

# Academic Advisors: We are here for you



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**C**COVID-19 may have cancelled University of Florida (UF) study abroad program in summer 2020, but that did not stop two instructors in the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences (FYCS) from innovating a new way to connect students with the sights and sounds of Ireland through an online format.

FYCS Senior Lecturer, Kate Fletcher and Associate Professor, Dr. Dale Pracht were scheduled to go on their fourth study abroad to Ireland. Fletcher started the program in 2017 by enrolling 13 students in a program focused on service-learning, Irish culture, and various organizations within the City of Galway. When COVID-19 emerged in March 2020, the department made the decision to cancel the program and worked with Pracht and Fletcher on a new idea.

The solution, they would co-teach two courses over the summer semester. Fletcher and Pracht worked with community partners, both in Gainesville and in Ireland, to give students the opportunity to work on a project to directly help create programs those specific organization without traveling abroad or being in person due to COVID-19. By co-teaching, Pracht and Fletcher have learned their teaching styles complement each other in such a way, the department now refers to them as the “Dynamic Duo”.

A total of 29 students enrolled between two classes embarked on this new journey with Fletcher and Pracht and, even though there were growing pains, they all worked together as a team to restructure the courses and make them better for future students. Fletcher and Pracht believe every student involved left the summer with the feeling they have created an impact on the community based on the work they produced in their class(es).

In addition to their teaching, Pracht has a research appointment and focuses his study on the effects of service-learning on college-aged students. Service-learning combines learning concepts in a classroom and applying those concepts to a community organization or program to meet the needs of those in the community. Pracht and Fletcher have also created a research lab where undergraduate students can gain first-hand knowledge and experience conducting research with the opportunity to become published.

Pracht and Fletcher both have a passion for helping students become successful in their interests. They serve as undergraduate academic advisors within FYCS and advise approximately 100 students. Fletcher has an open-door office policy, which means if her door is open, you are welcome to enter and usually has snacks and tea available. Come in, sit down, relax, and enjoy a cuppa in McCarty Hall B G085, stop in soon.

Students interested in FYCS can reach out to an advisor by visiting <https://fycs.ifas.ufl.edu/undergraduate-/academic-advising-and-career-counseling/>

For more information on Pracht and Fletcher’s research opportunities, courses, and study abroad experience, please visit <https://fycs.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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