2013

University Graduate School Annual Report 2013

University Graduate School, Florida International University

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Provost Awards

Dean's Message

Professional Development Program

2012-13 Fellows

Doctoral Dissertations
Academic year 2012-’13 was another remarkable year in terms of our accomplishments and new initiatives. This report is all about celebrating the successes of our graduate programs and looking ahead to new challenges in the coming year.

Our doctoral enrollments and graduations continue to grow. We have steadily expanded professional development opportunities for our students by teaming up with various centers and institutes on campus. The University Graduate School (UGS) and Graduate and Professional Students Committee joined forces to organize research paper and poster competitions. Our students’ research, showcased during Graduate Student Appreciation Week, covered such themes as ideological extremism, ecotourism, and swarm epistemology. Winners at this event fared very well at the Statewide Graduate Research Symposium, where they secured one first place and two second places in STEM and health science disciplines.

We take pride in working closely with both our students and our graduate program administrators. We are one of very few universities in the country to track individual doctoral student progress annually through annual evaluations. Moreover, vital statistics from Annual Program Summaries help graduate programs with strategic planning in recruitment, admission, and retention activities. We are also one of very few universities in the country to adopt the Carnegie assessment system for all our doctoral programs.

One focus in 2012-’13 was to make our operations and processes streamlined and efficient. We instituted a new graduate application system, developed an online system for petitions, and simplified several steps of the admission process. Our recruitment team developed an intelligent way of reaching out to admitted applicants, both domestic and international, which allows us to give personal attention to each and every prospective student.

Finally, 2012-’13 was a year of reaching out to our alumni. With a nucleus of six founding members, the Dean’s Academy has come into existence. The key purpose of the academy is to help develop alumni support for UGS and to lead and inspire our students by example. Students are at the center of everything we do. We measure our quality one student at a time, and that’s our strategy to remain Worlds Ahead.
Enrollment:
Ethnicity Distribution

Total Graduate Enrollment

Degrees Awarded
Fall Enrollment

Masters/Specialists
Research Doctorates

Numbers and Trends
Rankings

#1 for Masters degrees granted to Hispanics in Business and Marketing

#2 for total number of Hispanics enrolling in graduate school

#3 for Masters and PhD STEM degrees granted to Hispanic graduate students in Florida

Source: Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, April 2013

62% of FIU Doctoral Students seeking academic appointments were hired as faculty. (National average is 53%)


International Students make up nearly 1/3 of the graduate student body

Top 10 Countries of Origin for Enrolled International Graduate Students (2012-13)

China (444)

Jamaica (219)

Panama (51)

Peru (127)

Venezuela (127)

Colombia (125)

Iran (65)

India (171)

Cuba (93)

Haiti (52)

Provost Award
Outstanding Graduate Mentor

Paul Kowert

Dr. Paul Kowert is an Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations. For two decades at FIU, he has developed coursework, challenged students, and helped to establish a Ph.D. program. His graduate students nominated him for his exceptional guidance and mentorship.

What does the provost award mean to you?
Well, I felt enormously flattered, particularly since I was nominated by my students. If they feel that they are having a really good experience at FIU, then of course it’s not attributable just to me, but I am proud of what I contributed to that experience and what we’ve done in general as a department at FIU. Beyond that, I confess that I felt a little embarrassed to be getting an award simply for doing my job.

What you do love most about teaching here?
By far, the most fun part of my day is teaching. What I love most about teaching here is FIU’s mission. As a big public university in an urban environment, we get all kinds of students, from all over the world. They have a great diversity of backgrounds and experience, which is a plus in the classroom. But it also means that, without the same kinds of preparation, some have to work a little harder to get through school. I think FIU gives a lot of value-added education. We want to see our students succeed, and we work hard to help them find the right path.

How is mentorship at the graduate level unique?
Graduate school is the moment, for many students, of a transition from student to scholar. You want your students to surpass your own work, to go in directions that you wouldn’t be able to think of yourself. When they succeed, then you’ve done your job.

Any collaboration with your grad students at the moment?
I collaborate with my students in both teaching and research. Every year, I work with about six graduate teaching assistants in my large “Introduction to International Relations” undergraduate course. Together, we teach about 400 undergraduate international relations or political science majors. For the graduate students, who lead their own discussion sections every week, it’s a bridging experience that helps them learn how to design and teach their own courses later. We spend a lot of time talking about pedagogy, in weekly meetings, and crafting short writing assignments for the discussion sections. I’m also currently working with two graduate students on a co-authored paper, and I’ve helped many students find their way into print over the years. Today, it’s increasingly important for doctoral students to leave school with a publication record.

Any memorable moment as a mentor?
The moment that stands out for me, in retrospect, is the moment I arrived at FIU. When I think back to where we were only 20 years ago, with a brand new doctoral program, I think we’ve built a lot in a short time. Now, my own program has almost 100 doctoral students in two PhD programs (International Relations and Political Science), and we graduate about 10 new PhDs a year. As we enhance our reputation, that will attract even more students, but good mentorship is what will keep them here. So the mentorship award, to me, symbolizes what we have been able to build. It means that FIU is just doing the right things.
Les Standiford

Award-winning author Les Standiford helped establish the Creative Writing Program, where he has been the director for 27 years. The heralded program has awarded the MFA degree to several New York Times’ best-selling authors and to the 2013 inaugural poet, among others. Standiford is honored for exceptional dedication and achievement.

What were your aspirations for the Creative Writing Program?
Well, I looked at the place and the beauty of it, and said to myself, “Who on earth wouldn’t want to come to study creative writing in the middle of paradise?” One of the surprises that I found was that roughly half of our students come from our surrounding areas because so many people have come to Florida for other reasons, jobs, family, and so forth. There’s a big market that we serve locally, and then half of our students in the grad program come from elsewhere. I didn’t foresee that there was so much homegrown talent—it was a nice surprise.

What aspect of the program gives you the most fulfillment?
I’m most happy about the number of students who take this training and do something with it in terms of publishing, teaching and arts administration. It’s very difficult to publish a book, and in just 20 or so years we’re currently closing in on 100 book publications. Some of them are pretty significant. Dennis Lane’s “Mystic River” was made into an Academy Award winning film starring Clint Eastwood, and on and on the list goes. That, I think, is one of the things I’m most proud of.

What makes this graduate program unique?
Part of it is the place itself—Miami being such an interesting place, culturally diverse. Another part is the school, the institution—the English department has been so supportive from the beginning. The college, the university seems to embrace what we do and from the beginning made me feel like this is important and that they value our accomplishments. You don’t get that at every school. At some older schools, when a certain program or individual excels, then other people get threatened, and there is very little of that at FIU.

What else sets it apart?
The terrific faculty that I’ve been fortunate enough to have surrounding me, one by one, from the beginning. No one who has been hired here in my 27-year tenure has ever quit.

Where do you see the program and yourself in the future?
Well, I hope that I will be able to retire at FIU, although I’m not looking for that to happen any time soon. We’re in the process of creating a Ph.D. program in creative writing, an invaluable asset. There are over 200 MFA programs in the USA, with only 25 viable Ph.D. programs in creative writing. The only other one in Florida is at FSU. We have enough of our graduates alone living in the area to make the Ph.D. program in creative writing viable. I also look forward to working with great students who do terrific work. That’s the principle pleasure of this job.
Outstanding Creative Project

The first day of architecture class convinced Ana Cecilia Benatuil that she had picked the right field, and she has been pursuing an accelerated masters degree since coming to FIU as a new college student. Ana won this award for her thesis project, “Designing for Sea Level Rise,” which has been exhibited by the American Institute of Architects. Her fondest memory at FIU was competing with the architecture team at the 2011 Solar Decathlon International Competition in Washington, D.C.

Outstanding Student Engagement

The eyes of students at West Miami Middle School grew big as Rupak Dua explained how medical research saves lives. Introducing middle school students to STEM careers is only one facet of the diverse engagement activities Dua initiated as president of Alpha Eta Mu Beta, the honor society for Biomedical Engineering. From organizing fundraising for nonprofit organizations, to connecting with biomedical companies to provide an industry lecture series, Dua is a true ambassador of academia. During his masters and doctoral research at FIU, he has studied stent development, tissue engineering, and various alloys for orthopedics.

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant

Bryan Dewsbury loves both biology and teaching, and his passion has inspired many students in biology to feel the same way. He is pursuing a Ph.D. that follows his M.Sc. in Biology from FIU in 2006. As a teaching assistant, he created a holistic “teaching pentagon” approach as part of the NSF-sponsored program QBIC: Quantifying Biology in the Classroom. He believes a great teaching assistant needs humility, scholarship, and attention to students’ circumstances.

Outstanding Paper or Manuscript

Concerned about her native Bangladesh and its vulnerability to climate change, Shah Najiba is studying the use of low-carbon hydrogen energy storage materials. Her 2012 publication in the world’s second-most cited journal, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, was “High-pressure study of lithium amidoborane using Raman spectroscopy and insight into dihydrogen bonding absence.” Since 2009, she has been pursuing a Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering.
Margie Kieper is a first year doctoral student in Geosciences. Her research focuses on tropical cyclone precipitative structure and intensification. She developed a method that uses passive microwave (PMW) imagery for forecasting episodes of rapid intensification. The method has been tested around the globe and is currently being automated through the National Hurricane Center Joint Hurricane Testbed. Related research includes a PMW-based tropical cyclone life cycle model.

Elizabeth Turner is a third year doctoral student in Accounting. Her research centers on the value relevance of accounting reform and its effects in the US and international capital markets. She has published several research articles on related topics, including how the elimination of the reconciliation to US GAAP affects investors’ knowledge, another on the information quality of R&D information and a third on home bias. Her dissertation examines market reaction to recent pension accounting reform. All of her research adds to fundamental understanding of the effects of accounting reform on market valuation.

Vanessa Madrazo is in her fifth year of the Developmental Psychology doctoral program. Her dissertation examines the role of purpose and identity on positive development within the context of Hispanic women in college. Her research will inform policy makers and interventionists in the mental health field as well as professionals in Higher Education on the unique experience of Hispanic female college students.

Natalie Damaso is a second year student in the Combined M.S. of Forensic Science/Ph.D. in Biology program at FIU. Her M.S. thesis involves the comparison of novel polymers using capillary electrophoresis for bioseparations of complex DNA mixtures based on both length heterogeneity and sequence polymorphisms. Her Ph.D. research involves analysis of soil from across Miami-Dade County, using microbial metagenomic profiling, to study the potential of its use as forensic evidence. Her major research interests are a combination of microbiology, computational science, and forensic science to look at complex microbial communities.

Fellow Spotlights

Eric Huey is a fourth year doctoral candidate in Electrical and Computer Engineering. Eric’s doctoral research addresses the challenges of integrating oxide nanostructures into bio-sensing platforms. The central focus of his work will involve exploring the electron transport of oxygen through microelectrode barrier layers. His research will enable the development of wearable sensing devices for wellness monitoring and point of care diagnostics.

Raju Sinha is a doctoral candidate in Electrical and Computer Engineering. His current research is focused on the design and fabrication of a tunable, compact, solid-state terahertz (THz) source and detector capable of functioning at room temperature. The research involves studying characteristics of different nonlinear optical materials and how the dimension of different THz waveguides is related to the frequency of the propagating signal. His research will significantly contribute to the development of THz devices with high efficiency.
Graduate-Professional Student Appreciation Week seeks to honor the contributions, impact and value of graduate and professional students on campuses throughout the United States. UGS and the Graduate and Professional Student Committee jointly hosted the 2013 Graduate Student Appreciation Week. Below are highlights from the week-long event.

**Poster Sessions**

held during day one and two of the Scholarly Forum allowed graduate students to explore a variety of research topics, with presenters personally guiding visitors through their research projects.

*Zachary Jud* shares his research on following large-scale oyster reef restoration in the Loxahatchee River during day one of the Scholarly Forum.

*Richard Lopez* discusses the application of Student Experiential Learning as South Beach Food and Wine Festival's Program Manager.

*Elizabeth Harrison* shares her research "Identifying the Sources for Mayan Cichids (Cichlasoma Urophthalmus) in South Florida" during day one of the Scholarly Forum.

*Dr. Lawrence Morehouse’s* “Making the Most of Your Grad Experience" lecture provided graduate students with first hand knowledge and insights on how to maximize the overall graduate school experience.

*Rupak Dua* receives his Provost Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Engagement from Provost Wartzok during the recognition reception.

**Academic Panel**

with faculty from a variety of disciplines engaging in open discussion with graduate students on how to effectively start on their path to a successful faculty career.
Florida International University offers its graduate students many opportunities to develop their professional skills.

The Professional Development Program offers resources in the four focus areas of academic writing and communication, professoriate training, leadership, and well-being.

**Academic Writing and Communication**
Communication is an essential skill needed to be fully engaged in academia, as well as industry, government, and non-profit organizations. Professional development workshops offered under this competency include writing the literature review, publishing a dissertation, grant writing, presentation style, and more. These competencies prepare students to graduate and move seamlessly into their profession.

**Wellness**
Graduate students need to balance complex academic pursuits with their personal lives. Workshops under this competency address this need by offering stress and time management, conflict resolution, and motivational techniques.

**Professoriate Training**
Doctoral students aspiring to become professors need guidance to achieve excellence in teaching. In collaboration with the FIU Center for the Advancement of Teaching, workshops address concerns specific to graduate students pursuing a faculty career.

**Leadership**
Research leaders have skills to envision future trends in their disciplines and engage in lifelong learning. Workshops and lectures offered by the Center for Leadership at FIU provide inspiration and skills to develop the leaders of the future.
2012-13 Fellows

Presidential Fellows

The Presidential Fellowship provides a three-year award to attract outstanding Ph.D. students to pursue graduate programs at FIU.

Richa Agrawal
Dr. Chunlei Wang

Stephanie Archer
Dr. Craig Layman

Michele Bechor
Dr. Jeremy Pettit

Alfred Castillo
Dr. Weidong Xia

Maria Gabryszewa
Dr. Nicol Rae

Zhe Geng
Dr. Hai Deng

Erjia Guan
Dr. Thomas A. Breslin

Filmon Habte
Dr. Arindam Gan Chowdhury

Yonas Habtemichael
Dr. Hector R. Fuentes

Erin Hedemann
Dr. Wendy Silverman

Ryan Hill
Dr. Jeremy Pettit

Alexander Huezo
Dr. Guillermo Grenier

Inkyoung Hur
Dr. Weidong Xia

Ajeet Jain
Dr. Arun Prakash

Yagya Joshi
Dr. Rajamani Narayanan

Margaret Kieper
Dr. Haiyan Jiang

Nathan Lemoine
Dr. Deron Burkepile

Soumyadeep Mukherjee
Dr. Mary Jo Trepka

Janice O’Driscoll
Dr. Stephen Wong

Micah Oelze
Dr. Victor M. Uribe

Sundar Pandey
Dr. Kalai Mathee

Samantha Rhodes
Dr. Philip Stoddard

Elena Shersher
Dr. Xiaotang Wang

Raju Sinha
Dr. Jean Andrian

Thomas Soltis
Dr. Mohiaddin Messbahi

Kiran Subedi
Dr. Jose Amirall

Muhammad Bakhteer Talukdar
Dr. Suchi Mishra

Elizabeth Turner
Dr. Clark Wheatley

Ling Wang
Dr. Yi Xiao

Jun Yang
Dr. David Wernick

Daniel Yohannes
Dr. Nakin Suksuwang

Qianying Zhang
Dr. Jesse Bull

Xuena Zhu
Dr. Chenzhong Li
The FIU McNair Graduate Fellowship provides support to promising undergraduate McNair Scholars to pursue their graduate education at FIU.

### McNair Fellows

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<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Almodovar</td>
<td>Dr. Tonette Rocco</td>
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<td>Natalie Damaso</td>
<td>Dr. DeEtta Mills</td>
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<td>Christopher Davis</td>
<td>Dr. Alexandra Cornelius</td>
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<td>Angelica Hill</td>
<td>Dr. Caroline Faria</td>
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<td>Jennifer Houston</td>
<td>Dr. Victoria Pace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Jones</td>
<td>Dr. Les Standiford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisha Price</td>
<td>Dr. Maureen Kenny</td>
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### Dissertation Year Fellows

Dissertation Year Fellowships provide support to qualified doctoral students in their final year to facilitate timely completion of dissertations.

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<tr>
<td>Yalda Amir Kiaei</td>
<td>Dr. Thomas G. Reio</td>
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<td>Farrukh Arif</td>
<td>Dr. Mehmet Emre Bayraktar, Dr. Caesar Abi Shidid</td>
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<td>Melissa Armitage</td>
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<td>Jennifer Attonito</td>
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<td>Deepak Balasubramanian</td>
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<td>Ruchir Bhatt</td>
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<td>Gopal Bhatta</td>
<td>Dr. James Webb</td>
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<td>Derek Burkholder</td>
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<td>Ujwal Chaudhary</td>
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<td>Daniel Clausen</td>
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<td>Elena Cyrus-Cameron</td>
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<td>Dionne Dickson</td>
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<td>Tushar Gadkari</td>
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<td>Sylvia Lee</td>
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<td>Kumpal Madrasi</td>
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<td>Dr. Jiuhua Chen</td>
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<td>Christi Navarro</td>
<td>Dr. H. Virginia McCoy</td>
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2012-13 Fellows

Arash Nejadpak
Dr. Osama Mohammed

Bora Pajo
Dr. David Cohen

Varun Penmatsa
Dr. Chunlei Wang

Idaykis Rodriguez
Dr. Eric Brewe

Adam Rosenblatt
Dr. Michael Heithaus

Ali Sarikhani
Dr. Osama Mohammed

Amanda Snyder
Dr. Sherry Johnson

Colleen Supanich
Dr. Guillermo Grenier

Yannick Thams
Dr. Aya Chacar

Martin Tsang
Dr. Guillermo Grenier

Shelley Wick
Dr. Paul Kowert

Yoshiko Yamada
Dr. Francois Debray

Lauren Yeager
Dr. Craig Layman

Ozum Yesiltas
Dr. Mohiaddin Messbahi

Chadi Younes
Dr. Caesar Abi Shdid

Reng Zeng
Dr. Xudong He

Julieta Hernandez
Dr. David Cohen

Eric Huey
Dr. Shekhar Bhansali

Vanessa Madrazo
Dr. Dionne Stephens

Christi Navarro
Dr. H. Virginia McCoy

Fernando Patterson
Dr. Robert Daigler

Peter Perez
Dr. Wei-Chiang Lin

Dudith Pierre-Victor
Dr. Purnima Madhivanan

Jodonnis Rodriguez
Dr. Suchismita Mishra

Albecia Rumphs
Dr. Purnima Madhivanan

Tammy Sanders
Dr. M. O. Thirunarayanan

Desiree Sepulveda
Dr. Jacob Gewirtz

Carlos Tamayo
Dr. Hector R. Fuentes

McKnight Fellows

The McKnight Doctoral Fellowship is designed to encourage African American and Hispanic candidates to pursue graduate education.

Clair Blake
Dr. Daniel Bagner

Cherelie Carrington
Dr. Stephen E. Wong

Alejandro Diaz
Dr. Anibal Gutierrez
Dr. Shannon Pruden

Ransford Edwards
Dr. Ronald Cox
Dr. Richard Olson

Elaine Espanola
Dr. Anibal Gutierrez

Albina Farrell
Dr. Elena Bastida

DEA Fellows

The Doctoral Evidence Acquisition (DEA) Fellowship provides support to qualified doctoral students in their efforts to collect the evidence needed for their doctoral research.

Maurice Aboud
Dr. Bruce McCord

Mohmmadreza Barzegaranbaboli
Dr. Osama Mohammed

Katylynn Beltz
Dr. Kenneth G. Furton

Carmen Caicedo
Dr. Dorothy Brooten

Tosmate Cheocharngngarn
Dr. Jean Andrian

Bilal Ciplak
Dr. Mohiaddin Messbahi

Jaclyn Colona
Dr. Guillermo Grenier

Donna Comrie
Dr. Sukumar Ganapati
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