

# Global Citizenship and Education Key Issues at Florida International Summit

By: *Emily Jaczko, MacArthur Scholar*

On February 25, 2016, UCF hosted the Florida International Summit, an annual event sponsored by the Florida Network for Global Studies (FNGS), for the second year in a row. Keynote speakers and panelists presented throughout the day to an audience of over a hundred students and academics from FNGS member schools on this year's theme, "Transforming Our World Through Education."



*Goodman describes the impact studying abroad had on his education.*

Allan Goodman, CEO and President of the Institute of International Education, delivered the opening address. He spoke of his own college experience and how important studying abroad was to his education. Goodman referenced financial difficulties that nearly prevented him from continuing his schooling. He said this experience kindled a passion for aiding students so they might also have the opportunity to study abroad without financial hurdles. The Institute provides students who would likely not be able to with a chance to study abroad. Goodman stated, "International

studies should be a part of every education," and that if he were president, "I would give every college freshman a passport."

The first panel featured presentations on "International Literacy: Challenges from Basic through Higher Education." Rosemary Closson, Associate Professor in the Department of Adult, Career and Higher Education at USF, moderated the panel. Helen Boyle, Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at FSU, spoke about her research in Qur'anic schools of Morocco and the different success rates among social classes. Boyle attested to the importance of global studies, and reflected on the significance of studying abroad and joining the Peace Corps in her own life.

Next was Dr. Enrique A. Puig, Director of the Morgridge International Reading Center at UCF. He compared formal and informal means of communication, discussing eight universal learning conditions and encouraging nonstandardized approaches to reaching students. Peter B. Easton, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at FSU, spoke on the supply and demand factors of education regionally, stating, "If the environment is not literate, it is unlikely students will be." He referenced his time in the Republic of Niger, where he lived and studied for seven years.

Speaking next was Dr. Vassiliki Zygouris-Coe, Professor in the School of Teaching, Learning and Leadership at UCF. Zygouris-Coe's primary focus is disciplinary literacy, which she defined as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and

written materials associated with varying contexts,” adding that, “Students and adults have new demand to have literacy in areas beyond reading and writing.” Dr. Elsie Olan, Assistant Professor in the School of Teaching, Learning and Leadership at UCF, emphasized the significance of conscientious learning while studying abroad. She encourages her students to try to create meaning from what they have learned abroad and record it in some form, such as writing, so that they may better absorb and apply the lessons they have learned.

Dr. Kiki Caruson, Assistant Vice President for Research, Innovation and Global Affairs at USF, moderated the second panel, “Fostering Global Citizenship.” Dr. Karla Davis-Salazar, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Director of the Global Citizens Project at USF, presented on how archaeology led her to start her own global initiative at USF. She explained that, though it can be daunting, there are ways to utilize global citizenship in one’s daily life, such as exploring, connecting and participating, even locally. She also suggested exploring safe, yet unfamiliar situations at home in order to overcome fears or apprehensions about studying abroad.

Ms. Cynthia Tarter, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Academic Programs at the UF International Center presented next on the UF Learning Without Borders program, highlighting its five-year strategic plan to help students become more globally interconnected regardless of their chosen major. She is also a proponent for students logging their discoveries about changes in global perspective for better application in their own lives, saying, “Enhancing your global awareness helps bring about self-awareness.” Next, Dr. Susan Syverud, Associate Professor in the Department of Exceptional, Deaf and Interpreter Education for the College of Education and Human Services at UNF, detailed her recent field work. She works through a partnership with Belize to help facilitate literacy in its schools by bringing American teachers to Belize in order to promote literacy in the country while training teachers.

Following a brief recess for lunch, the Honorable Patrick Jason Faber, Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture for Belize, delivered the second keynote address. He is the youngest minister in Belize to date, an achievement in which he holds great pride. He detailed his gratitude toward universities such as UNF, his alma mater, that work alongside the Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation to make education more accessible to Belizeans. Faber discussed his plans to build 35 new schools in Belize while working toward his Doctorate in Public Administration. Throughout his presentation he demonstrated his passion for education, and closed by stating, “Education is a vehicle in which you can make change.”



*Faber details his work to increase access to education in Belize.*

The final panel featured three Pulitzer laureates and finalists discussing “The News Media’s Role in International Education and Awareness.” Mr. John C. Bersia, UCF’s Pulitzer laureate and Special Assistant to the President for Global Perspectives at UCF, moderated and opened the panel.

Bersia briefly explained the history of the Pulitzer Prize, which is celebrating its centennial in 2016, and addressed how crucial a strong journalistic-based media is to the U.S. Following Bersia, Ms. Lisa Chedekel, an investigative journalist for the *Hartford Courant*, detailed her experience reporting in Saudi Arabia a year after 9/11. She voiced her concern at how many news outlets have closed their foreign bureaus, commenting that “international reporting is a way to break down barriers between different cultures and societies.” Finally, Mr. Richard Marosi, a staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, recalled his experiences writing his Pulitzer Prize-winning series addressing the drug war in Tijuana, Mexico. He noted that if not for journalists’ curiosity, many stories would go untold, and that he hoped the journalistic search for justice would become more prominent amid the surge in technology and social media.

All presenters underscored the importance of international education, not only in terms of literacy abroad, but also for citizens of the U.S. looking to become educated and engaged global citizens in order to affect change and address many of the concerns and challenges presented at this year’s summit.

This event was one of UCF’s contributions to the Pulitzer Centennial Campfires Initiative in 2016. More information about the summit, including presenter biographies and event sponsors, is available [here](#).