Dear students and friends,

The School Psychology Student Association (SPSA) had a very successful 2016-2017 year! We, along with the Executive Board: Christina W. (Treasurer), Melonie M. (Secretary), and Bianca S. (Social Chair) organized several events throughout the year to bring members together, establish positive relationships and mentorship between members, enhance knowledge, and advocate and raise awareness about the school psychology profession. SPSA serves as a bridge between the academic responsibilities and social life of our students. It is a wonderful way for the students in the program to form supportive relationships, learn from one another, and spend time together.

One of the aspects that makes SPSA unique is the diversity within our students. SPSA members have diverse educational backgrounds, varied work experiences, and unique personalities. When our members come together they collaborate and learn from one another. SPSA offers the opportunity to network while developing supportive relationships with peers.

Being part of this year’s executive board has been an amazing experience for both of us. It gave us the opportunity to be involved with our peers, develop our leadership skills, and demonstrate our organizational skills. Even though we all have our own jobs and personal lives to attend to, SPSA motivated us to push ourselves. It made each one of us stronger and better equipped to handle future challenges. Our cohort has turned into a family. We are there for one another and support each other during academic or personal stress. It has been an overall wonderful experience and we strongly encourage members to become part of the executive board! We wholeheartedly wish you all the best of luck during the semesters to come.

Sincerely,
Alexa Borroto and Sandra Ferret
“Even though we all have our own jobs and personal lives to attend to, SPSA motivated us to push ourselves.”

SPSA Monthly Achievements

September:
- We launched our website. If you have not seen it, definitely visit it to learn more about our club: www.fiuspsa.weebly.com

October:
- We hosted our Movie Night. We watched an amazing documentary about bipolar disorder: Of Two Minds while eating yummy pizza!

November:
- 8 of our members attended FASP’s annual conference where they had the chance to bond, learn from amazing workshops, and present research. (right bottom photo)
- We set up a table in the Graham Center to raise awareness about the School Psychology profession during School Psychology Awareness Week or SPAW! (left bottom photo)

December:
- We had our end of the year social dinner at BJs Restaurant and Brewhouse.

February:
- SPSA members attended the NASP Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas!
- Also, SPSA members volunteered at the Baptist Children’s Hospital and brought joy to the children who have been hospitalized with chronic illness. SPSA played games with the children and completed art activities (left top photo).

March:
- 3 of our members attended the CSO favorite event of the month.

April:
- Several of our SPSA members attended an FIU baseball game to show FIU spirit, while others members attend a leadership and professional development conference, and our CSO representative attended the CSO monthly meeting.
- We celebrated interns and student accomplishments at our Annual Luncheon Banquet at Brio in Hallandale Beach!

May:
- Faculty and interns celebrate at Commencement 2017.
Celebrating Pride in Miami Beach

As an extra credit project for Dr. Kelli Scanlon’s MHS 5400 Counseling Skills and Techniques course, Bianca Santacoloma attended the Pride Event Beach Party at Lummas Park on April 8. It was a well-organized fun event!

"I am so glad that I went to this beautiful venue to celebrate the LGBTQ distinct members of our community. It was a well-organized event that celebrated the PRIDE in many different cultures with their diverse music, food, and smiling faces. No doubt about it, the ambiance provided a safe space that clearly exemplified RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE.” - Bianca S.

Student Accomplishments, Internships, and Job Offers!

♦ In the October FASP conference, Silvana Newman and Paulie Martinez were nominated for FASP graduate student awards! Also alumna Glanel Reyes, Ed.S., NCSP ('15) was recognized by the School District of Palm Beach County with the Early Career School Psychologist of the Year award! Glanel was also a finalist for the FASP School Psychologist of the Year Award!

♦ Mailin Delgado, Yesenia Joyas, and Silvana Newman received job offers at Miami-Dade County Public Schools! Paulie Martinez received two job offers at Denver Public Schools and Jeffco Public Schools in Colorado! Jessica Rothman received a job offer at Broward County Public Schools!

♦ Congratulations to our 7 new interns who all have received paid internships for the 2017-2018 school year: Alyssa Aguiar, Gemma Bonilla, Laynie Bunn, and Sandra Ferret at MDCPS; Alexa Borroto at Broward County Public Schools; Melonie Mendez at the School District of Palm Beach County, and Christina Williams at Pinellas County Schools!

♦ Silvana Newman is this year’s recipient of the Patty Del Valle Humanitarian Award!

♦ Also, congratulations to Dr. Phil Lazarus on his new book, Creating Safe and Supportive Schools and Fostering Students’ Mental Health, which features alumna, Shamika Patton, Ed.S., ('13) who was interviewed for her expertise in abused and neglected children and her work from the Florida Department of Children and Families!
On April 29, we celebrated interns’ and students’ successes at Brio in Gulfstream Park, Hallandale Beach!

- **Top left corner**: Graduates Nahomie Saint Pierre, Silvana Newman, Jessica Rothman, Yesenia Joyas, and Mailin Delgado (Ed.S. ’17)

- **Top right corner**: Silvana Newman accepted the Patty Del Valle Humanitarian Award from past recipient Annela Costa (Ed.S. ’16)

- **Left center**: Graduation gifts and cake!

- **Left bottom**: Yesenia and Mailin

- **Right center**: Faculty, students, alumni, and family celebrating
Student Presentations and Publications!

Conference Presentations


- **Mendez, M.**, & Pelaez, M. (2017, May). *Does social referencing have an overall impact on child compliance.* Poster to be presented at the annual conference of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI), Denver, CO.


Publications


This past Fall, School Psychology interns, Mailin, Silvana, and Yesenia presented at the Miami-Dade County Public Schools ESE Family Forum and Expo. (left photo)

“We had so much fun speaking with families interested in understanding children with ADHD, Autism, or Specific Learning Disabilities. We talked about strategies to use in the home to manage behaviors and challenges with an overall theme of understanding and positivity.” -Yesenia J.
Congratulations!

Yesenia Joyas, Ed.S.
Silvana Newman, Ed.S.
Paulette Martinez, Ed.S.
Nahomie Saint Pierre, Ed.S.
Mailin Delgado, Ed.S.
Jessica Rothman, Ed.S.
The First-Year Students...

Name: Ariana Ureña
Where did I grow up: I was born in Queens, NY and raised in Miami, FL.
Educational History: A.A. in Psychology at Miami Dade College, and soon Bachelors in Psychology with a minor in Education at FIU in the summer.
Favorite Food: Dominican food, pasta, and cheeseburgers!
What I will be doing this summer: I will be completing my Bachelors while working full time as a recreation leader at camp Owaissa Bauer.

Name: Alexandra Lumarde
Where did I grow up: I grew up in Haiti and moved to the US at the age of 16. At the age of 22, I moved to Colombia and returned to the US at the age of 37.
Educational History: Associates Degree as a Montessori School Teacher, Bachelors in Psychology with a concentration in Behavior Analysis, and Masters Degree in Clinical Social Work at FIU.
Favorite Food: Red snapper
What I will be doing this summer: I will be traveling to Haiti for a week, and then Columbia for a week. I will also be working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Name: Carolina Burgos
Where did I grow up: Santiago, Chile
Educational History: B. A. Journalism (Chile) and M.A. in Education and Leadership at University of Texas-Arlington.
Favorite Food: salads, ceviche, and breakfast
What I will be doing this summer: Resting and enjoying my parents visit.

Name: Alexandra (Alex) Ewing
Where did I grow up: Chicago, IL.
Educational History: Bachelors of Science in Special Education (Learning Disabilities and Behavioral Disorders) at Illinois State University in 1998. I've been a teacher in Broward County since 2004. I have taught in the middle school and elementary school level in various areas of ESE.
Favorite Food: Crab legs
What I will be doing this summer: Relaxing and traveling with family all summer long!

Name: Keila Tuckler
Where did I grow up: Miami, FL
Educational History: Bachelors in Psychology with Minor in Education and Criminal Justice at FIU (2015)
Favorite Food: Popcorn (although it is more of a snack)
What I will be doing this summer: I will be going on my overdue honeymoon in June to Europe!

Name: Jacqueline Diaz
Where did I grow up: Miami, FL
Educational History: Bachelors in Psychology with Minor in Education at Florida Gulf Coast University
Favorite Food: Sushi and anything Japanese
What I will be doing this summer: I will be moving back to Miami after living in Fort Myers for 4 years.

Name: Shantel Gomez
Where did I grow up: Miami, FL
Educational History: Bachelors in Psychology with Minor in Education at FIU
Favorite Food: Pizza
What I will be doing this summer: I will be taking two Summer classes and working as a Graduate Assistant here at FIU.
Field Supervisor Spotlight

Name: Daisy Pardo, Ed.S.

Year Graduated from FIU: 2008

Previous Education History: B.A. in English, FIU

Current Position: School Psychologist at Broward County Public Schools

Years in Position: 9 years

Areas of Clinical Expertise: Preschool, Bilingual Assessment

How did FIU prepare you to become a school psychologist?

The graduate program at FIU helps students by providing the framework of knowledge and skills required to be a successful school psychologist. For me, it laid a strong foundation through rigorous coursework in assessment, psychopathology, consultation, etc. At FIU, I gained my first hands-on experiences in testing and counseling as well. Through the program at FIU, I also learned about a job opportunity at the Mailman Center for Child Development as an interventionist and psycho-educational evaluator, which further developed my clinical training. Under the supervision of licensed clinical psychologists at Mailman, I gained important skills in preschool and early intervention.

What do you like most about your current position?

School psychology is a deeply rewarding career that allows us to advocate for students. Through the evaluation process, we help identify a child’s strengths and weaknesses, and determine their educational needs. It is an extremely gratifying experience to be part of the process that links struggling students with the services they require to reach their full potential. By helping children, we also get the opportunity to help families.

What is the most challenging experience you have faced in your position?

One of the most challenging experiences as a professional occurred during my first few years as a school psychologist. Early in my career, I was assigned as the crisis manager for a crisis at a middle school. A beloved teacher at the school had passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. It was a great loss for many, including students and school staff. As a crisis manager, it was my responsibility to organize the crisis response team and determine the needs of those affected. Although this proved to be a difficult and emotionally draining experience, the support and direction from the district office provided me with the tools needed to stabilize the situation and handle the crisis effectively.

Is there anything you would like students to know about becoming a school psychologist?

In a profession where many procedures are performed in a standardized manner, the importance of flexibility in school psychology is often under-emphasized. As school psychologists, our schedules and daily duties may turn on a dime. For example, on a given day, we may have planned to work with a particular student and consult with a teacher. However, our day may change direction very quickly when we are notified that a student in our school is experiencing significant behavioral difficulties that require our expertise. “Thinking outside the box” is also part of this flexibility, which involves the ability to adapt to different situations. At times, for instance, we are called to evaluate extremely low functioning students, who are unable to respond to the traditional modes of testing. In these circumstances, it takes an innovative thinker to determine the appropriate ways of assessing the student. Overall, the sometimes “unexpected” and “unscripted” nature of our day to day makes School Psychology an exciting and interesting career!
**Early Career Spotlight**

**Name:** James Stuckey, Ed.S., NCSP  
**Year Graduated from FIU:** 2013  
**Current Position:** School Psychologist at School District of Palm Beach County  
**Years in Position:** 4 years

I have been a school psychologist for four years servicing a diverse student population in the School District of Palm Beach County. This school year I am assigned to three distinctive elementary schools. The student population of each school is comprised of English language learners, ASD learners, a Pre-Kindergarten Behavior unit, and a Hebrew language based charter school. Three things I like most about my current position are working in consultation with highly qualified teachers, connecting with parents, and monitoring at-risk students as they progress towards their individualized goals.

My course of study at FIU played a vital role in preparing me for the challenges of being a school psychologist. I learned key skills in the problem solving process while collaborating with school staff. When others go off topic and begin to list obstacles, I am able to maintain focus on defining the primary concern and identifying research based interventions to achieve positive outcomes for students. Furthermore, this enables me to help multidisciplinary teams identify the student’s individual strengths and not just areas of weakness.

Additionally, Dr. Lazarus and Dr. Pham taught me the importance of examining the whole student during the evaluation process. This is not the time to take shortcuts. An academic evaluation focusing on a reading comprehension deficit may have the potential to lead to other areas of consideration. Proper data collection, multiple observations, and complete evaluations are essential for the development of psychoeducational recommendations.

I would encourage current and future FIU students to take particular interest in mental health and how it impacts students. It is important to understand the options within the school environment as well as identify potential outside community resources where parents and students may utilize appropriate comprehensive resolutions.

My most challenging experience has been working with a school administrator who did not fully understand best practices in ESE policies and procedures. I managed this situation by being patient, accepting the person’s current level of understanding, recruiting input from other ESE staff, and building bridges towards common goals. In the spirit of Anne Frank, I believe that all people who work with students are good at heart.

“I would encourage current and future FIU students to take particular interest in mental health and how it impacts students.”
About SPSA

The purpose of the SPSA organization is to advocate for the School Psychology profession, along with the children and families we will ultimately serve. We come together to enhance the students’ experience by providing opportunities for networking, professional development, leadership, and service. It is open to all FIU students, staff, administrators, and alumni who unite to promote their common interests. Please contact Sandra Ferret (sferr015@fiu.edu) or Alexa Borroto (abor023@fiu.edu) to join! We are also on Facebook and OrgSync, and have our very own webpage!

2017-2018 Executive Board Members

President - Munirah McNeely
Vice President - Diana Myles
Treasurer - (position open!)
Secretary - Chelsea Lawrence
CSO Representative - Luciana Lorino

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NASP 2018 CALL FOR PROPOSALS!

The NASP 2018 Annual Call for Presentation Proposals is Open! The conference will take place February 13-16, 2018 in Chicago, IL!

The Deadline for Proposal Submission: Wednesday, June 14, 2017!

If you are interested in submitting a proposal, more information can be found here: NASP Proposal Submission System