



**Fall 2018** Volume 1, Issue 2



**Welcome to the program,  
Melissa Fenton,  
Jackie Yourell,  
Jane Wilson,  
and Jihi Song!**

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GATOR GRADUATE  
ASSOCIATION



## Graduate Student Spotlight

**Nana Adu,  
Jean-Ribert  
Francois &  
Liliane Poincon**



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*“Coming from Ghana, Haiti felt like home, the sights and smells were very familiar the only difference was Creole being spoken all around me”*

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On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, Liliane Poincon and Nana Adu drove to Orlando International Airport to head to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. After a year of planning, research and waiting, it was finally time to collect data for their theses. Nana and Liliane are student research assistants with the Feed the Future Haiti Appui à la Recherche et au Développement Agricole (AREA) project. This project is addressing food insecurity and undernutrition by strengthening and supporting Haitian institutions.



2 Nana and Liliane spent time re-searching the farmer organizations that are a part of the AREA Extension Experiment under the supervision of faculty advisor and their chair Dr. Mickie Swisher.

Nana’s research explores the social supportive role, particularly the contribution to community and social change of these rural farmer associations. Liliane’s research explores women’s participation in rural farmer associations’.

Nana and Liliane spent 6 days in the field and 14 days in Haiti. Nana was able to talk to one individual member from 25 organizations and most of participants wanted to know what a girl from Ghana was doing in a rural area in Haiti. Her experience in a new country was exciting and peaceful at the same time. She says, ‘coming from Ghana, Haiti felt like home, the sights and smells were very familiar the only difference was Creole being spoken all around me’.



## Graduate Student Spotlight

### **Nana Adu, Jean-Ribert Francois & Liliane Poincon**

Jean Ribert Francois who was in Haiti spending time with his new born daughter, Julia (the cutest baby ever) joined Nana to conduct the interviews because although she had studied Haitian Creole for a year, it was to be no match facing first language speakers. Jean Ribert lead the interview process with Nana's participation when needed (which was almost never).

Liliane conducted 24 interviews with 6 organizations, she interviewed 4 people per organization (2 men + 2 women). Liliane, being a Haitian, was excited to be back home to spend time with her family. Seeing different parts of Haiti was also fun for Liliane and the familiar sights and sounds filled her with joy after being away from home for over a year.



Nana, Liliane and Jean Ribert hope they may go back to share what they learnt with the organizations they interacted. They are back in the department now taking class, Nana and Liliane are working on their theses and Jean Ribert is getting ready to head back to Haiti again to collect his own thesis data.

The students would like to thank their faculty advisors and all team members in the UF/IFAS Global and AREA offices in Gainesville and Haiti for their constant support and a special thanks to Dr. Rose Koenig, the Principal Investigator on the AREA project.



## Graduate Student Spotlight

**Nana Adu,  
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# Meet our new Faculty Member!



Hello! My name is Dr. Emily Johnson and I am excited to be a new FYCS faculty member. Specifically, I will serve as a lecturer, teaching FYC 3001 (Intro to FYCS) and FYC 3201 (Youth Development), as well as the undergraduate practicum coordinator. Although I primarily work with undergraduate students, I am happy at the prospect of working alongside graduate students as they work towards completing their graduate program.

I am a 'triple gator', having received three degrees from the University of Florida. While all three degrees come from the College of Health and Human Performance, I minored in FYCS in graduate school and even had FYCS faculty members serve on my dissertation committee. My research interests include child and adolescent health, with an emphasis on mental well-being.

Given the positive experiences I had as a student in the department, I knew that FYCS was the right place for me. Every person in the department is passionate about helping others and preparing our students for their transition from student to professional. I look forward to learning more about our graduate students and encourage you to stop by my office to introduce yourself.



Get together!

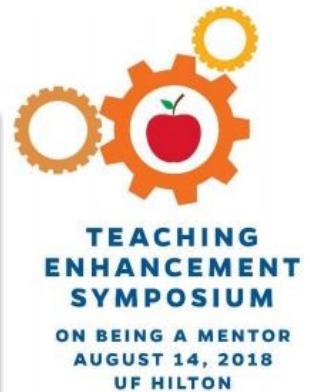
# Social

Have  
Fun!

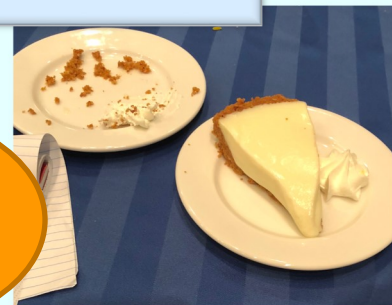
## FALL EVENTS

- August 24,  
Welcome Social @ Dr.  
Diehl's House
- September 1,  
First football game  
tailgate @ MCCB  
Courtyard
- October 6,  
Department-wide  
tailgate for LSU game  
@ MCCB Courtyard
- October 13th,  
UF-Nebraska watch  
party @ Dr. Diehl's  
House
- December 14th,  
Entries due for 2nd  
Annual Office and  
Wreath Decorating  
Contest
- December 17th,  
Annual MCCD Open  
House event

Doc students  
had a lot to  
think about at  
the TES 2018



How many pieces  
of pie do you think  
Tara and Katie ate  
at the TES?



Being social  
at THE  
SOCIAL



Grad student  
orientation  
and pizza  
lunch

Get together!

# Social

Have  
Fun!

We managed  
to sit together  
for a little  
while



**Next tailgate  
in the  
Courtyard  
on October  
6th!! Make  
sure you are  
there!**



Strolling down  
University Ave. for  
the first football  
game of the Dan  
Mullen era!





# Faculty Tips

## DR. RADUNOVICH ON MENTAL HEALTH



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*“Life in general, and grad school in particular, can lead to some high levels of stress. While this is to be expected, it will be important to keep an eye on this, and make sure you are getting what you need. “*

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Are you feeling a lot of stress in graduate school? Just know that you are not alone! In a large study of psychology graduate students, around 70% reported having a stressor that was severe enough to affect their ability to function, and graduate students report experiencing higher levels of stress than undergraduate students. Not only can the high levels of stress associated with graduate work impact academic functioning, there is a large body of research which shows that chronic stress can cause increased risk of both physical problems (such as Type 1 Diabetes, cardiovascular and intestinal problems, and even cancer), and mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, and suicidality).



While it would be nice if we could get rid of all of the things that cause us high levels of stress, that is not usually an option (although by all means, consider what you can do to reduce or get rid of stressors that are within your

control!). Given that most of our stressors can't be changed, it is important to consider what we can do for ourselves to best protect us during stressful times, such as during graduate school. Many

of you have found good ways to handle your stress, but I'll throw a few ideas out there of strategies you might want to consider or add in:

(Continued on next page!)



# Faculty Tips

## DR. RADUNOVICH ON MENTAL HEALTH

**a. Exercise** – Exercising not only provides health benefits, but reduces feelings of stress and increases endorphins (which make you feel good!). While regular exercise is great, even just going for a walk for 10-20 minutes can help you feel better when you are experiencing a lot of stress.

**b. Get social support** – When we are super busy it is easy to cut ourselves off from others while we work on the tasks at hand. However, having positive social contact with friends, family, and colleagues can reduce our feelings of stress and improve our mood. Try to make time to keep up contact with those people who make you happy. Also, joining graduate student social groups or studying with classmates can be a good way to increase social interaction while also helping with productivity.

**c. Keep an eye on your thoughts** – Sometimes the automatic thoughts we have increase our feelings of stress, but we can consciously change them to reduce stress and feel better about a situation. What is the worst thing that can happen if things don't go the way that you wish? Could there be another explanation for someone else's behavior? Sometimes consciously thinking differently about the situation can reduce our stress and give us comfort.



**d. Relax those muscles** – Consider using hot showers or baths, heating pads, or even massages (heads up, Florida School of Massage offers low cost massages!) to release tight muscles. When our muscles relax, this can help us to feel more relaxed.

**e. Watch your breath** – Our breathing tends to be fast and shallow when we are stressed, and the lower levels of oxygen we experience can make us feel more panicky. Taking a few slow deep breaths can help us regulate breathing and increase our oxygen levels, allowing us to feel better. In fact, just focusing on our breathing can help us divert our attention and reduce stress. Just a caveat: don't engage in deep breathing for too long, or you could get dizzy/faint.

**f. Engage in mindfulness** – Mindfulness is an umbrella term used to describe a number of activities and interventions that help us focus on the moment, and there is a lot of evidence that this can be useful in reducing stress and improving mood.

**g. Take care of for yourself** – Healthy eating, sleep, and taking time out for pleasurable activities can go out the window when we are feeling overwhelmed, but these are important things that we can do to take care of ourselves. It's a lot easier to cope when we have had enough sleep, are eating properly, and have had a break!

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*If you do your best to work on your stress and mental health but are still struggling, there is no shame in seeking outside help, and it is a show of strength, not weakness. Whether it is bouncing ideas around with a trusted friend or family member, seeking help from the Counseling and Wellness Center, or consulting with a therapist or physician, do what you need to do to get the help you need. You are important to all of us, and we want you to succeed!*

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# FALL CONFERENCES

Name of Professional Association	Website	General Time of Conference
National Council on Family Relations	<a href="https://www.ncfr.org/">https://www.ncfr.org/</a>	Early November
ARNOVA-Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Associations	<a href="http://www.arnova.org/">http://www.arnova.org/</a>	Mid-November
Society for Research in Child Development	<a href="https://www.srcd.org/">https://www.srcd.org/</a>	October
American Public Health Association	<a href="https://www.apha.org/annualmeeting">https://www.apha.org/annualmeeting</a>	November
American Evaluation Association	<a href="http://www.eval.org/">http://www.eval.org/</a>	October/ November
National Association of Extension 4-H Agents	<a href="http://nae4ha.com/">http://nae4ha.com/</a>	October

## Fall Birthdays

Noemi Reyes— September 14

Sarah Smith— September 26

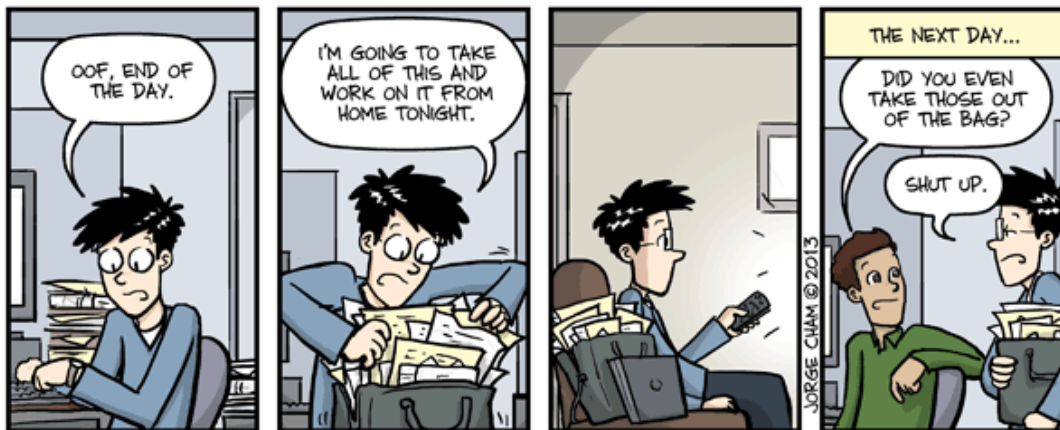
Vanessa Niblett— November 9

Melissa Fenton— November 30

Brian Visconti— December 1

Katie Dorman— December 10

Emily Davison— December 18

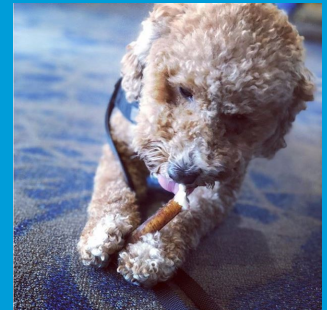


**"Piled Higher and Deeper" by  
Jorge Cham**

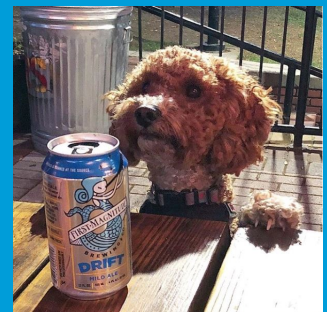
We thank you for reading, if you have any special announcements, tips, tricks, or advice please let Katie ([kdorman@ufl.edu](mailto:kdorman@ufl.edu)) or Emily ([em.davison@ufl.edu](mailto:em.davison@ufl.edu)) know. We are always looking for new content for the newsletter.

## SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHT

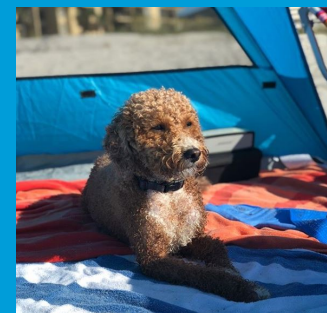
**TARA MERCURIO'S  
PUP**  
@ANDIEDOODLEDANDY



#traveler



#cheers



#beachpup

**GATOR GRADUATE  
ASSOCIATION**

