

FROM THE DIRECTOR

ABE GOLDMAN



It is a great pleasure to present the University of Florida's Center for African Studies 2015-16 Research Report. We're extremely gratified with the continuing growth in the scope and diversity of research on Africa carried out by faculty and students at UF, as well as the increasing number of students and faculty involved in Africa-related teaching and research. With their efforts and involvement, CAS has become one of the largest and most diverse academic centers for African Studies in the US and in the world.

In 2014, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida. This year's report includes a second installment of former Center Director and Emeritus Professor Hunt Davis' review of highlights of the Center's history over that half century.

The research summaries in this report represent a sample of some of the scope of work on Africa being carried out at the University of Florida. Our faculty and graduate students as well as visiting scholars are involved in research that spans the continent geographically and ranges

from multiple areas of the humanities to the natural sciences, conservation, and health; from aspects of political, social, economic, and linguistic change to the human and environmental impacts in Africa of climate change, disease, and globalization.

In particular, this year's report includes summaries of research on biology, ecology, and geology in several areas of Africa (see reports by Blackburn, Foster, McCleery, Palmer, Shirk, and Stanton); interdisciplinary social and climatological research on climate change in Africa (reports by Matyas, McKune, Serra; and Turientine); health issues and medical practice (Abramowitz, Devos, and Pulliam); social and political change in the Sahelian region (Elischer, Villalón, Burgen, Eizenga, Hames, and Kane) as well as numerous other topics and areas of focus. All of these represent only a selection of the full scope of research and applied work being carried out at UF.

A major objective of CAS is to bring together these and other scholars from numerous backgrounds and perspectives to identify and address questions of intellectual and applied significance. We've

been particularly pleased by the involvement of researchers in professional schools – including among others architecture, public health, medicine, veterinary science, agriculture, forestry, law, journalism, and education – together with those from the social and natural sciences and humanities, in cross-disciplinary research on and in Africa. The Center has also consistently supported collaboration with colleagues throughout Africa.

CAS continued its strong commitment to the Masters in Development Practice (MDP) degree, offered jointly with the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida. MDP admitted its sixth class in 2015, and many of the MDP students have been or plan to be involved in development efforts in Africa.

Finally, UF's Program in African Languages, which is closely linked to CAS as well as to UF's Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (LLC), hosted a fifth summer of intensive African language instruction through the African Languages Initiative. Students from UF and numerous other universities received innovative immersive instruction in six African languages.

We are very pleased to acknowledge the support we receive from various sources. Most notably, CAS was again granted funding as a Title VI National Resource Center for African Studies in 2014, one of only ten in the country. This grant helps us continue many of our programs and supports students through Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships. We are also extremely grateful for the consistent support for the Center from the University of Florida, particularly the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Office of Research, the International Center, and the Office of the Provost. Numerous individual donors, listed later in the report continue to support our activities and students and help us to prepare scholars and researchers who have deep understanding of and commitment to African peoples, societies, and environments.