Welcome to graduate training in the Department of Psychology at FIU!

A learning environment where distinguished professors and their talented students are key collaborators, leading the way in scientific research and advancing tomorrow’s ideas and discoveries.

Here we showcase some of the extraordinary accomplishments of our doctoral students.

Look for the next issue when we will introduce our first class of Cognitive Neuroscience PhD students!!!!

To keep up to date on happenings in the graduate programs visit our website.

If you have any questions or feedback please contact Dr. Leslie Frazier, Director of Graduate Studies.

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OUR NEW STUDENTS

Christopher Altman (BA, Ball State University) is interested in vulnerable witnesses and lineup identification in the Legal program. Chris presented a poster in the last year:


Starlie Belnap (BS, Idaho State University) came to FIU to study with Drs. Eliza Nelson and Robert Lickliter. She had a paper appear in the top ranked journal


Starlie also gave 2 conference presentations in 2014. Starlie has been married for 12 years and has 3 wonderful boys, 2 dogs, and 1 cat. She loves to cook, sew, garden, and generally be crafty.

Emily Boeving (BS Ouachita Baptist University; M.Sc. Evolutionary Anthropology, Durham University UK) is interested in laterality, communication and social cognition in primates living in a fission-fusion social structure. Her mentor is Eliza Nelson. Emily presented her work at a conference in September.


Victor Buitron (BA, FIU) began his doctoral training in the opportunity to take a course with Dr. Saul Garfield, a pioneer in psychotherapy research; and, given my interest in working with children, I decided to go to a graduate school where someone was studying treatment outcome in children. So, I went to work with Dr. Sheila Eyberg, who studied PCIT for young children with behavior problems. As far as prevention work goes, as I continued my work with young children, I learned that problems start very early in life. So, I pursued work at Brown at the Center for Children at Risk, where I began to conduct research with children as young as toddler age. From that, I learned that I could start even earlier, which led me to my current work starting at age 12 months to prevent the onset of more severe behavior problems.”

Nely: “What do you see as the most exciting or rewarding aspect of your career?”

Dr. Bagner: “Working and mentoring grad students. I think one of the best parts of my job is to collaborate with grad students in developing their own ideas for research and to see their own careers flourish and pursue their own areas of interest.”

Gabbi: “What was the most important thing that your graduate mentor provided for you?”

Dr. Bagner: “I would say I think she taught me how to write well scientifically, through her editing and proofreading. Also, she gave me the tools to help young children and families that are facing challenges.”

Nely: “What advice or “words of wisdom” do you have for graduate students (either in making it through graduate training and/or being successful in their careers)”

Dr. Bagner: “Persistence is key. That has been one of the most important
attributes that I’ve found successful. Both [graduate training and academic careers] can be challenging, and learning to overcome, be persistent, and keep at a paper or a grant is key to being successful. Also for grad school, time management is really important to help figure out how to best get all of your work done in an efficient and effective way. Also, developing really good relationships with both other grad students, who will become colleagues, and faculty in the field [is important].”

Gabbi: “Please share a (funny, challenging, “ah-ha moment”) story from your grad student days.”

Dr. Bagner: “Personally, the most challenging for me was spending 2 years apart from my girlfriend at the time, and now wife, during the first 2 years of grad school. It was wonderful when she moved to Gainesville, and we got married shortly after.”

Armando Falcon (BA, FIU) was awarded the prestigious McKnight Doctoral Fellowship. His research interests focus on occupational health psychology. He had two co-authored conference presentations in the last year.


Ryan Jacobson (BA, University of Missouri) is interested in gender differences, employee selection and workplace diversity issues. He is working with Dr. Asia Eaton. Ryan was co-author on 2 conference posters last year. Ryan has visited South Africa and is a fitness freak: he is a triathlete and ran his first full marathon in April 2014.

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**Fiona Macphee** (BA, NYU) who came to FIU to work with Dr. Pelham and examine behavioral, pharmacological, and combined treatments for ADHD moved to the U.S. from England when she was 11 years old. She is loving the weather in Miami!

**Michelle Penã**, (BA, FIU) a new student in the Legal program, is working with Drs. Evans, Schreiber Compo and Klemfuss. She has had several co-authored conference presentations in the last year:


Before beginning graduate training this Fall Michelle backpacked throughout Europe and bungee jumped in France.

**Vanessa Quiroz** (BA, FIU) was awarded a prestigious McNair Graduate Fellowship. Vanessa has already presented two papers one on her undergraduate work with Dr. Steve Charman and one with her graduate mentor, Dr. Asia Eaton.

- Eaton, A.A., & Quiroz, V. (2014, May) “How Gender Differences In Leadership Style Impact Career Success: A Longitudinal Examination Of Men And Women MBA Students.” Oral Presentation at the 1st Annual Southeast Cross-University Mentoring Conference, University of Miami; Miami, FL

**Michelle Ramos** (BA, FIU) a Developmental Science student working with Dr. Bethany Reeb-Sutherland was co-author on a paper presented at the American Psychological Society meetings in San Francisco.

- Joyas, Y., Ramos, M. Reeb-Sutherland, B.C., Rowe, M.

Our first student in the new Cognitive Neuroscience program, Carolina Vias (BA, FIU) works with Dr. Anthony Dick, and presented a paper this Spring:


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**CLINICAL**

Aparajita (Tuma) Biswas Kuriyan, who will be the first graduate of our Clinical Science program when she defends her dissertation research under the direction of Dr. William Pelham. Tuma has won “runner up” for the American Psychological Foundation Elizabeth Munsterberg Koppitz Research Fellowship for her proposal titled “Effectiveness of Evidence Based Practice Workshops on Community Providers.” Additionally, Tuma had two papers appear in the last year:


Finally, in addition to defending her dissertation Tuma and her husband are expecting their first child in November! Congratulations to Tuma!

5th year student, Sarah Helseth, holds the 2014 Adolfo Henriques Graduate Scholarship, and works with Dr. Stacy Frazier had had a productive year with 2 published papers and a conference presentation:


**Ryan Hill**, a 5th year student, working with Dr. Jeremy Pettit, has won an FIU Doctoral Evidence Acquisition Fellowship for his proposal titled: “Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial of a Program to Reduce Perceived Burdensomeness in Adolescents.” Ryan has also won the impressive American Psychological Foundation Visionary Grant for the same work. Perhaps even more timely and significant, he has been awarded a Military Suicide Research Consortium Pre-Conference Training Day Travel Award to begin research in that area. And, Ryan has won the FIU Clinical Science Program “Outstanding Graduate Student Award” in 2014. Ryan had 3 1st authored publications in 2014 and was co-author on two other published papers. Ryan presented 2 papers and 9 poster presentations on which he was primary author on four. Ryan is truly an exemplary graduate student in our department.

**Gabbi Rodriguez Hungerford**, who is in her 5th year working with Dr. Daniel Bagner, had her Master’s thesis research published in the last year:


She also presented her research at the ABCT conference in 2014.

**Michael Meinzer** is a 5th year student working with Dr. Jeremy Pettit. Mike had 2 first author publications in 2014:


Mike was the primary presenter on 4 different conference presentations in the last year as well.

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Michele Bechor, a 4th year student, was awarded the competitive and prestigious Presidential Fellowship. Michele works with Dr. Jeremy Pettit and has won honorable mention for her research from the Association for Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies. She had one first authored publication appear and one first authored book chapter in press for 2014:


Maya Boustani, a 4th year student, who works with Dr. Stacy Frazier, currently has one first authored paper out and 3 first authored papers in the pipeline:


Maya also has had 3 conference presentations in the last year. Interestingly, Maya has fun writing a parenting advice article in a mainstream local parenting magazine and her daughter was featured on the cover of that same magazine.

Dainelys (Nely) Linares Garcia, a 4th year student working with Dr. Daniel Bagner, had one first authored and one co-authored paper published this year:


Additionally, she gave one presentation:


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Chelsey Hartley, a 4th year student working with Dr. Jeremy Pettit, had two papers published in the last year:


She also presented three papers at the annual convention for the Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies. Finally, Chelsey and two of her clinical colleagues (Mike Meinzer and Megan Ross) completed the Spartan Race (8 miles) in April in Fort Lauderdale!

4th year student, **J. Megan Ross** who works with Dr. Gonzalez has two first authored papers under review and is co-author on an in press book chapter:


Megan also had four conference presentations two of which she was the lead author on.

Brittany Merrell, a 2nd year student who works with Dr. Pelham, does research focused on evidence based interventions for school-aged children with ADHD. She has published a paper with Dr. Sibley and several student colleagues:


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DEVELOPMENTAL SCIENCE

Congratulations to Desi Sepulveda, a 6th year student McKnight Fellow, who recently became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in the State of Florida and who will become a mother in October. Desi had a productive year with one published paper and two conference presentations.

- **Sepulveda, D. J., & Gutierrez, A. (2014).** McKnight doctoral fellows at the Behavior Analysis Autism Research lab at Florida International University. Florida Association for Behavior Analysis Observer, 9(2), 7-8.

Iris Broce, a 4th year student working under the direction of Dr. Anthony Dick. Iris has one first authored publication under review:


She has a co-authored chapter in press, and 6 conference presentations and posters in the last year. Of those she is primary author on 2. Iris has traveled to France and Spain and is an avid marathon runner.

Alina Nazareth, a 4th year student working with Dr. Shannon Pruden, has won the Manuel & Mercedes Mosteiro Graduate Scholarship and the First Prize in the Graduate Student Scholarly Forum. In 2014 she gave two invited talks and 9 poster presentations!

- **Sepulveda, D. J., & Gutierrez, A. (2014).** Evaluating the Effectiveness of Discrete Trial Procedures for Teaching Receptive Discrimination to Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Presented at the Association for Behavior Analysis International in Chicago, IL.

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Carla Abad, 3rd year student working with Dr. Shannon Pruden, won the extraordinarily competitive National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship! Congratulations to Carla on this outstanding accomplishment. Carla had one first authored paper published in 2013 and had 6 conference presentations in 2014. Carla traveled to Argentina, Spain, and Curacao.

3rd year student, Alejandro Diaz, who has been awarded a McKnight Doctoral Fellowship, has had two conference presentations in the last year on his research with Dr. Anibal Gutierrez, examining the sequencing effects of receptive and expressive training with Autistic children.


Elaine Espanola, a 3rd year student, who has been awarded a McKnight Doctoral Fellowship, has had four conference presentations in the last year on her research with Dr. Anibal Gutierrez.


3rd year student, Logan McDowell who works with Dr. Anibal Gutierrez, presented 4 papers at conferences in the last year:

- **McDowell, L.,** & Gutierrez, A. (2013, September). Evaluating a video modeling procedure for teaching imitation to young children with ASD. Talk at Florida Association for Behavior Analysis

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Analysis. Daytona, Beach, FL.

Rosalie Odean, a 3rd year student working with Dr. Shannon Pruden had 10 conference presentations in the 2013-14 year. Of those, she was primary presenter on 2.


Jessica Weber, another 3rd year student working with Dr. Gutierrez, had 6 conference presentations in the last year, two of which she was primary presenter on:


Victoria Bein, 2nd year student, working with Dr. Lorraine Bahrick was co-author on two conference presentations in the last year.


Sandy Gonzalez, a 2nd year student working under the direction of Dr. Eliza Nelson and had three conference presentations in the last year:


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**Jessica Saunders**, a 2nd year student working with Dr. Lorraine Bahrick, was awarded the highly competitive Presidential Fellowship. Jessica was primary presenter on one conference presentation and co-author on 3 other in the last year:


**INDUSTRIAL/ORGANIZATIONAL**

5th year student, **Julie Lanz**, works under the direction of Dr. Valentina Bruk Lee and is interested in occupational health and resilience, workforce safety and performance appraisal. Julie was awarded the NIOSH Sunshine ERC Pilot Grant to fund her dissertation research based on a proposal titled "Examining the Impact of Resilience on Work Stress and Strains in Nurses.” Julie has a revise and resubmit on a authored paper and is primary author on two conference presentations in the last year.

**Josh Wittgenstein**, a 5th year student working with Dr. Valentina Bruk-Lee, had 3 posters accepted for presentation at the 2014 APS conference.
Jose Rodriguez, a 4th year student under the direction of Dr. Valentina Bruk-Lee had 6 conference presentations in the last year. Jose was primary presenter on this one:


Jose is an Associate Dean in the Honors College at FIU and applies I/O psychology to his work everyday.

Renzo Barrentes, a 3rd year student working with Dr. Asia Eaton had a conference presentation:


David Beane, a 3rd year student had a co-authored presentation last year:


David took on the responsibility for managing the Sona Systems FIU Psychology Department Human Research Pool last year and has done a truly outstanding job. We are all very grateful for his hard work and dedication.

April Shantz, a 3rd year student working with Dr. Bruk Lee published an article that has benefit for all graduate students:


April also co-chaired a symposium on leadership:


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LEGAL

Brian Cahill, a 7th year student working with Dr. Steve Charman, has 1 co-authored publication under review.


5th year student, Andrea Arndorfer, whose major professor is Dr. Steve Charman, had 4 conference presentations in the last year,

three of which she was the primary author:


In addition, Andrea had the opportunity to take a leisurely trip to California this past year where she visited the beautiful Stanford University campus and the site of the Stanford Prison Experiment, one of her all-time favorite social psychology studies.

Congratulations to Dana Hirm Mueller, a 5th year student working with Dr. Schreiber Compo, won 2nd place in the Florida International University Graduate Symposium Best Paper Presentation. Dana also has two papers in press and one published this summer.


In addition Dana had 7 presentations in the last year AND she got married!!!

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Benjamin Fay, a 4th year Legal Psychology student who works with Dr. Asia Eaton has research interests focus on investigating the role of ego depletion in interrogation settings and juror attribution processes in eyewitness inconsistencies. Mr. Fey just published a first authored chapter with his major professor, Dr. Asia Eaton, in:


Additionally, Ben presented a poster, “Outness, relationship satisfaction, and relationship outcomes among lesbian women” at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology in 2014.

Another 4th year Legal student, Melissa Kavetski who works with Dr. Steve Charman presented a paper at the annual American Psychology-Law Society in 2014:


4th year student, Allison Mugno, who works with Dr. Lindsay Malloy, won a competitive American Psychology-Law Society Student Travel Award in 2014 for her proposal “Caught in a lie: An experimental investigation of lie-telling among children with Disruptive Behavior Disorders.” Allison has four co-authored papers under review or in press. In addition to her co-authored conference presentations she had conference presentation that she was primary author on:


Perhaps the most exciting thing that happened for Allison in the last year was her adoption of a new golden retriever puppy named Rylee!

Alexandra Mosser, a 3rd year student working with Dr. Ronald Fisher, is interested in investigative interviewing and eyewitness memory. Ali presented two papers at the 2014 American Psychology-Law Society meetings:

FORMER STUDENTS

Ileana Hernandez graduated from the Developmental Science program in August 2014 after successfully defending her dissertation titled “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Anxiety Disorders in Youth: Treatment Specificity and Mediation Effects” under the direction of Drs. Jeremy Pettit and Wendy Sliverman. Dr. Hernandez is now Assistant Director on a research project through FIU’s Undergraduate Education Department.

Jenna Kieckhaefer graduated in Spring 2014 after successfully defending her doctoral dissertation under the mentorship of Dr. Nadja Schreiber Compo. Her dissertation study titled “Understanding rapport-building in investigative interviews: Does rapport’s effect on witness memory and suggestibility depend on the interviewer?” was funded in part by a National Institute of Justice Graduate Research Fellowship, United States Department of Justice. Dr. Kieckhaefer has the distinguished honor of being recognized at the Summer 2014 commencement as an FIU Worlds Ahead Graduate – a recognition given by President Rosenberg for outstanding academic and personal achievements. Additionally Dr. Kieckhaefer had a paper appear in 2014:


She also had 3 conference presentations and 3 invited addresses in the last year. To top it all off, her boyfriend proposed to her on a rollercoaster!

Vanessa Madraza graduated from the Developmental Science Program in August 2014 after successfully defending his dissertation titled “Identity, Purpose, and Well-Being Among Emerging
Adult Hispanic Women” under the direction of Dr. Mary Levitt. Congratulations to Dr. Madraza who is getting married in December.

**André Maharaj**, graduated from the Developmental Science Program in August 2014 after successfully defending his dissertation titled “Exploring the Development of Social Responses in Children with Callous and Unemotional Traits: An Examination of the Impact of Hypothesized Reinforcing and Aversive Stimuli” under the direction of co-major professors Drs. Anibal Gutierrez and Daniel Waschbusch. Dr. Maharaj won several awards inclu ding the FIU 2014 Scholarly Forum Award and the Florida Association for Behavior Analysis (FABA) “Best Poster Award.” He has been active presenting his research at the Association for Behavior Analysis International and FABA annual conferences. Dr. Maharaj is currently adjunct professor in Psychology at FIU and Nova Southeastern University.

**Alan Meca** graduated in Spring 2014. Dr. Meca successfully completed his doctoral dissertation under the direction of Dr. Dionne Stephens. His dissertation titled “Ethnic and American Identity Development: A Developmental Systems Approach” was funded in part by a McKnight Doctoral Fellowship. Dr. Meca exceptional teaching was recognized when he was awarded the 2014 Provost Award for Outstanding Graduate Teaching. Dr. Meca has two papers in press and two that appeared in 2014 in addition to five conference presentations. Dr. Meca has taken a position as Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Miami’s Miller School of Medicine. And if you think Dr. Meca’s life couldn’t get sweeter: right after being hooded at graduation, he proposed to his girlfriend, and she said “Yes!”

**Jillian Rivard** successfully defended her doctoral dissertation and graduated in August 2014. Her major professor is Dr. Schreiber Compo and her dissertation was titled Confirmation bias in witness interviewing: Can interviewers ignore their preconceptions? Dr. Rivard was the recipient of two Grants-in-Aid Awards from the American Psychology and Law Society which funded her doctoral research. Dr. Rivard had one first authored publication and 3 co-authored publications appear in the last year.


Additionally, Dr. Rivard presented to papers at the annual Psych and Law conference last year.


interviewing: The delayed effects of pre-interview knowledge. Paper presented at the 7th International Conference of Psychology and Law, New Orleans, LA.

Dr. Rivard is now Assistant Professor of Psychology, Barry University, Miami Shores, FL and she and her husband welcomed their first child, Elise, this summer. Congratulations to Jillian on all her accomplishments.

Tara Sheehan who graduated in August 2014 successfully defended her doctoral dissertation titled “The effects of paternal and maternal nurturance and involvement on young adult academic outcomes” under the direction of Dr. Mary Levitt. Dr. Sheehan is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in the State of Florida and is the senior behavior analyst at the Severe Behavior Disorders Program of the Unicorn Children’s Foundation Clinic at Nova Southeastern University.