



UF/IFAS FAMILY, YOUTH, AND COMMUNITY SCIENCES
THROUGH THE YEARS

A CALLING TO HELP OTHERS

Unless you lived it, not many people know the history of the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences (FYCS).

What once was established as a home economics department in 1970 within the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) Extension Service, has evolved with the changing times and the continued development of humans in Florida and beyond.

In the 70s, the Home Economics Department had 18 Family Economists specializing in areas such as textiles, financial literacy, nutrition education, and food safety as well as faculty who worked with youth through 4H. These economists often conducted in-service trainings to teach people around the state of Florida better ways to care for themselves, their families, and communities. Relationships between the economists and the training attendees was an equal one—one of mentorship and learning. As the world continued to change, so did the concerns of Florida's families. There was much to discover so that we could better understand, learn from, and inform the people seeking assistance. A need for increased research presented itself, and three small research appointments were developed to inform Extension faculty around the state. This growth started FYCS on the road to becoming an academic department.

Between 1991 and 1994, a curriculum was developed and in 1994 the department of Human Resource Development (HRD) was born. The name changed in 2001 to Family, Youth and Community Sciences to better reflect who we had become.

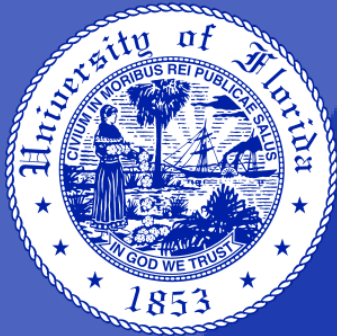
This year we celebrate just over 50 years as a department at the University of Florida. We have over 30 faculty with various intradisciplinary roles, a professional staff, enthusiastic undergraduate students who work closely with our own Gainesville community helping-people organization, and a thriving graduate program including a PhD focused on youth development and family science. We continue to learn from every single person who passes through our doors be they student, faculty, or community. By reflecting on our history, one can see that the constant throughout continuous change is the desire to understand and help each other be better human beings and live healthier lives.





FYCS THROUGH THE YEARS

FROM THE COMMUNITY TO THE CLASSROOM: A SNAPSHOT OF OUR HISTORY



1853 - University of Florida Established as a public land-grant research university in Gainesville, Florida.

1887 - Hatch Act establishes Agricultural Experiment Stations tied to land-grant universities for the purpose of scientific research.

1906 - Land Grant College UF has operated continuously on its Gainesville campus since September 1906.

1914 - Agricultural Extension Service - Home demonstrations performed until 1965.

1947 - UF accepts women.

1958 - UF desegregates.

1965 - UF Extension programs become racially integrated. Florida Agricultural Extension Service changes its name to Florida Cooperative Extension Service in order to reflect the expansion of Extension's mission.

UF | IFAS Extension
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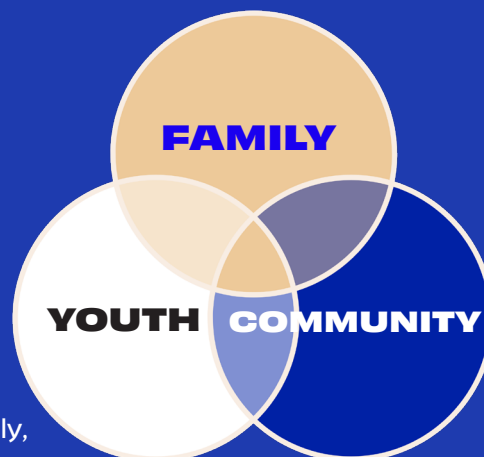


1970 - Home Economics Department established.

1981 - First departmental review - 18 faculty.

1985 - 3 small research appointments added to the department to inform Extension.

1990 - Task Force established with Family, Youth and Community faculty from other universities to develop academic curriculum.



1991-1994 - Developed curriculum to become academic department.

1994 - Human Resource Development (HRD) major established.

1996 - First graduates in Human Resource Development.

1998 - Electronic Data Information Source of UF/IFAS Extension (EDIS) established.



2001 - Name changed from Human Resource Development (HRD) to Family, Youth, and Community Sciences (FYCS).

2001 - Master of Science in FYCS program begins.

2003 - FYCS becomes Minor for undergraduates.

2004 - Organizational Leadership Nonprofit Minor begins.

2004 - Family Album Radio program begins on local public radio station.

2009 - Tim Tebow graduates with a BS in FYCS.

2012 - Online graduate programs begin in FYCS.

2013 - FYCS launches study abroad programs in India and Germany.

2013 - UF Becomes Preeminent.

2014 - 100 Years of Extension Celebrated.

2015 - FYCS Alumni Advisory Board established.

2015 - Cole Slate Scholarship established for undergraduate students.

2016 - Faculty, Friends and Alumni Scholarship established.

2016 - FYCS approved for Doctoral program.

2017 - FYCS launches service learning study abroad in Ireland.

2017 - Youth Development and Family Sciences Doctoral Program begins.

2018 - UF hires chief diversity officer.

2018 - FYCS recognized with Diversity, Equity & Inclusion award.

2019 - Rosemary V. Barnett scholarship established for YDFS students.

2020 - Omicron Nu Chapter established.

2021 - First Ph.D. student graduates in YDFS.

2021 - UF named Top 5 University



2022 - Study abroad in Belize established.

2022 - Hired first faculty member in Artificial Intelligence (AI).



2022 - Life Changers campaign begins.

THE SCIENCE OF PEOPLE

What strikes you when you first meet Dr. Nicole Stedman, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School at UF, is her authenticity. She's down-to-earth and funny and exactly who she is. When you find out she's an alumnus of FYCS, it all makes sense. She embodies the spirit of so many of our current students who want to make a difference in the lives of PEOPLE.

When young Nicole Perez started her academic career in the fall of 1993, academics weren't exactly on her mind. She was a forestry major, but, she wasn't quite sure where she was headed (not uncommon for someone in early adulthood). Still, she held onto a vague idea of obtaining her BS, returning to her hometown of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, and doing "something with sea turtles." Unfortunately, she felt discouraged by the heavy scientific classes and found herself failing chemistry. An advisor in Forestry recommended she look into the Human Resource Development Department (HRD was the department that eventually became FYCS), she made an appointment to meet with an advisor.

After that meeting, she remembers thinking "these are my people" and she says, "It was the first time any adult on campus paid attention to me in that way."

Within weeks of getting into the HRD program Nicole realized, that for the first time since becoming a student at UF she was in the right place. "Everything I had been raised to be, the connections to my community and my volunteer work—this is where I was supposed to be the entire time!" She suddenly felt like a real student. She had accountability to people who cared about her, and she fell back in love with her community. In her coursework the examples, the speakers, and the books all connected her to Gainesville and to herself. It was here that she could see a path that made sense to her on a level she hadn't thought of before.

She decided that she wanted to work with youth because she "grew up with a bunch of trouble-makers." She did her practicum at an organization working with juveniles in prison which would lead her to a job at the courthouse and eventually back to a path of research and leadership in academia.

"The big piece (that changed my trajectory in college) was that faculty really cared about me and called me out on my own risky behavior. But at the same time they were still willing to invest in me at a time that I needed to feel that. They trusted me to do grant work and sent me out into the community to make a difference in our world. This was so incredibly profound. I know I wouldn't be where I am now if it weren't for the PEOPLE in FYCS. I am all the better for it. I always carry that with me now in my professional career."





(Left) Dean Stedman with Dr. Biswadeep Dhar, who is one of our first Ph.D. graduates with Dean Stedman in 2022 and (above) with the first graduating class of FYCS in 1996.

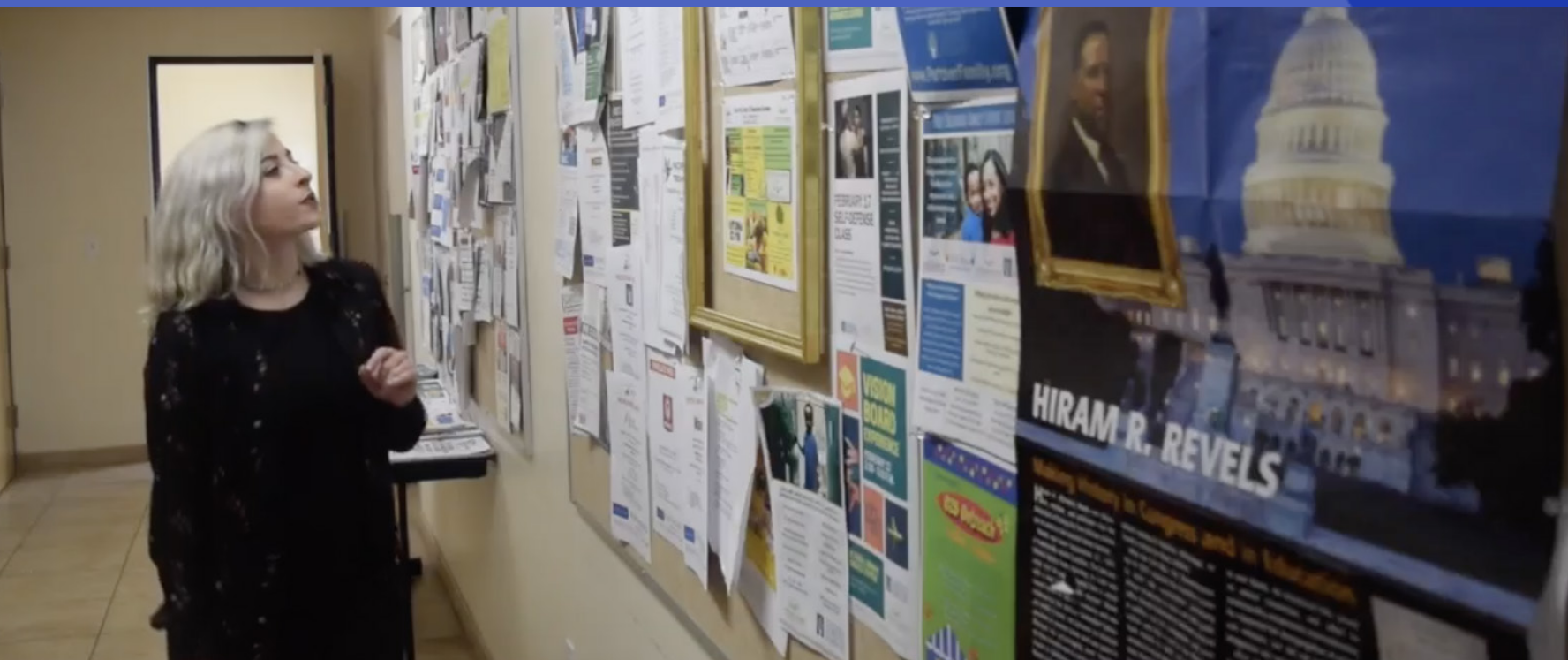
PRACTICUM AND THE EMERGING PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Family, Youth and Community Sciences has always had ties to local charitable organizations whose missions are aligned with that of our major. Many have been partners of ours since the establishment of our academic department in 1994.

Practicum is a core requirement for the FYCS major and the Nonprofit Organizational Leadership minor. This 3-credit, graded experience requires students to earn 240 hours within a professional environment, applying the knowledge and skills gained through coursework. This course provides students with hands-on experience in their chosen profession and is meant to be a time of service and innovation to the supervising agency, as well as a significant learning opportunity for the student.

Each year we have a departmental networking fair where organizations are invited to recruit students for Practicum as well as employment. Many of our local nonprofit organizations employ FYCS alumni who also serve on our Alumni Advisory Board. and will often come back to speak with current students on what they learned while students themselves and showcase the diverse careers our undergraduate major has to offer.

Our students pursue a variety of careers and post-grad programs and the emerging professional experience is often a stepping stone for their future paths.



Sites

ReadingPals (United Way NCF)
Partnership for Strong Families: Library Partnership
Resource Center
Mt. Olive AME Church
Partnership for Strong Families: SWAG resource center
Sira Gainesville
Be Your Haven Hospice Custead Care Center
FIT for ALL Inc.
Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation Foundation
First Academy Preschool
American Heart Association
Alive Church
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay
Center for Independent Living
Westside Baptist Church
Whispering Manes Therapeutic Riding Center
Florida Department of Children and Families
Akwaaba Freedom School at Duval Early Learning
Academy
Nathaniel White, Attorney At Law
Four Seasons ABA, LLC
Righteous Remedies
Girls Place
Hog Slat, Inc.
Peaceful Paths
BASS therapy
YMCA of the Treasure Coast
Options for Women
YMCA of North Central Florida Summer Camp
Desire Street Ministries
CDS Family & Behavioral Health Services
UF/IFAS Extension Clay County
Bonefish and Tarpon Trust

Locations

Florida (Gainesville, Leesburg, Miami, Green Cove Springs,
Bartow, Palm Coast, Jacksonville, Tampa, Stuart, Lakeland,
Orange Park, Winter Park)
Iowa (Humboldt)
Arkansas (Conway)

Social Issues Addressed

Youth Literacy, Youth Extension
Child Abuse, Child Welfare
Women's Health (Pregnancy)
End of life care
Physical Health, Heart Health
Disability Advocacy
Youth Social and Emotional Development, ABA
therapy
Domestic Violence
Animal Welfare, Animal Conservation, Environmental
Conservation

Communities Served

Adults with disabilities
Underserved youth
Youth with disabilities
Animals
Survivors of domestic violence
Women (Health)
SWAG Gainesville
Eastside Gainesville
Patients with advances illnesses (terminal)

Next Steps After Graduation

Master of Divinity Program- Emory University
Health Analytics Program- UNF
Teach for America- Miami Dade
Master's in education Program- UF
Master of Science in Physiology Program- Georgetown
University
Master of Science in Applied Behavioral Analysis- Florida
Institute of Technology
Master of Social Work Program- Columbia University
Master of Science in Sport Management- FSU



While it is important to learn the scientific method and become excellent scientists and researchers, it is also important to focus on the human element and make sure that the individual's well-being is secure and grad school is a positive experience. This is not a one-sided experience.

It takes that extra bit of care and time to cultivate a relationship based on trust and respect for one another that is the key to a successful evolution to what is considered "an academic scholar".

- Dr. Rose Barnett, Professor Emeritus

RESEARCH, MENTORING, AND BEING HUMAN

Mentoring has always been an important component in FYCS. Even before we were an academic department, our roots in Extension and teaching/training are the foundation of who we are. Our research is nothing without the people we interact with. Upon hire, our junior faculty are paired with a senior faculty member who helps to guide and offer understanding in the rapidly changing world of academia and the world in general. We started out as a department with 3 small research appointments and have grown to an interdisciplinary group who support one another and our students.

“Working with our faculty and grad students was very inspiring. We explored the intersection of youth development and community development, as well as specific topics with our grad students on adolescent and emerging adult problematic behaviors and protective factors that enhanced resiliency and well-being. If you look at the list of my publications, you will find many exciting topics that my grad students wanted to investigate that aligned with my own research studies. I always told them to do “sexy research” and they did not let me down! While we examined some topics related to risky sexual behavior, this was not exactly what I meant, which was to make your research exciting, trust your gut, examine variables that you sense may have an effect, and go for topics that you have a passion for so that you will stay interested in the study. Research can be very exciting if you are excited about it!

One of the most interesting things about spending my career as a social behavioral science researcher is that I have had the honor of mentoring not just grad students but junior faculty. While they have lots of new data analysis tricks up their sleeves, it is the exciting adventure of collaborative research design that to me is the most rewarding element of that mentoring. When you can help a researcher frame their work and navigate their way to successfully earning tenure or you can help a grad student of theirs design a thesis or dissertation study that will produce results worthy of publications, you have the ultimate experience!

There is also the rich tradition in academia of passing that mentoring baton from one senior scholar to a junior scholar to a grad student. It is truly magical when committees and publications eventually show an author line of several generations of academic researchers. It links the history and evolution of the science as well as the human academic experience. So, when you see a photo of three generations of mentoring, such as the one of me, Dr. Sarah Lynne, and Dr. Tara Counts, there has been a lot of intellectual exercise and personal relationship building that is represented across time and goes far beyond the lens of the camera.”

Dr. Barnett retired in 2019 and leaves behind the Rosemary V. Barnett Graduate Student Scholarship which supports graduate students who are pursuing a research career through enrollment in the Ph.D. in Youth Development and Family Sciences program. Dr. Tara Counts (middle) was the first recipient of this award.

PH.D. MENTORING TEACHING PROGRAM

The Ph.D. Mentoring Teaching Program provides our doctoral students the opportunity to shadow an instructor and to ultimately teach a section of an undergraduate course within the department on their own. This is a three semester program beginning in fall where the doctoral student serves as a TA and guest lectures a few times within the class. In spring, the doctoral student is assigned as a Co-Teacher with the faculty member and they share the responsibility of teaching and grading assignments in the class. In Summer A, the student is mentored in-depth by the faculty member to develop their syllabus, create their canvas shells, and prepare to teach the class on their own. In summer B, the doctoral student will teach the assigned course in a six-week period and be observed by the faculty mentor as well as their Ph.D. chair and the graduate coordinator.

From our Student Teachers:

“The mentoring program allows doctoral students to get their feet wet in the teaching arena, which may open doors for jobs in Academia and allow participants to test their passion. I learned a lot from this partnership. First, I completely understand the UF course system. That means I master UF’s teaching procedures and requirements. I mastered the content for the class I taught. With all honesty, having to teach certain content allowed me to better understand them, particularly certain theories. Second, it was the first time that I was teaching at the University level and in a foreign language. That allowed me to gauge my capacity and enhanced my self-confidence. Third, teaching this class was a practicum that prepared me for the concretization of my dream to establish a family support center in my country, Haiti, with youth being the core beneficiaries.”

—Beatrice Pierre, YDFS

“I participated in the teaching mentor program during the height of the pandemic and gained valuable experience with a variety of teaching modalities, including hy-flex. Managing the classroom with students simultaneously in person and online was challenging, but my mentor was incredible and worked with me weekly to support and continually improve my skills.”

—Selena Garrison, YDFS

“While challenging at times, teaching a course all on my own in FYCS as a graduate student gave me the experience and confidence needed to feel well-equipped to teach in the future. And receiving constructive feedback from teaching mentors along the way helped me strengthen my skills in real time so that each lecture was better than the last. Should I teach in the future at all, I feel very prepared and far less nervous than I would have had I not had this experience. Last, I learned that in teaching you learn so much from the students as much as you teach them.”

—Jackie Yourell, YDFS

The teaching program is also beneficial to the mentors. Kate Fletcher (who is currently working on her own Ph.D. in Agricultural Education and Communication and who did her MS in FYCS) said, “My favorite components to the mentoring programming encompass the relationships (formed and/or enhanced) with each mentee, seeing each mentee flourish (through this year-long program), and maintaining a connection with each mentee (in person and/or via social media).

Our doctoral program began in 2017 and the Teaching Mentoring Program has evolved since that time, mainly being built by the first cohort of students who all finished with their doctorates this summer.



Beatrice Pierre and Kate Fletcher, MS

Carolyn Beatrice Parker ELEMENTARY

Career Fair - 4 PM - 6 PM
9/8/2022 @ Aschua Bldg
9/15/2022 @ District Office
Same Day Hiring!



THE POWER OF MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

FYCS is the type of field that marries the real world and the academic one. It drives home the idea that we can all find careers that provide the types of experiences that strengthen and empower our youth, their families, and the community at large. I remember being in Principles of FYCS and realizing I had found my niche; *I was with people who wanted to help others*. Some people wanted to help youth abroad in other countries and others wanted to find solutions to homelessness for veterans living in Gainesville.

It was in this class that I also found my mentor, Kate Fletcher. She took the time to get to know every student that walked through her door and encouraged us to dig deep to examine our passions. She lived out the FYCS mantra that we all know - "Meet people where they are. Kate met me where I was and provided the space and empowerment to help me grow as a student and leader. As a mentor she provided the space for me to be myself, to make mistakes, to try my hand at being a leader. Even when I didn't see positive qualities in myself and doubt crept in, she was there to remind me I belonged at UF and that I could make a positive change in this world. Kate mentored me well beyond my time at UF. She was the one that encouraged me to take a gap year and serve as an AmeriCorps City Year when I wasn't sure what "came next". When I got accepted to University of Pennsylvania to pursue a masters degree in Education Policy it was Kate who assured me I could make it at an Ivy League school even though I was scared out of my wits. After a pandemic delay and a series of unfortunate events it was Kate that married me and my husband last January. Kate was the person who encouraged me to become president of the FYCS Club and to apply to join the CALS Leadership Institute. Kate also knew I was a first generation student and was supporting myself financially through college and she encouraged me to apply for The Cole Slate scholarship.

This scholarship was new to our department and I wasn't sure if I should apply. Cole Slate was a former FYCS student that had just started his own scholarship within the department - something I now aspire to do as well. Receiving this scholarship meant that in my senior year I could focus on school and preparing for graduation instead of worrying about some of my living expenses. Seeing how Cole took his passion for helping others and applied it to his skills as a real estate agent showed me (and many others) the depth of options you have as an FYCS graduate. Every class you take is applicable to truly any field a student would want to go into.

Many of my graduating FYCS class represent the diversity of options available to you as an alumni. We are teachers, doctors, advocates, child life specialists, and law enforcement just to name a few. If the profession interacts with people, we're there. Since graduating from FYCS in 2016 I've gotten to follow my passion to serve others all over the country. I've lived in South Carolina as an AmeriCorps Member serving rural elementary school students in a Title I school. I spent a year in Philadelphia, PA earning my masters and developing a state-wide teacher professional development program that encouraged STEM programming in marginalized schools. For 4 wonderful years I lived in Colorado as a family advocate in a child welfare prevention program.

Each of these careers put what I learned in FYCS right in the forefront. Whether it was helping parents to "fill their love bucket" or discussing positive youth development with my colleagues, the information I learned during my time at UF was always relevant. These days I'm calling Gainesville home again. I'm happy to be the family liaison for Parker Elementary, the very same elementary school I volunteered at as an FYCS student many years ago.

Allysen Marks-Burke
FYCS Alum, Class of 2016

RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

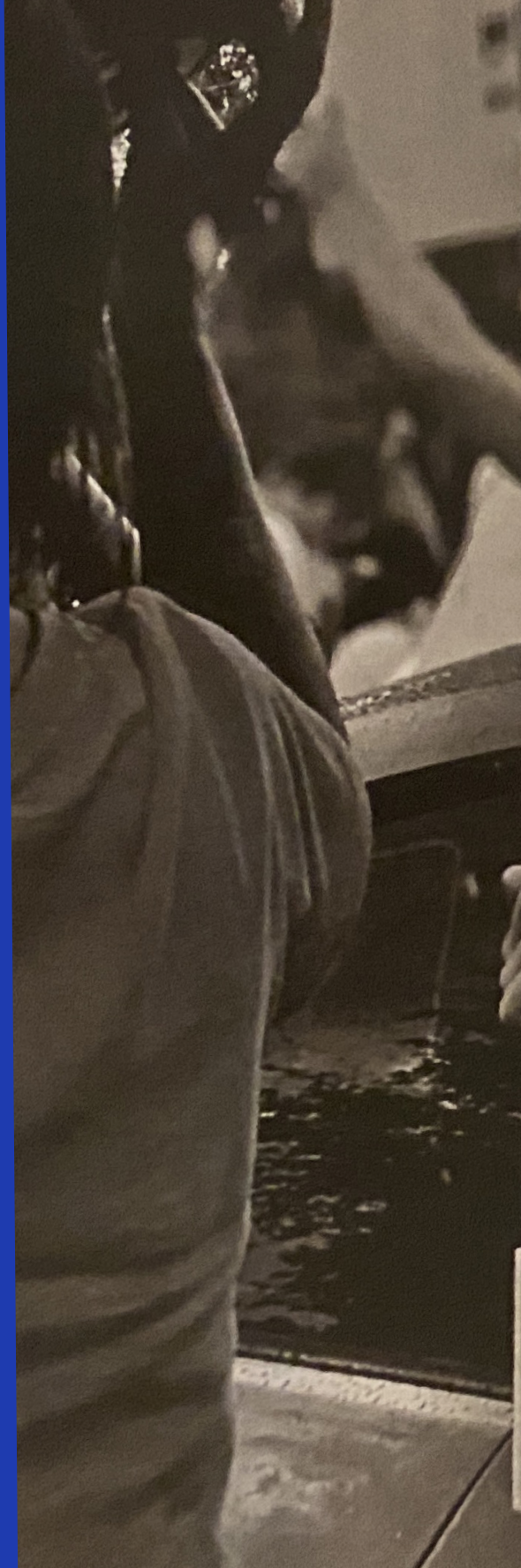
Amplifying Black Students' Voices is a project examining the support Black students experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The purpose of the project was to identify existing support for Black students, strengthen the relationship between Black students and UF, and identify solutions to close the gap of student support in times of crisis.

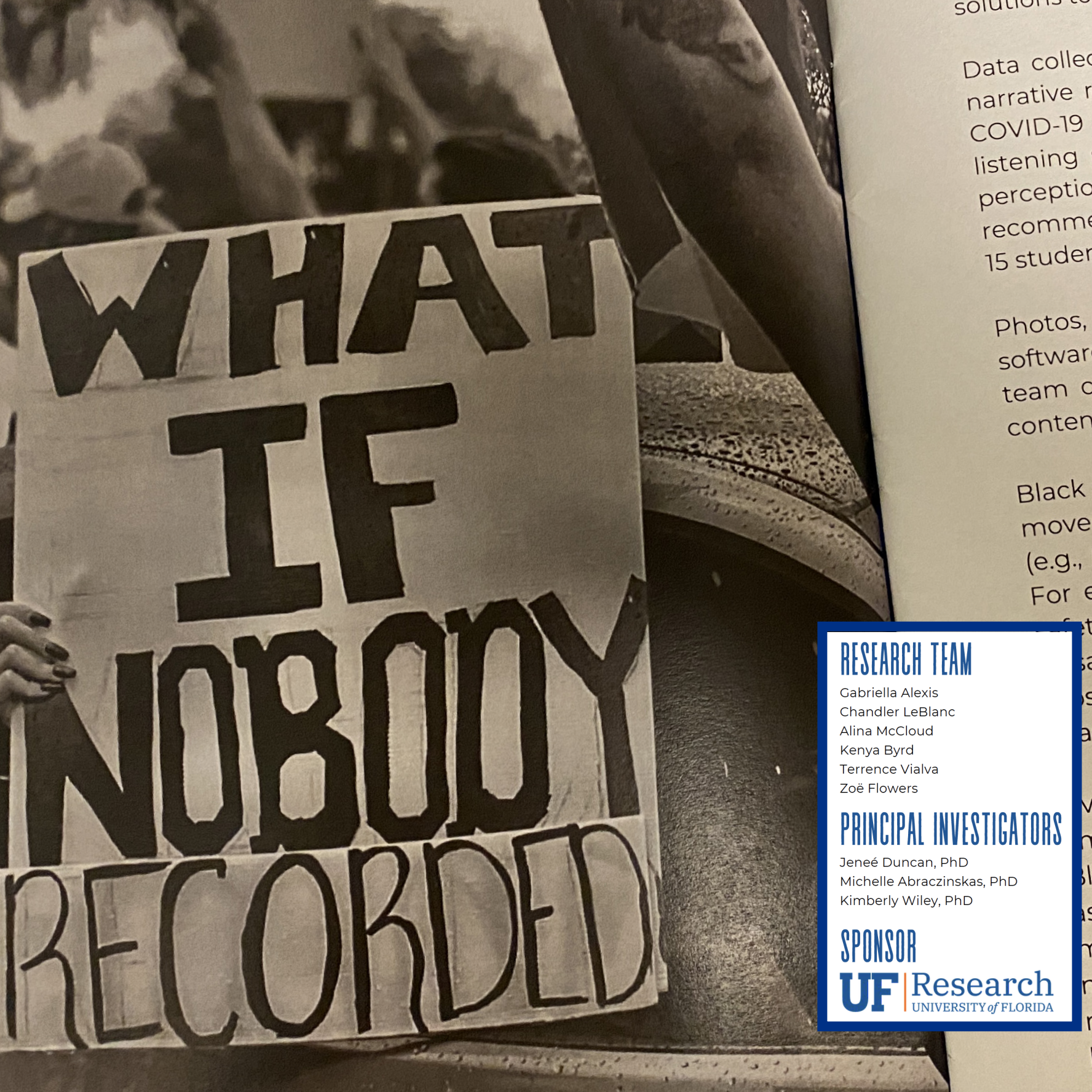
Data collection occurred in two phases. First, 26 UF students submitted a photo and narrative representing their perception of university or community support related to COVID-19 and the BLM movement. Second, students attended three semi-structured listening sessions. An external facilitator asked questions around the three themes: perceptions of university support, perceptions of community support, and recommended actions. Listening sessions were conducted on Zoom in Spring 2021 with 15 students. They lasted between 60 and 90 minutes.

Photos, narratives, transcripts, and field notes were uploaded to a qualitative analysis software program. A codebook was developed, and coding was conducted by a research team composed of mostly Black undergraduate students. The team used qualitative content to interpret transcripts and narratives and textual analysis to interpret photos.

Five recommendation themes emerged from the findings. To meet Black students' emotional and academic needs, UF can make extensive efforts to recruit and retain Black professors and therapists, which would foster a climate where they feel supported as people. Additionally, all statements released from UF about events impacting marginalized groups should assess the potential risk to students. To meet financial needs, UF can set aside funding to compensate for racialized labor. To meet safety needs, UF can be consistent in reinforcing a zero-tolerance policy against racism and hate speech. To meet academic needs, UF can provide breaks for students after traumatic events. UF implementing these recommendations can make great strides in improving the UF experience and well-being of Black students.

READ THE FULL REPORT HERE:





WHAT
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NOBODY
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RESEARCH TEAM

Gabriella Alexis
Chandler LeBlanc
Alina McCloud
Kenya Byrd
Terrence Vialva
Zoë Flowers

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Jeneé Duncan, PhD
Michelle Abraczinskas, PhD
Kimberly Wiley, PhD

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A portrait of Xiaoya Zhang, a woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored top with a floral pattern. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

I am most excited about the opportunity to work with faculty and students with diverse backgrounds and expertise in this interdisciplinary department. I value the privilege to pursue research work and contribute to the department using my substantive expertise and methodological skills.

- Xiaoya Zhang, Assistant Professor

THE FUTURE IS NOW AI IN FYCS

MEET XIAOYA ZHANG, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

What will you be doing in the FYCS department?

I am an assistant professor in the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences (FYCS). My work centers around children and adolescents' developmental plasticity and its implications for prevention sciences using a variety of statistical and computational methods. In the FYCS department, I am passionate to continue the work on developmental plasticity and collaborate with colleagues and students on basic as well as translational research that provides sound scientific evidence on designing prevention programs to promote the health and wellbeing of youth and family. I am also excited to develop courses on the application of Artificial Intelligence in social and life sciences.

Where did you grow up? What did you want to be?

I grew up in Shandong, China. When I was a kid, my dream was to become a doctor working in clinic settings. Now part of it indeed came true.

What was your very first job?

Prior to joining FYCS, I earned my PhD in Human Development with a designated emphasis in Computational Science at UC Davis. Most of my doctoral work focuses on understanding how children vary in their susceptibility to parenting effects and whether such developmental susceptibility is domain-general. In the last year of my doctoral degree, I worked as a research assistant at the Violence Prevention Research Program at UC Davis on projects investigating effects of community exposure of firearm violence on adolescents' mental and behavioral health and potential modifiable risk and protective factors that could be targeted in prevention efforts.

What do you like to do in your free time? Do you have any hobbies?

I enjoy spending my free time with my family and friends. I also enjoy being by myself reading and doing handcrafts.

Who is your greatest inspiration?

My initial reaction is nature and history. But I certainly have also always been inspired by many people I know, regardless of whether we have personally met or not. All of those people shaped who I am in a very complex way. Indeed, it's the curiosity in understanding the complexities of how people are affected, especially by close relationships, that brought me to the field in the first place.

What is your favorite food?

As a foodie, I don't really have a favorite food because I am always interested in trying something new. But Chinese food is my go-to comfortable food.

If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?

This is a hard decision to make. I probably would listen to a remix of pop songs so I can get a flavor of multiple songs and avoid choosing one from them.

What is a quirky or fun fact about you that people may not know?

Not sure if this is a fun fact, but I don't often turn off my laptop. In fact I haven't turned off my laptop for two years.

If you could sit down with your 20 year old self, what would you tell her?

Go for it. It's better to do something wrong than do nothing.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As you can see, we have changed a great deal during the last 50+ years since our establishment at the University of Florida. To go from being the Home Economics Department to a thriving social sciences department is something we are very proud of.

We have learned so much from the people, who make up the communities, families, and individuals we meet.

Every human has a story—by learning what makes a person who they are, where they live, and how they are affected by a rapidly changing world gives us the knowledge to not only make the world a better place for those we come into contact with ourselves, as individuals.

You can't work in the social sciences without having a love for people and we know we are on the right path to find ways to make the world better on a human level by meeting people exactly where they are.

If you are interested in finding out more about how YOU can join us or become a collaborator, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us.

We are always stronger together.

We want to hear from you!



www.fycs.ifas.ufl.edu





Life Changer

n. [life chayn-jr]

When you create a difference in someone's life, you not only impact their life but the lives of anyone influenced by them in the future. This creates a ripple effect; you are also changed.

FYCS

FAMILY, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SCIENCES

creating positive changes in our changing world



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