

**SPRING 2025**



# Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

## FCSUA NEWS BRIEF - SPRING 2025



**JACQUELINE  
MARQUEZ DUPREY**

Technical Assistance Coordinator

**WELCOME TO  
THE FCSUA  
TEAM!**



**XINGYAO  
CHEN**

Postdoctoral Scholar

The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities welcomes two new team members: technical assistance coordinator Jacqueline Marquez Duprey, and postdoctoral scholar Xingyao Chen.

Jackie holds a Master of Jurisprudence in Health Law from Loyola University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Rollins College. She is a certified Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) and Special Education Advocate, with expertise in special education laws, policies, and individualized education plans (IEPs). She also holds a certification in Proposal Grant Writing from the Edyth Bush Institute. She has a strong background in applied behavior analysis (ABA), special education, and grant writing, focusing on improving postsecondary opportunities for students with unique abilities, particularly within Hispanic and Latino communities. As an Autism Disorder Specialist at UCF-CARD, Jackie has trained and advocated for families and professionals while contributing to Dr. Daly's research on Postsecondary Outcomes for Hispanic & Latino Students with ASD. She has presented at Family Café, UCF CARD-HISPA, and Milestones Conference and leads workshops on behavior strategies and mindfulness in English and Spanish.

Xingyao earned a Bachelor of Science in Applied Psychology from Anhui University of Chinese Medicine in China, a Master of Education in Educational Psychology, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education, both from Washington State University (WSU). Prior to join the Center, Xingyao was the Assistive Living Advisor of WSU ROAR program for students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. He also worked as the Graduate Assistant in the Washington Transition Program.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

### FGCU R.I.S.E. Florida Gulf Coast University

#### “Embracing the Full College Experience for Students with Intellectual Disabilities”



FGCU R.I.S.E. (Real Independence, Successful Employment) continues its mission to support students with intellectual disabilities, empowering them to fully experience college life while preparing the students for independent living and to gain meaningful employment after graduation.

One way the program achieves this mission is by connecting the R.I.S.E. students with their degree-seeking FGCU peers through participation in clubs, social events, recreational activities, and academic experiences throughout the semester.

Earlier this year, the inaugural R.I.S.E. Games were hosted, organized by Student Engagement Coordinator Bruno Halpern. The event featured competitive games and activities such as giant Jenga, Connect 4, memory games, balloon volleyball, and creative painting sessions, creating an enjoyable environment to foster meaningful interactions and friendships across campus.

R.I.S.E. students also actively complete service-learning hours, dedicating themselves to 40 hours of volunteer work. These hours are a requirement for R.I.S.E. students to complete during the duration of the program. Service-hour opportunities include various volunteer activities, such as helping at campus events or supporting community organizations like the local Food Forest and Food Pantry. Through these experiences, students develop practical skills, gain a deeper sense of community involvement, and form meaningful relationships, such as R.I.S.E. student Abigail Carius, who recently volunteered at the Aramid International Conference held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Fort Myers. She warmly greeted attendees and provided additional event support throughout the entire event.

These activities and events enrich the college experience by empowering our R.I.S.E. students with real-world skills, meaningful connections, and a strong sense of belonging at Florida Gulf Coast University. This year, five students will graduate alongside their peers in May. Their commitment to personal growth and community involvement exemplifies the spirit and success of FGCU R.I.S.E.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Meet Randy Sosa,  
from FIU Embrace  
at Florida International University



Randy Sosa is a diligent and hardworking student whose commitment to excellence and dedication to his loved ones sets him apart. Randy's journey through the FIU Embrace program has been nothing short of inspiring.

Known for his responsibility and neatness, Randy consistently ensures that his work is completed with precision and care. His attention to detail and strong work ethic reflect his drive to contribute positively, both to his personal growth, and to the well-being of his family.

His passion for helping others and his caring nature make him eager to excel in his future career.

With a strong desire to give back to his home and community, he views his success as an opportunity to support those he loves. Whether it's through his studies or his commitment to personal development, Randy is constantly striving to improve himself and inspire those around him.

Outside of his studies, Randy enjoys listening to music, spending quality time with his family, and relaxing by playing games on his Xbox.

One of his proudest achievements was performing before a large audience, showcasing his musical talent, along with his confidence and love for creativity.

With aspirations to work in the hospitality industry, Randy is excited to apply the skills and knowledge he's gained through the FIU Embrace program. He is well on his way to achieving great things and the future holds endless possibilities for him.

## FPCTPS IN ACTION

### Project ACCESS

### The College of the Florida Keys



#### **Project ACCESS Graduates Advocate at Florida Keys Days**

On March 12th - 13th, graduates of the Project ACCESS program at The College of the Florida Keys (CFK) took part in Florida Keys Day in Tallahassee, Florida. Florida Keys Day is an annual event held at the State Capital in Tallahassee, where leaders and educators from Monroe County meet with legislators to advocate on behalf of the community and share success stories. Led by CFK President and CEO Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, students Monae Hylor and Joshua Leavell met with legislators and postsecondary education leaders to share their success stories and advocate for programs like Project ACCESS. A highlight of their visit was witnessing the passage of Senate Bill 112, "Children with Developmental Disabilities." This legislation focuses on enhancing early detection, intervention, and educational opportunities for children with autism. Hylor and Leavell's presence underscored the critical need for continued support and resources for individuals with disabilities.



 Florida Center for Students  
with Unique Abilities

#### **FPCTP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINARS**

#### **Our next FPCTP Technical Assistance Webinars will be held on:**

- **May 6** - Student Information in the Annual Report: Completing with Accuracy
- **May 20** - Graduate Follow Up Reports: Strategies for Following Students and Reporting with Accuracy
- **June 3** - Team Leader FLPEPPI Overview (Planning for FLPEPPI)

All webinars are held from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WEBINARS • CONFERENCES • RESEARCH



FCAN Talent Strong Florida Summit

May 5-7, 2025  
Orlando, Florida



The Family Cafe  
June 13-15, 2025  
Orlando, Florida



State of the Art Student Leadership Conference  
October 21-22, 2025 Syracuse, New York  
Student Proposal Submissions are due July 1, 2025.



Florida CASE Summer Leadership Summit Institute  
June 16-18, 2025  
Bonita Springs Florida



**FLORIDA**

Florida Council for Exceptional Children  
Conference  
June 18-21  
Gainesville, Florida

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We'd love to hear from you on what is happening at your institution. Please send stories and photos to [fcsua@ucf.edu](mailto:fcsua@ucf.edu), ATTN: FCSUA News Brief.

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