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The Beacon Magazine, September 15, 2016

Florida International University

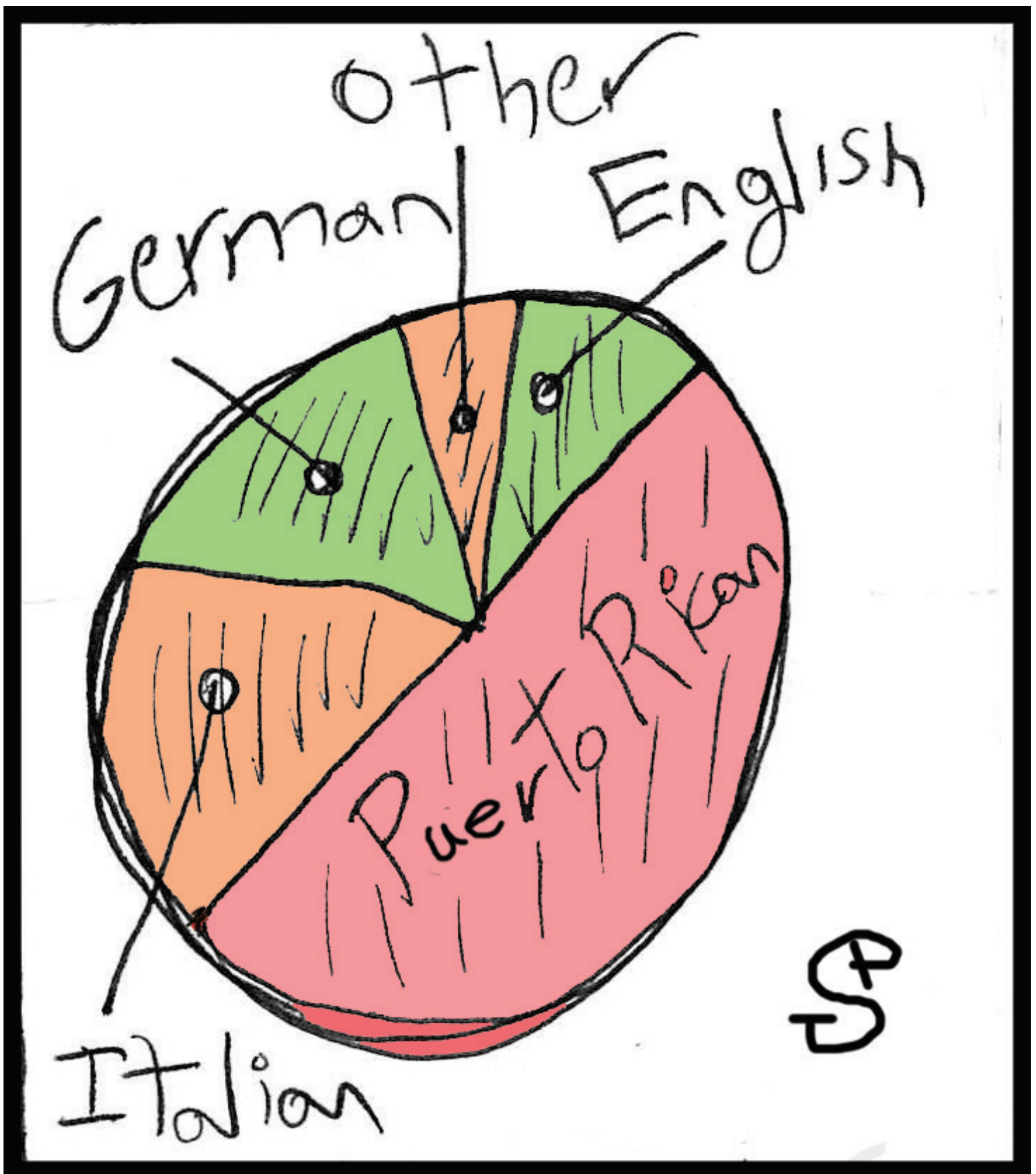
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SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY



EDITOR'S NOTE

Diversity requires understanding

CAYLA BUSH



EDITOR IN CHIEF

A campus with as much diversity as FIU should undoubtedly have a focus on intersectionality, mixed races and the collision of cultures that forms a student.

Intersectionality, the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage, is something that all students deal with.

Daniel Capote, president of the Stonewall alliance and an active advocate for social rights, shared with Student Media his views on what it means to be intersectional. In a letter to the editor, he explains why it is important to embrace and understand all facets of a person's experiences and life.

Wendolynne Perez of the Global Indigenous Group explains the harms of Columbus day and why her student organization has started to speak out against crimes against Native Americans -- even if other students don't agree, as you'll see on page three.

Multicultural Programs and services explains how they prepare the men on campus to deal with different identities, understand various backgrounds and to interact with different cultures respectfully.

Our student athletes share their experiences of traveling from another country to find better opportunities, either in their sport or their careers. Nikolina Toderovic explains how difficult it is being away from home and having a strong accent, while Kyna Pereira explains the benefits of having access to training facilities for her preferred sport.

Our eboard tackles a lack of professor understanding for intersectionality, and a proposal to rectify the situation. We also call out students to speak up, and say something to administrators and professors who are offensive and do not show respect or understanding for students' identities.

This magazine is to promote understanding of the ways students don't fit into boxes. This magazine is representative of FIU.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

INTERSECTIONALITY A 'PROMISE TO THE MARGINALIZED'



DANIEL CAPOTE

Intersectionality is a framework used to look at how our interconnected identities coordinate our lives.

These identities are comprised of our sex, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, ethnicity, nation of origin and so on. Each is a road that intersects at a specific address and people are subject to different experiences depending on their own addresses.

For example, civil rights activist, lawyer, author and episcopal priest Pauli Murray once wrote "Black women, historically, have been doubly victimized by the twin immoralities of Jim Crow and Jane Crow." The phrase "Jane Crow" here describes the way in which black women face discrimination from both sexism and racism.

A queer person who is deaf would have a vastly different relationship

within the LGBTQA+ community than a queer person who is not deaf.

The unique experiences of Cuban immigrants shape their world in a way that is different from the experiences of immigrants from other nations.

Trans women of color have an intersection of identity that is so stigmatized in our society that they are some of the most vulnerable among us to poverty, violence, and incarceration.

All of these are examples of how illuminating an intersectional perspective can be, which is why it's important for contemporary activism.

Social justice movements from our nation's past have almost never taken an intersectional look at progress. Social support for needy families was originally a patriarchal attempt to keep widowed mothers out of the work force by having the government provide the income their husband would have made, but this system was uncaring of the needs of poor black mothers and unmarried women who had children.

The "Lavender Scare," a witch hunt conducted in the 1950's in order to find and fire queer people working in the federal government, intensified the feelings of fear and dread that community faced during an era already riddled with anxieties about nuclear war.

Betty Friedan, a leading icon of feminism's second wave, coined the phrase "Lavender Menace" when describing the threats she felt lesbian women posed to the emerging women's movement.

All of these are examples of how progressives in the past have trampled over the less fortunate in order to achieve their goals.

Intersectionality is a promise to the generations of the marginalized, the institutionalized, and the brutalized, that we will never inflict on others the injustices they faced simply because of their identities.

Daniel Capote
Senior

Communication Arts Major

Student group starts petition to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day

CEYLIN ARIAS

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Columbus Day is less than a month away and although it's no longer a day students get off from school, it has always been regarded as a day to honor Christopher Columbus' discovery of America on Oct. 12, 1492.

Since its establishment as an official federal holiday in 1937, making it 79-years-old, the celebration was initially accepted as a way to commemorate the arrival of Columbus in the "New World."

Now, opposition has arisen to fight back against Columbus Day.

The Global Indigenous Group at FIU believes the FIU community should no longer celebrate Columbus Day and instead replace it with a day to honor the Native Americans who were already occupants of the land Columbus so called found.

Destiny Medina, a sophomore and psychology major, said, "It's about time that we celebrate the contributions and achievements that the indigenous people gave to this world. Having this day would actually benefit the younger generation by educating them [on] the history they never really hear about."

According to Wendolynne Perez, president of the Global Indigenous Group and member of the Quechua nation, the initiative to propose a change in holiday came from a friend of hers who had proposed the same idea to her school but was denied.

Perez mentioned that this was also around the time her home country, Peru, was facing issues against indigenous people's rights.

"After that, we kind of started talking about 'Why isn't FIU doing something for its indigenous students, faculty and its members of the community?' We have Miccosukee down the road, Seminoles up north and being an international school, it should be able to give more voice to all of its students," said Perez.

Efforts to gain support of changing Columbus Day to

Indigenous People's Day have included creating a petition.

According to a Facebook post by Perez, by changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day, "Florida International University would be celebrating the contributions of indigenous communities and cultures; and acknowledge the genocide and oppression of Indigenous and Native American people."

Perez also mentioned how the entire student body have been extremely supportive, including minority organizations on campus who have made it their priority to spread the word around and especially, President Mark B. Rosenberg.

On Sept. 2, the petition was presented to the Student Government Association at the Modesto Maidique campus with more than 400 signatures and as of Sept. 7, the petition currently contains more than 500 signatures.

Eden Jumper, CSO representative of the Global Indigenous Group and a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, hopes they can do away with what people are usually taught in elementary school in regards to Columbus Day and teach them the real narrative.

"We hope that we can get people to become comprehensive and acknowledge what really happened in the past because once you acknowledge what's happened in the past, that's it, you've broken that story forever," said Jumper.

Perez considers the story of discovery a complete lie. According to her, how do you discover a place that people have lived in for thousands of years?

"The narrative is a lie and one that subjugates people into believing that us, as indigenous people, are dead, are gone, or were evil, noble savages, or 'children lost from God.'"

Perez points out that if we don't have a holiday for Hitler because he committed genocide, why then should we have a holiday for Christopher Columbus who also committed genocide.

"The whole idea is that we're not trying to tell people 'oh, Italian people are bad since Columbus was Italian.' This genocide happened and lead to the Trans-atlantic slave trade system and we see it justified as something that had to happen for the world to continue flourishing and so I'm saying that's not true because a lot of our culture, agricultural, and our

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FIU Student Media Presents:

#BehindTheBadge

An open discussion
between FIUPD
and FIU community

Moderated by CARTA Instructor

Raquel Perez

When: Thursday, September 15

3:30 to 4:50 P.M.

Where: SIPA 100 and HL 210

Featuring a panel FIU Police Chief Alexander Casas and student leaders, as well as an open Q&A session.

CAN'T MAKE THE FORUM?

Keep up with the forum through social media, by searching FIUSM, and send us your questions through Twitter using the #BehindTheBadge

Palestinian flag joins GC Atrium



MELISSA BURGESS/THE BEACON

The Palestinian flag was added to the GC Atrium among the cornucopia of international flags after the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) requested it on Friday August 19 2016.

MELISSA BURGESS
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High up on the atrium of FIU's Graham Center hangs a cornucopia of international flags, representing the diverse cultures of the student body.

Thanks to the Students for Justice in Palestine council, GC introduced a new addition to the atrium, the Palestinian flag.

Jasmine Hatab, a junior majoring in biomedical engineering, has wanted to see her country's flag hung among the others since she started at FIU.

"I am Palestinian, so walking through GC with my friends who are from different countries and seeing their country's flag in the atrium with the other flags there except mine was a bit upsetting," said Hatab.

The SJP sent an email to the director of

Administrative Operations of GC Student Affairs, Carlos F. Carrasco, including a document put together by the council to request the inclusion of the Palestinian flag onto the atrium.

The approval process took three weeks.

"I'm sure there are other flags that aren't recognized up there. But our reasoning is that there is a large demographic of Palestinians at FIU and [an] even larger demographic that wants Palestine to be represented on campus," said Hatab.

As for FIU's relations with the Palestinian community, Rayid Sakib, the president of SJP and senior majoring in biomedical engineering, said that GC has been impartial toward the Palestinian conflict with other students and organizations.

"We used to do table with the Palestinian flag in GC and that would make a lot of people angry. We wouldn't do the tabling as a club. And honestly, we don't know why people have so many issues with us and I wish people would sit down and talk to us about them. A lot of times, a lot of

people would come up to our table and say 'Palestine doesn't exist' or 'Bombs come from Palestine.' We always try to avoid them," said Sakib.

The SJP president also said that the more people tried to oppose them, the more motivation they had to promote their organization and fight to put up the flag.

"We aren't trying to pick a fight with anyone. There are other people who try to spread information about Palestine or Arabia that are incorrect. Obviously we are going to make sure to prove them wrong," said Sakib.

Simrum Rafia, a junior majoring in biomedical engineering and a member of the SPJ said that the SJP aims to spread more awareness about conflicts with Palestine.

"A lot of people don't know the root of the cause of what's going on, and having the flag in the atrium is the first step," said Rafia.

Sakib believes that dialogue is the most effective way of getting peace. Through it, all parties can "acknowledge each other's struggles"

"It's healthy to a degree. It

brings conversation because it clears misconceptions and sometimes others do listen and we listen to them and it fosters a more tolerant environment," said Rafia.

The organization has been officially active since March of this year, with 10 council members.

"I'm not sure if I'm proud to see the Palestinian flag up there. FIU has most of all major countries flag in GC's atrium and only Palestine is missing. I feel like GC had no choice. If they wouldn't have put the flag up, they would've been looking for trouble because we would've fought to have the flag up there anyway," said Sakib.

Although Sakib showed his uncertainty about the addition, SJP released a statement on Facebook, saying that they are proud that the University works to make sure students are comfortable and proudly displays the diversity of FIU.

The organization also expressed their gratitude with the University for taking their requests into consideration and caring about their students.

Lecture to address crimes against native tribes

JOSE HERNANDEZ
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The Global Indigenous Group of FIU is organizing a discussion on Sept. 21 to bring awareness to the crimes committed against the Native American community.

"One of the many topics we will cover will be about 'The Hunting Season' which is when hunters go to hunt near native reservations and end up abusing and raping the women from that reservation," said Wendolynne Perez, a member of the Quechuan nation and president of the Global Indigenous Group at FIU. "These people may not be tried by the tribal governments because they could return to their homes and be free of any evidence of the crime, therefore making it impossible to prosecute them in a tribal government or even in the U.S. government."

In addition to the crimes committed against tribal women, tribal men often face discrimination and other offenses from members of their government. However, they keep quiet for fear of being attacked by police.

As the government plans on extending the Trans-Pacific Partnership over the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota, the discussion seeks to highlight the rights of Native Americans and their standing in American society.

"Native Americans and their societies, while still relevant, are no longer as relevant as they were," said political science major, Daniel Leibowitz. "It's simply a matter of the size of their population and society — they make up a far lesser portion of modern American population and simple landmass than they have in the past, along with continued assimilation to the greater American culture and way of life."

Some people may question if the different tribes should be running their own government because their land is on what is presumably considered to be that of "the United States of America."

"To have a government like this does not make sense to these tribesmen because an organized government is not part of their culture/way of life," Perez said. "However, these nations are sovereign so they have their own treaties, their own land, and their own rights, so they are supposed to have a say on their own land"

"They [tribespeople] should abide [to U.S. law] to a certain extent," said political science major Kayla Baptista. "They should be respectful of our laws if they are off preservation, but we should also respect their treaties and laws as well."

The Global Indigenous Group expects to have 35 or more people from different nations at the discussion. It will be open to the public and to the media at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham Center, room 316.

“

It's simply a matter of the size of their population and society — they make up a far lesser portion of modern American population and simple landmass than they have in the past, along with continued assimilation to the greater American culture and way of life

Daniel Leibowitz
Freshman
Political Science

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Student organization serves as place for women to ‘explore, enhance and celebrate womanhood’

JAYDA HALL

Sports Director

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Black Female Development Circle wants to be a space of empowerment for any student who needs support, despite their name.

The national student organization was founded to support black women, and brought to the campus after seeing a need on campus.

“We became an organization here on FIU’s campus in 2011, and we’ve been flourishing ever since,” Vice President Peta-Gay Taylor said to FIUSM. “We became an organization at FIU because we saw a lack of the black community for black women, and we wanted to extend the circle here as we are a national organization with chapters at other schools including the University of Miami.”

BFDC is a national organization, which was founded in 1994 as an independent, black womanhood preparation and actualization program; the organization embraces sisters from all walks of life. Taylor said, “the circle was established to facilitate the evolution of black women into a true and full womanhood.”

The organization became an incorporation on Sept. 19, 2002, and the 14th anniversary of the organization being incorporated was recently celebrated.

“Our mission is to educate, explore enhance and celebrate womanhood,” Taylor said. “We’re really focused on our members, and we want to transform their lives when they come to the organization.”

Taylor has been a part of organization for two years. She said she saw flyers on Instagram and said, “I’m going to go [to the meeting].”

After attending the first meeting, she realized “it was just a bunch of females, altogether happy in one



PHOTO COURTESY OF PETA-GAY TAYLOR

Members of the Black Female Development Circle poses for a photo following on of their events.

place.”

“Once you keep going, it’s more of an intimate meeting, and the circle of sisterhood can’t be broken,” Taylor said. “You get freedom but you also get a family. At all the meetings we want people to take something from it and learn from it.”

BFDC uses tabling in GC, FIU events and freshman convocation to recruit members and spread to everyone what the organization stands for. Most members are invited by a friend, and to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be a part, the organization is open to all genders and races.

“I went to a meeting, started attending events, getting to know the other girls, and that’s what made me stay,” Junior membership chair Lisa Lormejuste said.

Lormejuste said that her favorite memory was attending a Kappa’s barbeque.

“Once I started conversing with people, that’s when

I knew that I belonged,” she said.

Taylor said at the chapter retreat in Fort Myers Beach, she felt safe and let her guards down after “people opened up about their deepest darkest fears.”

“I can tell you about the organization, but you have to come to the meeting and see for yourself,” Taylor said. “I can try to describe it, but once you get there and feel the atmosphere, that’s the deciding moment on whether you want to stay. Everyone’s welcomed.”

The first meeting will be held in GC 343 in October. After that the meeting will take place every other Thursday in GC 316 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The organization will also hold study sessions on Sundays, and host an event called “Tribute to a Man” on Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. after four or five years, they can look back and say ‘I have these skills that allow me to be prepared for the future or for real life,’” said Harris.

Additional reporting by Cayla Bush

Male Mentoring Initiative wants to assist men in staying on path to graduation

CAYLA BUSH

Editor in Chief

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Minority men graduate at a rate more than 10 percent less than their white counterparts, according to a 2015 study done by The Education Trust.

Because FIU is a majority-minority institution, the University’s Multicultural Programs and Services wants to focus on these students who are having a difficult time and find solutions to keep them enrolled and reach graduation.

“In about 2008, there was a group of undergraduate male students at FIU who proposed a mentoring program to the vice president of Student Affairs, who was Dr. Rosa Jones at that time,” said Jeffrey McNamee, associate director of MPAS. “They were seniors, and they were looking around after being at FIU for four years, and there were a whole lot of their friends that for various reasons weren’t graduating with them. They just saw there was a need for something to be done.”

From that need and proposal came the Male Mentoring Initiative, although McNamee says that the program is slightly different from the 2008 proposal. He says that the goals of the program remain the same: get students to graduate and find success after graduation.

“There are many different aspects to reaching our goals, such as them going through self-awareness, leadership and career development, character enhancement, and utilizing the resources here at FIU,” McNamee said. “These four years in college are very formative years,

so we get to see them grow as men through that whole process.”

Part of their program is focused on developing relationships to shatter stereotypes of masculinity and allow the men to feel comfortable expressing themselves and talking to others around them.

“We’re trying to ensure not being so shelled in, especially with that male stereotype of ‘Oh, I have to keep things to myself. I can’t cry. I can’t talk to anyone.’ The more that mindset gets in, it hinders us to help them,” said Mark Harris, graduate assistant for MPAS.

According to Harris, talking to the students who participate in the program helps strengthen the understanding that students of different backgrounds can offer insights that benefit each other.

“We want to teach them in this world there is diversity, and everyone has a background you can learn from,” Harris said. “That’s the reason you should connect with your peers, but also talk to faculty or administrators that are a little bit older, so that you can speak with different people and be able to get different experiences and get different advice.”

The program focuses on how each aspect of a student -- their background, culture, race and personal decisions -- shapes who they are as a person and how expressing oneself can lead to open discussion that enriches the student’s life.

“It’s about just being able to express ‘Hey, this is what I think,’ and to be able to hear what others think about that as well. We want our students to be able to expand their knowledge not only in academics but in life in general,” Harris said.

McNamee says that the program looks at students holistically to improve their life outside of academics.

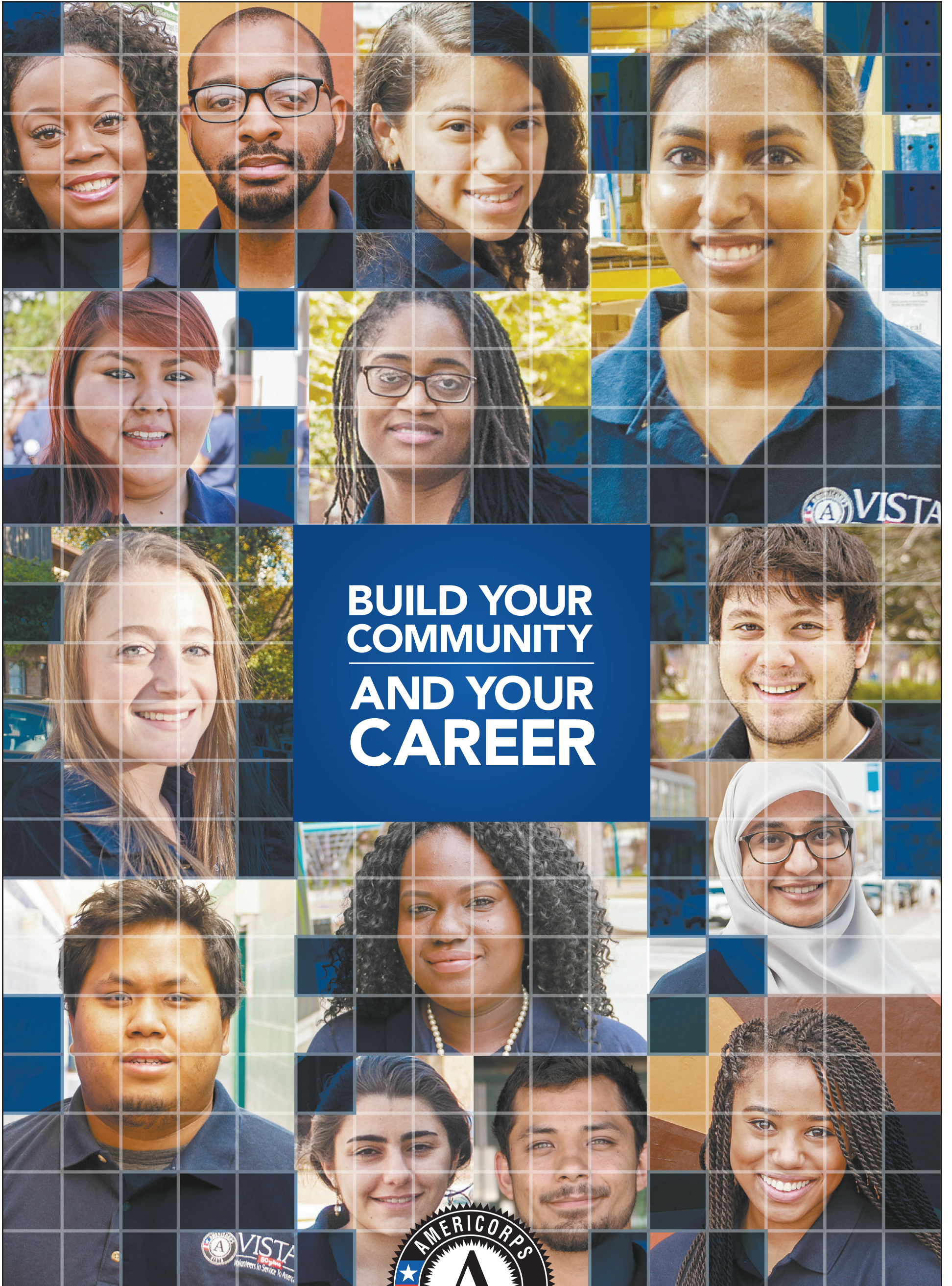
“There are other factors that go into graduating, such as knowing how to communicate and interact with others,” McNamee said. “A lot of students, when they leave the University they talk about feeling like a number, not feeling valued. This part of the mentoring program is talking to them. We value you as a person, so let’s talk about what it’s going to take to help you to be successful.”

Whether it’s a social injustice or personal trauma, the program works with professionals to provide participants the support they need. The program also focuses on diversity, hosting social justice workshops and discussions, inclusion and diversity programs, and global awareness projects throughout the year.

“We want them to know that they can talk to others because there may be someone with a different background that will offer something you’ll be able to learn from,” Harris said. “In the future in your career or professional life, you’ll know how to engage with someone from a different culture or background and be understanding.”

Harris and McNamee said the program is open to any male student who is interested. They can join by going to the MPAS office on either campus, or visiting the MPAS website through student affairs.

“We just want male students to utilize their entire experience to make sure that once they’re done, either after four or five years, they can look back and say ‘I have these skills that allow me to be prepared for the future or for real life,’” said Harris.



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Leaving home ‘hard,’ but will ‘pay off’

JASMINE CASIMIR
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Student-athletes are known to have the busiest schedules out of the whole student body, especially when they're in season.

They have classes, practices, meetings, games —home and away— and community work. With these components taking up most of their time, finding time to see their families and loved ones may be tricky.

Eighty percent of college student-athletes are able to go home, according to Inside Higher Ed, and see their families during their season. However, the other 20 percent are unable to have the leisure of going home, often due to limited funds or families living too far away.

Senior guard Nikolina Todorovic is a part of that 20 percent; with her family living almost 6,000 miles away in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it's difficult for her to go home when she wants.

"The biggest trouble would be the flight over the ocean," Todorovic said. "That would take about 10 hours to land. Then, I would have a layover for an hour and a half."

Bosnia doesn't have an airport that connects anywhere near Todorovic's home. So after a lengthy plane ride, she then has to land in a neighbor country and drive six hours to reach home.

Because the basketball season is practically year-round, Todorovic takes advantage of the two months she has off to go see her family.

"From May to June is the only time that I can go home to see my family," Todorovic said.

Following the war in Bosnia in the 1990s, Todorovic's family was greatly affected but was able to relocate.

"At the time, my mom was pregnant with me when they were bombing the whole town," Todorovic said. "My dad had the power back then to move us to a bigger city. The war was tough, but the consequence gave me and my sister better opportunities."

The Bosnia and Herzegovina native may not see her family as much as she would like and although it was hard for Todorovic to leave her family and travel halfway across the world, she knew the decision will eventually pay off.

"It was hard, but that is something that had to be done," Todorovic said. "Of course I miss my family, but we're doing this to make them proud."

Coming to the United States was always her dream, and Todorovic made sure to pick a university that would best suit her. FIU was second on her list, but eventually became the No. 1 pick after ruling out Texas Tech.

"On [FIU's] roster, I saw they had a couple of international players," Todorovic said. "I reached out to them and they gave me good feedback and had no complaints."

Since living in the U.S., Todorovic has been following in her sister's footsteps who also decided to move to the states for a better opportunity. She graduated last spring with her bachelor's degree in international relations, and has started graduate school to obtain her master's degree.

With all that she has accomplished and is striving to accomplish while playing college basketball, Todorovic gives a piece of advice on how to do it.

"To be a student-athlete, the number one thing is time management," Todorovic said. "I don't consider basketball a hobby anymore, it's my job. So it's very important to have your schedule on point to know when to study for classes or when to do homework."

Swimmer finds better opportunities at FIU

REINALDO LLERENA
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While some athletes leave their countries looking for a better education, one FIU swimmer came to the United States in search of an opportunity.

Kyna Pereira, a junior freestyle swimmer from South Africa, arrived at FIU seeking more opportunities to swim competitively. Pereira said that there was not much emphasis on sports in South Africa, and it was the main reason for her arrival in the U.S.

"[College sports in South Africa] are not set up the way it is here in the U.S. with the different conferences," Pereira said. "You can get a scholarship toward academics, but that's it. To look for a competitive swimming environment, you had to look elsewhere because there weren't many opportunities in South Africa."

Born in the small coastal town of Umkomaas, the South African native came to the

United States in search of improving her swimming career. In her two years at FIU, Pereira has broken three school records in the 200-meter freestyle, the 1000-meter freestyle and the 1650-meter freestyle.

All three of Pereira's school records were broken during last year's Conference USA championships. Pereira swam a 1:46.46 in the 200 free, a 9:51.70 in the 1000 free and a 16:24.36 in the 1650 free in the conference championship. Her times in the 1000 and the 1650 free were both four seconds faster than the previous school record held by Sonia Perez.

Although Umkomaas is located near the coast, Pereira said her hometown did not have any dedicated swimming facilities and no one would swim in the coast because of the cold temperatures.

"I would have to travel sometimes over an hour to reach the closest training facility," Pereira said. "Compared to home, Miami is much better for my swimming career than Umkomaas. I could walk about five minutes and have access to the facilities I need to better myself as a swimmer."

Although the change of country may have helped Pereira better her swimming career, the South African native faced a language barrier, despite English being her only language. She quickly learned that the dialect in the U.S. is vastly different than South Africa.

"Supposedly, my accent was pretty thick and hard to understand when I first arrived in the U.S.," Pereira said. "It was so thick my roommates when I was a freshman could not understand me. I had to repeat things three or four times for them to understand me. Supposedly, my accent has gotten lighter, but I honestly don't know how I sound anymore."

To this day, Pereira says she still has trouble communicating with fellow students because of her accent, which is a mix of South African and Australian. Pereira is pursuing a double major; she aims to major in education and psychology.

The FIU Swimming and Diving team gets underway on Sept. 30 at the University of Miami. The first event will begin at 6 p.m. in Coral Gables.

NAME THE ACCENT



SAM PRITCHARD-TORRES/THE BEACON

Student Indigenous Group seeks campus support to change Columbus Day's name

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way of living lead to being found in the first place," said Perez.

"Had we not shared that knowledge with the pilgrims then they would have never known how to harvest this world. It's about showing respect and justice so why should we glorify a man that murdered our people?"

Perez and Jumper assert that if their petition gets denied, all efforts toward changing the holiday will not stop. They will protest on Solidarity Day, as well as

contact Miccosukee and the media.

Perez hopes that FIU does not go down this route because, according to her, FIU is sure to lose partnerships, namely the Miccosukee, should they disapprove of changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day.

"We've seen the examples of other universities and whole entire states change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day so I guess in a way you could say that we'll be one of those examples that other local and national places can take as a model of 'fighting for justice actually worked' or at least we hope so," said

Jumper.

"If you give us our voice, we're going to tell you what really happened, the real truth and that's terrifying to think that everything you knew was a lie. You would have to live with the fact that the land you live in is not your land, it is covered in our blood and that's why you have a country, you had to kill us to have your own."

The Global Indigenous Group will be submitting its updated petition to SGA on Monday, Sept. 12 at 4 p.m. in GC 150.

The petition will also be presented to the Faculty Senate on Sept. 13 at 1 p.m. in Wertheim Conservatory 130.

"If you give Indians a day, you give them power and a voice," said Perez.

Perez and Jumper urge the FIU community to sign their petition even if they're not indigenous because doing so "unites us all in sisterhood and brotherhood against oppression."

"We know the real story so let's not be shut down by fear. It wasn't right then and it's not right now so we hope everyone can stand with us throughout this entire journey fighting for our right to justice," said Perez.

Miami: where I became my background

THE LEVELER



AUBREY CARR

In Miami, more than any city on the East Coast – the question ‘Where are you from?’ means ‘What is your ethnicity, your family background? What is the language you speak at home, the food you cook? What is your relationship with the United States of America?’

Anywhere else, it simply refers to the city where one grew up or lived last. So it was in Miami where I began to regularly express my family’s background and not just that I was born in Denver but grew up all over Florida.

The use of hyphenated identity seems more prominent amongst Americans, perhaps because modern America’s culture is a combination of so many others, built on this “melting pot” ideal, rather than a culture that has more specific pinpoints in terms of food, language and clothing.

There is a common but less explicitly acknowledged hyphenated identity in the U.S. because of its history: British-American.

My family settled in Appalachia long before the Revolution, an area where studies have shown that the Brits who stayed there, walled in by the mountains, tended to retain their British customs more than other immigrants from the UK who moved elsewhere.

They didn’t flee Britain because of religious persecution and they were exploring too early to have any grievances with the monarchy; they never really had a reason to be resentful of their homeland upon entering the new world and so the

pride of being British carried on across generations.

I have lived in seven cities in the U.S. and while they changed and I with them, the books and history with which I surrounded myself, the food, the etiquette, the way my mother sighed at seeing things spelled the American way, didn’t.

Even with my German, Swiss, Swedish and Russian ancestry, it was the Scottish and English parts that carried on and have influenced my everyday interactions, even as an 11th generation American.

Of course, some tell me that at this point I’m “just American,” but frankly, that keeps around the notion of white America being the default, instead of Native Americans being rightfully socially accepted as the default – a more important issue to address than the simultaneous minor issue of my hurt feelings over my heritage not being fully legitimised.

So when anyone here calls himself an “x-American,” it seems to imply a matter of citizenship over ethnicity.

At least in Miami, there’s a sentiment in almost all of us that we’re divided between being American and whatever we come home to in our families. While it may be hard at times to feel we fit in, it allows us to communicate our differences with others and educate them. It is absolutely beautiful.

For the full article, visit fiusm.com

Aubrey Carr is a staff writer for FIU Student Media. Her column, The Leveler, covers global social justice and political commentary. For suggestions or comments, please contact Aubrey at aubrey.carr@fiusm.com.

BEACON|Editorial

WHO WE ARE

FIU must work to maintain its “Worlds Ahead” philosophy

At FIU, we like to say we’re “Worlds Ahead,” but in the student lives of FIUSM’s editorial board, like many others, we have had experiences and professors who nullify the virtues of diversity and integration that FIU glorifies. Many of us have grown up in a community that has exposed us to many unfamiliar cultures.

However, some distance widens between professors and students.

As an editorial board, we believe if FIU wants to be “Worlds Ahead,” we must train our faculty to understand what that means, what their role in the community is and how being “Worlds Ahead” is represented -- especially when students find the need to report unfair treatment.

At the same time, an unspoken problem can’t be heard or addressed.

Students have a duty to exercise their right to report any unfair treatment they may receive from members of faculty. It’s not enough to warn the next student about the professor or report it on Rate My Professor. Going to the department chair or dean and informing them about any issues pertaining to the professor is key.

This, however, may not be so simple, nor does it guarantee a solution. Often, if the student musters the courage to speak to the appropriate authorities, an intimidating task for many students, their testimony will make the problem concrete.

The department has a responsibility to consider the issue being presented to them and

to respond in the right manner. Telling students that “there’s not much I can do” and that they’re “reading too much into it” is unacceptable.

Students are paying tuition to take classes, which should be taught by professors who have

“We are not suggesting censorship. As students we value conversations that challenge and develop ideas. We are suggesting consideration and courtesy.”

an understanding for the diversity in their own classrooms.

In the end, when a problem arises, students will overlook the content in the class and focus on how they were treated by someone they thought they could genuinely learn from. That’s not cool, and certainly not part of an educational mission.

Title IX is required training designed to prevent sex discrimination and sexual violence. We are grateful that our University takes these precautions with faculty and staff by training them to combat these particular situations for those who need the safe space.

Creating safe spaces for students and allowing them to go to professionals on campus for help is an important first step. However, if the University does not train their faculty and

staff to combat certain discriminations that a student may undergo, all of our progress towards becoming globally versed will be undone.

For instance, Safe Zone training was established on FIU campus in order to prepare faculty and staff to properly support students when coming out or sharing their gender identity. This form of specific training helps the professional understand how to react when being approached by students who are struggling through specific situations.

Any door with an FIU professional inside should be a safe zone for aspects like gender identity and more because people are the sum of all their identities.

We are not suggesting censorship. As students we value conversations that challenge and develop ideas. We are suggesting consideration and courtesy.

By highlighting problem areas and addressing them head on, we can improve how all members of our community are treated and become the image of an establishment that celebrates hyphenated identity - not ignores it.

At a university housing multiple identities such as FIU, training should be considered for all aspects of intersectionality, especially for the authorities to whom students report injustices.

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Intersectional feminism is misunderstood

FEMALE RACE



YURIELLE MENARD

“The most disrespected woman in America, is the black woman. The most unprotected woman in America, is the black woman. The most neglected woman in America, is the black woman” Malcolm X said in his speech ‘Who Taught You to Hate Yourself.’ In fact, who did teach black people to hate themselves? A white patriarchal society that favored white men, then black men, followed by white women of course. White feminism often consolidates women’s issues despite race and culture.

Intersectionality- a theory coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw- focuses on how various power structures connect with the lives of minorities. Though Crenshaw claims to not have pioneered the name, the idea has been around since the 1890s.

In a Newstatesman article, Crenshaw says that in every generation, in the intellectual and political sphere, the African American woman has wanted to speak about race from a gendered perspective or speak about the gender from a racial perspective.

She references the case

of Degraffenreid vs. General Motors where five women of color sued General Motors for racial and gender discrimination. The company offered jobs to people of color that were men, while secretarial jobs often done by women were only offered to white women. The court’s logic was that the women couldn’t prove that all people of color- men and women- were being racially discriminated against nor that all women were discriminated against.

However, Crenshaw’s most notable work is her participation on the legal team that represented Anita Hill during her suit against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas who allegedly sexually assaulted her. Thomas is notoriously known for his defense that he was a subject to “high-tech lynching” at the time. The case has since curved a path for sexual harassment awareness in the workplace.

Intersectional feminism is often taken as a title or term available to anyone that suffers oppression. But this is not the whole truth behind the term. The theory was coined by an African American feminist scholar who believed that an official term should be attached to an experience faced by women of color.

Often modern day white feminists take the front line on

issues and experiences that are not relevant to their experiences. For example, Rachel Dolezal, the NAACP’s former chapter President still claims to be puzzled as to why people would be upset as to her racial identity.

The issue at hand is simple to a woman of color in the sense that if roles were reversed, she could not racially identify as white. The problem is this, Dolezal’s white privilege afforded her the opportunity to pose as a black woman to positions and opportunities for black women. Yet, she sued Howard University, a historically black university, for racial discrimination in 2002 with ease on account of her white background.

Unlike Rachel Dolezal, women of color, specifically black women, cannot flip

the switch whenever it is the most convenient. The culture, tradition, oppression and discrimination that comes with being a black woman is not something that can be traded in when faced with adversity then picking it up again to get a book deal.

Therefore, Rachel Dolezal and women like her that identify as intersectional feminists cannot be such. These women can speak on issues pertaining to black women but undermine the weight behind the term. Women facing these issues should be able to speak about their experiences through the perspective that suits them; created by one like them, a woman of color.

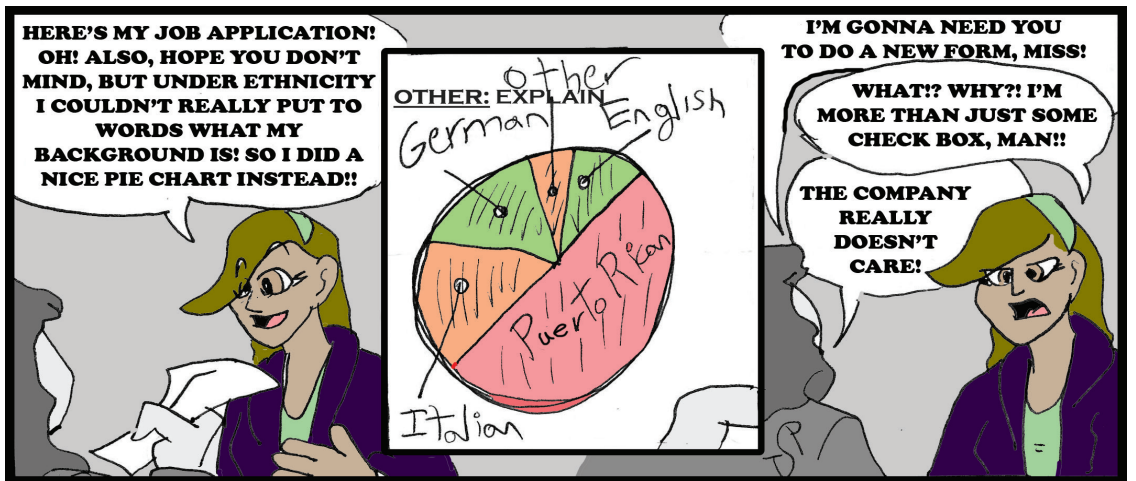
While this statement does not undermine the work and dedication given by white

feminists, it’s important to understand that creators should get their credit where it is due.

Intersectionality should not be understood as a theory addressing all identity politics. But to address the marginalized women of color as persons that cannot- do not fall- under one identity but multiple and appreciate their experiences holistically.

Yurielle Menard is a contributing writer for FIU Student Media. Her column, Female Race, is a commentary on feminism and race relations. For suggestions or comments, please contact Yurielle at opinion@fiusm.com.

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