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FARQUHAR

FORUM

FALL 2010

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

FARQUHAR COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Express Your *Self*

The college explores identity, the year's academic theme.

IDENTITY

SEEKS TO ANSWER the fundamental questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? What is our place in the world?

To answer these questions, we inevitably compare ourselves to, relate to, and connect with those around us. And doing so reveals even more questions. How does one define his or her unique identity as a member of a nation, community, college campus, or workplace where our ethnicities, cultures, and religions are as diverse as each individual? Are our identities limited by the beliefs and values that both bind and divide us? Do we live within our boundaries or seek common ground?

AT THE FARQUHAR COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, we are exploring the 2010–2011 academic theme of identity in our classrooms and through panel discussions; our Faculty Lecture Series; the Distinguished Speakers Series; visual art exhibitions; and performances, such as *A Year With Frog and Toad*, the premier production of the college's current Season of the Arts, which explores identity through creative self expression.

This fall, we celebrated the beginning of the academic year with author and Convocation speaker Edwidge Danticat, M.F.A., whose novels and personal journey as a Haitian-American resonate with the theme of identity. "Wear your identity garment loosely," Danticat told our students as they began their college journey, because who you are and what you believe will change while you are here.

Throughout the year, other Distinguished Speakers—such as film director and actor Spike Lee, M.F.A.; biologist Richard Dawkins, M.A., D.Phil.; and neurologist Vilayanur Ramachandran, M.D., Ph.D.—will challenge us to further examine identity through the lenses of their respective fields.

Through creative expression, analysis, and discussion, the college seeks to instill the greater knowledge that will guide students through their journey of identity. Developing a sense of personal identity as well as responsible citizenship, tolerance, and respect for what divides and connects us are core values of the undergraduate experience. We hope that when they leave here, students will continue to wear their identity garments loosely as they go out into their communities, leaving their footprints in the shifting sand.

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

FARQUHAR
FORUM
MAGAZINE

FARQUHAR COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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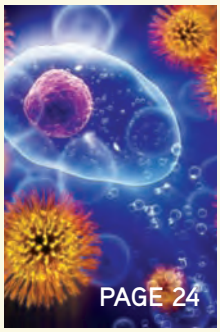
CONTENTS

FALL 2010

PAGE 4

PAGE 10

PAGE 22



PAGE 24

PAGE 16

FEATURES

4 **WE ARE LISTENING**
Human rights activists speak on responsibility

8 **FROM LITERATURE TO LIFE LESSON**
Finding inspiration and help for Haiti

10 **WEAR YOUR IDENTITY GARMENT LOOSELY**
Writer Edwidge Danticat addresses students on the journey of identity

14 **THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE**
Statistics courses crack the code of *American Idol*

16 ***A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD***
Exploring identity through art

26 **ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK**
Students witness life after genocide in the Balkans

DEPARTMENTS

18 **FACULTY PROFILE**
One professor asks: *Does Bilingualism Benefit the Brain?*

20 **ALUMNI PROFILES**
The college plants seeds for success
- Roy Jacob Smith IV
- Nehal Gheewala
- Natalie A. Solomon
- Briana O'Dowd

22 **OUTSTANDING STUDENT PROFILE**
Blazing new trails—Carlos Garcia

24 **MAJOR PROFILE**
The Biology Program: Advancing careers and the future of science

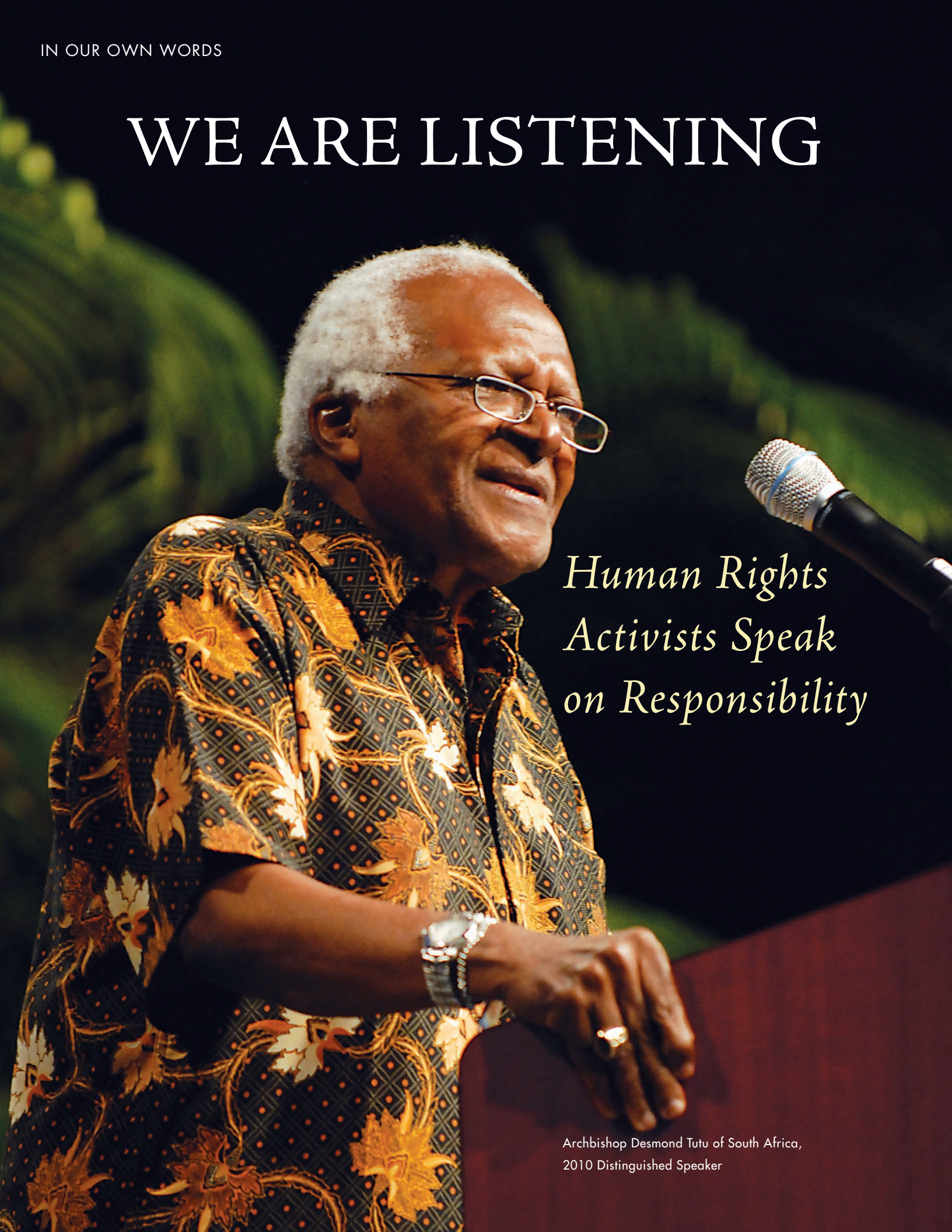
ON THE COVER

The college's 2010–2011 Season of the Arts opens with *A Year with Frog and Toad*, showcasing creativity as a means of expressing one's identity.

Pictured: Brielle Rassler, freshman, theatre major, photographed by Chad Moulder

WE ARE LISTENING

Human Rights Activists Speak on Responsibility



Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa,
2010 Distinguished Speaker

As part of its mission, the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences supports its academic programs with engaging speakers and distinguished experts whose accomplishments, messages, and ideals enhance critical thinking and promote responsible citizenship.

THAT WAS EVIDENT THIS SPRING when the college hosted the visits of Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire of the Canadian Armed Forces, a former commander of the United Nations peace-keeping force in Rwanda. Their stories vary, and their hometowns span two continents. But, their fight for human rights and their call for universal responsibility carry a common message: one person's voice and actions can help right injustice and change the world.

Tutu, whose visit was hosted by the college's Division of Humanities, is regarded as the moral conscience of South Africa for his vocal opposition to apartheid, his emphasis on nonviolent protest, and his plea for economic sanctions against apartheid-era South Africa. Among other topics, his lecture to students, faculty and staff members, and community attendees touched on the earthquake in Haiti, human suffering, and the omnipotence of God.

Lieutenant-General (ret.) Roméo Dallaire served in the Canadian Armed Forces and was the speaker at NSU's 2010 Undergraduate Commencement ceremony. Dallaire was the force commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda from 1993 to 1994. During a three-month span in 1994, an estimated 800,000 Rwandans were killed in a murderous rampage by Hutu extremists against Tutsis and Hutu moderates. Dallaire would later write about witnessing genocide in his book *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*.

While the college hosted these Distinguished Speakers, Nova Southeastern University sponsored the Dalai Lama's return visit to campus in 2010. The 14th Dalai Lama, the exiled leader of Tibet and the spiritual leader of millions of Tibetan Buddhists, is revered by practitioners of Buddhism worldwide. NSU students and faculty members from around the campus filled the arena to hear him speak about human values, universal responsibility, and "The Effect of Compassion on the Global Community."

College faculty members and students spoke to the *Farquhar Forum* about these speakers, the meaning of their common message, and the impact of their campus visits.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

Andrea Shaw, Ph.D.

Nerissa Street, B.A.
Class of 2010

Stephen Levitt, LL.M.

Calista Siobhan Ming
Biology Major

Tim Dixon, J.D.

Andrea Shaw, Ph.D.

Associate Professor/Assistant Director,
Division of Humanities

Shaw introduced Tutu before his lecture at NSU.

"As a child growing up in Jamaica, I was very aware of South Africa's predicament. I felt a sense of kinship with the people of South Africa and was concerned about the severe oppression they faced. Their dilemma was especially brought to my awareness by various Jamaican reggae artists, like Bob Marley, whose socially conscious music often addressed South Africa's perpetual social and economic woes.

Africa was both a source of salvation and sadness. The land that some of Jamaica's majority black population glorified as 'home' was ironically the place where Jamaica's oppressive colonial heritage was being reenacted and quite readily visible.

Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu became household names and were as good as superheroes. During his speech, Tutu touched on spiritual issues and suggested that we should have faith that some power is out there assisting us, even in the most desperate of times. He implied that Haiti's plight has come to our awareness because of the earthquake. Despite the devastation, this disaster is engendering concern for Haiti and its adverse social and economic situation. There is an increased awareness of this struggling economy, which could be the platform from which Haiti is transformed.

The rest of us have a responsibility to be part of Haiti's rebuilding. Tutu said that while apartheid was in place, the efforts of people from around the world contributed to its eventual collapse. He was encouraging students to take an active role in fighting political and social misdeeds and to share a sense of communal responsibility."

Nerissa Street, B.A. in Theatre, Class of 2010

"To me, the common theme of these speakers was 'Each of us has more power than we think.' Hearing this affirmed that I have a communal responsibility. Part of that responsibility is helping take care of my community and helping the people in my community talk to each other. Not only was Tutu's message incredibly powerful, it was an affirmation of the ability of one person to make a local difference.

Artists are uniquely positioned to help. I feel my job is to renew a sense of possibility in the adults and children within my reach. Making a good impact on the world is a choice that you make on a daily basis. We see everything that goes on in the world, and we get overwhelmed. But it's worth the time to think about it because your good choice has an impact."

Stephen Levitt, LL.M.

Associate Professor, Division of Humanities

"Tutu suffered under the system of apartheid for a long time. However, his message is very positive because, ultimately, South Africa did away with racial discrimination, honored human rights, and enshrined civil and political liberties in its constitution.

Dallaire witnessed firsthand the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The Rwandan genocide illustrates what terrible crimes may occur when human rights are not respected or honored and when international enforcement is weak.

When the Dalai Lama was here, I was teaching international law, and we were talking about different nations and whether they follow international law. For extra credit, a number of the students watched the film *Kundun*, a 1997 film directed by Martin Scorcese based on the life and writings of the Dalai Lama. Because of the visit and the film, students reexamined the Chinese occupation of Tibet in the 1940s and the Dalai Lama's life prior to his exile in India.

Collectively, the speakers represent different aspects of the same discussion that is occurring all around the world. Students who attended one, two, or all three of the speeches came away with a much better understanding of the role and importance of human rights in international relations today."

Brandon Giardina, Criminal Justice Major

"I knew absolutely nothing about Desmond Tutu. I did not have any idea who he was or what he did. As I sat and listened to the first speakers discuss his accomplishments, I was amazed. Tutu did so much for so many people. He fought so many battles in South Africa. It seemed everyone he touched had a different perspective of things.

Tutu talked with a purpose. He offered a newer look at things. I didn't feel like I was sitting in a lecture. It was inspiring.

When he started to talk about the earthquake in Haiti and people asking God 'why,' I think his message was that God is here all around us, but we choose how and what we do with our lives. We have a choice to go down any path we want. God is not going to tell you the right way to do things. He is going to put a path out there for you, and we are going to make a decision, right or wrong. But the choice will always be there."

Calista Siobhan Ming, Biology Major

Ming, who grew up in Georgetown, Guyana, was one of nine students from the college who traveled to Europe during spring break as part of a travel-study course. The students met with Dallaire in May 2010, coinciding with his visit at commencement.

"We asked Dallaire a lot of questions about his experiences. It was very personal. He spoke a lot about what he feels the United States and the world should have done to stop the genocide.

He told us that when he was there witnessing this, he would be driving around in his car wishing he would be killed. He suffered post-traumatic stress disorder. Here he was, a United Nations general, and he was powerless. He is working now to try to prevent this from happening again and to make sure the world doesn't forget it happened.

I have been following the news about Rwanda and Darfur and the blood diamonds. Meeting Dallaire definitely made me more aware of what was going on in Africa. I've been talking a lot about this to my friends. It's our job as students who took the class to help bring more awareness to this topic."

Tim Dixon, J.D.

Associate Professor, Division of Humanities

Dixon discussed the Dalai Lama's commitment to human values and his message of nonviolent resistance and peace at a ceremony hosted by the university welcoming the Tibetan leader to NSU.

"[Following the earthquake in Haiti], people opened their homes and their wallets, and they opened their hearts to the Haitian people. This was a reflection of compassion by Americans. All of the major religions teach good moral lessons. All of these religions have the ability to create good human beings. It's not religious differences that are important. It is the moral lesson that is important.

We need to open our minds to the Dalai Lama's ideas, open our arms and embrace his ideas, and open our hearts to live his ideals. The students were enthusiastic about his visit even though they had limited knowledge beforehand of his importance. They recognized that he is a religious leader who represents a good message."

FROM LITERATURE TO LIFE LESSON

Finding Inspiration and Help for Haiti

Amanda Thompson

"It is a therapeutic feeling to know that even though you're not doing enough, at least you're doing something to help. I find solace in doing something, even if it's not enough."

JUST WEEKS BEFORE HAITI was struck by a deadly earthquake in January 2010, Amanda Thompson was assigned to read *Krik? Krak!*, a collection of stories by author Edwidge Danticat about the extraordinary lives and struggles of people on the island.

The book had a lasting impact on Thompson, an English major who read the book during a Caribbean Literature course last fall at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. Danticat was the first guest of the college's 2010–2011 Distinguished Speakers Series and the keynote speaker at the college's Convocation ceremony this fall.

So when the earthquake struck, the news about the devastation, death toll, and the stories of the missing resonated with Thompson, the mother of a toddler son, who enrolled at Nova Southeastern University in 2008 and graduates this summer.

"It was such ironic timing for me," she said. "I had just read this book that had touched me so much. I was heartbroken for them. I felt compelled that something needed to be done."

That something, she decided, would be gathering help in her own backyard and neighborhood in northwest Broward. After researching what items and supplies were most needed in Haiti, Thompson began by setting up two bins in her yard for people to drop off donations. She set up a collection box at her son's day care center.

In between her full-time studies and taking care of her son, she walked door to door and talked to business owners who allowed her to set up collection bins. One of those businesses was a dry cleaner that Thompson patronized and where she was often greeted by Eileen, a woman from Haiti. Eileen told Thompson she had lost her sister and her family's home in the earthquake. Her children survived.

"I already felt this connection to Haiti through this woman and the literature," Thompson said. "Danticat had such a sense of community woven throughout the stories. She had given such a voice to their struggles. So often we see things on the news and we're desensitized to it. This was a voice to many of their struggles, enough that I felt a sense of what they were going through."

At the time, there were no collection points in the neighborhood. To get the word out, Thompson printed flyers and stuffed them in mailboxes. "I became the collection point," she said.

Word spread through the community. Soon children were ringing her doorbell, offering canned foods and goods from their families' pantries.

"I was amazed at how many kids showed up at my doorstep. You could tell they had gone through their pantries at home with their parents. There would be all these items of canned foods and then you'd find one soft-wrapped Twinkie tucked in there," she said, smiling. "I felt very encouraged by that. As a mother, I want my child to see how communities should serve each other and how the world can be and how we can change it."

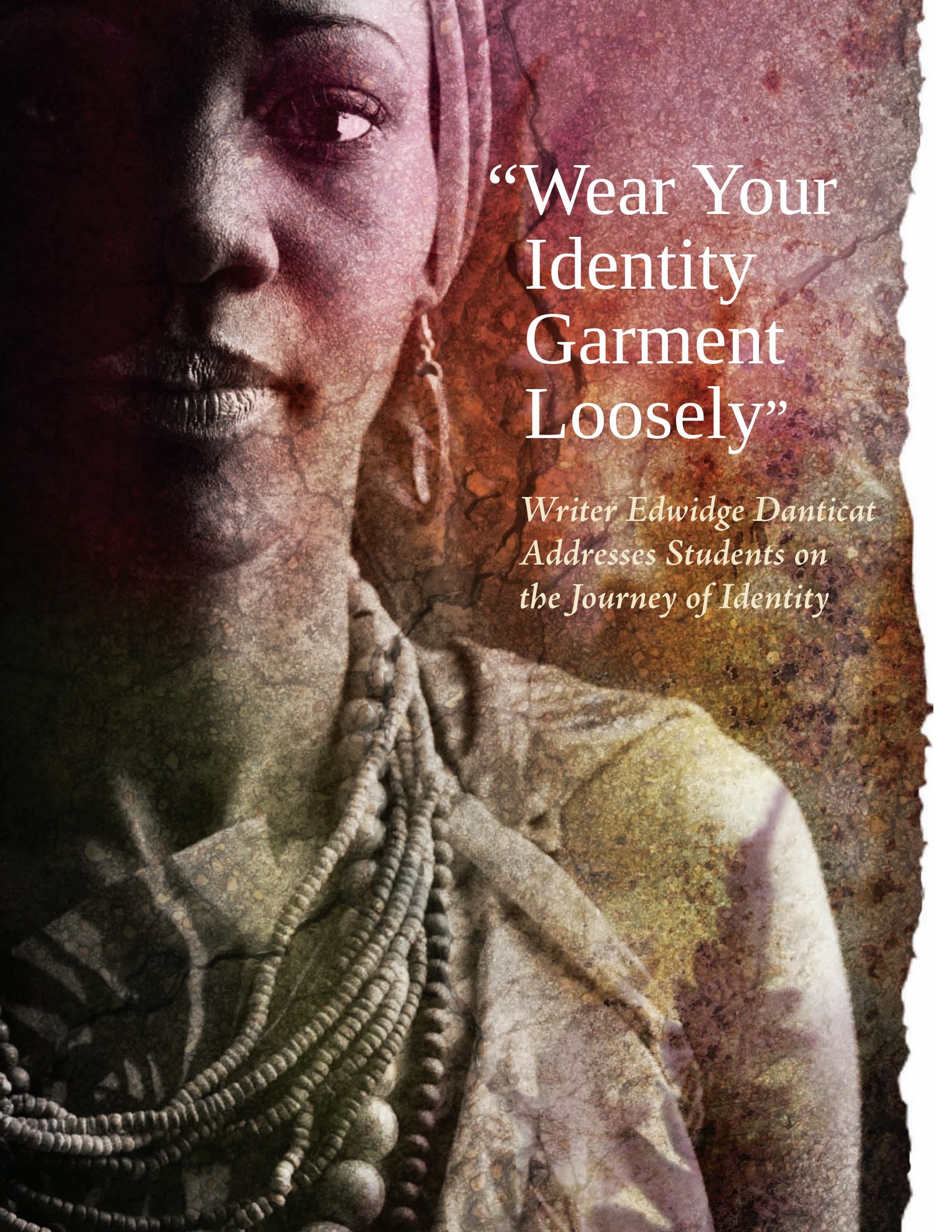
During the weeks after the earthquake, Thompson filled and refilled her family's SUV with supplies of canned food, baby formula, batteries, duct tape, and flashlights. She rented a truck to cart cases of bottled water. Her family delivered the donations to Food for the Poor, a nonprofit agency with a large presence in the Caribbean. She doesn't know how much she collected in total, only that it was an effort well spent.

"I thought my efforts were best spent in my own community where people can be a little insulated from what's going on," Thompson said. "People here have blessed lives, and sometimes we don't always realize it. Within about a five-mile radius, I feel like I had more of an impact and an ability to reach people."

Thompson stays in touch with Eileen from the dry cleaner. Not long ago, Thompson loaned her a copy of Danticat's book.

"She told me recently that she had finished reading it and sent it to her older son in Haiti," Thompson said. "We both shared a love of it. She understood it in a way that I never could.

"I think the experience brought the world closer to me. The needs are so overwhelming. It is a therapeutic feeling to know that even though you're not doing enough, at least you're doing something to help. I find solace in doing something, even if it's not enough." FF



"Wear Your Identity Garment Loosely"

Writer Edwidge Danticat Addresses Students on the Journey of Identity

IN EDWIDGE DANTICAT'S NOVEL *The Farming of Bones*, a young Haitian woman is directed by fate to live in exile in the Dominican Republic while haunted by dreams of her homeland and lost heritage. Set in 1937, this book of historical fiction recounts the era's massacre of Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic, as seen through the eyes of Amabelle, who witnesses as a child the drowning deaths of her parents in the river that separates the two nations. Left an orphan, Amabelle is taken in by an affluent family in the Dominican Republic. There, she toils as a domestic worker who struggles to unveil her identity as a woman and an immigrant "without papers." Danticat has delicately crafted a central character who lives in the shadow of two worlds and two identities.

Identity is a constant undercurrent in the books by Danticat, a Haitian-American writer and award-winning author who was the keynote speaker at NSU's 2010 Convocation Ceremony and the first guest lecturer of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences' Distinguished Speakers Series to discuss this year's academic theme of identity.

Addressing students at Convocation, Danticat wove together the questions of identity facing new students as they begin their college journey and the struggles confronting the main character of her novel, which was the focus of the college's First-Year Reading Program.

The First-Year Reading Program encourages incoming freshmen to experience summer reading as an act of leisure and a means for discovery. The program then challenges them through literary analysis with their peers and professors and engaging discussion with the author.

"The thoughtful discussion and analysis in the First-Year Reading Program seminars demand critical thinking beyond what first-year students experience in high school," said Don Rosenblum, Ph.D., dean of the college, adding that *The Farming of Bones* addresses issues such as identity, bias, and cultural differences that both separate and connect us.

Born in Haiti in 1969, Danticat acknowledged that, "Identity is a subject that has been extremely important in my life and in my writing." Her parents immigrated to the United States when she was a toddler, leaving her and her brother with their uncle in Haiti. At 12, Danticat left Haiti and was reunited with her parents in Brooklyn, New York, where she encountered a new language and culture as well as the obstacles and opportunities of her new home.

SPEAKING TO STUDENTS at Convocation, Danticat urged them to "wear your identity garment loosely," as one's identity changes and evolves over time, through maturity and experience.

Danticat pointed out the parallels between Amabelle's journey to find identity and that of students who are just beginning college and embarking upon a new time and a new place in their lives.

"To summarize the book, it is the story of a young woman who's facing very difficult circumstances and who leaves the world that she knows to make her place in a new world," Danticat said. "She's taken in by the kindness of strangers and encounters some very difficult moments she's never even imagined. She fights to survive and overcome her obstacles. And no, she did not get the happy ending that she so desires, but she gets a new sense of her identity as a woman, as an immigrant, and as a survivor."

To the new students, Danticat added, "You have also left the safety of the world you know, a world where you were probably the brightest star in your universe. Now you have entered this new place, a brave new world. Over the past weeks, you have been shown the kindness of people who were previously strangers to you. And already you may have had some bumps in the road, but I believe you will find your way. At the end of this road, when you are all gathered together again for your graduation, you might have a whole new sense of your identity and of the person you could possibly become.

"I hope that during your four years here, you will cling to the image of your identity as something as fluid as a loose garment and as open to touch and layering. I don't think the person I was at 18 years at my own orientation at Barnard College would have recognized the person who walked into my graduation four years later.

"What changed? I refused to allow anyone to decide that I could only be one kind of person. What I decided to do was to wear my identity garment loosely and explore, explore, explore. The best universities are communities of teachers and scholars who wear their identity garments well. It is very important to remember that your own identity is not detached from the community and the world in which you live. It rises as a community, the original community from which you come and now this community that you have joined.

"IT IS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY TO REMEMBER YOUR HISTORY, BUT TO STUDY IT, BECAUSE IT MAKES YOU APPRECIATE IT MORE. TO ME, IDENTITY MEANS KNOWING WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU COME FROM."

—Revka Tima
Freshman,
First-Year Reading Program

"As you begin your time here, forming your own personal and intellectual identity, I wish for you the courage to raise your voice and speak when something is not right. For the person you think you are will continuously be tested, and you will become another person, like I did, or you will become a more confident and polished version of the person you already are. Don't cut corners on that journey. The time will go quickly and there will be opportunities that you come across while you are here that might not come again."

Revka Tima, a freshman in the First-Year Reading Program, struggled to learn a new language, become part of a new culture, and adapt to a new country when she moved to the United States from Haiti as a child. She found resonance in Danticat's book and its ties to identity.

"I was born in Haiti, and I learned a lot about Haiti from the book," Tima said. "It helped me to understand that it is important to try and keep your cultural history alive. It is important not only to remember your history, but to study it, because it makes you appreciate it more. To me, identity means knowing who you are and where you come from."

At a reception following the Convocation ceremony (L–R): Don Rosenblum, Ph.D., dean of Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences; Dimitrios Giarikos, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, who was honored at Convocation as the 2010 Outstanding Full-Time Teacher of the Year; Edwidge Danticat, M.F.A.; George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., president of Nova Southeastern University; Marlisa Santos, Ph.D., director of the Division of Humanities; and Andrea Shaw, Ph.D., associate professor and assistant director of the Division of Humanities

EDWIDGE DANTICAT received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Barnard College in 1990 and a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1993 from Brown University, where she was awarded a full scholarship for the creative writing program. Besides *The Farming of Bones*, she is the author of *Breath, Eyes, Memory; The Dew Breaker;* and *Krik? Krak!*, a collection of short stories.

THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE

Statistics Courses Crack the Code of *American Idol*

BIOLOGY MAJOR William Kotkin isn't a fan of *American Idol*, but he got a quick education in the biases and inner workings of the contest show last fall as a freshman in Life's Not Fair… Or Is It?, an interactive seminar course for freshmen, taught by Jason Gershman, Ph.D. "I never really got into the show, but I could still relate to the research that Professor Gershman was doing," Kotkin said of the assistant professor in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences.

"THE RESEARCH SHOWED it isn't an ideal competition because it's flawed," said Kotkin, who discovered through statistical analysis that the contestant with the best voice or even the most fans doesn't always walk off with the crown. "Professor Gershman showed specific numbers and statistics that were interwoven throughout the show, such as the impact of cell phones and texting. We learned there's a huge bias in voting by text message rather than by calling on a landline and the impact of voting from different time zones. It showed us how the show is biased."

"There's a lot that goes into this that the average viewer wouldn't think of or see."

—William Kotkin, Biology Major

Gershman used the Fox network show as an example in last fall's UNIV 1010 seminar for freshmen and in his Statistics I Honors class. In the UNIV 1010 seminar, students presented and analyzed the validity of data findings using tools Gershman taught in the course. Participants studied data relating to *American Idol* in addition to subjects ranging from food labels to motion picture history to animal shelters.

Students analyzing *Idol* discovered that factors in the show's production and voting processes could be deal breakers early on, influencing who is named the winner. To keep their favorite contestant on the show, viewers in each time zone are given two hours after the conclusion of each episode to cast their votes by telephone calls or text messages. The contestant with the fewest votes each week is eliminated. Gershman analyzed data from a software program (not connected to the show) that enables viewers to program their computers to vote as many times as possible during the voting period.

His analysis also found that the show's producers influence the vote by deciding which contestant sings first or last, which contestant is showcased in television interviews, and the song selection. "There is a strong hand of influence early on by the producers and who they feel should be the entrée, not the appetizer," Gershman said. A contestant picked to sing last usually has the edge. "You are fresh in the mind of voters as you close the show," he explained. "That's human behavior. Attention spans are short."

Through his research, Gershman learned that factors such as which contestant gets more "face time" and which one is placed in the front row in group productions can affect voting outcomes. Odds are a polarizing contestant, regardless of his or her singing ability, will last longer than a more neutral or bland performer who isn't as likely to engage television viewers and drive up ratings.

Even geography plays a role. Gershman found that the number of busy signals encountered by fans during telephone voting is a good indicator of a contestant's popularity. Those with the most busy signals are less likely to be voted off than those with fewer busy signals. Performers with a large fan base in Mountain or Pacific time zones have an edge because their fans are far less likely to encounter a telephone traffic jam than those in the more-populated Eastern time zone. Those voting via text message never encounter busy signals.

"It's not perfect. It's not truly a random contest. But it's not fixed," Gershman said, pointing out that the voting audience wields the strongest influence when the contest is whittled down to the final four contestants. "By the last week, the singing order doesn't matter. It matters most in the early weeks when no one knows who [the contestants] are."

In November 2009, Gershman presented his research, "America's Idol: How the Contestant Most Voted for Doesn't Always Win," at the 35th annual conference of the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In his statistics classes, he discusses the show during the months it's on the air, asking students to analyze data and make predictions based on the biases they've learned of during the course.

"I started watching the show to look at the data," he said. "I won't lie. I got hooked. Now, I plan my entire schedule from February to May around it. My friends know, don't bother Jason on Tuesday or Wednesday nights during that time."

For students like Kotkin, discovering the biases behind the show was more interesting than who got eliminated each week.

"There's a story to how it actually works, and it's interesting to see," Kotkin said. "There's a lot that goes into this that the average viewer wouldn't think of or see."

Students Shine in *A Year with Frog and Toad*.....

FOR ALEX GLAMYAN, playing the part of Frog in *A Year with Frog and Toad* meant the chance to shine in his first lead role in a musical. It was also a unique opportunity to work behind the scenes with professional artist Theo Edmonds, J.D., M.H.A., who designed the set.

GLAMYAN, a senior majoring in music with a minor in theatre, performed in the premier production of the current Season of the Arts at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. The college's Division of Performing and Visual Arts will explore this college's annual academic theme of identity through creativity, self-expression, and artistic productions such as *A Year with Frog and Toad* (for the 2010–2011 Season of the Arts schedule, see page 28).

Edmonds, an accomplished poet and artist who participated in this year's Art Basel in Miami Beach, spent several days with students. In the on-campus Performing and Visual Arts Wing of the Don Taft University Center, students worked side-by-side with Edmonds as he designed and painted the colorful set for their production of the Tony Award-nominated musical, which was written by brothers Robert and Willie Reale and based on the children's stories *Frog and Toad*.

Describing the set's vivid color and whimsical design, Edmonds said, "It's very Dr. Seuss-meets-Tim Burton. I wanted to give kind of a tour of American abstract painting over the past 100 years. But it's also very modern and very fresh. All the pieces work together in a story-telling fashion to support the action on the stage."

"It is an invaluable experience whenever a professional comes in to work with students who are looking to pursue careers much like the one he or she has," Glamyan said. "Getting that sort of mentorship gives you a perspective of exactly what you want to do or what you aspire to do. It gives you an idea of what you can put into your own creativity."

The production was made possible by a range of cast, crew, and faculty members from across Nova Southeastern University, including alumni and current students with majors as diverse as theatre, psychology, and marketing. Jett Canary, M.F.A., served as director and choreographer. Daniel Gelbmann, M.F.A., and Bill J. Adams, D.M.A., both assistant professors at the college's Division of Performing and Visual Arts, served as production designer and vocal director, respectively.

^ Guest artist Theo Edmonds, J.D., M.H.A., works with students from the college on the creation of the set.

< Lead actors (L–R): students Alex Glamyan and Joshua Oliveras

Michael Caldwell, D.M.A., director of the division, said productions such as *A Year with Frog and Toad* allow audience members of all ages to explore personal identity and how it relates to the story's theme of friendship.

"In this area of the arts, we suspend belief to allow the imagination to explore definition and, in this case, how we define and identify with friendship," Caldwell said. "If you examine a fairy tale or a myth, you will find that there is some philosophical wisdom in it. People who identify with Frog, the eternal optimist, will see one portion. And so will people who identify with Toad, who worries about everything. It allows everyone to come to the platform and make their own decision." FF

One Professor Asks: *Does Bilingualism Benefit the Brain?*

BILINGUAL SPEAKERS have distinct advantages, primarily, the ability to understand and communicate with others in two languages.

But does speaking more than one language have a more significant and lasting impact on the brain? Can it stave off the decline in cognitive functions associated with aging in the brain? Does it suppress distracting or irrelevant information, enabling bilingual speakers to perform better at complex attention tasks?

These are some of the questions behind a research study by Mercedes Fernandez, Ph.D., associate professor at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences.

Fernandez, who specializes in neuropsychology, was recently awarded the Chancellor's Faculty Research and Development Grant (CFRDG) and the Dean's Mini Grant to pursue a one-year research project that will begin this fall at Nova Southeastern University.

Fernandez's research will highlight how speaking a second language enhances the complex attention abilities thought to be handled by the brain's frontal lobe, which is associated with short-term memory, attention, and higher mental functions. This is significant because the frontal lobe is the last area to fully develop in the human brain and the first to decline with age.

"The question is do you maintain frontal lobe cognitive abilities longer with age if you are bilingual?" she said.

Research has shown that people who are monolingual—those who speak only one language—perform better than bilingual speakers at certain tasks such as quickly identifying and naming an object. Bilingual speakers, however, appear to perform better at complex attention tasks because their brains have an enhanced ability to inhibit distracting or irrelevant information.

"When you are bilingual, the brain has to suppress one language in order to allow you to speak in the other. This inhibition generalizes to nonlanguage tasks," Fernandez said. For instance, "when you are able to identify an object by more than one name, you begin to appreciate the arbitrariness of language. This ability allows you to ignore the irrelevant feature of the object and to pay attention to the relevant dimension."

Fernandez cites the example of showing a group of bilingual and monolingual speakers a sponge that looks like a rock. Bilingual speakers, less distracted by the dimensions of an object, will more often correctly identify the object as a sponge.

"When you look at the research, the complex attention abilities associated with the frontal lobe of the brain are stronger in bilinguals than in monolinguals," Fernandez said, adding that is true even among bilingual speakers in their 80s.

In the study, Fernandez will evaluate the brain's electrical activity to measure how neurons respond to stimuli and how those responses differ among bilingual and one-language speakers. The ultimate goal is to measure and compare the nonlanguage related cognitive abilities among the two populations and uncover how the brain processes this information.

Two of Fernandez's students are working on the bilingualism project as research assistants. Alicia Harnisch is a biology major who plans to pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Daniela Padron plans to attend medical school. Both students have minors in psychology and presented research at the Undergraduate Student Symposium in spring 2010.

Mercedes Fernandez, Ph.D., associate professor, and her research students monitoring brain activity in response to language-based prompts

"Being bilingual myself, I have become very interested in the field, and observing Dr. Fernandez's passion for her research has made me become interested in learning and participating more in the research process," Padron said. "Research with Dr. Fernandez has not only allowed me to learn how the research process works, it has allowed me to learn things about myself by studying bilingualism and psychology in general."

Research and faculty-student mentorship are integral parts of the college's mission. Fernandez offers guidance and works closely with students to ensure that they gain insight and hands-on experience that will help them as they pursue graduate degrees and careers.

"Hands-on experience is irreplaceable when it comes to developing and implementing research protocols," said Harnisch, whose interest lies in psychopharmacology. "Working with Dr. Fernandez on this project has provided me with the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the research process. We have gone from literature reviews to analysis of the archival data and are preparing to collect data for our own empirical research. Putting together our presentation for the Undergraduate Student Symposium was a unique experience that helped prepare me for this aspect of my future career."

Fernandez also is working in collaboration with Jaime Tartar, Ph.D., associate professor/research coordinator in the college, and Brian Gold, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Kentucky.

Fernandez and the students will begin collecting data this fall using volunteers from NSU. Participants must be between 20 and 40 years old and speak English only or speak fluently in English and Spanish.

Such research may also help shed light on whether learning a second language at middle age or older will still reap the brain benefits and delay a loss of cognitive abilities.

"There may be a lot more flexibility in the brain than we thought as far as learning at an older age," Fernandez said. "Can the brain still master a new task at middle age or older? We may find those answers from this kind of research."

Fernandez, who arrived at NSU in 2009, will teach a new course this fall in neuropsychology, which is the study of brain behavior relationships. At the college's Hot Topics in Psychology Series in March 2010, Fernandez presented her research on "Neuropsychological Test Performance in Monolinguals Compared to Bilinguals: Advantages and Disadvantages of Speaking Two Languages."

NOT FAR FROM THE TREE

The College Plants Seeds for Success

Alumni of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences enter the next phase of their education or careers prepared to make a difference in their personal and professional lives as well as their chosen fields.

Roy Jacob Smith IV
Class of 1997
Division of Humanities

Roy Jacob Smith IV, J.D., a successful personal injury and family law attorney, has come a long way since his first undergraduate legal studies class at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. Thirteen years later, he is still in contact with Stephen Levitt, LL.M.; Charles Zelden, Ph.D.; Lester Lindley, Ph.D., J.D.; and David McNaron, Ph.D.—inspiring professors he fondly refers to as "the mighty four."

A recipient of the 2010 Celebration of Excellence Distinguished Alumni Award, Smith graduated with a B.S. in Legal Studies. This degree program advances students' writing skills while exploring historical, political, and philosophical themes related to law. This was the first step that led Smith to where he is today, practicing law at Weiss Legal Group in Orlando, Florida.

During his first year of law school, Smith was concerned when a professor called him to the front of the classroom. To his relief, Smith was recognized as one of only a few students whose first required paper met the necessary requirements on the first draft. He would later write for the *Florida Law Review*, an accomplishment he credits to the four college professors who taught him how to write.

Zelden said he knew his former student would not only become a lawyer, but that he would become an exceptional lawyer. "He had the interest and the focus—and his making *Law Review* only proved this point."

Smith ultimately graduated from law school with honors, having served as the senior articles editor and chief judicial panelist of the *Florida Law Review*. In June 2010, he was selected as a Rising Star by *Florida Super Lawyers*, an honor awarded to only 2.5 percent of Florida attorneys.

Today, Smith remembers the professors at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences as "passionate teachers with great character" who are eager to help their students succeed.

Nehal Gheewala
Class of 2009
Division of Math, Science, and Technology

Alumnus Nehal Gheewala took advantage of the university's Dual Admission Program—an academic commitment that has already paid off. After earning a B.S. in Biology at the college, he has returned to NSU to complete a four-year graduate program in osteopathic medicine.

The summer after his graduation, Gheewala was awarded an internship at the Washington, D.C., office of Mel Martinez, the former United States senator from Florida. This was a chance for Gheewala to learn the ropes on Capitol Hill, develop his interest in health care policy, and connect his classroom experience to events in the national spotlight.

"I got to listen in and learn how health care policy affects Floridians," Gheewala said of his experience. During that time, he met with lawmakers, witnessed the health care debate in full swing on Capitol Hill, and attended historical events such as the confirmation hearing of United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. "I learned quite a bit about how people are affected by our current health care legislation and how they could be affected by proposed legislation," he said.

As an undergraduate at the college, Gheewala worked with Mark Jaffe, D.P.M., associate professor in the college, as a volunteer at community outreach health fairs and events such as A Day for Children. "He clearly recognized the intrinsic value of being involved in and out of the classroom for his professional development here at the college," Jaffe said.

By his senior year, Gheewala was mentoring other students. He also served as president of the Pre-Medical Society and president and founding member of the NSU chapter of the Pre-Student Osteopathic Medical Association.

"We were privileged at the college to have small class sizes and teachers that focus on their students," he said. "They always knew me by name."

With futures as diverse as the college's academic programs, these graduates exemplify the value of gaining a personalized, liberal arts education at the heart of a major university.

Natalie A. Solomon
Class of 2009
Division of Performing and Visual Arts

Alumna Natalie A. Solomon has not traveled far from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences since her graduation as a 2009 Outstanding Student.

Solomon, who earned a B.A. degree in Theatre, is working on the Nova Southeastern University campus as a teacher's aide at the Baudhuin Preschool for children with autism. At the same time, she is pursuing a graduate degree in exceptional student education.

"I am working toward becoming a special education teacher," said Solomon, who completed a minor in psychology at the college and whose professional goal is to help children with special needs.

As an undergraduate student, Solomon also worked part time as a teacher's aide at Challenger Elementary School, assisting children with autism. She excelled in academics while engaging in college life and community outreach. She was actively involved in the college's theatre program, appearing on stage or working behind the scenes in productions such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Laramie Project, Dead Man Walking,* and *The Women of Lockerbie.*

A member of Alpha Chi National College Honor Society, Solomon earned a place on the Dean's List for four consecutive years and participated in travel-study programs in England and Scotland through the college's history and theatre courses. In the community, she volunteered for programs such as Prevent Child Abuse America and Women in Distress.

"I had a great experience at NSU," said Solomon, who is originally from Kingston, Jamaica. "I met some amazing people and professors, and it is because of that experience that I have returned to NSU to continue my studies."

Briana O'Dowd
Class of 2009
Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Alumna Briana O'Dowd earned a long list of accomplishments while she was an honors student pursuing a B.S. in Psychology at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. Now a doctoral candidate in the same academic field, she hopes to return to the college one day as a psychology professor.

O'Dowd credits her undergraduate experience for igniting her passion for psychology and research. "All of the professors challenged me intellectually. Honors courses focused on critical thinking, and professional debate between students prepared me for graduate seminars. Research practicum and assisting faculty research were invaluable experiences for me as an undergraduate."

O'Dowd's current research interests include studying the importance of pre and postnatal social experiences using the bobwhite quail as an animal model. "I see myself as a scientist," she said. "[I'm] trying to answer one of the hardest questions in psychology: What makes us who we are?"

While at the college, O'Dowd was named an Outstanding Student of the graduating class of 2009. She was a member of NSU's Dual Admission Program; the Undergraduate Honors Program; Alpha Chi National College Honor Society; and Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology. In 2007 and 2008, she was named the Honors Distinguished Student Scholar. Her research poster won second-place honors at the 2008 Undergraduate Student Symposium.

O'Dowd also dedicated many service hours at community organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Hands on Miami, which organizes a variety of volunteer events throughout the year. She was awarded the Congressional Award Gold Medal for her volunteer service and personal achievements. "With education comes responsibility to change the world around us," she said.

Blazing New Trails

As a firefighter and paramedic, Carlos Garcia knows his job can mean the difference between life and death in an emergency.

Determined to go a step further to help others in crisis, Garcia returned to school after a 10-year absence. At 32, the psychology major finished his bachelor's degree at Nova Southeastern University and was named one of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences 2010 Outstanding Students. Garcia addressed the graduating class at the Undergraduate Commencement ceremony.

A former United States marine who served in Iraq, Garcia has worked for six years at the St. Lucie County Fire Rescue Department, where he was named Paramedic of the Year in 2008. He continues to work full time and plans to begin graduate school this fall.

"I want to continue my education, and I really enjoy what I do," Garcia said. "For me, my work is a tie-in to my studies in psychology. In some ways, my 15 or 20 minutes with that patient in distress is like a mini-therapy session. If you can put them at ease, their levels of pain can decrease, their levels of anxiety decrease, and they're able to deal with the situation much better. A little bit of reassurance goes a long way with patients who are in critical situations. If you can do that in such an acute situation, you should be able to do so in any type of therapy session."

When Garcia enrolled at NSU two years ago with an associate's degree, he found opportunities that he didn't know existed. Although he took courses online, he became engaged with the college's academic life with encouragement from faculty members such as Jaime Tartar, Ph.D., associate professor/research coordinator at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. Garcia conducted research in areas such as cognitive deficits in HIV-infected women. He joined the NSU Psychology Club. He is a member of Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology.

"As an online student, I had not been to classes in a long time," he said. "Professor Tartar asked me if I wanted to get involved in doing research. She completely opened my world. She told me about research opportunities and the possibility of getting into graduate school. She has truly been a godsend for me."

Garcia's goal is to earn a doctoral degree, practice clinical psychology, and help save lives from the inside out. In his job, he often comes across patients suffering from depression, addiction, or emotional disorders. As a psychologist, Garcia believes he can do more to help than just drop these patients off at the hospital door. He wants to treat the root of their problems, not just the acute symptoms that lead to a 911 call or a suicide attempt.

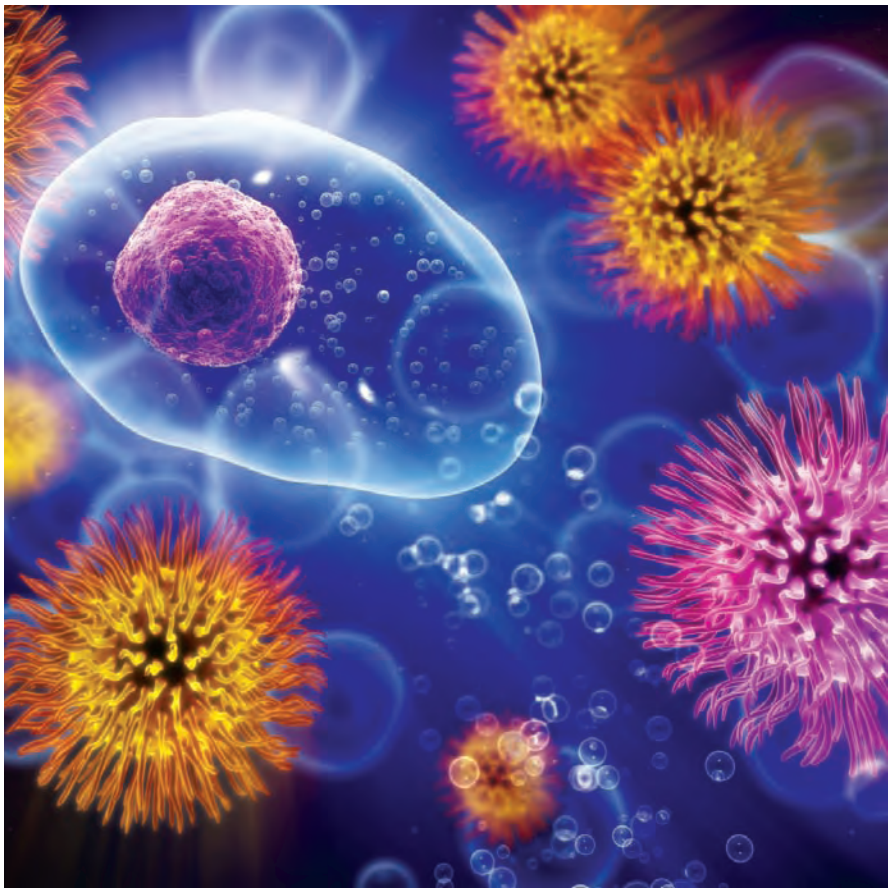
"When it came to going back to school, it was a matter of going back and forth and finding my true desire. I decided I wanted to study... concepts of human behavior. What makes people tick? There is so much to learn about the human brain, which makes it more interesting for me."

Garcia's message to graduates is, in part, to choose their own path and not be afraid to change course.

"While you have made it to a high place by earning your diploma, this shouldn't be the end. Continue to strive for more knowledge and more wisdom. Go out there and be the person who can make the difference."

"Professor Tartar asked me if I wanted to get involved in doing research. She completely opened my world. She told me about research opportunities and the possibility of getting into graduate school. She has truly been a godsend for me."

The Biology Program: Advancing Careers and the Future of Science



THIS SUMMER, Yaneve Shemesh spent a few days dissecting a cadaver. He also performs supervised medical screenings at community and campus health fairs. But, Shemesh is not a surgeon, nor is he a medical student—yet.

A senior at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, Shemesh is taking full advantage of the many learning opportunities available to him and other undergraduate biology majors at Nova Southeastern University. These experiences have helped Shemesh move toward his goal of becoming a doctor. And such programs and partnerships have made biology one of the college's largest and most sought-after majors.

"Students in the biology major focus on their primary mission of learning and expanding their college experiences in the areas of research and community services. They work to make positive differences in our society," said Matthew He, Ph.D., director of the college's Division of Math, Science, and Technology. Graduates of the college's biology program can pursue a diverse choice of careers in professions such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, optometry, research science, science education, and within the biotech industry.

An example of the program's success, Shemesh is one of five biology students at NSU who participated in the 11th annual International Human Cadaver Prosection Program at Indiana University School of Medicine—Northwest. The students (two recently graduated) were selected for the cadaver prosection program from among more than 200 applicants worldwide. The two-day program was an intensive, educational experience for students pursuing careers in medicine. Participants learned anatomy, dissection, and radiology and performed dissections on cadavers for use by student-doctors.

Many biology students also work closely with faculty members to conduct laboratory, clinical, or field research, sometimes traveling to exotic locations to collect data. Students present their findings at the college Undergraduate Student Symposium and at regional, national, and international conferences.

Biology major Calista Siobhan Ming, who is in the Undergraduate Honors Program and plans to study optometry, spent a month this summer conducting field research in Barbados. She collected data for research into the chemical components of atmospheric (dust) aerosols. Studying the composition, sources, and evolution pathways of these aerosols will give scientists a better understanding of their role and impact on climate change, air quality, and public health.

"Research is something we try to encourage," said Mark Jaffe, D.P.M., associate professor in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. "The goal of the biology program is to provide an assortment of opportunities and match students according to their interests and their ability. We are not going to hand it to them. They have to earn it. We want to take someone who is a go-getter and who has that burning desire to learn and place them in the best environment that we can."

Corynne Dignan and Nergess Taheri, both biology majors, spent several weeks this summer in Graz, Austria, where they assisted a team of transplant surgeons. In addition to being on call for surgeries, their responsibilities included daily hospital rounds and working on three or four research projects. This program, one of the first of its kind for NSU undergraduate students, was developed and coordinated by Jaffe.

"I was called one day to assist in an emergency multiorgan explantation in another city," said Taheri, a senior at the college who is in the Undergraduate Honors Program. "I took a two-hour ambulance ride and assisted in a five-hour surgery that removed the liver and kidneys from a 74-year-old donor.

"This experience was a once-in-a-lifetime chance. I feel that this opportunity gave me practical hands-on experience of what [until now] I have learned only in textbooks," said Taheri.

Norberto Mancera, biology major, oversees medical student participants at the prosection program during a suture workshop. Mancera provides assistance to those learning basic suture techniques on pig skin prior to practicing them on human cadavers as part of the program.

Corynne Dignan participates in NSU's Dual Admission Program and plans to pursue a career as a surgeon. "This internship allowed me to assist in the operating theater, an opportunity that will not be seen again until I am a surgical resident," she said. "Every morning, we reported to the surgical ward to observe and participate in the blood work and rounds. We were able to take blood from patients on our own by the end of the internship. Usually, our days were spent on the operating floor either observing or assisting in the multiorgan explantations and implantations, heart surgery, and many other amazing procedures."

An opportunity such as this as well as laboratory or field research provides students with hands-on learning and exploration, practical experience, and a better chance of acceptance into graduate schools.

Shemesh, who has a minor in chemistry, also participated in the Clinic Exploration Program, which allows students to shadow medical professionals in partnership with NSU's Health Professions Division.

Besides dissecting cadavers during this summer's prosection program, he learned how to perform and read radiology scans.

"To dissect a cadaver is an experience you would usually get in medical school. Why not take the chance to get that opportunity now?" said Shemesh, who hopes to one day work at a trauma center. FF

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

Students Witness Life After Genocide in the Balkans

INSIDE A MOSQUE in the war-scarred city of Sarajevo, student Konstantine Lagos learned something impossible to grasp in a classroom.

"WE WERE COMING from the lone synagogue in the city when we heard the call to prayer at the mosque, and we literally just followed on impulse. We were so curious. Those 20 minutes of prayer became a manifestation of everything we learned in class. This was such an incredible, eye-opening experience that I will never forget," said Lagos, one of nine students from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences at Nova Southeastern University who traveled to Europe during spring break 2010 as part of the travel-study course Genocide in the 20th Century and Beyond.

THE 12-DAY TRIP, led by Gary Gershman, J.D., Ph.D., associate professor, took students to the historic cities of Belgrade, Serbia; Krakow, Poland; and Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the tell-tale signs of the civil war are widely visible. The conflict from 1992 to 1995 between the three main ethnic groups—the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims—resulted in genocide committed by the Serbs against the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Such experiences are the goal of the college's Travel Study Program, which encourages students to engage with, discover, and explore other countries and cultures. The program encompasses a wide range of international academic and cultural experiences, providing an opportunity to pursue in-depth topics relevant to students' majors, study another culture, or learn another language. Lagos and three other travel-study students, Lauren Butler, Maxwell Hyman, and Calista Siobhan Ming, also were participants in the Undergraduate Honors Program.

For Gershman's students, the study of genocide was deeply rooted in the trip abroad. In Sarajevo, the road that once led to the Olympic Village of the 1984 international games is now lined with cemeteries, filled with the graves of the war dead. In Belgrade, the class met with Serbs who criticized the United States because they felt they were unfairly blamed for the genocide in Bosnia.

In Poland, students visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp where about a million Jews and at least a half a million others were murdered during World War II.

"To talk about genocide is one thing," Gershman said. "But to stand in the middle of Auschwitz-Birkenau in the cold and snow, or to walk the streets of Sarajevo seeing the scars of the three-year siege, or to sit in a room with the Women of Srebrenica and have them look you in the eye while they describe the last time they saw their sons before they were taken away from them by the Serbs and slaughtered—this creates a unique, impactful educational experience."

Maxwell Hyman, a legal studies major, is the grandson of a Holocaust survivor. His late grandfather lost 11 members of his family at the Auschwitz death camp.

"Walking from the train depot to the site of the gas chamber was very momentous," Hyman said. "I was thinking about my family and how privileged I am to be alive. If my grandfather had died there, I wouldn't be alive today. I keep seeing it in my mind. It was my own 'March of the Living.'"

One of the most pivotal events was the students' meeting with the Women of Srebrenica, an organization based in Sarajevo that is dedicated to finding the thousands of bodies still missing from the massacre of men in the town of Srebrenica in July 1995. Some of the women wept as they told their stories.

Business major Freslaine Saint Louis said the experience made her feel like "we live in a bubble. We hear about [war and genocide], but to see the people and how they live really changed my mind set. There are people struggling with things that are so much bigger than what we experience."

The shared experience forged a bond between the students whose diverse backgrounds were a touch point for learning from each other. The nine students come from Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and Greek Orthodox backgrounds.

"Learning about the harsh realities of human nature and history forces you to open your eyes and question what you thought you knew about the world," said Anam Ismail, a legal studies major who is Muslim. "Further, genocide truly encompasses many aspects of academics, namely psychology, history, and the law. On multiple occasions, I have quite passionately pointed out examples of genocide, which often leads to discussions regarding how genocide fits into international law and its various legal implications. In many ways, the trip has provided me with a canvas, and everything I learn from here on out will add to it."

Ismail encouraged fellow classmates to enter the mosque in Sarajevo. She helped the women properly cover their heads.

"If it wasn't for Anam, I would not have gone into the mosque," said Lauren Watkins, a junior majoring in communications studies. "Our group was completely diverse. We each brought something to the table. I learned as much from [fellow students] as I did from anything else on the trip."

For Konstantine Lagos, a mother's tears will always remind him of the trip.

"One of the Women of Srebrenica who had lost her son was pouring her heart out," Lagos said. "She was trying to express her pain. You could see the pain in her eyes. When she looked at me, she said she wondered what her son would look like now." FF

2010–2011/SEASON OF THE ARTS

Hosted by the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences

The Premier Series

A Year with Frog and Toad

October 8–10, 2010

Tony Award-nominated comedic hit based on the children's stories

Wonder of the World

November 19–21, 2010

An absurd comedy of a young wife who flees her husband and runs off to Niagara Falls

The Voice of Dickens: A Concert of Holiday Carols

Friday, December 3, 2010

The Bossa Nova Chorale retells the Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol*

Dance Concert

March 25–27, 2011

NSU Dance ensemble performs original choreography

Twelfth Night, or What You Will

April 8–10 and April 15–17, 2011

Shakespeare's classic comedy, complete with clowns, lovers, mistaken identities, and shipwrecks

Renaissance and Juliet: An Evening of Drama and Music

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

The Bossa Nova Chorale, student actors perform chivalric music and scenes from Shakespeare

The Studio Series

Dance Works

November 5–6, 2010

Showcases new choreography by NSU Dance in an informal setting

IMPROV JAM!

Friday, January 21, 2011

An evening of sketch comedy, improvisational theatre, and pop music

Festival of Student Works

April 29–30, 2011

Showcases student talents in dance and musical theatre

The Exhibition Series

The Lost Series: An Exhibition of Drawings by Virginia Fifield

September 24–October 20, 2010

This Is Who I Am: North | South Print Exchange Exhibition

November 1–December 3, 2010

One: Third Annual Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition

January 31–March 17, 2011

Say What? Third Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition

April 4–27, 2011

The Faculty Series

Agony and Ecstasy: A Musical Exploration of Suffering and Redemption

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Piano works by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Liszt, Chopin, Bach, and Messiaen

Each year, the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences brings to campus a series of prominent leaders in their fields through the Distinguished Speakers Series. In conjunction with these campus visits, special events are often organized to reflect the speaker's field and expertise as well as the college's annual academic theme. Tickets are limited; availability to students, alumni, and the community will be announced for each lecture. For details, visit *www.fcas.nova.edu/articles/dss*.

November 3, 2010

Spike Lee, M.F.A.
Film Producer, Director, Actor

Spike Lee's films are outspoken and provocative sociopolitical critiques that challenge cultural assumptions about race, class, urban violence, and gender identity. His 1989 movie *Do the Right Thing* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. In 2006, Lee directed and produced a four-hour documentary for television, *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, about life in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

February 17, 2011

Richard Dawkins, M.A., D.Phil.
Popular Science Author,
Evolutionary Biologist, Ethologist

Richard Dawkins is a former professor for public understanding of science at Oxford University. He came to prominence with his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, which popularized the gene-centered view of evolution. In 1982, he introduced into the field of evolutionary biology an influential concept that the phenotypic effects of a gene can stretch far into the environment. He is well-known for describing the processes of evolution as analogous to a blind watchmaker.

March 24, 2011

Vilayanur S. Ramachandran, M.D., Ph.D.
Neurologist, Director of the Center for Brain and Cognition
Professor, University of California—San Diego

Vilayanur S. Ramachandran works in the fields of behavioral neurology and psychophysics. His experiments have had a profound impact on the way we think about the brain. In 1995, he delivered the "Decade of the Brain" lecture at the 25th annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience. Ramachandran has published more than 120 papers in scientific journals and has lectured widely on art, visual perception, and the brain.

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WHAT IS REVEALED BY A SPOTLIGHT? TAKE A LOOK.

"Discovering a New Path and Passion Through Research"

Alumna Sylvia Duluc-Silva interviewed residents in Mexico about the disappearing native manatees.

"Trading College Avenue for K Street"

Honors student Max Hyman interned as a Washington Center legislative aide.

"Technology Trouble Shooter"

Alumnus Allen Furmanski helps information technology professionals around the world solve problems.

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Tell us your story. Email *ois@nova.edu* to shine a spotlight on your accomplishments and experiences since graduation.