



Center for Undergraduate Research and Creativity
Florida SouthWestern State College

NEWSLETTER

Issue 2

April 2024

Message from the Director



Dr. Wendy Chase- Director

The incredible success of our largest Spring Research Expo to date is due to the collaborative efforts of several groups and individuals across the district. First, I would like to thank our honors capstone faculty: Professors Jordan Donini, Ihasha Horn, Terri Housley, and Lenny Owens, whose commitment to their students' projects was evident in the high caliber of work on display this week.

Thank you to Dr. Katie O'Connor and Dr. Jamie Votraw for organizing another fabulous Battle of the Bucs competition. The community judges combined with audience participation adds a unique and exciting flavor to this signature event, and I'm glad we were able to add it to the Expo agenda.

In the Arts and Humanities, I am incredibly grateful to Prof. Berry Van Boekel for guiding his students through our first "Wicked Problems" community-engaged art exhibition, which incorporated field trips to the Williams Academy, interviews with local residents, and lessons on how to cut glass and wood to make frames from scratch. Thank you to Professor Scott Courtney who organized jazz students to perform during the art exhibition, and coordinated the stunning faculty recital. Thank you to Professor Steve Chase for leading the Q&A with our guest speaker, Tara Calligan.

Thank you to all of the professors involved in our art and literary journal, Illuminations: Dr. Brandi George, Dr. Michael Barach, Professor Ihasha Horn, Dr. Dahye Kim, Professor Mark Massaro, and Professor Lenny Owens.

Many thanks to Dr. Katie O'Connor, Dr. Matt Vivyan, and Dr. Rebecca Harris for closing out the week with a fun and impressive Creative Capstone showcase. The student projects on display were rigorous and creative, and this team added more disciplines to the Expo mix by adding Dr. Cesarano's cooking demonstration and Dr. Allen's immersive Spanish-language card game to the agenda.

Special thanks to all of our judges: Dr. Bruno Baltodano, Dr. Gabe Gaidos, Dr. Jill Hummel, Dr. Monica Krupinski, Dr. Sabine Maetzke, Dr. Myriam Mompoin, Dr. Katie O'Connor, Dr. Heather Olson, Dr. Brian Page, Dr. Lisa Pickell, Dr. Joyce Rollins, Dr. Caroline Seefchak, Dr. Sheila Seelau, Dr. Eric Seelau, Dr. Michael Sauer, Dr. Jennifer Summary, and Dr. Phil Wiseley.

Thank you to all of the faculty and administrators who took time away from their busy schedules to attend some of these events and see for themselves the quality of work our students are capable of when guided by talented and committed faculty. I was happy to see Dr. Allbritten in attendance. He made time after the Board of Trustees meeting on Charlotte to connect one-on-one with some of our students to discuss their research with them. None of this would be possible without top-down administrative support so special thanks to Dr. Allbritten.

Last but hardly least, I want to thank the Program Coordinator for CURC and Honors, Courtney Daniels. Courtney quietly handles the logistics of all of these events, making sure everyone involved meets deadlines, ordering supplies for both students and faculty, coordinating with IT, and generally assuring that everyone has what they need to make each event runs smoothly.

It is truly a pleasure to work with each one of you to show off the incredible talent of our students and faculty. Thank you all for your support and I hope you have a relaxing and adventurous summer.

Faculty Spotlight

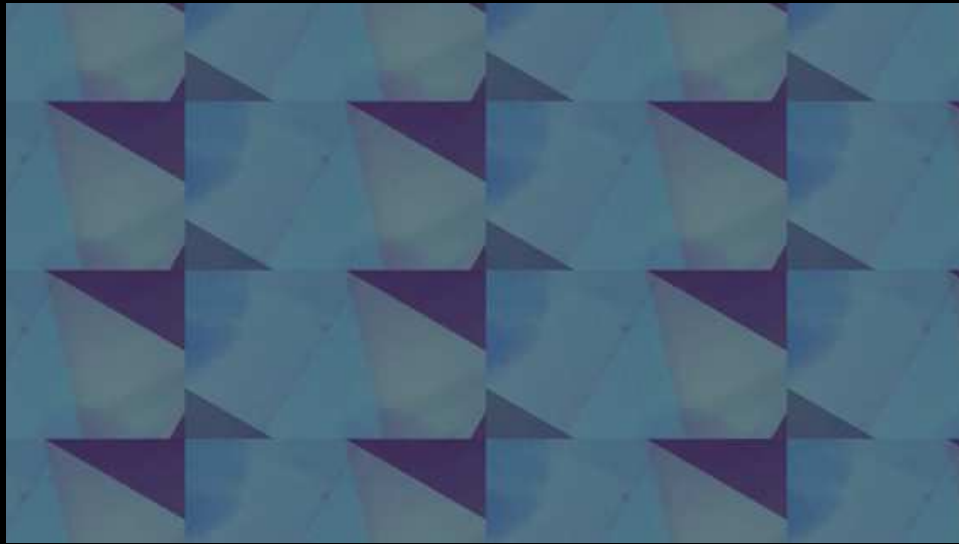
Dr. Dahye Kim

Professor of Digital Arts



“Contemporary art is a constantly evolving, fueled by new ideas and perspectives, serving as both a reflection of society and a critique of conventional culture.”

Becoming a professor has been a journey filled with learning and inspiration. During my time as a student, I had the opportunity to work closely with internationally renowned artists such as Professor Charles Long, Professor Diana Thater, and Professor Patti Podesta. They were wonderful mentors who helped me understand non-functional art beyond a logical language, enabling me to communicate intellectually as well as expressively through a new form of art. I was especially drawn to the idea of becoming an interdisciplinary multimedia artist/educator and sharing the knowledge I gained from these esteemed professors. While completing my Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree, I realized that I also wanted to research college art teaching and curriculum alongside my art practice. This led me to pursue a doctoral degree at Columbia University in New York City, where I spent five years studying pedagogy, expanding my digital art practice, and exhibiting my work. Since then, I have been fortunate to have various teaching positions in higher education before joining the FSW. Teaching art is a challenging task, given the array of styles and ideas, but I view it as my personal journey, one that constantly challenges me to grow and evolve.



Prismatic Sunset, 2023, Dahye Kim. Video Art

Art is about unleashing creativity and innovative thinking. I think that creativity as well as creative problem-solving often depend on a broad interdisciplinary perspective and training. This includes not only a background in diverse art practices but also an understanding of diverse aesthetic and cultural viewpoints. Digital media and multimedia art, in particular, exemplify this interdisciplinary form of contemporary art, encouraging students to become independent critical thinkers by exploring new materials and technologies. I believe that contemporary art is a constantly evolving, fueled by new ideas and perspectives, serving as both a reflection of society and a critique of conventional culture. As an educator, I am currently expanding my digital art pedagogy to provide students the kind of grounding necessary to enhance their own aesthetic and critical ethos.

This summer, I have a couple of exhibitions lined up in South Korea. South Korea has been actively embracing digital media in its art scene, and the solo exhibition at Gangneung Art Center is particularly significant in the field of digital media. I think this exhibition will serve as a direct extension of my role as a Digital Arts professor. As an artist, I always strive to communicate effectively and innovatively with viewers, challenging their assumptions about the relationship between comprehensibility and meaning. My upcoming exhibition explores the characteristic of time in video and film while expanding it into space, allowing audiences to contemplate the present moment with poetic metaphors. Utilizing the distinctive architecture and gallery space of the Art Center, I hope to offer a new perspective on contemporary art. This travel this summer will greatly benefit my exploration of digital art research as I present my work on an international stage. Upon my return, I look forward to sharing my experiences with students, hoping to inspire them for their own artistic endeavors, fostering a sense of curiosity and innovation.

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Lisa Pickell



How did you end up becoming a professor? Was this always your professional aspiration, or did you follow a more circuitous path?

I am excited to be a new full-time faculty at FSW as a Professor of Environmental Science. My path to becoming a professor has definitely been a circuitous one, however, I have kept coming back to teaching in one form or another throughout my career. Along the way, I have been an adjunct professor in Oceanography, Earth, and Environmental Science at Sacramento State and UC Davis, as well as here at FSW for the past 4 years.

I have always been interested in everything to do with the ocean, so I got my PhD in Oceanography from the University of Maine, where my research focused on how the concentration of trace metals in seawater influenced marine phytoplankton communities. Specifically, I was interested in how iron and copper affected the growth and toxin production by harmful algal bloom species. For my studies, I was fortunate to conduct many of my experiments at sea on research cruises in several different ocean and coastal areas. These opportunities solidified my enthusiasm for the natural environment and helped me realize the importance of hands-on field work experience.

After graduation, I spent more than 14 years in the Biotech Industry working for several companies to develop and manufacture natural products from algae. We started off primarily making biofuels, which then quickly led to the development of other natural products, such as, proteins, colorants, nutraceuticals, fertilizers and cosmetic ingredients. It was very exciting and motivating to put my knowledge of phytoplankton ecology to practical use that has the potential for positive and sustainable global impacts. I find students are very interested to know more about this field as it offers a unique and tangible example of how a degree can be applied in an innovative career.

What are your main goals as a professor and what is one thing about your field of expertise that you wish everyone could know and understand?

As I observe younger generations becoming more disconnected from our natural world, my main goal as a teacher in environmental science is to help student recognize that we are a part of nature, and to re-connect with and explore how we interact with and impact the world we live in. I like to do this through fun and interactive outdoor activities and field trips. I also try to encourage students by demonstrating simple, yet effective actions we can take as individuals to help lessen our negative impacts on the environment.

What I wish everyone could understand is that everything in nature is connected, and that by maintaining the health and functioning of the environment, we also ensure our health and well-being.

**IF WE SAVE OUR WILD PLACES,
WE WILL ULTIMATELY
SAVE OURSELVES.**

– Steve Irwin





Student Spotlight

Habana Zarranz



Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you plan to do after you graduate from FSW.

Born and raised in SWFL I was homeschooled throughout middle and high-school. In my free time I enjoy listening to punk rock from the 70s through 90s, I also play guitar, and I love longboarding. In addition I enjoy sports of all kinds including, football, baseball, hockey, autoracing and soccer (up the reds!)


I plan to attend to FGCU to complete my credits for vet school so I can achieve my dream of earning a doctorate in veterinary medicine focusing in zoology while also pursuing a degree in journalism. I was inspired by Shy Wolf Sanctuary in Naples Florida and Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary in Punta Gorda to pursue a DVM and help care for such amazing animals.

What was your most memorable experience in the Honors Scholar Program?

My most memorable experience in HSP was traveling to Jacksonville with one of my fellow classmates and Dr. Chase to present at the Florida Undergraduate Research Conference and then exploring the Jacksonville zoo and St. Augustine. Being able to present next to students from larger universities such as UF and FSU will be an experience I'll never forget.

What advice would you give in-coming freshmen for how to maximize their experience at FSW?

Don't be afraid to pursue classes outside of your career field! Being in a STEM major it was daunting to take classes that were in the arts & humanities but they helped foster new passions while also opening my mind to a new way of thinking about the world. I also believe it is important to become your own advocate when it comes to you education. If something feels wrong dont be afraid to question it. Know Your Rights!



Student Spotlight

Marcel Suarez

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you plan to do after you graduate from FSW.

After FSW, I plan on attending Florida State University as a part of the Presidential Scholars Program and pursuing a Bachelor's in History. What really drew me to FSU was the sense of community and support I felt, especially as a Presidential Scholar. While I will forever be a proud Buccaneer, I am so excited for whatever the next chapter holds in Tallahassee. Go 'Noles!



What was your most memorable experience in the Honors Scholar Program?

My most memorable experience in the Honors Program was conducting and presenting my Capstone Project. Conducting research and immersing myself within Chinese-Cuban history and culture was so much fun and provided me with lots of valuable experience at a very early age.

What advice would you give in-coming freshmen for how to maximize their experience at FSW?

If I could give one piece of advice it would be to discover your academic passions and dive deep. I did that by taking Professor Herman's World History course and it changed my life. Don't be afraid to take that class that seems difficult but catches your eye. The best opportunities in life always lie behind the toughest and least-trodden paths!

Student Spotlight

Maria Rueda

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you plan to do after you graduate from FSW.

Hello! My name is Maria Rueda, and I am a dual-enrolled high school student from Immokalee, FL. I will graduate from FSW with my A.A. and receive my high school diploma this semester. In my community of Immokalee, I am involved with farmworker justice groups and civic engagement initiatives. After graduation, I plan to attend a four-year institution and delve into the social sciences. Outside of academics, I enjoy learning languages and spending time with my family and friends!



What was your most memorable experience in the Honors Scholar Program?

While I only joined FSW full-time and the Honors Scholar program during my last year of high school, the courses I took and the people I met made my short time on campus memorable. My highlight as an Honors Scholar was taking the Model U.N. (MUN) course taught by Dr. Baltodano. Through the class, I participated in the Harvard National Model United Nations conference in February 2024. My time in Boston, MA, for the conference brought me closer to my fellow Honors Scholar MUN peers and helped me improve my public speaking skills. I would recommend every Honors Scholar student to join the MUN class to engage in a semester of self-growth and join a tight-knit community of dedicated students passionate about understanding global affairs.

What advice would you give in-coming freshmen for how to maximize their experience at FSW?

Engage with the FSW community! FSW is filled with great opportunities for everyone to take advantage of. Take the initiative at FSW to meet new people, connect with your professors, and create lifelong memories. Make the most of your time at FSW because it has opportunities and support you will not find anywhere else.



Student Spotlight

Elyse Martin

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you plan to do after you graduate from FSW.

Hello; my name is Elyse Martin! I'm a dual enrolled senior at South Fort Myers High School. After I graduate, I will be attending the University of Florida and majoring in Zoology. From there, I hope to continue my research with reptiles and parasites.



What was your most memorable experience in the Honors Scholar Program?

My interest in the field was jump started by my experience in the Honors Program. Professor Jordan Donini introduced me to pentastomes, a type of novel lungworm found in reptiles, and I was “hooked” - pun intended. That being said, I couldn't give a single memory that stands out most because all of them are incredible to me. Through Professor Donini's class, I was able to work with multiple Florida wildlife organizations. I joined a group of exceptionally talented scientists, all of whom are focused on researching pentastomes further. I was invited to work with a graduate student, Jenna Palmisano, at UCF, and process my samples for PCR Testing under her guidance - and together with my Professor, we found three potential hosts that were (hitherto) unknown. Through my research in the Honors Program, I've accomplished things at seventeen that I could only have dreamt of prior. I spread my wings, and I can't believe how far I've flown.

What advice would you give in-coming freshmen for how to maximize their experience at FSW?

As a freshman I was excited, but nervous. Despite the butterflies in my stomach, I thrived here. And to our incoming freshmen, I'm sure that you will too. Find your passions and feed them, and everything else will follow. If you don't know what you want, this is your time to explore - and if you do, this is your time to chase it.



CREATIVE CAPSTONE



Dr. Rebecca Harris

This academic year has seen the CREATIVE Capstone grow to new heights, with just shy of 1000 projects being completed by students across four sites, as well as the Clewiston and Moore Haven Collegiate Institutes. Two more Capstone courses are going abroad this summer, to Italy and Ireland. The CREATIVE Connections events in Fall and Spring saw students, faculty, staff, and community partners engaging in meaningful co-curricular experiences, including lectures, film screenings, stargazing, hiking and kayaking, panel discussions, community partner fairs, the FGCU Scholar Series, international celebrations, art exhibitions, research presentations, and more. We are thrilled to see partnerships across the college with the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creativity, International Education, FSW Libraries, One Theme, One College, and others continue to grow and support one another in providing the best, most impactful experiences for our students.

The 3rd Annual Innovative Thinking Showcase closed out an incredible, vibrant Research Expo this year, with the greatest variety of projects and events seen to date. From the poster sessions to Battle of the Bucs to the showcase, the incredible work of our students and faculty is a testament to FSW's investment in ensuring a world-class educational experience for everyone in Southwest Florida. Three students were honored at the showcase for their outstanding CREATIVE Capstone projects. Sophia Estrada's project on the history of coffee in America could, according to her professor, air on the History Channel (Best Overall Project, \$250). Alex Chiafullo experimented in the kitchen to reverse engineer the Levain Bakery Chocolate Chip Cookie for those who need to eliminate gluten from their diets (Best Creative Project, \$125). This writer can confirm it was one of the best cookies she's ever eaten. Michael Mendez studied the devastating impacts and clean-up efforts from Hurricane Ian, interviewing local meteorologists, law enforcement, and school officials (Best Experiential Project, \$125). One of his interviewees was so impressed that Michael was offered a job! The projects that students complete demonstrate their commitment to curiosity, creativity, and community. As our students continue to be supported by innovative, conscientious faculty like Inquiring Minds General Education Prize Winners Dr. Gerry Anzalone (Natural Sciences) and Dr. Brandon Jett, who shared the positive interventions they have made in their general education courses at the showcase, we will continue to see high impact practices made available to students across the entire curriculum.

CREATIVE CAPSTONE



As we close out this academic year, I'd like to thank the people who dedicate their time and effort to the Capstone. First and foremost, Dr. Matthew Vivyan and Dr. Katharine O'Connor provide tremendous leadership to the CREATIVE Capstone faculty and invaluable support and guidance to me. Prof. Jamie Votraw has helped us to grow our Connections events and I thank her for her dedication to service and our students. Dr. Shawn Moore's work as Digital Specialist ensures that we can show off all of the incredible work our students and faculty are doing, and for that we thank him. Thank you to Mr. Alex Schimel and all of our academic advisors who are cheerleaders for the transformative nature of the Capstone for students, and we look forward to having you as Capstone professors! Dr. Martin McClinton is an indefatigable ally of the CREATIVE Capstone and I would like to thank him for always showing up. Thank you to Dr. Wendy Chase and Ms. Courtney Daniels of CURC for all of their support this year. Thanks to our entire Capstone Advisory Board for keeping the trains running on time. Many thanks go to Dr. Judith Bilsky for her financial support of the Capstone student awards. Finally, and most importantly, thank you to all of our dedicated faculty and librarians who are changing our students' lives!



OTOC: ONE THEME, ONE COLLEGE



Dr. Brandon Jett

During the academic year 2023-2024, the FSW community delved into the theme of "The Pursuit of Happiness" as part of our institution's ongoing commitment to fostering shared intellectual experiences. This exploration was facilitated through a comprehensive array of events and programs that engaged participants in meaningful discourse and reflection.

Dr. Catherine Sanderson and Dr. Lucinda Vickers delivered our keynote addresses. Their presentations offered novel perspectives on happiness, its historical context, and its relationship with nature.

Complementing the keynote events, OTOC organized a series of talks and roundtable discussions led by our esteemed faculty. Dr. Juan Carlos Ginarte led a thought-provoking discussion titled "Does money buy happiness?: What we can learn from international happiness surveys," while Professor Michael Demoran explored the intersection of nature and happiness. Additionally, Professor Terri Taggart examined the correlations between life event theory and self-assessment of happiness.

OTOC collaborated with various campus clubs and organizations to enhance engagement with the Pursuit of Happiness theme. Notably, FSW's literary journal, Illuminations, dedicated an issue to the theme of Joy, the Legal Studies and Debate Club facilitated a discussion on happiness and its relation to the U.S. Constitution, and the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creativity hosted a symposium focusing on happiness discussions with faculty members.

The impact of these initiatives was significant, with over 750 students, faculty, and staff participating in OTOC events both in person and virtually.

We extend our sincere gratitude for your support of this initiative and invite you to anticipate a robust schedule of events for the upcoming academic year as we embark on our exploration of the theme "Our Changing Worlds."

THEME FOR 2024: "OUR CHANGING WORLDS"

Spring 2024 Research Expo



Spring 2024 Research Expo



Harvard Model UN



FCHC and FURC Conference



Congratulations Capstone Winners

Arts and Humanities:

1st: **Sylvia Yousef:** *Encapsulated Agony and Joy*

2nd: **Anna Halmeaho:** *How Female Characters are Portrayed in Nintendo's Super Mario Brothers*

3rd: **Marcel Suarez:** *An Analysis of the Chinese-Cuban Identity Post 1959 (Un Análisis de la Identidad Chino-Cubana Después del 1959)*

Natural Science:

1st: **Emma Ulseth:** *Immunomodulation in Invasive Cane Toads (Rhinella horribilis) From Two Field Sites in Southwest Florida*

2nd: **Grace White:** *Comparison of Blood Lead Concentrations in Turtle Species Across Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitats*

3rd: **Elyse Martin:** *Presence of Pentastomid Parasites Within Turtles and Snakes from Southwest Florida*

Education:

1st: **Michaella Achille:** *Fostering Continuity During Transitions of Leadership of Registered Student Organizations at Florida SouthWestern State College's Main Campus*

2nd: **Ivan Tobar:** *Peer Mentors: The Bridge Between Academics and Extracurriculars To Prevent College Attrition*

3rd: **Karl Schott:** *FSW Guided Pathways*

Political Science and Technology:

1st: **Maria Rueda:** *Amplifying the Voices of the Forgotten: Unincorporated Immokalee, FL*

2nd: **Trung Nguyen:** *The Viability of Artificial Intelligence in Differential Diagnosis of Pneumonia*

3rd: **David Winn:** *Corporate Nepotism and the Downfall of RCA*

Psychology:

1st: **Isabella Lopez:** *Social Skydiving and Social Confidence*

2nd: **Juliana Arenas Gaviria:** *Poisonous Positivity*

3rd: **Melanie Maugeri:** *Eating Disorders and Body Dysmorphia - An Epidemic Caused by TikTok and Instagram*

Social Science:

1st: **Gabriella Smolnicka-Dos Santos:** *Differences in Body Language Across Ethnicities*

2nd: **Hayden Freytag:** *Public Perceptions on Stem Cell Usage in Human Therapeutic Cloning*

3rd: **Nadine Gill Cardoso:** *Heaven or Hell: ASMR and Misophonia*

Congratulations Honors Scholar Program Graduates!



Ayah Abuijaq
Abigail Blikstad
Juliana Arenas Gaviria
Savannah Barnes
Felipe Bonini
Kendall Carrico
Carson Clancy
Sophia Clancy
Elliot Courtney
David Creve-Couer
Jun Cunningham
Juan De La Cruz
John Ditty
Hayden Freytag

Gail Gahon
Nadine Gil Cardoso
Britthany Gonzalez
Anna Halmeaho
Christian Jasinski
Katelyn Johnson
Ryan Kareh
Evan Krupick
Isabella Lopez
Linda Lopez
Elyse Martin
Melanie Maugeri
Trung Nguyen
Daniel Ocampo

Ethan Rider
Isabella Rincon
Maria Rueda
Karl Schott
Gabriella Smolnicka-Dos Santos
Marcel Suarez
Emma Ulseth
Grace White
Paige Wilson
David Winn
Bridghet Wood
Sylvia Yousef
Habana Zarranz
Kaylee Ziegelbauer

Congratulations

Life Changer Award presented to
Professor Leonard Owens

Dr. Myriam Mompont
Special Award for Outstanding Teaching

Courtney Daniels
Award for Outstanding Service to the
Honors Scholar Program



A teacher is a compass that activates the magnets of curiosity, knowledge, and wisdom in the pupils.

Ever Garrison

CURC Committee Members

Dr. Stuart Brown
Prof. Jordan Donini
Dr. Brandi George
Dr. Brandon Jett
Dr. Katharine O'Connor
Dr. Bridgette Malchow
Dr. Myriam Mompount
Dr. April Ring
Dr. Michael Sauer

Honors Advisory Council

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Dr. Mark Herman
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