CAPS OFF
MOVING ON UP

Graduating seniors share their favorite memories at University

After four years of going to classes, participating in school events and studying in the library until late at night, graduating seniors must face life after FIU.

Preparing for graduation means more than meeting with advisors to figure out what classes seniors need to take to fulfill requirements. For some seniors, it means having a professional resume, good interview skills and experience in the field they are studying through internships.

“It was my Study Abroad trip in Berlin and Paris, where I got to travel with strangers and came back with family.”

Alexander Melendez, a marketing manager for Procter & Gamble, graduated from FIU in May. “The Career and Talent Development office helps students with multiple aspects of finding employment, such as creating resumes, improving interview skills and writing cover letters.”

One of the things Leon mentioned when helping students find jobs after graduation were internships. “Statistics are showing that students who have an internship before they graduate, and even multiple internships, are more likely to find employment right before graduation or after graduation,” Leon said.

“The Career and Talent Development office helps students with multiple aspects of finding employment, such as creating resumes, improving interview skills and writing cover letters.”

“I went to the business master’s program because I wanted to get a master’s in human resources but the master’s in business administration really interested me,” Olivero said.

All of the steps seniors take to get ready for graduation, there is one thing they can’t prepare for, and that is what life outside of school will be like.

“One of the things I’m going to miss the most is that I’m in this place in my life where everyone else is on the same path as me,” Melendez said. “We’re all going in the same direction and there is this sense of unity at the University, and I’m going to miss that.”

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Assistant Director for the Career and Talent Development office Nelly Leon.

For some graduating seniors, job offers are not their priorities. Journalism major Yanaisis Collazo is more interested in applying to graduate school.

“[It] really depends where in life and how much money it is,” she said.

“Many seniors are interested in applying to graduate school, but not for psychology.”

Eliana Olivero, a psychology major, is also interested in going to graduate school, but not for psychology. “I went to the business master’s program because I wanted to get a master’s in human resources but the master’s in business administration really interested me,” Olivero said.

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For more information on Career and Talent Development, visit their offices at SASC 305 MMC, 2852 at the Engineering Center and WUC 255 at BBC.
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For more information on Career and Talent Development, visit their offices at SASC 305 MMC, 2852 at Miami, or organizations.

EDITOR’S NOTE
Take advantage of college before graduation

Last spring, I shared a class with our former editor, Cayla and one day, she walked into class with a Student Media shirt on. A few months earlier, I had made the resolution to get more involved on campus so I asked her about it, and one year later, I now follow in her footsteps as the next editor in chief for Student Media.

I had spent my first years at FIU focused on my courses and didn’t venture out much to participate in school events, but for psychology.

But for some graduating seniors, job offers are not their priorities. Journalism major Yanaisis Collazo is more interested in applying to graduate school. "(It) really depends where in life and how much money it is," she said. "But I do plan to leave, so I’m looking into Columbia University and [New York University]. If I do end up staying, [University of Miami] does have a good master’s program for journalism.”

Elaina Olivero, a psychology major, is also interested in going to graduate school, but not for psychology. "I went to the business master’s program because I wanted to get a master’s in human resources but the master’s in business administration really interested me," Olivero said. With all the steps seniors take to get ready for graduation, there is one thing they can’t prepare for, and that is what life outside of school will be like. "One of the things I’m going to miss the most is that I’m in this place in my life where everyone else is on the same path as me," Melendez said. "We’re all going in the same direction and there is this sense of unity at the University, and I’m going to miss that.

"My best memory at FIU is meeting the people in class and making connections with them... After a few semesters, you somewhat grew a relationship with these people who I call friends now. Second best memory at FIU is becoming a brother of Sigma Phi Epsilon.”

Preparing for graduation means more than meeting with advisors to figure out what classes seniors need to take to fulfill requirements. For some seniors, it means having a professional resume, good interview skills and experience in the field they are studying through internships. "I’ve been preparing for my graduation for two years now," said Alexander Melendez, a marketing major. “What I’ve specifically done is… last summer, I landed an internship and that really helped me grow... They’ve made me realize some passions that I didn’t even know I had because I didn’t try to step out of my comfort zone.”

"It was my Study Abroad trip in Berlin and Paris, where I got to travel with strangers and came back with family."

"Statistics are showing that students who have an internship before they graduate, and even multiple internships, are more likely to find employment right before graduation or after graduation," Leon said.

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LGBTQ graduates recognized at event ‘because they deserve it’

BARBARA BRITES
Staff Writer

There are two colors that have symbolized the oppression of the LGBTQ community throughout history. These colors have been the primary focus in recent years in the LGBTQ community. These colors are pink and purple.

The two colors have been used to symbolize the LGBTQ community in different ways. The pink triangle was the symbol used by many LGBTQ individuals during the Nazi era as a way to identify themselves as part of the community. The purple triangle was used by women who were considered lesbians or who deemed mentally ill. These colors were later used to represent LGBTQ individuals.

At the event, students were offered a job by an internship employer.

Office collaborates with federal agencies for conference

MARTINA BRETOUS
News Director

In an effort to expose students to job opportunities with federal agencies, the Career and Talent Development office will host its 12th annual Federal Government Statewide Conference at the University.

The conference, a one-day event on June 21, will feature information sessions, federal panels, a resource fair and networking opportunities with agencies from the federal government.

“Some colleges hope [students] don’t even know that [with] their majors, they might be able to find employment in the federal government so it’s like an eye opener for them,” said Lucio, who is the director at Career and Talent Development office. “It’s either ‘I don’t want to work for the government’ or ‘I don’t know what I have all these opportunities with my major.’

Moscoso’s role as special events organizer is overseeing the logistics for the conference including parking, food and marketing materials.

“We have a committee and the committee decides the actual programming of the event,” Moscoso said. “We have several organizations who are going to be talking about their subdivisions. Duarte says coordinating with the federal partners has been key. In February, the University became one of the CIA’s signature schools which solidified the lifelong partnership between both parties and will increase recruitment efforts at the University.

“We want to know what we can to prepare the student for the careers because … then, the student will be better equipped to apply to [the agencies] kind of have all that knowledge ahead of time,” said Duarte. “It may not be for everybody — you might walk out and say ‘Oh my god, I had no idea. This is not for me,” and that’s OK too.”

At the event, students interact with 30 to 60 government agencies including the CIA, DEA and their subdivisions. Duarte notes that for recruitment opportunities, the agencies consider several factors — citizenship, employment, among other things. So the event may not be for everyone but says students should always look for events that will expand their knowledge.

“I think the one thing that’s critical for anybody graduating, if it’s in your ability, is to do educational peace or even something formal like an internship because you never know what you don’t know,” said Duarte. “… For anyone contemplating a career in federal service, this is a must but it’s not an event for everybody.”

To register or learn more information about the event, visit career.fiu.edu

Q: Have you ever used Career and Talent Development?

Infographic created with data collected from spring 2017 report from Career and Talent Development Office.

*Total students surveyed: 1079

*Total students surveyed: 2422

*Total students surveyed: 970
LGBTQ graduates recognized at event ‘because they deserve it’

BARBARA BRITES
Staff Writer

T wo colors that have symbolized the oppression of the LGBTQ community have since merged to celebrate the accomplishments of the community in a nationwide event called the Lavender Graduation.

FIU’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Allies Organization is hosting, for the second year, a city-wide Lavender Graduation for students of the LGBTQ community recognized for their academic achievements, leadership and voluteer work to the general and FIU community.

“This event is one of the few venues which brings together the entire LGBTQ community in a safe space,” according to Gisela Vega, associate director of LGBTQ+ and the University’s Lavender Graduation.

“We open our doors to recognize all LGBTQ students who have attained an academic achievement of graduation,” Vega said to Student Media.

The ceremony is open for all high school, college and graduate students as well as students doing community service or research in the issues of sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

“I was so proud to have been recognized by FIU’s first city-wide Lavender Graduation,” said Duarte. “I think the one thing I have noticed is that the community has really embraced the idea of the Lavender Graduation and we have received a lot of support from the community.”

The event has been attended by FIU students for the past 11 years. The first event was held in 1992 for students who attended last year’s graduation. Last year, the ceremony had a total of 40 graduates and this year they expect more students from different schools.

“This event is really important because the reality is that this group is often marginalized a lot and many of these students are kicked out of their homes; 40 percent of homeless youth is identified as LGBTQ,” Vega said. “In the face of adversity, they have been resilient so we do recognition for them because they deserved it. The night will feature a dinnner, motivational speakers and music from the Miami Gay Men’s Chorus and Seminio String Quartet.

“A lot of our high school kids need role models; that is why we have motivational speakers that will speak that night so they will hear that this is worth-while. Getting an education can open doors for you,” Vega said. “We want to show students that there is life after high school and there is life after college.”

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Office collaborates with federal agencies for conference

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n an effort to expose students to job opportunities with federal agencies, the Career and Talent Development office will host in 12th annual Career and Government Statewide Conference at the University.

The conference, a daylong event on June 21, will feature information sessions, federal panels, a resource fair and networking opportunities with agencies from the federal government.

“Some college students [students] don’t even know that [with] their majors, they are able to work in employment in the federal government so it’s like an eye opener for them,” said Lucio Duarte, a career development specialist at Career and Talent Development office. “It’s either ‘I don’t want to work for the government’ or ‘I don’t see how I can get into this field’ and we are there to bridge that gap and let them know that they can work for the government.”

Moscoso’s role as special events organizer is overseeing the logistics for the conference including parking, food and marketing materials.

“We have a committee and the committee decides the actual programming of events - [things like] who’s going to be the speaker, how many sessions and so on,” said Moscoso.

“When we get the applications, we look for events that will increase the mix between students and government agencies. We want to make sure they are part of the event,” Moscoso said.

For the past 11 years, the event has been at capacity accommodating 400 to 500 students and often requires putting students on a waitlist, according to the director of the office, Ivette Vega.

“People are interested because they want to know what it’s like to be a government worker,” Duarte said.

At the event, students interact with 30 to 60 several government agencies, including the CIA, DEA and their subdivisions. Duarte notes that for recruitment opportunities, the agencies consider several factors, including citizenship, employment, among more — so the event may not be for everyone but says students should always look for events that will expand their knowledge.

“Think the one thing that’s critical before anybody graduates, if it’s in your ability, is to do educational peace or even something formal like an internship because you never know what you don’t know,” said Duarte. “… For anyone contemplating a career in federal service, this is a must but it’s not [an event] for everybody.”

Survey shows pre-and post-grad plans

Percentage of students who have participated in an internship

- *Total students surveyed: 2433*

Percentage of students offered a job by an internship employer

- *Total students surveyed: 970*

Location students plan to work upon graduation

- Florida 83%
- Other 17%

*Total students surveyed: 1079*

Q: Have you ever used Career and Talent Development?

- Yes 28%
- No 72%

*Total students surveyed: 2422*

Infographic created with data collected from spring 2017 report from Career and Talent Development Office.
Farewell, Student Media

CINDY JEAN BAPTISTE, STAFF WRITER

I won’t miss FIU. I will miss Student Media, and the friends that I’ve made as we sat in GC Media, and the friends that I’ve formed in the office with me far past 5 p.m. putting together the newspaper. I have no doubt that Student Media will be led in capable hands.

Martina: there is probably no one I’d be more sure of as my successor. I’ve watched you grow in the past year and get comfortable in your writing and editing. You are a joy to work with, and I have no doubt that next year will continue the upward trend we’ve started this year. I'll miss your shy looks and your joy at my pettiness. No one will understand my messy nature quite like you.

Nia: you are by far the hine that brings me the most pride. When you interviewed for the position, you stood out because of your flexibility and your willingness to learn. As I’ve worked alongside you, I’ve seen you bloom into a wonderful leader. Your “stiletto wrapped in velvet,” quiet assertiveness will take you far as you’d like to go. Thank you, for keeping me sane and staying in the office with me far past deadline to make sure there was a paper printed. I’ll never be able to express my gratitude, in even “all my words.”

Michelle: the only word that comes to mind as I write this column is wow. I’ve been at Student Media since your first day here; in fact, I remember going over your copy editor test. You’re growing so much, and worked your way up the ranks to become a section director. You grow as a leader each day, and it’s an absolute joy seeing the growth and potential you exude.

Jay-milly: I couldn’t write this without calling you by at least one of the nicknames I have for you. You’ve become one of my closest friends in this last year, and I know our friendship will continue far beyond this year. No one makes me laugh as much as you, even when you’re not trying. Thank you for being the comedic relief we all needed this year.

Erica: I’m just going to say that I would’ve lost my mind without having you by my side. As my counterpart through this year’s journey, you’ve held it down. I don’t think anyone could’ve taken you as far as you’d like to go. Thank you, for keeping me sane and staying in the office with me far past deadline to make sure there was a paper printed. I’ll never be able to express my gratitude, in even “all my words.”

Stephanie Castro

Establishing an online presence is crucial, especially when it comes to finding a new job and networking.

At the Career and Talent Development office, staff and faculty members work to help students prepare to take on anything they set their sights on, including keeping their LinkedIn profile current for possible employers. Sonia Gonzalez Hernandez, account manager at Career and Talent Development, shared dos and don’ts for first-time LinkedIn users.

“Do have a strong, powerful headline for most headshots it’s just going to be the top, so that’s the main focus,” said Hernandez.

“The best way to approach it is like you would any other interview. Do your homework on the company and the person you’re being interviewed by because that’s when your eyes naturally crinkle. If you look at a picture and it’s just a blank face you don’t know what they’re thinking,” said Hernandez.

A few more tips include taking the photo in front of a solid background and ensuring your setting, not meaning people out of the photo, wearing clothing relevant to your industry, such as a doctor in a lab coat, and making sure the photo is not a selfie.

The Career and Talent Development office also offers a headshot service. Students can take advantage of it by simply registering under the events section on their PantherJobLink account.

Another service regularly offered by the Career and Talent Development office are resume reviews. According to the Career and Talent Development website, a resume should demonstrate your knowledge, skills, abilities, interests and passions.

A winning resume should be consistent and easy to read, have a document with 10-12 point Times New Roman font and clean of personal previous. Industry-specific skills and a clear objective with a separate page of at least three to five professional references will set candidates apart.

The Career and Talent Development Department offers walk-in hours Monday – Friday from 2 p.m. – 5 p.m at the Engineering Center and Monday – Thursday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at MMC and BBC.

For further information on the most current information regarding events and workshops, visit career.fiu.edu.

My challenges served to make me stronger

ERICA SANTIAGO

I’ve been called many things during my time as general manager at Student Media, including a tyrant. I’m going to miss striking fear into the hearts of 60 unsuspicious DJs, but like all good things, this too must come to an end.

First and foremost, I want to thank my disloyal subjects for reminding me that not everyone is ready for the professional world. Thank you for reminding me that expecting people to do their jobs is simply expecting too much. Thank you for challenging me to be a bigger, badder and scarier tyrant. All jokes aside, thank you for proving to me what I always knew: I am the best at what I do.

My reign of terror would not have been possible without the love and support I received from our Student Media board and advisors. It was through them that I learned of my true potential as a leader, journalist and a dictator.

To Alfred and Jarosz: it’s been a wonderful four years. The two of you have constantly guided me, and tried your best to keep me from making the inevitable mistakes that would happen. When I did make a mistake, you didn’t let me fall flat on my face. Jarosz, I took on the almost impossible task of upgrading your wardrobe. I will graduate knowing you now how know how to put together an outfit.

Alfred, I’ll never match your flair for all things pithy or your Grandiose Banter, but my life is richer for knowing that one day, you’ll casually bless me with the name of my next memoir.

Without each of you, I would’ve lost my mind this year. We made history, as a team, from creating a weekly magazine, to renaming our Student Media entities. We’ve all done work we should be proud of.

Thank you for supporting me.

General Manager

IRACELLE SANTOS

I’ve been called many things during my time as general manager at Student Media, including a tyrant. I’m going to miss striking fear into the hearts of 60 unsuspicious DJs, but like all good things, this too must come to an end.

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My reign of terror would not have been possible without the love and support I received from our Student Media board and advisors. It was through them that I learned of my true potential as a leader, journalist and a dictator.

To Alfred and Jarosz, you’ve been amazing friends and I have no doubt that Panther Press, Panther Now and The Roar will flourish under your leadership. Thank you for rising up to the challenge and for bringing new and innovative ideas to the table. I can’t wait to see Student Media grow even more in the next year. The only advice I have for you both is to stick together and support each other through the craziness that is Student Media.

Finally, to everyone who has ever tried to stop me along my path to success - you inspired me the most. Thank you for helping me to make me stronger. I can’t wait to see where my reign of terror will take me next.
FIU graduates focusing on the NFL Draft

Peter Holland, Jr. is a staff writer for Panther Press. His column, Pete’s Pick, is a commentary on the University sports.

the position that I’m at because there is always someone out

Albury was a highly recruited defensive tackle from Miami Northwestern Senior High School. He originally signed to play for University of West Virginia before transferring out after he redshirted his freshman year. Having found his way back home to play for FIU, he has made an impact on defense for the past three seasons. He may not wow people with his defensive stats because he lines up at nose tackle, where his job is to disrupt the offensive line, get penetration and make sure his linebackers don’t get touched when making the tackle. In his FIU pro day last month, he put up 41 reps during the 225-pound bench press.

While appearing on Panther Sports Talk Live, the Miami native says he is confident in the progress to be made.

“I feel like I’m in a good position,” said Albury. “I’m not ranked too high but I’m not ranked too low. I feel great and I feel confident in my abilities. I just want to show them what they already know about me and what they see on film.”

Michael Montero, 6-foot-2 offensive center weighing 299 pounds

Four years ago, Montero entered the football program as a walk on out of Miami Columbus Senior High School. Now an FIU graduate four years later, Montero has established himself as the Panthers’ most consistent player after anchoring the offensive line for three years. The two-time All-C-USA honoree, alongside his former teammate Joseph, helped produce 4,503 total yards, which is fourth ranked all-time in FIU history. He also played a key role in blocking for senior running back Alex Gardner, who is FIU’s all-time leading rusher, and for starting quarterback Alex McGough, who is FIU’s all-time leader in touchdown passes.

The NFL draft will begin Thursday night on April 27 and will end on Saturday on April 29.

Peter Holland, Jr. is a staff writer for Panther Press. His column, Pete’s Pick, is a commentary on the University sports.
Credit surcharge necessary

First, FIU provides several exceptions to the “cap” of 132 credits. For example, adding another major increases the cap by the amount of credits the major requires — usually around 30. Certificate programs, which are usually around 18 credits, are also exempted from the ECS.

Thus, double majoring lets students take up to 150 credits without penalty.

The surcharge doesn’t prevent students from pursuing their academic interests, however eclectic.

Further, the ECS puts a reasonable disincentive on wasteful spending. Since the government of Florida funds public universities, the ECS is a reasonable fine for spending an unnecessary amount of time taking courses past what a degree requires.

In a world of limited resources, the state is right to be concerned about students taking too long before joining the labor force.

Finally, from a rhetorical perspective, the ECS encourages students to graduate rather than linger too long at the university. With its exemptions and nuances, the excess credit surcharge is a necessary policy.

It encourages students to graduate even as exceptions are made to provide students with the freedom to pursue their intellectual curiosities.

Christian Gonzalez is a staff writer for Panther Press. His column, Right Turn, is a commentary on foreign affairs, culture, and social sciences.

Control your destiny

Once graduation day comes, nothing else matters except trying to avoid falling off the stage and getting your hands on that degree.

A college experience is a once in a lifetime opportunity to take advantage of because there’s nothing like it. The time between enrolling in an institution and graduating with a college degree is considered to be an important time for students.

But, graduating is what counts, not the time it took you to graduate. It’s understandable that life happens and time is constrained. Above all else and despite the struggles, you’ll appear as a go-getter because you finished what you started.

Adrian Nones-Newman, a junior majoring in journalism, has dealt with his own obstacles along the way, and doesn’t think graduating as fast as possible is what students should be concerned about.

No, it doesn’t matter how long it takes. However, what does matter is if you can handle paying bills, juggling time and budgets everyday.” he said. “Because the older you get, the more pressure you have to establish your life, which becomes increasingly difficult while still in school.”

While it’s impressive to finish a degree in less than an average time span, it’s important to recognize what you do during that time. There are more reasons to go at a steady pace than there is rushing through it. Ultimately, it depends on why it took you longer to graduate, and that’s something that will be reflected on your resume when you get a job.

In fact, employers should be impressed if a person completed their degree while being a parent, holding down a job or two, or any other obstacle students may face.

“What’s the hurry?” said Amin Hoeppler, a senior majoring in public relations.

“There are some of us who already work and going to school helps us acquire the skills we need to advance in our careers, get promotions at work, as well as get a degree.”

Fernanda Zarate, a junior majoring in broadcast communications, agreed, and believes that it’s the degree that matters, not the time spent on it.

And while it may be seen as a success knowing you finished “on time” or even faster than expected, this isn’t high school where every step you make is mandatory.

The beauty of being a student in college is that you make your own rules. You’re in control over your destiny, because once you embrace the journey, it will embrace you back. Knowledge is power, and no one can take that away from you so make time count, literally.

Isabell Vasquez is a contributing writer for Panther Press. Her column, Independence, is a commentary on feminism.
Don’t rush graduation

by LAQUAVIA SMITH

Four years and 8 months of deadlines, final exams, research papers and presentations. Four years and 8 months of commuting and not commuting. As a student among the graduating class of 2017, it has taken me an extra 8 months to officially graduate. These 8 months have not necessarily lingered a bad taste nor a negative energy, but have created friendships, networking, enlightenment and a diligent work ethic that I wasn’t aware that I could even produce.

On no level, shape or form do I want to create this idea that one needs to graduate on time, or early.

Knowledge, better yet the desire for education, is a messy thing that can create conflict, a term in our society that we are prone to juggle their academic life with their work group goals above individual needs or desires.

What I’m trying to get across is simply the fact that you, your school, or college is not grading you. For anyone who hasn’t taken a communication or sociology class, collectivist cultures, briefly defined, is a culture that emphasizes family and work group goals above individual needs or desires.

Along with our minorities this culture comes this factor of not only first-time generation students, but also collectivist cultures. For anyone who hasn’t taken a communication or sociology class, collectivist cultures, briefly defined, is any culture that emphasizes family and work group goals above individual needs or desires.

What I’m trying to get across is simply the fact that you, your school, or college is not grading you.

Family comes first in my world, and for any reason I have to take a break from my “four-year” degree, I’d do it. Let’s stray away from this individualistic idea of time. Go at your own speed, behave in the way that makes you feel the most comfortable, but never too comfortable.

In the words of my revered father, “It does not matter how long it takes you to do it, as long as you do it.”

Laquavia Smith is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, “What’s Up FIU”, is a commentary on the latest style and entertainment news.

Diplomas do not guarantee job security

by DANIELA PEREZ

With graduation coming up for the Class of 2017, many students face the predicament of what comes after. Their adolescent safety net is beginning to rip as responsibilities begin to put a heavy weight upon this invisible role. The role of just being a student begins to branch out towards being a statistic in a millennial lifespan.

Graduate school may be within the horizon for some students but their are some getting their undergraduate diploma who feel just as lost as they get it at their high school graduation.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, it’s predicted that Generation Y will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2030, yet in 2016, the millennial unemployment rate remained “stagnant” at 12 percent as discovered by Millennials Report. With these findings, competition is another brick added onto the aforementioned “safety net.”

Unlike a college diploma, an undergraduate diploma merely passes the mark for employers. With the words “A Master's Degree Preferred” rising on job applications, Generation Y begins to scratch their head and open their empty wallets in utter confusion while their dreams begin to go adrift.

This situation begins to question the integrity of a college diploma. Barbara Ehrenreich from Alternet, titles a college diploma as “Higher Education Conformity.” She introduces her article by arguing that a college degree is “chiefly a signal to employers that you’ve mastered the ability to obey and conform.”

Ehrenreich also comments on the 2007 Marilee Jones case. Marilee Jones was the former Dean of Admissions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

According to Nick Semenovich, the Associate News Director of The Tech MIT Newspaper, Jones resigned after it was discovered that her academic credentials were “mispresented.”

After being employed for 28 years, Jones apparently never received an undergraduate degree despite claiming a bachelor’s and a master on her resume. Jones is just a moron in a big bowl of academic fraud. Conformity isn’t something that can be seen with a naked eye. It’s a psychological phenomenon that many people fall into. Instead of talking about their futures, college graduates must distinguish themselves and prove that their competence is reflected on their diplomas.

Daniela Perez is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, “Pulitzer’s Phenomena,” is a commentary on human interest.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Have something on your mind? Send an email to opinion@fiu.edu. Be sure to include your name, major and a photo of yourself. Letters must be less than 400 words and may be edited for clarity and length. Panther Press will only run two letters a semester from any individual.

DISCLAIMER

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Editorials are the united voice of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor in chief, management, and the editors of each of the four sections. Panther Press welcomes any letters regarding or in response to its editorials. Send them to opinion@fiu.edu.
Once the whirlwind of joy from graduation celebration fizzles, the reality of post-graduation depression is a serious concern for recent graduates. Recent graduates often have high expectations that may be difficult to achieve immediately after graduation. The job they are hired for—if they are even hired at all within the first few months—may pay less than they expected, or may be in a company they didn’t wish to work in. For many, the relative freedom of living alone in a dorm or in an apartment might suddenly collapse as financial realities force students to move back in with their parents.

The loss of a daily routine makes the transition particularly difficult for some. College provides structure and predictability, and the sudden interruption of that lifestyle can be challenging. Vicki Hays, director of Counseling and Psychological Services at the University of Michigan, believes that a loss of a routine is a significant contributor to post-graduation depression. “For most students, they have not been without the structure of organized education ever in their lives.”

Symptoms of post-graduate depression are not always clear to the person experiencing them or to the people surrounding them. According to Empowher, some graduates aren’t even aware they are experiencing depression. Common symptoms include “feeling tired, restless or agitated, losing interest in life, and avoiding people.”

Justin Peterson, a spring 2016 graduate, told FIUSM that he experienced this depression shortly after his commencement ceremony. “Once I left the dorms, I lost contact with all my friends and I had nothing to do,” he said. “Every day was a struggle to wake up and be productive, because everyone else around me was achieving their goals and I was kitchen doors from jobs.”

Peterson combatted his depression with getting involved in charity work at a local homeless shelter, where he made friends with other people his age and created meaningful relationships with individuals suffering from homelessness. “The experience there helped me branch out and try new things, and I was even offered a professional job from one of the connections I made there.”

Statistics released by the Guardian show that approximately one in four students suffer from depression during their college years, but there are no official figures on the rates of depression in recent graduates as they are more difficult to track down.

If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of post-graduate depression, seek help from a professional. In addition, Mental Health Daily recommends focusing on the present and being social within your community. Activities like volunteering in a local organization and having a positive outlook can help recent graduates remain optimistic and motivated.

There is so much to look forward to, from finding a rewarding job that makes you happy to becoming more independent and spending time with your loves ones. You will find a fulfilling career and you will adapt to your new environments. You just have to give yourself time to adjust to the changes in your life following graduation.

Do not compare yourself to others, even if you see your friends getting married and landing their dream jobs before you do. Each student has a unique story to tell; they merely play out in different timelines.

Have a safe summer break, Panthers, and remember that you never have to suffer from depression alone.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the spring 2017 class graduates and wish you all the best of luck in your endeavors.

Julietta Rodrigo is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, Weekly Why, is a commentary on the latest issues in sports.