Things have returned to normal this fall in Coral Gables. In the classroom, laboratories, and clinics we are almost completely in-person again, although Zoom meetings seem to be here to stay! I am pleased to report that the state of the Department is strong, and we continue to be the most popular major in the College. In addition, we are the largest Ph.D. granting department in the University, and our scholarship and extramural funding is among the best at UM. As always, we are extremely proud of these accomplishments, and I am grateful to the faculty, students and staff who have made this happen.

On the pages that follow you will read about the recent accomplishments of many of our faculty and students. We are extremely proud of Professor Frank Penedo, who was just given the Dolphins Challenge Cancer Living Proof Endowed Chair in Cancer Survivorship. Of course, Frank was an undergraduate, graduate student and faculty member in our department before accepting a position at Northwestern. He returned to UM in 2018 and played a pivotal role in helping the UM Sylvester Cancer Center attain its designation as a National Cancer Institute Center of Excellence. Frank is a leader in cancer survivorship research and clinical intervention. He has established one of the nation’s most robust programs for monitoring patient-reported outcomes to manage patient symptoms, toxicities, and psychosocial needs. All of South Florida, and particularly our Department, is fortunate that Frank decided to return home.

Over the past year we have also added several bright young faculty members to the Department. Tony Petruzzella is a Clinical Assistant Professor and the new Director of the Psychological Services Center (PSC). He comes to us from Brown University, where he did a postdoctoral fellowship after receiving his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Georgia. In his new position Tony will supervise the clinical training of over 50 graduate students in the Department. Also, joining us on the faculty are Research Assistant Professor Christina Cordero and Clinical Assistant Professor Marc Puccinelli. Christina will play a prominent role in managing the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (Neil Schneiderman, P.I.), and Marc will be working within the UM Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (Steve Safren, P.I.). We are pleased to have these individuals with us, and we are excited about the expertise and enthusiasm that they bring.

I hope you enjoy hearing about the department in the pages that follow. Once again, let me thank you for your generous support of the department and its programs over the years, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Phil McCabe, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Meet

TONY

PETRUZZELLA, PH.D.
DIRECTOR OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES CENTER

What was your professional journey prior to coming to UM?

I earned my Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Georgia and completed my doctoral clinical internship at the Bay Pines VA Medical Center. Clinically, I trained as a generalist and focused on evidence-based, culturally responsive, cognitive-behavioral psychological interventions, and my research has examined the factors related to the mental health and well-being of sexual- and gender-diverse individuals and couples. After graduate school, I moved to Providence, RI, where I completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the OCD & Anxiety Disorders Program at Butler Hospital through the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. Across these settings, I’ve had the amazing opportunity to work with individuals across the lifespan, from diverse backgrounds, and in different care settings. I looked forward to returning to academia and being involved in graduate clinical training, and as such, I was incredibly excited and honored to join the psychology faculty this summer as a clinical assistant professor and the Director of the Psychological Services Center (PSC).

What is your vision for the UM PSC and student training?

As the new PSC Director, I want to preserve the many features of strong clinical training currently provided through the PSC while also expanding the breadth and depth of practicum offerings for students. One important derivative of this goal is to ensure the provision of quality psychological services to the community served by the PSC. Personally, I see the PSC playing a central role in contributing to a strong sense of community among graduate trainees at UM. It’s also my hope that students, faculty, and our clients will enjoy many of the exciting changes and updates coming to the PSC.

Anything you want to share about yourself personally?

I moved to Miami with my partner (Brian) and our 2-year-old Tuxedo cat (Waffles). I enjoy most outdoor activities - hiking, visiting the beach, exploring parks and botanical gardens, and playing sports, especially volleyball, softball, and (more recently) pickleball. I enjoy traveling domestically and internationally and have some exciting trips planned for the coming year, including an upcoming trip to Italy. Finally, I love good coffee and pastries, and I’d welcome recommendations for coffee shops or bakeries around Miami!

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MICHAEL ALESSANDRI, PH.D.
Clinical Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics
Executive Director of the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (UM-NSU CARD)

Dr. Alessandri was named the 2022 Distinguished Alumnus by the University of Rochester School of Arts and Sciences. The award recognizes graduates of the School of Arts & Sciences whose exceptional professional achievements, contributions to their chosen field, and service to their alma mater have brought honor to themselves and to the University of Rochester.

ANNETTE M. LA GRECA, PH.D.
Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics

Dr. La Greca was awarded the 2022 Outstanding Service Award from the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research (ABMR) at the annual Healthy Aging Across the Lifespan: The Role of Socioeconomic Status Meeting.

MARIA MAGDALENA LLABRE, PH.D.
Professor of Psychology

Dr. Llabre received the 2022 Distinguished Research Award at the annual Healthy Aging Across the Lifespan: The Role of Socioeconomic Status Meeting.

MARC PUCCINELLI, PH.D.

Dr. Puccinelli is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Psychology Health Promotion and Care Lab at the University of Miami. He earned his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Miami in 2017, and completed internship training in clinical health psychology at the Miami VA medical center. His clinical and research experience has primarily focused on substance use, mental health treatment, HIV prevention, and coping with chronic illness, including HIV and cancer. His research interests include development, testing, and disseminating interventions to address health disparities in sexual and gender minority and other underserved communities.

CHRISTINA CORDERO, PH.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Cordero is a Research Assistant Professor in the Health Division in the Department of Psychology at the University of Miami. She earned her Ph.D. in Epidemiology from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 2017. She completed her postdoctoral training in Behavioral Medicine Research in Cardiovascular Disease at the University of Miami under Dr. Neil Schneiderman. Her research experience has primarily focused on maternal and child health, cardiometabolic diseases, and health disparities. She is currently the Project Director for the NHLBI Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos, a multisite longitudinal study of chronic diseases in Hispanic/Latinos, which focused recruitment in her hometown of Hialeah. Her teaching interests include causal inference and scientific writing.

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The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has awarded $7 million for research led by Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Yale Cancer Center, to study the impact of nutrition and exercise on ovarian cancer outcomes.

It is one of four grants awarded nationally by the NCI through its Exercise and Nutrition Interventions to Improve Cancer Treatment-Related Outcomes (ENICTO) in Cancer Survivors Consortium.

**NCI TO FUND SYLVESTER-LED STUDY ON HOW EXERCISE AND NUTRITION MAY IMPROVE OVARIAN CANCER OUTCOMES**

Dr. Frank Penedo

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