Dear Learning & Cognition alumni, current students, and friends,

I am so excited to report that our Educational Psychology program has been ranked in the top 20 by *U.S. News and World Report*. Our fully online master's program in Learning & Cognition continues to expand. We saw its first graduates this year and welcomed more students into the program. Additionally, over the last 10 years, the number of students in the Learning and Cognition program overall has doubled in size to 47!

Our students and alumni continue to shine, doing all kinds of amazing things and winning all kinds of awards, as you can see in their updates. In particular, the L&C faculty were pleased to be able to award Shawna Durtschi, Fang Liang, and Laith Jum‘ah with L&C research funds to support their preliminary research studies. As you know, resources for conducting research that makes a difference in the lives of all learners can be hard to come by, so donations to our Learning & Cognition foundation account are extremely helpful. After we have raised $20,000 (a goal we hope to meet by 2020), we will convert this fund to an endowment account that will generate interest that we can use to pay for scholarships. If you are interested in giving, please let me (aroehrig@fsu.edu) or Kevin Derryberry (kderryberry@foundation.fsu.edu) know. See more details about how to give at the end of this newsletter. Every little bit helps!

Alumni, we would love your feedback on the L&C program, as you are important members of our community, too. Please email me (aroehrig@fsu.edu) if you have any comments or suggestions! I hope you enjoy reading about what some of your colleagues—including alumni, current students and faculty—are up to in this newsletter. There are so many interesting projects and areas of study and inspirational updates!

Cheers,

Alysia

Alysia Roehrig, PhD
L&C Graduate Program Coordinator

2019 Learning & Cognition Newsletter
FACULTY UPDATES

Beth Phillips

The biggest new development for me in 2018-2019 is that I am happy to share that I have been awarded a promotion to full professor by Florida State University. I feel so privileged to have been able to build my career for all these years right here in Learning and Cognition and look forward to more years here in the program and the department.

The last year has been busy and productive for me. I continue to focus most of my research on early childhood school readiness, especially for children from backgrounds of poverty and other potential adversities, and for children whose early language skills are below what is typical for their age group. Together with colleagues at the Florida Center for Reading Research, I am working on a very large-scale intervention project (funded by the Institute of Education Sciences), providing small group instruction to high-need children in preschool and kindergarten. We are conducting this project in school districts all across Florida and some in Georgia, too. We aim to learn more about the timing and intensity of small group instruction in supporting children's critical early language and literacy skills.

I have also become even more interested in children's very early language skills. Within the Florida Learning Disabilities Research Center, which involves six large projects, I am leading a longitudinal study following the language and literacy development of children from ages two to five. We are particularly focused on children who come from families where a parent or sibling already has, or used to have, a known reading or language problem. My third big project is even more on children's language development—we have completed data collection on about 100 preschool teachers and over 600 children and are investigating classroom supports for early language growth in early childhood classrooms, using massive amounts of audio and video recordings to really learn what goes on in these classrooms across the year. This project is huge and will be part of my focus for years to come.

Within the program, I had the opportunity, and great fun, to teach a seminar again on family involvement in education, which looks at this phenomenon for children from early childhood through going to college. I am also excited to be able to teach again a newer seminar I created several years ago that focuses on critical thinking. A big element in this class is also about learning how to use critical thinking skills to support the quality of professional (and even personal) writing. I will be teaching this seminar in fall 2019.

During the past year, I have supervised many of the master's students in our online and comprehensive examination-focused program. Over the past several years, this program has grown substantially, so I have been organizing material and support systems for these students with huge help from the other faculty and advanced doctoral student Laura Jakiel. We think that this program will just keep getting bigger and better, so spread the word to friends and colleagues! Several of my advisees in this program have recently graduated and several more are on track to complete the program this fall. Congratulations to all! An even bigger congratulations to doctoral graduate Shiyi Chen who I had the honor of hooding for her Ph.D. on August 2, 2019. Shiyi is off to bigger and better things as a new assistant professor in Idaho! So very proud of her and all my current and former doctoral advisees.

Jeannine Turner

I am currently advising 13 doctoral students and two master's students. It's a lot of students, and we have been very productive; over the past year, we conducted 16 conference presentations!

My research continues to focus on issues related to students' motivation, emotions, self-regulation, and learning within the fields of engineering education and foreign/second language learning. Chena Jinjushang Chen, Min Tang, Laith Jum‘ah, and I continue to investigate engineering students’ epistemological beliefs about engineering knowledge and learning. All three of these students have interviewed engineering students to help us understand these complex processes. Andria Cole, another of my students, plans to interview male African American professors who are currently STEM
Alysia Roehrig

I am still excited to be the coordinator of the Learning and Cognition program, even after 10 years! It is such a joy to see all the students studying important things and making such great strides in their learning and careers! Additionally, I am so proud to serve as the Co-Director of Research for the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) Developmental Research School's Freedom School. Freedom Schools provide children from low income neighborhoods on Tallahassee’s southside with a free summer camp focused on the power of reading and making a difference in the community. With growing partnerships, over 120 children were served this summer.

In addition to my students’ collaborations, I have had a wonderful opportunity to work with Dr. Banban Li. I met Banban when I went to China in 2017 and was delighted to host her as a visiting scholar this past year. She and I have focused on the “goal complexes” of Chinese students—specifically focusing on students’ reasons (i.e., self-determination theory) for achievement goals. She has been a wonderful addition to our research lab! We will all miss her very much and hope she will continue to collaborate with us for many years.

Because my husband Ralph and I enjoyed England so much last year, we are returning at the end of July. We’ll spend a bit of time in England and then go to the EARLI conference in Aachen, Germany, where I’ll present on some of the work we have been conducting on Chinese students’ goal complexes.

My research focus on students’ motivation for learning a foreign/second language has also been very active. Yanyan Chen recently defended her dissertation; she explored Chinese students’ reasons for majoring in English, their class engagement and self-efficacy, as well as their perceptions of support for autonomy, competence and positive interpersonal relationships. Darcey (Fang Liang) is continuing her interviews with international graduate students about their writing anxiety and ways they cope with their anxiety. Yanyu Pan plans to analyze our large Chinese dataset with respect to students’ self-regulation and learning strategies for her prelim study, and Juhee Kim is using the dataset to conduct a cluster analysis of students’ reasons for learning English for her master’s thesis.

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I am particularly proud of my PURPOSE fellow and L&C master’s student, James Hernandez, and my L&C Ph.D. student, Makana Craig, who won best student poster at the Florida Educational Research Association conference last fall. With regards to other research, I continue to collaborate with colleagues in order to study the work done in both the Freedom Schools and PURPOSE programs. In particular, I am interested in understanding what supports children’s reading gains in Freedom Schools, as well as what supports fellows’ researcher identity development and research efficacy in PURPOSE.
Makana Craig
Aloha! My name is Makana and I am a second year PhD student in FSU's Learning and Cognition program. I am originally from Hawai‘i and am an alumna of the University of Hawai‘i Mānoa where I obtained bachelor's degrees in English and Hawaiian Studies, a minor in Business Administration, and a master's in Educational Administration. As a graduate of Kamehameha Schools—a K-12 institution for Native Hawaiians—and Hawaiian Studies major in college, I am particularly drawn to culturally relevant and responsive education. In this regard, I felt the best way I could serve my community was through education. When my partner received word that he would be transferred to Panama City, Florida for work, I eagerly applied to Florida State University determined to earn a PhD and work toward my goal of one day becoming faculty and, eventually, an administrator in higher education. My hope is that in such a role, I will be better able to advocate for underserved students.

Julieth Diaz Benitez
I will be starting my second year in the PhD program this fall. Over the last year, I presented the findings from my master’s thesis at the FERA conference in South Florida, and worked as a research associate at the FSU College of Medicine, where I coordinated various studies focused on chronic diseases and cognitive functioning in adults. Now, I am excited to start a new role as a graduate assistant at the new Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) at FSU. I am also working with Dr. Alysia Roehrig as one of the TAs for the online Research Methods in Education course.

My research interests relate to teacher and faculty professional development. During the rest of this year, I will be working on my preliminary study proposal, which will focus on how teachers’ beliefs and perceptions of their surrounding environments may impact their emotions and attitudes toward professional development initiatives. I hope this will be a productive year!

Michael P. Mesa
I am a doctoral student in the Learning & Cognition program at Florida State University, where I also earned my M.S. and a certificate in Measurement and Statistics. I earned my bachelor’s degree in Psychology with a minor in Statistics from Florida International University. My research interests include examining the factors related with the implementation of high-quality language/literacy instruction, including classroom management and culturally relevant pedagogy. I have recently presented my research at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Society for Research in Child Development Conference, British Dyslexia Association Conference, Marvalene Hughes Research in Education Conference, Florida Educational Research Association Conference, and Eastern Educational Research Association Conference. I am passionate about preparing and empowering future generations of educators and researchers. I have taught face-to-face and online courses for preservice teachers in Classroom Assessment and Educational Psychology. I am a recipient of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award at FSU, which recognizes excellence in teaching by graduate students throughout the university. Additionally, I mentor graduate students conducting research at Florida A&M University Developmental Research School’s Freedom Schools, a free, culturally-relevant, reading-focused, summer program in Leon County.
Pam Burris

My name is Pam Burris and I'm a doctoral candidate in Dr. Phillips’ lab. I am working to complete my dissertation examining relations of neighborhood and parent characteristics to acculturation and to the home literacy environment of ELL preschoolers from Hispanic/Latino homes. After a lengthy review and revision process, my first journal article, co-authored with Dr. Phillips and Dr. Lonigan, was accepted for publication this year in the *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. I currently live in my hometown of Crossville, Tennessee with my husband and two daughters, who are five and two. I love watching their language and literacy skills develop because that has been my primary area of research. I also work part-time as the Executive Director of Kids On The Rise, a local organization that works in partnership with the local school district to provide mentors to students facing opportunity gaps to facilitate their opportunities to succeed.

James Hernandez

Amanda Campos and I were finalists at the first Master's in Four competition out of 33 contestants. We had to present our theses in four minutes to the university. In the competition, I earned 2nd place. Shirley Chen and I were honored at the 2019 Spring Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence. Shirley for the Research and Creativity Award and myself for the 2nd place in the Master's in Four competition.

In the Fall of 2018, Makana Craig, Dr. Roehrig, and I presented “Culturally Responsive Classroom Management in CDF Freedom Schools” at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Florida Educational Research Association Conference, earning the Graduate Student Posters Best Overall Award.

Lastly, I earned the Florida Education Fund’s McKnight Fellowship for the Doctoral Program starting this Fall 2019.
**Margareta Thomson**

Hello L&C friends. This was an amazing year for me, both professionally and personally. While we had a bit of moving around as a family this year, and consequently had to deal with adjusting to new environments, the outcome was great. During the 2018-19 academic year, I received a US Core Scholar Fulbright Award, and I had a very rewarding experience working with K-12 students and teachers in public schools in Romania. Also, I was able to engage professionally with faculty and researchers from various institutions in Romania and abroad during my Fulbright year. My 5-year-old son joined me in Romania for five months, and I hope he will remember the time spent here and all the friends he made during our journey. Other great news: I also received this year the University Faculty Scholar Award at NC State University, in which yearly, 20 faculty per university are selected as excellent scholars. I am proud to be one of them!

Dr. Thomson graduated with a Ph.D. from the Learning & Cognition program in 2008 and has been a faculty member of Educational Psychology in the College of Education at North Carolina State University. Her research interests include teacher and student motivation and beliefs, STEM education, and teacher development. Dr. Thomson’s Fulbright project, “Fostering Academic Motivation and a STEM

**Kayla Sedgewick**

Kayla Sedgwick graduated with her M.S. from the Learning & Cognition program in August 2014 and currently lives with her fiancé in Denver, CO. Since graduation, she has been working full-time as a professional research assistant at the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

She is currently disseminating a Blueprints evidenced-based research program, LifeSkills Training (LST), to approximately 200 middle school teachers in 50 schools across 14 districts in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana. Additionally, Kayla is currently working on two manuscripts with colleagues related to effective suicide prevention programs for youth and risk and protective factors of suicide.

Before working at CSPV, Kayla was a lab manager in the Clinical Psychology department where she managed a project related to traumatic grief in bereaved children and families. Her work involved evaluating clinical interventions to improve services for grieving children and families.

In addition to her academic work, Kayla is currently a consultant acting as project coordinator for the Center for Transformative Movement (CTM). CTM facilitates movement meditation interventions in the city of Boulder to help community members alleviate stress and anxiety through movement. Finally, and more personally, Kayla looks forward to starting a family in the near future.
Boon Lim

I did not graduate from the Learning and Cognition Ph.D. program. Instead, I left the program with the support of Dr. Alysia Rhoerig and Dr. Jeannine Turner to join the US Army in 2013. Since then, I’ve gone to South Carolina for Army Basic Combat Training, Texas for Medical Laboratory Training, and Washington State for duty assignment. There, I served as a soldier in the Blood Support Unit and was reassigned to Blood Transfusion Services at the Madigan Army Medical Center. During my final year in the Army, I had another reassignment to work at the Department of Clinical Investigation. Then, I left the uniformed service in 2018 and traveled to Southeast Asia, Scandinavia, and the Caribbean Islands before moving to Washington, D.C. with Bart, my husband.

The knowledge I have gained from the Learning and Cognition program put me in my current position as an Organizational Leadership Development Contract Consultant for the Department of the Navy. I apply learning psychology in almost everything I do. Some of my recent projects involve planning Navy Defense Acquisition Workforce training programs and facilitating workplace learning environments. Although I have left the program, it did not leave me. Both Alysia and Jeannine provided a path for me to do more. During Alysia’s last D.C. visit, we exchanged many memories and discussed the many possibilities ahead of me. By the end of this year, I will start another Ph.D. application and hope to continue to contribute to the betterment of this society. The FSU Educational Psychology and Learning Systems Department rocks!

Crissie M. Jameson

I completed my Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, Learning and Cognition at FSU in 2008. I received a postdoctoral fellowship with the Association for Institutional Research shortly thereafter which led me to work eight years in institutional research offices for two different universities. Those statistics courses finally paid off!

I taught K-12 prior to my doctoral studies at FSU and transitioned to teaching at the college level (part time during my work in IR and full time for the past 5 years) and am now an academic coordinator at a large, online university. I love serving on dissertation committees and mentoring other faculty.

My time at FSU served me well, and I am forever thankful to Dr. Turner and the other faculty who provided me with guidance, knowledge, coffee and a shoulder to cry on. My research interests are virtual mentoring of online doctoral students, teacher motivation and professional development.
Keli Swearingen

M. Keli Swearingen is the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Democracy Prep Baton Rouge. Keli joined the leadership of Democracy Prep at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. Keli’s work at DPBR is focused on raising achievement levels in a growing national charter school system to ensure that all scholars, regardless of location, have access to a top tier education. Recently released state test scores show the school has already improved from 50% of 8th grade Algebra students receiving high school credit to 100% of 8th grade Algebra students receiving high school credit. State scores for 3rd through 8th grade courses are pending release in July.

Before joining Democracy Prep Baton Rouge, Keli spent six years working for KIPP. Keli started with KIPP as the Managing Director of Teaching and Learning for KIPP New Jersey. In her role as MDTL, Keli supported K-12 alignment, assessment, teacher and instructional leader development by leading the instructional leadership team, instructional vision team, and co-supporting the learning specialist/special education team. Having a background in assessment and measurement, Keli’s primary focus was on the development of CCSS and NGSS-aligned formative and summative assessments. Keli then joined the KIPP Foundation’s Teaching and Learning team to lead the development of next generation assessments for ELA and math, as well as focus on the development of protocols that will aid instructional leaders in implementation of data driven instruction. In addition to this work, Keli served KIPP school leaders as an instructor for the KIPP School Leadership Programs, supporting data-driven instruction courses for Assistant Principals, Principals, and Superintendent level leaders.

Prior to KIPP, Keli founded Ascend’s second elementary school in Brownsville (serving as school director) and later managed data and analytics for all schools in the Ascend Learning network. Keli was a research fellow at the Florida Center for Reading Research and an Ed Psych and Classroom Assessment instructor for FSU’s College of Education. She has a master’s in library science and a doctorate in educational psychology. Keli started this journey as a Teach For America corps member teaching high school ELA in New Orleans (CM ’02).

When not nerding out on assessment, Keli enjoys spending time with family, working on Jeeps, watching Florida State football (Go Noles!), and watching Saints football (Who Dat).

Meagan Arrastia-Chisholm

My undergraduate student, Jigzy Nwanegbo, and I have been awarded a summer research grant ($5,000) for the Blazer Summer Research Institute. This summer we collected and analyzed interviews with college students who experienced parental separation growing up due to various reasons (deployment, incarceration, divorce, adoption, etc.). This photo was taken at this semester’s undergraduate research symposium where Jigzy presented on our work with adult children of divorce. We presented updated results at APA in Chicago this August.
A YEAR IN PHOTOS

Dr. Phillips and Dr. Shiyi Chen

FAMU DRS Freedom School's morning Harambee ceremony

James Hernandez presenting at FERA

FAMU DRS Freedom School participating in National Day of Social Action at the Capitol

Dr. Fei Xing hooded by Dr. Turner

PURPOSE Conference
KEEP IN TOUCH

PLEASE SHARE YOUR PHOTOS, PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL UPDATES, AND MORE!

Please consider sharing your own update for the next newsletter! By sharing and making connections through information submitted by members of our community, we are better able to help graduates identify career tracks, job openings, research collaborators, and even funding. Send your information to Dr. Alysia Roehrig at aroehrig@fsu.edu.

Alumni: Please share your title/current position, major/degree, major professor/year of graduation, contact info, any particular research or professional interests you would like to share/get assistance with, personal news, any opportunities or requests for current students or faculty in terms of collaboration, etc.

Current students: Please share your major/degree, major professor, ongoing or future research projects, assistance needed, etc.

CONSIDER A GIFT TO L&C

We are working very hard to build an endowment that can be self-sustaining. With your help, we will be able to accomplish this goal and make it possible to more significantly support an increased number of deserving students. Please consider making a donation to support current and future Learning & Cognition graduate students’ research and conference travel!

You can make secure donations online at http://fla.st/2ssRD2I. Checks may be mailed to the College of Education (1114 West Call St.; Tallahassee, FL 32306-4450) or the University Foundation Office (2010 Levy Ave # 300, Tallahassee, FL 32310). You can pay online or by check, just be sure to specify “Learning & Cognition Student Support Fund” or “Fund # F08101” in the memo/tribute line. You can also contact our foundation officer, Kevin Derryberry, at (850) 228-5021 or kderryberry@foundation.fsu.edu.