GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2020
TAKING STOCK AND PLANNING FOR A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

International Center
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
There is a great paradox in the global pandemic in which we currently find ourselves. While it has underlined the extraordinary interconnectedness of the world in which we live, it has also brought most global engagement as we knew it to a screeching halt. Even as we are reminded on a daily basis that events, policies, and actions in one part of the world have repercussions around the globe, our international collaborations and exchange are more difficult than ever. Further complicating matters, the global public health crisis has coincided with a political and regulatory environment that presents new barriers to international mobility and exchange.

In this juncture, while the internationalization of American higher education is challenged like never before, the imperative to redouble our efforts in pursuit of our core missions is clear. At universities we are blessed to have unique resources, and a responsibility to use them to help make a better world. New ideas, models and frameworks for doing so—whether in health, social justice, environmental concerns, or other fields—are born and developed in our research labs and programs, in exchange and discussion with our international students and colleagues, and in the perspectives that our study abroad students both share with their hosts and bring back to our community. Now more than ever it is imperative that we embrace our global mission.

Rather than our usual reporting of the numbers and statistics of our international engagement, of which we have been rightly proud in recent years, in this report we have asked our respective units to reflect on the challenges the pandemic has brought, and on how we are beginning to plan a way forward in pursuit of international engagement in a post-pandemic world. On behalf of all of the dedicated staff of the UF International Center, we look forward to working with the campus community in this crucial endeavor.

Leonardo A. Villalón, PhD
The development of the Department of State’s Exchange Visitor Program dates back to the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961, with the main objective of “increasing mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other nations”. With the often-articulated goal of Exchange Programs being cultural and educational exchange, here at the University of Florida (UF) we are deeply committed to upholding those principles, now more than ever. While reflections on the Academic Year 2019-2020 cannot be disentangled from the impacts of COVID-19, we would like to call attention to our challenges, lessons learned, and innovations along the way.

UF’s Exchange Visitor program is administered by the Exchange Visitor Services unit and the Exchange Student Services unit. Adjusting to the various needs of each population such as the changing global landscape, travel restrictions worldwide, Shelter-In-Place orders, and eventually reopening plans, proved a challenging environment for seasoned professionals and for those new-to-the-field alike.
EXCHANGE VISITOR SERVICES (EVS)

This year was a challenging one for UF’s Exchange Visitor program and international education in general. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw an unfortunate overall decrease in our exchange visitor community. Many travel restrictions and lockdowns were put in place, and several of them remain in place to this date. Nonetheless, new scholars still choose to overcome the added hurdles to contribute their talents at UF despite the decrease in numbers.

A pandemic event of this magnitude also created many challenges for our visitors when they needed to return home, pursue immigration status changes, or continue with their plans. EVS worked very closely with our visitors, assisting and guiding them through the processes and procedures to either request an extension with the U.S. government and/or work with their home country consulates to request repatriation flights.

To help ease our visitors’ concerns, EVS used our various communication platforms to send reminders to our exchange visitors throughout this difficult time, reminding them of the importance of maintaining compliance. Despite the challenges, our team worked hard to assist our exchange visitors and students with such things as their tax preparation, providing travel authorizations as well as travel safety tips, and keeping them up to date with fast-paced changes relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last but not least, we have created a Frequently Asked Questions section on our website, where visitors and students can get
the most updated news about closures and general requirements related to COVID-19 as well as their visa status.

One of our lessons learned is that like every situation in life, there is always a positive side to every negative. This pandemic reassured us of how passionate many of our scholars are about coming to UF and conducting research at our university. Scholars have jumped through endless hoops, quarantined in third countries, navigated embassy closures, and applied for National Interest Exceptions. Some have had to quarantine again upon their arrival in the US, and then adjust to a partially virtual life on a new campus. The fact that many of our exchange visitors and students have chosen to do all this extra work reflects not only on the quality of UF’s opportunities, but also on how eager they are to come and contribute to our academic community. It is something that makes us proud.

As a continuation of our efforts to keep connected with our exchange visitors, we developed and launched a fully online orientation session for our visitors (both on our main campus and at our Research and Education Centers throughout the state). This orientation session is delivered live (via Zoom) to all of our new visitors, and attendance is mandatory. We will soon be launching a cultural orientation in the same format for visitors interested in learning more about American culture. Through our weekly newsletter, we provide our visitors with a range of fun, socially distanced, online activities in the Gainesville community, as well as major museums throughout the US.

Thanks to the on-going support of our sister units in the International Center and our hardworking and dedicated staff, EVS was well-equipped to deal with the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented. We take our roles and efforts in supporting research on this novel virus very seriously. Many of our visiting scholars play leading roles at the weekly COVID-19 webinars (provided to the UF community), as well as in pharmaceutical research about the virus.

We understand that challenging times are uncomfortable and unsettling, but they also present a great opportunity to rethink and innovate in the way we do our work. We are here to help our community see current issues through a global lens, to foster intercultural exchanges, and to enrich academic research at UF and the Gainesville community.
EXCHANGE STUDENT SERVICES

Shelter–In–Place orders meant we watched as the world turned inward, in a field very much set on looking outward. Throughout the evolving pandemic, we were reminded that we have the privilege of welcoming the world right into our living room. We felt solidarity in knowing that our UF counterparts, over 115 partnering institutions around the world, were also logging in from laptops and makeshift desks. The world somehow felt more connected, despite very real limitations to physically connecting.

On a practical level, we had J visa compliance concerns to maintain, protocols from partner universities to monitor, and student support concerns such as when exchange students faced the decision of whether to remain at UF or return to their home countries. We also had evolving communication responsibilities at a university, local, state and national levels to distill. Like so many other universities, we relied heavily on technology to balance reporting needs and surveying students on plans. By mid-March, we had already held a zoom town hall to address exchange student concerns, adapted all advising services online, and created an online questionnaire for students to report their travel plans. By the end of March, 80% of Spring 2020 exchange students had opted to return to their home countries, and with travel becoming more limited by April, the remaining students, residing both on and off campus, were faced with staying in the US until the end of the Spring semester (and onwards in some cases).

The Fall 2020 university plans called for a temporary suspension of inbound exchange programs. With that in mind, we piloted a remote exchange semester for a small cohort in that category. Remote exchange students take online courses with UF, while remaining in their home countries. They have the opportunity to connect to UF students through student-led organizations, thanks to UF NaviGators International who conducts virtual peer matching. Additionally, students on this remote program are able to access UF resources and events that are offered virtually.

Looking ahead, Exchange Student Services is working with the Office of Global Learning to help scale up virtual exchange opportunities. By strengthening our international partnerships through more regular communications, we are working towards the ultimate goal of resuming physical mobility for exchange students.

Our ongoing exchange program participants are a constant reminder that no place in the world remains untouched from the impact of COVID-19. Nevertheless, and despite the interruptions to travel, we remain interconnected, and the mission of cultural and educational exchange prevails no matter how the execution might look.
The 2019-2020 Academic Year started off with the International Student Services (ISS) unit welcoming 1,446 new international students checking-in during Fall 2019, and 171 new international students in Spring 2020. It was one filled with on-going transitions for ISS. The ISS staff, the campus community and the students worked on adjusting to the changes in processing and advising in the TDS internal record system. The University also implemented upgrades to the student database and the course listings in Compass. ISS also adopted a new tax program, which was a major change for the students. We were able to add a new staff member position, and an ISS staff member moved to a position with UFIC’s Exchange Visitor Services.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in the Spring, we had launched a discussion to consider restructuring ISS unit services into separate support and compliance sections, both to better accommodate the needs of our constituents (students, staff, and faculty), and reporting bodies (SEVP/ICE and USCIS). The transition was finalized when Martine Angrand took on the position of Director of IS Compliance Services and Ethel Porras that of Assistant Director, while Debra Anderson assumed the role of Director of International Student Support Services.

The worldwide impact of COVID-19 during the Spring semester strongly affected our international student population, with varying policies coming from the Federal Government, as well as from the university. The impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt in terms of changing federal guidance and institutional protocols looking forward. In this context, we are especially confident that the separation of federal compliance from support services within ISS will help us to provide better services to all our audiences.

As the COVID-19 situation continued to develop and the decision to return to campus was made, the International Student Services staff once again adapted and made the necessary adjustments to return to their office spaces safely and effectively.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMPLIANCE SERVICES CONTINUES TO SERVE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The ISS team continues to adapt to meet the challenges of serving international students during a global pandemic. In the Fall 2020 semester we are working on a rotating schedule, with most employees working 3 or 4 days in the office, followed by 6 or 7 days of remote work. This rotating schedule has allowed us to be present at UFIC for important functions such as document pick up and shipping, while also ensuring that less than half of UFIC employees are physically present at the office at any given point. In this way, we reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, while also remaining available for functions that are most effectively carried out in person.

Having moved many of our F-1 processes online, we are able to continue performing our duties whether working from remote locations or our UFIC offices. While we no longer advise students in person, face-to-face meetings with students are still possible through the use of Zoom technology. For those students who do not wish to meet virtually, we are also available for phone appointments, and email correspondence, as always. We have also begun hosting virtual office hours for general questions that F-1 students might have. At the moment, we host 8 hours of virtual office hours per week, but may increase those hours in the future depending on student demand. These office hours give us the chance to meet with our students safely, help answer their questions, and provide them with guidance for how to best approach their situations. Students find these Zoom meetings to be very helpful as we often see between 5 and 12 students per virtual session. We have also been able to utilize Zoom to host international student orientations, as well as a town hall to answer student questions regarding the Fall 2020 semester.

Regardless of location, our communication as a unit remains strong, as we continue covering important topics in our weekly meetings over Zoom. When new guidance related to COVID-19 is released by SEVP or ICE, we continue to meet as a unit to discuss our interpretation, to ensure that we all have the same understanding of requirements, and to continue adapting to changes during these unprecedented times.

We have also been able to continue staff training in the current context. While new members of our team are no longer able to shadow in person, we are able to effectively conduct training through the use of tools such as screen sharing through Zoom meetings. By using these features, we have trained new team members in various F-1 process and procedures. This adapted form of training is effective despite the trainer and trainee not being in the same physical space. We have learned and embrace new virtual and intellectual spaces and we have adapted to the new possibilities for the future that allows for the sharing of knowledge in a world that calls for physical distancing.

MOVING FORWARD

With the return of the UF community to campus, we are ready to meet the challenge of moving forward in the time of COVID-19. We continue to process requests for F-1 visas and to advise students regarding the maintenance of their status. We continue to help our students feel appreciated and supported, whether they are in the U.S. or currently abroad. The world is changing in ways we could never have expected or planned for, but our mission of serving our students remains unchanged. As a team, we will continue to adapt to the evolving circumstances and complete our duties in a timely manner, whether it be on campus or working remotely. Whether our commute is from our homes to UFIC, or from our living room to an improvised remote workstation, we will go the distance to ensure that our work is completed with flexibility, professionalism, and compassion.
As Director of International Student Support Services, Debra Anderson will manage a centralized Resource Center for all international students providing:

- guidance about the appropriate campus resources available
- answers to questions and inquiries related to campus services
- assistance for dealing with adjustment
- outreach to new incoming students to check on their wellbeing

The new resource center, located in Yon Hall-Room 414, hopes to provide a physical space for students to drop-in in the future, when meetings in-person are possible. For now, services are mostly being provided virtually. Debra will also handle LAC/Linkage processing, serve as liaison with the Social Security Administration, Division of Motor Vehicles, and provide guidance related to tax filing. She will also liaise with the Dean of Student’s Office, UPD, various UF departments and emergency community partners.

Debra has been at the University of Florida for 24 years and served as Director of International Student Services for almost 20 years. She earned an M.A. in Race, Gender, Culture and Religion from the University of North Carolina (Greensboro). Debra has many years of experience and great passion to serve international audiences. She is involved in cross-campus research projects with numerous units on campus.

UFIC is very grateful for her years of dedication, advocacy, and valuable contributions to raise the profile of our international students on UF’s campus. Debra has been invaluable in accomplishing multiple initiatives aimed to improve the number and quality of UF services to international students.

Congratulations, Debra, and keep up the good work!
INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME

Since its creation exactly a year ago as the institutionalization of UF’s 2014-2019 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), the Office of Global Learning has focused its efforts on campus internationalization through a global/local lens and with a technology-supported approach. Although student and faculty mobility have always been an important part of its programming and goals, the Office of Global Learning has never relied solely on international travel to achieve its educational mission. Instead, this unit has always had its sight on the UF campus, on local resources for internationalization, on the “glocal” communities that surround us, and on the international communities we can engage virtually. The “at home” nature of this unit has made it more resilient to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than bringing operations to an abrupt halt, this global public health crisis has allowed the Office of Global Learning team to identify strengths, innovate, and deepen bonds with faculty and students.

VIRTUAL GLOBAL CLASSROOMS: FROM PIONEERING TO MAINSTREAMING

In Fall 2018, a group of 60 UF faculty and staff members gathered at the UF International Center to learn about how a small number of faculty managed to virtually connect their students to their peers abroad to explore course topics in a variety of disciplines. Some students interviewed entomologists all over the world, others practiced World languages with native speakers and virtually toured their cities, and others explored Caribbean culture and engaged in digital humanities projects with institutions abroad without ever leaving Gainesville. This event was the first virtual exchange faculty showcase organized by the UF International Center. Since then, the Office of Global Learning has collaborated with the Center for Instructional Technologies and Training and the Center for Latin American Studies to create trainings and guide cohorts of faculty in the development of virtual exchange course modules. Faculty from institutions in the UK, Ecuador,
Mexico, Colombia, Australia and many other locations have joined the trainings and collaborated with UF faculty in the development of these projects.

Today, UF students in a variety of courses and disciplines are interacting virtually with their peers abroad. They connect to collaborate on sustainability projects, to compare criminal justice systems, soccer culture, or parenting practices, or to learn about the impact of COVID-19 in communities around the world.

Virtual exchange enhances student learning in numerous ways. It provides deepened global perspectives on course topics, helps develop students' intercultural competence, and prepares them for future careers in which virtual collaboration will remain essential. Above all, virtual exchange affords an opportunity for international engagement to all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or economic status. While participation in other forms of international activities is heavily lopsided towards specific populations (i.e., study abroad in the U.S. is mostly white, female, and affluent), virtual exchange can be universal. It is also less subject to (although not entirely free of) the power differential that often presides over other international engagement experiences. Virtual exchange relies on individuals who establish reciprocal relationships and work together for mutual educational benefit. By ensuring equal access to international opportunities and by promoting respectful and equity-driven interactions with peers around the world, virtual exchange is well aligned with current institutional priorities for diversity and internationalization at the University of Florida. The Office of Global Learning is committed to continuing to grow UF’s network of Global Classrooms.

GLOBAL LEARNING INSTITUTE: CREATING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AROUND GLOBAL LEARNING

In Spring 2020, the Office of Global Learning launched the Global Learning Institute (GLI), a cohort-based semester long program, to provide faculty with relevant tools to make their on-campus courses more global. During the institute, participants visit campus resources, such as the Harn Museum or the Florida Museum of Natural History, and learn how to develop activities to expand global perspectives in these spaces. Other Institute workshops focus on community-based global learning, oral histories, virtual exchange, and other aspects of curriculum internationalization.

As the GLI was in progress, the COVID-19 crisis occurred, challenging participants to reassess...
TEACHING ABOUT PANDEMICS DURING A GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS
Ilaria Capua, Director of the One Health Center of Excellence, along with Rania Gollakner and Sara Agnelli, members of the One Health team, developed a course on COVID-19 during the Global Learning Institute. To gain global perspectives on the pandemic, students in “The Circular Nature of the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic” interviewed international researchers virtually and engaged in virtual interactions with students at the School of Medicine at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador.

UF PEACE CORPS PREP IS #3 IN THE NATION
International Scholars Program students have the option of additionally obtaining a Peace Corps Prep certificate that prepares them for future service as Peace Corps volunteers. UF ranked #3 among the 140 Peace Corps Prep certificate-issuing institutions in the nation for the year 2019-2020. UF issued 35 Peace Corps Prep certificates to the graduating class of 2020. There were 305 Gators enrolled in the Peace Corps Prep program during the 2019-2020 academic year.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM AND PEACE CORPS PREP
The International Scholars Program was conceived and implemented under the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) with the understanding that global learning occurs in a variety of contexts, including on-campus curricular and co-curricular settings. In this sense, the International Scholars Program has proven very resilient in the current environment. Despite the restrictions on international travel, students in the International Scholars Program have continued to pursue global learning opportunities virtually or on campus. In fact, despite the pandemic and the move to online classes, 75 students graduated in Spring 2020 with the ISP distinction and participated, along with friends and family, in a virtual graduation ceremony where they had an opportunity to share their electronic portfolios with the audience.

The International Scholars and Peace Corps Prep Programs continue to serve a diverse segment of the UF undergraduate population and continue to produce outstanding graduates that flourish in their lives, academic pursuits, and careers.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNAE
After graduating with the International Scholars Program in 2017, Elizabeth Pantaleon spent a year in Ramallah and Jerusalem as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant. Elizabeth is currently pursuing her graduate education at Georgetown University as a Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow at the U.S. State Department and Emerging Leaders Fellow at the United Nations Association-USA.

International Scholars Program 2017 graduate Chizoba Ezenwa returned to the United States in December 2019 after serving 2 years in Benin, West Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer. Chizoba has recently accepted a position at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service.
Since March 2020, mobility for faculty, students, and staff at UF has come to an abrupt stop. The long-term prognosis for face-to-face meetings and travel for collaboration, meetings, conferences, and other activities is unclear. In light of this uncertainty, the International Center (UFIC) carried out a survey of faculty who are active in international research. We distributed 720 surveys in July and August and received 272 usable responses, representing a response rate of 38%.

KEY FINDINGS

Almost 90% of respondents report that their international programs are tied to international research. More than three quarters reported that they collaborated on joint publications and other scholarly activity; visited faculty and staff at an international partner institution and hosted faculty from abroad at UF.

The faculty surveyed travel an average of 3.3 trips per year, and almost 85% had travel plans that were disrupted by the pandemic. The faculty have well-developed networks; respondents had, on average, seven partners/collaborators outside of the U.S. During this travel disruption, 44% believe that their international partners abroad will be able to continue the research activity that needs to be completed locally. More than half work with collaborators in Europe and almost another half in Latin America and the Caribbean. On average, respondents predicted that they will be able to travel internationally in eight months.

TRAVEL DISRUPTION

For the majority of respondents, the travel disruptions this summer and fall have not changed the likelihood that they will continue to work with their current international partners. Overwhelmingly respondents have maintained their engagement. 88% report that they will continue to collaborate with their current partners, while only five percent stated they will no longer pursue international activities.

The majority, almost 80%, reported that their international work was disrupted this summer. Three quarters report that they canceled travel to conferences or to prearranged trips to collaborate with partners. A little more than half report that project deadlines were set back.

Disruption of Activity
Due to Coronavirus and Travel Ban

- 88% will continue to work with current partners; 5% will no longer continue to pursue international activities. Prior to disruption, 79% had planned travel.
- 78% canceled trips to conferences.
- 72% canceled trips for collaborative research.
- 60% will not change priorities for international activity; 40% will.
- 54% reported that project deadlines were set back.
- 18% closed laboratories
- 17% could not fulfill commitments of sponsored research.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN A POST PANDEMIC WORLD

48% of Respondents believe that their international research is relevant to issues that are of importance to a post-pandemic world, while and another 32% are not sure. A segment of the faculty believes the coronavirus has increased the importance of their work, but a substantial number are not yet sure whether their topic has a unique significance in a post pandemic world. The topics they identify as most relevant include those tied to health, wellness, and
disease; as well as topics related to climate change, community resiliency, environmental impact, food production, food safety and food security, economic systems, educational systems, ecological systems, and issues tied to technology.

AI WITHIN AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A segment of the international researchers surveyed believes their work will include applications of artificial intelligence (AI). A little more than one quarter (29%) believe that their work touches on AI (a substantial percentage), while 40% are not sure. Additionally, 18% believe their partners have AI capabilities. Overall it is clear that international engagements have the potential of making substantial contributions to the new university-wide AI program.

FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Looking toward the future, 60% believe that they will continue their programs similar to those before the travel restrictions. However, 40% stated that the travel restrictions have contributed to how they perceive future international research. Their comments reflect that respondents believe change is inevitable and they will re-think the nature of their involvement in international programs. A large number report concerns for their health and safety, as well as for the wellbeing of students and collaborators. Virtual and technological solutions are often mentioned as probable means of overcoming travel limitations. Both groups report that they will rely on communication technologies to compensate for in-person travel.

The majority will continue pursuing projects and activities with an international outlook, and the need for continued university programmatic support is clear. Based on comments, they look to UFIC for advocacy on their behalf and on behalf of their students. Additionally, 55% look to UFIC to provide seed funds to explore new international research opportunities, and 53% to provide seed funding for graduate students who pursue international work. Fifty-two percent look to UFIC for assistance in identifying sponsored research and 36% to facilitate connections to research institutions abroad.

The status of the University of Florida is tied to our international reputation. As our faculty continue their work in this increasingly complex world, UFIC has an opportunity to support them in ways that have the greatest potential to accelerate their impact. The results of this survey suggest a mandate of continued programmatic and strategic investment; a mandate that serves UF’s mission and elevates our reputation worldwide.
Global Fellows Program

In 2020, 15 Global Fellows from seven different UF colleges and units were selected for our fifth annual cohort of our signature faculty professional development program. This program features six workshops and a final symposium where the Global Fellows have an opportunity to showcase their research and specific plans to complete an international activity. Unexpectedly, the travel restrictions of the pandemic required this year’s fellows to make rapid adjustments to summer plans. Many are relying on their international colleagues to pursue data collection or have modified their research to focus on secondary data, while other activities were postponed. The 2020 fellows and their research areas are:

**Dr. Simone Athayde**
Center for Latin American Studies (State of Roraima, Brazilian Amazon)

**Dr. John Bowden**, College of Veterinary Medicine (Olifants River, South Africa)

**Dr. Manoucheka Celeste**
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Pan-Africa)

**Dr. Andrew Janusz**, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Brazil, Latin America)

**Dr. Philip Janzen**
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Republic of the Congo, Dakar and Aix en Provence)

**Dr. Alix Johnson**
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Iceland)

**Dr. Jonathan Judy**
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (Queensland, Australia)

**Dr. Yao Li**, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (China)

**Dr. Julie Meyer**, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (Caribbean Countries and Mexico)

**Dr. Alpa Nawre**
College of Design, Construction and Planning (India)

**Dr. Eugenio Rojas Barros**
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Mexico)

**Dr. Jessica Siders Kahler**
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Guyana)

**Dr. Adrienne Strong**, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Sub-Saharan Africa)

**Dr. Daniel Urbine**, College of Medicine (Zambia and India)

**Dr. Pengfei Zhao**, College of Education (China, Hong Kong and Taiwan)

**EWEL POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE IN THE TROPICS AND SUBTROPICS: DR. ANYA BROWN**

The Ewel postdoctoral fellowship is made possible with the generous support of retired UF professors John J. and Katherine C. Ewel. The second Ewel fellow, Dr. Anya Brown (2018-2020) worked under the mentorship of microbial ecologist Julie Meyer and ecologist Thomas Frazer. Dr. Brown’s work merges tropical marine microbial and marine ecology to inform conservation. With the support of the Ewel fellowship she worked in close collaboration with a coral reef restoration NGO, the Central Caribbean Marine Institute in Little Cayman, Cayman Islands to use ecological questions to inform the restoration of local reefs. Following her very successful tenure at UF, Dr. Brown is now a Postdoctoral scholar at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.
Research Abroad For Doctoral Students 2019-2020

The UF International Center, in conjunction with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate School established the Research Abroad for Doctoral Students (RAD) program in 2015 to provide an opportunity for advanced Ph.D. students to conduct an extended period of research abroad. The aim of the program is to increase the number of students who participate in global research so that they are able to compete and become leaders in an increasingly global research environment. In 2019-2020 fourteen students were awarded a RAD grant.

Licino Nunes de Miranda
History, History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Brazil

Liselotte de Wit
Neuropsychology, Clinical & Health Psychology
Public Health & Health Professions, Netherlands

Benjamin Smith
Anthropology, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Ethiopia

Sarah Staub
Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Benin

Hui Jean Kok
Exercise Physiology, Applied Physiology & Kinesiology, Public Health and Human Performance, Canada

Jamie Fuller
Anthropology, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Senegal

Katie McNamara
One Health, Environmental and Global Health (EGH), Public Health & Health Professions, Ecuador

Kimberly Ledger
Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, South Africa

Mirela Silva
Electrical & Computer Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering, Brazil

Oswaldo Medina-Ramirez
Anthropology, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Costa Rica

Qingming Huang
Political Science, Political Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, South Korea

Jeeye Song
Political Science, Political Science College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, South Korea

Scott Cinel
Zoology, Biology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Panama

Treenate Jiranantasak
Veterinary Medicine, Infectious Disease and Immunology, College of Veterinary Medicine, Thailand

Kimberly Ledger, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (South Africa)
Kimberly’s research is about habitat modification and how the loss of biodiversity plays a key role in infectious disease risk and alters the ability of the ecosystems to regulate prevalence of important human, livestock and wildlife diseases.

Licino Nunes de Miranda, History (Brazil)
Licino’s research deals with the abolition of slavery in the state of Ceará, Brazil, in the late nineteenth century, seeking to understand the role of freedmen, slaves and common people.

Jamie Fuller, Anthropology (Senegal)
Jamie’s research ethnographically explores the kinship building practices of Senegalese women living in the United States and their families at home across social media applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram.

Qingming Huang, Political Science (South Korea)
Qingming’s research looks at the resilience of communist regimes in East Asia decades after the collapse of communist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2020

Mapping Women’s Role and Barriers in the Livestock Vaccine Value Chains

In August 2019, The UF International Center was awarded $1.177 million from Canada’s International Development Research Centre to implement a research project titled *Advancing women’s participation in livestock vaccine value chains in Nepal, Senegal, and Uganda*. The primary goal was to increase livestock vaccination uptake by women, using a gendered inter-sectional transformative approach. The study was carried out by four University of Florida graduate students in collaboration with local students. Great examples of Global Gators taking action!

- **Mapping the peste des petites ruminants (PPR) vaccine (Adi Gangga, Nepal)**
  
  "As part of my field practicum I spent summer 2019 in Nepal to map the flow of the PPR vaccine to rural female goat keepers."

- **Mapping the PPR and New Castle disease vaccine (Pierre William and Papa Hoyeck, Senegal)**
  
  "I went to the Kaffrine Region of Senegal to map the PPR vaccine flow to female livestock keepers, while Papa Hoyeck joined to map the New Castle vaccine flow to women poultry farmers."

- **Mapping the Vaccines in Karamoja Sub Region (Olga Muñoz, Uganda)**
  
  "I helped the UF research team with preparatory work to launch the PPR VVC mapping to identify areas where livestock vaccination points."

GLOBAL FELLOWS ADAPTS TO PANDEMIC TIMES

Professor Jessica Siders Kahler studies wildlife crimes, such as poaching and illegal trade, community-based conservation and responses to wildlife crimes, and situational wildlife crime prevention. Her research engages diverse stakeholders, including communities, government agencies, and conservation organizations in Zambia. The broader impact and practical recommendations of wildlife-crime prevention strategies touch on a reduction of risk to human health (e.g., the spread of disease), economies, ecosystems, and human security.

Since 2019, Dr. Kahler has partnered with Wildlife Crime Prevention (WCP), a conservation organization that supports the Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife in responding to and reducing wildlife trade and trafficking in Zambia and neighboring countries. Together, they have secured a grant through the US Fish and Wildlife Service that supports collaborative research to combat the illegal trade and trafficking of pangolins and big cats. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic derailed their summer 2020-field season, the irony being that the illegal trafficking of pangolins is one probable suspect in the origins of this zoonotic disease. Adapting for this project has meant a greater reliance on data sharing and data collected by WCP during a prior field season. Dr. Kahler plans to return to Zambia as soon as safe and feasible.

The pandemic has also been challenging toward advancing her research associated with the Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research in the Bahamas. Because she has not yet established an on-the-ground presence, she must rely more on secondary data, such as state, national and international databases that document legal and illegal sea turtle trade in the Caribbean, and communicating with partners already on the ground. She plans to conduct remote surveys with key informants to complement the analysis of existing data.

Dr. Kahler anticipates lasting pandemic impacts on her research process and will have to adapt by relying more on relevant and available data and remote communication and collaboration with partners.
Study Abroad Services faced many challenges over the course of the 2019-2020 Academic Year. Beginning with protests last Fall in Hong Kong forcing exchange partner institutions to shut down and requiring UFIC to evacuate eight students, the year brought one challenge after another.

In the Spring, we found ourselves in unchartered territory as the snowball spread of COVID-19 forced us to change plans overnight and create policies where none previously existed. As the virus jumped from Asia to Europe, one of the most popular study abroad destinations for UF students -Italy- became a COVID-19 epicenter. UF made the difficult decision to evacuate 43 students and faculty in the School of Architecture from Vicenza, Italy. Unfortunately, this was only the first of many difficult decisions, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students. Understandably this was incredibly disappointing, but as the semester progressed, and, at the time, not one that was well received by students.

In total, 279 study abroad students were affected by the pandemic in the Spring. With a few exceptions, nearly all of those students returned to the U.S. to complete their semester remotely. For those who elected to remain abroad of their own accord, their coursework also transitioned to online platforms. With their return, students faced new challenges with remote learning, especially those who were participating in overseas internships. Adjustments had to be made for many students, and in some cases, entirely new courses were created to ensure credit hour continuity. SAS also worked closely with the Office of the University Registrar to determine new processes for the receipt and evaluation of foreign transcripts, and with Student Financial Affairs to ensure students’ financial aid would not be negatively impacted.

In the midst of dealing with Spring program suspensions, SAS also simultaneously looked ahead to Summer programs. Due to expanded
outreach efforts in Fall 2019, focused on access and funding opportunities for underrepresented students, we were on track to send our largest ever number of students abroad in Summer 2020. By mid-March, however, it became clear that we could not allow any students to travel abroad in the Summer. This meant suspending over 80 UF Sponsored faculty-led programs and disappointing close to 1,900 students hoping and preparing to go abroad. For some students, a crucial component of their academic plan was suddenly derailed, while for others, their last opportunity to study abroad before graduating was gone.

With the shocking absence of student mobility in the Summer, program providers and international universities alike swiftly developed, marketed, and implemented virtual education abroad programs. For a few UF students, this option was appealing, and met with enthusiasm.

By April, as the dust settled a bit, our new reality slowly kicked in. Spring has always been the busiest time of year for SAS, filled with back-to-back advising appointments and pre-departure orientations. The sudden shift to a slower pace, typically reserved for the summer months, was jarring for our team. However, we quickly embraced the opportunity to work on new projects and find alternative ways of engaging with our students. The challenges of working remotely also provided opportunities for us to rethink some of our procedures. By converting to a completely electronic application process, adding an online chat feature to our website, and offering virtual advising appointments and information sessions, we have streamlined the application process and can now provide more information to a larger number of students.

As we head into the start of a new academic year, it is unclear what the future holds for study abroad, but we are cautiously optimistic. A determining factor in how we proceed will be foreign border control policies. With the EU banning non-essential travel for U.S. citizens, not much can be done under these circumstances. However, the Fall 2020 semester has not been entirely disrupted, as we were still able to send 21 students to non-EU
countries and South Korea. We are moving forward with plans for Spring and Summer 2021, and will evaluate all programs and locations on an individual basis as we get closer to the start of each program.

For the very first time, we hosted a virtual study abroad fair at the end of September. Our goal was to engage new populations of students through this platform as well as provide expanded search functions for visitors that would not normally be possible with an in-person event. The fair was attended by nearly 400 students, 75 total programs were represented, and almost 65 faculty participated.

Last but not least, we concluded the first year of our Study Abroad Leadership Program. This professional development program provides training, tools, and funding to support UF faculty members in developing new and innovative study abroad programs. We are excited to continue working with six faculty members who will be offering new programs in non-traditional locations such as India, Vietnam, South Africa, and Colombia.
UFIC STAFF MEMBER REFLECTS ON NEW NORMAL

The commute to and from work is a process that many might dread. Whether it’s fighting through traffic, chasing after your bus, or trying not to break a sweat as you walk to the International Center under a Florida sun that has no business being so hot at 7:30 in the morning, it is easy to look at these commutes as an inconvenience. But with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to working remotely, we began to realize the importance of these transitionary spaces. The commute allowed us to shift our focus from home and leisure, to work and our mission to serve students. How could we make this necessary mental shift when our commutes had been shortened to the distance between the living room and the dining room?

The first few weeks of remote work were strange. Working from home makes one lose one’s sense of time and blurs the lines between spaces of work and spaces of leisure. But humans are nothing if not adaptable, and soon the walk between an improvised office space in the dining room and a couch for relaxation in the living room became a commute in its own right. Employees of University of Florida’s International Center rose to the challenges of a global pandemic and made the changes necessary in order to accomplish the goal of providing services for the population that we ultimately serve, the students, faculty and staff of UF, while physically distancing ourselves and working from home.

– James Everett
F-1 International Student Advisor
The UF International Center is pleased to have collaborated with and co-sponsored international programs and activities with the following departments and units across campus.

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We are also grateful to the following colleagues who make a world of difference at UF:

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