Housing policy accommodates comfort pets

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Sofía Alberto, a freshman majoring in recreational therapy, attends FIU with her 6-month-old dog named Charlie. Charlie serves as Alberto’s emotional support animal, or comfort animal, and lives with Alberto in his dorm at Lakeview Hall South.

Alberto is a survivor of Ewing’s sarcoma, a form of cancer, and has recently been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. All of this, combined with her hesitation in taking a medicated route for her condition, revealed her vital need for Charlie as her comfort animal.

He brings Alberto relief and is trained to calm her anxiety attacks.

“He seems like a normal dog, but to me he’s the best medicine I’ve ever received,” Alberto said.

FIU’s strict housing policy regarding animals in the residence halls has undergone some adjustments to accommodate students like Alberto who are in need of emotional support animals.

According to Andrew Naylor, associate director of housing, approximately 15 students need emotional support or service animals residing in on-campus housing.

“If the student has a need for an emotional support animal and has roommates, there are some negotiations that have to go on,” said Naylor.

The course of action would be centered on the medical conditions of the animal owner’s potential roommates. Housing’s goal is to assure that medical arrangements are made pertaining to particular situations such as allergies.

There is also the question of how an individual can be approved for an emotional support animal.

“I think the first thing is making sure that the student that has identified that they have need for an emotional support animal, that all their documentation is legitimate,” said Naylor.

Naylor realized that FIU strives to hold higher standards pertaining to the legitimacy of the student’s emotional need.

“We make sure that it is a legit therapy or mental health situation,” said Andrew. The housing department works in partnership with the Disability Resource Center in the process of verification.

Stephen Lovenz, access consultant manager, says “The DRC works with various entities on campus to implement accommodations. As for authenticating letters, we typically call the therapist or doctor’s office that wrote the letter.”

The goal is to investigate each emotional disability case, seeking evidence of a sound and solid relationship between the student and therapist. The task of Housing and the DRC can become complicated due to what Naylor mentioned as the latest alternative, an online therapist.

Websites such as theredotgoronline.com, claiming to be America’s number one online emotional support animal approval site, make it possible for anyone to obtain the proper documentation to acquire an emotional support or service animal—whether they need the animal or not.

These websites require an online medical exam and provide the option of selecting between three different payment plans, one of which does not require re-evaluation.

Once the exam is reviewed and approved by medical professionals, the user will take approximately 48 hours until the patient receives the prescription letter via email. These alternative can potentially pose as a barrier in terms of discerning who needs a comfort animal who is trying to cheat the system.

Emotional support animals aid patients of various conditions and are utilized for therapeutic methods and counseling. This especially applies to cases like Alberto’s that require a pet in order to prevent the occurrence of emotional turmoil that could disrupt her ability to successfully navigate college.

Charlie is currently undergoing the process of training to become a certified service dog to further ensure Alberto’s safety. Once training has been completed, he will have the ability to open doors, contact help in case of an emergency and serve as protection.

“If he weren’t for him I wouldn’t be able to control my attacks and I would’ve failed out of the semester,” explained Sofía.
Venezuela’s crisis remixes its tourism industry

In Caracas, the capital, tourism businesses have shifted their attention from foreigners to what is known here as “full day” tours—one-day trips, mostly for people who live in or near Caracas, to places such as Choroni, a tourist destination tucked into a national park about 40 miles due west of Caracas that was once a hive for foreigners and their money. These trips are creating a growing market for domestic tourism, said Marjorie Leal, who works for a company that sells full day trips. That market also is benefiting from Venezuelans’ inability to get permission or enough American dollars to travel to the United States, Leal said. With fewer tourists, they take trips in their own country.

Military appeals courts confront sexual activity by HIV-positive troops

Gavin B. Atchak’s commanding officer at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina ordered him to avoid unprotected sex after Atchak tested positive for HIV in 2011. The officer also directed Atchak, an enlisted man in the Air Force security forces, to inform future sex partners that he carried the virus that can cause AIDS. Atchak disobeyed and engaged in unprotected oral and anal sex with fellow airmen. At a subsequent court-martial, he pleaded guilty to aggravated assault. Now Atchak and others, including a former South Carolina-based airman, are caught amid changing times, as military prosecutors and defense lawyers sort through the evolving legal guidelines applicable to sexual activity among HIV-positive troops.

Possible public health emergency over Zika

Nine months after the Zika virus was first discovered in South America, international health organizations are still struggling with how to confront what appears to be the largest global public health crisis since Ebola decimated eastern Africa in 2014. U.S. researchers have blasted the World Health Organization for what they say has been a slow response, and some pressed the international organization to declare a public health emergency before the mosquito-borne virus becomes an “explosive pandemic.” Officials from the World Health Organization acknowledged Thursday that the Zika virus was “spreading explosively” in the Americas and set an emergency meeting for Monday to decide whether to declare a public health emergency.

Meditation sessions at College of Law begin

Nicole Montero

Staff Correspondent

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Sofía Galíano meditates at least three times a week. According to her, it can prevent heart disease, reduce stress and significantly lessen ADHD.

“One day, I need to do this service to others in order to release stress, improve communication skills, and to have content mind which helps them to stay positive.”

“Yoga is a tool that helps to develop your body, mind and spirit. Even though you have a stressful life, it opens up your body and mind. It opens up your mind and heart. I don’t see anyone else winning wrong. I don’t see anyone else winning. I don’t see anyone else winning”

“We need these classes at the University because most of us start the day with the stress of driving to classes, academic load and also with personal issues,” she said. “A few minutes of meditation classes during the day at the University helps to calm us down.”

“Spreading explosively” in the Americas and set an emergency meeting for Monday to decide whether to declare a public health emergency.

“Meditation helps in developing insight and emotional regulation through which a student becomes better able to release stress, improve communication skills, and to have content mind which helps them to stay positive.”

The workshop series initially started for law students, it is open to anyone in the University community. “Not only does it benefit law students, it benefits all of us,” said Veeramachaneni. “Meditation helps in developing insight and emotional regulation through which a student becomes better able to release stress, improve communication skills, and to have content mind which helps them to stay positive.”

“The workshop will be held in the Modesto A. Maidique Campus’ Law Library Seminar Room, RDB 2080, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. To sign up and view the specific workshop dates, go to law.fiu.edu/library.

“Meditation is a way to engage with your body and mind,” said Seidel. “You dig deep and think about yourself. You’re more relaxed and attuned to your body and feelings. There’s nothing better.”

“Meaning, it’s great for them, but I don’t think this really affects me all that much,” he said. “It’s not like they’re getting money to support the initiatives we already have. It’s just an award and I’m not sure how they can use that to make things better.”

“Meditation helps in developing insight and emotional regulation through which a student becomes better able to release stress, improve communication skills, and to have content mind which helps them to stay positive.”

“I tell my students: if your life doesn’t change somewhat for the better, then you have probably done very little in the class,” she said. “The rewards are reaped according to the amount of effort, dedication, and commitment to learning and applying the various tools and techniques.”

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The back is one of the most important parts of the human anatomy. It is also one of the most neglected. Back muscles give power to the body, they play a major role in all functions. They connect the hips, butt, chest, shoulder and neck. It is a conjunction between the major body muscles of human body parts. Strengthening our back muscles should not be treated as a luxury, but rather an obligation. These muscles of human body parts. Strengthening our back muscles should not be treated as a luxury, but rather an obligation. These muscles do not only serve us in spotting activities and power workouts, they serve us in our daily lives.

Aesthetically, working out the back will give a slimmer waistline and help to create the perfect upper body look. Working out the upper back will make us stronger and create the V-shaped fitness model look from the rear view. Often, we are concerned how our muscles and body look from the front, as that is the only side we see in the mirror. Whether for men wearing suits or for women wearing dresses, a perfect back gives the perfect look for a man in a suit or for women wearing suits or for women wearing dresses, a perfect back gives the perfect look for a man in a suit or for women.

Scientifically, every muscle in our body is directly correlated with its counterpart. For example, biceps with triceps, chest with upper back and abdominals with lower back. To achieve strong chiseled abs, then working out our lower back is essential. Without a strong lower back, any regular ab workouts such as sit ups, planks and many more cannot be performed properly. The back gives the body the power and support to do all those ab crunches. Similarly, for strong chest muscles, working out our upper back muscles is indispensable. To have the perfect upper body look, working out our back part of the body is just as important.

If we consider our daily lives, we find that we are either sitting or standing every single moment of the day, therefore good posture is important and it requires strong back muscles. Sitting down for hours on end will cause back pain. This pain is extremely common in American adults due to every single day activity of sitting down for long periods and with untrained posture. Strong back muscles are essential and directly correlated to good posture.

The importance and strength of neglected back muscles

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**South Florida’s spring music lineup**

The year 2016 has already promised bountiful entertainment for South Florida, for just the second month of the year more than 13 musicians have announced tours through spring. This lineup ranges from hit pop artists such as Fall Out Boy to head-bangers such as Ice Nine Kills.

The earliest dates are set in February, while the latest come in during May. And once May is over, plenty of summertime entertainment comes into play.

The first musician to stop by is indie electronic artist Robert Delong. Delong’s single “Don’t Wait Up” has gathered massive air time on South Florida’s very own Alternative Station, The Shark. Despite this, tickets are still available at an affordable price - $15 for Delong’s Feb. 25 concert at Ft. Lauderdale’s Culture Room.

Following immediately after them are the popular punk-pop kids, Neck Deep, Knuckle Puck and State Champs. They will be playing Orlando’s Venue March 6, with tickets still available at $17 for general admission and $30 for VIP. VIP includes express entry, elevated viewing and access to a private bar.

Also in Orlando, Ice Nine Kills and Like Moths to Flames are stopping by to rock the night on March 21 at the BackBooth Bar and Venue. Tickets are on sale, and at an extremely affordable $15. Since neither band tends not to tour so far south, definitely take this opportunity to experience them live.

Once March rolls around, a different crowd of musicians is stopping by. First off, hard rockers Buckcherry, famous for their 2006 single, “Sorry,” are stopping by the Ft. Lauderdale Culture Room on March 4. Tickets just went on sale, so expect plenty at an affordable price.

A few days later are the popular pop-punk kids, Neck Deep, Knuckle Puck and State Champs. They will be playing Orlando’s Venue March 6, with tickets still available at $17 for general admission and $30 for VIP. VIP includes express entry, elevated viewing and access to a private bar.

Change your diet

If you’re suddenly feeling depressed because of the weather, there may be some foods that can boost your mood. Your diet has more of an effect on your mood than you think. It is important to keep your blood sugar steady, which means eating fewer refined sugars and starches that can spike it up. An ideal food to keep a positive mindset this winter is foods that contain vitamin D. This vitamin D contains whole grains and fiber, which help stabilize blood sugar. The best part? It’s often fortified with an element called selenium, which may help ease anxiety and depression and make you less tired. Foods that contain vitamin D are fish, eggs and milk.

**Surviving the winter blues**

Winter has arrived in South Florida – sort of. As Panthers kick off spring semester, it’s clear that the warm sunshine has been replaced by a crisp breeze, flip flops by boots and iced coffee by warm lattes – which are a hit for these cooler mornings when it’s harder to wake up.

This weather is a nice break from the heat; however, it’s only natural that the days get shorter and the nights get colder. This can bring even the best of us down.

The “cold weather blues” are not a myth. They’re absolutely real. The term used by experts is Seasonal Affective Disorder, in extreme cases. According to ClevelandClinic.org, a non-profit academic center, four to six percent of the population of Florida may suffer from SAD, and 10 to 20 percent might have a milder version – dubbed the winter blues.

The disorder is characterized by mild depression, lack of motivation and low energy - sound familiar? These symptoms are common experiences in people during the colder months. For some, it could be traumatic to detach themselves from sunny summer days. Luckily, there’s a lot that can be done to prevent the blues.

Do a little home improvement

If you’re home most of the time, you might as well paint that room, do a little home improvement. This weather is a nice break from the heat; however, it’s only natural that the days get shorter and the nights get colder. This can bring even the best of us down.

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**Embrace the Season**

Instead of always avoiding the colder temperatures, look for the best ways to embrace them. Embrace colder temperatures by trying new hobbies and participate in outdoor activities. But when the weather gets cold, we tend to stay inside. Bike riding is one of the best ways to deal with the cold temperatures. Books that contain vitamin D are fish, eggs and milk.

**Don’t quit your exercising routine**

When it’s cold out it is difficult to find motivation to work out, but staying active will boost your energy. According to WebMD, our bodies release chemicals called endorphins during a workout. These chemicals interact with brain receptors that reduce pain and trigger positive feelings. The temperature drop can be tough to deal with for South Floridians. The rest to the country may consider this a winter paradise but we would like our warm Miami sunshine. In the meantime, stay warm and stay happy.
FIU drops 71-69 decision to rising 49ers

SOPHOMORE guard Eric Nottage drives in for a layup against the University of North Carolina at Charlotte 49ers. The Panthers’ next game is Thursday, Feb. 4, at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

ALEJANDRO SOLANA
Staff Writer

The walk-on athlete has long been the unheralded mainstay of collegiate athletics, and that was never more evident than this season for the FIU men’s soccer team.

The unwritten code of walk-ons suggests that most players who walk-on to college sports teams are the less talented players of the squad, the players who weren’t good enough to get noticed before college, recruiter fillers.

But we’ve all heard of Rady, right? The underized and unskilled kid from Illinois, who stopped at nothing to wear those blue and gold uniforms. Or what about Scottie Pippin? Pippen, only 6-foot-1 when he graduated high school, couldn’t find a single team who wanted him.

FIU men’s soccer player Patrick Lopez’s story is no different. No, Lopez’s route is different. Lopez is a 6-foot-1 native of Miami, Florida, who shined on the pitch for the Bulldogs. Lopez started all four years at ACC and led his team in goals and assists both his junior and senior season, earning him team MVP honors in back-to-back years.

Despite his impressive high school campaign, Lopez was not offered any Division I scholarships after graduating.

“Jeez, I thought I was a decent high school player,” Lopez said. “I was playing in different adult leagues around Miami, staying in form and waiting until I got my chance,” said Lopez.

Just as he hoped, the opportunity came knocking when FIU assistant coaches Jean Camese and Kevin Nylén provided Lopez a chance to try out for the FIU men’s soccer team as a walk-on in 2013.

“I was presented the chance to have a spring season trial and it was up to me to show if I was capable of playing at this level or not,” Lopez continued. “I knew coming in, it would be a huge learning curve for me trying to catch up with the rest of the guys who had already had a chance to play at this level.”

As Lopez started his career at FIU, the program underwent a huge change when Scott Calabrese was named the new head coach of the team. Camese and Nylén, this year’s Glenn “Mooch” Myerick Assistant Coach of the Year for the Southeast region, saw the potential in Lopez after bringing him in and Calabrese approved, keeping him on the squad for the 2014 season.

Lopez’ first year with the team was definitely not what anyone would describe as a breakout year. Finding the pitch only five times on the season, the Miami native struggled to find minutes with the squad, notching only 476 total minutes on the season.

“I don’t think there was ever a low point for me, but being a competitor, I’d be lying if I said it doesn’t get frustrating being on the bench,” Lopez said. “I admit to being frustrated, but also made it very clear that he had nothing but respect and trust for the coaching staff who had brought him in and given him his chance.

“The one thing I really enjoyed about our coaching staff was the open dialect between us players and the coaches. When I felt those lows, or thought to myself ‘why am I doing all of these things and I’m not even getting on the field?’ I could just easily go to Scott, Kevin or to Jean and express my concerns and they would immediately give me feedback,” Lopez said.

Just one year later, things went a little differently for Lopez than his first season with the team. After only getting to start in five games and make a total of six appearances his first year, Lopez played in all but one game for the Panthers in the 2015 season.

The senior would go on to fill out the stat box, notching 476 total minutes on the season, appearing in 22 of the team’s 24 games.

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Panthers keep game close against 49ers

CLOSE, PAGE 6

24 points on 10-15 shooting, seven rebounds and four assists. The Panthers made a run thanks to three point baskets from Donte McGill and Eric Nottage and FIU took its first lead of the night at 17-16. However, Turnovers and second chance opportunities crippled the Panthers, and at halftime the 49ers led FIU 37-36.

In the second half Adrian Diaz led the Panthers down-low, scoring 17 points on 7-10 shooting.

Despite FIU’s struggles on offense, they did enough on defense to keep the game close late in the second half. The Panthers had a chance to make a comeback down 71-66 with three minutes to play, but the chance at a late run disappeared when Draper committed back-to-back turnovers and junior guard Ray Rodriguez air-balled a three point attempt.

Draper was fouled on a successful three point shot with 1.4 seconds left to play to close the score to within two points. The intentional miss on his free throw did not find a Panther, however, and FIU dropped the game 71-69.

Diaz expressed after the game what he can do as a senior leader on the team to dial up his team’s energy in the future. “I can try to be more vocal out on the floor. Try not to attack personal players and give them encouragement and hope that they respond from that,” said Diaz.

FIU ended the game shooting 49 percent from the field - a number that was inflamed by 38 points in the paint. The Panthers held Charlotte to 40 percent from the field, but allowed them 17 second chance points. FIU recorded 11 blocks compared to Charlotte’s one.

The Panther’s next game is Thursday, Feb. 4.

Players prepare for C-USA

OVERALL, the 49ers are a balanced team with three players averaging in double figures. Tumah Abaras, a redshirt sophomore, scores 17 points on 7-10 shooting, seven rebounds and four assists.

Along with his championship game winning goal Lopez tallied two other goals earlier in the season, one of which was also a game winner against Old Dominion University. While Lopez was able to find the back of the net three times, he also managed to set his teammates up and record two assists on the season.

The coaching staff taking away the ball from some of that. “I credit all of my success to my teammates, coaches and of course my family. They have been with me from the beginning and it’s big that they were there for me, reminding me not to give up and keep working. They helped me enjoy the moment.”

When asked if the whole walk-on experience was worth it, Lopez quickly exclaimed, “absolutely. The bond I built with my teammates is a brotherhood and I’ll never forget that.”

As for what’s next for the senior? “Professional [soccer]. That’s the next step. That’s what I’m working to get to and if I’m able to accomplish that, this whole story that has been a blessing continues and that is all I can ask for.”

Along with his walk-on experience the second baseman is also a prime example of what the Panthers are losing, it certainly doesn’t help either. FIU’s tallest player who has more than two minutes, Jankia Hegedus, doesn’t average over five rebounds per game. Context is also important, as Hegedus plays on the perimeter a lot. However, when your rebound production is so poor from someone so big it’s going to be difficult to be good in the field.

FIU is not just having a rough season, it’s a near disaster. However, as previously mentioned it is a transition year for the program. There are some positives, some improvements and a lot of time to get it right.

Players prepare for C-USA

SOCCER

Lopez prepares for the big leagues

Panthers keep game close against 49ers

T-BASEBALL

Transitional period leads to ‘disaster’
CARTA and SMJC merger further explained

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Early December 2015 it was announced that the School of Journalism and Mass Communications will be integrating with the College of Architecture and the Arts.

In the fall the provost asked CARTA and SJMC to merge; a committee was assigned for both schools and voted in favor of the merge at Biscayne Bay Campus.

Many students reacted negatively towards the integration. Some believed it could devalue the school’s accreditation or that money was in the way of everything.

“As a student, I believe it won’t affect us in a bad way,” said Anzela Vanegas, a junior broadcast journalism major. “However, now we depend and operate under a new department that can be very different from journalism and mass communication majors. I think each school needs their own dean that has relations to the field.”

However, there’s also students that favored the merge.

“Of the Journalism and Broadcast students that favored the merge, and it’s an integration that must have been done long time ago,” Blevens said.

According to Blevens, there are two important steps into the process. “How do you get into the program and get accepted.”

The school will retain the limited number of student admittance but barriers will be met through courses. It will be up to the students to meet the requirements or not.

“We will still remain a limited program with barriers for admittance,” said Blevens. “Barriers are going to be different, competency and performance based.”

Students coming from high schools will be able to declare their majors and get admitted by their sophomore years, not junior as it usually is, as long as admission requirements for SJMC are met.

Another possible change that has been mentioned but not approved or discussed is the barrier exam, Language Skills Test, an entry grammar exam that SJMC students must pass to continue onto their major track.

“Language skills tests have become something in the past, some states are no longer using barrier exams anymore but instead course work to make sure students are competent,” said Blevens. “I don’t think it’s a good idea to hold students hostages in a class for a test.”

For now that’s just a possibility. “It’s not going to be easier to get into the program, it’s just different,” Blevens said.

Overall, Blevens said he was in favor of the merge, and it’s an integration that must have been done long time ago.

Throughout the holiday break, students were being informed about the integration through newsletters, student media and even the Miami Herald.

Blevens said the communication was poorly distributed to students, angering them and leaving them in the unknown about the merge leading to negative views about it.

“Some of it was generated by a misunderstanding from Miami Herald stories, the advised report hadn’t had a clear understanding, students were misinformed,” said Blevens. “The reporting didn’t reflect the reality of the situation.”

Dean Brian Schriner will lead SJMC under CARTAs umbrella with the help of recently named interim executive director of SJMC, Juliet Pinto, an associate professor of the journalism and broadcast department.

“I am enjoying getting to know the SJMC’s students, faculty, professional staff, advisory board members and alumni,” said Schriner.

In response to the merger, according to the Dean, CARTA students have favored the change.

“My interactions with students, whether from CARTA or the SJMC, have been very positive,” said Schriner. “The students’ initial questions or concerns have focused on how the integration might impact their current major, the name of the degree they are pursuing, the name of their home department, etc.”

Part of the dean’s personal goals for the integration is “to increase strategic enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate level, increase the number of full-time faculty – potentially as cluster hires - in the areas of digital media, communication, digital arts, graphic design and public relations and to enhance the administrative teaching and research support to the faculty,” said Schriner.

Incoming freshmen from high schools will experience the new changes between the schools.

“They will have access to additional resources and will graduate with the confidence they have a skills-set that gives them a competitive advantage in the 21st century’s information, innovation, and technology economy,” said Schriner.

Pinto said that SJMC will retain its own entity and accreditation, and the purpose is to grow and expand by reducing inefficiencies and making everything better.

“What CARTA represents to us is an opportunity to resources such as their 3D printers, their Miami Beach Urban Studios and many more that can help our students think creatively,” said Pinto.

In SJMC, faculties have been placed in committees to better SJMC, such as what Professor Blevens is doing.

Pinto said, “most of our faculty and staff are on committees to work with the curriculum, governance, space and staffing to make ourselves better.”

In addition of directing SJMC, Pinto is also communicating with sponsors for filings.

“I am also out in the community looking for engagement and partnership to help us get resources that we need.”

The faculty-led process will also create a new name that represents both schools.

“The entire point of this integration is to make everything stronger and CARTA is the right place for SJMC, we’re all looking to help the industries that students wish to go into,” said Pinto.

All structures shall be placed no later than July 1 of this year.

SWEET LIPS

Angelica Walker, junior hospitality major (right), and Catrease Ancion, senior psychology major (left) serve cotton candy to students participating in the SPC’s Lip-Sync Battle hosted at the Wolfe Center Thursday, Jan. 28.

SING TO ME

Mechanical engineering junior Randy Callaoun and junior journalism major Carolina Estrada lip sync at the Blue & Gold Recruitment Week: Councils Unplugged event, held at Panther Square, Thursday, Jan. 28.

JASMINE RIVERA/The Beacon

Joseph Ramirez/The Beacon

Part of the dean’s personal goals for the integration is “to increase strategic enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate level, increase the number of full-time faculty – potentially as cluster hires - in the areas of digital media, communication, digital arts, graphic design and public relations and to enhance the