

FIE Annual Report 2009

Mission Statement

The Florida Institute of Education (FIE) provides statewide leadership to improve education at all levels by working collaboratively with Florida's universities, community colleges, public schools, school readiness agencies, and communities to:

- Foster collaborative programs that address critical educational needs by supporting innovation and engaging in problem-focused research;
- Increase access to and use of the knowledge and skills needed to improve practice and inform decision-making; and
- Enhance achievement for all students, especially those at-risk.

Vision

FIE's vision for education excellence is embodied in the following statements:

1. Every child will enter kindergarten eager and ready to read, ready to learn, and ready to succeed in school regardless of the geographical location where he/she lives;
2. Florida's prekindergarten through postsecondary students will rank at the highest levels of academic performance and achievement, and will not be differentiated by race, gender, or socioeconomic status;
3. Practitioners and researchers will view themselves as members of active learning communities committed to collaboration, ongoing learning, inquiry, and continuous improvement; and
4. Families and communities will be fully engaged partners committed to improving children's learning and social, emotional, and healthy development.

Realizing this vision requires dramatic educational improvements on many fronts. FIE works toward this vision using a systematic approach for improving practice and informing policy, an approach which embraces a sustained commitment to research, to university/practitioner collaboration, to innovation and development, to dissemination of evidence-based tools and strategies, and to data-informed decision- and policy-making.

Dear Friends,

With 2009 closing on what many may remember as the year of change, FIE's goals for 2010 remain clearly focused on sustainable educational improvement via innovation, research, and educational reform.

Education begins with reading. While this may be a simplistic observation, the dynamics of fostering reading skills in children is fraught with challenges. The challenge of improving learning outcomes for the youngest of learners and enabling them to succeed at an early age is the overarching goal of the ELLM/Plus program. FIE works with the youngest of learners – the prekindergarteners – for whom the lack of reading skills can portend failure before their formal education has even begun.

FIE's Healthy Habits and DCPS/Title I summer Science Camp initiatives provided opportunities to see connections being made in the inquisitive and curious minds of prekindergarteners as they experimented with simple concepts and began the work of connecting similar ideas and concepts. The wheels are turning; the learning has begun.

Working with inner city middle schools, FIE is committed to seeing Jacksonville attain higher graduation rates and at the same time imbuing these students with the motivation and belief in themselves that college is a real and viable alternative. Using Human Geography as the content focus, middle school students build and expand their background knowledge while acquiring important technology skills. In the UNF/FIE PreCollegiate Connections College Reach-Out Program, middle school students are paired with UNF undergraduate students who serve as learning guides, mentors, and friends. This pairing strategy begins a positive cycle that reinforces "nothing succeeds like success," with UNF Learning Guides taking a personal interest in seeing their younger partners succeed.

These projects provide just a few of the highlights of the past year and a glimpse into some of the programs that will be expanded in the year to come. FIE staff, students, researchers, and faculty along with our community and state partners remain committed to the collaborative effort of educational improvement, through innovation, research, and reform. Together we will make a better future for Jacksonville and Florida!

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Fountain, Ed.D.

Executive Director

School Readiness

FIE continues to build on a rich body of research to support young children's learning and the active engagement in that learning by their families. FIE researchers worked collaboratively with school readiness and prekindergarten teachers to develop and test innovative instructional strategies using concept mapping designed to strengthen children's background knowledge, vocabulary, and connection-making skills. This past year was a busy one in the school readiness sector.

Linking the **arts and literacy** for children and their families was the focus of a three-way partnership among the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens and its Weaver Academy, the DCPS Title I Program, and FIE. An interactive family workshop series coupled with excursions to the museum and its gardens will be offered through the DCPS Title I Neighborhood Learning Networks Initiative. Improving academic and developmental outcomes for young children helps build a strong foundation for future success.

The **Enhancing Leadership and Early Learning Services (ELELS)** project, a research-based professional development series for child care directors, focuses on developing their leadership skills and increasing their capacity to run an effective and efficient small business. The six-month series includes training on leadership, assessment, curriculum, the learning environment, family involvement, and small business. A set of modules, developed and refined from a pilot with child care directors, includes facilitator notes and activities. ELELS is now being implemented by our research partner, the Early Learning Coalition of Duval.

FIE researchers also worked collaboratively with school readiness and preKindergarten teachers to develop and implement innovative instructional strategies to strengthen children's background knowledge, vocabulary, and conceptual thinking – all building blocks for future reading comprehension.

Funding from the UNF Foundation enabled FIE staff to continue implementing the **Healthy Habits through Literacy** project, designed to use concept mapping as a tool to help young children and adults make their thinking more explicit. One important aspect of the instructional pedagogy has been to document children's development of conceptual connections based on information obtained from nonfiction books and hands-on learning experiences.

A second important aspect of the project was to combat childhood obesity by:

1. Increasing children's knowledge of the food pyramid and food groups;
2. Increasing families' understanding of nutrition education and physical activities that promote child health; and
3. Providing daily physical activity (teacher-guided) on a continuum of physical skills and abilities appropriate for preschool children.

As part of the project a set of ten DVD exercise episodes featuring participating teachers and their young students was developed. Three take-home literacy packets were also designed and used in sessions for parents/families conducted at a partner child care center. These packets focused on nutrition, exercise, and the importance of maintaining a healthy body. Fifty child care directors were trained in the use of these

materials. Each director received the *Color Me Healthy* kit, lesson implementation time line, set of nonfiction books, set of physical activity DVDs, and information about the family engagement sessions. This family engagement workshop is posted on the FIE website and may be downloaded at no cost.

FIE continues to host the **Florida Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO)** in Tallahassee, where the program director serves as an active member of several statewide early childhood committees. Participation on these committees helps to improve the delivery of services to children from low-income families in the areas of child protection, health, oral health, inclusive settings, and professional development of child care staff. 2009 highlights include: hosting a meeting to share information on the *Strengthening Families Initiative*, a primary child abuse prevention strategy; collaborating with other state and national entities to develop a plan to address Medicaid Portability for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start families; funding a review of the alignment of Florida Early Childhood Core Competences with a typical Associates degree program; and receiving validation from the Office of Head Start declaring Florida's Child Care Professional Credential meets or exceeds the National CDA.

Finally, FIE researcher/practitioner partnerships are in place with: 1) Agency for Workforce Innovation/Office of Early Learning; 2) Florida Department of Education/Office of Early Learning; 3) Early Learning Coalition of Duval; 4) Florida Mentoring Partnership; 5) Jacksonville Urban League Head Start Program; and 6) Volunteer Florida Foundation. Outcomes from these partnerships result in improved learning opportunities for young children as well as data to monitor progress and inform future actions.

FIE's continuing partnership with the Florida Department of Education/Office of Early Learning resulted in the production and distribution of the *2008 Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards*. Our partnership with Agency for Workforce Innovation/Office of Early Learning resulted in the continued production and distribution of over 10,000 copies of the *Florida Birth to Three Learning and Developmental Standards*, *Florida Birth to Three Screening and Assessment Resource Guide*, and *Florida School Readiness Performance Standards for Three-, Four-, and Five-Year-Old Children*.

PreK-12 Education

FIE partners with Duval County Public Schools and its Title I program in the **PreK–3: Success by Design** initiative to develop a well-coordinated early learning and transition system to improve PreK-Grade 3 children’s achievement, promote meaningful family engagement, and provide professional learning opportunities for prekindergarten-Grade 3 practitioners. FIE staff completed observations in prekindergarten and kindergarten classes, using the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System*. Data from the observations were used to design professional learning opportunities for both prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers.

A second important strand is the development of the **DCPS Title I Neighborhood Learning Networks (NLNs)**, located in high-needs neighborhoods in Jacksonville. NLNs are conceived as places and sets of partnerships working together to improve the learning and developmental outcomes for young children. NLNs engage in activities to strengthen outside-the-classroom learning, garner family support, and increase families’ access to information and services. The UNF College of Education and Human Services, under the auspices of the Andrew A. Robinson Chair, support the research efforts undergirding the NLN development. Through this support, progress will be monitored, promising practices identified, and a model for building NLNs developed for use by others. The five inaugural NLNs are:

- **Arlington NLN** anchored by Woodland Acres Family Involvement Center (FIC), Arlington MS, Terry Parker HS (Full Service (FS) and Jacksonville Commitment programs)
- **Brentwood NLN** anchored by North Shore K-8 FIC and Andrew Jackson HS (FS program)
- **College Gardens NLN** anchored by S.P. Livingston FIC, Eugene Butler MS FIC, Raines HS (Jacksonville Commitment program)
- **Eastside NLN** anchored by Matthew Gilbert MS FIC, R.L. Brown, Andrew Jackson HS (FS program)
- **Ribault NLN** anchored by Sallye B. Mathis FIC, Ribault MS, Ribault HS (FS and Jacksonville Commitment programs)

FIE implemented a new and exciting six-week **Science Camp** for rising first and second grade students. Hands-on interactive lessons were designed using DCPS and national science standards. Rising first grade students, known as “Astronomers,” and rising second grade students, known as “Meteorologists,” studied earth/space science and weather respectively. Students were immersed in content using non-fiction books, outdoor weather experiences and hands-on experiments. A strong emphasis was placed on vocabulary and concept development, and the work paid off! Students were interviewed and asked about their understanding of important concepts at the beginning and the end of these experiences. Responses at the end of camp showed that these “rising scientists” demonstrated significant understanding of new science concepts and the connections among them.



The Fall of 2009-2010 ushered in the third year of implementation of the highly successful **UNF/FIE PreCollegiate Connections College Reach-Out Program**. It was a busy and exciting year, with the eighth grade curriculum being implemented for the first time. UNF/FIE PreCollegiate eighth graders have been in the program for three years now and are looking forward to graduating and transitioning from middle school to high school and the Jacksonville Commitment Program. The program is offered at Eugene Butler and Paxon middle schools and combines an after-school Human Geography curriculum with technology-rich activities, college mentors, and learning excursions.



During the year, curriculum activities have sixth graders examining the world around them – self, friends and families, neighborhoods and communities. Seventh graders explore our city, state, and country. The eighth grade curriculum focuses on the world and the impact geography has on economic, social and cultural development, and the environment.



Capitalizing on UNF/FIE PreCollegiate Scholars' attraction for technology, curriculum activities were rich with the use digital/video cameras, movie making, PowerPoint, concept mapping, Google Earth, and other computer programs. Enrichment activities included an African-American historical tour of Jacksonville, including a visit to LaVilla Museum and tours of both the UNF and FCCJ campuses. The academic year culminated with a graduation celebration at UNF that was well-attended by students and their families. Not wanting to waste valuable time in the summer, PreCollegiate Scholars participated in a summer book club and a week-long UNF Summer ECO Camp where they studied either Florida's flora and fauna or the effects of human interaction on the natural world. Water activities and basic survival skills were some of the highlights of the camp.



The Sunshine State Scholars Program, working in collaboration with the Florida Department of Education, Florida Education Foundation, the Governor's Office, and community college, university, and K-12 science and mathematics faculty across the state, successfully implemented the 12th annual statewide competition. At the 2009 awards ceremony, Dr. Francis Haithcock, Florida Chancellor for Public Schools, assisted by Deputy Chancellor Mary Jane Tappen, announced Jonathan Mei, a student at F.W. Buchholz High School in Alachua County is the *2009 Sunshine State Scholar in Mathematics and Science*. Jonathan Mei, along with nine other Regional Sunshine State Scholars took a three-hour specially created science and mathematics test and did a research paper on lasers and their uses, which they presented before a statewide panel of science and mathematics experts.



The nine *Regional* and one *Statewide Sunshine State Scholars in Mathematics and Science*, along with their teachers and families, were in attendance with Florida Governor Charlie Crist at the Cabinet for a recognition ceremony and resolution offered by Attorney General Bill McCollum. Scholars also received generous gifts from corporate sponsors Casio, Maplesoft, and Microsoft. The 2009 Sunshine State Scholars Program is slated to be the last one implemented through FIE, as the program will be modified and administered by the Florida Department of Education beginning in 2010.

FIE continued its partnership with the Florida Department of Education and all 67 school districts through the **Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Technical Assistance Project**. The project works to collect data, inform policy, and educate the community and K-12 public schools about the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and bullying to the health, safety, and education of Florida's students.

The prevalence of gang activity and gang-related violence in Florida is a growing threat to the safety and security of all Floridians. In June 2008, the Attorney General's Office initiated the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy. The strategy calls for the formation of seven regional task forces throughout the state. The purpose of these task forces is to encourage coordination and cooperation among community leaders, including the education community, business community, government entities, law enforcement, and elected officials. These partnerships are essential for meaningful solutions and success of this strategy.

Florida Region 3 Gang Reduction Task Force consists of thirteen (13) counties. Ms. Cindy L. Dickerson, FIE Associate Director and Liaison for the FLDOE Department of Safe & Healthy Schools Technical Assistance Grant, was named Education Chair for Duval, Nassau, and Baker Counties. This Committee will focus on the following objectives:

- Implement evidence-based violence prevention programs in schools
- Establish partnerships between schools and law enforcement
- Institute protocols to identify students who are at greater risk of becoming gang-involved
- Train parents/families and school personnel how to identify gang-involved youth
- Create collaborations with businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations

The Region 3 Gang Reduction Task Force, is working to increase the support of community leaders and join this crucial effort to reduce and eliminate gang activity.

Postsecondary Education

FIE supported the work of doctoral student Ellen Glasser and promoted the master's degree studies of Ms. Katie Radcliff, General Psychology, Ms. Kristi Howard, English Literature, and Matt Campese, Mathematics Education.



FIE continued its partnership with **ENLACE** Florida, a statewide network advocating and promoting college readiness, access, and success for Latinos, African-Americans, and other underrepresented students. Nine UNF undergraduate students, who serve as learning guides/mentors for the *UNF/FIE PreCollegiate Connections College Reach-Out Program*, represented UNF at a mock legislative session in March 2009. The UNF students researched what was required to add rigor and relevance to Florida's high school curriculum. They were part of a group of 64 students from eight SUS institutions to debate and present policy recommendations at the First Annual Florida Student Education Policy Conference. Participating in the UNF/FIE PreCollegiate Program helps the UNF students understand the link between policy and practice.

FIE partners with the **Jacksonville Commitment Program**. The *Jacksonville Commitment* is a unique citywide partnership among Jacksonville's four postsecondary institutions (Edward Waters College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville University, and the University of North Florida), the Duval County Public Schools, and the City of Jacksonville to:

- increase the percentage of students from low-income families who are prepared for success in high school, graduate from high school, and are then admitted to and successfully complete a postsecondary education program; and
- create a "college-going" culture in Jacksonville and its public schools that helps participating middle and high school students and their families prepare for college eligibility, cover college costs, and continue to support students' success in their postsecondary education programs.

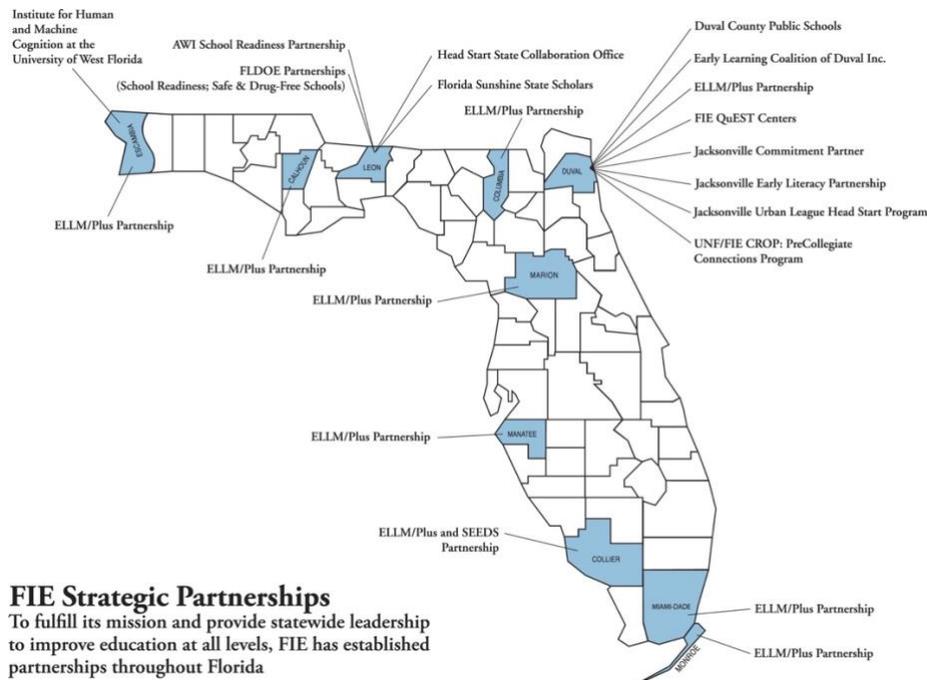
FIE Strategic Partnerships

FIE understands that success does not happen in a vacuum. In fulfilling its mission to provide statewide leadership for improving education at all levels, FIE continues to grow its individual and organizational partnerships throughout Florida. FIE faculty and staff researchers contributed time and expertise in the following areas:

Dr. Cheryl Fountain served on the boards for Early Childhood/Parents as Teachers; the Florida Educators Academy, Florida Community College at Jacksonville; and the Don Brewer Early Learning and Professional Development Center. She was co-chair of the *Jacksonville Commitment* design team, served on the Steering Committee for the Sunshine State Scholars Program, and was a member of the Agency for Workforce Innovation/Office of Early Learning *Early Learning and Development Standards* Revisions Work Team. Additionally, Dr. Fountain was a member of the Florida Department of Education Task Force to revise Voluntary Prekindergarten Mathematics Performance Standards, a member of the Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership (JELP), and a member of the Florida Head Start Research Committee. Dr. Cheryl Fountain also served on the ENLACE Florida management team.

Dr. Afesa Adams served on the Board of Directors for the Women's Center of Jacksonville. **Dr. Madelaine Cosgrove** served as a member of the Early Learning Coalition of Duval, Inc. Board of Directors and as a member of the statewide Head Start Research Committee. **Ms. Cindy Dickerson** served on the Statewide Task Force for Gang Reduction in Florida and chair of the Region 3 Gang Reduction Task Force. **Dr. Linda Goudy** partnered with the UNF Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives for the daily publication of the UNF e-News and served as co-advisor to the UNF ENLACE student delegation. **Dr. Janice Hunter** served as associate member of the UNF Environmental Center Executive Board. **Ms. Heather Monroe-Ossi** served on the Steering Committee of Eugene Butler and Paxon Middle Schools and served as co-advisor to the UNF ENLACE student delegation. **Dr. Janice Wood** served as a chair of the Jacksonville Urban League Head Start Advisory Board.

FIE's organizational partnerships are depicted in the following state map.



Budget Report

The Florida Institute of Education leverages resources to advance knowledge, address educational challenges, and improve learning outcomes. The state-funded operating budget for the year was \$1,176,095. Proceeds generated from FIE-developed curriculum materials and the provision of training and evaluation services was valued at \$586,738. Grants awarded for 2008-2009 totaled \$2,165,213.

FIE continues to play an important role in helping UNF fulfill its objective of increasing external funding to support research and address community needs. In 2008/09, several major grant proposals were developed and submitted to the USDOE and the FLDOE. The research and grant portfolio for FIE remains diverse, covering an array of projects addressing the educational needs of Florida students—prekindergarten through the postsecondary level.

Presentation and Publications

Refereed Presentations, Posters, and Conference Proceedings

McLemore, B., (2009, March). *Hands-on experience with concepts of print*. Presented at the Conference of the Association for Childhood Education International, Chicago, IL.

McLemore, B., (2009, Sept.). *Bringing books to life for our youngest learners*. Presented at the Florida Association for the Education of Young Children Conference, Orlando, FL.

McLemore, B., (2009, Sept.). *Fun with phonological awareness*. Presented at the Florida Reading Association Conference, Orlando, FL.

Monroe-Ossi, H., Adams, A., England, R., Goudy, L., & Wehry, S. (2009, Nov.). *Developing learning communities for student academic and social success: A three-tiered model for after school programs*. Presented at the 14th Annual National Learning Communities Conference, Marietta, GA. Creative Works: Instructional and Professional Learning Materials

Cosgrove, M., England, R., Hunter, J., & Monroe-Ossi, H. (2009). *Enhancing leadership and early learning services: A professional development series for early care and learning center directors*. (Available from the Florida Institute of Education, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224).

England, R. & Hunter, J. (2009). *Professional learning modules for pre-k teachers*. (Available from the Florida Institute of Education, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224).

Hunter, J. (2009). *Healthy habits through literacy family engagement modules*. (Available from the Florida Institute of Education, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224).

Wood, J. (2009). *2009-2010 ELLM family calendar*. (Available from the Florida Institute of Education, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224). Book Chapters

Caldwell, W. (2009). *Applying concept mapping to algebra I*. In K. Afamasaga-Fuata'i (Ed.), *Concept mapping in mathematics: Research into practice* (pp.217-234). New York, NY: Springer, LLC.

Other Publications

Hunter, J. & Wehry, S. (2009). *FIE/DCPS Title I Success by Design: PreK-3 Initiative Annual Report 2008-09*. Jacksonville: University of North Florida, Florida Institute of Education.

Shoe, A., Fountain, C., Wehry, S., & Kasten, K. (2009, April). *ELELS: Enhancing Leadership and Early Learning Services Professional Learning Series Program Evaluation*. Jacksonville: University of North Florida, Florida Institute of Education.

Wehry, S. (2009). *Early Learning Coalition of Duval 2008-09 Report*. Jacksonville: University of North Florida, Florida Institute of Education.

Wehry, S. (2009). *Florida Kindergarten Readiness Across the Jacksonville Community: Fall 2009*. Jacksonville: University of North Florida, Florida Institute of Education.

Wehry, S. (2009). *United Way Success by 6 Final Evaluation Report 2008-09*. Jacksonville: University of North Florida, Florida Institute of Education.

FIE Faculty and Staff

Dr. Afesa Adams, *FIE Senior Research Associate, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences*

Mr. Justin Bergstrom, *FIE Graphic Designer/Communications Coordinator*

Dr. William Caldwell, *FIE Senior Faculty Fellow, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Arts and Sciences*

Ms. Terri Cook, *FIE Coordinator, Grants Accounting*

Dr. Madeleine Cosgrove, *Associate Director for School Readiness, Florida Institute of Education*

Ms. Alice DeLeon, *FIE Graphic Designer/Communications Coordinator*

Ms. Cindy Dickerson, *Associate Director and Business/Project Manager, Florida Institute of Education*

Dr. Rebecca England, *FIE Family Involvement Specialist*

Dr. Cheryl Fountain, *Executive Director, Florida Institute of Education, Professor of Education, College of Education and Human Services*

Dr. Linda Goudy, *Associate Director for Administration/Project Manager, Florida Institute of Education*

Ms. Kristi Howard, *FIE Graduate Student Assistant*

Dr. Janice Hunter, *FIE Research Fellow for Early Learning and Literacy*

Ms. Catherine Johnson, *FIE Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director*

Dr. Katherine Kasten, *FIE Senior Research Associate, Professor of Educational Leadership, College of Education and Human Services*

Ms. Penny Mayer, *FIE Senior Research Assistant*

Dr. Bronwyn McLemore, *FIE ELLM/Plus Literacy Specialist*

Ms. Dena Norman, *FIE Senior Secretary*

Ms. Heather Monroe-Ossi, *Director, UNF/FIE PreCollegiate Connections College Reach-Out Program*

Ms. Howaida Mousa, *FIE Senior Grants Specialist*

Dr. Karen Patterson, *FIE Research Associate, Associate Professor and Chairperson, Department of Exceptional Student & Deaf Education, College of Education and Human Services*

Mr. William Phillips, *FIE Research Coordinator*

Ms. Lynn Pinner, *FIE Research Assistant*

Dr. Randall Russac, *FIE Research Associate, Professor of Psychology and Director of Master of Arts in General Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences*

Dr. Stephanie Wehry, *Assistant Director for Research and Evaluation, Florida Institute Education*

Dr. Janice Wood, *Crawford Early Literacy Faculty Fellow, FIE ELLM/Plus Developer*

Dr. John Venn, *FIE Research Associate Professor, Exceptional Student and Deaf Education, College of Education and Human Services*

EDITOR

Linda Goudy, Ed.D.

Associate Director for Administration/Project Manager

DESIGNER

Alice DeLeon

Graphic Designer/Communications Coordinator

For more information, visit our website at:

<http://www.unf.edu/dept/fie>

University Center, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224-2678

(904) 620-2496, Fax (904) 620-2454