

# THE INTERNATIONAL GATOR

University of Florida International Center Newsletter

April 2011

Volume I, Issue IV



1st Place - Faculty, Staff and Alumni Category  
William John Grisaitis  
"Madagascar Baobabs"  
Near Morondava, Madagascar  
2010

## A NOTE FROM THE DEAN

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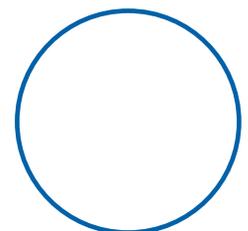
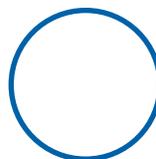
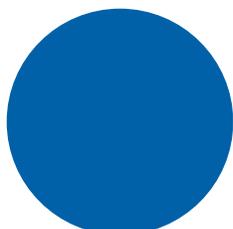
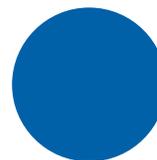
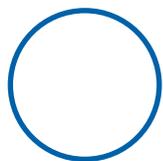
Recently, I attended the Gainesville celebration in observance of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps in 1961. As many of you know, I started my career in international education as a Peace Corps Volunteer, working in the Philippines to help strengthen the capacity of elementary school science teachers. Although I had intended to go to medical school after completing my B.S, the Peace Corps experience, living and working in a rural agriculturally-based village in the northern part of the Philippines, transformed my career goals. Instead of returning to the United States and studying to be a doctor, I entered a graduate program in agriculture. I view agriculture, like medicine, as a way to apply the biological sciences to solving large human problems. On a daily basis, agricultural professionals address such issues such as poverty, hunger, health, nutrition, environmental conservation, and economic well-being – all important human problems deserving our attention. Agriculture in Florida is a leading component of the state's economy, generating between \$70 to \$100 billion in revenues annually. Here at UF, our efforts to support agriculture in the state and around the world are led by the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). This month's newsletter spotlight features the international work of IFAS that has extended the university's reach to the far corners of the world. As you read about the international work of IFAS, note that the work described also benefits Florida – an important attribute of all of the international efforts of the UF International Center and affiliated units. We are part of one world, and our international agenda underscores that point.

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## FROM SAUDI ARABIA TO GAINESVILLE, FL

### THE PROGRAM

This is a special program funded and initiated by senior administration and the international office at Prince Sultan University in Saudi Arabia during an International University Showcase in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Dr. David Sammons, Dean, UF International Center and Dr. Joe Glover – UF Provost were in attendance at the exhibition in January 2010, as part of a six-person UF delegation at the event. The PSU program permits selected Saudi students to attend UF for a full academic year as J1 Non-Degree students to learn in a U.S. academic institution as well as experience U.S. culture and college life.

The current students are primarily majoring in Information Systems and Management and are in the second semester of their two semester program at UF. This is the first group of students from this PSU initiative and the next group is already beginning to form to start Fall 2011. We hope this will be a successful and continuing initiative for years to come.

### THE EXPERIENCE

Out of nine students, four were selected to attend UF for one year on scholarship as study abroad students. Abeer Alraee and Athoug Al Soughayer are two of the five Prince Sultan University students at UF this year. Abeer had visited the United States in the past, but still faced many challenges in getting accustomed to the culture. She made sure to introduce herself to her teachers and discuss topics

she didn't understand in class, she would go out of her way to interact with students and would go to activities held around campus, saying "I really enjoyed Gator Nights...I went to football games, and that was a great experience!" Similarly, Athoug's time at UF has been filled with first time experiences, such as taking courses online. Athoug also explained "back home they segregate girls and boys so we don't study together so it was a bit of a surprise to share a class room with a bunch of guys." Looking back over their time here, both girls feel it has been a worth-while experience. Most of all, Abeer says that she has had a great experience, and with so little time left she has a lot she wants to do before leaving and check off of her "bucket list". Athoug also reflects on her time at UF fondly, believing "it's hard to find a dull moment in UF so I'm happy to say this has been one of the best experiences ever."



From left to right: Dr. David Sammons – Dean, UF International Center; PSU students Abeer Al Raee and Athoug Al Soughayer; Scott Davis – International Student Advisor.

## A TRIPLE EXPERIENCE

Imagine going into hot springs in Costa Rica, hearing an artist in an underground jazz club in France sing Georgia, do tribal dances around a camp fire or visit a concentration camp in France. Three sisters don't have to imagine those things because they did them. Erica, Kelsey and Valerie Tainsh are triplets, but that's not what makes them stand out - they have studied abroad a combined 10 times and are only juniors at the University of Florida. All three have traveled to Paris twice with study abroad, Erica and Valerie have also been to Mexico while Kelsey has been to Costa Rica and will be going to Greece in the Summer of

*There is so much more  
to the world than  
Gainesville, Florida or  
the United States  
- Kelsey*

2011. Their adventures in study abroad began before they even attended their first class at the University of Florida, during the summer before their freshmen year. Erica and Valerie went to Mexico and say it was the "best way to start off UF...it wasn't as hard of a transition into college because we already knew a lot of people from the study abroad program." The sisters attribute their abundant travels to their parents, as Erica says "our parents put a strong emphasis [on traveling]. The reason we have done this so much is because our parents want us to see and experience different cultures."

Receiving the support of their parents, Erica, Kelsey and Valerie have had experiences they would have otherwise never had. Not only did they see traditional landmarks of the countries they have visited, but they also went to areas where local university students spend their time. As Valerie describes it, "it's important to see not just the tourist locations during the day, but what the locals do at night." The wonderful and memorable times they had did not come without their challenges. The study abroad trip to Mexico was more of a language immersion trip, as Erica and Valerie described it. They were placed with host families who didn't speak English and had to find their way around, go to classes and to each other's host families without speaking the language well. The biggest challenge Erica encountered in Mexico was when she got off at the wrong bus stop and had to figure out how to make her way back to the correct location. While in Paris, Kelsey went with a friend to buy a cell phone and were going to meet the rest of the study abroad group for dinner, but Kelsey and her friend didn't show up because they couldn't find their way back. Erica and Valerie were nervous at the absence of their sister because they had no way of contacting



## A TRIPLE EXPERIENCE

her, but Kelsey and her friend eventually found their way back.

After having experienced such a variety of study abroad trips, it would be expected that Erica, Kelsey and Valerie would have a favorite, but it was a unanimous no. As the three described, each trip had such unique aspects that you can't compare them to each other. It was indisputable among the sisters that the trips were memorable and life-changing because of the professors who led them. Erica explains that the "professors want you to see things that you would never think of or otherwise see under any other circumstances." They agree that they never would have found many of the things that they saw on their own, such as the concentration camp in France, because they wouldn't have known those things where there. Their favorite part about each trip weren't the land marks they would go visit, but the stories they would hear from their professors along the way. The experiences with the professors from study abroad have made their

*Cultures aren't better than one another, they are just different than one another*  
- Erica

*You learn about other things, like what is and isn't appropriate, social cues and customs*  
- Valerie

own impact, as they describe that being on this one-on-one experience allows you to get to know the professors versus in a large lecture classroom with hundreds of students.

Reflecting on their trips, Erica, Kelsey and Valerie admit that each trip has been a growing experience, providing them with perspective and making them realize that the problems they face in their everyday lives are manageable and less overwhelming.

The sisters view the trips they have taken as the best experiences they have ever had, and encourage fellow students to do the same. Valerie says, "people don't realize the kind of opportunity you have available here at UF. They literally don't know how special the trips are." Kelsey continues, "You don't actually realize how wonderful it is until you experience it. It's so much more than just visiting a country. We know how great it is and that's why we keep going back." Erica finishes their thoughts by saying "study abroad is the best way to travel."

So what advice do they have for those who already have plans to study abroad? Unanimously, "no matter how exhausted you are on one of these trips, don't say no to going and doing something because you will not regret it."

*A special thanks to Erica, Kelsey & Valerie Tainsh for sharing their experiences.*

### THE PROGRAMS:

#### **UF in Merida**, Summer 2008

with Dr. Allan Burns Professor of Anthropology and Dr. Mark Brenner Professor of Ecology

#### **UF in Costa Rica**, Spring Break 2009

Tropical Ecosystems (San Jose) with Professor Taylor Stein

#### **Americans in Paris** (Paris) May Intersession 2009

with Dr. Andrew Gordon Professor of English, Emeritus

#### **History of Documentary Film: The French Connection**

(Paris), Spring Break 2010

with Professor Churchill Roberts

#### **UF in Greece**, HHP (Athens), Spring Extended 2011

with Barbara Rienzo, Paula Welch and Kiki Kaplanidou

### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN RENEWABLE ENERGY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

In conjunction with the Florida Network for Global Studies, the UF International Center is pleased to announce a Business and International Education (BIE) Faculty Workshop to be held on April 21, 2011 from 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The workshop will be led by Dr. David Renné, principal project leader at the National Renewable Energy Labs (NREL) in Boulder, CO. Dr. Renné is also the president of the International Solar Energy Society.

The seating capacity is for a total of ten UF faculty: 5 from the College of Business and 5 from the College of Engineering. We encourage the participation of faculty members with potential for interdisciplinary collaboration. The workshop is on the realities of implementing renewable energy projects in developing countries, and we expect it to be highly interactive and participatory.

Per this BIE grant, each faculty member will receive a \$200 stipend for attending. This opportunity is on a first come first serve basis. Please RSVP to [mcardec@ufic.ufl.edu](mailto:mcardec@ufic.ufl.edu) if you are interested.

### TRAINING WORKSHOP ON 'INTEGRATING GENDER APPROACHES INTO RESEARCH AT THE WLI BENCHMARK SITES'. ICARDA, ALEPPO, SYRIA. MARCH 6-10, 2011

The training was organized in an effort to ensure the integration of gender in WLI's agricultural research activities. Women play a very important role in both the management and utilization of water in rural households. Women also use and experience water shortages differently than men. The recognition and inclusion of their needs, preferences and priorities is thus very important for the success of the Initiative.

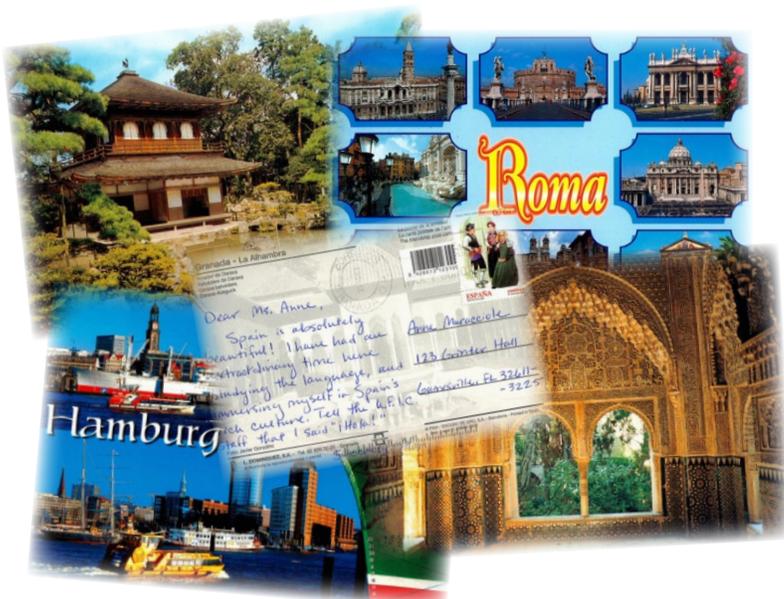
The training was attended by local researchers from various partnering countries including: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria. The training was given by Dr. Sandra Russo, Dr. Kathleen Colverson and Ms. Jillian Jensen from the University of Florida; in collaboration with Dr. Malika Martini and Mrs. Alessandra Galie from the Socio-Economic and Policy Research Program (SEPRP) in ICARDA. The training covered a broad spectrum of topics that ranged from basic introduction to gender, to the application of gender analysis tools to collect and use data in planned activities. Trainees were challenged to look beyond the 'closed household' model and have a gendered perspective in conducting their research.



Trainees holding a focus group discussion in Khanser valley, Syria. Photograph taken by Dr. Malika A. Martini (March 2011).

## POSTCARDS FROM ABROAD

At the International Center it is not uncommon to receive postcards from students while they are abroad. We thought it would be a great initiative to gather these postcards together and display them digitally. We created a web page and here is the result! We feel that this page displays the diversity and quality of experiences that UF students have while they study abroad. We will continue to add postcards as we receive them! To view the postcards, please visit <http://ufpostcards.tumblr.com/>



## WORKSHOPS IN DEVELOPMENT

David Maas, an advisor in the Study Abroad Services unit at UFIC, is developing a workshop series aimed at helping students pay for their study abroad programs and defray their costs while abroad. He has engaged the Study Abroad Peer Advisors in lively discussions about funding, planning, and cutting corners. He is also enlisting input from faculty and other people on campus. Specific topics to be covered will include ways to select a cost-effective program, obtain sponsors, submit competitive scholarship applications, get the best deals on travel, and keep costs low while overseas. The workshops will include general advice as well as information pertaining to specific locations and partner schools. The first workshop will be held early in the fall semester. This is expected to be an annual or semiannual event.

## GLOBAL PHOTO COMPETITION DISPLAY

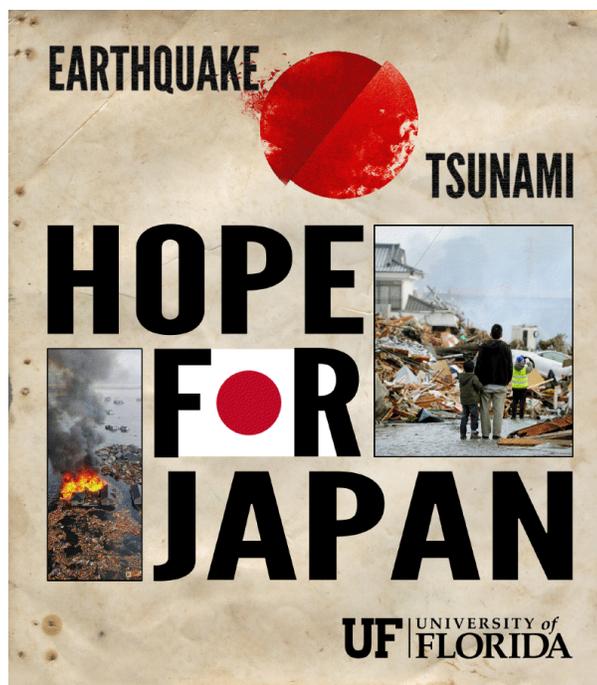
From April 6 to May 31 you can see the winning photos from the 2010 International Center's Global Photo Competition. The photos will be displayed on the first floor of the Reitz Union (next to the Information Desk).



Faculty, Staff and Alumni Category  
"Guatemala Flower Pickers" by William John Grisaitis; Lake Atalan, Guatemala

### UF STUDENTS RAISE MONEY FOR TSUNAMI & EARTHQUAKE RELIEF IN JAPAN

J-Gators, along with the Asian American Student Union, the Japanese Club, and other student organizations have been raising money to assist with the relief efforts in Japan. These groups have rallied under the title "Hope for Japan." The goal of this grassroots organization of students is to raise \$5,000.00 by the end of March. More information on their other fund raising efforts can be found at the group's Facebook page: J-Gators Tsunami & Earthquake Relief Starting with Gators.



THE UF INTERNATIONAL CENTER, UF LIBRARIES AND THE I-CUBED PROGRAM PRESENT FULBRIGHT DAY ON APRIL 21ST, 2011.

Workshops for Faculty and Students to:

- Learn about available funding opportunities
- Hear about the application process
- Listen to past Fulbright scholars and students share about their experiences abroad
- Receive individual consultations

**When:** Thursday, April 21, 2011

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** Reitz Union 361-363

Presented by Fulbright Guest Speakers:

- Andy Riess, Scholar and Professional Programs, Institute of International Education (IIE)
- Walter Jackson, U.S. Student Programs, Institute of International Education (IIE)

Target Audience: Faculty, professionals and students from ALL fields of study who are interested in teaching, conducting research and/or working in:

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- East Asia & Pacific Region
- Europe and Eurasia
- Near East/North Africa
- The Western Hemisphere
- South & Central Asia

Free and Open to the public. Registration is not necessary, but RSVP's are encouraged by contacting Kimberly Ambayec at [kambayec@ufl.edu](mailto:kambayec@ufl.edu).

### STUDENTS CAN NOW OFF-SET THEIR CARBON EMISSIONS

The International Center is committed to making our global gators green, even when they are not in Gainesville. The Study Abroad department has created a carbon emissions offset program targeted towards study abroad students flying on international flights. Students have the option to make a donation to a local non-profit organization, Neutral Gator. This donation offsets carbon emissions through reforestation, energy efficiency and weatherization efforts in low income homes and renewable energy.

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION

### UF INTERNATIONAL CENTER NOMINATES SAM GIBBONS FOR HONORARY DOCTORATE IN PUBLIC SERVICE

"UF did wonders for me." While that phrase has been uttered by many UF alumni through time, there is no arguing that those words are certainly apropos for Sam Gibbons.

On April 29, 2011, the Honorable Sam M. Gibbons will be awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service at UF's advanced degree commencement ceremony. Gibbons' nomination, sponsored by UF's International Center, is a capping moment to a long and prestigious lifetime of service to the State of Florida and our nation.

Gibbons is most well-known in Florida as a US Representative from the Tampa/Hillsborough County district who served 34 years (1962-1996) in the US House of Representatives. Known as an advocate of ethical practices and fair treatment for all, he was among those who forwarded legislation such as the Civil Rights Bill, and the funding of the Head Start and juvenile delinquency and drug abuse prevention.

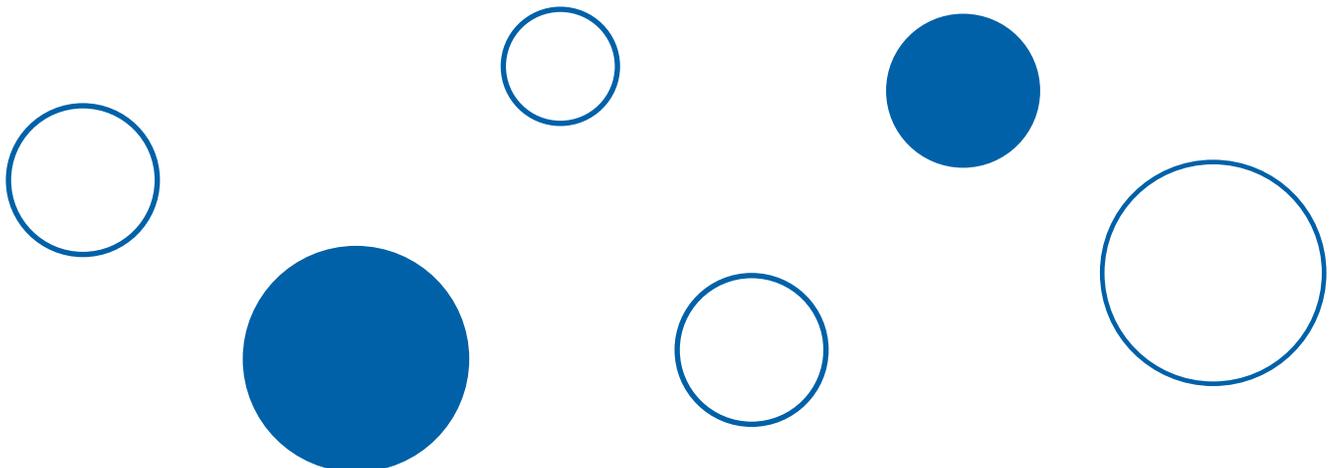
Among his most notable international achievements, Gibbons was a leading

architect of American trade policy for more than 25 years. A proponent of open markets and free trade, as the Chairman of the Trade Subcommittee in Congress, he sponsored every major trade law enacted from 1976 – 1997. Gibbons additionally was the Chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, during which time he regularly led delegations throughout Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia.

Prior to Gibbons service in the US House, he served ten years (1953-1962) in the Florida Legislature. Gibbons drafted the bill that brought the University of South Florida into existence and is widely recognized as a USF founder. The UF International Center hosted Sam and two of his sons, Cliff and Tim Gibbons, in Gainesville in September 2010. The Gibbons Family was the guest of President Bernie Machen in the President's Box for the viewing of the UF vs. USF football game – the first time the two teams had ever met on the field.

The International Center looks forward to hosting the Gibbons Family again in Gainesville for the recognition of Sam Gibbons at the April commencement ceremony.

*Written by Janet Bente Romero*



## SPOTLIGHT ON: THE INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES



*Dr. Jeff Jones and his graduate student, Joubert Fayette, in the field with farmers in Haiti.*

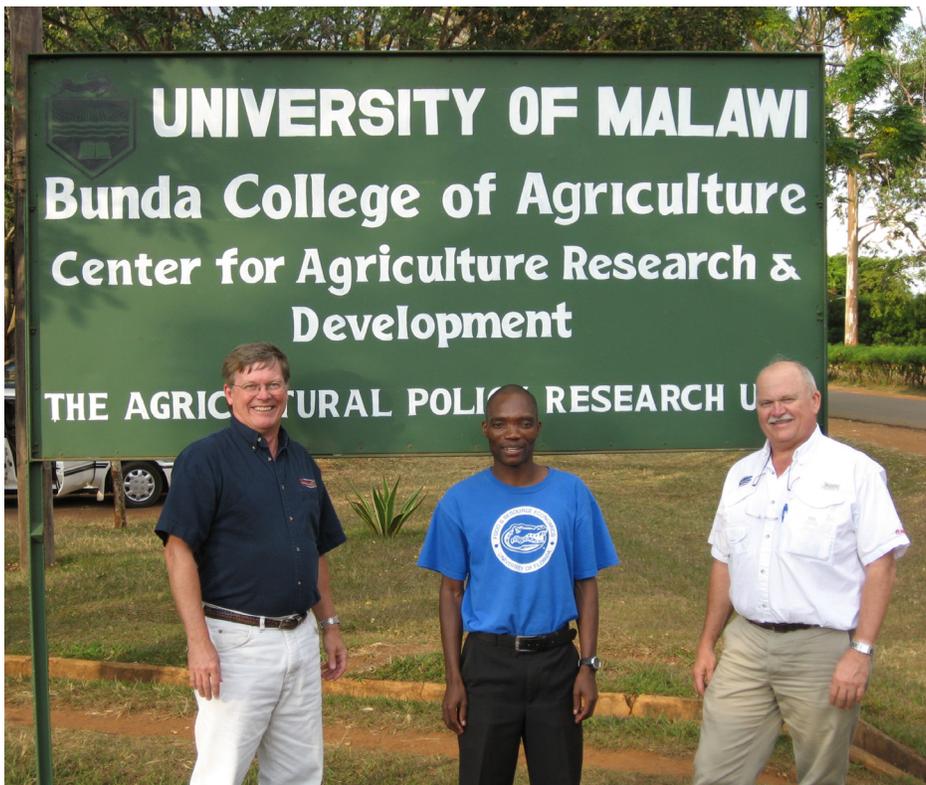
The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) brings to the global stage an extraordinary breadth of science for agriculture, natural resources, and human systems. Recognized for its excellence in teaching, research, and extension, UF/IFAS attracts faculty and students from around the world. It also continually seeks opportunities for its faculty and students to work on global issues and problems in almost all areas of the world. Recently, the UF/IFAS International Programs office has garnered funds that have brought 22 M.S. candidates to UF from Malawi and Haiti for degree programs in Food and Resource Economics, Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Horticultural Sciences, Interdisciplinary Ecology, and Animal Sciences. This unique program allows students to return to their home country to conduct thesis research. In addition to a research budget, these programs include funds to support travel by each major professor to either Malawi or Haiti to provide guidance on the thesis research. The travel also provides major professors with the opportunity to become more familiar with the unique development challenges that each country faces, including learning more about possibilities for collaborative research, education, and extension. While some of the students entered UF during Fall 2008, and have already completed their Masters of Science (M.S.) degree programs, others have just started their coursework during Spring 2011. Join us as we shine a spotlight on these students and some of their major professors.

## MALAWI – USAID INITIATIVE FOR LONG-TERM TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Initiative for Long-term Training and Capacity Building (UILTCB) is a pilot training program to develop and test innovative and cost effective approaches to long-term degree training involving U.S. universities. In particular, USAID would like to see all degree requirements completed within two years. With support from the USAID mission in Malawi starting Fall 2008, UF/IFAS has implemented M.S. degree programs for 14 professionals from Malawi. These professionals have come to UF in three different groups. The first group had six professionals; five candidates for M.S. degrees in Food and Resource Economics (FRE), and one candidate in Agricultural and Biological Engineering (ABE). One student in the first group, Pearson Jasi-Soko, whose major professor was Dr. Evan Drummond, opted for the M.S. non-thesis option and was able to complete

all degree requirements in one year for an August 2009 graduation date. The student in the ABE department, Jonathan Chiputula, whose major professor was Dr. Ray Bucklin, conducted research and gathered data in Florida during summer 2009 and was able to write and defend his thesis for a December 2009 graduation date, thus graduating after only 1.5 years.

The remaining four students in the first group, all in FRE, completed 32 credit hours at the UF campus by August 2009, and then returned to Malawi to conduct their thesis research. Their major professors traveled to Malawi June 2010, and during that time conducted a thesis defense for each student as well as a public seminar series where each student presented a summary of their results to an audience including representatives from the local university (Bunda College), the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, and USAID/Malawi. Bonet Kamwana talked about his research on the financial viability of investing in small-scale irrigation technology for potato production in Malawi; Fiskani Nkana assessed consumer willingness to pay for Malawi organic coffee; Lucy Nyirenda studied cooperatives and transaction cost theory for dairy and rice markets in Malawi; and Innocent Thindwa analyzed economic partnership agreements and their likely effects on trade, fiscal impacts and policy options for Malawi. The major professors for these students were, respectively, Dr. Richard



UF/IFAS professors Dr. Richard Weldon and Dr. John VanSickle with Bonet Kamwana at the University of Malawi, Bunda College of Agriculture. Bonet is now a Gator with his M.S. in Food and Resource Economics.

Malawi - USAID, continued  
on the following page

## MALAWI – USAID CONT.

Weldon, Dr. Zhifeng Gao, Dr. James Sterns, and Dr. John VanSickle.

There were two professionals in the second group from Malawi, Aubrey Chinseu and Wycliffe Kumwenda. Both began their studies at UF during Fall 2009, and both opted for the Master of Agribusiness option rather than a thesis option. After one year of coursework, they graduated August 2010 and returned to Malawi. As with the first group, their academic performance was excellent. The major professor for Aubrey was Dr. Allen Wysocki, and the major professor for Wycliffe was Dr. John VanSickle.



*Dr. James Sterns, Lucy Nyirenda, Fiskani Nkana, Dr. Richard Weldon, Bonet Kamwana, Innocent Thindwa, Dr. John VanSickle, and Pearson Jasi-Soko in Malawi.*

The third group, comprised of six professionals, is presently on the UF campus taking coursework for their M.S. degrees in Animal Sciences. They started Fall 2010 and will most likely be on their way to Malawi to gather data for their thesis research late August 2011. The students are Donald Kazanga, Chunala Njombwa, Joseph Hamie, Suzgo Chapa, Felix Makondi, and Matrina Mpeketula.

## HAITI - WATERSHED INITIATIVE FOR NATIONAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

In Haiti, UF/IFAS partners with the firm Chemonics on the USAID-funded project, Watershed Initiative for National Natural Environmental Resources (WINNER). The UF/IFAS International Programs office is leading efforts that focus primarily on providing technical assistance and training in the areas of watershed management, livelihoods, and agricultural production, post-harvest handling, and marketing in horticultural and non-horticultural commodities. The WINNER team is working with farmers to increase productivity, expand incomes, and strengthen their organizations, helping them revitalize hillsides and intensify production through improved use of inputs, labor, water, know-how, and equipment, while protecting the environment. To facilitate farmer training, WINNER has set up several Rural Centers for Sustainable Development (CRDDs), which

house technical leaders and provide farmer training and demonstration sites for improved livelihoods, productivity, and natural resources management in each watershed.

An important component of the WINNER project is the long-term training of eight Haitian students (2 women, 6 men). Having first completed six months of intensive English at UF's English Language Institute, all students began coursework for their M.S. degree programs Spring 2011. Isnel Pierreval is seeking his M.S. in Food and Resource Economics; Ronald Cademus, Marie Pascale Saint Martin Francois, and Reginald Toussaint are pursuing an M.S. in Interdisciplinary Ecology; Arthur Bonicet and Dakson Sanon are candidates for an M.S. in Horticultural Sciences; and Lidwine Hyppolite and Joseph Beneche are seeking an M.S. in Agricultural and Biological Engineering.

## PROGRAM MANAGER: FLORENCE SERGILE

### What does the WINNER project entail?

The University of Florida, especially IFAS colleagues have brought new technologies to help Haiti's agriculture make the leap to sustainable and profitable agriculture. About 1,200 soil samples have been analyzed to understand soil capacity and fertility.

We (UF/IFAS) collaborate with the school of agriculture in Haiti to train local staff in precision agriculture, micro irrigation and vertical agriculture. We assist private and public producers in mango processing, improving fresh produce post harvest and transportation and revitalizing the cut flower, tomato, and sugar cane production and industry. We assist mayor's offices and local governments in waste management and biodigestion.

Colleagues from the IFAS Research and Education Center are involved with many other activities.

Our newest activity, distance education, is in its beginning stages.

### What has working on the WINNER project in Haiti been like?

We don't get bored. Roosters sing at 4 am and other times of the day, roads are teeming with people, cars and wheel barrels as early as 6 am, making travel from one point to another difficult. We became experts in finding short cuts. Sun is hot in some areas, and fog dense in others.

It is very challenging and certainly hard work. My colleagues and I start the day at 5 am. There are no Saturdays, no Sundays, no lunchtime, but a job to be done. So far, we have been making a difference in production, food safety and post harvest.

### What do you enjoy most about working for/with UF on WINNER?

Making a tangible difference.

### What impact do you think WINNER will have on future Haitian generations?

It will teach them that agriculture is a profession that can bring wealth, show them new ways of doing agriculture to increase income, improve diet and nutrition, give them the opportunity to invent and try their inventions, invite more entrepreneurs to agriculture, post harvest and food processing address food safety issues, change teaching in schools of agriculture and establish a good extension system with nearby services (recommendations for plant diseases, new technology etc.).



*WINNER Students (From Left to Right): (Top) Isnel Pierreval, Ronald Cademus, Arthur Bonicet, Joseph Beneche (Bottom) Marie Pascale Saint Martin Francois, Reginald Toussaint, Lidwine Hyppolite, and Dakson Sanon*

**WINNER STUDENT:  
MARIE PASCALE G. SAINT  
MARTIN FRANCOIS**

**What is your country of origin? Your hometown?**  
I was born in Jeremie (Southwest department) Haiti.

**What is your field of study at the University of Florida (UF)?**

I just started a master's degree program in Interdisciplinary Ecology at the School of Natural Resources and Environment. My major is Aquatic Science.

**What were you doing (school, research, work, etc.) before moving to Gainesville?**

I got my Bachelor Degree at the Faculty of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Before moving to Gainesville, I worked as Agronomist and resident representative of the National Program of artificial lakes (PNLC), Port-au-Prince, Haiti, From Mars 2008 to April 2010. I was directing and managing the feasibility study of lakes regarding technical, social, economic plan and land based in Lascahobas, Regional Center, Haiti. And also I trained technicians of the program about lakes management, efficient use of lands upstream and downstream to lakes and production of vegetables.

From April 2010 to June 2010, I worked with the USAID/WINNER project (Watershed Initiative for National Natural Environmental Resources) as an Agricultural Area Manager in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti. I moved to Gainesville in July 2010.

**What has your time at UF been like? What are the names of some professors you conduct research/work with?**

My time at UF has been very interesting, fun. I acquire plenty of experience. I am working with Andrew Kane, Ph.D. Department of Environmental and Global Health.

**What is your favorite thing about UF?**

My favorite thing about UF is that the education is practical. We don't stay in class with theory and equation. We go out and learn about the reality. There are a lot of field trips, conferences, and seminars. The UF community is involved in the concern of everyday life of Florida and even the world.

**WINNER STUDENT:  
DAKSON SANON**

**What is your country of origin? Your hometown?**  
My country of origin is HAITI and my hometown is Aquin.

**What is your field of study at the University of Florida (UF)?**

My area of study is "Organic and Sustainable Crop Production"

**What were you doing (school, research, work, etc.) before moving to Gainesville?**

Before moving to Gainesville, I was working on my own as an Entrepreneur on extensive market gardening. In parallel, I was also working as Manager of Agricultural Section at Unit for Research and Intervention in Education (URIE). I was contributing to introduce new varieties of watermelon and eggplant seeds, and to strengthen associations of farmers in southern Haiti particularly in Aquin my hometown.

**What has your time at UF been like? What are the names of some professors you conduct research/work with?**

Since I got my admission at UF I felt automatically free of stress. I am having a great time so far at UF and specifically at the Horticultural Sciences Department where I am studying. My academic supervisor, Dr. Danielle Treadwell, is very caring, and the whole administration staff is wonderful. I think that all the conditions are met for me to carry out very interesting research.

**What is your favorite thing about UF?**

The way people treat people at UF is excellent. University of Florida has a lot of facilities such as libraries, student associations, gyms to balance life, court, transportations, food etc. that can make my experience fruitful. However, my favorite thing is Club Creole a student association that is fun, and via its activities, helps to relax students learning to speak Creole and to overcome class stresses and difficulties. I do like UF.

*Special thanks to Kim Ambayec for her contributions.*