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Date: October 10, 2020



## *Program*

National Anthem

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Message from the Chancellor

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Closing

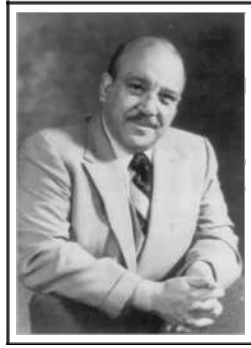




## *To the Families of the Graduates*

We all recognize the help, support, respect and love that our family has provided us throughout the academic journey that we complete today. Our achievements are the fruit of mutual work and efforts.

Love is appreciated through love. Just to say “Thank You” is not enough. We want to dedicate this great moment, our Graduation, to all of you.



**CARLOS ALBIZU-MIRANDA, Ph.D.**

*Founder and First President*

*Albizu University*

Dr. Carlos Albizu was a pioneering and visionary man who dedicated his life to improving the well-being of Puerto Rico.

Dr. Albizu labored to improve the mental health services offered to his fellow countrymen, while providing opportunities for Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics to complete a program of study in higher education which was not available at the time.

Dr. Albizu was born on September 16, 1920 in the city of Ponce, Puerto Rico. In 1943, he attained a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Puerto Rico with a concentration in psychology and history. As there was no graduate program in the field of psychology on the Island, he decided to attend the University of Minnesota to begin his graduate studies in clinical psychology. After a year, due to financial reasons and to the lack of financial aid programs available to minorities, he returned to Puerto Rico to work and so postponed completing his doctoral studies. In September of 1950, Dr. Albizu secured a teaching assistant position and moved to Purdue University, where he attained a master's degree in experimental psychology in 1951, and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology in 1953. His doctoral dissertation focused on the relationship between social class factors and test performance.

Dr. Albizu joined the faculty in the Psychology Department of the University of Puerto Rico where he attained the rank of full professor, retiring in 1975 after 22 years of service.



Upon returning to Puerto Rico, Dr. Albizu felt great concern about the lack of opportunities for students on the Island to engage in graduate studies in the field of psychology. He fervently believed that the training acquired abroad did not provide psychology students with the skills needed for an effective and culturally-sensitive intervention with Hispanic populations. He therefore founded the Puerto Rico Institute of Psychology in 1966, which became the first psychology graduate program on the Island, and the first school of professional psychology in the United States and its territories.

Dr. Albizu was not only a visionary but also a man with great courage. After ten short years, Dr. Albizu foresaw the same needs in South Florida where the increasing influx of Caribbean and Latin American immigrants created a critical need to provide culturally-sensitive mental health services for this population.

He thus established the Miami Institute of Psychology in 1980. Master's and doctoral level programs in the field of psychology were offered, concentrating on the needs of underrepresented minority groups. The institution offered opportunities for studies in higher education that were otherwise inaccessible to the majority of Hispanics and other minority populations.

Dr. Albizu passed away in 1984, but his legacy of excellence in mental health and education continues to contribute significantly to the social and economic development of the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States, through the culturally sensitive professional training offered at the campuses in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Miami, Florida.

In January of 2000, the Board of Trustees changed the name of the institution to Carlos Albizu University in response to its strategic plan to become a multidisciplinary university responsive to the educational and workforce needs of the pluralistic and diverse population of the United States. Albizu University is the only regionally accredited, secular university in the United States named in honor of a Hispanic.



## *History*

Albizu University (AU) is a private, nonprofit, specialized university-level institution offering associate, bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology, education, criminal justice, and speech and language pathology, and doctoral degrees in psychology and human services. Albizu University has campuses in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Miami, Florida, and an extension center in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

The origin of Albizu University dates back to the year 1966, when the Puerto Rico campus, originally known as the Caribbean Center for Advanced Studies, was founded with the specific objective of offering a Master of Science degree in clinical psychology. At that time, there were very few mental health professionals on the Island and most received their professional education outside of Puerto Rico.

Upon completion of those studies, returning mental health professionals were confronted with the necessity of adapting their training to Puerto Rican socio-cultural realities. The Caribbean Center for Advanced Studies was established by Dr. Carlos Albizu, a renowned Puerto Rican psychologist, in response to the need for culturally sensitive professional training. Starting in 1972, the Puerto Rico campus began offering doctoral degrees (Ph.D. and Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology), thus becoming the first university offering culturally sensitive doctoral training in clinical psychology in Puerto Rico.

Dr. Albizu devoted his life to the training and formation of multiculturally competent psychologists on the island of Puerto Rico as well as on the mainland. Albizu University continues in this tradition of cultural sensitivity and is today an educational institution whose programs of study and research are founded, both in theory and practice, on our multicultural heritage.

Through the founding of the Miami campus in 1980, Albizu University responds to the need in the continental United States for graduate psychology programs sensitive to cultural and ethnic issues. Through the academic offerings at both campuses, AU provides professional training that is relevant and responsive to the educational needs of the communities served and to the needs of culturally sensitive research, thereby contributing to the development of the professions of psychology, education, criminal justice, human services, and speech and language pathology.



## *Historical Overview of the Academic Costume Code*

The origins of academic dress date back to the 12th and 13th centuries, when universities were taking form. The ordinary dress of the scholar, whether student or teacher, was the dress of a cleric. With few exceptions, the medieval scholar had taken at least minor orders, made certain vows, and perhaps been tonsured. Long gowns were worn and may have been necessary for warmth in unheated buildings. Hoods seem to have served to cover the tonsured head until superseded for that purpose by the skull cap.

A statute of the University of Coimbra in 1321 required that all “Doctors, Licentiates, and Bachelors” wear gowns. In England, in the second half of the 14th century, the statutes of certain colleges forbade “excess in apparel” and prescribed the wearing of a long gown. In the days of Henry VIII of England, Oxford and Cambridge first began prescribing a definite academic dress and made it a matter of university control even to the extent of its minor details.

The assignment of colors to signify certain faculties was to be a much later development, and one which was to be standardized only in the United States in the late 19th century. White taken from the white fur trimming of the Oxford and Cambridge B.A. hoods, was assigned to arts and letters. Red, one of the traditional colors of the church, went to theology. Green, the color of medieval herbs, was adopted for medicine, and olive, because it was so close to green, was given to pharmacy. Golden yellow, standing for the wealth which scientific research has produced, was assigned to the sciences.

European institutions have always had great diversity in their specifications of academic dress and this has been a source of confusion. In contrast, American colleges and universities opted for a definite system that all might follow. A significant contribution to the development of this system was made by Gardner Cotrell Leonard of Albany, New York. Mr. Leonard designed gowns for his class at Williams College in 1887 and had them made by Cotrell and Leonard, a firm established by his family in Albany, New York. He was greatly interested in the subject and following the publication of an article by him on academic dress in 1893, he was invited to work with an Intercollegiate Commission made up of representatives of leading institutions to establish a suitable system of academic apparel.

The Commission met at Columbia University in 1895 and adopted a code of academic dress, which besides regulating the cut and style and materials of the gowns, prescribed the colors which were to represent the different fields of learning.

In 1932 the American Council on Education authorized the appointment of a committee “to determine whether revision and completion of the academic code adopted by the conference of the colleges and universities in 1895 is desirable at this time, and, if so, to draft a revised code and present a plan for submitting the code to the consideration of the institutional members of the Council.”

The committee reviewed the situation through correspondence and conference and approved a code for academic costumes that has been in effect since that year. A Committee on Academic Costumes and Ceremonies, appointed by the American Council on Education in 1959, again reviewed the costume code and made several changes.

In 1986, the committee updated the code and added a sentence clarifying the use of the color dark blue for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

*“Historical Overview of the Academic Costume Code,” Eugene Sullivan, American Council on Education, reprinted with permission from American Universities and Colleges, 15th Edition © 1997 Walter de Gruyter, Inc.*





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**2019-2020**

***Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education***

Yesenia Carmenate, *Distinguished Award Recipient*

Carolina Fernandez

Daira F. Méndez

Yesenia Isabel Rodriguez

Ruba Samhan

***Bachelor of Arts in Exceptional Student Education***

Alexandra Isabel Gómez Dapena

Katherine E. Infantes Gálvez

Natalie Méndez

Carlos R. Tapanes Vazquez, *Distinguished Award Recipient*

***Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice***

Roger Lucas Fernandez

***Bachelor of Science in Psychology***

Jose Manuel Algozain

Maday Armas

Luis Felipe Batista Caceres

Andrea T. Cabanelas Fernandez

Grethel M. Castelvi

Sharyk Castillo

Sabrina Chavez Salvatorelli

Adriana Sofia Diaz Gerardino

Fatima Galan

Neriana Gonzalez

Jessica Hernandez

Briza Margarita Ibarra Aleman

Monique Jimenez, *Distinguished Award Recipient*

Ashley Lopez



Yenil Natalie Lopez  
Melanie Marti Olivera  
Ginnette Mendez  
Aida I. Morales  
Martha P. Nuñez Castro  
Tamara Nuñez  
Mayara Orozco Castillo  
Yelina Ortiz  
Robert F. Ramos  
Gema de la Caridad Rojas Rosa  
Stephen V. Senra  
Ailadys Sordo  
Ingrid Tamayo  
Rosario Lucila Valladares Zuniga  
Glenda Verdecia  
Maria C. Villena  
Dawn Nicole Witherspoon

***Master of Science in Psychology  
Mental Health Counseling***

Nereida Aguilar  
Claudia Alvarez  
Lina Bolivar-Alpern  
Ariel Borges  
Joanne Cancel  
Navila Cardoso  
Laura Viviana Castro  
Paula Mateo Escalera  
Mabel Gimenez  
Alejandro Goicoechea  
Claudia Gomez Alvarez  
Hector Hernandez  
Veronica Hernandez Carrero



Beatriz Herrera  
Vidal Victor Lazo III  
Diego M. León  
Cecilia Dinay Lopez  
Suzette Lozada  
Susanna Martinez  
Tirzah Neves  
Nancy Ospina  
Michelle Palomo  
Chantell Perez  
Michael Perez  
Marielys Pino Paez  
Malky Polonetsky  
Karla D. Ramirez-Velazquez  
Leslie Rocha  
Andrea Nicole Rodriguez  
Olga Lillian Rodriguez  
Yanislen Rodriguez  
Elizabeth T. Rodriguez  
Jan A. Rodriguez  
Andrea Sambucetti  
Melissa Gabriella Sandino  
Sergio Andres Silva Cortes  
Netty Alexandra Varela

*Master of Science in Psychology*  
*Marriage and Family Therapy*

Leslian Alamo  
Giovanna Baldovin  
Izaskun Cruz Nunez  
Jessica Damaso  
Estefania Fernández Ayala  
Odette Hoffmann Guadalupe  
Betsy L. O'Farrill Berges



Margarita Ordieres  
Pilar Yoany Pardo-Vazquez  
Iuliia A. Podgorbunskaja  
Olivia Margot Portuondo  
Erik Torres

***Master of Science in Psychology***

***School Counseling***

Naddiuska Brito  
Lilianna Golan  
Jeremiah Glen Dale Howard  
Leann Baugh Kurzner, *Distinguished Award Recipient*  
Rosalie Llombart-Morales  
Janely Daimy Santi  
Dana-Rochelle Shehan Jarrett  
Jacqueline Zayas

***Master of Science in Psychology***

***Mental Health Counseling***

***Marriage and Family Therapy***

Marisa S. Chiuchiolo

***Master of Science in Psychology***

***Mental Health Counseling & School Counseling***

Elbany Eugenia Angulo  
Karina G. Castillo  
Pamela Del Castillo  
Ednei Estevez Gonzalez  
Jelissa Forero  
LaShawn Rene Issac  
Esther Ranero Carrazana  
Dorilee Santa



*Master of Science in Psychology*  
*Marriage and Family Therapy & School Counseling*  
Maria Beatriz Menezes

*Master of Science in*  
*Industrial and Organizational Psychology*

Enelimary Acevedo Rivera  
Patricia Jeanne Beck  
Cody Matthew Chemlik  
Nicole Rene Duran  
Waleska Marie Garcia  
Priscila Polette Garcia Garcia  
Jessica Nicole Gomez  
Ana Laura Gonzalez Aguililla, *Distinguished Award Recipient*  
Piery-Ann Guzman  
Hillary Janeen Hixon  
Coral La Rosa  
Amy Lopez  
Gregory Luis Minguel King  
Zulia D. Mojica Avila  
Susanh Abigail Perez-Molina  
Charlotte J. Quiñones  
Reinier Ramirez, *Distinguished Award Recipient*  
Sarah Joanna Restrepo  
Suhey Rojas  
Catalina Ruiz Avendano  
Dylan Sankar  
Ivan Santos  
Daymelit Schell  
Yimala Lenie Telemaque



*Master of Science in  
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*  
Judy Brid

*Master of Science in Exceptional Student Education*

Giraldo Jesús Almeida Pardo

Zulema Alonso Martinez

Anabel Caraza Cruz

Carmen M. Angel Gutierrez

Julia Maria Hernandez

Laura Lledo Rodriguez

Madelen Lopez

Katherine Maidique

Laura Novoa

Brenda Lee Quiñones Pagán, *Distinguished Award Recipient*

Laura Rodriguez

Manuel Rodriguez

Priscilla Ruiz

*Master of Science in Speech and Language*

*Pathology*

Melissa Alarcon

Yessenia Alvarez

Bianca D. Anghel

Neda Barooni

Christina Barringer

Nicole Marie Batista

Antonette M. Bennett

Rebecca Michelle Bequer

Estefania Bereicua

Valeria Joann Clock

Nicole Garcia

Alexis Marie Garcia



Shady Gramajo  
Gabriella Guerrero  
Jenae Shelese Hodge  
Ariel Catherine Jeanty  
Amy Kaminski  
Gabriela Mendez  
Anay Morales  
Carolina Navarro  
Amanda C. Nunez  
Paula Oramas  
Dinaibys Paredes  
Stephanie Rodriguez  
Michelle M. Samper

Kassandra Brooke Santurio, *Distinguished Award Recipient*

Dunia Sardina  
Marie S St Louis  
Megan Tombley  
Adriana R. Tridenti  
Katya Velasquez-Pace  
Nathalie Vinasco  
Nicole E. Walfall

***Master of Science in Psychology***

Stephanie Afua Afranewaah Sarkodie  
Elizabeth Alfaro  
Breona Lashay Alvarado  
Denise Carballea  
Jessica Marie Frias  
Malyorie García-Diaz  
Mariemilia Larrea  
Eric Loyd  
Adriana Martinez  
Alexandria Kathryn Marullo





Dilianna Marie Padrón  
Rita Michelle Rivera Varela  
Maudy Sanchez  
Mónica Santini  
Nicolle Marie Serrano Colón  
Arlenis Silva  
Sean-Michael Suarez  
Mary Abigail Ubeda  
Hanny Vera  
Ambar Ximena Zapata

*Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology*

Jessica Alpizar  
Dinisha Marissa Blanding  
Michelle Sharon Brooks  
Bethania Andreina Carrión Parés  
Latasha Sunshine Dean  
Shirly Dorilas  
Brianna Garcia Marrero  
Joanna M. Gonzalez  
Alexandra Maria Grigorian  
Janeel Inda  
ShaRone S. David Kushnir  
Andrew Lima  
Elizabeth Lopez  
Adrine Maresco  
Karli M. Martin  
Juliana Millan-Torres  
Maria Modesto  
Michelle Stephanie Myott  
Raven S. Oshiro  
Jacqueline N. Pablos, *Distinguished Award Recipient*  
Edward Alexander Pardo  
Maria Enid Rodriguez Santiago



Clara M. Thompson  
Crismarlyn Valentin Arias  
Jennifer Yukawa

*Doctor of Philosophy in Human Services*

Jackeline P. Giansanti

Michelle Mendez, *Distinguished Award Recipient*

Jean Rasquin



**Yesenia Carmenate**

*2020 Distinguished Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education Award Recipient*

Ms. Yesenia Carmenate joined Albizu University to pursue the Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education (BAEE) which she completed in the Spring 2020 academic session, graduating Magna Cum Laude. She had previously earned her Associate in Arts degree in Early Childhood and a College Credit Certificate in Business Administration from Miami Dade College. Yesenia is a member of the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education Alpha Epsilon Nu Chapter, and of the Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority.

Yesenia completed a stellar AU and Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Internship at Kensington Park Elementary School in Miami with third grade level students, where she received excellent evaluations from her M-DCPS Directing Teacher. She excelled in the completion of the program academic requirements as well as those of the Florida State Educator Accomplished Practices.

An outstanding Intern, sterling student, always helpful, enthusiastic, motivating her peers, and driven to succeed in all she does, Yesenia is looking forward to her future in the teaching profession.



We are very proud of Yesenia and congratulate her for maintaining her goals, remaining true to her plan, and achieving her degree. We wish her success in her future endeavors.

**Carlos R. Tapanes Vazquez**

*2020 Distinguished Bachelor of Arts in Exceptional Student Education Award Recipient*

Mr. Carlos R. Tapanes Vazquez enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Exceptional Student Education program in the Fall 2017 academic session at Albizu University from which he is graduating Summa Cum Laude with minors in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Applied Behavior Analysis.

Carlos is the oldest of three brothers and a sister, whose parents immigrated to the United States from Cuba to be able to provide their children a better future.

Since a very early age, Carlos developed a passion for teaching and helping others, greatly influenced by his History teacher in his 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, an individual that he still today considers as one of the most influential people in his educational goals.

His undergraduate studies in the field of Exceptional Student Education allowed him to combine his two passions in life: learning and helping others. He has been working for the last three years with children with disabilities as a Behavioral Analyst Assistant. His



studies in Exceptional Student Education and Applied Behavior Analysis have also developed his interest in psychology.

He has expressed that he will continue his studies in the Psychology field and that he will like to become a higher education professor and teach others with the same passion and knowledge of his undergraduate professors.

Carlos is the perfect representation of the hard-working Hispanic students who form part of Albizu University and a genuine example that with perseverance and dedication you can achieve your goals.

### **Monique Jimenez**

*2020 Distinguished Bachelor of Science in Psychology  
Award Recipient*

Ms. Monique Jimenez enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Psychology program at Albizu University in the Spring 2019 academic session and completed her degree in Spring 2020, graduating Magna Cum Laude.

Monique had a rough childhood and upbringing. Being a mother of three and working full time at a very early age, she had to put her educational aspirations and dreams on hold. This is why although she had got her GED in 1995, she did not return to school until 2017 when she enrolled in Miami Dade College and graduated there with an Associate of Arts in Psychology in 2018.

Monique has not only been an outstanding student since she resumed her studies in 2017, but has also been actively involved in student life associations, several organizations, and honor societies. During her time at Miami Dade College she was an active member of the Alternative Breaks Club, the



Hearts on Fire Club, and the Psychology Student Association Organization. As soon as she enrolled at Albizu, she got involved with the Student Council where she became a board member. She also became the President of the Albizu University Chapter of the Psi Chi Honor Society and has been a member of the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) Miami Chapter since 2019.

Monique loves reading, listening to music, and, most of all, spending time with her family. She has a passion for helping abused children and women who are victims of domestic violence. She has volunteered in many organizations in Miami since 1998, including Kristi House, and served as Guardian ad Litem for two years.

Monique is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Psychology with dual majors in Mental Health Counseling and Marriage and Family Therapy at Albizu University. She hopes she can motivate and inspire people around her and show them that you can do anything you set your mind and heart to.

The faculty is very proud of Ms. Jimenez and wishes her success in her future endeavors.

### **Brenda Lee Quiñones Pagán, M.S.**

*2020 Distinguished Master of Science in Exceptional Student Education Award Recipient*

Ms. Brenda Lee Quiñones is a native of Puerto Rico. A week after hurricane Maria hit the country on September 2017 taking away everything she had, she embarked on a humanitarian cruise with her two children to settle in Florida. She then started to work as a teacher assistant and volleyball coach through the Miami-Dade County Public Schools.



In January 2018 she began to work as a Paraprofessional in a Self-Contained ASD Classroom and at that point she made the decision to pursue a master's degree in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) at Albizu University, from which she graduates today.

The culmination of the Master of Science in Exceptional Student Education is a research capstone project using qualitative Action Research. Ms. Quiñones conducted an action research project titled *Behavior Modification in a Middle School ESE Classroom*; she developed a token economy system for students with behavioral disorders in middle school classrooms to reduce class disruptions for effective teaching time. Her project goals were attained and her performance was outstanding.

Ms. Quiñones currently works as an ESE Teacher's Assistant at Calvary Christian Academy in Fort Lauderdale and is the Head Coach for the JV girls' volleyball team and Assistant Coach for the girls' varsity team. She intends to pursue the Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) certification and continue to work with students with special needs.

Albizu University congratulates Ms. Quiñones on her accomplishments and wishes her success in her future endeavors.

***Kassandra Brooke Santurio, M.S.***

*2020 Distinguished Master of Science in Speech and Language Pathology Award Recipient*

Ms. Kassandra Brooke Santurio joined Albizu University in the Fall 2017 academic session to pursue her Master of



Science degree in Speech and Language Pathology from which she graduates today. During her studies, Ms. Santurio achieved academic and clinical excellence, exemplified by her GPA and Clinical Practicum Score. In addition to these achievements, she has also demonstrated strong bonds with the University and her commitment to the Institution, the community, and her chosen profession.

While dedicating herself to the pursuit of her degree, Ms. Santurio spent time during her summers observing children and volunteering at a therapy office that provided services for children with autism spectrum disorder. She also tutored elementary school-aged children and worked with her father and sister at her father's architectural design office. She also assisted her father and helped at meetings of the Society of American Registered Architects. On campus, Ms. Santurio served as the Speech and Language Pathology Program ambassador for the University.

In a testimonial she stated: "Albizu University gave me the tools to shape me into a professional; the faculty gave me the confidence to believe in myself and the education I need to be a successful future Speech Language Pathologist. I am forever grateful to all the faculty and staff who dedicate so much time into guiding students like myself to pave their way, show their support every step of the way, and cheer us up to the finish line."

Albizu University congratulates Ms. Santurio on her achievements and wishes her success in her professional endeavors.





## **Ana Laura Gonzalez Aguililla, M.S.**

*2020 Distinguished Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology Award Recipient (Campus-based program)*

Ms. Ana Laura Gonzalez Aguililla earned a Bachelor's degree in Law from the Central University of Las Villas, Cuba in 1994. She was admitted into the Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, online modality, at Albizu University in 2016. Later, in 2018, she combined online classes with some live classes and a practicum in the campus-based program from which she graduates today with Distinction.

Ana had practiced her law profession for 18 years as attorney, legal advisor in small and medium companies, and attorney supervisor in a law firm, but her career in the legal field ended when she left her native country and came to live in the United States in 2012. In 2016, she decided to expand her knowledge and work again in business settings. Seeking to access organizational environments, Ana discovered a new field of interest in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Ana found a huge passion to participate in the research process. As a group project, she successfully published her research project "Well Being, Fairness, and Supervisor's Ability and Support" in the *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* in 2018. In 2019, Ana participated in two professional events where she presented posters. Her first poster, titled "Employees' Perception of Fairness in Relation to Managerial Skills of Their Supervisors in the Workplace", was presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Knowledge Culture, and Change in Organizations, The New Story of Organizing in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Her second poster, titled "Equality in the Workplace, Gender Differences in Beliefs About Equality", was presented at the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the New England Psychological Association, New Hampshire University.

Ana completed her practicum at Miami Jewish Health in Miami, Florida where she focused on talent acquisition, recruitment activities, and training and development. She is



currently employed in the Albizu Library at Albizu University. She holds membership in the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology since 2018 and in the New England Psychological Association since 2019. The faculty is proud of her accomplishments and wishes her continued success in all her endeavors.

**Reinier Ramirez, M.S.**

*2020 Distinguished Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology Award Recipient (Online program)*

Mr. Reinier Ramirez graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology degree from Florida International University in 2015. He was admitted to the Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, online modality, at Albizu University in 2017.

While attending Albizu for his master's degree, Reinier simultaneously worked in higher education, starting as an Outreach and Admissions Counselor with Job Corps. In this role, Reinier was able to serve his community, assisting underprivileged youth in obtaining free career training and education.

Reinier later went on to work in the Admissions Department for West Coast University's nursing program. Recognized for his work ethics, leadership skills, attention to detail, and creative problem-solving skills, he was promoted to Senior Admissions Advisor, and later to his current position of Assistant Director of Admissions. In these roles, Reinier takes pride in his commitment to his students, and is deeply passionate about helping them pursue their academic and career goals.

In addition to excelling in his academic courses, Reinier also completed Six Sigma Certification, achieving both Green Belt



and Black Belt level certifications, as part of his capstone projects. When not working or studying, Reinier is a big sports fan and avid supporter of the local Miami Sports teams. He is also a dog lover.

Reinier has thus far been able to apply his knowledge in guiding his entire department to successfully transition from a fully on-ground work environment to working remotely from home. He hopes to use his knowledge to continue to make positive influences in his field and positively impact those he cares about. In the near future he plans to pursue a doctoral degree.

The faculty is proud of his accomplishments and wishes him continued success in all his endeavors.

### **Leann Baugh Kurzner, M.S.**

*2020 Distinguished Master of Science in Psychology  
Award Recipient*

Ms. Leann Baugh Kurzner earned a Bachelor of Science in Education, French, and English from Baylor University. After working at Gulliver Preparatory School in Miami for 31 years as a French teacher, Leann decided to pursue additional certification as a Guidance Counselor. In the Fall 2018 academic session, she was admitted to the Master of Science in Psychology program with major in School Counseling at Albizu University, from which she graduates today with Utmost Distinction.

Leann's academic performance during her graduate studies was excellent. She received commendations from her professors on numerous occasions and maintained a perfect GPA of 4.00. Leann conducted her clinical practicum duties in an exemplary manner at Coral Gables Senior High School.



Throughout her career, Leann has volunteered her time to mentor new teachers, and to assist with the activities of student honor societies. She is happy to help students navigate the stressful years of their youth and high school academics, and to help them make plans to continue to higher education. In addition to her academic achievements at Albizu, she also contributed her talent for connecting with others when she participated in the University's promotional videos to encourage others to reach for their dreams.

While Leann enjoys being useful and bringing joy to others, she is inspired daily by her supportive husband of 35 years and by her three amazing and talented sons. She considers herself a lifelong learner, a people person, and her motto is "Where there's a will, there's a way!" She is an enthusiastic and optimistic self-starter who takes pride in motivating her students. In her leisure time, Leann likes to travel, hike, play games and meet people from diverse backgrounds. Currently, she is a school counselor at Miami Senior High School.

The faculty is proud of her accomplishments and wishes her continued success in all her endeavors.

**Jacqueline N. Pablos, Psy.D.**

*2020 Distinguished Doctor of Psychology Award  
Recipient*

Dr. Jacqueline N. Pablos, a South Florida native, enrolled in the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) in Clinical Psychology Program at Albizu University in the Spring 2016 academic session.



Dr. Pablos completed an APA-accredited internship at Florida International University and is currently completing her postdoctoral training at Oliver Pyatt Centers, where she treats adolescents and families recovering from eating disorders, and heads the center's family programming. She had previously worked as a student clinician in various hospitals and community health settings throughout South Florida, where she received outstanding evaluations.

During her graduate studies at Albizu University, Dr. Pablos demonstrated her passion for her career. She not only excelled in all her courses but was actively involved in assisting faculty and students as a teaching assistant. Her supervisors have stressed her strong work ethics, tempered by humility and genuineness. She continues to be committed to her personal growth and development as she assists individuals and families through the process of healing and self-discovery.

Today, Albizu University congratulates Dr. Pablos for her academic and clinical accomplishments and wishes her success in her future endeavors as a clinical psychologist.

**Michelle Mendez, Ph.D.**



*2020 Distinguished Doctor of Philosophy in Human Services Award Recipient*

Dr. Michelle Mendez first joined Albizu University in 2009 to pursue a Master of Science degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), from which she graduated in 2011. She attained a second Master of Science degree from Albizu University in Exceptional Student Education in 2012. After completing one year of doctoral coursework at Nova Southeastern University, she transferred to Albizu University to pursue the Doctor of Philosophy in Human Services degree which she completed in the Spring 2020 academic session.

Michelle's thirst for knowledge is evident in her tendency to obtain double majors since she started her studies in higher education. Prior to enrolling at Albizu University, she had attained both Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees, the latter in Sign Language, from Miami Dade College as well as a Certificate in Drug Addiction Counseling. She also earned a Bachelor of Science in Languages degree from Florida International University.

Dr. Mendez has over 20 years of professional experience working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) population of Miami-Dade and Broward counties. Her dissertation, *A Pilot Study Comparing the Writing Skills of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adults by Learning Approach*, assessed how the educational methods of American Sign Language, Oralism or Total Communication affect the writing skills of D/HH individuals; she measured them with the Woodcock Johnson Achievement Writing Samples.

Dr. Mendez has many years of teaching experience at Miami Dade College; she currently teaches in the School of Education at the college-wide level.



Today, Albizu University congratulates Dr. Mendez on her achievements and wishes her success in her future endeavors.

### ***Graduation Honors Criteria:***

Undergraduate cumulative grade point average:

Cum Laude - 3.33-3.49

Magna Cum Laude - 3.50-3.95

Summa Cum Laude - 3.96-4.00

Graduate cumulative grade point average:

Distinction - 3.60-3.94

Utmost Distinction - 3.95-4.00

Graduate students receiving honors cannot:

- ~ Receive a grade of C or lower in any course.
- ~ Receive a NP in or repeated courses, practicum, Internship, Dissertation/Doctoral Project, and/or Comprehensive Examination