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Panther Magazine, April 20, 2017

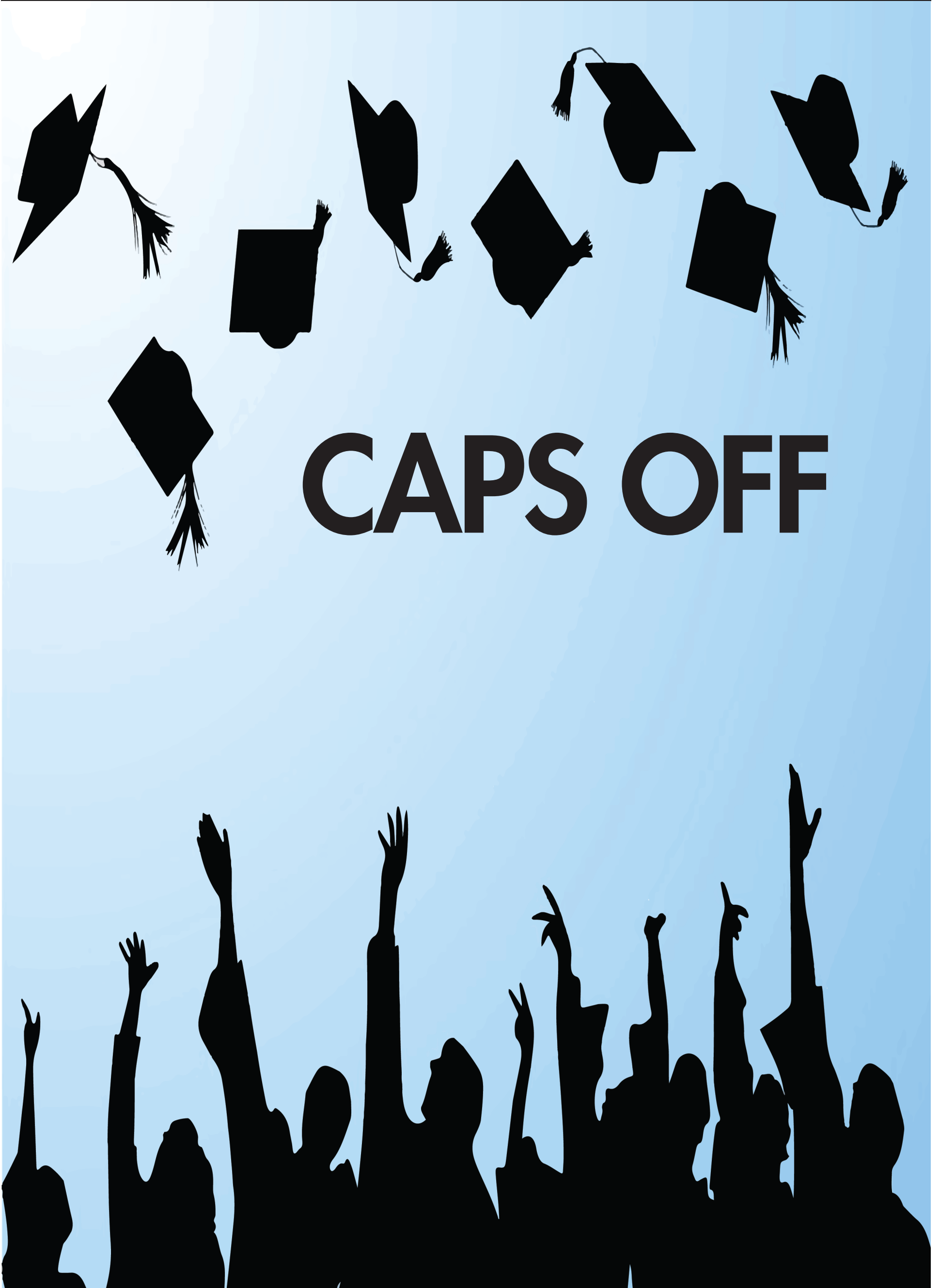
Florida International University

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MOVING ON UP

Graduating seniors share their favorite memories at University

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Jennifer Ortega
Psychology



Carlos Ramos
Finance

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

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



Anthony Byles
Health Services Administration



Gabriela Riviera
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"My best memories have been meeting people outside of FIU ... When I started an Internship program out of the state, I was shocked to know there were countless FIU students there. The fact that FIU gives its students an opportunity to find groups even outside of Florida is one of my favorite things."



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"Participating in dance marathon my first year and helping raise money for the hospital. Seeing the exciting of the kids running on stage and how happy they were."

Office coaches and provides support to students during college

LIZANDRA PORTAL
Contributing Writer

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

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

"I've been preparing for my graduation for two years now," said Alexander Melendez, a marketing major. "What I've specifically done is... last summer, I landed an internship and that really helped position me to feel confident about graduation."

Melendez will be graduating in June with a job as the new account manager for Procter & Gamble, a consumer packaged goods company that makes household items.

Getting a job after college is something the Career and Talent Development office on campus hopes to help students with.

"Our goal is to be able to provide the support, resources, tools and knowledge to help students find gainful employment," said

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

One of the things Leon mentioned when helping students find jobs after graduation were internships.

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

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

"We don't guarantee employment, but we definitely are able to coach [students]," Leon said. "We bring employers to campus, we do career coaching, we host career fairs [and] workshops on career development... so we have a lot of events happening at this main office."

All of the events the office holds are posted on the Career and Talent Development website every semester.

"We have some great events coming up for the summer," Leon says. "For the summer, all the students are gone, but our office continues working. We have the federal government conference... that's June 21 that attracts more than 30-40 federal agencies... so if [students] are looking for federal

government hiring, this is the place to be in June."

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

"[It] really depends where in life and how much money it is," she said. "But I do plan to leave, so... I'm looking into Columbia University and [New York University]. If I do end up staying, [University of Miami] does have a good master's program for journalism."

Eliana Olivero, a psychology major, is also interested in going to graduate school, but not for psychology.

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

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

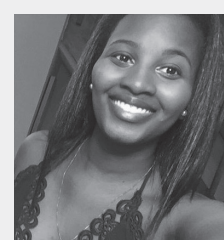
"One of the things I'm going to miss the most is that I'm in this place in my life where everyone else is on the same path as me," Melendez said. "We're all going in the same direction and there is this sense of unity at the University, and I'm going to miss that."

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

Take advantage of college before graduation

MARTINA BRETOUS



EDITOR IN CHIEF

Last spring, I shared a class with our editor, Cayla and one day, she walked into class with a Student Media shirt on.

A few months earlier, I had made the resolution to get more involved on campus so I asked her about it, and one year later, I now follow in her footsteps as the next editor in chief for Student Media.

I had spent my first years at FIU focused on my courses and didn't venture out much to pursue extra-curricular activities. Some of the graduating seniors featured in our News section echoed that sentiment. They also tell us about their best memories at the University — many of which were found through clubs or organizations.

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into their programs, workshops and networking events meant to prepare students for the professional world.

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The Entertainment section offers some tips on appropriate LinkedIn photo etiquette. We also get columns from two of our very own graduating seniors: our editor, Cayla and general manager, Erica Santiago. They highlight some obstacles they faced throughout their journey as student leaders and the people who helped them along the way.

The Sports section features an article on the depression student-athletes can face after graduation.

With so many resources at our disposal, it's important that we take advantage of everything a college education has to offer and make the most of it.

In less than a year of involvement, I've found my place at Student Media, an environment where I'm constant challenged and have fostered close relationships — and that's an experience everyone should have before graduation.

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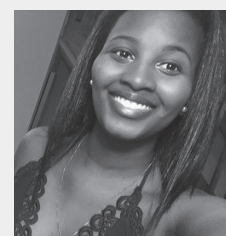
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LGBTQ graduates recognized at event ‘because they deserve it’

BARBARA BRITES
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Two colors that once symbolized the oppression of the LGBTQ community have since been merged to celebrate the accomplishments of the community in a nationwide event called the Lavender Graduation.

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

This event is one of the few venues, which brings together the entire LGBTQA community in a safe space, according to Gisela Vega, associate director of LGBTQA and organizer of the Lavender Graduation.

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

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

“I was so proud to have been recognized by FIU’s first city-wide Lavender [Graduation]. Of all the recognitions I’ve received in academia, this is definitely the closest to home,” said Janessa Brito, a lawyer, who attended last year’s graduation. “This one is for those who have heard ‘You won’t make it very far because

you are a minority,’ Yes, you can and indeed you will go far. Thank you to the LGBT Initiatives at FIU.”

Last year, the ceremony had a total of 40 graduating students and this year they expect more students from different schools.

“This event is really important because the reality is that this group is often marginalized a lot and many of this students are kicked out of their homes; 40 percent of homeless youth is identified as LGBT,” Vega said. “In the face of adversity, they have been resilient so we do recognition for them because they deserve it.”

The night will feature a dinner, motivational speakers and music from

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The students who are graduating will get a lavender medallion that they get to wear in their graduation.

According to Vega, lavender is a significant color in the LGBT community.

The two colors were used during Nazi Germany to identify members of the LGBTQ community in concentration camps. Men were given a pink triangle and women who were considered lesbians or who deemed mentally ill were given a black triangle. The creator of the lavender graduation, Ronni Sanlo, used the mixing of the two colors to turn it into something positive.

The lavender graduation has been around since the mid 80’s and the first one held at FIU was back in 1996.

Two years ago, they included everyone in the Miami Dade area and some of the Broward County schools.

Vega said that their goal is not only to recognize students, but to make them feel appreciated and provide a platform for them where they can connect with well-minded individuals who value education and the importance of being engaged in their community.

“If you are LGBTQA, this is your perfect opportunity to stop and give yourself credit for what you have accomplished,” Vega said.

The free-for-students ceremony will take place Monday, April 24, 2017 at 6 p.m. in the Graham Center Ballroom.

To participate, students must send an email to lgbt@fiu.edu including their name, school, degree and major (if applicable). Guests and donors can buy tickets via their Eventbrite page.

Office collaborates with federal agencies for conference

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“... Sometimes they [students] don’t even know that [with] their majors, they will be able to find employment in the federal government so it’s like an eye opener for them,” said Lucy Moscoso, assistant director at Career and Talent

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

“We have a committee and the committee decides the actual programming of the event - [things like] who’s going to be the speaker, how many sessions,” said Moscoso. “From my perspective, I need to make sure that the agencies know that this event is happening again ... if they have issues with registration, I also follow up to ensure they are part of the event ...”

For the past 11 years, the event has been at capacity accommodating 400 to 500 students and often

requires putting students on a waitlist, according to the director of the office, Ivette Duarte. She describes the event as an information session where students will learn how their major can be applied to any area in the federal government.

Duarte says coordinating with the federal partners has been key. In February, the University became one of the CIA’s signature schools which solidified the partnership between both parties and will increase recruitment efforts at the University.

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

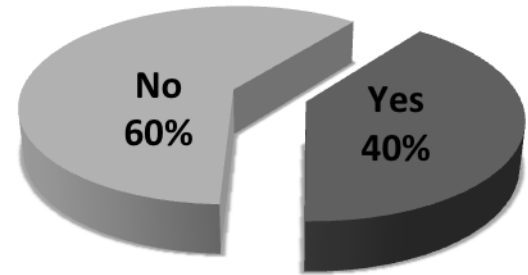
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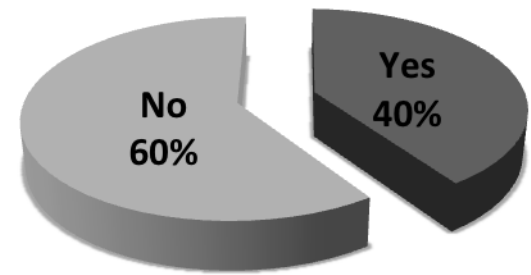
Students share pre- and post-grad plans

Percentage of students who have participated in an internship



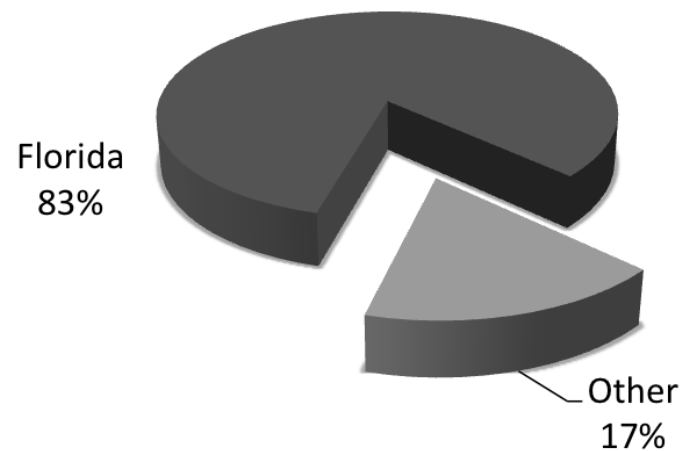
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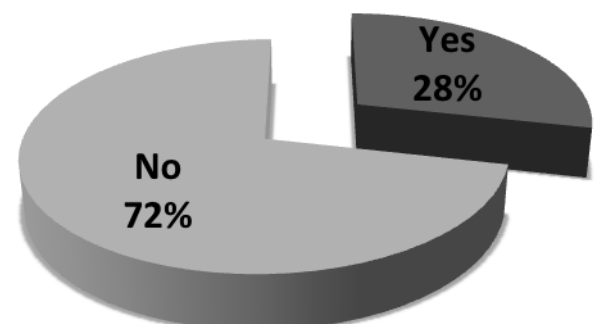
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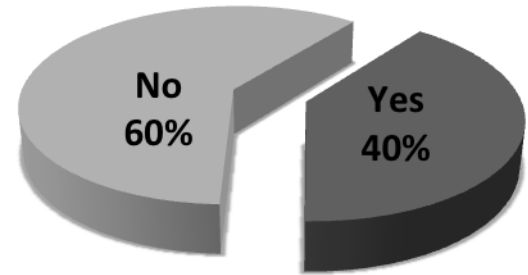
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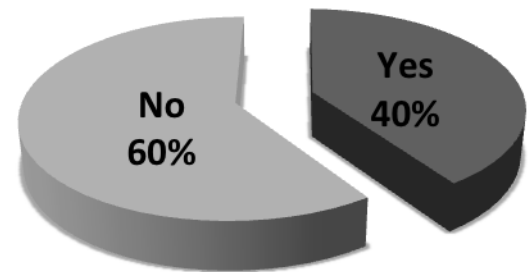
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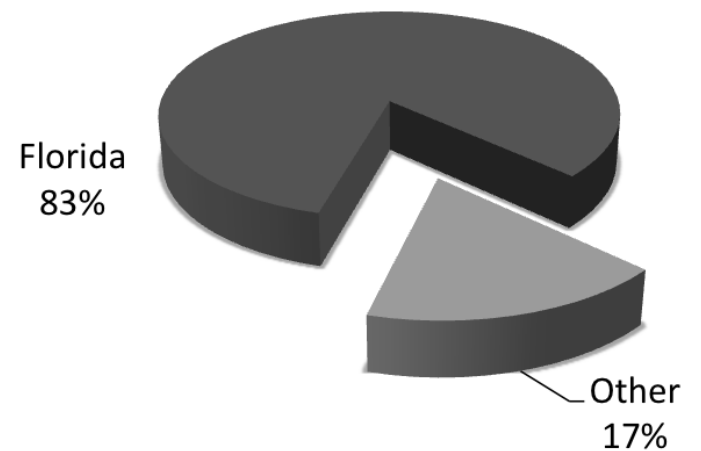
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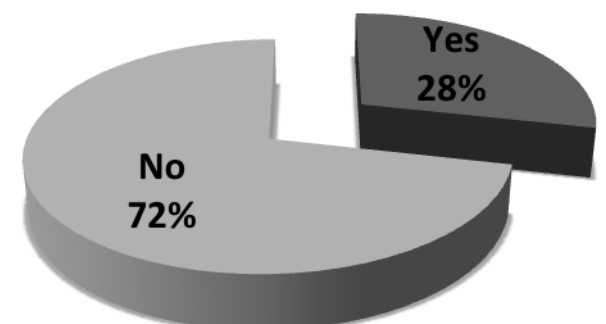
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LINKEDIN INSIGHT

Career and Talent Development offers ‘dos and don’ts’ for LinkedIn



NIA YOUNG/PANTHER PRESS

Cindy Jean Baptiste, freshman Information technology major poses for her professional headshot with, Sonia Gonzalez Hernandez, account manager from the Career and Talent Development office on Monday, April 17 at a career workshop.

STEPHANIE CASTRO Staff Writer

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

At the Career and Talent Development office, staff and faculty members work to help students prepare to take on anything they set their sights on, including keeping

their LinkedIn profile current for possible employers.

Sonia Gonzalez Hernandez, account manager at Career and Talent Development, shared dos and don'ts for first-time LinkedIn users.

“Do have a strong, powerful top because for most headshots it's just going to be the top up, so that's the main focus,” said Hernandez. “Having a well fitted jacket, a shell

[underneath the jacket] if you are a woman, a male in a nice shirt with a coordinating tie, a jacket, if possible, but making sure that it fits right.”

Hernandez also recommends a clean cut look with a trimmed beard for men, and light makeup for females.

“What I tell students all the time is your LinkedIn or your professional headshot is not a glamour shot,” said

Hernandez. “It is you at your best at any given business day because on LinkedIn you need to look like yourself. Your headshot is your virtual handshake.”

Despite keeping up appearances, one of Hernandez's main tips is showing teeth in your profile shot and to smile to the point that your eyes crinkle.

“LinkedIn does a bunch of articles on what recruiters look at and these are the things they constantly hear, because when you smile your eyes naturally crinkle. If you look at a picture and it's just a blank face you don't know what they're thinking,” said Hernandez.

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

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

Another service regularly offered by the Career and Talent Development office are resume reviews.

According to the Career and

Talent Development website, a resume should demonstrate your knowledge, skills, abilities, interests and passions.

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

The Career and Talent Development Department offers walk-in hours Monday – Friday from 2 p.m.– 5 p.m. at the Engineering

“

Your headshot is your virtual handshake.

Sonia Gonzalez Hernandez
Account Manager
Career and Talent Development

”

Center and Monday – Thursday from 10 a.m.– 2 p.m. at MMC and BBC.

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

Farewell, Student Media

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



CAYLA BUSH

I won't miss FIU.

I will miss Student Media, and the friends that I've made as we sat in GC 210 long after 5 p.m. putting together the newspaper.

I have no doubt that Student Media will be left in capable hands.

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

Nia: you are by far the hire that brings me the most pride. When you interviewed for the position, you stood out because of your flexibility and your willingness to learn. As I've worked alongside you, I've seen you bloom into a wonderful leader. Your “stiletto wrapped in velvet,”

quiet assertiveness will take you as far as you'd like to go. Thank you, for keeping me sane and staying in the office with me far past deadline to make sure there was a paper printed. I'll never be able to express my gratitude, even in “all my words.”

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

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

Erica: I'm just going to say that I would've lost my mind without having you by my side. As my counterpart through this year's journey, you've held it down. I don't

think anyone could've taken the ridiculousness you've had to endure this year. You've managed to survive the year unscathed, though there were about 60 simpletons who tried to stop you. I salute you for standing up to the childishness, and doing what you felt was right for the radio station.

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

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

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

Thank you for supporting me.

‘My challenges served to make me stronger’

GENERAL MANAGER



ERICA SANTIAGO

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

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

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

To Alfred Soto, thank you for your brutally honest critiques and for pushing me to become a better news writer. Thank you for convincing me to move from opinion director to news director. It wasn't as simple as “switching hats” but I'm glad it happened. Our writers are incredibly lucky to have your guidance. I hope you continue to mentor them and to push them to their full potential.

Thank you, Robert Jaross, for showing me the business side of media and for always doing so with just the right amount of humor. As cringeworthy as your dad-jokes are, they made me laugh when I wanted to scream in rage. You kept me from taking myself too seriously, while also reminding me to be confident in my decisions as a general manager.

To Cayla Bush, thank you for being my best friend, for constantly encouraging me and for standing by me because you're “always ready to die.” It was an absolute pleasure to work with you and it was a blessing to have you as a friend. You are the true definition of #BlackGirlMagic and I hope you continue to open doors for more black women to make their mark in media.

To Nia and Martina, you're going to be amazing leaders and I have no doubt that Panther Press, Panther Now and The Roar will flourish under your leadership. Thank you for rising up to the challenge and for bringing new and innovative ideas to the table. I can't wait to see Student Media grow in the next year. The only advice I have for you both is to stick together and support each other through the craziness that is Student Media.

Finally, to everyone who has ever tried to stop me along my path to success - you inspired me the most. Thank you for the challenges that only served to make me stronger. I can't wait to see where my reign of terror will take me next.

FIU graduates focusing on the NFL Draft

PETE'S PICKS



PETER HOLLAND JR.

The Panthers have been in a four-year drought without any of their NFL prospects getting drafted. All of that could change at this year's NFL draft, to take place April 27-29.

Now, it's a safe bet that neither of the FIU prospects will go first, second, or even third round. However, somewhere in the fourth through seventh round range, at least one of the 32 teams could consider one of the FIU alumni and take them in for development, special team purposes or to build depth in the needed position.

Here are my top four picks for NFL teams to consider when draft day comes.

Jonnu Smith a 6-foot-3 tight end weighing 248 pounds.

Smith could be the best, most underrated tight end and has been following the same path as his fellow alumni T.Y. Hilton and Johnathan Cyprien, who both made it to the league.

His resume speaks for itself as a four-year starter for the Panthers. He's fourth all-time in career receptions (178) and first among tight ends in catches and receiving yards (2,000).

The Philadelphia native elevated his draft stocks throughout the draft process. At the NFL scouting combine, he ran a 4.62 in the 40-yard dash, which is sixth best among tight ends. He also rep'ed 22 in the 225-pound bench press which is second best among his position, and jumped 38.0 inches in the vertical jump and 127.0 inches in the broad jump.

Of course, everyone remembered Smith when he made national news after his then pregnant girlfriend poured boiling water on him that put his college career in jeopardy last season. When asked about it during his combine, he shrugged it off and has been looking pass it throughout the NFL process.

"I smiled through the whole thing," Smith said to the reporters according to the Palm Beach Post. "I'm grateful of the position that I'm at because there is always someone out

there in a worse position than you."

Dieugot Joseph, 6-foot-6 offensive tackle weighing 293 pounds.

Joseph, who was also a four-year starter, has the size to play offensive tackle at the next level. The Orlando native came from being recruited as a defensive end out of high school to starting every game his senior year at left tackle, which earned him All-Conference honorable mention in

“

He [Dieugot Joseph] will need extensive technique work in order to eliminate some of the bad habits that are holding him back

Lance Zierlein
Analyst
NFL.com

”

Conference USA.

Lance Zierlein, an analyst for NFL.com, wrote a scouting report on Joseph, saying his size and stature could wow NFL scouts when evaluating the prospect.

"Intriguing physical traits and tools, but he will need extensive technique work in order to eliminate some of the bad habits that are holding him back," Zierlein said in his scouting report. "Teams will be attracted to his length, and one will take him on Day 3 (Rounds 4-7) and try and bring him along slowly as a left tackle lottery ticket they hope pays off down the line."

Imarjaye Albury 6-foot defensive tackle weighing 293 pounds.

Albury was a highly recruited defensive tackle from Miami Northwestern Senior High School. He originally signed to play for University of West Virginia before transferring out after he redshirted his freshman year. Having found his way back home to play for FIU, he has made an impact on defense for the past three seasons.

He may not wow people with his defensive stats because he lines up at nose tackle, where his job is to disrupt the offensive line, get penetration and make sure his linebackers don't get touched when making the tackle. In his FIU pro-day last month, he put up 41 reps during the 225-pound bench press.

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

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

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

Four years ago, Montero entered the football program as a walk on out of Miami Columbus Senior High School. Now an FIU graduate four years later, Montero has established himself as the Panthers' most consistent player after anchoring the offensive line for three years.

The two-time All-C-USA honoree, alongside his former teammate Joseph, helped produced 4,503 total yards, which is fourth ranked all-time in FIU history. He also played a key role in blocking for senior running back Alex Gardner, who is FIU's all-time leading rusher, and for starting quarterback Alex McGough, who is FIU's all-time leader in touchdown passes.

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

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

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f i s t y

THE JOURNEY NEVER ENDS

College a time for self discovery and exploration

AFTER WORDS



CAROLINA SANCHEZ

This semester concludes my last full, in-person semester at FIU as an undergrad. I'll culminate my undergraduate career by participating in a short study abroad during the summer through FIU, and afterwards officially graduating thereafter.

My two years here at FIU have been nothing but rewarding. I have learned to appreciate the diversity of South

Florida, represented by FIU's student body.

It has shown me that bilingualism goes beyond Spanish and English, and the importance of being cognizant and knowledgeable about the rest of the world.

Though I plan to continue my education over the next three years in law school, my time as an undergrad student here at FIU has been my best scholastic experience to date.

Partaking in different organizations such as Student Media and the Chess Club, and indulging in the knowledge my teachers have offered is truly what has made my undergrad years both worthwhile and successful.

FIU is a large campus with equally numerous options. Try

“ Undergrad is a very powerful time in a student's life. ”

new things, find a club you like, learn a new language, take a class outside of your major that you feel might really pique your interests.

I became a contributing writer and landed my own column in

the Panther Press because one of my professors linked my taste for controversial topics to my writing style. Though I have never done any kind of journalism before, I took the plunge. It is truly one of my most cherished accomplishments.

I took courses outside of my major, which is English, such as Criminal Justice and the Constitution and World Religions, in order to make sure that I remained open to all of my current interests as well as prospective interests.

I asked teachers to give me feedback on editorials, found inspiration about current issues in the world by swapping ideas with peers, and met people who shared the same areas of

interests as me.

Undergrad is a very powerful time in a student's life because it allows them the opportunity to indulge in multiple subjects and topics, perpetuating current passions or creating new interests for you.

I encourage you to use this time to take advantage of all the resources available to you in life, and find explore different classes, clubs and opportunities.

Carolina Sanchez is a contributing writer for Panther Press. Her column, After Words, is a commentary on current events and controversial issues.

Credit surcharge necessary

RIGHT TURN



CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ

At FIU, students are charged extra for each credit hour taken in excess of the total required for completion of their degree. This is called the excess credit surcharge (ECS), which is mandated by Florida law and applies only to public universities.

To finish a degree, students must complete 120 credit-hours, but they are permitted to take an additional 12 credits without incurring additional fees. The excess credit surcharge essentially imposes a fine on students after 133 credits.

When I first arrived at FIU, I thought the ECS was an abomination, some sinister plot concocted by the powers-that-be at the governor's office. It seemed like an attempt to prevent students from pursuing their intellectual curiosities.

Why, I thought, would the government create a financial barrier for students who want to take more courses and better educate themselves?

However, after careful reflection and reading, the ECS began to seem like an appropriate and necessary policy.

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, from a rhetorical perspective, the ECS encourages students to graduate rather than linger too long at the university.

With its exemptions and nuances, the excess credit surcharge is a necessary policy. It encourages students to graduate even as exceptions are made to provide students with the freedom to pursue their intellectual curiosities.

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

Control your destiny

RIGHT TURN



ISABELL VASQUEZ

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

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

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

Adrian Nones-Newman, a junior majoring in journalism, has dealt with

his own obstacles along the way, and doesn't think graduating as fast as possible is what students should be concerned about.

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

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

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

“What's the hurry?” said

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

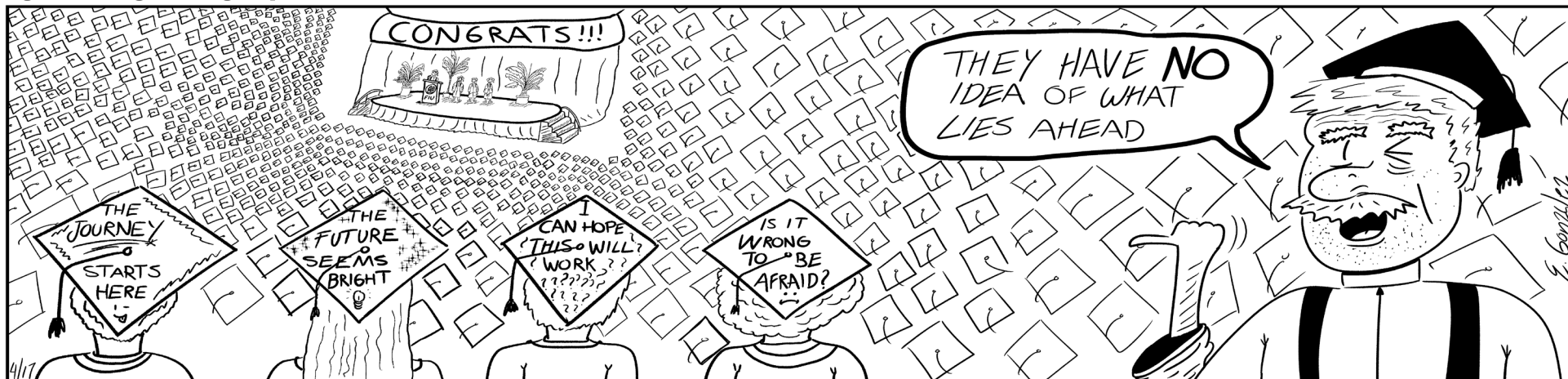
Fernanda Zarate, a junior majoring in broadcast communications, agrees, and believes that it's the degree that matters, not the time spent on it.

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

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

Isabell Vasquez is a contributing writer for Panther Press. Her column, Independence, is a commentary on feminism.

GRADUATION DAY



PANTHER EDITORIAL

Students: Graduation isn't a race

Students may feel a rush to complete their studies in four years, but not every student is the same, and this pressure may do more harm than good to their body and life.

While timely working habits are no doubt beneficial and four years is certainly an achievable deadline to complete an undergraduate degree, this pre-determined deadline can be a recipe for burnout and poor

performance in the classroom.

First, every major is different. Some, like theatre or hard sciences, require specific courses and prerequisites and if one is missed, it can spell disaster for the originally intended graduation date.

Other majors, like international relations and language or culturally focused ones, have more flexibility in how many electives are allowed

and when they can be taken.

So while a four-year deadline is easy enough for some full-time students, it can be an intense struggle for others, just based on fields of study alone and not including individual needs.

In order to stay on track, students should schedule a meeting with their advisor at least once every semester, but visiting advisors isn't enough. Students should set their own

personal graduation deadlines but must also remember that graduation is not a race.

Florida's law requires nine credit hours to be taken during one or over the course of multiple summer semesters, and these don't come with the standard financial aid perks, either. However, once you complete the summer requirement, don't be afraid of taking a summer off, if needed.

Students should take time to rejuvenate their minds, spend time with family and pursue any other nonacademic interests they may have. And for those who don't want to take the entire summer off, remember to make time to focus on your mental and physical health. No matter how long it takes, your graduation will be an accomplishment.

Don't rush graduation

WHAT'S UP FIU



LAQUAVIA SMITH

Four years and 8 months of deadlines, final exams, research papers and presentations. Four years and 8 months of commuting and not commuting. As a student among the graduating class of 2017, it has taken me an extra 8 months to officially graduate.

These 8 months have not necessarily

the best advising, but I always had a clear plan.

When it comes to studies based on social norms or what is thought to be the "right way" to do something, it always gets a little bias.

If I were to conduct my own study here at FIU, I'm pretty sure we would see many of our students saying that they didn't do too well freshman year and that they took a break. Or maybe I'm just speaking from experience.

When we conduct research, studies and surveys at FIU, two factors play a huge role.

Factor number one, we are a mass of minorities. We are an organization built of different cultures, customs and countries.



Collectivist culture is any culture that emphasizes family and work group goals above individual needs or desires.



lingered a bad taste nor a negative energy, but have created friendships, networking, enlightenment and a diligent work ethic that I wasn't aware that I could even produce.

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

Knowledge, better yet the desire for education, is a messy thing that can create conflict, a term in our society that we are constantly worried about.

When it comes to FIU specifically, College Factual states that on average 23.6 percent of first-time/full-time students graduate on time (two or four years depending on the degree) and the university contains an overall graduation rate of 54.2 percent.

A segment on USA Today argued that according to a study performed by Complete College America, most American students are completing their 4-year Bachelor's degree in six years.

Reasons for this stigmatized "set-back" included lack of clear plan/advising, change of majors, change of universities and unnecessary courses. I agree to disagree.

On a personal level yes, I've changed my major — not to the extent of acquiring extra classes — and yes, I haven't had

Along with our minorities comes this factor of not only first-time generation students, but also collectivism cultures.

For anyone who hasn't taken a communication or sociology class, collectivist cultures, briefly defined, is any culture that emphasizes family and work group goals above individual needs or desires.

What I'm trying to get across is simply the fact that yes, school, education and graduating is important. One must learn to juggle their academic life with their social life and if you are like myself and work full-time as well, it can get a little challenging.

Family comes first in my world, and if for any reason I have to take a break from my "four-year" degree, I'd do it.

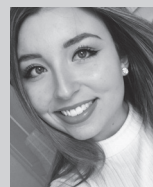
Let's stray away from this individualistic idea of time. Go at your own speed, behave in the way that makes you feel the most comfortable, but never too comfortable.

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

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

Diplomas do not guarantee job security

PULITZER'S PHENOMENA



DANIELA PEREZ

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

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

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, it's predicted that Generation Y will make up 75 percent of the workforce

by 2030, yet in 2016, the millennial unemployment rate remained "stagnant" at 12 percent as discovered by Millennial Job Reports. With these findings, competition is another brick added onto the aforementioned "safety net."

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

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

Ehrenreich also comments on the 2007 Marilee Jones case. Marilee Jones was the former Dean of Admissions at

the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

According to Nick Semenkovich, the Associate News Editor at the Tech MIT Newspaper, Jones resigned after it was discovered that her academic credentials were "misrepresented."

After being employed for 28 years, Jones apparently never received an undergraduate degree despite claiming a bachelor's and a master's on her resume. Jones is just a morsel in a big bowl of academic fraud.

Conformity isn't something that can be seen with a naked eye. It's a psychological phenomenon that many people fall into. Instead of sulking about their futures, college graduates must distinguish themselves and prove that their competence is reflected on their diplomas.

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

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AFTER THE DIPLOMA

Post graduation depression a ‘serious concern’ for recent graduates

WEEKLY WHY



JULIETA RODRIGO

Once the whirlwind of joy from graduation celebration fizzes, the reality of post-graduation depression is a serious concern for recent graduates.

Recent graduates often have high expectations that may be difficult to achieve immediately after graduation. The job they are hired for—if they are even hired at all within the first few months—may pay less than they expected, or may be in a company they didn’t wish to work in. For many, the relative freedom of living alone in a dorm or in an apartment might suddenly collapse as financial realities force students to move back in with their parents.

The loss of a daily routine makes the transition particularly difficult for some. College provides structure and predictability, and the sudden interruption of that lifestyle can be challenging. Vicki Hays, director of Counseling

and Psychological Services at the University of Michigan, believes that a loss of a routine is a significant contributor to post-graduate depression. “For most [students], they have not been without the structure of organized education ever in their lives.”

Symptoms of post-graduate depression are not always clear to the person experiencing them or to the people surrounding

finding it hard to make decisions, and avoiding people.”

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

with other people his age and created meaningful relationships with individuals suffering from homelessness. “The experience there helped me branch out and try new things, and I was even offered a professional job from one of the connections I made there.”

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

If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of post-graduate depression, seek help from a professional.

In addition, Mental Health Daily recommends focusing on the present and being social within your community. Activities like volunteering in a local organization and having a positive outlook can help recent graduates remain optimistic and motivated.

There is so much to look forward to, from finding a rewarding job that makes

you happy to becoming more independent and spending time with your loved ones. You will find a fulfilling career and you will adapt to your new environments. You just have to give yourself time to adjust to the changes in your life following graduation.

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

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

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

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

“Once I left the dorms, I lost contact with all my friends and I had nothing to do, very day was a struggle to wake up and be productive, because everyone else around me was achieving their goals and I just kept getting rejection letters from jobs.”

Justin Peterson
FIU alumni
Spring 2016

them. According to Empower, some graduates aren’t even aware they are experiencing depression. Common symptoms include “feeling tired, restless or agitated, losing interest in life,

just kept getting rejection letters from jobs.”

Peterson combatted his depression with getting involved in charity work at a local homeless shelter, where he made friends



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