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Fall 2008 Farquhar Forum

Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences

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Life

What is the meaning of life?

What happens when we die?

Death



A Message from the Dean

With a long presidential election now over and our thoughts focused on what's ahead, one thing we know is that we face the many challenges of an uncertain economy. I hope that we face these challenges with optimism and a renewed sense of civic engagement.

Engagement is one of the prizes of a liberal arts education. It has long been acknowledged that higher education degrees translate into higher earnings. But when we talk about the value of education, we also talk about a direct relationship between higher education and responsible, active citizenship.

Consider some of the individuals featured in this issue of the *Farquhar Forum*: a history professor examining presidential elections and shedding light on problems with the electoral college; a literature class using blogs to write in new ways, while learning about critical analysis of online sources; and an alumna supporting parents of children with autism with a new kind of resource that helps them track their children's development.

The Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, a home where these students and teachers can explore new ideas and experiences, brings education and cultural discourse to the community. All of our activities—including our performing and visual arts programs, Distinguished Speakers Series, and the college's annual academic theme (which, this year, is *Life and Death*)—serve as points of in-

tersection for different circles to meet, discuss, and share with the rest of the world, becoming more engaged.

For our students, a liberal arts education translates into responsibility as citizens. Higher education is positively correlated with rates of volunteering, raising money for charity, working with others on community problems, and other indicators, including voting rates. The more formal education a citizen has, the greater the likelihood that he or she registers to vote and goes to the polls on election day*.

As you read this issue of the *Farquhar Forum*, I hope you will think about the broader implications of our college's achievements and activities as well as the effects of a college on community strength and quality of life. We play a significant part in the lives of not just the students enrolled, but also the citizens of the community at large.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Rosenblum'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Don Rosenblum, Ph.D.
Dean, Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences

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THE FARQUHAR FORUM

Nova Southeastern University
Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences

Administration

Don Rosenblum, Ph.D., Dean
Naomi D'Alessio, Ph.D., Associate Dean
Marlisa Santos, Ph.D., Director, Division of Humanities
Matthew He, Ph.D., Director, Division of Math,
Science, and Technology
Allan H. Schulman, Ph.D., Director, Division of
Social and Behavioral Sciences
Michael Caldwell, D.M.A., Director,
Division of Performing and Visual Arts

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Director, Office of Information Services

Alyssa Rothman

Assistant Director, Office of Information Services

Jill Gambill

Managing Editor/Writer

Kathleen Kernicky

Contributing Editor

David Amber

Photographer

Elizabeth Braegger

Office of Publications

Ron Ryan, Director
Sheryl Koral, University Editor
Dana Kantrowitz, Associate Editor and Copywriter
Jo Carandang, Graphic Designer

Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences

3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314-7796
(954) 262-8185

OIS@nsu.nova.edu

www.undergrad.nova.edu

We would like to recognize the following students in the college's M.A. in Writing degree program for their contributions to this issue of the *Farquhar Forum*: Katherine Palacio, Shewanda Garner, Racquel Fagon, Maryse Als-Lee, and Matthew Weeks.



Students performing *Opening Night: Say It Somehow* showcased the new theater in its best light.

Homegrown: South Florida Arts Community Is Born Here

By Kathleen Kernicky

Monica Lynne Herrera is chasing her dream of a career in musical theater. Since transferring to Nova Southeastern University this fall, she feels like she's moving a step closer to the stage. In October, Herrera was on stage in *Opening Night: Say It Somehow*, the inaugural performance at the new Performance Theater at the Performing and Visual Arts Wing of the University Center. She has landed a principal role in *Baby*, a musical coming to the Performance Theater in February 2009. And, if acting, singing, and dancing aren't enough, she plans to take a course next semester in directing.

"It was the right choice," said Herrera, 20, of her decision to join the growing performing and visual arts programs at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, where she is pursuing a major in theatre. "We have a lot of support for the arts from the school. That was really influential in me coming to NSU. We have a brand new theater. We have high-tech studios. The student-teacher ratio is low. It feels like they really want to help us. They're excited that we're here. And that makes me excited to be here."

This fall, the college added three new majors—art, dance, and music—that complement the existing theatre major. The new curricula are available to all students as elective courses or to support a major or minor area of study.

The Performing and Visual Arts Wing of the University Center is home to the new, 250-seat Performance Theater and state-of-the-art classrooms as well as rehearsal halls and studios for music, dance, set building, costume design, and the visual arts including painting, drawing, sculpting, ceramics, and graphic design.

"The Performing and Visual Arts Wing will begin a new era for the university as a significant contributor to South Florida in terms of theater, dance, music, and the visual arts," said Don Rosenblum, Ph.D., dean of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. "Students can take advantage of our vast partnerships with professional organizations in the local community, such as the Promethean Theatre, the Ars Flores Symphony Orchestra, the Museum of Art—Fort Lauderdale, and the Broward Center for the Performing Arts."

Students like the high-tech facilities, diverse curricula, and the chance to stand out in a new program. Armando Alonso, 21, is taking courses in acting, theatre history, technical theatre, and stage management. "Every new skill we get helps us develop more," said Alonso, a junior who transferred into the program this fall after visiting the

new wing. "I got a sense that there was a lot happening here and a lot to be done. All the students know the teachers, and the teachers know the students. I feel there's more communication."

Today, NSU is the only four-year university based in Broward County that offers students a bachelor's degree in the performing arts. A university-based program lays the foundation for a "homegrown" arts community, producing artists, performers, technicians, vendors, and future patrons and supporters. That helps build an economic base. "You're creating an audience" said Mark Duncan, M.F.A., coordinator of performing arts/assistant professor of theatre in the Division of Performing and Visual Arts. "Students who come here are engaged, and in turn, these are the students who will give back to the university one day." Students who are not majors in the arts still learn an appreciation for the arts. "If you can get someone to see a musical, maybe next time they'll go to an opera. It's exposure," Duncan said.

The new wing and the growing program will help integrate the arts into the fabric of the campus and the community, said Michael Caldwell, D.M.A., director of the Division of Performing and Visual Arts. "By location, we are physically at the center of university life,"

Caldwell said. "This positions us to be able to enhance cultural life both at NSU and beyond. Broward County is experiencing cultural growing pains. People are hungry for this. We have the potential to be leaders in Broward and beyond. This is a first big step."



Life and Death

Our Immortal Quest for Control Is Redefining
How We View the Beginning and the End of Life

By Kathleen Kernicky

They are age-old questions:

What is the
meaning of life?

What happens
when we die?

Questions of life and death are a constant theme in every field of exploration. Do human beings have the right to decide when life begins and when it should end? Is technology changing the definition of life and death? Does society have a right to kill a human being in a state execution? Should we be allowed to choose the time and manner of our own deaths?

The Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences has chosen Life and Death as its academic theme for interdisciplinary exploration in the 2008–2009 academic year. Each year, the college's theme provides a foundation for co-curricular programs and discussion. It plays a role in the college's mission to prepare students for life outside the academic community.

Throughout the year, students will explore the issues of life and death in numerous ways. In biomedical ethics courses, students are debating the issue of rights surrounding euthanasia and abortion. Technology students are conducting research projects and examining topics such as "Cryonics—Promise and Problems" and how "Robotic Surgery is Changing How We Operate."

Who Decides?

In the criminal justice system, homicide is at the root of the life-and-death cycle—the capital crime most likely to result in receiving the death penalty.

"When we talk about life and death in criminal justice, we're talking about homicide without lawful justification on one hand, and the state imposition of the punishment of death on an individual on the other," said George Kakoti, Ph.D., associate professor of criminal justice in the

Deciding when to impose the death penalty—or whether to impose it at all—is complicated. "What if we execute an innocent person?" Kakoti asks his students when considering the tradeoffs of the death penalty as a way to protect society.

Other topics related to "who decides" are abortion and euthanasia, which form the core of biomedical ethics courses. Both raise questions: When does life begin, and who should decide when it ends?

We're still asking these questions about immortality. No one has come back yet from heaven to tell us that it does or doesn't exist.

James Doan, Ph.D.,
professor, Division of Humanities

Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences. "The death penalty is the most severe expression of society's outrage," he said. "We're the only Western nation that regularly imposes the death penalty."

The death penalty remains controversial, raising questions about possible bias in gender, class, and race when determining who will ultimately die on death row. In his classroom, Kakoti tries to provoke students into viewing the issue's complexities.

"We'll have a class on the definition of death," said Vicki Toscano, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Humanities. "What is the meaning of death? The reality is there are a lot of definitions out there. One of them [asks] 'how much cognitive function does the person have?' And this ties into bigger questions about the meaning of life. What does it mean to be alive as a human being? What is the quality of life?" In discussing the questions of life and death, students focus on the idea of rights, and

ASK THE PROFESSOR

Why are we obsessed with death and murder on TV and in books?

whether people have the right to decide when, where, and how they will die. Because the idea of death is difficult for most people, it raises other sets of issues about faith. "Is there an afterlife? And if there isn't, then what is the purpose of life?" Toscano said. "The point [of the discussions] isn't the answers. It's the questions."

Questions of Immortality

Afterlife and immortality have always been central themes in world mythology. For example, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the first epic from ancient Mesopotamia, focuses on the legendary king's quest for immortality.

"The main reason for many of the world's myths and for the development of many world religions was the question, what happens after death?" said James Doan, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Humanities. "Is there a soul? Does the soul live on? Is there a judgment of the soul? We're still asking these questions about immortality. No one has come back yet from heaven to tell us that it does or doesn't exist."

Modern religions preserve some of the principles inherited from Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, and other ancient cultures that believed in an existence after death. This allows Doan to engage students and make connections between their own religious and cultural

In popular media, murder and the process of solving murders is a dramatized source of human fascination. "In 20 years, we'll look at American literature and consider that the mystery sub-genre has had a tremendous impact on our culture and literature," said Christine Jackson, Ph.D., a professor in the Division of Humanities who teaches American literature and writes mystery thrillers on the side.

Jackson also notes another reason—besides the literary and cultural ones—why we're obsessed with media murders.

In modern literature such as mystery novels, she says, readers establish a visceral control of death through the experience of others.

"People have a need to control the overwhelming feeling that a real death will bring," Jackson said. Through fictional or real-life crime-solving, readers and viewers gain a sense of control by figuring out the mystery and "catching" the perpetrator. "It's a way of distancing yourself from death by constant media exposure and victims we don't know," Jackson said.



“If we can keep your heart beating with medical technology, are you really dead?”

Gerri Sant, instructor,
Division of Math, Science,
and Technology

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beliefs and those of thousands of years ago.

Some beliefs are carried out in modern rituals marking the life and death cycle—baptisms and funerals—and rites of passage such as confirmation ceremonies, bar mitzvahs, and weddings.

“Cultures ritualized life and death,” Doan said.

“Rites of passage marked life stages. Most cultures recognize them in some way. Such rituals laid the groundwork for a central cultural belief that death is part of life, not separate from it,” Doan said.

Technology Changes the Definition of Life and Death

Looking toward the future, technology is at the forefront of redefining and attempting to control life and death. Medical science can prolong the physical or flesh-and-blood life, while the Internet gives us the power to create new, virtual lives.

Through MMORPGs (or massively multiplayer online role-playing games) such as *World of Warcraft*, with its 10 million subscribers, and the popular *Second Life* platform, participants can control new versions of themselves in virtual lives in online communities complete with their own politics, economies, and currencies. As technology and user demand shape these new digital landscapes, virtual

realities—as well as social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace—are eliminating some limitations of the user’s “life.”

“With technology blurring the lines of reality, students must learn to discern truth from lies and question what they see on the Internet,” said Vivian Haddad, technology coordinator for the Division of Math, Science, and Technology. “We try to teach students what to look for on a Web site. Is it valid information? Don’t take it at face value.”

Futuristic Control of Life and Death

In addition to creating our new pixelated, virtual selves, technology in many ways is changing how we define life and death for our 3-D, carbon-based bodies. Said Gerri Sant, an instructor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, “If we can freeze people and bring them back to life 100 years from now, and cure them of illness, were they really dead? If we can keep your heart beating with medical technology, are you really dead?”

The availability of technological assistance, now and as it evolves in the future, leads to fundamental debates mixing science and philosophy. Sant poses the question, “What

is our definition of death going to be 20 years from now?” No one fully knows the answer, but research into fields such as nanotechnology and cryonics, once viewed as science fiction, is challenging old assumptions about the limits of our control.

Ralph Merkle, Ph.D., who spoke at the college’s Distinguished Speakers Series in October, is a leader in the field of cryonics, which applies the science of using ultra-cold temperature to preserve human life with the intent of restoring good health when the technology becomes available.

Looking ahead, the college will continue to explore the themes of control over life and death in winter 2009 with more distinguished speakers. These will include Jack Kevorkian, M.D., who spent eight years in prison for assisting in the suicides of terminally ill patients, and Sister Helen Prejean, the human rights activist whose book about the death penalty, *Dead Man Walking*, and its 1995 film adaptation focused attention on the experiences of death-row inmates.



Sponges in the Tree of Life

By Matthew Hoyt Weeks

Years ago, equipped with a diver's mask, rubber snorkel, and fins, Jose Lopez, Ph.D., embarked on an adventure to the Bahamas that serendipitously propelled his life's direction.

It was there in the Bahamas that the beauty of a pristine marine ecosystem served as a catalyst for his scientific career and ultimately inspired Lopez to pursue a doctoral degree in environmental biology and public policy.

Now, as an associate professor in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences Division of Math, Science, and Technology and a molecular microbiologist at NSU's Oceanographic Center, Lopez finds himself even deeper into his quest to understand the quintessential elements that forge biodiversity. At the heart of his quest: the sponge.

Marine sponges are found in diverse habitats, from tropical coral reefs to the frigid, deep-sea benthos. Lopez's research aims to identify and characterize

"There is no tree of life without a solid trunk."

Jose Lopez, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology

the realm of sponges through the use of modern-day molecular tools, such as DNA sequencing, that will allow DNA to serve as "genetic fossils" for inferring sponges' evolutionary history.

As part of a team of researchers supported by a five-year, \$2.9 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Lopez is setting out to study the genetics of sponges and describe their place in a larger evolutionary context.

The research is part of the Assembling the Tree of Life project, a coordinated effort by the NSF to put together a complete historical tracing of life on the planet, a species at a time.

During the five-year grant period, Lopez plans to provide opportunities for some undergraduate students to participate in

sponge-related laboratory research at the Oceanographic Center. One possibility includes the NSF's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program, which can provide stipends for specific assistantships related to projects such as the Tree of Life.

The Tree of Life project is using advanced genomic science to supplement traditional taxonomic efforts that began with Carl Linnaeus in the 1700s. There are between 8,000 and 15,000 different species of sponges, and fossil evidence indicates that sponges, as part of the Phylum Porifera, date back to the Precambrian era (more than 500 million years ago) and are the oldest group of living animals.

Some sponge species can stretch four to five feet across and can harbor a diverse group of small invertebrates, algae, and microorganisms. This cornucopia of organisms may contain ancient bacteria, fluorescent sea anemones, and even the occasional spider crab.

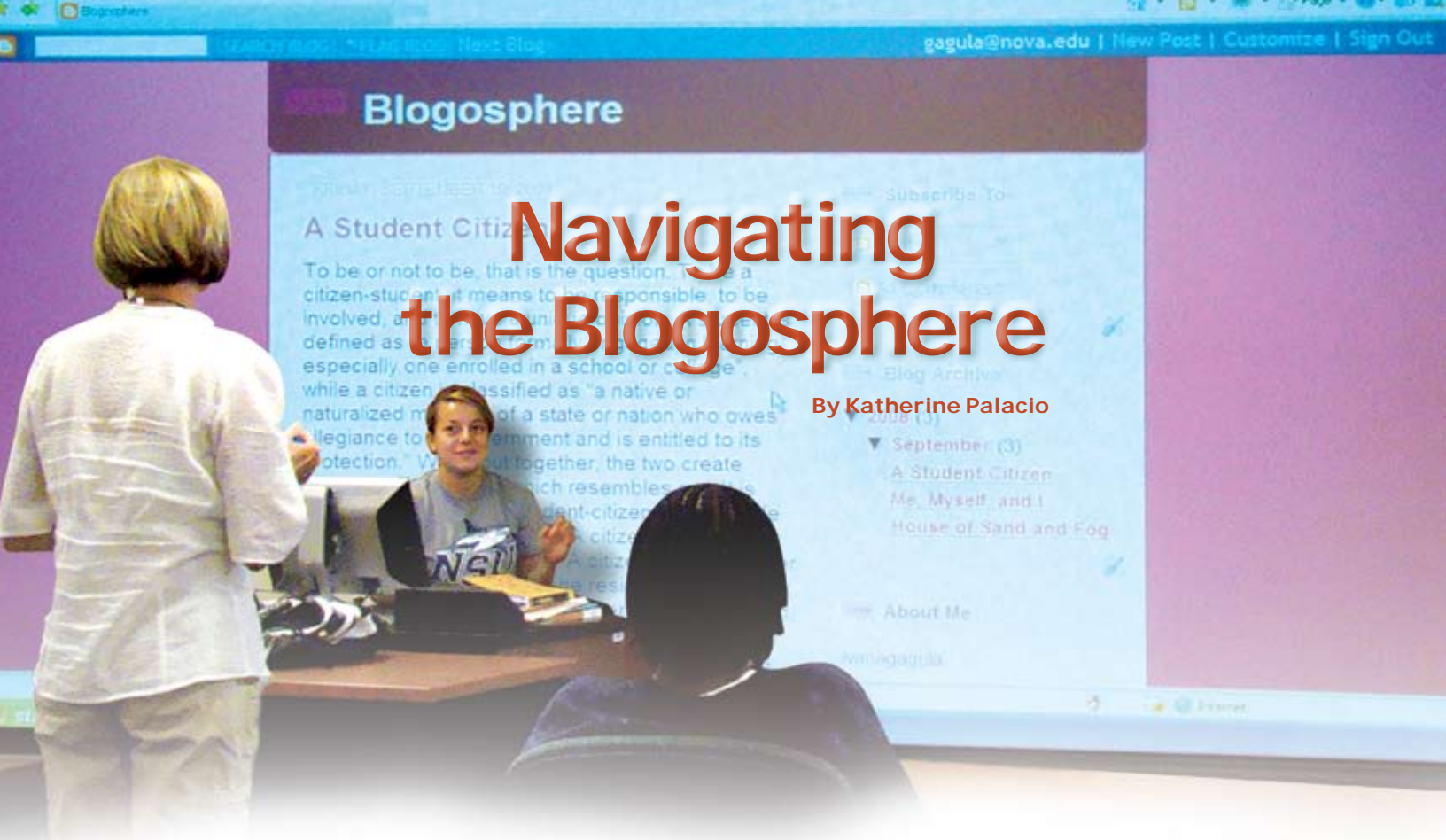
Lopez, who periodically ties sponge research into his microbiology class, anticipates using several DNA sequencing techniques to infer the histories of individual organisms and their closest relatives.

By constructing and understanding the evolution and hierarchy of sponges, he strives to discover more exact leads for potential cures for cancer and other diseases.

"Applications of biotechnology, bioinformatics, and genomic methods can be found within the core roots of the ever-expanding Tree of Life," Lopez explained. The sponge's versatile tissue may hold a plethora of chemical compounds, unique biotoxins, and bizarre microbes that might help today's scientists develop groundbreaking medical treatments.

"There is no tree of life without a solid trunk," Lopez said.





Navigating the Blogosphere

By Katherine Palacio

Within the four walls of Room 3044 in the Carl DeSantis Building, a small group of first-year students enters “the blogosphere,” the virtual world where writers discuss anything, and everything, through commentary and invitations to others to respond and join in.

Ivana Gagula is up first, and on a projection screen at the front of the classroom, she displays her latest Web log entry, a posting about what it means to be a student-citizen. While some students voice comments on Gagula’s post, two others pop open their laptops and begin typing responses that will appear on her blog within seconds.

Blog topics range anywhere from politics and current events to Hollywood, and now, even school subjects such as literature. “I’ve blogged about several things already,” said Gagula, “My top three interests, the assignment for the novel, and what it means to be a student-citizen.”

“This course is all about thinking outside the box,” Gagula said. “It’s a time to reflect on my thoughts.”

Kate Waites, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Humanities and instructor of this innovative course, UNIV 1010A “Reading, Thinking, and Navigating the Blogosphere,” is using what is now a common feature of modern technology

“This course is all about thinking outside the box.”

Ivana Gagula, first-year student enrolled in “Reading, Thinking, and Navigating the Blogosphere”

to help these students hone their critical thinking and writing skills. The course is one of three that is part of the pilot series for UNIV 1010, a seminar for first-year students.

Consider one assignment, in which students analyzed the novel *House of Sand and Fog* by Andre Dubus III, who visited NSU’s main campus this fall as part of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences’ Distinguished Speakers Series. Dubus spoke at Convocation, the annual ceremony that marks the beginning of the academic year.

“They are using their blogs to examine particular aspects of the novel—to do close reading and then write about it,” said Waites, who is teaching students how to use blogs to express their ideas and thoughts in a way that is informal

yet clear, coherent, and informative.

Blogging has been around since the late 1990s, but has become increasingly popular as Google and other companies developed free and easy-to-use resources. Web sites such as <http://blogger.com> offer free Web hosting for blogs, which is similar to writing a journal entry in a notebook. Blogs’ accessibility have helped them quickly rise in popularity. The Technorati (<http://technorati.com>), a search engine dedicated to finding blogs, has tracked more than 112 million blogs since December 2007.

A survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2005 revealed that children and teens between the ages of 8 and 18 spent an average of six-and-a-half hours a day using media outside of school, whether surfing the Internet or using blogs. Web-based methods of expression are also becoming increasingly common teaching tools, from elementary school through high school and college.

Students in Waites’s course create and manage their own blogs while reading and commenting about others.

“The blogosphere is just a route, a mechanism, which I thought would be interesting as a way of encouraging students to hone their critical thinking,” Waites said.

NSU Forms Research Partnership with Indiana University

By Racquel Fagon

“This program prepared me mentally for a future in medicine and, at the same time, opened my eyes to the struggles of scientific research.”

Alexandra Timis, biology major

The specimen on the steel gurney had all of her attention. Scalpel in hand, Alexandra Timis carefully carved out a cross-section of coagulated muscle fiber from the specimen of an Ossabaw miniature swine.

Her goal was to gather samples for her research project as part of the 12-week Undergraduate Student Externship Program at the Indiana University School of Medicine—Northwest (IUN).

Timis and fellow biology major Myra Rafi were chosen to participate in the inaugural year of the program, a partnership between the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, Indiana University, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The partnership is designed to give students opportunities for hands-on research and practical experience.

The externship program was launched in January 2008 under the direction of Mark Jaffe, D.P.M., assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, and Ernest F. Talarico, Jr., Ph.D., assistant director of medical education at the Indiana School of Medicine. Upon completion of the program, the students were awarded Dean's Office Scholarships.

“They are being taught research methods and are using specialized

equipment that most undergraduates, wherever they attend college in the United States, will rarely have the opportunity to learn,” Jaffe said.

Talarico agreed, stating, “This is a wonderful opportunity for undergraduate students to have a first-hand experience in what is usually privileged to only medical students.”

Alexandra Timis worked in the laboratory of Tatiana Kostrominova, Ph.D., an assistant professor of anatomy and cell biology at IUN and an adjunct assistant professor of molecular and integrative physiology at the University of Michigan.

Timis's research project was to investigate how diet affects the structure and function of eye muscles. More specifically, she studied how feeding a high fat/fructose diet to pigs would affect the composition of their extraocular muscles (EOM)—the muscles that control the movement of the eye—compared to keeping the pigs on a lean control diet.

“It was an amazing experience to do such complex research at such a well-known medical school,” Timis said. “This program prepared me mentally for a future in medicine and, at the same time, opened my eyes to the struggles of scientific research.”

Myra Rafi participated in a different research project, one designed to benefit people with age-related macular degeneration.

Her research project dealt with how a specific protein—NCKX5—influences that degeneration. NCKX5 is involved in the assembly of melanosomes, the cell structures that contain the light-absorbing pigment melanin, and ultimately affect skin coloration.

Rafi worked with mentors Brian G. Kennedy, Ph.D., and Nancy J. Mangini, Ph.D., both associate professors at IUN, to research how NCKX5 is expressed in cells of the retina, the area primarily affected by the degeneration.

Upon their return, the students presented their research to faculty members, administration, and students.

“I believe that they gained maturity, confidence, knowledge, and experience not available to most undergraduate students—not just here, but across the country,” Jaffe said.



F A C U L T Y



Ahmed Albatineh, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, presented papers on mathematics research related to cluster analysis at the International Conference on Interdisciplinary Mathematical and Statistical Techniques at the University of Memphis, May 16–18, and at a meeting of the Classification Society in St. Louis, June 5–7. He also published research in the *Journal of Classification* and received funding from an NSU President's Faculty Research and Development Grant.



Jose Antonio, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, was the lead editor and a contributor to the 2008 textbook *Essentials of Sports Nutrition and Supplements*, a study guide for certified sports nutritionists from the International Society of Sports Nutrition (ISSN). Antonio is the co-founder and CEO of ISSN.



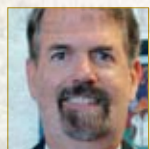
Paul Arena, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, was featured in an episode of *Knowledge*, a German documentary television show, on August 31, 2008. The episode, "Ships to Reefs," highlighted Arena's research on the effectiveness of artificial reefs off the coast of Florida.



Barbara Brodman, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Humanities, served as an Honorary Visiting Scholar at Galen University in Belize during the winter 2008 semester. In July 2008, Brodman presented a paper on the literature and politics of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Rigoberta Menchu at the International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences held at Monash University in Prato, Italy.



Timothy Dixon, J.D., associate professor in the Division of Humanities, appeared on public television station WPBT Channel 2 on July 27, 2008. Dixon was part of a panel on *Viewpoint* discussing "China's Religious Landscape" prior to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing.



James E. Doan, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Humanities, presented a paper on the history of the Dwnn family in medieval Wales, at the biennial meeting of the Doane Family Association of America, in Barrie, Ontario, Canada, July 24, 2008. Doan serves as a regional vice president of the association.



Gary Gershman, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Humanities, published *The Legislative Branch of Federal Government: People, Process, and Politics*, a textbook focusing on the history and workings of Congress. Following the 2008 presidential debates, Gershman was interviewed about the candidates' performances by *Local 10 News* and the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel*.



Michele Grillo, instructor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, participated in the Davie Police Department's nine-week Civilian Police Academy, earning a certificate of training on April 22, 2008. She also received certification through Palm Beach County to be a victim services specialist in the area of domestic violence on June 24, 2008.



Matthew He, Ph.D., professor and director of the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, published a research paper "On Bioinformatics and Cognitive Informatics: Emerging Pattern, Dissipative Structure, and Evolving Cognition" at the Seventh IEEE International Conference on Cognitive Informatics, August 14–16, 2008, at Stanford University.



Mark A. Jaffe, D.P.M., assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, participated in "Closing the Gap in Elder Care," an interdisciplinary geriatrics symposium hosted by NSU's Health Professions Division in June 2008. On August 9, he supervised 10 undergraduate students who performed foot screenings at the City of Miramar Health Fair.



Jose V. Lopez, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology and molecular microbiologist at NSU's Oceanographic Center, has received \$445,000 in funding—part of a five-year, \$2.9 million grant—from the National Science Foundation to participate in the organization's Tree of Life project by studying the history and taxonomy of sponges.



Mindy Ma, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, received funding from the National Institutes of Health as a co-investigator for research on the health effects of stress on young women. She also received an NSU President's Faculty Research and Development Grant as a co-investigator for research about teasing among overweight children.

A C H I E V E M E N T S



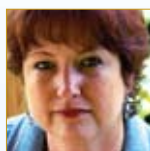
David McNaron, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Humanities, published three articles in summer 2008. McNaron's "Meeting Objections to the Danish Cartoons of Muhammed" was featured in the *Florida Philosophical Review*. He authored or co-authored two papers about multiculturalism that were published in the July 2008 issue of *The Individual*, the journal of the Society for Individual Freedom.



Madhavi Menon, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, presented research related to the psychology of self-esteem at the 18th World Meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression in Budapest in July 2008. Menon also presented a study on the links between academic self-concepts and peer reputations at the 20th Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science in May.



Ben Mulvey, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Humanities, contributed a chapter on regional Caribbean philosophy for the textbook *Conversations in Philosophy: Crossing the Boundaries*. Mulvey also presented a paper about Hollywood's depiction of physicians, at the Center for the Study of Film and History's 2008 biennial Film and History Conference in Chicago, October 30–November 2.



Jennifer Reem, M.S., coordinator of the communication program in the Division of Humanities, was interviewed by CBS4 on September 12, 2008, about vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin's body language during television interviews. The South Florida *Sun-Sentinel* and the *Christian Science Monitor* also featured analysis from Reem, a speech coach and body-language expert, about the communication styles of the two presidential candidates.



Glenn J. Scheyd, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, co-authored a chapter for the 2008 textbook *Foundations of Evolutionary Psychology*. He also presented a poster on variation in the perception of physical attractiveness at the annual convention of the Association for Psychological Science in Chicago, May 22–25, and was featured in the August/September issue of *Psychology Today* magazine.



Mahmood Shivji, Ph.D., director of the Guy Harvey Research Institute at NSU and professor in the Joint Science Program of the Division of Math, Science, and Technology and the NSU Oceanographic Center, was part of the scientific team that confirmed the second incidence in sharks of the asexual reproductive process known as parthenogenesis. The scientists' findings were published in the *Journal of Fish Biology* on October 10, 2008, and were covered extensively in the media including *Newsweek*, CNN, MSNBC, and the *Washington Post*.



Eileen Smith-Cavros, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, helped research and create "Love and Respect for Self and Community—Struggles for Justice in Miami-Dade Neighborhoods," a photography exhibit at Florida International University in August 2008.



Weylin Sternglanz, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, was named an "Adviser of the Year" for his role with Psi Chi, the psychology national honor society. In May 2008, Sternglanz took eight students from Psi Chi and NSU's Psychology Club to the Association for Psychological Science's annual convention in Chicago.



Charles L. Zelden, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Humanities, published *Bush v. Gore: Exposing the Hidden Crisis in American Democracy*, on September 4, 2008. The book is a nonpartisan look at the controversial results of the 2000 election. He also appeared on WPBT Channel 2, participating in a panel discussion about the presidential debates.



Fuzhen Zhang, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, gave talks related to the field of matrix mathematics in China during summer 2008. In June, Zhang presented his work at Northeastern University (Shenyang). In July, he spoke at Zhejiang Forestry University and Shanghai University, receiving honorable professorships at both universities. His work earned a 2008 NSU President's Faculty Research and Development Grant and was published in *The International Journal of Information and System Sciences* and *Linear Algebra Applications*.

Making a Difference on Campus: Gist Twins Show Their Shark Spirit

By Maryse Als-Lee

Whether at the RecPlex, the residence halls, or the Greek organizations, the Gist twins are easy to spot around campus.

"We are goofy people; we laugh, live, and learn," says Titina Gist, referring to how she and her identical twin sister Elizabeth find fun in campus life.

Their school service and achievement has helped them earn scholarships from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, where the 21-year-old seniors share a passion for communication studies and theatre. Whether it's through theatre or as orientation leaders, Elizabeth and Titina stress the importance of getting involved in campus activities. They believe in pursuing any opportunity that helps them achieve their goals.

Donors and Grants Offer the Priceless Gift of Education

Affordable access to education cannot be overstated, which is why scholarships are so important in providing essential financial support for deserving students.

Students in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences receive support through various institutional scholarships that grant funds directly from the university or college and also through special scholarships funded by generous outside organizations and private donors.

Donations in the form of privately funded scholarships are beneficial to all parties involved. They help students pursue a quality education and allow the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences to recruit and retain the best students. They also leave a legacy and pay homage to the person whom the scholarship is named after.

For more information about existing college scholarships, visit www.undergrad.nova.edu/newstudents/financialsuccess/scholarships/programs.cfm.

For additional giving opportunities, please contact the Office of the Dean at (954) 262-8052 or farquhararts@nova.edu.

Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences

"Never let fear of striking out get in your way, because if you do, you will never know the opportunities that could have been offered to you," said Titina, a recipient of a Dean's Office Scholarship and a student leader who takes pride in being a Shark. Titina is also membership vice president of service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega.

Elizabeth, a recipient of a Performing and Visual Arts Grant, is pursuing communication studies and theatre, something she missed during high school in Lake City, where the twins grew up. "Communication plays such an avid role in everyone's daily life. I find it fascinating," said Elizabeth, who belongs to Lambda Pi Eta, a communications honor society. She also has two part-time campus jobs—at the RecPlex and in Shark Dining—and works hard to maintain a balance between school, work, and extracurricular activities.

Faculty members who know the sisters praise their hard work and dedication. "They always bring a unique perspective and interesting insight to every task they undertake," said Chetachi A. Egwu, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Humanities. Egwu has taught Titina and Elizabeth in several classes and worked with them in two of NSU's dance shows.

"This is really where I got to know them in a realm outside of a purely academic setting," Egwu said. "Though they are twins, they are two distinct and wonderful individuals, and I'm proud to tell everyone that they are my students. Or, as I often say about many of the dancers I've taught, 'Those are my babies!'"

Mark Duncan, M.F.A., coordinator of performing arts/assistant professor of theatre in the Division of Performing and Visual Arts, said Elizabeth and Titina have been "an integral part of our theatre program. They were in the first NSU theatre production, *Burial at Thebes* [in 2005], and continue to provide student leadership in the program."

Titina and Elizabeth considered a state university, but chose to attend NSU after falling in love with the Fort Lauderdale campus, where they both live. Titina said NSU offered her the chance to stand out as an individual and not just feel like a number.

Although the Gist twins haven't decided on ultimate career goals, Elizabeth might pursue a higher degree related to communications. They both hope to travel and plan to pursue internships after graduation. And they might go into business together.

Chances are they will pursue their goals like they are doing now—with support from each other.

"Never let fear of striking out get in your way because, if you do, you will never know the opportunities that could have been offered to you."

Titina Gist, Dean's Office
Scholarship recipient



Broken Democracy:

New Book Explores the Lessons of the 2000 Election

By Shewanda Garner



The year 2000 marked one of the most controversial presidential elections in U.S. history. Anger over purged voter lists, improper voter registration, hanging chads, and the actions of the U.S. Supreme Court that determined the outcome still exists today.

Charles L. Zelden, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Humanities at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, author of several books, is ready to start the dialogue again. In *Bush v. Gore: Exposing the Hidden Crisis in American Democracy*, Zelden chronicles the legal battle that ensued shortly after the polls closed on November 7, 2000.

The book is an in-depth, nonpartisan look at the controversial election results in Florida, which were deemed “too close to call.” After numerous recounts led to *Bush v. Gore*, the lawsuit challenging the recount’s constitutionality, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Bush, ended the recount, and effectively decided the election in favor of the former Texas governor.

Yet, as Zelden points out in his book, the post-election crisis was much more than just a fight to name a new president. It was also a serious warning of a hidden crisis in the American electoral system—a warning that was effectively ignored not only during the post-election crisis, but in the years since 2000. In addition to exposing the electoral process as what he describes as an outdated, broken institution, Zelden contends there is the potential for conflicts of interest because those who run the elections are



is still largely “a faith-based enterprise... praying that your vote will count,” Zelden quipped.

The 2000 election should have been a learning experience for American voters, Zelden stated. Instead, it was a lesson that Americans put on the back burner after the events of September 11, 2001.

“2000 was a fire bell in the night. But rather than go out and fight the fire, most of us went back to sleep,” Zelden said.

“2000 was a fire bell in the night.

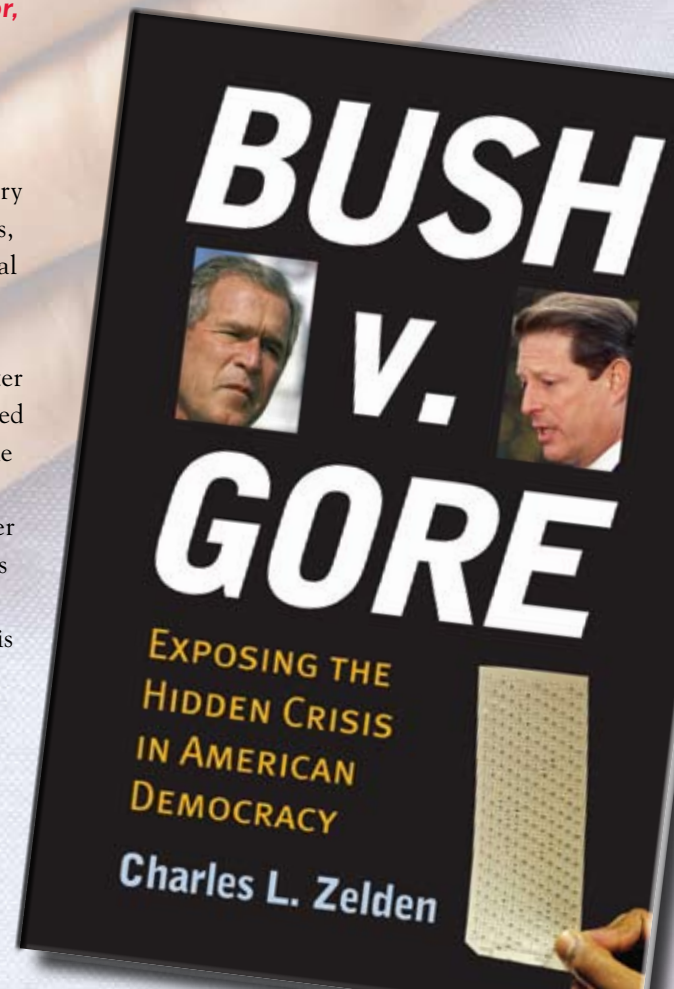
But, rather than go out and fight the fire, most of us went back to sleep.”

**Charles Zelden, Ph.D., Professor,
Division of Humanities**

often partisan officials.

During the past eight years, very little has changed in the process, Zelden said. The 2004 presidential election saw similar issues in Ohio, with allegations of voter disenfranchisement taking center stage. Zelden’s solution: “We need to take the wiggle room out of the process to make sure that the running of elections is no longer a partisan endeavor.” None of this can be achieved, however, until Americans “recognize that there is a problem,” he said.

Zelden said that some progress has been made, especially regarding voting technology. Voting machines are better, he said, though not perfect. Voting



Jenan Merhab, Class of '07

Alumna Combines Two Career Paths

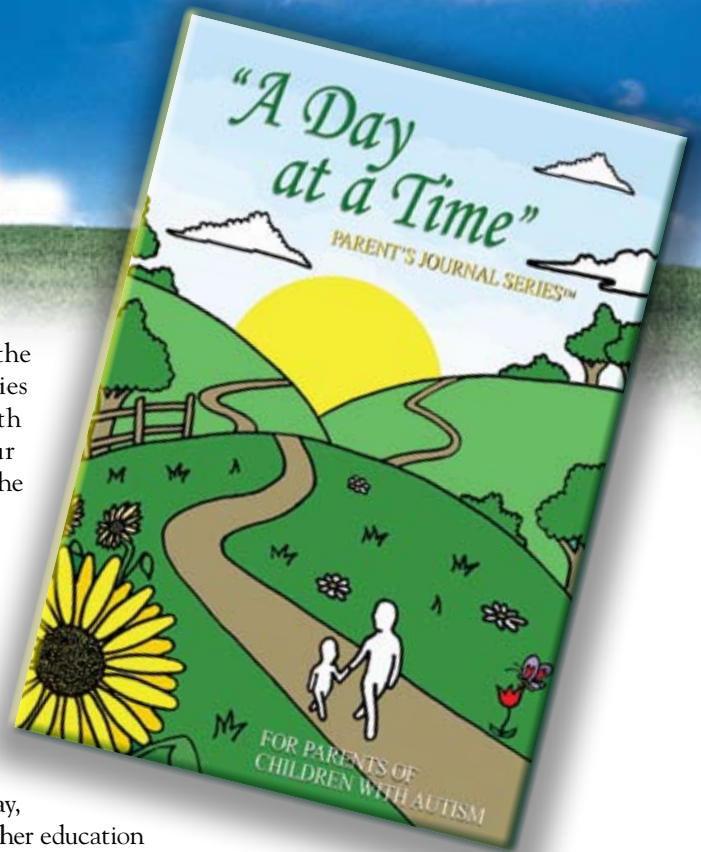
When Jenan Merheb earned a degree in psychology from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences in 2007, she was divided over which career path to pursue. As a psychology major, she wanted to help people. With a minor in business, she was intrigued by the idea of becoming an entrepreneur.

"I took the two fields and blended them together to start my own business," said Merheb, 23, who now operates a home-based business, Sunflower Bee, and recently published *A Day at a Time—Parent's Journal Series: Autism*. The journal is designed to help parents and caregivers track an autistic child's day-to-day progress, activities, symptoms, and treatment. A daily log provides space to write observations, notes, and information that parents might want to share with their child's doctor or therapist.

"The goal of the journal is for parents to be able to reflect on how the day went and to write about the ups and downs without spending a lot of time doing this," Merheb explained. "It's tailored for their child's condition."

Merheb came up with the idea for the journal series after being diagnosed with a thyroid condition four years ago. As a patient, she discovered that keeping accurate and organized notes helped improve communication with medical professionals. She began her company with the goal of creating a series of journals to help other patients. Today, she acknowledges it was her education and professors at NSU that gave her the know-how to accomplish this.

"The professors who worked with me sparked my interest in entrepreneurship," said Merheb, who now lives in Sachse, Texas. "It was a very positive experience. I was an undecided major for a long time. I knew I wanted to help people. My goal, ultimately, was to do something to help parents. When I started doing research, there was so much about autism in the news. It seemed like a good time for something like this to come out."



For now, Merheb's journal is sold only online (at www.sunflowerbee.com). She hopes to expand her business to include a series of journals tailored to the needs of those living with various medical conditions.

"I hope I can add more titles for every single medical condition," she said. "At this point, I'm starting out small."



Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314-7796

