

Contributing Author Biographies

Lorraine Chaljub:

Lorraine Marie Chaljub is a Biochemist and Biotechnologist who graduated from Florida Atlantic University, as well as an active member of the American Chemical Society, the American Society of Pharmacognosy, and the Council on Undergraduate Research. She was born in New York City, New York, later raised in Miami, and dreams to expand worldwide. A true believer of natural medicine, she is devoted to further her education for alternative healing.

Sarah Cronell:

Sarah Cronell graduated in Fall 2013 magna cum laude with a BS degree in Biology and an Environmental Science Certificate. In pursuit of more research experience, she has since worked as a field technician for New Mexico State University on a Lesser Prairie Chicken project and as a Giant Panda research intern at the Memphis Zoo. She plans to continue her education in New York City and earn a graduate degree in Conservation Biology.

Laura Cruz:

Laura Victoria Cruz transferred to Florida Atlantic University from Broward College after receiving her Associate's degree in biology. During her time at FAU she interned for two summers with the US Department of Agriculture in Michigan. Her internship experience led to an interest in plants and plant pathology. Laura graduated in May 2014 with a Bachelor's degree in Biology and a Certificate in Geographic Information Systems. She is currently applying to graduate programs to pursue a Ph.D. in Genetics.

Hien Do:

Hien Do was born to Ngoc Nga Thi Thai and Hi Van Do. He was born in Viet Nam on June 19, 1987. Hien went to To Hien Thanh Elementary in Viet Nam. He came to America when he was eight years old and went to Dwight Eisenhower Elementary, Howell Watkins Middle, and Palm Beach Garden High School. Then he attended Palm Beach Community College from his freshmen to sophomore year of college, and junior to senior year he attended Florida Atlantic University. Now, Hien is a graduate student studying molecular biology at Florida Atlantic University and his hobby is working out when time is available. His decision to continue in the field of molecular biology is driven by the possibility of saving lives by understanding the arcane mechanism that makes proteins and genes function the way they do.

Kelli Griffin:

Kelli graduated from FAU in the spring of 2014 with a B.S. in Biology and a minor in German. She will be working in Vienna, Austria for a year starting in September at a company called Haplogen. This is a private biotech company that works with viruses to combat infectious diseases. Kelli plans on returning to the U.S. to start a master's program related to marine molecular biology or marine biotechnology.

Benjamin Lewittes:

At the beginning of his junior of high school, Benjamin Lewittes began an independent research study at Florida Atlantic University under the mentorship of Dr. Edgar An, Professor of Ocean and Mechanical Engineering. He continued his study for two years under the guidance of Dr. An and Mr. John Kielbasa, Department of Ocean and Mechanical Engineering Senior Electronics Engineer. Benjamin Lewittes has since graduated Donna Klein Jewish Academy High School in 2014 and is currently a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania seeking a BA in the College of Arts and Sciences. He aspires to one day pursue a career that combines his interests in engineering and business.

Stephanie Lopez:

Stephanie Lopez graduated Cum Laude from the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College in the Spring of 2013 with a double major in Spanish Language and International Studies. She received Honors for her thesis, "El domínico-japonés: expresiones culturales de la identidad japonesa en la república dominicana desde mediados de los años 50," relating the Japanese immigration to the Dominican Republic and their cultural expressions through the generations. Also, as a member of the 2013 Diplomacy Program, Stephanie was a delegate that represented FAU at the National Model United Nations, winning the Distinguished Delegation Award. After graduating, Stephanie was accepted into the prestigious Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program where she taught English to Japanese high school students. After teaching in Fuji City, she returned to the US where she has continued her studies and hopes to become a certified translator.

Melanie A. Mayone:

Melanie A. Mayone was born in Plantation, Florida, in August, 1992. She is the daughter of Jerry S. Mayone Jr. and Catherine Y. Mayone, and younger sister to Courtney Y. Schilling. Ms. Mayone graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from the College for Design and Social Injury at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton. While attending FAU, she presented her research on curiosity and adolescent involvement in deviance at the Third and Fourth Annual Undergraduate Research Symposia. On both occasions, she was awarded first place in her category. Ms. Mayone is a member of Alpha Phi Sigma, the National Criminal Justice Honor Society, and the winner of the 2014 William J. Bopp Award for Academic Excellence. Ms. Mayone is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Criminal Justice at Georgia State University in Downtown Atlanta, Georgia.

Nirthieca Suthakaran:

My name is Nirthieca Suthakaran and I am currently a senior pursuing a B.S. in Biology and a minor in Psychology. I was born in Colombo, Sri-Lanka but lived in the United States since I was one. Through the FAU High Dual Enrollment Program, I started my undergraduate career at FAU at the age of fifteen. I am the Director of Research for the American Medical Student Association at FAU, a notetaker for the Office of Students with Disabilities, and a student researcher in Dr. Binninger's Genetics lab at FAU. In my free time, I tutor chemistry and physics, shadow doctors in Boca Pediatrics, volunteer at my local temple, and I'm a devoted Bharatanatyam dancer at the Vanee School of Dance. When I'm not studying or working, I enjoy spending time performing at the Vanee School of Dance where the divine art of Bharatanatyam is brought to life. Last year, I completed the Honors Thesis program at FAU. During my time in Dr. Binninger's lab, I found my passion in Molecular Biology research. In this lab, I wrote and defended my thesis, made a research poster, gave a poster and an oral presentation at Butler University's Undergraduate Research Conference, and won first place in poster presentation at FAU's 4th Annual Research symposium. My research experience so far has been both memorable and rewarding. My dream is to attend medical school in the near future and pursue an M.D./Ph.D program, where I will be able to continue my passion in research.

Ella Tepper:

Ella Tepper graduated in May with her Bachelor's degree in Sociology and has now returned to FAU to pursue a Master's in Higher Education Leadership. Her involvement in leadership started when she served as the Director of Council of Student Organizations, advised by Student Involvement & Leadership. She currently serves as the Student Organizations Graduate Assistant and serves as Team Support for the LDR 2010 Introduction to Leadership course.

Fernando Varela:

Fernando Varela is a senior at the Wilkes Honors College with a concentration in Hispanic literature. His area of concentration is 20th century Latin American literature, particularly in Caribbean literature and culture. After graduation, he plans to go to graduate school to get a PhD in Spanish and teach at a university.

Kayla Woody:

Kayla Woody recently graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in May. She has held many leadership positions during her time here at FAU, and was involved in many honor societies and organizations. The passion that Kayla has for leadership is what drove her to conduct this research, and seeing that students on campus are interested in Leadership studies made everything worthwhile.