SVA awarded at national competition

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Thursday, Jan. 7 to Sunday, Jan. 10, members of the FIU chapter of the Student Veterans of America, a national organization dedicated to providing resources, advocacy and support for active duty veterans and their dependents, represented the university at the SVA National Conference in Orlando FL.

Over the years the SVA National Conference has grown to be a center where veterans come together to facilitate “connections between thought leaders, stakeholders and veteran advocates.”

Johnson also explained the conference serves as an opportunity for many Veterans to get reacclimated into society via employment fairs and internships.

One major opportunity at the conference is the annual national business plan competition. During this competition, SVA chapters from across the U.S. compete for up to $100,000 in grant money for their chapter.

“This is our second year competing in the conference and last year we were in the top six in the nation,” says Christopher Johnson, an Information Technology major and IT committee chair for the FIU chapter of SVA.

The competition serves as a way for SVA chapters to earn large grants that could be used towards facilitating the services of SVA and further expanding SVA chapters. Participants must present a business plan that summarizes how the chapter generates revenue, how the revenue is used and the future plans of the chapter. A budget must be included in the presentation.

The competition starts accepting plans around August of every year. This year over 100 chapters submitted their plans and the top six went on to present in front of a panel of judges. The top two competitors go on to present in front of the whole conference. From there, votes from the audience combined with ratings from the judges determine the winner.

This year, not only did FIU’s business plan earn them a spot in the finals, but they also earned second place and took home a $2750 grant for their chapter.

“We can use the money to help service veterans on campus, provide resources and fellowship events,” says Johnson.

FIU SVA also plans to provide a scholarship for veterans at financial risks.

Johnson credits Amal Rosario, president of FIU SVA, and the FIU SVA team who came together to represent FIU in the business plan competition.

“It’s important to understand this was done by a team of 10 people who worked really hard,” says Johnson.

He goes on to credit Rosario with organizing their participation and planning out the trip to the conference.

“She’s the one who drives the train,” says Johnson.

The Student Veterans of America is an organization that seeks to provide support and advocacy for active duty veterans and dependents.

Johnson says that it is important for there to be an organization and safe space for student veterans because often times they have a difficult time relating to fellow students. This has to do with many of the veterans training and personal experiences, as well as the fact that the vets are much older than some students and have families of their own.

Johnson himself, who did three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan as an Army National Guardsman, is in his 30s and has two children of his own.

Non-veteran and dependents are encouraged to join as well. Johnson says this is because civilian students could actually benefit from learning from and getting to know FIU’s student veterans.

“One of the biggest things [students can do with veterans] is talk to them. We have so much knowledge to share,” says Johnson.

Colleges across country ban hoverboards citing fire risk

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Due to fire hazard concerns caused by the hoverboards lithium-ion batteries, colleges and universities have taken action to ban the popular scooters from campus buildings.

In emails and letters this month, campus officials told students who live on campus not to bring hoverboards with them after the holiday break.

The boards have been prohibited from residence halls of Campbell, Duke, East Carolina, Meredith, N.C. Central, St. Augustine’s, UNC-Chapel Hill, William Peace University and recently Florida International University.

Many universities are concerned about the batteries in hoverboards and similar devices due to the fact they seem to be prone to spontaneous combustions, thus creating a safety and fire risk.

Similar to other aforementioned universities, FIU’s Department of Environmental Health & Safety will be conducting a review of best practices concerning hoverboards. The review will take into consideration the results of investigations conducted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Colleges are looking into their safety back and give us the all clear, we’d love to give students the opportunity to use them - if it’s safe for everybody to do so.”

The Daily Tar Heel newspaper published a tongue-in-cheek column, suggesting alternative modes of campus transportation such as skateboards, Segways, rolling chairs and Heelys, or shoes with embedded wheels.

The ban, columnist Alexis Hinnant wrote, came as a sad surprise for students, “because I’d say after toothpaste, soap and face wash, hoverboards were a solid number four on the packing list. But now, students are just left with an empty space in their hoverboard cases of what could have been an amazing bonding time with all of the cyclists on campus. As well as the unfortunate burden of actually walking to class.”

UNC’s student body president, Houston Summers, said he hadn’t heard any complaints about the new rule. He

EEP FIRE, PAGE 2
Miami, possible venue for trial of ‘El Chapo’

U.S. and Mexican officials are engaged in high-level talks to determine whether Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman will be tried in Miami or New York on drug-trafficking charges following his anticipated extradition to the United States from Mexico. Federal prosecutors in six states have filed indictments against Guzman, but the Eastern District of New York and the Southern District of Florida have overlapping cases that could be combined, and the headquarter sites of Brooklyn and Miami have emerged as the leading contenders for the sensational trial.

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Actor and Director Alan Rickman died Thursday, Jan. 14 at the age of 69. He had been suffering from cancer. Rickman is known for his roles in Die Hard, Sweeney Todd and the Harry Potter franchise. Upon hearing of his death, many FIU students took to social media to express their condolences and share the ways they were affected by his work.

Elementary education major, Genevieve Remy posted her thoughts on Facebook sharing, “It’s not very often that an actor can jump between arenas as easily as Alan Rickman could.”

She goes on to say, “He could be to big enough so his audience could relate to him while he was on stage and he could pull it all in as he could be intimate enough with the camera.”

In reference to how close in time his death was with that of David Bowie, Remy says, “We’ve lost two immense talents this week. So sad.”

Victor Lopez, a junior public administration major, shared with student media the way in which Alan Rickman had a profound effect on his childhood. “Alan Rickman was one of the most influential actors of my childhood. He had a way of speaking and acting that both intimidated but also brought the audience into the story.”

Lopez also expressed his admiration for the late actor’s work. “His redeeming arc in the (Harry Potter) series is something that I hadn’t seen before and he acted the h-i-l out of it. He could play a bad guy like no one else, from HP to Sweeney Todd. [In] Love Actually you sit there and admire his ability to express even the most minute changes in his expression and his deep booming bassoon voice only adds to that ability.”

Similar to Remy, Lopez also states “The world has lost a truly great actor today.”

Rickman was born Feb. 21, 1946 in Acton, London. Before acting in film, Rickman got his start in theater and acted in productions such as Romeo and Juliet and A View From the Bridge. Later, he would star in a variety of films, most notably as Hans Gruber in Die Hard and most recently Severus Snape in the Harry Potter franchise.

He was an active supporter of the research foundation Saving Faces and honorary president of the International Actors’ Aid Trust, a charity that works to fight poverty amongst artists around the world.

Aug. 15 Rickman suffered a minor stroke which led to the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. His diagnosis was kept private. Rickman died in London, in the company of his friends and family.
**SICK FLICK**

S t o p m o t i o n animation is a technique that can be found in motion pictures all the way back to the early experiments. This unique approach to visual storytelling has been utilized in some of the most beloved animated movies of all time.

“The Nighttime Before Christmas” fills us with dark and twisted imagination, “James and the Giant Peach” is an imaginative retelling of a classic children’s novel, and “Fantastic Mr. Fox” is all great examples of how stop motion animation can appeal to people of all ages.

There is something unique about how the characters in these movies interact; the puppets and their props are moved between frames, which when played continuously makes film fluidly. Rarely do stop motion films actually transcend the medium and make the audience aware of what they are watching, that is until “Anomalisa,” a groundbreaking and monumental achievement in the stop motion genre.

“Anomalisa” is at its core is an introspective examination of what it is like to be human, without featuring actual live human actors. It was filmed with 3-D printed puppets that have a super realistic and natural feel to them.

The screenplay was written by Charlie Kaufman, who also co-directed the film with Duke Johnson. In Kaufman’s own words: “Anomalisa” sounds familiar to you, it should: he is responsible for some of the most innovative and equally absurd scripts of the last few years.

“Being John Malkovich” brought his name into the mainstream; “Adaptation” and “ Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind” firmly planted him as one of the most innovative voices of our generation.

The road to getting his newest screenplay in motion was a long and complicated one.

The script started as a one-off play that was put on as part of American composer Carter Burwell’s Theater of the New Ear series. Kaufman later turned the play into a longer form screenplay and tried to raise a budget for the film through Kickstarter.

When all was said and done they finally acquired the proper funding to turn Kaufman’s surreal romantic comedy drama into a 90-minute stop motion animation feature film.

The plot of “Anomalisa” is very simple. In fact the film features only three different voice actors: David Thewlis, the voice of Michael Stone, a middle-aged author of customer service related books; Jennifer Jason Leigh, the voice of Lisa, a sales rep, and Tom Noonan, the voice of every other character that appears in the film from Michael’s point of view.

When Michael travels to Cincinnati, Ohio to speak at a convention of customer service professionals he meets Lisa.

I won’t go too far into the details, but this is something that is essential to the story and really makes you think deeper about who Michael is and what he is going through.

What occurs within the specific constraints of stop motion animations is nothing short of mind-blowing. The fact that these inanimate objects can be used to conjure up such deep and personal emotion through the amazing illusion of animation is a testament to the vision and passionate execution from everyone involved in the production.

When you watch what is happening between Michael, Lisa, and the rest it escapes your mind that they are puppets.

This film has the opportunity to resonate with people in a very intimate way. Not only does it deal with every person’s desire to fall in love, but what that feels like. It touches on the mundanity of everyday life, such as checking into a hotel, talking with strangers on an airplane, awkward conversations with taxi drivers and how these situations can affect people differently.

Based on recent releases, stop motion animated films can either be huge successes or massive box office failures. “Anomalisa” isn’t going to reach a typical large audience because of its adult oriented subject matter but it is sure to make waves throughout the industry that I believe will be felt for years to come.

**GIVE ME A BEAT**

L indsey Wilson, a senior sports management major, performs at the Open Mic Night as “Un-Z,” an event hosted in Parkview Hall by Iota Phi Theta and Residential Life in order to raise money for St. Jude’s hospital.

**Wolfsionian-FIU offers free tours**

**LESJIE OVALLE**

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Every Friday until Feb. 19, the Wolfsionian-FIU will be offering free guided tours from 6 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

Tours vary from week to week depending on the tour leader, who chooses specific exhibits or collections to concentrate on. This week, on Jan. 22, one of the museum’s curators, Silvia Barionte, will be leading the tour.

She will be focusing on the permanent collection, found on the 5th floor, and the special exhibition, “Philodendron: From Pan-Latin Exotic to American Modern,” found on the 7th floor.

Meg Floryan, the museum’s communications manager, recommends the museum’s permanent collection, “Art and Design in the Modern Age: Selections From The Wolfsionian Collection.”

According to her, guests get to really see the essence of the museum.

“Wolfsionian-FIU website. “We get to stop and think about everyday things that can be art,” said Floryan, “we have a more unusual experience than other museums.”

For more information about the Wolfsionian-FIU’s collections and free guided tours contact the museum.

**Garage band Hinds releases debut LP**

**EMILY AFRE**

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Hinds serves sunny and surf-tinged, girl gang tunes with their first record, also touching base with many of the sides love. The lyrics, “You’re on my mind” appears throughout several songs on the album, acknowledging what it is like to be missing that one person, wishing things were how they used to be.

“Don’t let her waste your smile/Don’t let her curse your eyes,” is sung in the track, “Warts,” a warning to a lost love, advising that this new girl is not all she seems to be.

In the lyrics: “She’s becoming like an angel/She’s going to beat you bad” they further emphasize how undeserving it is to live in false happiness.

Phrases like “I need you by my side” and “You treat me like a friend” are expressed in the song “Easy” where ending a relationship, is always easier for one person.

Having “Easy” and “Warts” follow each other made these two cuts the highlight of the album. Consecutively, the themes of these songs lead into each other, in a story-like fashion.

Left as friends and heartbroken (”Easy”), Cosials and Perrote’s layered harmonies in tandem with fuzzy riffs and simple basslines are effective, for the most part. “Leave Me Alone” is cute and fun, but lacks a certain distinction they can really call their own.

Perhaps, if some tracks were sung in Spanish, it would add flare and depth to cuts that are otherwise, not as memorable.

Emily is Lead Genre Director at WRGP, listen to her live show “Blue Velvet” every Monday 4-5 p.m. to offer suggestions for Emily, send an email entertainment@fiu.com.
Nihat’s secret to flat abs and muscles

SDA HEALTH

Whether you love it or hate it, broccoli is the superhero of superfoods. There doesn’t seem to be a middle ground for this dark green vegetable.

So why should people learn to love broccoli? The nutrients packed in broccoli may prevent chronic disease, support energy production, elevate mood, and make the skin glow.

The reason broccoli is held in contempt may be due to human development in the earlier days of human existence, people associated bitter tastes with poison, which often resulted in illness and even death. Why would anyone associate broccoli with poison? According to the website, “World’s Healthiest Food,” the phytochemical known as isoiodiocyanate imparts a bitter flavor in the vegetable and trying to get kids to eat broccoli can be a challenge because of this bitter taste, and off-putting dark green color.

When my daughter, Emily, was little, she loved to watch “The Powerpuff Girls,” an animated show that, in one episode, portrayed broccoli as evil aliens invading the earth and enslaving all the parents. To free the parents, the children had to eat the broccoli and I thought this to be the best example of the love-hate relationship people have with this cruciferous vegetable.

To find out how to help incorporate more vegetables into family meals, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ website for kids has some great tips including hiding it in wraps or pizza, “Nendurize” it in a superhero drink, combine it into a one dish casserole. What the kids don’t know won’t kill them and may keep them healthy for life.

It’s so important for everyone to get a good helping of broccoli every week. Broccoli, packed with powerful nutrients, such as riboflavin, folate and vitamin A, B6, C and K, support the health of every part of the body, from the inside out. Instead of considering it a villain broccoli should be viewed as the superhero of the vegetable universe.

All of these nutrients support the body in different ways. The most abundant nutrient found in broccoli is vitamin K, associated with blood clotting. In recent studies, vitamin K is shown to enhance D absorption in the body, which builds healthy bones, and prevents osteoporosis later in life.

The next most abundant nutrient includes vitamin C, often associated with preventing the common cold. The truth is, vitamin C does so much more, not only do the nutrients in broccoli act as an antioxidant, but it also helps the body absorb iron from meat, build healthy skin through the synthesis of collagen, and it converts the amino acid tryptophan into serotonin (the happy hormone).

One of the most important reasons for consuming broccoli is to prevent chronic disease. It is one of the leading causes of illness, and death in individuals throughout the lifecycle. Conditions such as arthritis, hypertension, osteoporosis, depression and cancer are all linked to a chronic inflammatory response in the body. In other words, the body attacks itself.

The antioxidant properties of vitamin C, combined with the anti-inflammatory, and energy promoting properties of riboflavin, as well as the phytonutrient isothiocyanate, can help reduce inflammation in the body and therefore alleviating all symptoms.

Broccoli is easy to work with and provides so many health benefits and it has all the nutrients that support the body in different ways. It can improve vision, reduce oxidative stress that causes cardiovascular disease, build healthy bones and radiant skin, keeps the brain happy and alert, burns carbohydrates and keeps the metabolism working efficiently. If you want to be at the top of your game, physically and mentally, broccoli offers the best bang per calorie.

Eat Broccoli, stay happy, healthy and young.

SDA Health is a weekly column written by members of the Student Dietitian Association. The column focuses on healthy eating and living. For more commentary or to target a topic, email life@fiusm.com

Tree of life: broccoli is the superhero of super foods

Fiusm.com

Nihat’s secret to flat abs and muscles
After watching the Panthers down the Louisiana Tech University Bulldogs in outstanding fashion, perhaps we should begin to ask: is 2016 the year of the Panther?

Everything went right for the FIU men’s basketball team (9-8, 3-1 in Conference USA) in their 88-74 win over LA Tech. Junior guard Donte McGill went on a tear, scoring a game-high 29 points on 10-18 shooting. Senior forward Daviyon Draper was able to cook up offense whenever the team began to stall - he finished with 18 points on 8-13 shooting. Center Adrian Diaz was able to play a team-high 36 minutes because he didn’t pick up a single foul in the first half.

“We talk about having the same type of effort every game that we play,” head coach Anthony Evans said. “It’s just a matter of going out and doing it consistently.”

FIU barraged the Bulldogs, crushing their press and confusing their coaches. They took the lead from the tip and never looked back, as if nobody told them that they were up against a 13-3 team with the conference’s most dangerous offense.

In this game, it was the Panthers’ performed better in all offensive categories than in past games. They shot 56.9 percent from the field and 50 percent from behind the arc. They passed good shots up for great shots. Many of FIU’s opportunities on offense revolved around the extra attention the Bulldogs paid to Diaz.

“When [Diaz] is not in foul trouble, we can throw the ball into him because teams have to double down and he’s going to create offense for other people,” said Evans.

Defensively, FIU held its own. Louisiana Tech is not the kind of program that often gets “shut down.” Going into the context, the Bulldogs were averaging 80.6 points per game; FIU held them to 74 points on 41.4 percent shooting. The Panthers were able to contest shots the entire first half, and when LA Tech tried to cut FIU’s lead through three-pointers, FIU held them to 2-11 from behind the arc in the second half. In fact, 16 second chance points - most of them coming in the form of easy layups - bloated LA Tech’s shooting percentage.

“We weren’t going to stop them for scoring, but it was getting the stops when it counted,” said Evans.

The Panthers were either tied or in sole possession of the lead through the entire game. They gained it early thanks to McGill, who was 5-6 from the field with 12 points before the first half was even halfway over. LA Tech put a full court press on FIU early on, but retired the strategy after the Panthers routinely avoided the pressure. Junior guard Jason Boswell was also knocking down shots in the first half and helped space the floor - he ended with 11 points, adding 2 assists, 2 steals and a block. As FIU began to pull away, Evans kept the pressure on the Bulldogs and put in junior forward Elmo Stephen, who sank two triples with ease. At the half, FIU was on top 52-41.

Although his team had an 11 point lead, anybody who knows C-USA knows that FIU couldn’t afford to cruise through the rest of the game and expect LA Tech to give up. FIU knew it too, and continued to look for quality shots. Although Diaz only finished with 11 points, he proved his worth yet again in the second half, drawing defenders underneath to create open looks. Defensively, FIU performed even better in the second half, forcing LA Tech to shoot 38.7 percent. The Panthers improved their all-time record against the Bulldogs to 4-5.

Next up for the Panthers is a home game on Saturday, Jan. 16, against the University of Southern Mississippi Golden Eagles.
CORNER KICKS

Major League Soccer is at last long last is set to return to South Florida. After a constant will they won’t they, a kin to a teenage romantic comedy, it was unclear if David Beckham and his group would find a location for their stadium. It felt like every month there was a new proposed site and then new reason why they couldn’t use that site. It looked bleak.

However, the proposed 25,000 stadium in Overtown looks probable and the MLS might indeed be coming to Miami. The city is proposed to be put on North West Sixth Ave. and North West Sixth St., extending all the way to Sixth street and State Road 7. But, and there is always a but with the MLS when it comes to having a team in Miami, due to limited space there will be no parking facilities.

Yes, because of the lack of space in the proposed site, there is only room for a stadium built to fail: David Beckham’s nightmare.

CORNER KICKS

PETER HOLLAND JR.

Staff Writer

The Panthers’ track and field team traveled to Clemson, South Carolina Saturday, Jan. 9, for the Orange and Purple Classic. They showed their dominance throughout the event as 11 total Panthers finished in the top three and 38 in the top eight.

Starting on the women’s side, two freshmen stood out during the high jump. Clarissa Cullifff came in first-place, recording a personal-best of 1.75m, which was 2.5cm past the national school record. Following her was Kenfolore Attilus, who jumped a personal best 1.70m. This was her personal record, which resulted her in finishing in second place.

On the weight throws, junior Chandra Fullwood threw a personal-best 17.57m finishing in second place. On the shot put, Fullwood finished with a season-best 11.37m mark. She finished in sixth place.

On the track, the Panthers finished in third, fourth and third in the 200 meter dash. Starting with freshman Sidnee Wilkeron, the Jacksonville native ran a 23.79 season best.

Coming from behind was returning seniors Cam’ree Jackson (25.70) and Sharmiece King (25.85).

In the 4x400 relay meter, freshman Kayla Woolard, senior Jaylaan Slaghout, sophomores Shaquita Smith and Morgan Taylor helped King finished in third place overall.

On the men’s side, returning Luka Musirific finished strong in the shot put. The Croatian native ran a 18.47m personal best.

At the long jump, sophomore Christian Williams finished in third place with a 1.90m mark. On the track, the men also had a solid performance as well. Both mid-distance and distance runners took the top two spots for the men and came in first in the 500m. In his Panther debut, Eric Jones finished strong in the 800m, finishing with a 1:55.57. Following behind was Senior Brandon Woulard with a time of 1:56.20. Ballard finished in second place. In the 5k, freshman Ronny Greepout took out as well, finishing in first place with a time of 16:07.38, giving the Panthers another first place sweep performance.

The Panthers next meet will be on Friday. Feb. 5. They will be traveling to New York City to compete in the Armory Track Invitational. This will be their third indoor meet of the season. Here are the results of the season.

COLOMBIAN PROS BRING TALENTS TO FIU

SERGIO SALAZAR

Contributing Writer

Representatives from Colombian professional soccer league gathered Tuesday, Jan. 12, afternoon to discuss the implications of professional Colombian soccer teams coming to FIU to play against one another in regards to Colombian soccer as a whole and their teams alike.

In a very sincere ceremony, the mayor of Miami, Tomas Regalado, awarded a key to the city to each team in a show of gratitude and stated that, “Colombia is part of the soul of Miami.”

On Wednesday, Jan. 13, and Saturday, Jan. 16, the FIU stadium hosted a total of four soccer matches between clubs from the professional Colom- bian soccer league, Liga Postobon. The teams, who are only just beginning their respective pre-seasons, are Deportivo Cali; America de Cali; Deportivo Independiente Medellin; and the reigning Liga Postobon champion Atletico Nacional.

Sports is a large part of Miami soul. In the past few years, Miami has been beginning to host many international matches between clubs and national teams alike. The craving for soccer events like these come into play.

Games that will be played on Wednesday are essentially warm-up games for the main events on Saturday, Jan. 16, when we will see Deportivo Cali and America de Cali face each other in what is both team’s largest rivalry. Saturday will also be another “clasico” with Deportivo Independiente Medellin faces off against Atletico Nacional in another bitter rivalry match known as “el clasico paísa”. Both teams from Medellin play in the same stadium back home, and the match is infamous for its aggressive history. This matchup is the Colombian soccer equivalent of the Los Angeles Lakers and the Los Angeles Clippers.

Although all teams are only at the beginning of their training camps and trying to compose a squad for the next season, the tension was palpable when asked if the clasicos on Saturday would mean more than a pre-season matchup. Several of the representatives from the teams mentioned that, aside from being a great opportunity for physical conditioning and arming a team, the games were going to be a treat to the local fans of Colombian soccer who would rarely get to see any of their hometown teams play against each other on their domestic pitch.

These games are part of a larger soccer movement in South Florida that is calling for more games to be played locally. Until this point, Beckham can work out the kinks with our future hometown club, Miami, will have to quench its thirst with imported matches like these.

Built to fail: David Beckham’s nightmare

SeriousWriter

SPORTS
Critically-acclaimed author speaks at the Bay

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The School of Environment, Arts and Society is preparing to host Thrity Umrigar for the next installment of the Writers on the Bay Reading series. BBC’s Barnes and Noble will host Umrigar, Armitage Professor of English at Cleveland’s Case Western Reserve University.

According to Julie Wade, a FIU English professor and Writers on the Bay series coordinator, the reading series has brought four award-winning authors to FIU each year since the mid-1980s.

During the event, the visiting author reads a selection of their book to attendees, giving an opportunity for audience members to ask questions, purchase copies of the author’s novel and have it signed and participate in a reception afterward with food and drink provided. “These events are meant to be entertaining, instructive, and informative,” said Wade.

A critically acclaimed author, Umrigar has written multiple novels including “Bomboy Time,” “The World We Found,” “The Space Between Us” and “The Story Hour.” She has also written for various publications, such as the Washington Post, Boston Globe and the Huffington Post.

Umrigar is the winner of a Lambda Literary award, the Cleveland Arts Prize and the Seth Rosenberg prize, and her best-selling novels have been nominated for various literary awards. Her memoir, “First Darling in the Morning,” was a finalist for the Society of Midland Authors Award. Teaching classes from fiction workshops to 20th century African-American literature, Umrigar has a “respect for canonical writers,” but says her passion lies in introducing students to contemporary literature, and “to writers who write about and are reflecting the age that we live in.”

The event, which is free and open to the public, will be held in the Barnes and Noble Bookstore at the Biocayne Bay Campus Thursday, Jan. 28 at 8 p.m. Wade and her coordination team have planned two more Writers on the Bay reading series events for the spring semester, also to be held at the BBC. One will take place March 3, also held at the BBC Barnes and Noble Bookstore at 8 p.m., hosting poet William Archila. The last Writers on the Bay event will be held April 28 in the second-floor ballroom of the Wolfe University Center featuring Tim O’Brien, winner of this year’s Lawrence A. Sanders Award.

For more information on the Writers on the Bay series, or for those interested in attending these events can “like” the Writers on the Bay series’ Facebook page, which provides updates about each event and provides information on visiting authors.

Student support will bring in domestic athletes

A look at many of the FIU sport’s rosters will illustrate a difficulty that many coaches have continually expressed: Florida athletes aren’t very likely to pledge to the Panthers.

In fact, back when flat-tops ran the court, FIU’s men’s basketball coaches used to snip bitterly that they could recruit in Detroit easier than they could in Miami-Dade County.

“We have a better chance to get a higher level of kid internationally than we do domestically,” FIU swimming and diving Head Coach Randy Horner said.

The problem is, many domestic players opt for bigger named schools, especially their “big brother” to the southeast, University of Miami.

FIU men’s soccer Head Coach Scott Calabrese agreed. Calabrese thought FIU could compete for top international players with Promethean programs such as North Carolina or UCLA.

“That’s probably more the case than with the domestic players, who have a better sense of the pecking order of the major programs like a UNC or UCLA or a mid-major program like FIU,” he said.

Women’s sports such as tennis, golf and sand volleyball all need more student visas than Sun Passes. Former women’s basketball Head Coach Cindy Russo beat almost everybody but McDonald’s into Eastern Europe once it opened up in the early 1990s and the roster still reflects it – five from Florida and four from Germany, including second-leading scorer Janka Hegedus of Hungary.

FIU might have the only swimming and diving team that got pulled out to draw fans to a football game and a season-opening basketball doubleheader. The squad always ranks among FIU’s top teams academically and brought home the University’s first Conference USA team championship in any sport last February. Last Friday Jan. 8, FIU edged No. 44 University of Kansas in a three-meet victory.

(Also, no team supports their fellow athletes more – swimmers were half the student section at last week’s women’s basketball near-huge upset of Western Kentucky.) 17 of the 25 team members come from outside the United States. Six of the remaining eight are from Florida. Foreign-born swimmers hold all of FIU’s individual records.

While it can be argued that the reason that FIU has more clout internationally than domestically is because we are somewhat disadvantaged due to our location and Miami is a really well-known city everywhere, the same can be said for why a US born athlete would want to attend.

Yes, climate and location is a huge advantage for us, but the truth of the matter is that FIU does not plan on a professional career.

FIU simply does not provide that sort of attention in most mainstream sports. The football, basketball and baseball teams don’t bring out the huge crowds that UM does. According to Horner, omnipresent merchandising and mass media noise favors the well-known schools from the Power Five conferences.

“Sometimes, [recruits] will sacrifice what kind of scholarship or even what kind of contribution they can have to their program because they want to wear that shirt,” Horner said. “Take it further, their parents. It’s a badge of honor for them where their kid goes because of the culture of athletics in the United States.”

It’s the thrill of the crowd that entices these students into choosing a bigger, more well known school. The crowd that comes not only from being in a specific conference, but from having a loyal fanbase - something that FIU simply doesn’t have.

Each of the athletes that play here understand what it’s like to play with no crowd - the worst of which is probably the football team. There are countless photos on social media showing how empty the stadium is during football games, how quiet it is compared to an Alabama or UM game.

Our coaches have to expand their horizons to find players because we don’t support them. We’re not in the stands cheering them on. In fact, past football season there was sort of a “sitting for them to fall” vibe on campus in terms of support.

If we want to be a University that can run with the big boys, that can hang with Bama, Ole Miss, UF and UM. Students and athletes want to attend a university that is known, but all of that comes from putting in work.

If we continue to refuse to support the team, the players will continue to leave once they capture the attention of a more advantageous school, our coaches will continue going overseas to bring in talent that is unaware of the pecking order.

We’re at the bottom of the totem pole not because of questionable administration decisions, but because we don’t support our athletics department the way favored schools do. As long as we continue to play ourselves, we’ll never get the major keys to success.

FIU is capable of greatness and drawing in local talent, but we’ve got to give our athletes and potential recruits a reason to want to be great and attend, other than to leave for greener pastures.

The Shade Locker is a weekly column offering commentary on various sports topics. The Shade Locker is published each Wednesday. To send suggestions or thoughts, email Cayla at cayla.bush@fiusm.com.