

February 2018

## A Message from the Coordinator



**Dr. Wendy Chase**

The question of what constitutes an Honors student preoccupies me and dominates a portion of every one of our Honors Advisory Council meetings. Academics have been debating the concept of multiple intelligences since Howard Gardner's acclaimed book on the subject was published in 1983. And yet, many programs continue to privilege a high GPA over any other criteria when selecting Honors students. Based on this criteria, Robert Rauschenberg, who changed the course of art history and is recognized for his creative genius around the world, would never have been accepted into HSP because he was dyslexic and performed poorly in a traditional academic environment. We have to do a better job of identifying the students who would benefit the most from our reduced class sizes, discussion-based seminars, and experiential learning opportunities. We need for all of our professors to help us find these students and encourage them to apply because the students who have been

transformed by our program are those who were tapped by a particular professor and encouraged to apply.

Last weekend, Professor Ihasha Horn, Professor Emily Porter, and I had the pleasure of accompanying six of our honors students to the Florida Collegiate Honors Conference at FGCU and for the first time in three years, I believe I have more clarity than ever before on how to *make* an honors student, rather than merely *identify* one. What distinguishes an Honors student is their intellectual curiosity and their motivation to put their talents to work in the service of others. The students at this conference were inspired by each other's passion for particular subjects. We watched them take risks in front of their peers and demonstrate a refreshing openness to critique and a willingness to revise their ideas when confronted with new information. We watched them seek out students from other campuses who had implemented meaningful projects on sustainability, food insecurity, homelessness, and mental illness at their schools and then come to us to see how we could help them initiate similar projects at FSW. Their scholarship was motivated by their desire to solve problems and make positive changes in the world and we saw students connect with each other based on this shared passion.

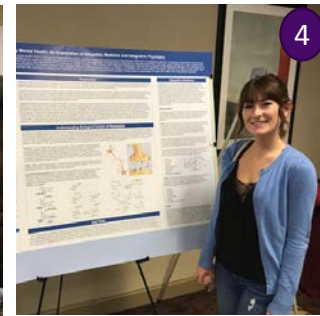
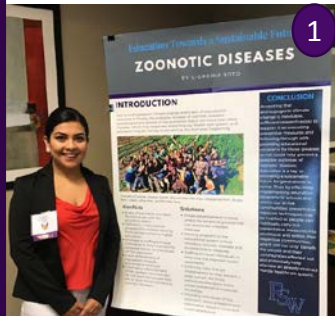
We are featuring two of our alumni in this newsletter and I hope that this will give all of our readers a better idea of how to identify a potential Honors student so that you can help us to catch all that we can. In addition to finding those students who fit the traditional profile of an Honors student because of their clear academic ability, we hope you will also help us find some of the late-bloomers or right-brained creatives who approach assignments in a non-traditional, but intellectually robust manner. We want to take risks on highly motivated students who might not have been exposed to an enriched curriculum and see if we can cultivate their talents. Applications for fall admission are due April 5th. Please guide any dual-enrolled students to contact me directly so that I can send them an application. All other students should be directed to fill out the online application which is linked to our website: <http://www.fsw.edu/honors>. Remember that this program is best suited to students pursuing an AA degree who have not completed more than 36 credit hours by the time they begin the program.



# FSW Honors @ The 2018 Florida Collegiate Honors Conference



We are proud of several students from the FSW Honors Scholar Program who presented research at the 2018 Florida Collegiate Honors Conference. Students presented their research via posters and formal presentations. Several honors students will present their work again prior to FSW's Research Lecture on April 11. The poster session begins at 11:30 a.m. and the lecture start at 12:30 p.m. in the Rush Auditorium, Building J Room 103.

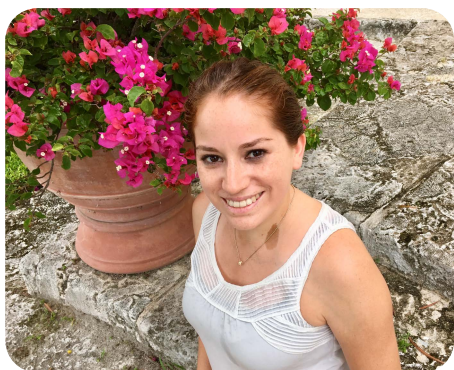


1. Giorgina Soto, *Zoonotic Diseases*
2. Owen Dyches, *The Sandinistas, The Contras, and The Miskitu Fight for Cultural Preservation*
3. Nathalie De Leon Brea, *Everyone Wins: A Explanation of Sustainable Business Practices*
4. Janna Linehan, *Sustaining Mental Health: An Exploration of Integrative and Allopathic Psychiatry*
5. Danica Murray, *The Sunny Side: Implementation of Solar Power in Florida*



# Honors Alumni

## Marisol Continues Pursuing Her Passion for Research



**Marisol Gomez**  
**Honors Scholar Alumni**  
Edison State College  
Class of 2006

I was born in Guanajuato, Mexico and came to the United States at a young age. I first attended Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) as a dual-enrolled student in 2008 and later as a full-time student. I greatly benefited from my experience at FSW where I first had the opportunity to do research as an honors student. I focused on necrotizing fasciitis under the mentorship of Dr. Nirmala Prabhu. At graduating from FSW, I continued my education at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Biology and minors in Mathematics and Chemistry. After graduation, I embarked on a two-year journey in full-time research as a Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. I was able to work on two interesting projects. My first project explored the effects of chronic alcohol consumption on post-translational modifications in the liver of mice, while my second project investigated

the effects of hormone replacement therapies on key proteins involved in learning and memory in rat brains. Currently, I am attending the Morsani College of Medicine at the University of South Florida. My journey, although very unique, can be a testament that dedication to a goal can pay off. I want to encourage students to keep working towards their goals, regardless of whatever obstacles they may perceive in their lives.



## Kristen Finds Her Passion for Art at FSW



**Kristen Pettifor**  
**Honors Scholar Alumni**  
FSW Graduate  
Class of 2016

I am currently a student at the School of The Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) where I am working on my Bachelor of Fine Arts. My active pursuit of the arts is due solely to my experiences at FSW. Initially, I intended to study psychology, as it was interesting and would guarantee me a job. However, my experiences in the Art and the Honors programs at FSW led me in a different direction. The encouragement and constant support from my professors, paired with their passion for education, gave me a strong foundation for my times at SAIC. The ability to be work with the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery and as a Student Assistant gave me invaluable hands-on experiences and helped me to be better prepared for my time at SAIC than many of my peers.

This summer, I traveled to San Diego, CA to attend the ESRI International User Conference, where I displayed one of my artworks, "The Loop By Letter" in the Map Gallery. Even though I now live outside of the state of Florida and I can see that my work will take me other places, I have remained connected to FSW and the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery. My advice to all of the students at FSW is to take risks and be open to change.



# Honors Faculty Feature



**Ihasha Horn**  
Professor of English

## What inspired you to become an English professor?

My inspiration for becoming an English professor stems from my Native American culture, from being raised by a family of teachers, and from the knowledge I have acquired through my academic studies.

Growing up as a Native American, in a household of teachers and writers, I have come to realize that we, as a people, stress narratives, which has endured as the most important means of communicating ideas throughout history. Whether it is flicking a finger across an i-Pad or by turning the pages of a book, each generation remains tethered to our human stories. Moreover, I have discovered from my studies that amidst our human narratives stand the importance and power of language. Communication is a large part of who we are, from parables to work memos to the essays required in our academic pursuits. The belief in understanding the importance and power of language is the essence of being human. It is this essence found in the living relevance of our human stories that beckon my inspiration, which remains rooted in my culture, rearing, and education.

## What do you tell your writing students to expect from a taking your class?

In class, I accentuate that good, clear, effective writing is advantageous, but more valuable is recognizing that good communication skills builds confidence. In short, I expect from my students to build their communication skills – thus their confidence. The student's ability to gain knowledge and communicate knowledge establishes a sense of self-worth, not just in their writing but their overall capabilities as human beings, which equates to self-reliance. This self-reliance can be exercised in accurately expressing emotions to their child at home to clarifying their correspondence at work. Taken together, good communication makes better people and builds a stronger society.

## What is your best piece of writing advice to students?

Read and write! These are the two things you will do in college over and over again. Be a voracious reader, too. Don't just read the good stuff. Read the bad stuff. It can often teach us more about writing than the good stuff does. Most importantly, though, a writer must write (that old adage about practice makes better comes to mind!). But remember that writing is a process, not a product. Because we are so used to seeing the final written *objet d'art* on a bookshelf or on a monitor-of-sorts, we are often unaware of how much hard work is required to arrive at that point when, in fact, that final artifact is often an artifact of pain, mental and emotional anguish hidden by a glossed cover page, polished with the help of editors, agents, and time. A writer's patience and perseverance are paramount here. Just like the mighty tree holds onto its last May flower, so too must the young writer holdfast. And as that tree relinquishes that delicate piece of itself to the first stiff gust of a summer storm in an ancient act of acceptance, so too must the young writer sacrifice a piece of their self. After all, making art is a sacrifice and, make no mistake, writing is an art. Lastly, in all this, do not forget to be patient and kind to yourself with your writing. We can be too harsh or too critical with ourselves sometimes without being aware of it. This acquiescence between author and critic is difficult to master, as any artist will tell you. Nevertheless, if you are not patient and kind to yourself, or with your writing, who will be?



FSW Honor Scholars students participate in Harvard's Model United Nations Conference which brings over 3,000 students and faculty together from colleges and universities around the world to simulate the activities of the United Nations. Students experience the challenges of international negotiation and diplomacy. Throughout the conference, delegates gain insight into the workings of the United Nations by participating in the resolution of important global issues.

