami)

I feel giving to the community is something everybody should do, and I am glad it is a requirement to graduate from high school because everybody needs some type of assistance.

Sidney Lyght, Tallahassee Coalition COE

I've done some volunteer work for my local food bank, by sorting food, and found out that sorting and organization is something that goes well with my personality. It's interesting that volunteering can actually help you understand the type of person you are.

Micah Rich, UCF-McKnight COE (Orlando)

In November, the UCF NAS will offer volunteer opportunities at The Second Harvest Food Bank. This is the perfect time to help others as the holidays are fast approaching. I am proud to help out in any way that I can, and I look forward to seeing my (NAS) Chapter members there.

Shenyah Ruth, St. Petersburg College COE

Community service not only helps us get our needed hours, but teaches us how to give back to the community and other people. It doesn't have to be anything big. It can be the little things that work as well. As long as you put some effort and thought into it, that's all that matters.



Achievers/Believers and parents from the Hillsborough County COE help the Tampa Salvation Army feed homeless adults.

Laws of Life Essay Contest Winners Stress Importance of Hard Work

Each year, students in grades 3 through 12 compete in the FEF's Laws of Life Essay Contest, which requires them to exercise writing and critical thinking skills as they communicate the principles that guide their lives. Each contestant selects a quotation that expresses a key value and explains in the essay why she or he feels the chosen value is important.

Vivica Renee Roberson, St. Petersburg College COE, 11th grade

Nothing ever comes to one that is worth having except as a result of hard work. – Booker T. Washington

Booker T. Washington was born a slave and never knew his father. After Emancipation, he walked 500 miles to obtain a college education. Washington not only graduated from college with honors but also opened a school of his own, named the Tuskegee Institute. Washington was a living example of the advantages that come through diligent work.

When I reflect on Booker T. Washington's quote, "Nothing ever comes to one that is worth having, except as a result of hard work," it reminds me of my continued efforts to better myself and of the living examples I have had to demonstrate the importance and benefits of hard work.

Commencing in early adolescence, I have always had a desire to learn. My hunger for an education diverged from the desires of my peers, who looked forward to only three experiences: naptime, lunchtime and recess. Furthermore, as my peers aged, some increasingly despised education and pursued the same objectives: sleeping, eating, and skipping class.

But for me, it seemed the more I matured, the more obstacles appeared to divert me from my academic goals. Through my sedulous effort, however, I rose like a flower growing through concrete. Last year, I was a dissatisfied high school student who



Vivica Renee Roberson

longed for more, and this year, I am a full time college student challenging myself every day. At that time, I was pursuing my dream of being a journalist by taking a high school journalism class, and this year, I am a writer for the *Tampa Bay Times*.

Reaching goals has not come easy. Labor, time, dedication and a humble attitude have propelled me to success. In addition, older mentors have guided, advised, and modeled for me that hard work truly does pay off. One mentor was my Great Aunt Rebecca, who lived to be nearly 100 years old. She worked hard her whole life, did the things she loved, and put family first. She gave me a lot of advice, such as, "a little can go a long way," and "be thankful for what you have." Most of all, however, Auntie showed me "Nothing ever comes to one that is worth having, except as a result of hard work."

Jana Connelly, Pasco-Hernando COE, 7th Grade

Nothing ever comes to one that is worth having except as a result of hard work. – Booker T. Washington

To me, this quotation by Booker T. Washington means that you can get something that you want or something you need only by working hard until you are able to get it. This applies to me in many ways, but mostly



Jana Connelly

to my academics. Two days before writing this essay, I received news that I had been accepted into a program that lets seventh graders take the ACT or SAT and rewards them with certain prizes for certain scores. The only way to get into this program is to score in the 95th percentile on FCAT and maintain A's and B's.

My hard work got me this opportunity. I usually put in at least four hours each night doing homework and studying. As a result, I get high test scores and maintain straight A's. This helps me get into elite programs, such as the one I wrote about above, and is leading me to academic advancement I wouldn't have if I didn't work hard. I never slack off, and my hard work will definitely benefit me in the future, when I will be able to get things worth having because of my hard work.

Curtis Thomas, Jr., North Florida COE, 3rd Grade

Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.
–Nelson Mandela



Curtis Thomas, Jr.

I think that this quote is very powerful. It lets me know that education can change my life. For example, with an education I can improve the way I live by having a better house and a better car. I know that an education can allow me to receive a good job when I am older. By having a job, I can improve my life and the life of my family.

Also, education will allow me to communicate better with others through words and action. With a good education, hard work, dedication, and a positive attitude, I know that I will reach my goals.

I know that educating myself comes in many ways other than just finishing school. Going places through traveling, getting to know people, visiting museums will improve my knowledge about the world around me. It also will allow me to grow as a person so I may help others now and in the future.

Busy, Successful NAS State Leaders Move On to University this Fall

The National Achievers Society (NAS) thrived this year under the leadership of an energetic and multi-tasking State President and Vice President, both of whom kept Achievers and Believers apprised @ NAS Online of their busy lives filled with studies; sports, math and robotics team practices; student organization activities; volunteering; and preparing for graduation.

State President Tomlinson Spencer, who joined NAS in 2007, will graduate from Everglades High School in Miramar in June and begin his pre-med studies at the University of Central Florida in the fall. He plans to pursue a career as a pediatrician.

continues on page 7

Center of Excellence Director of the Year Sofia Santiesteban

Sofia Santiesteban has been the director for Pre-College and Upward Bound programs at Florida International University for the past eighteen years, where she prepares disadvantaged, underrepresented and underserved youth for college access.

Through the years at FIU, Santiesteban has written several successful grants focusing on her specialty in bilingual education and college access for disadvantaged students and is responsible for five resulting projects: TRIO Upward Bound; College Reach Out Program (CROP); the College Board Partnership; the National Achievers Society and South Florida Center of Excellence; and Partners in Progress. Each program involves partnerships between the University and local, state and federal agencies and/or foundations.

Under Santiesteban, the South Florida Center of Excellence has grown to one of the strongest in the State, routinely tutoring the most students in its academic enrichment centers, inducting the greatest numbers into the National Achievers Society, bringing one of the largest groups of students and parents to the Annual State Pre-College Summit, and recruiting students to parti-



COE Director Sofia Santiesteban

pate fully in year-round Brain Bowl competitions and other academic contests. She also maintains the support of a productive parent association that helps organize exciting programs that reinforce the Center's mission and goals, including an annual mini-Summit that presents participants with valuable and enriching workshops on leadership, health, and college access and funding.

As Dr. Judith Grey-Bowen, president of The Miami Achievers Parent Association, says, "Sofia Santiesteban is known for her hard work and dedication to FIU's Pre-College and Upward Bound Programs. She develops and

"Sofia Santiesteban develops and supports ideas and activities that promise to be an asset in the development of the Achievers and always ensures activities are worth the time and effort invested."

-- Dr. Judith Grey-Bowen, President
The Miami Achievers Parent Association

supports ideas and activities that promise to be an asset in the development of the Achievers and always ensures activities are worth the time and effort invested."

Santiesteban was born in Mexico City and graduated from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México with a research degree in Educational Psychology. After migrating to the United States to pursue a graduate degree in education, she completed an M.S. in Supervision, Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Miami and has since taken extensive course work at the doctoral level in Bilingual Education, ESOL, Linguistics and Spanish Language and Literature.

Santiesteban began her career in bilingual education with Dade County Public Schools, where she ultimately won several federal grants to prepare Spanish speaking educators and administrators to serve in the school system through the Desegregation Assistance Center at the University of Miami. The projects expanded in scope and evolved as Santiesteban prepared bilingual educators speaking other languages to work with the public schools. In fact, she was a pioneer in preparing Haitian educators and

administrators to serve Florida's Haitian American communities before turning her efforts to urban education in her current position at FIU.

Busy, Successful NAS State Leaders Move On to University this Fall

continued from page 6

In addition to presiding over NAS both statewide and locally at the South Florida Chapter, Tommy successfully maintained an extremely hectic schedule all year, practicing with the South Florida NAS 11th-12th grade math team; leading ongoing community service efforts, like beach cleanups and food and clothing drives; and tutoring local elementary school kids in math. He also played wide receiver on the varsity football team and ran track, all while maintaining a 4.36 grade point average.

When asked @ NAS Online what he was looking forward to the most this year in NAS, he wrote, "I think we are all looking forward to the Summit. This is the one big event where we all gather to compete academically, meet up with our old friends, make new friends and basically just hang out. The Summit promises to be great as usual, and I can't wait."



Tomlinson Spencer

Also in June, State Vice President Priyanka Patel, a member of NAS since 2008, will graduate from Columbia High School in Lake City, with a 4.45 GPA. She will begin studying to become an Aerospace Engineer this fall at Embry-Riddle University.



Priyanka Patel

In addition to serving as an NAS leader at the state and regional levels since 2013, this year Priyanka took classes at Florida Gateway College and participated extensively in extracurricular activities as Co-Captain of the Robotics Team; Varsity Captain of the Academic Team; President of the National Honors Society, the Interact Club and the Beta Club; Ambassador for the National Society of High School Scholars; and a FloridaLearns STEM Scholar.

When asked what she was thankful for @ NAS Online, she wrote, "I am thankful to have an education. I am thankful for all the opportunities I am able to receive through my education. I am especially thankful for my parents and family members who continuously reinforced the value of education throughout my upbringing."

FEF Board of Directors

Dr. Sylvia W. Thomas, Chair
 Dr. Robert L. Nixon, Vice Chair
 Dr. Hayward J. Benson, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer
 Dr. Sylvia M. Carley
 Mr. B. John Frady
 Dr. Dovie J. Gamble
 Dr. Earl Lennard
 Dr. Shandale Terrell
 Dr. Robert L. Thomas
 Mr. Philippe L. Villain

FEF Staff

Dr. Lawrence Morehouse
President and Chief Executive Officer
 Lyra Logan, Esquire
*Executive Vice President
 and General Counsel*
 Mr. Charles Jackson
MDF Program Manager
 Ms. Vickie McNeal
Finance Manager
 Ms. Monica Montes
*Executive Assistant/
 Graphic Designer*
 Ms. Phyllis Reddick
*Executive Assistant/
 Communication Specialist*
 Ms. Katelyn Sengsoulya
Administrative Assistant

Upcoming FEF Events

June 19-20, 2015	MDF New Fellows' Orientation, Tampa
July 26-31, 2015	MDF Summer Research and Writing Institute, Tampa
November 13-15, 2015	MDF Annual Fellows' Meeting, Tampa

FEF Focus is a semi-annual publication of the Florida Education Fund.
 ©2015, All Rights Reserved.

Volume 13, Issue 2 Spring 2015

Layout & Design:	Lyra Logan, Monica Montes
Editing:	Lyra Logan, Monica Montes, Phyllis Reddick
Writing:	Charles Jackson, 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.



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