

COE Highlights

FAU HONORS COE FACULTY, STUDENTS

Two faculty members and two students in the College of Education (COE) were recognized for their outstanding achievements in an announcement of Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s [51st annual Honors Convocation](#) award recipients on Wednesday, April 15, 2020 by FAU President John Kelly, Ph.D., and Provost Bret Danilowicz, Ph.D.

HONORS CONVOCATION

Celebrating Excellence



Melanie M. Acosta, Ph.D. *Presidential Award for Engaged Faculty, Service*
Jenny Bloom, Ed.D. *Finalist for the Distinguished Teacher of the Year*

Among the award winners was Melanie Acosta, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry, who earned the Presidential Award for Engaged Faculty in the category of Service. Acosta partners with community-based organizations and elementary schools to design and implement innovative and academic enrichment activities for children and families. Jenny Bloom, Ed.D., Professor, Educational Leadership and Research Methodology, and Provost Fellowship, Leadership and Professional Development, Academic Affairs, was one of eight finalists for the Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award. Bloom is also the founder of the FAU Office of Appreciative Education.

Lauren Rahgozar, an undergraduate student majoring in Elementary Education (K-6) with ESOL and Reading Endorsement, received the University Scholar Award for FAU's

COE. Lauren was one of eight undergraduate recipients. The University Scholar Awards are given in recognition of outstanding academic achievement and upon the recommendation of faculty in each of the eight undergraduate colleges.

Kelly Thomas, an undergraduate in the Exceptional Student Education Honors-in-the-Major, Honoring Outstanding Owl Teacher (HOOT) program, received the Undergraduate Researcher Award for FAU's COE. Kelly was one of nine undergraduate recipients. The Undergraduate Researcher of the Year Awards are based on student involvement in research, inquiry, or scholarly activities. College deans make the final selection from three finalists selected from each college by a committee of faculty, staff and students.



Kelly Thomas
Undergraduate Researcher of the Year, College of Education

COE DOCTORAL STUDENT AMONG WINNERS OF THREE MINUTE THESIS (3MT®) COMPETITION

Tiffany Cox, a doctoral student pursuing a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education's Department of Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry, was the Championship People's Choice winner and recipient of a \$1,500 award (determined by public vote) at Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s [4th Annual Three Minute Thesis \(3MT®\) Competition](#). Her advisor was Susannah Brown, Ph.D., Professor, Teaching and Learning. To view Tiffany's winning video, visit [Band Directors Don't Wear Heels: The Lived Experiences of Female High School Band Directors in Florida](#). She was one of five Championship winners in four categories.

This exciting competition, hosted by the Graduate College, challenges students to present their research in only three minutes. Students competed virtually April 25–29, 2020 in a heat specific to their discipline; the first Place, Runner-Up, Second Runner-Up and People's Choice winners from each heat advanced to the Championship, which was held April 30 - May 4, 2020. Scholarship prizes are awarded to both Heat and Championship winners. Audience members determine the People's Choice winner by electronic ballot at each Heat and at the Championship. The 3MT® Competition, originally founded by the University of Queensland in 2008, is now hosted at more than 900 universities worldwide. The goal of the competition is to help graduate students develop their presentation and academic communications skills.

Elena McLaughlin, who is pursuing an Ed.D. in Exceptional Student Education (ESE), was one of 20 finalists for her 3MT® titled, [A Neglected Skill: Investigating the Effects of "Handwriting without Tears" on Letter Formation by Young Children with Autism](#). Her advisors were Peggy Goldstein, Ph.D., Associate Professor, ESE, and Michael Brady, Ph.D., Chair, ESE. She was among the winners of the 'COVID-19 Change Challenge' (see article on that competition on page six).



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Dean's Dispatch2
- Faculty Awards2
- Sabbatical Sightings.....3
- COE Honors & Awards: Faculty4
- WAVE Competition Winners.....4
- TL Confers First Graduate Environmental Edu. Certificates.....4
- OURI Undergraduate Research Symposium5
- ELRM Launches Fully Online IDEAL Master's Degree.....5
- COE Honors and Awards: Students.....6
- Q&A: Tips for Online Learning.....6

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Summer Dissertations due in the Dean's Office by June 22, 2020.
- [College of Education Graduate, Specialists and Doctoral Programs](#) application submission deadlines by department.



DEAN'S DISPATCH

As we complete my first year at FAU, I thank all of you for everything you did to complete the spring semester under challenging circumstances. Our very quick transition to remote instruction and remote work is something that none of us could foresee, but we adapted well and are moving forward to the uncertainties of the fall semester. We will continue to adapt as the situation changes and our teaching, research, and service will evolve. I do so appreciate your work and hope it's not too far in the future that we'll be able to see each other in person again.

Steve

"I thank all of you for everything you did to complete the spring semester under challenging circumstances."

*— Stephen Silverman, Ed.D.
Dean and Professor, College of Education*

FOND FAREWELL

Patricia Heydet-Kirsch, Ed.D., Assistant Dean, Accreditation, Assessment and Analytics, retired effective March 16, 2020. She served the College of Education (COE) for 14 years in a variety of roles including Acting Assistant Dean of Jupiter Campus and for Scheduling and Enrollment.

Nancy Brown, Ed.D., Associate Professor, Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry, officially retired on May 11, 2020. She served the COE for more than 14 and a half years.

FACULTY AWARDS

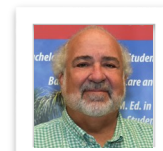
Michael Brady, Ph.D., Chair and Professor, Exceptional Student Education, was honored with the 2020 Senior Scholar Award by the [Eastern Educational Research Association](#) (EERA) during the 43rd Annual EERA Conference Feb. 19 - 22, 2020 in Orlando, Fla. The award recognizes a scholar for outstanding theoretical or applied research that contributes to the professional body of knowledge about education, and for demonstrating excellence in teaching, advising or mentoring.

Carman Gill, Ph.D., Professor, Counselor Education, was awarded the Outstanding Chapter Faculty Advisor of the Year from Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), the Counseling Academic & Professional Honor Society International (ACA), for her past five years of service to CSI's Beta Rho Chi Chapter during the ACA 2020: CSI Delegate Business Meeting & Awards Ceremony held online on April 16, 2020. Under her leadership, the Beta Rho Chi Chapter at Florida Atlantic University was awarded the Large Chapter Outstanding Newsletter Award for 2020.

Dilys Schoorman, Ph.D., Professor, Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry (CCEI), received the 2019 William R. Jones Most Valuable Mentor Award from the Florida Education Fund (FEF)'s McKnight Doctoral Fellowship Program during the Awards and Jacketing Ceremony at its 35th Annual McKnight Fellows' Meeting and 23rd Annual Graduate School Conference in Tampa, Fla., Oct. 13, 2019. The award is presented to mentors and faculty members who have played major roles in the lives and success of McKnight Doctoral Fellows. Schoorman was nominated by Deborah King McEwan, who earned the Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction from Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s CCEI in the College of Education (COE) on Dec. 13, 2019 and was the first McKnight Doctoral Fellow in FAU's COE. Established in 1984, the [FEF's McKnight Doctoral Fellowship Program](#) awards 50 fellowships annually to address the under-representation of African American and Hispanic faculty at colleges and universities in the state of Florida.

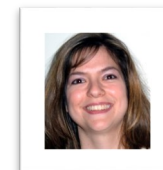
STAFF AWARDS

Lydia Bartram, MSW, Director, Karen Slattery Educational Research Center for Child Development (ERRCD) accepted the 2019 Florida Literacy Association (FLA) Early Literacy Grant Award on behalf of ERRCD for Palm Beach County during the FLA conference Nov. 2–3, 2019 in Orlando, Fla. This grant is awarded to early learning childcare/preschool providers who demonstrate the need for supplemental literature and how the resources will be used to support literacy instruction in the classroom. ERRCD was one of five early learning centers to receive a collection of literature, which have been reviewed by the FLA board. FLA is a statewide professional organization comprised of educators and literacy experts striving to equip all teachers with tools to improve reading and literacy in all classrooms.



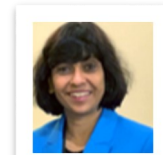
Michael Brady, Ph.D.

Chair and Professor



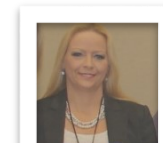
Carman Gill, Ph.D.

Professor



Dilys Schoorman, Ph.D.

Professor



Lydia Bartram, MSW

Director

SABBATICAL SIGHTINGS: EVIDENCE-BASED COUNSELOR-LED INTERVENTIONS

For the past 15 years, Elizabeth Villares, Ph.D., Professor, Counselor Education (CE), has been teaching school counseling courses at Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s College of Education (COE). Previously, she was a secondary social studies teacher, school counselor and the director of a school counseling and guidance high school program that served more than 5,550 students and parents.

"Early on in my career, I realized that my ability to deliver quality instruction and counseling services was dependent on having access to evidence-based interventions and utilizing best practices to improve the academic, social-emotional and career development of students," revealed Villares about the core value that motivates her research.

To that end, Villares collaborated with St. Lucie Public Schools (SPLS) during a two-semester sabbatical to develop the [Social, Wellness, and Emotional Learning Leaders](#) (S.W.E.L.L.) program designed to increase the

number of school counselors in SLPS high needs schools thanks to a U.S. Department of Education grant. Villares acts as FAU program advisor to S.W.E.L.L. students, who are enrolled in an accelerated 60-credit graduate degree at FAU, beginning with the spring 2020 semester. "With the increase in certified school counselors, counselors can spend more time delivering evidence-based interventions and direct services to address students' mental health and social emotional learning needs," said Villares.

During her fall 2019/spring 2020 sabbatical, Villares also redesigned the Career Counseling for Teenage girls (CTCG) curriculum to reflect the current college and readiness literature; created a companion classroom guidance program for six - 12 graders; and conducted a pilot study to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. In addition, she co-created other interventions: Student Success Skills for grades four and five, published two articles and has five manuscripts under review.

SABBATICAL SIGHTINGS: NEUROGENIC SPEECH AND SWALLOWING DISORDERS

Connie Porcaro, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD), has been conducting research and teaching in areas of adult neurogenic speech, voice and swallowing disorders for the past 15 years at Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s College of Education (COE). In spring 2020, she completed a sabbatical semester focused on research and writing activities that will benefit FAU's Institute for Human Health and Disease Intervention and FAU's Brain Institute. Additionally, students in CSD's master's degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology and individuals in the elderly population of South Florida will experience improved learning and assistance due to Porcaro's efforts in these areas.

Porcaro worked on two books related to neurogenic speech and swallowing disorders. One book tentatively titled, "A Caregiver's Guide to Brain-based Communication Impairments," was finished during this semester. Written for caregivers of adults who have neurogenic disorders, such as stroke or Parkinson disease, which may impact communication and swallowing, the book explains many issues that individuals with brain disease or injury may encounter and gives suggestions and strategies to caregivers in layperson's language.

Furthermore, Porcaro completed a book proposal and is working on a book that will serve as a "Here's how" guide for students and speech-language pathologists to assist in improving intelligibility (i.e., speech understandability) in many types of clients.

The book focuses on three areas: speaker issues, communication environment issues and listener issues. The chapters tie into two main concepts: 1) use of evidence-based practice in decision-making when managing clients and 2) the World Health Organization concepts of disability and impact of function in social, educational and vocational purposes. "Being understood by listeners is a main focus of speech-language-pathologist, whether they are working with children or adults in nearly all disorders," explained Porcaro. The books will be helpful to patients and their families, as well as the speech-language pathologists who work with them.

Porcaro also completed work with a colleague on a continuing line of research that requires extensive time to record speakers and recruit listeners. The purpose was to determine which listener strategies—visual only versus auditory-visual—are most effective in improving intelligibility with different speaker groups with voice disorders. These studies were conducted in collaboration with the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md. Porcaro also worked with Kelly Steele, M.S., Instructor-Clinical Supervisor, CSD, to prepare and submit a Phase III grant from the Parkinson Voice Project. Lastly, Porcaro submitted a manuscript for review on an investigation of changes in healthy aging adults' quality of voice and the impact on social interaction. The research methods and findings will be shared with Porcaro's students in the many courses she instructs.

COE PROFESSORS AWARDED SABBICALS FOR SCHOLARLY PURSUITS



Elizabeth Villares, Ph.D.
Professor of
School Counseling
Counselor Education
Fall 2019/Spring 2020

Ever wonder what professors do during their sabbaticals? Here are the stories of two COE faculty members from different departments.



Connie Porcaro, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of
Audiology
Communication Sciences
and Disorders
Spring 2020

ADHUS/FAU HIGH SCHOOL AWARDS



Stephanie Anderson
District Teacher of
the Year

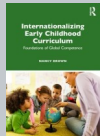


Deborah Baltzer
District Related
Employee of the Year

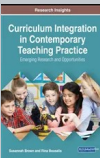
Sherry Bees, M.Ed., Principal/Director, A.D. Henderson University School (ADHUS)/Florida Atlantic University (FAU) High School announced Stephanie Anderson, Eighth Grade English/Speech, as the 2020 District Teacher of the Year for Florida Atlantic University (FAU) School District #72 and Deborah Baltzer, School Nurse, as the FAU District Related Employee of the Year. The award recipients were recognized for their outstanding achievements in an announcement of the College of Education's Honors and Awards winners on Friday, May 8, 2020.

COE FACULTY BOOKS

Recent book releases of College of Education faculty at Florida Atlantic University include:



Nancy Brown, Ed.D., Associate Professor, Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry, authored "Internationalizing Early Childhood Education: Foundations of Global Competence."



Susannah Brown, Ph.D., Professor, and **Rina Bousalis, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, both in Teaching and Learning, co-authored "Curriculum Integration in Contemporary Teaching Practices: Emerging Research and Opportunities."

COE RECOGNIZES FACULTY/STUDENTS THROUGH ANNUAL HONORS AND AWARDS

Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s College of Education (COE) recognized the achievements of faculty and students in an announcement of its annual Honors and Award recipients on May 8, 2020 by Stephen Silverman, Ed.D., Dean, COE. The Honorees of the Year include Jenny Bloom, Ed.D., the COE Distinguished Teacher of the Year (see FAU Honors article on page one); Sabrina Sembiante, Ph.D., the COE Scholar of the Year at the Assistant Professor level; and Hannah



Sabrina Sembiante, Ph.D.
COE Scholar of the Year,
Assistant Professor



Hannah Bowers, Ph.D.
COE Researcher of the
Year, Assistant Professor

Bowers, Ph.D., the COE Researcher of the Year at the Assistant Professor level. Bloom is a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology, Provost

Fellowship, Leadership and Professional Development, Academic Affairs, and founder of the FAU Office of Appreciative Education. Sembiante and Bowers are Assistant Professors in the Department of Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry and the Department of Counselor Education, respectively.

Student awards included the 2020 COE Outstanding Dissertation Award and the Dr. Rosanna Gatens Student Award for Outstanding Community Service at the graduate level (see Honors and Awards article on page six), as well as the COE Undergraduate Researcher of the Year (see FAU Honors article on page 1 and OURI article on page five).

The Chair of five of six departments announced Outstanding Undergraduate and/or Outstanding Graduate awards for their respective departments (see Honors and Awards article on page six). A.D. Henderson University School/FAU High Awards were bestowed (see sidebar at left). Donors and scholarship recipients, as well as retiring faculty were also recognized.

FAU HIGH STUDENTS TAKE FIRST AND SECOND PLACE IN FIFTH ANNUAL WAVE COMPETITION

Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s Division of Research held its Fifth Annual WAVE Competition online on April 6, 2020. Among the 65 virtual attendees were one undergraduate student majoring in elementary education in the College of Education's Department of Teaching and Learning and nine students from FAU High School.



FAU High students Paris Prince, a junior, and Vassili Georgakopoulos, a senior, placed first and second, respectively. Paris developed biodegradable sanitizing capsules called SPods - Sanitizing Pods. Vassili developed a swimbait business, called, 40s Not Feelings, specifically designed to lure snook, redfish, tarpon and grouper.

The WAVE program challenges students to submit innovative ideas that target societal issues and provides seed funding for project development. Projects are rated on their innovation, feasibility, commercialization, research efforts and problem significance.

A.D. Henderson University School and FAU High School is a Title 1, K-12 public laboratory school under the auspices of the State University System of Florida as part of FAU's [College of Education](#).

TL CONFERS FIRST GRADUATE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATES TO FOUR STUDENTS

On May 8, 2020, four students were the first to earn FAU's new [Graduate Certificate in Environmental Education](#). Designed for teachers, informal educators, science graduates, and others who want to improve their environmental teaching skills, it includes the core courses of the Master's in Environmental Education (EE), and the credits can count towards the Master's in EE if students wish to continue.

Zhongyuan Fan, Christopher Hill, Lida Niu, and Mingkai Zheng completed the four course progression that includes visiting some of the excellent environmental education providers in Palm Beach and Martin counties. The new certificate is offered by the Department of Teaching and Learning in Florida Atlantic University's College of Education. For more information on the EE graduate certificate, Master's Degree, or Honors in Elementary Education, please contact Bryan Nichols, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Teaching and Learning, and Environmental Education Coordinator, at nicholsb@fau.edu.



Two of the students (each end) who recently completed the Graduate Certificate in Environmental Education, with participants of a Pine Jog Environmental Education Center program during the early part of the spring 2020 semester.

COE, FAU HIGH STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Four undergraduate students in the College of Education (COE) and 21 Florida Atlantic University (FAU) High School students participated in the [10th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium](#), which was held virtually April 3 - 6, 2020. Students, engaged in undergraduate research and scholarly activity under the mentorship of COE and A.D. Henderson University School (ADHUS)/FAU High faculty, and presented their findings through poster presentations. Attendees engaged through discussion boards and faculty took part in breakout sessions. FAU's [Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry \(OURI\)](#) hosted the event.

Among the 2020 oral presentation winners was Oriana Williams, who was mentored by Jack Scott, Ph.D., Professor, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and Executive Director of the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) in FAU's COE. An undergraduate student in the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science, Oriana tied for first place under the Behavioral, Educational and Social Sciences category. Kelly Thomas, an undergraduate in ESE's Honoring Outstanding Owl Teacher (HOOT) program and OURI Peer Mentor, was awarded the Undergraduate Researcher of the Year by the COE (see FAU Honors article on page 1). Kelly's mentor was Lisa Finnegan, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, ESE.

Sharon Darling, Ph.D., Associate Professor, ESE, was also a COE faculty mentor. ADHUS/FAU High faculty mentors included Tricia Meredith, Ph.D., University School Assistant Professor; Molly Adams, M.S., Assistant Director of Student Affairs; Amy Tift, Ph.D., University School Instructor; and Allan Phipps, M.S., University School Instructor.



Faculty in Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s College of Education and in A.D. Henderson University School/FAU High mentored undergraduate and high school students who submitted poster presentations for the [10th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium](#). This year, the event was held virtually from April 3 - 6, 2020.

“OURI serves as a centralized support system for all students and faculty engaged in Undergraduate Research and Inquiry. Our mission is to promote intellectual and personal development through engagement in research, creative, and scholarly activities.” – Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI)

ELRM LAUNCHES FULLY ONLINE IDEAL MASTER'S DEGREE

The Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology (ELRM) in Florida Atlantic University (FAU)'s College of Education launched its groundbreaking synchronous distributed eLearning model for the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership with specialization in School Leaders (K-12) in the spring 2020 semester. Known as [IDEAL](#) (for Inclusive Development of Educational Administrators and Leaders), this program brings “together the best elements of in-person and remote teaching and learning,” said

John Hardman, Ph.D., Senior Instructor, ELRM and IDEAL Program Coordinator.



The first cohort of graduate students in the Master's Degree in Educational Leadership, called IDEAL, met for the first class on Jan. 11, 2020. John Hardman, Ph.D. (fourth from left in back row), Senior Instructor, ELRM, is the IDEAL Program Coordinator. Pat Maslin-Ostrowski, Ed.D., Professor, and Meredith Mountford, Ph.D., Associate Professor, both in ELRM (not present) are the program's school administrator mentors.

Replacing the more traditional master's degree, IDEAL was made possible by a \$5.6 million grant from the Wallace Foundation, along with the leadership of Daniel Reyes-Guerra, Associate Professor, ELRM, and Principal Investigator, and a committee of representatives from all four partnering districts that co-constructed the program. IDEAL “offers a fully redesigned curriculum intended to provide aspiring school leaders wherever they are with the rigorous, research-based and job-embedded course of study needed to prepare equity driven, instructional and transformative leaders of public, charter, private, religious and international schools,” Hardman explained. Completion of this degree qualifies graduates to serve as assistant principals, intern or interim principals.

The delivery model allows emerging school leaders, who work full time, to meet the requirement for real-time attendance with their instructor (on Saturday mornings and weekday evenings) at FAU's Boca Raton campus by attending in person (once face-to-face courses resume) or joining remotely via video-conferencing technology. All classes, including the three-semester school based internship, are conducted using this design. This enables the program “to provide ongoing opportunities for students to experience scenario-based learning through collaboration, in-depth discussion and real-world applications to very different contexts, while building lifelong professional networks,” he added. For more information about this program contact Dr. Hardman at whardma1@fau.edu.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

College of Education

Our Mission

The mission of the College of Education is to use research and scholarship to prepare and support teachers, leaders, counselors and speech language pathologists to improve the lives of people and communities.

Our Aspiration

As researchers, scholars and educators, we aspire to be a leading resource for research, professional preparation, policy, and public engagement in local, state, national and international communities.



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Davie 954-236-1028
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COE Highlights
Volume 2 Issue 3 Summer 2020



Writer/Editor: Josephine Elliott

HONORS AND AWARDS: COE STUDENTS

College of Education (COE) students were recognized as award recipients of COE Honors and Awards in an announcement on Friday, May 8, 2020 by Stephen Silverman, Ed.D., Dean, College of Education (COE). College-wide winners included Tiffany E. Vastardis, who earned a Ph.D. in Counseling. She is the winner of the 2020 Outstanding Dissertation Award for her dissertation, *Developing the Covert Traumatic Experience Scale (CoTES): A Retrospective Early*



Tiffany E. Vastardis,
Ph.D.
2020 Outstanding
Dissertation Award,
College of Education



Samantha Pino
2020 Dr. Rosanna
Gatens Award for
Outstanding
Community Service,
graduate level

Psychosocial Trauma Assessment Tool. Samantha Pino, Counselor Education (CE), was the recipient of the Dr. Rosanna Gatens Award for Outstanding Community Service at the graduate level.

Also, recognized was the COE Undergraduate Researcher of the Year Kelly Thomas, Exceptional Student Education (ESE). Kelly was also honored in an announcement of FAU's 51 Annual Honors Convocation in an April 15, 2020 announcement (see FAU Honors article on page one). Recipients of Outstanding Graduate Awards bestowed on by COE Departments were Christie

Getejanc, Communication Sciences and Disorders; Kathryn Bosso, CE; Eleanor Su-Keene, Educational Leadership and Research Methodology; Tracy Meiners, ESE; and Tara Henn, Teaching and Learning (TL). Recipients of Outstanding Undergraduate Awards bestowed on by COE Departments were Kelly Thomas, ESE, and Kelsey Fertig, TL.

COE DOCTORAL STUDENT AMONG WINNERS OF 'COVID-19 CHANGE CHALLENGE'

Elena McLaughlin, a doctoral student in the College of Education (COE)'s Department of Exceptional Student Education, was one of four winners of the COVID-19 Change Challenge organized by the Division of Research, according to a Florida Atlantic University (FAU) announcement on May 5, 2020. She was selected for her project on supporting fine motor skills development of young children with Autism spectrum disorders. Students were asked to submit their ideas of how to meet the demands of COVID-19 related issues for an opportunity to earn up to \$2,000 to help implement that idea.



Q & A: TIPS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

While all courses have shifted online during this time of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), students are adjusting to this format, which will continue to be in place throughout the summer 2020 semester. Here are some tips for successful online learning shared by Paul Peluso, Ph.D., Chair, Counselor Education, and Interim Chair, Teaching and Learning, and Michelle Vaughan, E.D., Assistant Professor, Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry:

How can I minimize distractions?

Vaughan: Block out specific dates and times, such as when you would have been in class, to focus on your studies. Use that time to engage with instructors and classmates, ask questions, participate in discussion boards, tackle assignments, read textbooks, view lectures and take notes.

Peluso: Make a dedicated space where you can do your online learning and get up and walk away from it. This can help create distance mentally to manage stress.

Who do I reach out for help?

Vaughan: Ask your instructor for assistance. Reach out to them and ask questions. If you anticipate needing an extension to a deadline, let your instructor know the circumstances in advance and ask if your request can be accommodated.

Where should I look for communication from my instructor?

Vaughan: Check Canvas frequently for new notifications from your instructor. Make sure notifications in Canvas are set appropriately. For example, notifications can be set up as a text to your phone. Also, check your emails.

What are the best ways to stay organized?

Vaughan: Print out due dates for assignments and tests or enter them into your calendar. This will help you manage your time more appropriately and provide you with a framework to stay organized.

What can I do to stay healthy?

Peluso: Schedule time to exercise in any way you can. Be mindful of eating habits. Better to eat healthy meals regularly than to snack mindlessly.

How can I keep connected to others?

Peluso: Reach out to family, friends and other students via phone or video platforms. Do not self-isolate socially. Talk to professionals, who can provide counseling support via telemental health, if necessary.

Is it OK to feel abnormal?

Peluso: It is OK to feel strange. These circumstances due to the COVID-19 virus are unprecedented. Yet this will pass and a new normal will emerge, which may be a little bit different. Eventually, your life will get back to something resembling "normal."