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Goals for 2014 academic year passed

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The University met and surpassed some of the goals it set during the previous academic year.

During the Board of Trustees meeting held on Wednesday, Jan. 14, which concluded the academic year, the Governance Committee discussed the past academic year's performance goals and results.

The discussion was led by Albert Maury, chair of the Board of Trustees, with a presentation by University President, Mark B. Rosenberg.

The president began by highlighting several milestones achieved during the previous year.

Among these were the College of Law and the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine ranking first and ninth, respectively, for excellence in educating a diverse student body, according to HispanicBusiness.

The University also achieved a ranking of fifth

in the country, among other high-performance universities, with their Model UN Team, ranked 24th in the "Washington Monthly" national universities rankings and maintained the title of national leader in awarding STEM bachelor's degrees to underrepresented minorities.

"It sends the message that FIU can compete wherever it goes," Rosenberg said.

Developing avenues for more University research was also a topic of discussion at the meeting.

The goal for research expenditures of \$126 million was surpassed by \$4 million, and total research doctoral degrees awarded increased by two percent.

"I want to point out that this is especially good news," Rosenberg said. "...The federal government, as you know, is either freezing the research funding or cutting it back. And yet we continue to grow; we've grown 30 percent since 2009."

The first ten goals in the "36-goal Self-Evaluation Scorecard" were performance

goals, which, if achieved, would bring the University incremental state funding.

These ten goals vary from increasing academic progress rate to not increasing the average cost of undergraduate degrees.

Member of the BOT and Student Government Association President at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Alexis Calatayud, took a special interest in one of the ten goals: to have seventy percent or more bachelor's graduates employed and/or continuing their education one year after graduation.

"Really that's why people go to school," Calatayud said. "Either to create a foundation for even more education, which leads to their dream, or to get a job that they really want."

This goal was far exceeded with seventy-seven percent of the students employed and/or continuing their education.

According to Calatayud, it is not easy to raise those percentage points.

Five hundred students are contained within one

SOUNDS OF THE STRINGS



JINETTE GARCIA/THE BEACON

Artist-in-Residence Marcia Littley plays violin with the Amernet String Quartet on Tuesday, Feb. 3. **see School of Music, pg.5.**

percentage point and, according to her, a lot of strategic planning must be done for goals like this to be achieved.

Rosenberg also drew attention for receiving the votes for the University's appropriation of the 64 acres of the fairgrounds.

According to Rosenberg, this was something that took a lot of effort and campaigning, but he is very proud and excited about the results.

Calatayud is also excited

about this expansion.

"We have to sit down at the table before we can even eat, and this [expansion] is kind of us sitting down at the table," Calatayud said. "We are not going to leave until we've eaten."

Rosenberg was commended by many for this self-evaluation presentation.

According to Maury, Moteza Hosseini, the chair of the Florida Board of Governors, found the presentation to be

fairly impressive.

"I had a nice lengthy discussion with the chair [of the BOG] and he is very happy with the performance of the president and the institution," Maury said. "He was very impressed with the way we presented it to him, in fact, his words were, 'I'm going to take this one as a sample to the governor so we can have all the presidents in the university system evaluate the same way.'"

New technology simplifies faculty-advisor communication

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A new feature has been added to the PantherSoft Faculty Center that will facilitate communication between faculty and academic advisors.

The program aims to allow faculty members to contact advisors as a form of early intervention for students who are identified as struggling in certain courses.

According to Dr. Douglas L. Robertson, dean of undergraduate education, the Early Alert feature is part of the University's Graduate Success Initiative, a specific brand of academic intervention to help students succeed.

Consisting of four main objectives, the Initiative involves helping incoming students identify a major early, providing a clear path to help students meet the requirements for the major in question, providing feedback about progress toward the academic goal and removing barriers on the road to graduation.

While the feature is now available for use by professors teaching all types of undergraduate courses, an early alert system was already in existence for a number of specific courses.

The alert system built upon one that had already been developed as part of the Title V grant with the college algebra course.

The Title V grant, generated by the government, was received specifically to improve student success in college algebra, as the course had a high predicting value of whether the student enrolled would graduate on time or not.

Some time after the University received the grant, it was discovered that if a student failed college algebra, then he or she would be 75 percent

less likely to graduate on time.

The system was later expanded to include other sets of courses: first year experience and english composition courses.

The system was then tested for gateway courses.

Among the were gateway courses, those that go toward meeting the University Core Curriculum requirements and are common prerequisites for other classes, such as college algebra, finite math, general biology and principles of macroeconomics, among others.

“Every school should have this type of technology. This makes it a lot easier, more streamlined, for a professor to lead students to make the right decisions when they are struggling in class.”

long way to help ensure student success, faculty participation is optional.

Rather than wait until the midterm or final examinations for information on the students' progress to be gathered, Robertson believes that faculty members should be proactive in providing early progress reports of students in order to better identify which ones should be contacted by advisors.

Ideally, the alert should be made within the first three to four weeks of the semester, according to Robertson.

Abel Tomlin
Junior
Mechanical Engineering

Since the software already existed, it just needed to be modified to fit other course groups.

One of the intended purposes of the Early Alert system is to provide a manner of intervening early in the academic career of a student that a professor deems to be at risk for failing.

Professors using the feature will be able to navigate between different columns of academic progress, such as attendance and assignment completion.

Robertson believes that faculty members are just as responsible as students.

He admits that although the feature will go a

In order to develop the program, the department of Undergraduate Education, along with different members of the University community, such as those within the College of Arts and Sciences, where all of the Title V gateway courses are housed, met with University technology services.

The program took less than two months to finalize, and it went live on Jan. 20.

While all students can walk in to speak with an advisor in regards to their academic progress, each student is assigned a specific advisor at the moment of enrollment into a specific major.

This policy, however, was not employed until

2012, Robertson said.

At present, the University boasts an advisor-to-student ratio of around 400-to-one, a significant drop from a previous ratio of around 1000-to-one, all due to the University's efforts of hiring more advisors to serve the student population. Some students believe that the program doesn't hold much promise.

Even if an advisor notified of a student's at-risk performance contacts a student, the decision of whether or not to meet with the advisor rests with the student.

"I don't think it'll do much," said Laura Fernandez, a junior architecture major. "It's likely that a student will be called in to speak with [his or her] advisor and they will just ignore the advisor's request."

Robertson admits that while advisors have many ways of reaching out to students, such as through text messages, emails and phone calls, they can only do so much to ensure that a student pays them a visit to discuss their progress.

There is a certain point at which a student's sense of responsibility must kick in.

Other students, however, actually believe the Early Alert feature will yield positive effects.

"Every school should have this type of technology," said Abel Tomlin, a junior mechanical engineering major. "This makes it a lot easier, more streamlined, for a professor to lead students to make the right decisions when they are struggling in class."

Robertson says that the current step is to educate faculty members about this feature available to them, to encourage them to make active use of it.

SEE TECHNOLOGY, PAGE 2

Reducing our footprint by going local

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Since the 1970s there have been a lot of people who turn to vegetarianism as a way to reduce their negative effects on nature, the general pain and gloom of life for livestock and the guilt that comes from knowing that, when it comes down to it, steak is animal muscle.

There are two types of people who live this way. The first and largest group will eat fish and parts of harvested animals without killing them. Vegans, however, won't eat any sort of animal product; they rely solely on first-tier energy producers like plants.

Let's keep in mind the benefits of the vegetarian lifestyle.

Animals suffer in captivity. While the extent of this suffering can't really be measured empirically, life is rough for livestock. Also, according to the EPA, raising these animals creates an environmental impact, mainly from methane created by cattle--yes, cattle farts--that traps much more heat than CO2.

Additionally, agriculture is one of the most destructive human activities. The farmer must clear acres of wild land to make space for the produce that the farmer will plant. Habitat loss

is arguably the biggest threat to animal species worldwide, except perhaps climate change. The problem is that it takes more land to grow the equivalent of a cow's worth of protein than the space that such a cow would take up.

However, this is not the true genocide. Mice are exterminated by the millions through agriculture. There is rat poison in the grain silos that store grain and there are mice that die from field pesticides.

A study from Australia (the only place where such research exists) found that there are 500 to 1,000 mice per hectare of farmland and 80 percent of them are killed. If the land used for agriculture accounted for just 1 percent of Australia's land mass it would be 7,686,850 hectares of land, so 2.5-6 billion mice die every year due to agriculture in that country alone.

If everyone became a vegetarian, these numbers would skyrocket.

Even though pesticides and fertilizers are mostly made from petrochemicals, the organic alternative is also damaging to the environment.

While organic farmers do less damage to the soil that they cultivate, the runoff of excess fertilizers causes putrefaction in nearby bodies of water. The Gulf of Mexico is a perfect example, most of which has slowly died due to the fertilizers that find their way into the

Mississippi River. If cow excrement creates putrifaction around cattle pens it's logical to expect that effect would be similar if the farmer sprinkled the manure on their produce. The same goes for pesticides, even organic farmers use natural pesticides which still kill the insects, spiders and mice.

In terms of greenhouse gasses, agriculture is not necessarily a good practice. The chemicals used in non-organic agriculture are mostly petroleum derivatives.

While organic produce reduces the use of those chemicals, organic foods make up a small portion of agriculture and are expensive enough to keep many people from being able to buy them. All agriculture relies on heavy vehicles such as trucks and tractors and also uses up a lot of water.

The only way to reduce animal suffering is by changing our behaviour as consumers, which is exactly what vegetarians are doing. However, turning everyone into a vegetarian doesn't sound feasible and some ways of raising livestock are much more humane than others.

While the end result of killing the animal will not change, the life of the animal could be much less miserable. There should probably be a law protecting the rights of livestock,

but considering that animals aren't entitled to rights according to the law and that the cattle industry is very rich and profitable,

I wouldn't bet my savings on that happening soon.

My recommendation: Buy local! To me this is the most important step to take. Chickens have a shorter lifespan, require less space to raise and are much healthier sources of protein than cows and pigs.

Farm raised fish don't deplete the natural fish populations and recent breakthroughs in technology allow the fish farms to be in the open sea--as opposed to bays and pools which is the current method--which greatly reduces the problem caused by fish waste.

If you do chose to eat red meat, the least destructive form of doing that is by eating free range cows -- cattle raised in pastures eating grass.

Lastly, if you can afford it, eat organic. The ideal way to reduce your footprint -- for those who have time -- is to have a small vegetable garden to reduce your dependence on agricultural produce.

These foods require no transportation and the gardener controls exactly what goes into the food, but not all of us can afford the spare time.

Abortion should be a woman's option

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No woman should have to be held accountable for the life of a child she did not agree to make due to rape and certain situations involving incest. The reasons that support this stance in society should be brought to light. While there are many women who hope to become mothers at some point in their lives, it is not the ultimate goal for all.

Being in a situation involving rape makes a woman vulnerable firsthand. It adds on to another state of vulnerability the woman would be placed in by a pregnancy that resulted from it. It is not fair that a woman is forced to work around and change her life plans because she has to raise an unplanned child. The fact that her body is the one responsible for the development of a child should give her the right to decide what comes out of it. It is important to

realize that not only would the life of the woman who gave birth be impacted by this, but the child's life as well.

There has been an estimation of 25,000 pregnancies resulted from rape, according to Dr. James Trussell and Dr. Felicia H. Stewart's studies published on the American Journal of Preventive Medicine website. Even though this makes up a small portion of the nation's three million pregnancies in total, the statistics are still very high.

Although rape survivors are the victims, the children also get negatively impacted. It is not fair that a child should undergo a life of neglect from a parent that had no intention of keeping them. It makes it fair to understand that not only is the mother's well-being necessary, but also that of her offspring.

To add on to this, it is unfortunate that a child would have to live a life without knowing who their father is because of rape, and the reality that there are times not all rapists are able to be exposed. An example of this would be a woman being catcalled

on the streets followed by sexual harassment which leads to rape from a stranger. It's another reason that supports why abortion is a better logical decision.

However, this same notion of abortion is relevant towards the connection it has with situations involving incest. Unlike certain situations where a child is unfamiliar with their father because they were born out of rape, it is equally unfair that a child conceived out of incest would have to live a life knowing that their father is also their brother, or any double familial role that they are born in. Abortion may be a crucial decision, but it could also be the fairest outlet that strays from shame within a family, and most importantly one that is forbidden by law. It is necessary to remember that the child did not ask to be born in the first place.

Based upon the circumstances of the time when the woman was impregnated, she should be able to determine whether or not having a child would free her from her victimization, or hold her back. At the end of the day, it is up to her, not us.

FRANK AND IRENE: Payday



SAMUEL PRITCHARD-TORRES/THE BEACON

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Have something on your mind? Send your thoughts (400 words maximum) to opinion@fiusm.com or drop by our offices at either GC 210 or WUC 124. With your letter, be sure to include your name, major, year, and copy of your student ID. The Beacon will only run one letter a month from any individual.

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Editorials are the unified voice of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor in chief, management, and the editors of each of the five sections. The Beacon welcomes any letters regarding or in response to its editorials. Send them to opinion@fiusm.com.

SOUND OF MUSIC



SCHOOL OF MUSIC, PAGE 1: FIU’s Ensemble-in-Residence, the Amernet String Quartet, performs alongside guest Celloist Christopher Rex (third from the left).



Guest violinist Sharon Wei also joined the Amernet String Quartet who performed pieces composed by Ludwig van Beethoven and Karl Goldmark.

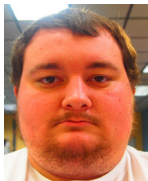


ALL PHOTOS BY JINETTE GARCIA/THE BEACON

Senior Instructor and Artist-in-Residence Micheal Klotz plays viola during the Feb.3, performance.

Highest ranked men’s bathrooms at MMC

TOP TRES



RHYS WILLIAMS

Have to “go” somewhere on campus? I can speak for the guys on this when I say that a nice bathroom is a home away from home sometimes. I have been, at some point or another during my tenure at FIU, to a bathroom in most of the buildings here.

I am not counting bathrooms in the housing buildings. That is the closest “at home” bathroom available for some students but I am solely counting buildings that every student has access to.

A good bathroom should be comforting, clean and not full - which is sometimes the most important aspect. The following are my top three men’s bathrooms at the University.

No.3

The third best men’s room on campus has to go to the location on the second floor of the Ernest R. Graham Center that is near the Student Government Association office.

The reason this location is up there is that, in my history of being in GC and needing to use them, it is never really full. Yes, it may not always be the cleanest, but it is good when the need comes. It is, however, the best bathroom in arguably the most crowded building on campus.

No.2

This one may have the most backlash out of any of my picks, but my second highest rated men’s restroom is the one at the U.S. Century Bank Arena. Out of the many sets of restrooms

here, the set I find the best are in the corner between the hallway with classrooms near the student entrance and the back hall with the racquetball courts.

They are usually clean and always empty. The worst part is that the temperature is a little high because there are no windows around the staircase to the outside world directly across from them.

No.1

The penthouse suite of FIU may not be in the tallest building, but it houses the top dog of the University in President Mark B. Rosenberg. That is the office of the president and several other members of the administration for the University.

Near the hallway that leads you past the

office of the board of trustees, heading down to the office of the president, is a set of bathrooms. These are my top bathrooms for the University on the men’s side.

They are clean a majority of the time, and I have had a class in Primera Casa every semester since I have been at FIU. I usually take the elevator ride up a couple seconds to the fifth floor to use these facilities if I am in the building or area and feel the need to “go.” The bathrooms are also always filled with the necessities of toilet paper, hand soap and paper towels.

Top Tres is done for every Friday issue of The Beacon and on fiusm.com. The view of the Top Tres do not represent the views of FIU Student Media. If you wish to suggest an FIU “top three” topic for Rhys Williams, send him an email at rhys.williams@fiusm.com.

‘Appropriate Behavior’ somehow both ‘ugly and beautiful’

PRIDE GUIDE



CHRISTIAN PORTILLA

Desiree Akhavan is the producer, writer and protagonist for the new film “Appropriate Behavior” which opened in select theaters on Jan. 16. Bi-sexual, Iranian, Early Twenties Brooklynite and unemployed graduate are the ingredients for Akhavan’s breakout film.

The film is like watching your best friend’s post-breakup and witnessing the re-bound stage: petty, ugly and beautiful all at the same time. In the film, Shirin (Akhavan) has recently broke up with her girlfriend, Maxine, played by Canadian actress Rebecca Henderson.

In one scene, Shirin is in her new apartment with her parents and over-achieving brother. As they are helping

her organize her belongings, they awkwardly mention how she has never had a boyfriend.

In another scene, her brother questions what she will do with her master’s in journalism. I’m pretty sure I had pit stains from how nervous I got when I heard this. I’m currently working on my bachelor’s in journalism.

As the films progressed, I couldn’t help but identify with Shirin’s character because anyone can relate to a crappy breakup with leftover messy emotions (social media stalking included.)

Topics such as coming out, sexual orientation, in-denial parents and identity issues are just some addressed in the movie. The real treat for audiences is that Shirin embraces her bi-sexuality. I rarely see shows or films represent bi-sexual orientation.

For the most part, I feel like the “b” in LGBT is underrepresented.

I’ve always heard that bi-sexuals are confused and don’t know what they want. Shirin explains she is bi-sexual because although she is attracted to girls, she was equally into the guys she had once dated. The movie also showed how she dated both genders without making her seem desperate. She is just a young woman exploring her sexuality.

I would recommend anyone to watch this film. LGBT or not, the film has such a broad spectrum from family issues to sexual exploration, and the witty humor is a great touch.

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A sit down with popular local DJ Heron

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In anticipation of DillaWeekend, FIUSM had a chance to sit down and talk with DJ Heron.

DJ Heron is hosting and organizing DillaWeekend, which started on

Thursday, Feb. 5 and will go on until Sunday, Feb. 8.

DJ Heron, who are you?

Heron: I’m just a Miami DJ. I do a lot of parties down here in Miami, and I have a lot of fun doing them.

You’re not just a DJ though. Somewhere along the line, you decided, “We’re lacking something.” What was it?

Heron: Nobody was doing regular club shows trying to bring individual artists like Raekwon, Black Rob, or any shows like that... Plus, my genre, I really don’t cater to the new style of hip-hop that’s out there now. I really play that old boom-bap stuff... and I was just like “You know what? Let me just do what me and my boys want to see and see how it goes from there.”

Around what year?

Heron: Around two years ago. We started with Raekwon first.

So it was Raekwon [first], and from there, things just fell into place?

Heron: Everything just fell into place and people saw there was a market down here. Sponsors came out... That’s where it all took off.

How did that lead to Dillafest?

Heron: Mrs. Yancey [J Dilla’s mother] reached out to me in late November and father RJ, [who] is Young RJ’s father from Slum Village, Mr. Rice, he reached me up also, and they were looking for me because they wanted to do Dilla Day in Miami... I gave them the idea... and I was like “Well, Mrs Yancey, Mr. Rice, I think instead of just doing a J Dilla day, we should do a J Dilla weekend.”

If you’re coming from Japan, or coming from England, you don’t want to just come to Miami for one day.

So why Miami? Why not, for example, Atlanta? Is it because they saw there was a track record there in the previous two years?

Heron: It’s because of the weather. Atlanta’s cold in February also.

Why does Miami have a J Dilla weekend whereas Los Angeles only have a day, and is three times the size of the Miami metro area?

Heron: I guess they didn’t have somebody like me to come up with the concept.

Friday, Feb. 6 is at The Stage, it’s Talib Kweli and Black Milk, right?

Heron: Correct... It’s a performance from Talib Kweli, and it’s a drum machine and video performance from Black Milk, plus there’s also a performance from Da Vinci from Miami Beat Wave, and also there’s a performance from Dynas...

probably the only one in Miami that has a song with J Dilla called “The Apartment.”

It’s an official song. Klassik is DJ’ing, so is DJ Sharpshoot and I’ll be DJ’ing also. Tony Touch too.

Saturday the seventh is probably the meat of the [weekend], right? It’s shaping up to be an all day thing.

Heron: Yeah. It starts at 2 p.m. It starts with the Dunk Xchange first. Then we have Joey Bada\$\$, Mobb Deep, the Soulection barbeque with Esta and Starro, Chuck Strangers, Camp Lo, and I think we just added Kaytranada.

That’s just the day?

Heron: Yeah. That’s just the daytime. That’s just from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. at night. I mean, by 9 p.m. it’s gonna be pretty much done.

Then at night-time at The Stage we got Slum Village and Pete Rock, right?

Heron: Right.

Dead Prez is slated for Sunday?

Heron: Not only that, we just added a lot more to Sunday. We added a performance from Termanology, a performance from Wreckonize from ¡MAYDAY!... Statik Selektah is going to do a DJ set.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS JACOB SCHERE

DJ Heron, a local DJ is helping to host DillaWeekend happening Feb. 5-8

MIAMI’S MUSIC
DillaWeekend Lineup

FRIDAY, FEB. 6 AT THE STAGE
TALIB KWELI BLACK MILK

SATURDAY, FEB. 7 AT LMNT
JOEY BADA\$\$ MOBB DEEP DILLA BIRTHDAY BBQ WITH ESTA AND STARRO CHUCK STRANGERS CAMP LO KAYTRANADA DILLAN DUNK XCHANGE

SATURDAY, FEB. 7 AT THE STAGE
SLUM VILLAGE PETE ROCK

SUNDAY, FEB. 8 AT THE STAGE
“MAKE EM NV” BEAT BATTLE DEAD PREZ

SOCCER



MARIA SOLEDAD LORENZINO/THE BEACON

Executive Director of Sports and Entertainment Pete Garcia spoke with local media outlets at a press conference on Tuesday, Feb. 3. Garcia presented the university as a “solution center” for Miami Beckham United.

University to possibly house Miami Beckham United as temporary option

MARIA SOLEDAD LORENZINO
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The University could be the temporary home of David Beckham’s major league soccer team.

Executive Director of Sports and Entertainment Pete Garcia held a press conference on Tuesday, Feb. 3, to announce the University’s bid as the short-term playing field for the proposed MLS team.

Garcia held his press conference after a commission meeting Tuesday morning, where commissioners asked Mayor Carlos Gimenez to propose the Alfonso

Field at FIU Stadium to Beckham’s group, Miami Beckham United.

“This town deserves major league soccer, and whatever we can do to facilitate that and get a soccer team earlier, we’re willing to do,” Garcia said. “As long as it’s a win-win for everybody.”

Garcia said that the team would be charged rent, and housing the MLS team would not cut into University athletics costs.

“It’ll enhance it. If we ever do this, we’re talking about being a temporary solution center,” he said. “Financially, it’ll be a huge benefit to athletics.”

David Beckham, an English native and international soccer star, announced he would push for a

MLS team in Miami last year, on Feb. 4, 2014.

However, several stadium site rejections from Miami-Dade County commissioners caused Miami Beckham United to go silent until now.

Miami Beckham United views this as a positive step but, according to the Miami Herald, the group won’t commit to a temporary venue yet.

Garcia hopes the University’s size and reputation will help it run against Marlin’s Park and Sun Life Stadium, two other contenders for the temporary MLS home.

“This is the fourth largest university in the nation and we are an international university. And what more can represent that than Beckham’s team?”

FOOTBALL

2015 Conference USA football schedule announced

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After weeks of speculation over how the final schedule would look, Conference USA has finally unveiled their official football schedule for the 2015 season.

When it was announced that the University of Alabama at Birmingham was no longer carrying a football team, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte’s football team would be making the jump to Division 1 and joining C-USA, there were many different potential scenarios drawn up as to how the conference would align the divisions.

The final alignment has the Conference split into two divisions, East and West, made up of seven and six teams respectively. FIU will be competing in the East Division along with Charlotte, Florida Atlantic University, Marshall University, Middle Tennessee State

University, Old Dominion University, and Western Kentucky University. The West will consist of Louisiana Tech University, University of North Texas, Rice University, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Texas at El Paso, and University of Texas at San Antonio.

Teams from the West will play every team in their division, and have three additional conference games against teams from the East Division. Three teams from the East Division play everyone in their division and have two crossover games with teams from the West. The other four teams in the East will play five games against division opponents and two crossover games.

Unlike last season (in which FIU opened the season with four consecutive home games), four of the first five games for the Panthers in 2015 will be on the road.

FIU opens their season on Saturday, Sept. 5, against in-state rival University of Central

Florida. The last time these two teams met, UCF shut out FIU 38-0 in Miami.

The Panthers will then travel to Bloomington, IN to take on the Indiana University Hoosiers. FIU will return to Miami for their home opener a week later, facing off with Football Championship Series opponent North Carolina Central University.

On Saturday, Sept. 26, the Panthers will open C-USA play with a trip to Joe Aillet Stadium to take on the Zaxby’s Heart of Dallas Bowl champion Louisiana Tech Bulldogs. They play one more non-conference game against the University of Massachusetts Amherst on Saturday, Oct. 3, and the rest of the season consists of solely C-USA games.

UTEP will visit Ocean Bank Field at FIU Stadium on Saturday, Oct. 10, which will be the first conference home game for FIU in 2015. One week later, FIU will travel to Middle Tennessee attempting to defeat the Blue Raiders for the second season in a row,

before traveling back to Miami to face the Monarchs of Old Dominion.

On Halloween, the Panthers will travel to Boca Raton to face their biggest rival, the Owls of FAU. FAU will be looking to avenge their 38-10 loss at the hands of the Panthers from the 2014 season.

FIU will return home the following week to play the Charlotte 49ers, marking the first time the Panthers will face their new C-USA opponent. Saturday, Nov. 14, may prove to be FIU’s toughest day of the season, going on the road to face Marshall, the reigning conference and Boca Raton Bowl champions. FIU will close out the season on Saturday, Nov. 21, with a home game against Western Kentucky.

The C-USA Championship will feature the winners of the East and West Divisions on Friday, Dec. 11. This game will be televised nationally on either ESPN or ESPN 2. The official television schedule for the conference will be announced on a later date.

FOOTBALL

National Signing Day adds 18 new Panthers

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Starting Wednesday morning, high school athletes started signing their letters and officially joining the universities they plan to call home.

National Signing Day took place on Feb.4, and FIU solidified their 2015 recruiting class.

First to sign with the Panthers Wednesday was Collin Olsen, a four year letterman running back from Spruce Creek High School. A few hours and 17 commits later, First-Team All-Dade County cornerback Olin Cushion III from Miami Central High school was FIU's last signee.

Head Coach Ron Turner was excited about this signing class

said the group of athletes brought in can be key in helping the Panthers for the next four years.

"We put together a very good recruiting class," Turner said. "We addressed our roster's depth, and helped get players that we think will have an immediate impact."

When asked which players may see significant playing time early on in their careers, Turner said that the players at skill positions will have a great chance to contribute early on. He specifically mentioned early enrollee wide receiver Anthony Jones from Miami Central High School.

"The first one that comes to mind is Anthony Jones," Turner said. "He's a tremendous player. You watch the film, and you see him making play after play after

play. Very talented guy, and he's here in the spring so that'll help him a lot as well."

Another player who enrolled early is Quarterback Christian Alexander from Lakeland Christian High School. Turner spoke highly of both him and the other quarterback commit from the 2015 class, Maurice Alexander from Booker T. Washington High School, and hinted at a possible quarterback competition during the offseason.

"I'm really excited about the two quarterbacks, Christian Alexander and Maurice Alexander," Turner said. "I think they are both very good quarterbacks, and they're going to come in and compete right away. That's something that Alex [McGough] knows, as he came

in last year and competed for the starting job.

I think both Alexanders have something special, ability-wise, leadership-wise, and character-wise, they have what you're looking for from a QB."

The Panthers had an impressive signing class but they did lose out on players as well.

The most notable decommitment came when Safety Ocie Rose, one of FIU's highest rated defensive commits, decided to sign with Conference USA rival Florida Atlantic University.

Two weeks prior, former FIU offensive lineman commit Richard Williams flipped his commitment over to the Owls.

Turner discussed the importance of having players sign who want to be part of the

university.

"[We] want guys who want to be here and believe in what we're doing," Turner said.

Including the three early enrollees and previously gray shirted cornerback Tyree Johnson and preferred walk-on kicker/punter Stone Wilson, the Panthers 2015 class sits at 23 players. Turner placed emphasis on recruiting in-state talent, and the team accomplished just that. 21 of the 22 players they signed are from Florida, nine out of Miami-Dade County.

Breaking down the class by position, there are two quarterbacks, two running backs, four wide receivers, one tight end, three offensive linemen, four defensive linemen, one Linebacker, five defensive backs.

Tem Lukabu added to coaching staff to lead linebackers in 2015

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Head Coach Ron Turner announced on Tuesday, Feb. 3, that Tem Lukabu has been hired as the new linebackers coach. He will replace



TEM LUKABU

Rob Harley, who left to fill the same position at the University of Pittsburgh in January.

"Tem is a bright, young defensive coach, who was a key part of our staff at Rutgers and at Tampa Bay," said former NFL Head Coach Greg

Schiano. "He is a great fit for FIU and Head Coach Ron Turner."

Lukabu served under Schiano for two years with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He was in charge of the defensive line in 2012 and the linebackers in 2013. He went on to coach the outside linebackers at Colgate University in 2014 before arriving at FIU.

"I'm excited to be a part of the FIU coaching staff," Lukabu said. "I'm very appreciative of the opportunity to work with Coach Turner. He is a very respected coach and has a great track record. I also have a lot of respect for the guys on his staff. It's a very accomplished group with a lot of experience."

The University's newest

coach spent three years starting as linebacker for the Colgate Raiders. In this span, Lukabu's team won back-to-back Patriot League titles. He also earned two conference Defensive Player of the Year awards while playing at Colgate.

"Coach Lukabu is a tremendous teacher," Turner said. "He's a great

communicator. I was with him in Tampa and had a chance to watch him in action. He has a very good work ethic and is a man of high character and integrity. He's a great family man and I'm excited to have him join our staff. Tem is a very intelligent, hard-working individual and will bring a lot to the table."

Tis the season of snubbing for the NFL

RHYS' PIECE



RHYS WILLIAMS

This past weekend was big for football. It had not only the biggest game of each football season-- Super Bowl XLIX--but also the fourth annual National Football League Honors Award show.

This is where the regular season awards were given, such as the defensive player of the year, the offensive and defensive rookies of the year, the comeback player of the year and the Walter Payton Award winner, among others. The other important announcement was the revealing of the members for the 2015 Pro Football Hall of Fame.

I think that there were definitely some award snubs from this past weekend, along with some obvious on point selections.

Let me start with the Most Valuable Player award from the Super Bowl. Tom Brady, the quarterback of the New England Patriots, Super Bowl XLIX champions - which is still sour on the tongue - won MVP on 37-50 passing with four touchdowns, two interceptions and 328 passing yards. He also finished the game with negative three rushing yards.

This, to me, does not warrant being awarded MVP for the biggest game of the season. He may have had the four total touchdowns but those interceptions, which I believe led to points for the Seattle Seahawks, should be taken into account.

I would have given the award to Julian Edelman, the wide receiver of the Patriots. Even though he needed Brady to throw him the ball, he had nine receptions for 109 yards and a touchdown, as well as a

single rushing attempt for seven yards. Wide receivers have a decent amount of their yardage after the catch is made, and that is not affected by the quarterback's play.

I am not going to dive deep into the topic of the overall Super Bowl, but I think that the offensive play choice at the end was not right. Seahawks' Marshawn Lynch was in the discussion for the offensive player of the year award as a running back and you don't hand him the ball from the 1-yard line with that much on the line in the fourth quarter?

“

If a defensive player has no chance of winning, such as J.J. Watt should have this season - even with having offensive statistics - then the award should be separated and an overall MVP should be crowned.

”

That perplexes me.

Working back to the NFL Honors Award show, which took place on Saturday, Jan. 31, there were a couple awards given that could not have been argued.

Some of these were the defensive player of the year which went to Houston Texans' monster defensive end J.J. Watt, and the

offensive rookie of the year going to New York Giants' phenomenon Odell Beckham Jr. However, a few of the other big awards I definitely did not agree with.

The biggest part is that, at this point, there needs to be a separate award for the offensive player of the year and the MVP of the regular season.

If a defensive player has no chance at winning, such as J.J. Watt should have this season - even with having offensive statistics - then the award should be separated and an overall MVP should be awarded.

My vote for the MVP of the 2014-2015 NFL season was J.J. Watt.

The comeback player of the year award went to Rob Gronkowski.

This one is a personal vendetta, but I think it should have gone to the Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Jeremy Maclin. Gronkowski played in seven games during the 2013-2014 season at which point he was injured. Maclin missed the entirety of 2013 with a leg injury.

The following men were announced as the inductees for the 2015 Pro Football Hall of Fame class: Junior Seau, Tim Brown, Jerome Bettis, Charles Haley, Will Shields, Bill Polian, Ron Wolf and Mick Tingelhoff. They will forever be enshrined in Canton, Ohio.

There are several former players and coaches who I believe were snubbed from that list.

They include former St. Louis Rams and Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kurt Warner, former coaches Tony Dungy and Jimmy Johnson, former Indianapolis Colts wide receiver Marvin Harrison and former

Tampa Bay Buccaneers strong safety John Lynch.

In my belief these men deserve to be in Canton in the next few years, but, I think that they should be there now.

Rhys' Piece is a weekly column on both FIU and National sports news that goes on. The views shown by Rhys' Piece are not necessarily the views of The Beacon, its Editorial Board or FIU Student Media. Check back every Friday for the latest edition of Rhys' Piece and email rhys.williams@fiusm if you have a topic that you would like to suggest.

KEY 2015 NFL AWARDS

2015 Comeback Player of the Year

Winner: Rob Gronkowski
My vote: Jeremy Maclin

2015 Super Bowl MVP

Winner: Tom Brady
My vote: Julian Edelman

2015 NFL MVP

Winner: Aaron Rodgers
My vote: J.J. Watt

2015 Pro Football Hall of Fame Inductees

Actual: Junior Seau, Tim Brown, Jerome Bettis, Charles Haley, Will Shields, Bill Polian, Ron Wolf and Mick Tingelhoff
My additions: Kurt Warner, Tony Dungy, Marvin Harrison, Jimmy Johnson and John Lynch

MAST@FIU receives national award in STEM

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Just less than two years since its grand opening in 2013 as the only four-year high school on a university campus in Miami-Dade County, MAST @ FIU has been nationally recognized.

Located in the University's Biscayne Bay Campus, the high school centers its curriculum on science, technology, engineering and mathematics to provide students with a leading edge in the rigorous fields.

On Jan. 23, MAST @ FIU received the 2015 STEM Excellence Award at the 35th Annual Florida Education Technology Conference in

principal Matthew Welker. "I waited in with great interest regarding the announcement as to whether or not we were anywhere in the running," he said.

Finalists in the high school division also included Chartiers Valley High School from Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, and Park City High School from Park City, Utah. According to Welker, the award was due to a successful partnership between M-DCPS and FIU.

The faculty involvement of the University's School of Environment, Arts and Society enriches the academy's academic experience, as well as student access to university resources such as internships, lectures and career exploration, said Welker.

School of Journalism and Mass Communication and their Eyes on the Rise initiative. The project was led by journalism professor Robert 'Ted' Gutsche thanks to a \$35,000 grant award.

According to Gutsche, Eyes on the Rise is to raise awareness and educate South Florida communities about the threats of sea level rise, as well as to create possible solutions for future sustainability. Students from environmental and technology professors Martin Roch and John Zoeller, as well as journalism professor Arleen Senas, were involved in the project.

"The minds that are over there in those classrooms -- there's just something that draws you in to want to work with these students and the faculty -- there's an energy in there," Gutsche said.

"This award, at least to me, is an indication of the real passion of faculty and staff of MAST, as well as the pure brilliance of the students there," he said.

Last year in October, over 50 hand-selected students from the school gathered at Miami Beach during King Tides Day when ocean tides are the highest around the world. This has led to massive floodings in South Florida.

Students built sensors called Coqui, that test water salinity. With the buzzing sensors, they participated in the public data collection of scientific information to investigate the effects of king tide.

"We had them all through Miami Beach -- they were collecting samples, little water samples, to see what were the effects of the tides, of the water



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTHEW WELKER

MAST @ FIU students used Coqui sensors, which they constructed, to measure the conductivity of seawater during last year's October King Tide in Miami Beach, Florida.

coming up on the streets," Roch said.

"They were involved, their voices were being heard, they were able to build the sensors, go out in the field... They were responsible for a lot of parts of the whole process, and the kids enjoyed it," he said.

Also, Roch said that MAST @ FIU and the University benefit from each other mutually, not just the academy.

"We always think that the students have the most to gain, but the professors also have access to our students and a potential student body," Roch said.

"[These students] are going to be the future scientists or future leaders... So we want to work with FIU and hopefully it's going to be a partnership that's just going to get bigger and bigger," he said.

“ [These students] are going to be the future scientists or future leaders... So we want to work with FIU and hopefully it's going to be a partnership that's just going to get bigger and bigger.

Martin Roch
Professor
Environmental and Technology

Orlando, Florida. It was the only Florida school to be recognized.

The school was selected from hundreds of high school applicants across the nation that offer a curriculum in STEM. They were evaluated based on their use of interdisciplinary curriculum, collaboration, design, problem solving and overall STEM experiences offered.

"It came as a complete surprise," said the school's

"My vision as the principle of MAST @ FIU is to create the image that [the academy] is the absolute best high school in the nation," Welker said. "What leverages that position and assumption is the ongoing relationship that we have with the University."

According to Welker, the academy's most exemplified work in the STEM fields was their partnership with the

Top swimmers earn Conference USA recognition

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The swimming and diving team could not have ask for a better start to the season. Sitting at 10-0, the Panthers' have not only been one of the elite teams in Conference USA, but the nation as well. They seem to be hitting their stride as their regular season schedule comes to an end.

The team has been lifted by freshmen Silvia Scalia and Rebecca Quesnel. Scalia, a native from Italy, has been swimming for many years. In Italy, she participated in various events including the European Junior Championships, the Milan Trophy, and the Multination Games. She won a gold medal at the 2013 Summer National Youth Championships. Scalia has proven to be a very important aspect of the team.

Quesnel, an Ontario native, is a nationally ranked diver and has competed in the CAMO International Invitational, Canadian Junior Elite Nationals and was named an alternate for Team Ontario in 2013. Quesnel

proves to become an elite diver for the Panthers.

This past week, Scalia and Quesnel were named C-USA Swimmer and Diver of the Week, respectively.

This was Scalia's fifth Swimmer of the Week award, setting a C-USA record. Quesnel has collected six Diver of the Week awards this season, becoming the fourth diver in C-USA history to achieve such a feat. Even more impressive is the fact that both of these athletes are only freshmen.

They accomplished this by putting up impressive performances against instate rivals Florida Atlantic University and the University of Miami.

On Friday, Jan. 30, Scalia participated and won in three events, two of which included the 200 medley relay and the 200 freestyle events against FAU. Scalia and her teammates would go on to defeat the Owls in both events in convincing fashion.

Quesnel scored a 293.02 in the one-meter dive, which was good for first place. Quesnel took second place in the three-meter dive with a score of 293.02 as well. This was good enough to defeat the Owls and record their ninth

win of the season.

On Saturday, Jan. 31, Scalia continued to show her dominance as she faced UM. Scalia had a total of four wins, three individual and one medley.

As always, she was a threat in the backstroke event as she won the 100 and 200 events. She clocked in at 55.56 in the 100 and 2:00.23 in the 200.

Scalia's final individual win of the day was in the 200 IM, where she posted a time of 2:04.89. The Panthers would sneak by the Hurricanes 150-149.

After impressive performances from Scalia and Quesnel this past weekend, the Panthers get to rest until the C-USA Championships on Wednesday, Feb. 18, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Being a four day tournament, the C-USA Championships will pose as the biggest threat the Panthers have faced this season.

Scalia and Quesnel will need to bring out their best performances in order for the Panthers to succeed against the tough competition.

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