Campus life edition
Housing resident assistants advocate for students

BARBARA ANDRADE BITIES
Contributing Writer

T he resident assistants at the University assist in creating a healthy, safe and thriving environment where students can develop their interpersonal, academic and leadership potential.

Abbey Olson, a first year RA majoring in International Relations, works with freshmen in the Lakeview South Residential building and said she had been involved in numerous events for FIU residents.

Olson, who also works for Student Media, said she wanted to gain leadership skills. She said her RA encouraged her to consider becoming an RA so she applied for the job.

“I absolutely love being an RA. My staff is amazing and I have had the opportunity to meet incredible students,” said Olson. “Not only am I wronging a person as a leader, but I am also opening avenues for residents to become leaders as well.”

An RA is a trained student leader in colleges and universities charged with the responsibility of living inside you. This is a job unlike any other. I know and that is why I love it so much.”

Destiny Lawson, a graduate student getting her masters in Criminal Justice, has lived in the Parkview residential hall for the past two years. She said she had great experiences with many students.

“I really like my current RA. He is super nice and helpful,” said Lawson.

“I remember one time I wasn’t going along with my roommate because she was being really dirty and disorganized around the dorm and I didn’t know what to do, so I came to him and he really knew how to handle the situation and make both of us happy.”

Each RA is required to do three programs per month; two community builders, which consist of activities to get the residents to socialize with each other, and one educational programming where RAs help promote FIU initiatives.

“My RA always organizes cool events in our floor. Those events are a great opportunity to just hang out and get to know who is around you,” said Lawson.

Olson said she planned a program called “just a cup of tea,” where the students on her floor talked about sexual assault awareness and how consent is like offering someone a cup of tea.

“I plan to do a cool program on April called Empanadas en pajamas. I want to combine the culture in Miami with help residents make a fun meal,” said Olson. “This is going to be a pajama party with empanadas for south residents mostly but I would not mind if other students come to hang out.”

Jaevee Weiser, a junior majoring in International Relations, is a first year RA at Everglades Hall.

Weiser said she became an RA because she enjoyed the experience that she had as a freshman. She lived in the Lakeview South last year and said her RA inspired her to pick up the position.

“Coming from Maryland, it was my first time in the state of Florida and obviously I didn’t know who everyone was, but the more I went to my RA’s programs the more was able to connect with her personally as well as people in the floor and the dorms in general.”

Weiser said that how she really made me think ‘wow I want to do the same for somebody else’ so I just joined a Residential Assistant life.”

Weiser said ever since she became an RA, she has had the opportunity to experience some amazing networking events. Recently, Weiser was nominated to go to the Florida Resident Assistant Seminar where she got to see other RAs from other universities and what their programming consists of.

Both Olson and Weiser re-applied to be an RA next semester and they will find out if they get the positions next month.

Weiser said she loves being an RA. She explained how through this job she not only helped students, but also has developed herself.

“Whether or not I end getting the position which obviously I hope I get it again, I just want to be able to go out and support whatever my resident is because I realized how important a RA assistant is and how many avenues can open for a student,” said Weiser.

In spite of the challenges of being an RA, Olson said that residential life is an opportunity to engage with the FIU community.

“There’s is this sense in college that you have to pick your classes and you have to do your homework and submit papers and that is what college should be but I think in residence hall you become a learner outside of your classroom and your comfort zone,” said Olson. “If really you go to programs and engage in your community there is no limit on what you can do.”

ARIANA RAMSUNDAR Staff Writer

s a school of mostly commuter students, a distinct 8 percent of the students at FIU face the challenge of finding ways to get to the grocery store.

In the spring of 2016, SGA implemented a pilot program to help residential students make the commute. The program consisted of buses that would run on Sundays for a four-hour period, taking students from residential housing to Publix and back.

“I think it was a good idea, because I usually walk to Publix, so when there were a lot of things to carry the tram would come in handy,” said Dione Grundy, a junior accounting major.

Since the program came to an end early, Grundy, like many other students, reverted to walking to get their groceries every week. “Since I live in University Apartments, walking to publix isn’t much of an inconvenience. But if I have a lot of things or heavy things I have to take on Uber which adds up in the long run,” said Grundy.

However, as the semester came to a close, Grundy said: “When I was speaker of SGA we wanted to give the students access to go to the Publix across the street,” said Allan Collazo, MMC’s current student government president.

“We were able to reallocate the funds from the money left in the contingency for MMC’s spring 2016 budget.” The program was funded for spring semester, but we knew that we would not have the money to experience it every semester,” said Collazo.

Collazo mentioned that, for the moment, the transportation to and from Publix for residential students is not available, but they’re always looking for solutions.

“We are working on a sustainable way to implement the program, so it is not based on whether extra funds are available or not,” said Collazo.

Collazo expanded on the plan to actualize a longer lasting program, explaining the current work taking place to ensure that the students have access to a transportation system.

“We are now in conversation with parking and transportation to facilitate a more sustainable and reliable way for students residing on campus,” said Collazo. “The Sweetwater Trolley is being integrated into the university system. We are working with them to see if they are willing to make the stops.”

The use of the Sweetwater Trolley could provide more students with means to Publix, a problem Grundy sees herself experiencing while using the program last spring.

“I know many students used to use the buses. That was sometimes the problem, the tram was only so big for the amount of students who wanted to use it. On the first day there was about sixty students using the program. I would really like to see the program return I think that a lot of students benefited from the program,” said Grundy.

In addition to trying to get service to students, Grundy is also working on extending the program so that students can use the Sweetwater Trolley already makes stops at Dolphin Mall, SGA would like students to be able to utilize this resource.

“SGA met with the mayor of Doral on Tuesday, Feb. 7 to discuss integrating the transportation system of Doral to allow students to go to more businesses in Doral as well,” said Collazo.

By utilizing the Sweetwater Trolley and the CAT’S shuttle, SGA is planning to extend the two stops to 10 stops and identify days and times for maximum student usage.

Freshman nursing student Kelly Wozza was not attending the University at the time, but expressed her personal experience getting groceries.

“I am not from Miami, so I want to be able to go to Publix as much as sometimes,” said Wozza. “Since I live on campus finding a ride can be difficult, so walking is my only option. I am willing to get groceries. I think this program would be beneficial to students and would be much safer that how we currently commute.”

LIKE the Society of Professional Journalists, the Public Relations Student Society of America - we’re contributing to the campus life experience.

Campus life is such a broad topic to broach - it includes student organizations that the University, the Student Council for Student Organizations or the Student Union - or the Black Student Union - or the organizations that the University supports. And it includes the issues that affect housing students, and those who work in housing.

We wanted to shed some light on the organizations and entities that go into creating and maintaining a campus lifestyle that students would like -
Greek life: University professional fraternity develops 'business leaders'

TAPKANNIA KEOUN
Contributing Writer

The term 'fraternity' is most commonly denoted as the perception of male brotherhood; however, at its core it is any opportunity of opportunity and friendship. One fraternity that exemplifies these elements is Alpha Kappa Psi, a co-educational fraternity specializing in the area of business.

Alpha Kappa Psi is the earliest established professional business fraternity and possesses the largest membership overall among business fraternities in the United States. The FIU Chapter, Xi Sigma, currently has 140 members.

In contrast to service fraternities that focus on providing community service, professional fraternities prepare students for skills in a specific occupation.

"AKPsi's main goal is to develop principled business leaders. We work on interview skills, have resume workshops, and bring in recruiters to speak to our members," said Vice President of Membership, senior Ashley Guerra.

Current members refer to Alpha Kappa Psi as 'AKPsi', a shortened form of the name and an indication of the common bond members share. Alpha Kappa Psi was traditionally an all-male fraternity at the time of its creation in 1904, and permitted the integration of female members in 1976.

"Having both men and women in the fraternity resembles a more realistic environment, like in a company. One of our goals is to prepare our members with a platform to meet people in the outside world, so they know what to expect in the real world," said FIU's Xi Sigma Chapter President, Maria Areiza.

The co-educational attribute of men and women in such a distinguished business fraternity, provides a platform of inclusivity and in turn, altering the standards for fraternities.

As with any other fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi partakes in a recruitment and pledge process to extend full membership.

"We start tabling and marketing ourselves during the second week of school. As for our rush events, you must attend at least one of the five events in order to be considered," Guerra said.

The recruitment process is a means for the fraternity to exhibit visibility among potential members and to identify the people who are genuinely interested in joining.

"Once the recruitment period ends, Guerra explains that bids are extended to 'rush-ees' and the pledge process includes explaining pledges about its central values, history of the fraternity and building personal and professional development.

On the latter note, a benefit of Alpha Kappa Psi is a mentorship program offered to brothers and sisters who are interested in joining.

"It's Google! When will you get another opportunity to sit down ask questions and possibly make a valuable connection with an employee from such an innovative company again?" said Roopchand. "It's Google! Will you get another opportunity to sit down ask questions and possibly make a valuable connection with an employee from such an innovative company again?"

DOUGLASS GAVILAN
Staff Writer

M ax Henderson, the head of marketing for Firebase, will be at the MARC building to discuss how he was able to start his own development project and inspire students and alumni, on Wednesday, Feb. 22 as part of an event hosted by StartUP FIU.

Henderson is an entrepreneur and strategist with almost 15 years of experience. An alumni of Cornell University, Henderson has worked for Oracle, Google and Firebase after it was bought by Google. Now, as the head of go to market, he overseas and leads the strategy for the go to market department.

"It is an amazing opportunity to have Max Henderson from Google to speak to our students and community members on what he is like to work for a company like Google," said Areiza. "It's Google! Will you get another opportunity to sit down ask questions and possibly make a valuable connection with an employee from such an innovative company again?"

StartUP FIU is hosted Google speaker series

University Alpha Kappa Psi chapter, Xi Sigma fraternity has the largest membership overall among business fraternities in the United States.

She adds that the fraternity is not limited to business majors, herself a senior double majoring in chemistry and biology, stating they are open to anyone interested in the field of business.

"Alpha Kappa Psi is a family to me. This is where I’ve been to join a group of people who are all like-minded in the sense of [bettering themselves]," Barrera said.
DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS

117 students were nominated in this year’s Student Life awards

I feel blessed to be part of a University that provides its students with a vast range of opportunities to develop themselves as leaders not only within the FIU community, but throughout the community as a whole. It is always humbling to be recognized alongside others inspiring students who motivate you to strive to be better.

As a transfer student, I felt very devastated that I had to leave my country and continue school somewhere where I thought I would have to be alone. That idea was terrifying to me, except it was not true as a Panther. FIU was able to demonstrate what a second home truly means. When you walk on campus and you can see many people willing to help students with potential, you never feel alone.

JOSHUA CEBALLOS
Staff Writer

Rather than watch TV or play video games, senior chemistry and psychology major Robert Wood felt getting involved and volunteering would be a better way to spend his time. Students like Robert are being honored by the University as part of the Outstanding Student Life Awards.

“[These awards are] a unique opportunity for faculty, staff and students to recognize FIU student leaders who have excelled academically and in the areas of distinguished service to others, citizenship, scholarship, innovation, leadership, diversity advancement, and promotion of the Panther Spirit,” according to Vice-President of Student Affairs, Larry Lunsford.

Sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs, 117 students have been nominated for the 2017 Student Life awards, of which there are eight categories: Kaplan Prize, Outstanding Leadership Award, Outstanding Service Award, Diversity Award, Spirit Award, Shining Star Award, Scholar Award and the Presidential Award.

Graduate and undergraduate students can be nominated by faculty members, other students, and they can also self-nominate, according to Brotwen Bares Pelaez, the chair of the Student Life Awards. Once nominated, a review board selects the individuals who meet the criteria to move onto the next round of selections.

Finalists, along with two guests of their choosing, are invited to an awards ceremony on April 6 in the Graham Center Ballrooms for the results of the award selection.

“Every finalist gets a certificate that night when they arrive, then the winners are announced, and the winners get a physical award… and there’s three awards with monetary pieces associated with them,” says Bares Pelaez.

Lauren Zaluzeta, freshman nursing major in the FIU Honors College, is nominated for the Outstanding Service Award and is appreciative of the recognition.

“I feel honored and humbled. It’s a humbling experience. Just to be in a nomination with other nominees who are also striving for greatness and being able to make a difference in the community.”

Zaluzeta is involved in a range of different service projects in and around the University community and an active member of CURE, an international non-profit organization that operates hospitals in countries around the world.

“One particular instance which still touches me today is my involvement with Blue Lakes Autism Academy,” she said. “I had tutored kids and played with children while their parents were at work, and because of this, the children were so inspired, they drew a picture for me when we were all holding hands.”

Jessica Weissman, a nominee for the Outstanding Leadership Award, is a Ph.D student in the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. She also works as the campus liaison for FIU the American Public Health Association, and the regional student liaison for the South Atlantic region and the New England region.

In the spring of 2016, Weissman planned a conference for the APHA despite her busy schedule with school and writing her dissertation proposal.

Robert Wood, nominated for the Outstanding Leadership Award and the Outstanding Service Award, works on campus as a learning assistant with the Chemistry Department, and says he got into service because it made him happy.

“Service has to come from within. You definitely need to feel like you’re doing it for you and feel like you’re helping people. You really can’t do it because it’s going to look good for this, or it’s going to look good for that,” says Wood.

Throughout his time at the University, Wood has also worked with inner city kids to teach them about science and inspire them, and cooperated with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation during an event held on campus.

On April 6, the nominees will find out if they will receive the award, but each one of them has said that whether or not they win, their service in the community is by no means over.
Campus Life events: ‘Can’t say no when it’s free’

DAMIAN GORDON
Staff Writer

February may be the shortest month but Campus Life at The Biscayne Bay Campus is aiming to make the most of its 28 days by offering back-to-back events for the remainder of the month.

“We’ve seen that our students really seem to like interactive games, having more of an open space to hang out, talk with their friends and engage with each other,” said Hannah Katherine Ellis, Graduate Assistant, Campus Life at Biscayne Bay Campus.

With back-to-back events planned, there’s something usually going on for students to take part in between or after classes.

On Monday, Feb. 20, “Late Day Latte: Southern Cuisine” is being held at the Academic Center 1 Bus Stop Area from 4 to 6 p.m. At the event, which come from Hannah Katherine Ellis, graduate assistant at BBC’s Campus Life, students will be giving a different flavor of the world in this monthly series with activities to coincide. Campus Life’s events toward students in the past is and incorporating tips given by students, who are given mason jars at events to suggest ideas for future events.

“We’ve seen our students really seem to like interactive games, having more of an open space to hang out, talk with their friends and engage with each other,” Ellis said.

Cinco De Mayo’s event will feature mini pitas, trivia questions and painted mini flowers pits to round out its other educational components.

“We’re going to have some really good food. Chicken, some waffles, some really really good sweet tea,” Ellis said.

“It’s going to be very interactive, we’re very excited.”

George Espinosa, senior who says he “can’t say no when it’s free,” has attended most events hosted by the BBC during his time at the University. One of his favorite events was the makeshift skating rink set up in the WUC Ballrooms back in April 2016, where he also had his favorites, free pizza and popcorn.

“I had told somebody about an event that I thought would be pretty cool, and they took that into consideration and made it an event. I didn’t think it was going to happen but it happened,” Swink said.

As a student-led organization, transitioning from general member to a higher position is common in SPC. Former general member and current director of events, Ananda Hernandez, advocates for students to join to open up to new experiences.

“As a general member, you would just basically come and help at the events,” Hernandez said. “You get some perks that regular students don’t really get because when we have our concert in the spring and we have comedians and … we actually get to meet the artists.”

For those who go on to gain a position within SPC’s e-board, there is another dimension of involvement. As a director, it’s even more hands-on,” said Hernandez. “In the fall, we had Jodi Sweetin from Full House and so I got to directly work with her and speak to her and meet her.”

E-board members attend conferences that enable them to forge the connections necessary to coordinate these events, according to Hernandez.

Seeking ways to ensure student involvement, SPC also offers positions that involve piquing student interest, as Team Coordinator Nirvana Anazoo explained.

“Students of Community Health is the only health club at BBC. Our main goal is to give back to the community, so we do different service events on campus to spread awareness on different health issues. This organization means a lot to me because I am doing pre-med, so this is a pre-basis of what I am going to be doing in the future,” said Mishal Haq, Biology Major, President of SCH.

Julie Alba, junior biology major signs up to learn more about Society of Professional Journalism as members Jessica Parra (left) and Peter Holland (right) explain the benefits.

JULIANE SUNSHINE
Staff Writer

With a Valentine’s Day theme, Campus Life and the Student Organization Council held a club fair to invite students to join clubs at The Biscayne Bay Campus.

Public Relations Student Society of America is an organization that focuses on PR majors, but we are open to all majors. Our goal is to try and assist students in developing the skills and knowledge that they need for their future career in PR,” said Jay Enquisto, Advertising Major, Member of PRSSA.

Society of Professional Journalism is the student professional of journalism, it’s those who are the students who broadcast, digital media or public relations [majors]. They are free to join the club and network with other students to understand the media side. The next event is data workshop on Feb. 28.

Peter Holland
Digital Media Studies
Member of SPF / Student Media

Students of Community Health is the only health club at BBC. Our main goal is to give back to the community, so we do different service events on campus to spread awareness on different health issues. This organization means a lot to me because I am doing pre-med, so this is a pre-basis of what I am going to be doing in the future,” said Mishal Haq, Biology Major, President of SCH.

SGA is the voice of the students at BBC. This organization has taught me how to be involved on campus, there is a lot of great opportunities and you meet really great people,” said Ronan Kelly, Computer Science Major, Member of Student Government Association.
PUTTING THE ‘U’ IN CAMPUS LIFE

Student organizations enhance college experience

Panther Health

Most students go to college to learn, but they will quickly learn that there is more to the college experience than the classroom.

College offers students opportunities to pursue interests, but sadly, too many college students pass up some of the opportunities offered because they are too focused on either their academic life or their work life.

Students should also know that taking part in extracurriculars will help them develop skills that will be useful inside and outside of the class.

At FIU, there are all sorts of student councils, organizations and clubs on campus, and there are so many people who have a common purpose or shared duties.

Aside from the plethora of opportunity, getting involved on campus offers so many significant benefits that will make the college experience so much better.

It’s a lot of hard work to create a club, and even more to keep a club going, but FIU’s Japan Club continues to prove how successful it is.

Miguel Rischmaui, a senior double majoring in computer science and asian studies, and also the president of the Japan Club, said that the Japan Club was originally formed many years ago by students who had an interest in Japanese culture.

“Throughout the years, the club has taken many paths, but with each new group of students that take charge of the club, [the] Japan Club evolves and becomes unique. Each group leading it is different than the previous, but the heart of Japan Club stays the same,” Rischmaui said.

Joining a student organization presents many opportunities to learn more about yourself, your goals and your strengths. Having participated in numerous Asia specific events, I learned that I have a passion for studying Japan.

Having never learned the drums before, she said, “It was exciting to learn something new related to the culture I’m studying.

It was also fun to work as a team and help one another improve to give a great performance. It helped build soft skills and team skills, but best of all, I was able to have lots of fun.

I wish there were more events like this. There are so many cool things to learn and showcase [about Japan], and I’d like to see more events highlight the country I am studying about.”

Getting involved on campus further allows students to become connected to their school and fellow peers.

“Colleges are full of resources, but the responsibility is on the student to seek them out.

One such student did just that, and the Korean Culture Club was born. The original Korean Culture Club president first contacted FIU to find out the process of starting a new club also volunteered for community service events such as the Nourish the Children of North Korea.

“By being involved in the things happening at FIU, Panthers can experience tremendous benefits to their college experience and future career. There should always be a balance between a student’s academic and extracurricular activities and attendance; activities on campus are important for one’s well-being.”

Mattisme Kramer is the Assistant Opinion Director for Panther Press. Her column, Panther Health, is a commentary on maintaining one’s health during college.

Sexual literacy still part of FIU’s curriculum

Sexual Literacy, while not a required part of FIU’s curriculum, is by no means absent.

“Many students’ first contact with their healthcare services occurs at Freshman Orientation. The 2013 original ski was designed to introduce students to the health-related departments and campus resources. The time allotted for these presentations is insufficient to address issues such as consent and LGBTQQA narratives.

In order to give these students the appropriate consideration and weight, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) conducts events, presentations, workshops, during which consent and LGBTQQA narratives are addressed at length. The Victim Empowerment Program (VEP) works tirelessly to educate FIU about the It’s On Us campaign, whose focus is on prevention, bystander intervention, and resources for victims.

At Student Health Services, students can discuss sexual health, safer sex practices, and birth control options with a licensed medical professional. Low-cost STD/STI testing is also available.

The Healthy Living Program offers a variety of programming on sexual literacy. Sexual Health appointments cover STD’s/STI’s and prevention methods.

Free, confidential HIV testing with a certified counselor is also available. Free safer sex materials are distributed at HLP events and presentations, and free at the HLP offices.

Additionally, HLP offers presentations and workshops. This is especially true for Freshman Experience classes, where professors request presentations on any number of topics, including Sexual Health.

The presentations are in-depth, touching upon important aspects of sexual health, including consent, safer sex tools, and an overview of STD’s/STI’s.

Through KCC, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with individuals outside of FIU, and I have learned how to work in a group. The presentations are always good, and I have also been able to learn about issues beyond the classroom.

Insofar as the HLP’s genital-shaped costumes are concerned, we will say this: Gina and Rick, as they are known, are a part of HLP’s health-education culture.

Insofar as the Healthy Living Program’s genital-shaped costumes are concerned, we will say this: Gina and Rick, as they are known, are a part of HLP’s health-education culture.

FIU SALSA and FIU Bridge provide in-classroom education and conduct tabling throughout FIU. FIU’s MPAS LGBTQQA student population by “developing and implementing educational, social, and resource programs and services.” The FIU Women’s Center hosts Take Back the Night “to promote awareness of the issues of sexual assault and intimate partner/gender-based violence on college campuses.”

Insofar as the Healthy Living Program’s genital-shaped costumes are concerned, we will say this: Gina and Rick, as they are known, are a part of HLP’s health-education culture.

These “comical” costumes allow staff to break down barriers with humor. Rick and Gina foster the possibility of an open conversation about sexual health, breaking the taboo- and they’re not going away any time soon.

But, it’s beyond these department’s capabilities to mandate that FIU integrate sexual literacy and LGBTQQA-specific information into the curriculum, they will continue to provide students through, factual, and non-judgmental sexual literacy education.

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Panther Magazine – Thursday, February 16, 2017

**Editorial**

**MMC and BBC should have one cohesive SGA**

Flu prides itself on the “Worlds Ahead” university experience, but if feels as though the MMC and BBC campuses are worlds apart. The campuses are only an hour’s drive away from one another and many students take classes at both.

President Mark B. Rosenberg is the sole president of the university, presiding over each campus, but student life is divided in its leadership and options, so a student’s experience at one campus could potentially be a stark comparison to a student involved at another.

Why should some student organizations be separate but equal? Where things get confusing is in the Student Government Association, which is divided into two branches, one for MMC and one for BBC. They each receive the same amount of funding and have an equal amount of power, but they each have their own president.

If they are really supposed to be one unit, why is the power distributed between two presidents?

As mentioned, the campuses are relatively near to one another, so there shouldn’t be an issue of the president not being able to make it to meetings at either location, or other such circumstances.

The main office of Student Media, for example, as well as many other organizations, is at MMC, but that doesn’t prevent us from participating in the BBC campus.

The same editions of the Panther Press are still circulated around campuses, involving information from each location and with the same e-board members and writers putting the paper together.

The departments of Campus Life do vary depending on the campus, but much of this has to do with what is available at each campus. MMC is the bigger of the two, so a majority of the students group operate primarily out of the MMC campus, either leaving BBC out of the picture completely or including rare events nearly the BBC campus.

It means something, however, that the kayak and scuba club would be at BBC, since Key Biscayne makes a perfect practice point for these activities.

Nevertheless, SGAs’ itinerary isn’t restricted to the shores of the almost-Bahamian water.

It’s a major component of student life and what it decides for the school directly and indirectly affects everyone involved in any form at FIU.

Shared power and distinct leadership in SGA is an interesting and almost confusing set up, especially considering our proximities between each campus.

If policies don’t apply at FIU equally and the government is meant to be one cohesive unit, why divide the power?

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Club sports ‘fun and flexible’ activity for students

JASMINE CASIMIR
Asst. Sports Director

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Club sports give you a reason to get out of your dorm and widen your social circle. They also allow you to stay in shape while relieving some of the stress that academic life can bring.

Juan Vasquez, the vice president of the rock climbing club, said he has created an environment around his club for that exact purpose.

“We provide a different point of view with people at the university being stressed all day,” said the international relations and economics major. “You can relieve that same stress by joining our club and rock climb.”

In intercollegiate club sports, there are no athletic scholarships, no roaring crowds and minimal adult leadership.

Students conduct practices, make team rules, raise money for uniforms and game officials, and manage paperwork. It’s their prerogative, and that’s the way athletes in club sports like it.

“I like how we weren’t pressured into dedicating so many hours into the team,” said senior sports and fitness major Montrell Robinson. “I don’t have any experience in varsity sports, and I’m good at what I do.”

The former member of the intramural basketball team said it’s flexible, fun, and it’s not as competitive as division sports.

College sports aren’t limited to the high-caliber NCAA division sports that you can participate in from the comfort of your dorm or on television. There are a few degrees of competition, ranging from intramural team activities to club sports and University-owned teams.

For many, the biggest benefit aside from continuing to play a beloved sport is the social connections.

“It’s nice because you see the guys around campus and since they’re on a team with you, you have a relationship with them that you don’t have a lot of other people,” former member of the baseball club and senior psychology major Carl Alteme said. “I highly recommend joining a club sport, even if you just want to support your friends.”

Clubs have been so enjoyable for many college students that if given the chance to turn their teams into fully financed varsity sports, most said they would decline.

“It would be less fun,” Robinson said. “You don’t want to turn it into a job for the same reasons because varsity sports have restrictions, caps, and incentives. But club sports eliminate the barriers and let anyone in to be free and do their best.”

If the University doesn’t have a sport that you’re interested in, you can also create your own club if you gather enough interested people who are interested and follow procedures laid out by FIU.

For a full list of club sports, visit studentaffairs.fiu.edu.