

Alejandra Salemi

Social and Behavioral Sciences (On Campus)



My name is Alejandra Salemi (she/her) and I am part of the Spring 2020 graduating MPH class. I was born in Bogota, Colombia and have lived in the states since I was a child. I did my undergrad at UF in public health and transitioned into the MPH program. Being a Double Gator has been such a blessing and I have found my passions through the past 5 years of being part of the Gator Nation. My areas of interest include mental health, suicide prevention and substance rehab specifically with opioids and overall social justice and empowerment. I hope to pursue a PhD down the road and work in the intersection of faith and science.

Huge shout out to the incredible professors I have met along the way. First and foremost, my incredible advisor, mentor, Sheri, and friend, Dr. Ashby Walker. You are truly one of the most inspirational and genuine women I've ever met and I am forever thankful that you helped me in this journey.

Special thanks to Dr. Mark Hart who encouraged me in my undergrad to apply and push myself into the combined degree program. Your guidance and friendship is so appreciated.

Also, special thanks to Dr. Ernesto Escoto and Dr. Meggen Sixbey who were the best supervisors one could ask for. My time at the Counseling and Wellness Center was so wonderful and I feel grateful to have been given the opportunity to have worked alongside the both of you. Lastly, thank you to Heather and Joel Pancoast, my spiritual guides and friends who have helped me develop my passions during my time in Gainesville. You all are truly one-in-a-billion type of people.

And of course, thanks to my mom. This is all for you.

How has your University of Florida MPH helped you achieve your goals?

I am so thankful for the UF combined degree program for helping streamline me into a field that has completely captured my heart. I have met incredible professors along the way who have mentored me and shaped me to appreciate this field and encouraged me to push my boundaries and grow as a student and public health professional. I know that the friendships and connections made during this program, both with my cohort and those who educated me, will have a lasting impact on my life.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I plan on going to Harvard University and beginning a second Masters, this time in Divinity focusing greatly on social equity and public health. I hope to work in the intersection of public health and theology to have a better relationship between religion and science to help build a better future. However, before moving to Boston, I am currently working with the Florida Department of Health with their COVID19 relief response team.