MDF NEW FELLOWS' PROFILES: CLASS OF 2020-2021

BUSINESS

DAVID CACERES
Florida International University, Business Administration

B.S., Accounting, Pennsylvania State University; M.S., Taxation, American University

David examines how business and accounting policies affect society and the environment as a whole. His goal is to make businesses more responsive to the current environmental crisis through the implementation of environmental protection policies and incentives. This research could help ensure a cleaner, healthier and more peaceful world for future generations.

ESTEBAN HERNANDEZ
Florida Atlantic University, Finance

B.A., Business Administration, Inter American University of Puerto Rico

Esteban studies the ways financial markets interact with the real economy. Understanding the real macroeconomic factors driving asset prices, or the proof that they do not, helps to address central questions in financial economics. He strongly believes advances in the economy will bring economic prosperity to our society and extend it to other nations.

ANDRÉA HODGE
Florida State University, Business Administration

B.A., Art Education, Xavier University; M.A., Urban Studies, Eastern University

Andréa is interested in investigating small business and entrepreneurship strategies in culturally diverse markets. She wants to help expand our knowledge about the successful businesses of people of color, women, immigrants, emerging markets, members of vulnerable populations, and social entrepreneurs.

KALAN HORTON
Florida State University, Business Administration

B.S., Construction Management; M.B.A., University of Arkansas - Little Rock

Kalan researches the convergence of big and small business interactions, sustainable community/economic development, and corporate responsibility. His goal is to develop cooperative models for large and small businesses that will result in the greatest benefit to their communities. This research is critical for making substantial improvements in disenfranchised communities.

MICHAEL HUDSON-VASSELL
Florida Atlantic University, Business Administration

B.S., Management, University of Florida; M.S., Finance, Florida Atlantic University

Michael studies aspects of human organizations--their priorities, imperatives, and incentives--through the lens of financial decision-making, focusing on protective factors for long-term organizational survival. He is also interested in the financial realities Black businesses experience and the role of funding strategy and financial decision-making, from an investment perspective, in the longevity of entrepreneurial ventures.

RIANA MADISON
University of Central Florida, Hospitality Management/Business

B.A., Business/Hospitality Management, Florida Atlantic University; M.S., Organizational Leadership, Brenau University

Riana researches diversity in upper management within the hospitality industry. Her goal is to develop strategies to increase diversity recruitment in hospitality and create paths for a more diverse upper management in the industry. This work will benefit society by helping provide a more inclusive organizational culture within hospitality companies that values and welcomes employees from diverse backgrounds, ultimately leading to improved talent retention and greater company effectiveness.

BUSINESS (Cont.)

LAWRENCE WILLIAMS
Florida Atlantic University, Business Administration

B.S., Accounting & Finance; M.B.A., Corporate Finance, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Lawrence plans to conduct research in audit and financial accounting and is particularly interested in company reporting of intercompany transactions and transfer pricing policies. His research will examine the transaction distinction between a company's domestic and foreign entities as well as how the distinctive treatment affects tax-planning strategies.

HUMANITIES

CAMILLE ADAMS
Florida State University, Creative Writing

B.A., Creative Writing, Hunter College Cuny; M.F.A., Creative Writing, City College Cuny

Camille's research focuses on narcissistic abuse in Afro Caribbean families, broader toxic practices embedded in Caribbean cultures, and the community's complicit disregard of these problems. In her creative nonfiction, Camille explores the induction, cultivation, manifestation, and perpetuation of these dysfunctions, and the means through which the victimized can survive, heal, and ultimately thrive.

BERTHA CROMBET
Florida State University, Creative Writing

B.A., Liberal Arts; M.F.A., Creative Writing, Florida International University

Bertha's area of study is creative writing with a concentration in poetry. Her goal is to explore the boundless potential of language through both classical and contemporary works. Our lives are enriched by expanded understanding of the written word, a benefit which also advances the comprehension of grammar, improves critical thinking, and enhances communication among cultures.

VINCENT OMNI
Florida State University, Creative Writing

B.A., English, Saint Olaf College; M.F.A., Creative Writing, University of Kansas

Vince writes stories about black identity in America. As in all good fiction, his stories examine relationships - a woman who converts her dead father's barbershop into a high-end café, or a straight father who sabotages his dream to raise money for his queer son's legal defense. His most recent project is *Sarge*, in which a former Panther is forced to put family before principles in l970's Louisiana.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

FATOU GAYE
Florida State University, Clinical Psychology

B.S., Psychology, University of Maryland

Fatou studies executive function deficits in children and adolescents with ADHD. Her goal is to refine and implement effective non-pharmacological cognitive training interventions targeting domains such as working memory. This research aims to provide treatments that reduce the core symptoms of ADHD while also helping children's cognitive, social, and academic outcomes.

MELISSA HERNANDEZ
Florida International University, Clinical Psychology

B.S., Psychology, University of Florida; M.S., Counseling Psychology, Florida International University

Melissa researches risk and protective factors that influence treatment gains in minority children with externalizing behavior problems. Her goal is to better understand and implement an integrative approach to treatment when helping children and their parents. This research will provide insights to clinicians who work with this population and improve treatments for families.

KANDYSEE LEONARD
University of Florida, Psychology

B.S., Psychology, Howard University

Kandysee's research interests involve improving the subjective well-being of children and adolescents. To achieve this, she will focus on the effect of integrating evidence-based mental health interventions into schools' daily curriculum. She will also investigate parental engagement to determine its effect on students' academic involvement. Ultimately, this research benefits society by increasing students' academic engagement and subjective well-being and improving emotional awareness/regulation.

CAMILLE LEWIS
Florida State University, Educational Psychology

B.A., Elementary Education, University of South Florida; M.S., Community Psychology, Florida A&M University

Camille is an experienced educator and community advocate with a passion for African-centered education. She researches the implementation of culturally relevant teaching strategies and resources for African American students. This research will benefit students, teachers, and parents by aiding in the creation of engaging and rewarding educational experiences for students of color.

GABRIEL LOCKETT
University of Florida, Psychology

B.S., Biology; M.S., Psychology, Tennessee State University

Gabriel's research interests are centered on the psychological wellness of black, indigenous, and people of color who identify in the queer and/or transgender community. Currently he is focused on the intersection of spiritual, religious and cultural influences on the psychological wellbeing of QTBIPOC.

TATIANA MAGRI
University of Central Florida, Clinical Psychology

B.S., Psychology, University of Central Florida

Tatiana researches substance use and addictions with a primary focus on the use of alcohol. She has researched a variety of topics in this realm, including but not limited to protective behavioral strategies, alcohol expectancies, deviance regulation theory and personality related to alcohol use.

NADÈGE NAU
University of South Florida, Applied Anthropology

B.S.P.A, Entrepreneurship, Business Management, Photography, Public Administration, Baruch College

Nadège is an aspiring anthropologist whose research focuses on higher education, world anthropologies, and development in Haiti and the Caribbean. Through traditional research approaches and engagement with visual anthropology, Nadège aims to diversify narratives, highlight the experiences of underrepresented groups, and identify novel approaches to fostering transformative change.

SOCIAL SCIENCES (Cont.)

MALENA PRICE
University of Miami, Clinical Psychology

B.A., International Comparative Studies and Arabic; M.S., Global Health, Duke University

Malena researches the impact of structural and cultural factors on mental health outcomes of ethnic minority individuals. Specifically, she explores the relationship between racial and ethnic identity, poverty, statelessness, and trauma among African Americans, refugees, and stateless individuals. Her research will inform development of evidence-based, culturally informed, and accessible mental health services for disenfranchised populations across the United States and abroad.

REBECCA QUINONES
University of Florida, Clinical Health Psychology

B.A., Religion, University of Florida; M.T.S., Religion, Ethics, Politics, Harvard Divinity School

Rebecca's research interests lie with adolescents and young adults who are battling cancer. Her goal is to assess their unique needs and develop a tailored psychological approach to their overall treatment, which will include a spirituality component. Some psychological challenges she will explore include patients' feelings of body/mind disconnection, survivorship guilt, lack of independence and PTSD.

STEPHANIE ROSADO
University of South Florida, Social Work

B.A., Sociology, Indiana-Purdue University; M.S.W., University of Southern California

Stephanie's research interests lie in the intersection of sports and social work and directly inform and promote the development of sports policy that serves the unique individual, environmental and behavioral health needs of college and youth athletes. She intends to develop evidence-based assessment tools and practices that focus on athletes from historically underrepresented groups and improve their health and social and emotional wellbeing.

ERVIN SIMMONS
University of Miami, Clinical Psychology

B.A., Psychology, Syracuse University

Ervin studies HIV among marginalized populations, specifically gender, sexual, and racial/ethnic minorities. He is especially interested in researching social, contextual, and behavioral factors that impact HIV transmission among young Black and Latina transgender women and among young Black and Latino gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

MANUELA SINISTERA
University of Florida, Clinical Psychology

B.A., Psychology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Manuela will conduct research in the field of pediatric psychology. Specifically, she will examine psychosocial and systemic factors that impact youths' ability to manage chronic illness, focusing on health disparities. Her goal is to develop behavioral interventions to improve family and child quality of life as well as long-term health outcomes.

STEM – ENGINEERING/COMPUTER SCIENCES

ALIYAH CARTER
University of Florida, Human Centered Computing

B.S., Computer Science and Mathematics; M.S., Computer Science, Norfolk State University

Aliyah will pursue her Ph.D. in Human Centered Computing, in the areas of socio-computing, ethno-computing, and social informatics. Aliyah is particularly interested in analyzing how the adoption of wireless technology, digital communications, and social media affects intrapersonal relationships and overall mental/spiritual health. This study will help us understand newly formed communication barriers and technology interdependence in human beings.

CAROLINA FERNANDEZ
University of Miami, Biomedical Engineering

B.S., Biomedical Engineering – Electrical Concentration, University of Miami

Carolina is interested in using spatial computing in biomedical studies. Her goal is to improve hearing prosthetics by exploring the cognitive capabilities of humans in an environment true to their physical expectations. She hopes her research will improve quality of life for people suffering from profound hearing loss.

RADEN GUSTINVIL
University of Miami, Mechanical Engineering

B.S., Aerospace Engineering; M.S., Mechanical Engineering, University of Miami

Raden researches recycling techniques within additive manufacturing processes and seeks to improve these techniques to produce strong, multifunctional energy harvesting materials. His goal is to investigate low cost, earth-abundant materials to develop printed thermoelectrics while minimizing waste through spheroidization-based recycling processes. This research is crucial, as energy harvesting materials can recapture waste heat to maximize energy efficiency.

WILSON LOZANO
University of South Florida, Human Centered Computing

B.S., Computer Systems Engineering, Universidad Industrial de Santander; M.S.Cp.E., University of Puerto Rico

Wilson researches the integration of machine, data science and mobile computing applied to smart cities solutions. One of his research topics includes activity recognition based on travel behavior data. Results from this research will benefit govern-mental agencies and local governments by helping facilitate informed decisions about future developments and city initiatives.

LAUREANA MUOK
Florida A&M University, Biomedical Engineering

B.S., Mechanical Engineering, New York University Tandon School of Engineering

Laureana's research interests are in biomaterials and cellular and tissue engineering. Biomaterials research involves creating materials used for therapeutic or diagnostic medical purposes. Cellular and tissue engineering works toward understanding interactions between cells, developing methods for disease intervention, and producing tissues for therapeutic applications. This research will benefit society by helping to create improved methods for diagnosing and treating medical ailments.

ANTHONY PEREZ
University of South Florida, Mechanical Engineering

B.S., Mechanical Engineering, University of South Florida

Anthony plans to solve fundamental problems in fluid dynamics. He has performed research in the optimization of flight systems, fluid-structure interactions of compliant media, and a wide breadth of civil and environmental flows. His goal is to develop novel methods for computing turbulent flows. This research will enable better prediction of turbulent phenomena with applications in aerospace, physical oceanography and weather systems.

ROYCE POKELA
Florida State University, Mechanical Engineering

B.S., Mechanical Engineering, Florida State University

Royce researches aerodynamic vortex-shock wave interaction in high-speed flow fields. His goal is to characterize how these interactions impact the aerodynamic body forces and the effectiveness of downstream control surfaces on various air vehicles. This research will lead to a better understanding of aerodynamic control for space flight launch vehicles, commercial supersonic aircraft, and military defense aircraft.

STEM – ENGINEERING/COMPUTER SCIENCES (Cont.)

ALIYAH SHELL
Florida International University, Biomedical Engineering

B.S., Biomedical Engineering, Rutgers University

Aliyah plans to investigate neural activity in interactive virtual environments with a goal of developing more practical virtual rehabilitative strategies. Ultimately, these improved strategies should enhance the quality of life for individuals with upper limb and congenital amputations.

STEM – HEALTH/LIFE/PHYSICAL SCIENCES

SHADE` AHMED
Florida A&M University, Pharmaceutical Sciences

B.S., Biology, Biological Sciences, Florida A&M University

Shade' researches triple negative breast cancer (TNBC), which is the most aggressive subtype and affects African Americans disproportionately. Her goal is to investigate the effect of the natural compound, fucoxanthin, in TNF-alpha-stimulated TNBC cells and identify novel molecular targets. This research could provide a new therapeutic approach to treating and slowing the progression of TNBC cancer.

JOYCE MORALES APARICIO
University of Florida, Biomedical Sciences

B.S., M.S., Microbiology and Cell Science, University of Florida

Joyce is interested in researching host-pathogen interactions and disease-causing mechanisms. Her goal is to understand the molecular basis of antibody-dependent enhancement in developing vaccines. This research will help scientists produce more effective vaccines against viruses and other pathogens that benefit from previous antibody presence in the body, like dengue virus.

KATHLEEN LUGO CHARRIEZ
University of Central Florida, Chemistry

B.S., Chemistry, Florida International University

As a Chemist with a focus in environmental chemistry, Kathleen’s research interests involve the fate of contaminants such as heavy metals as well as the redox chemical reactions that take place between sediment and water column of aquatic systems. The goal is to develop remediation techniques that allow for the removal or decrease of these contaminants from the water column, therefore reducing their environmental impact. This research will help advance environmental protection efforts.

MARIA JOSE SANTIAGO ESTEVEZ
Florida International University, Biochemistry

B.S., Biological Sciences, Florida International University

Maria's research focuses on how aberrant microRNAomics induced by cigarette smoking and HIV affects miRNAs leading to dysregulation of genes involved in airway innate immunity, mitochondrial homeostasis and lung molecular clock. Her goal is to identify these pathophysiological mechanisms and test therapeutic strategies to restore baseline regulation. This research will benefit society by facilitating development of new and effective therapeutic treatments.

FREDERICK FEELY, II
Florida State University, Biomedical Sciences

B.S., Biology – Molecular Track, University of North Carolina

Frederick conducts research aimed toward identifying and characterizing mAb responses to vaccine candidates for Malaria, HIV, Typhoid, and Rotavirus. These characterizations yield further insights into the interactions between Ags and immune systems. This research will benefit society by revealing immunological correlates with protection that help guide the development of vaccines for infectious diseases.

KAMARIA JACOBS
Florida A&M University, Public Health

B.S., Interdisciplinary Studies (Health & Humanities); M.P.H., Florida A&M University

Kamaria's previous public health research included congenital syphilis case reviews, syphilis testing evaluations, provider treatment follow-ups, and access to care evaluations of persons living with HIV. As a certified HIV tester and counselor, her future endeavors include expanding her research to identifying disparities among individuals living with HIV and using current resources to end the epidemic.

MARIANA LOPEZ
University of Florida, Biomedical Sciences

B.S., Biotechnology/Biology, Indian River State College

Mariana's undergraduate research focused on marine ecology. For graduate school, she will transition to biomedical sciences with a concentration in molecular cell biology. She will pursue interests in epigenetics, gene expression and bioinformatics research.

MARIA MORENO
University of South Florida, Nursing Science

B.S.N., Nursing, State College of Florida

Maria's research goal is to prevent diabetic nephropathy in minority populations with a diabetes diagnosis, by developing interventions based on physiological and psychosocial disease risk factors. This research will reduce the number of people suffering from diabetic nephropathy and the financial burdens that arise from its complications.

NAJA MURPHY
University of South Florida, Marine Science

B.S., Marine Science and Chemistry, University of Miami

Naja's goal is to understand how contaminants influence the initiation, maintenance, and cessation of red tide events. She will research trace metal complexation and phytoplankton-metal interactions along the Gulf of Mexico. This research is critical to mitigating the detrimental human health and economic impacts that result from algal blooms.

NKOSI MUSE
University of Miami, Marine Ecosystems

B.S., Meteorology, University of North Carolina; M.S., Geosciences, Georgia State University

Nkosi's research focuses not only on mitigating global warming and its resulting climatic changes, but also ensuring that our cities are resilient in the face of the global phenomenon's implications. This work will ensure equity across privileged and marginalized communities, while also slowing down climate change and the devastating effects it can have on society.

LATOYA NEWBY
Florida A&M University, Public Health

B.S., Health Science – Pre-Physical Therapy; M.P.H., Florida A&M University

LaToya plans to research the impact of religion and spirituality on healthcare decisions made by people of African descent. This work will inform her goal to develop interventions that incorporate religious concepts to improve healthcare utilization and health outcomes. The research promises to foster culturally informed approaches to improve the effectiveness of health care services provided to underserved populations.

GIOVANNA ORTIZ
University of Miami, Biology

B.S., Environmental Science, Broward College

Giovanna's undergraduate research at Broward College involved analysis of insect biodiversity throughout at-risk areas of the Greater Everglades ecosystem. Her current research interests include insect community ecology and plant-insect-microbe interactions, and she is broadly interested in the ecology and conservation of the Greater Everglades ecosystem. Through her doctoral studies, Giovanna aims to produce meaningful insights that can be used to understand and manage the relationships between plants, microbes, and diverse insects in natural and agricultural systems.

PAOLA RIVERA
University of Central Florida, Exercise Physiology

B.S., Sport and Exercise Science: Human Performance; M.S., Sport and Exercise Science, University of Central Florida

Paola researches exercise physiology and neuromuscular changes elicited by varying exercise protocols. Her goal is to develop optimal exercise interventions for increasing muscle hypertrophy and strength in men and women of varying ages, as well as to examine bone development. This research will benefit individuals who experience decrements in bone and muscle strength over time.

LEXTER SAVIO RODRIGUEZ
Florida International University, Physics

B.S., Nuclear Physics, Higher Institute of Technologies and Applied Sciences of Havana

Lexter's research interests are in the fields of theoretical and experimental condensed-matter physics, quantum physics, classical molecular dynamics, solid state physics, computational physics, and nuclear physics--research he began to develop as an undergraduate in Cuba. He plans to continue his work on the dynamics of structural relaxation photo-induced in solids of Ar, Ne and p-H2 doped with NO.

STEPHEN THOMPSON
University of South Florida, Marine Science

B.S., Chemistry, North Carolina A&T State University

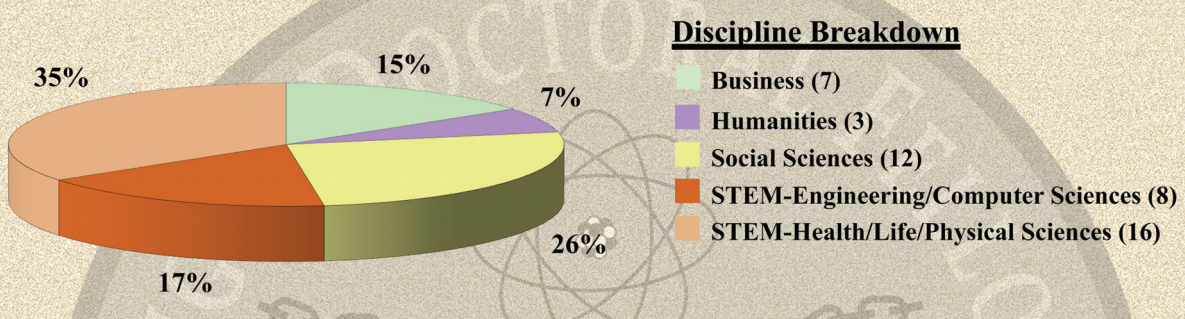
With interests in marine chemistry and biogeochemistry, Stephen will pursue a doctoral degree in chemistry with a concentration in marine chemistry. He intends to analyze the chemical behavior of the world's oceans through synthesis and characterization of marine natural products from marine organisms. This work will foster global advances in medicinal and energy solutions.

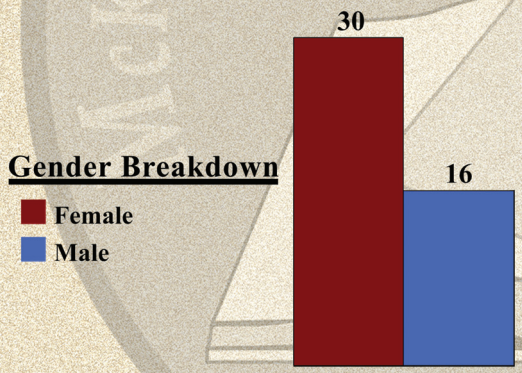
IKENNA UNIGWE
University of Florida, Pharmaceutical Outcomes and Policy

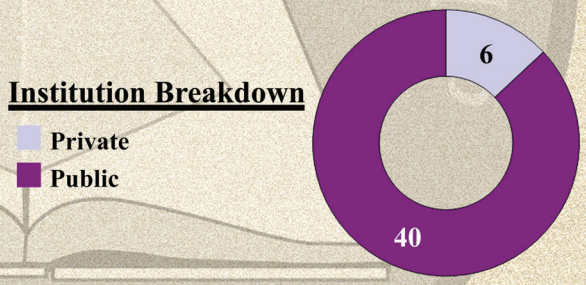
B.A., Biochemistry, University of Mississippi

The cornerstone of Ikenna's research in infectious diseases is pharmacovigilance and patient safety. He is particularly interested in HIV/AIDS, which disproportionately impacts minority communities, and seeks to address many research questions about the quality and safety of drugs prescribed to the HIV/AIDs affected patient population. This research will strengthen the health system and help make HIV/AIDS a disease of the past.

CLASS OF 2020-2021







F.E.F.

CLASS OF 2020-2021

Business

David Caceres
Florida International University
Business Administration

Esteban Hernandez
Florida Atlantic University
Finance

Andréa Hodge
Florida State University
Business Administration

Kalan Horton
Florida State University
Business Administration

Michael Hudson-Vassell
Florida Atlantic University
Business Administration

Riana Madison
University of Central Florida
Hospitality Management/Business

Lawrence Williams
Florida Atlantic University
Business Administration

Humanities

Camille Adams
Florida State University
Creative Writing

Bertha Crombet
Florida State University
Creative Writing

Vincent Omni
Florida State University
Creative Writing

Social Sciences

Fatou Gaye
Florida State University
Clinical Psychology

Melissa Hernandez
Florida International University
Clinical Psychology

Kandysee Leonard
University of Florida
Psychology

Camille Lewis
Florida State University
Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition

Gabriel Lockett
University of Florida
Psychology

Social Sciences

Tatiana Magri
University of Central Florida
Clinical Psychology

Nadege Nau
University of South Florida
Applied Anthropology

Malena Price
University of Miami
Clinical Psychology

Rebecca Quinones
University of Florida
Clinical Health Psychology

Stephanie Rosado
University of South Florida
Social Work

Ervin Simmons
University of Miami
Clinical Psychology

Manuela Sinisterra
University of Florida
Clinical Psychology

STEM-Engineering/ Computer Sciences

Aliyah Carter
University of Florida
Human Centered Computing

Carolina Fernandez
University of Miami
Biomedical Engineering

Raden Gustinvil
University of Miami
Mechanical Engineering

Wilson Lozano
University of South Florida
Human-Centered Computing

Laureana Muok
Florida A&M University
Biomedical Engineering

Anthony Perez
University of South Florida
Mechanical Engineering

Royce Pokela
Florida State University
Mechanical Engineering

Aliyah Shell
Florida International University
Biomedical Engineering

STEM-Health/Life/ Physical Sciences

Shade' Ahmed
Florida A&M University
Pharmaceutical Sciences

Joyce Morales Aparicio
University of Florida
Biomedical Sciences

Kathleen Lugo Charriez
University of Central Florida
Chemistry

Maria Jose Santiago Estevez
Florida International University
Biochemistry

Frederick Feely, II
Florida State University
Biomedical Sciences

Kamaria Jacobs
Florida A&M University
Public Health

Mariana Lopez
University of Florida
Biomedical Sciences

Maria Moreno
University of South Florida
Nursing Science

Naja Murphy
University of South Florida
Marine Science

Nkosi Muse
University of Miami
Marine Ecosystems

Latoya Newby
Florida A&M University
Public Health

Giovanna Ortiz
University of Miami
Biology

Paola Rivera
Florida International University
Exercise Physiology

Lexter Savio Rodriguez
Florida International University
Physics

Stephen Thompson
University of South Florida
Marine Science

Ikenna Unigwe
University of Florida
Pharmaceutical Outcomes and Policy