

Higher Education Winners and Honorees

Trinidad Arguelles

Miami Dade College - West Campus

Dr. Arguelles infuses changemaker education in her Psychology and Human Growth and Development courses. Examples of this are the **Building a Better Society through Mental Health Project** and the **Age Awareness Initiative** where Dr. Arguelles and her students design and implement projects to address community needs related to aging and mental health issues. Students do research and engage in service related to these is-sues. Her students also assist the large number of students at West Campus who are learning English through a peer mentor-ing “Ambassador” program. Many of her students also complete the Mental Health First Aid Training and the QPR suicide prevention program. She connects these engagement experiences with course content to help students apply what they are learning in class to their role as changemakers. She prepares her students with skills to deescalate situations and assist people in crisis. These collaborations between Dr. Arguelles, community partners, and her students are catalysts for change that invite all students to be empathic and action-oriented as they contribute to the betterment of our South Florida community.

Ruth Ban

Barry University

Dr. Ban’s courses, TESOL Issues and Strategies and Intro to Qualitative Methods, integrate community-based pedagogy with course content to provide students experiential opportunities to serve their local communities. Dr. Ban’s students engage with local residents and complete language assessments for refugee families and oral histories of community activists. Working with Church World Service, her TESOL students created and implemented language assessment interviews with Afghani refugee families and worked to plan language support. In the Qualitative Methods class, her students created and shared oral histories of local community members who fight for social justice. Students then share these oral histories by presenting in local and regional research symposiums and conferences.

Agatha Caraballo

Florida International University -
Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs

The Capstone Project for Dr. Caraballo's Integrative Seminar PAD 4934 requires students to address existing public sector problems in a real-world setting and then apply learned skills and re-search methods to propose a solution using Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Related, and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.) recommendations. Students work on a capstone project throughout the semester to address three policy issues posed by elected officials, culminating in a final capstone project that includes preparing three policy briefs, an oral presentation, an infographic, and an e-portfolio. For example, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Rene Garcia wanted the students to address an issue related to the col-lapse of the Champlain Towers in Surfside, specifically, what best practices can be adopted in building structures within 100 feet of the shoreline. Other issues addressed were career and life skill training for foster children, and artificial intelligence and transportation. Students present their research to a coalition of government, industry, and community leaders and are coached and mentored throughout the process to prepare them to be effective public problem solvers and changemakers.

Jaeson Clayborn

Miami Dade College - Eduardo J. Padron Campus

Dr. Clayborn is an Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences. In his Biology 2 class he brings the subject to life for his students by applying concepts to their daily lived experiences. Students in his courses are introduced to the importance of plant and tree cover in neighborhoods for environmental and public health. Students go on field trips around campus and the Little Havana area in search of native plants, interacting with community members about what they've found and the general plant diversity of the area. If butterfly host plants are found, the students let residents know the specific butterfly the plant is hosting. From the beginning of the project to the end, students learn how to identify local native plants, raise them, share them with others. The students learn about and reflect on the concept of urban greening and their contributions. Students are also taught practical skills grounded in sustainable practices such as aquaponics, gardening, insect and butterfly care, and the identification and propagation of native plants to support biodiversity and pollination of future growth. In Dr. Clayborn's courses, students learn that the human population is interconnected with the natural world for the symbiotic well-being of all. Through this work, he is encouraging deeper respect and reciprocity with our land, animals, and human peers.

Michael Lenaghan

Miami Dade College - North Campus

Dr. Lenaghan, who teaches International Relations courses, recruited 16 students from five MDC campuses to engage in six 90+ minute virtual meetings with students at Anbar University in Ramadi, Iraq. These discussions focused on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) including ending poverty and promoting good health and well-being. Unique mini-projects that could be implemented at each school grew out of these meetings. The ability to communicate and collaborate across cultures, with support from Anbar U, MDC, and the State Department, was cultivated and nurtured by participants. Although these virtual meetings and actual projects grew from the discussions exemplify the "Think Globally, Act Locally" philosophy, Dr. Lenaghan accentuates "Think Ethically and Act Thoughtfully, Honestly and Collaboratively when acting globally and locally."

Marisa Nia Madison

Miami Dade College - Homestead Campus

Dr. Madison is an associate professor of microbiology, director of HIV research, STEM facilitator and MDC Endowed Teaching Chair (the gold standard for faculty excellence at MDC). In her microbiology courses students learn about epidemiology, emerging diseases, how microbiology affects us on a daily basis, how natural systems function, how to prevent nosocomial infections, how to recognize the impact of humans on the environment and to develop and pursue strategies to fulfill personal, civic, and social responsibilities. This learning comes to life through her students' participation in HIV research, agricultural research and summer STEM workshops that Dr. Madison and her students facilitate for local K-12 schools.

Kimberly McGrath Moreira

University of Miami

Professor Moreira is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department. In her freshman composition course, The Civically Engaged Mind, students are provided opportunities to build their analytical reading and writing skills while exploring relevant academic research that examines the motivations behind college volunteering as well as trends, discrepancies, and gaps. A primary focus is for students to partner with a community organization of their choice and to

engage significant time, intellect and energy in meaningful service. Students are required to conduct a literature review exercise to discover existing conversations related to the issues faced by their chosen organization and then use their experiences with community partners as primary research. For their final project, they write a 12-page paper to detail their experiences and highlight the work of their respective community partners, which is then pre-sented in an online medium using Adobe Spark for a more general audience. Students learn about the social justice challenges that exist within our community and the world and often find inspira-tion to cultivate a lifetime of service, social responsibility and leadership.

Kristina Vincent

Miami Dade College - Medical Campus

Professor Vincent has embedded changemaking and civic engagement throughout MDC's Respiratory Care Program curriculum. It is incorporated into four semesters of clinic courses over 16 months. All of her students complete actions on MDC's Civic Action Score-card every semester, and earn the Gold Award by the time they graduate. Her students are involved in changemaking education every semester, from learning about the relationship between voting and health care, to speaking with middle schoolers about the dangers of smoking and vaping during their pediatric rotation, to performing acts of kindness, to promoting recycling, and much more. As future leaders in the profession, Professor Vincent ensures that her students have communication and public problem-solving skills, as well as a deep understanding of the diversity of our community, and the importance of being a well-rounded, civically engaged professional and citizen. Students complete and submit reflections on each civic assignment. Her students start to see the world from a broader, civic perspective. As one her students wrote "this new view... strengthens and enriches our communities by influencing a growing number of people to take action before it's too late." In addition to infusing changemaking education in all her classes, Professor Vincent is and advocate and leader of civic engagement in her role as the Medical Campus' Faculty Facilitator for the Institute for Civic Engagement & Democracy.

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Rukayat Adebisi

Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School

Rukayat Adebisi is an experienced educator known for her passion-ate work of helping build agency in her students and assisting them with developing into changemakers. Her work with Project Citizen has helped her students learn to identify community issues, bring awareness to problems that need to be addressed by lawmakers, gain support from members of the community, and create solutions to improve communities. Ms. Adebisi is a changemaker in education. Her dedication and expertise in social justice are evident in her students' success and commitment.

Vandana Gudi

Robert Morgan Educational Center

Mrs. Gudi is a biology teacher and also serves as the sponsor for Science National Honor Society. For the past several years, her students have actively participated in the Green Schools Challenge. Their projects have won numerous grants and awards. Last year, Mrs. Gudi's classes participated in Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden's Million Orchid Project. Mrs. Gudi has also championed the restoration of her school's nature preserve. Through her work, students have increased their awareness of environmental issues and learned how to find solutions.

Monica Valdes

West Miami Middle School

Ms. Valdes currently teaches social studies and serves as the year-book sponsor for West Miami Middle School. Last year, her students had the opportunity to produce podcasts on various issues of interest. Among the topics researched were bullying, gun violence, and the war in Ukraine. Various guests were invited to discuss their topics and students were able to make real world connections by interviewing a wide range of professionals. The pod-cast project allowed her students to discover their voices and understand complex civic issues.

La-Shanda West

Cutler Bay Senior High

Ms. West is a veteran teacher and serves in many roles. She is the Safe Space Support teacher sponsor and she is passionate about helping her students develop civics skills including advocacy, empathy, social responsibility, and being changemakers committed to the common good of humanity. Ms. West uses project-based learning as a tool to make learning relevant and real. She serves on the Sandy Hook Promise and National SAVE School Advisory Committee implementing mental health and school safety programs – Know the Signs. Her changemaking education project focuses on learning, bringing awareness, and creating solutions to combat human trafficking with the Safe Space Support.