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Panel to have discussion on Cuba at the University

ADRIAN SUAREZ AVILA
News Director
adrian.suarezavila@fiusm.com

Martin Palouš spent a portion of his life living in a totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia under Gustáv Husák, which collapsed in 1989.

Palouš, the former Czech ambassador to the United States, ex-Permanent Representative to the United Nations for the Czech Republic and director of the Václav Havel Initiative for Human Rights & Diplomacy at the University, admits that the transitional phase of his country in 1989 is similar to the situation that several Cubans may find themselves in following President Barack Obama's declaration last December to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

In light of this declaration, the Václav Havel Initiative for Human Rights & Diplomacy will be hosting a panel discussion on the future of the island and its ties with the United States and the European Union.

The event, titled, "Cuba and the World in 2015 Between the Past and the Future," will examine the nation's place in the international realm at the moment and its future.

The panel will host four distinguished scholars who will examine the debate surrounding the new diplomatic ties.

The panelists are Alexis Jardines, the Perez Bengochea scholar in residence for the Václav Havel Initiative who will speak on Fidel Castro's legacy and Raul Castro's reforms; Carlos Alberto Montaner, a journalist and author who will lecture on the future of U.S.-Cuba relations; Frank Mora, director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center will speak about the regional relationships of Cuba; and Palouš, who will moderate the panel and speak on the opportunities and challenges of the bilateral treaty between Cuba and the European Union.

Palouš admitted that President Obama's executive order regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba is not enough to ensure that change will happen. He added that he was aware that people stand on one of two sides of the reactionary continuum regarding the issue, as some are in favor and some opposed.

In addition to the United States, the European Union has already started working on establishing ties with the Caribbean nation, according to Palouš.

The bilateral discussions between the EU and Cuba involve looking at the future of the nation in light of the diplomatic ties that have been established. He said that at the heart of these discussions is the issue human rights.

Supervised by the School of International and Public

Affairs, the Václav Havel Center for Human Rights and Democracy addresses, among other things, the need of preserving and researching the upheld values of nations that have experienced oppression by helping these countries come to terms with democracy and human rights, according to the Center's informational packet.

Palouš mentioned that if people want to consider Cuba in the world in 2015 it's important to take a look at the nation's relations with the United States because of the economic aspect concerning the embargo

"The biggest problem with Cuba, I think, now is that, with all due respect, Cuba is not perceived as priority problem number one," Palouš said.

He clarified by saying that not many people on an international realm find the island's politics very interesting, as the situation within the island is not as dangerous as one found in the Middle East or Ukraine at the moment.

Palouš said that, at present, what can be done with Cuba's political situation is to make it more visible for the community to understand the issues. As he put it, the case of democratization is very interesting and what's happening now is an opportunity for people to think about the island's issues more seriously and to see its relevance in the realm of international relations.

While the event is open to the public, it will be good for students who are interested in both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, according to Palouš.

Students shared their thoughts.

"I don't think much will come of the new diplomatic ties," said Hanser Cruz, a junior biology major. "Only the governments, as I see it, will see the benefits."

Others expressed different sentiments.

"The whole issue with these ties between Cuba and the United States needs to be discussed, and this panel will give the community that opportunity," said Yeneliz Hernandez, a sophomore psychology major.

As Palouš considers it, while the Castro brothers want to achieve normalization of diplomatic ties on their own terms, it's important to come up with alternative and realistic ideas.

He believes that Cubans want a peaceful transition and to be able to participate in economic changes in a fair and reasonable way.

For Palouš, the event will allow those in attendance to reflect and pose questions on the topic of Cuba in the world.

The event will take place on Wednesday, March 4 at 6 p.m. in the MARC Pavilion in the Modesto A. Maidique Campus.

"I think Cuban people want democracy," Palouš said.

Reza Aslan engages students with Islam debate



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Dr. Reza Aslan speaks to students at the Beyond Fundamentalism: Islam in the 21st Century lecture on Thursday, Feb. 19. The lecture was co-sponsored the Initiative for Muslim World Studies and the Middle Eastern Program.

SANDEEP VARRY
Contributing Writer
life@fiusm.com

The doors to the School of International and Public Affairs kept opening every few seconds to allow people in.

They were gathering inside SIPA's Room 125 to see Dr. Reza Aslan, a New York Times Best Seller, who spoke to faculty and students about Islam in the 21st Century, last week, in an event sponsored by Ruth K. and Shepard Broad Distinguished Lecture Series.

Recently his interview with media outlet CNN went viral on social media.

In his interview, he slammed Bill Maher and CNN anchors Don Lemon and Alisyn Camerota for their overgeneralization and

mischaracterization of Islam.

Within a minute of his opening, Aslan told attendees that he would avoid the typical lecture format and instead try to engage the audience by treating his lecture like a lively debate.

He spent the first few minutes explaining the concept of Christian nationalism.

It did not take him long before he routed his conversation toward the topic that the majority of the audience expected him to speak on – the role of Islam in today's world.

Aslan defined the concepts of Islamism and Jihadism and showed how these terms can help classify different Islamic states and groups around the world.

While talking about national

SEE ASLAN, PAGE 2

FIU's Model UN team takes home big award

NICOLE MONTERO
Asst. News Director
nicole.montero@fiusm.com

Last weekend, the university's Model United Nations team took home the Outstanding Large Delegation Award at the Harvard National Model United Nations Conference.

The conference, held from Feb. 12 to 15 in Boston, drew teams from over 300 universities and 68 countries from North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia and had over 3,000 students competing.

President Mark B. The university's

Rosenberg took to social media to announce the news.

"BREAKING NEWS: Last night, FIU took the Outstanding Large Delegation Award at the National Model United Nations Conference!!!" he wrote on a post via Facebook. "For the second year, FIU captured [this award] – this time with 7 more points..."

According to Rosenberg's post, the team hopes to continue their success at the University of Chicago Model United Nations Conference in April.

delegation, comprised of 20 students, won 10 awards as a group-surpassing any awards they have received in the past years.

John Stack, executive director of the School of International and Public Affairs and associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, is very proud of the team's victory.

"We are absolutely delighted by our team's success in Boston," Stack said in an FIU News article. "The Harvard National Model United Nations is one of the most prestigious conferences in the circuit. Our students' hard work continues to pay off and we

couldn't be more proud of their success."

The Model United Nations program is part of a political science course within the university.

“

Our students' hard work continues to pay off and we couldn't be more proud of their success.

John Stack
Executive Director
School of International and Public Affairs

It is supported by relations major, and seven the College of Arts and Sciences, School of senior delegates. Gabriela Guadalupe,

a senior political science major and one of the senior delegates on the team, is proud of the team's performance at the conference.

"Being part of the Model UN program has been the highlight of my undergraduate career," she said. "Each year, the competition becomes more fierce, but it's a challenge we have consistently overcome. Winning this award goes to show that our delegates remain some of the best in the country. I couldn't be more proud to be part of that legacy."

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

With Islamic State threatening, Turkey abandons historic tomb in Syria

After months of siege by Islamic State extremists, Turkey early Sunday sent an armored column into Syria to evacuate troops that had been guarding the tomb of Suleyman Shah, the grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire.

The government announced that nearly 600 soldiers were deployed to the site on the Euphrates river late Saturday, traveling in more than 100 tanks and armored personnel carriers, and aided by airborne early warning and control aircraft, military helicopters and drones.

The troops removed Suleyman Shah’s sarcophagus, and then destroyed the mausoleum. Turkey said it would house Suleyman Shah’s remains in the Ashma region, close to the Turkish border, after a new mausoleum is built.

The operation ended what in effect was a long-running hostage crisis, which began when Islamic State forces captured the area surrounding the enclave about a year ago.

In Ukraine, tragic but fake death of heroic nurse who was actually a porn star

The story making the rounds on the Russian version of Facebook (Vkontakte) would be truly horrific, if not for the “truly” bit.

A heroic young ethnic Russian nurse, working the front lines of the war between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russia separatists, was captured by the Ukrainians. After dragging her back to their camp and abusing her (in such a vile manner that the description is no more specific, though it is noted that “they recorded their fun on video”), one of the Ukrainian soldiers grabbed an ax and decapitated her.

The name of the heroic nurse is given on the “Aid for Donbas” page as Sasha Serova, and while they don’t give her age, they do run a photo showing a beautiful dark-haired woman, with surprising, come-hither eyes.

Kerry meets with Iranian foreign minister in another push for nuclear deal

Concerns over what ability to enrich uranium Iran would keep and whether it would maintain its controversial plutonium reactor at Arak remained points of disagreement Sunday as U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, began another round of top-level talks.

Both issues are critical to limiting Iran’s ability to the quick development of a nuclear weapons, and must be resolved if Iran and the world powers it’s negotiating with are to reach a long-term agreement on Iran’s nuclear program that would allow the lifting of economic sanctions.

U.S. and Iranian officials have been engaged in bilateral talks since Friday, and on Sunday the European Union hosted a negotiating session Sunday after the Kerry-Zarif meeting.

Debate on Islam intrigued students

ASLAN, PAGE 1

and transnational agendas, Aslan pointed out the common misconceptions about Islam and its role in creating groups like ISIS and how ISIS has an absence of practical and achievable goals in their transnational agenda.

He said that groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda unite people under an umbrella of common grievances against a common enemy.

He said groups like ISIS are inclined towards transnational Jihadism and that an effective way to combat such groups is to allow and promote Islamism, which is more nationally and rationally rooted.

“Anyone can be a Muslim just by saying that he is and nothing else,” Aslan said, as he explained how the personality of an individual and what one brings into a religion dictates the direction one goes on.

On another note, Aslan joked that the sole purpose of media is to sell Coca-

Cola and Viagra.

In the lecture he mentions there is a small difference between editorial rooms and TV serial production rooms, as both are constantly trying to find out what sells with the public.

“

Anyone can be a Muslim just by saying he is and nothing else.

Reza Aslan
Best Seller
New York Times

”

Aslan believes that pop culture is a more effective tool that can propagate rightful messages about culture than media.

Not all, including Muslims, received Aslan’s comments on Islam warmly. Aslan is sometimes met with strong criticism.

One particular question from the audience stood as a testimony to this.

The student expressed his dissatisfaction with Aslan’s comments on religious leaders and their use of theological manuscripts and ideas.

Aslan responded, with a hint of passive aggressiveness and said that it’s the behavior and not beliefs that are important – a statement that was received with instantaneous applause.

Aslan also made himself available and open to talking with students.

His response to a student who brought up the issue of a transgendered mosque was to come and chat with him after his talk.

Throughout the lecture, Aslan spoke as if his every thought landed on a conveyer belt and went through a series of inspection points before being presented in an eloquent manner.

Overall, Aslan’s visit to FIU intellectually highlighted the common issues with Islam perception today.

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THE BEACON æ

E-BOARD AND PRODUCTION STAFF		CONTACT INFORMATION
<u>EDITOR IN CHIEF</u> JUNETTE REYES	<u>PHOTO EDITOR</u> MARIA LORENZINO	Modesto Maidique Campus: GC 210, Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-5 PM (305) 348-2709 news@fiusm.com
<u>BBC MANAGING EDITOR</u> CAMILA FERNANDEZ	<u>ENTERTAINMENT DIRECTOR</u> AMANDA RABINES	Biscayne Bay Campus: WUC 124, Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-5 PM (305) 919-4722 bbc@fiusm.com
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<u>NEWS DIRECTOR</u> ADRIAN SUAREZ AVILA	<u>RECRUITMENT DIRECTOR</u> MARTIN DI DIEGO	Editor-in-Chief: (305) 348-1580 junette.reyes@fiusm.com
<u>ASST. NEWS DIRECTORS</u> SOFIA GALIANO NICOLE MONTERO	<u>BUSINESS MANAGER</u> CHARLIE GRAU	Advertising: (305) 348-6994 advertising@fiusm.com
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The University Activity and Service (A&S) Fee Committee will be holding public hearings on

Thursday, February 26, 2015 BBC
WUC 155 at 2:00pm

Monday, March 2, 2015 MMC
GC 140 at 2:00pm

The objective of these meetings is to give interested individuals an opportunity to hear arguments pertaining to the proposed increase to the Activity and Service fee. The amended fee will become effective in the Fall 2015 term. Students and other interested individuals are invited to attend these meetings.

Fresh Food Company: Not so fresh at all

SIDHIKA HEMRAJ
Contributing Writer
opinion@fiusm.com

There are many benefits of living on campus. Being able to build a network of friends, participating in school related activities, getting to class on time and especially having a meal plan so you don't have to cook every day are some of the best things offered to us. But what happens when you start going to the cafeteria and there's nothing to eat?

Fresh Food Company is the main cafeteria here at the University and on many days, I overhear complaints from students. Sometimes going to the cafeteria is pointless as there is nothing to suffice the hunger of a student after a long day.

If the cafeteria is closing at 11 p.m., staff start closing at 9 p.m. They start packing away food trays, cleaning up tables and closing down stations. This minimizes the options left for students to eat.

Since there is no food at the stations, hungry, irritated people gravitate towards the salad bar in hopes of creating a hearty salad. However, nothing.

The lettuce trays consist of scraps of lettuce, no spinach is left and there is barely any salad dressing!

On other days, there is food; however, there is no variety. The stir fry station

usually has commendable fried rice, but sometimes the options are only pork and tofu. What about the people who don't eat pork or don't like tofu? A university cafeteria is supposed to cater to all of the possible likings of the school.

Also, the vegetarian options are limited. There are only two vegetarian dishes served. Although there is a salad bar, vegetarians include a lot more interesting dishes in their diet than just salad.

“ Sometimes going to the cafeteria is pointless as there is nothing to suffice the hunger of a student after a long day. ”

Better days arrive eventually, when Fresh actually has food to feed students throughout the entire day.

These days only occur when the supervisors are in the cafeteria keeping an eye on the cafeteria staff. It is unbelievable how spectacular their services are when they are being watched and made sure they are catering to our needs, as they should.

When supervisors are not in the cafeteria, many of the staff tend to lounge around holding conversations with each other without even acknowledging hungry students waiting in line for food.

So, what is the point of getting a meal plan when you are barely ever satisfied after leaving the cafeteria? Why should students constantly go to Fresh to only be disappointed?

Simply because they have no choice. The meal plan entails Fresh Food Company as the main staple of food. Every day, students wonder if there will be improvement, and change has yet to occur.

Consistency is necessary in the cafeteria as food is a very important part of a student's day. Food gives students the energy to get through the rest of their classes or even to win an upcoming sporting event.

Fresh Food Company needs to improve or else the number of meal plans bought at FIU will start to dwindle excessively. Students will start to inconvenience their schedules by trying to cook in their dorms or even start buying food from other restaurants. This will end up being more costly and not benefiting the student in the long run. Having a meal plan is a huge benefit to a college student and should be accessible and worth having.

Tough choice: Graduate school or nah?

KIERON WILLIAMS
Staff Writer
kieron.williams@fiusm.com

When I start thinking about graduation at the end of this semester, I'm not as happy as my family is for me. In fact, graduating is scary because it gets closer and closer whether you're ready for it or not, like the big drop in a rollercoaster. Reaching the end of undergrad is like climbing slowly up that first hill and watching the ground get farther and farther away. You look back up, and you see nothing ahead of you. You have no idea what's going to happen next. All you know is that things are going to change, and that you might throw up.

As I reach that big drop, I am faced with one of the greatest decisions of my life will I go on to grad school, or will I not? I'm not pre-law or pre-med. I have a major that can (hopefully) do me fine upon graduation. According to the Florida Board of Governors, 68 percent of FIU students with a Bachelor's degree are employed one year after graduation, so the odds are in

my favor. The last thing I want is to dig myself deeper into debt because of something that may end up being unnecessary.

One of my greatest advocates for grad school is my mom, and she is pushing me to go for a plethora of reasons: getting a Master's degree will give me more

“ I'm not pre-law or pre-med. I have a major that can (hopefully) do me fine upon graduation. ”

career options, additional job safety as I will be seen as an expert amongst my peers, and most importantly, it will bring me much closer to never living paycheck to paycheck. Looking at all of these reasons, it makes sticking with my Bachelor's feel like a gamble.

But as much as she wants me to believe it, I know that I am not hopeless if I choose to stick with my Bachelor's. Grad school is expensive in some cases more expensive than undergrad. If I decide against it, I can save my money and focus every hour of each day on building my career. One

of my teachers, who is very big on student employment, said something in class last week that changed my whole perspective. She said she would never go to grad school without working in the field of her major first, because grad school before anything else is

specialized training. And how can you really know what you want to specialize in before you know what it looks like and feels like in the workplace?

Going to grad school is something to be commended, but it is important for students to know that you are not hopeless if you decide against it. Your parents and your advisors will tell you otherwise, but there are people who have become successful without a college degree at all. If you decide to go to grad school, just make sure it's because you want to, not because people are pushing you to go. The drop is steep with just a Bachelor's, there's no doubt. But success will find you if you work for it, no matter what degree you have. meal plans bought at FIU will start to dwindle excessively. Students will start to inconvenience their schedules by trying to cook in their dorms or even start buying food from other restaurants. This will end up being more costly and not benefiting the student in the long run. Having a meal plan is a huge benefit to a college student and should be accessible and worth having.

THE BEACON | Editorial Annual fee increases coming?

When we pick our classes for next semester, there are usually additional fees you'll notice added to our tuition that may have nothing to do with the classes themselves. So, where exactly does all this extra money go? This age old question has followed every college student since the beginning of educational institutions and has continued to be the central conflict between the student body and the administration on any campus. Even Florida International University is no stranger when it comes to controversy surrounding student fees. There's the parking fee and health fee, for example, that are seen as a necessity for the University to operate to it's best capacity to accommodate everyone even though there are disagreements with the amount charged or lack of use by the students themselves. One addition to our tuition that has never been addressed are our Activity and Services fee which currently stands at \$12.87 per student credit hour. This fee in particular covers expenses of extracurricular agencies like Homecoming, the Black Student Union and the Council for Student Organizations. It also covers operating costs of important facilities on campus such as Career Services and the Recreation Center. The budget itself is first divided by the Student Government Association to these bigger councils who then hold meetings or budget hearings to decide who ultimately gets a bigger or smaller percentage of the budget on a yearly basis.

The budget could not be found online but it was made available to anyone who came in person to their office with the updated amounts for this year. According to the summary, the grand total estimated revenue coming from the A&S fees is \$16,380,156, which includes an additional 2 and 1 million to the Modesto Maidique Campus and Biscayne Bay Campus respectively. Huge dollar amounts will raise doubts but SGA and the administration have been transparent as shown by the detailed breakdown of the projected amounts given to these different organizations. These numbers, however, have a possibility of fluctuating due to the three year cycling of increases awarded to different departments of the University. This year, if Activities and Services chooses to do so, there could be a possible five percent increase to the fee making a small jump to \$14.85 per credit hour. This is where concerns start to arise but, unlike other increases in the past, this could possibly fix many problems the student body faces and bring additional unforeseen benefits effective in our immediate future.

The increase itself would generate an additional \$1,869,192 that would go toward funding programs that are in danger of being cut, help grow the Career Services department in order to provide more internships for more students and finally begins the expansion of our own recreation center. These are all improvements in our eyes and serves as a major push from the administration to make quality of life here at FIU more worlds ahead. There is dissent from the Governor to these increases but no real reasoning behind it other than maintaining his political capital and using financial burden as an excuse. Ultimately, we have to maintain our trust with our SGA and Student Affairs administration and support the increase we want to have any hope of being able to support our enormous student body. Being the No. 4 largest university in the nation definitely has it perks but it requires a little sacrifice in order to see it grow.

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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Homefield Comedy Club’s ‘Comedy On Tap’ brings Miami improv to Kendall

CRYSTAL FERNANDEZ
Contributing Writer
life@fiusm.com

It felt like home to some who celebrated the NBA championship games, and it contained the screams of football fans during the World Cup, Homefield Sports Bar has been a hot spot for sports but now it’s giving locals the opportunity to sit back and enjoy an evening of jokes, laughter and drinks.

When The Miami Improv in Coconut Grove closed its doors in

Miami Improv with a one night only special event of his ‘Hot Mess Comedy’ Tour.

“We don’t have any comedy clubs in Kendall, so when we headlined names such as Rob Schneider, Michael Yo and Carlos Mencia the feedback was phenomenal,” said Gibson.

When football and basketball season came around, the improv shows came to a halt so that the venue can cater to the sports fans. But it wasn’t long until comedy made its way back to Homefield.

anyone can attend and participate. Who knows? The next Rob Schneider could be walking the halls of FIU.

“We had this one guy show up last month and he was like, ‘Hey, I have ten people with me can I get on stage for a few minutes?’ and we were like yeah sure go ahead,” said Gibson

Gibson said he would love to see more students at the shows. Whether its been a tough week at work or you’ve just finished a marathon study session, a good laugh can always make things better.

“Comedy crosses all demographic



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL GIBSON

Erik Rivera, A regular at NYC and LA comedy clubs such as The Comedy Cellar, Comic Strip , makes his Homefield debut at his show on Friday, Jan. 23.

November of 2013, Miami was left in a comedy drought. With a team effort and a little help from big names in comedy, Homefield Sports Bar became Homefield Comedy Club, Miami’s new laughter machine and ‘Comedy On Tap’ was born.

Homefield has already built a reputation for its laid-back bar feel and a good game of pool.

It’s 8,000 sq. feet that fits approximately 450 people and is popular for sports games and events. Homefield Comedy Club Manager, Bill Gibson, feels the sports bar reaches its full potential when big events crowd the venue.

“We found that the venue was most packed when we had a big event. Its a big spot, we get great use of it. The atmosphere is amazing and its great for business,” said Gibson.

Which is why when the owners of the Coconut Grove Comedy Club and Homefield Sports Bar worked together to bring Miami Improv back the feedback was just as expected.

On March 22, 2013 Michael Yo kicked-off opening night of The

Claudia Angulo, Homefield Comedy Club Coordinator said, “We derailed a little because of the sporting events but us here at homefield really liked the idea of a comedy club and we felt Miami needed one.”

The venue has undergone a few changes for its new theme. To keep the familiarity for the locals, the same logo remains but the words “live to laugh” have been added. Soundproof curtains, acoustical tiles, glass dividers and adjustments to the sound system have been added to fit the new theme.

“We’re really going for a long term comedy club and we want it to be the real deal,” said Gibson

A regular show starts with a local comedian or host, followed by a feature comedian and finally the headliner. The two-hour national comedian shows run on Friday and Saturday. Some headliners this month include Alex Reymundo, Michael Kosta and Carl LaBove.

Once a month, the comedy club hosts a ‘New Faces in Comedy’ show. This is an open mic event that

lines and income levels. When you have a long day, really all people want to do is laugh and that’s what we want to provide for them,” said Gibson.

WHAT:
HOMEFIELD COMEDY CLUB & GRILL

WHERE:
LOCATED AT 8575 SW 124 AVE MIAMI, FL 33183

WEBSITE:
FOR CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS VISIT HOMEFIELDSPORTSBAR.COM.

TICKETS:
ALL SHOWS TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED ONLINE. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A BUY ONE GET ONE DEAL WITH THEIR STUDENT ID CARDS.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT




ANA ARENAS/THE BEACON

ANA ARENAS
Staff Writer
ana.arenas@fiusm.com

“Everything is just a matter of perspective. College is the time to broaden horizons and dig deeper into life,” says Xavier Moreno, a class of 2016 accounting major.

Same sex parenting

PRIDE GUIDE



CHRISTIAN PORTILLA

When I think about starting a family and having children, I think about how the future will be and how society will react. I think about how the children will become curious and ask questions about how they were procreated and about their mommy’s sexual orientation.

These thoughts really came into perspective after I read a post from a Colombian communications professor, Juanita Leon Santaella.

In her post, she asked why she was not able to adopt in her country, and why society was against it.

As if being a lesbian was a guarantee that she would be a bad parent or wouldn’t give her children the same morals, love and education if she were in a heterosexual relationship.

I refuse to be stigmatized and I will not develop a complex because of my sexual orientation. I refuse to think that I will be a second rate parent because I decide to raise my child with another woman.

Like professor Santaella, I know I will try my hardest to raise a human being to the best of my abilities with respect and moral standards.

As far as having children with my partner, I know that it does not take a certain title or gender role to raise a child in a loving environment.

I know of many heterosexual families that don’t have one or the other parent involved. Although

there is a difference, the love for the child is the same.

I can attest from this by personal experience and it wasn’t until society pointed it out to me that I knew my family structure was different.

I was not born with a preconceived notion of how a “regular” household should be. All I knew was that I was raised with a lot of love and respect and it didn’t matter who wasn’t present because I never felt the absence of another parent.

As a human being and as a person that looks forward to having a family of my own one day, I hope that my sexual orientation will become an obsolete topic to society when it comes to raising my children.

I look forward to seeing more acceptance and less discrimination of the LGBTQA community and same-sex parenting.

I hope that as our country progresses, we can create a unified culture that values differences and accepts similarities.

After all, being LGBTQA is a process of self-discovery, questioning and acceptance. Being questioned about our parenting capabilities by society shouldn’t be part of it.

Every Wednesday Pride Guide will take a deeper look into the LGBT community at FIU and produce a column that will consists of keen analysis within the daily lives of LGBT students and faculty. Make sure to read more and fiusm.com.

FIU League of Legends community preparing for Panther’s Rift

JOSE MALDONADO
Contributing Writer
life@fiusm.com

Over the past few years, E-Sports have steadily gained popularity around the globe due to competitive multiplayer games such as League of Legends and Dota 2. Last year alone, the League of Legends 2014 World Tournament was streamed by 40 private broadcasters in 19 different languages and had over 27 million viewers.

With its popularity among FIU gamers, it is no surprise that FIU will be hosting its largest League Tournament ever named Panther’s Rift.

The tournament is a joint effort between STARS and Association for Computing Machinery, both of which are under the School of Computing and Information Sciences, to promote programming education among FIU students.

The tournament itself began preparations

early spring semester among a group of students from both organizations lead by STARS President Gio Peralto-Pritchard, whose vision of the event is to bring together a community with a common interest.

“Students have actually sent me emails and messages saying thanks for hosting this tournament, this is a great idea. The positive feedback has proven to me already that this is a good idea,” said Peralto-Pritchard.

“Originally, I aimed for a 40 person tournament because that is what Riot Games requires for sponsorship for an event, but the day after we opened registration we had 40 people and we felt we could make the cap larger.”

The tournament consists of 16 teams of five that will battle through a first phase elimination qualifier March 7 and the main event on March 21.

Semifinals will be best out of three and finals will be best out of five.

All standard League of Legends rules apply to the tournament. There will be plenty of space for spectators and the team is planning to stream the tournament on the popular streaming site Twitch for outside League fans to see.

The tournament as of now is going through its final preparations. STARS and ACM members have assembled a Solutions Engineering team specific to solving the technical and logistic issues of holding an event of this magnitude such as creating algorithms to evenly distribute individuals to teams, handling online participant registration and create live video streaming solutions for the event.

“It may not sound like a big deal, but when you get to the fine math of it we have to incorporate a lot of mathematical/ computational theory and efficiency,” said Peralto-Pritchard about the work his solutions engineering team has been doing.

One big difference between Panther’s Rift and ordinary League Tournaments is that it will incorporate an evenly distributed team selection which places competitors in teams

by rank evenly.

In other words, no team will have all pro gamer or all casual gamers, but rather an even mix of skills between all teams in an effort to make the tournament fair.

“We have 80 people in our tournament, and we have to take 80 people regardless of their rank. We said anyone could enter this tournament and for us to say something that broad and that bold means that our algorithm [computer system] needs to be secure and meet our need,” said Peralto-Pritchard.

In the end, Panther’s Rift could bring more than spawning a new community of gamers and free goodies like Teemo Hats.

Establishing a relationship between Riot Games and FIU could create a pathway for internships and opportunities for students within the company, as well as establishing a greater E-Sports culture on our campus.

Movies to be screened at first WideScreen Film & Music Video Festival

FILM, PAGE 8

The festival begins Friday, Feb. 27 with a pre-party at Club 50, open to all festival attendees. All films, including shorts, web-series, trailers, documentaries, full length films and more will be shown at AMC Aventura 24. The event will close with an award show on March 3, to include a cash prize for the best film.

“We’re featuring music videos as well, so we’re giving musicians and artists overall a chance to showcase their work besides film,” Slosaski said.

Aaron Abelto, 30, also an FIU alumnus, commends Knowles for creating a gateway for local filmmakers, both professional and amateur. One of the many urged

by Knowles through social media to showcase his work, Abelto submitted a trailer for his feature film “I Before Thee,” and is nominated for the awards for best trailer and best screenplay.

“That’s how you get notoriety,” Abelto said regarding film festivals. “My main objective is to just get the story out there and to show that South Florida has talent.”

In addition to showing films, the festival will also host workshops for those interested in breaking into the industry.

“For the workshop, we have several renowned filmmakers like Jessy Johnson, one of the directors of the Wonder Woman fan film. It’s a networking opportunity for persons (sic) to meet industry professionals,”

Knowles said.

The team also reached out to film departments in schools to promote the event and give upcoming filmmakers an opportunity to show their work.

“We’ve reached Nova, Broward College and the Art Institute in Ft Lauderdale,” said Slosaski. “I was surprised that a lot of people said they’ve heard about this through Facebook.”

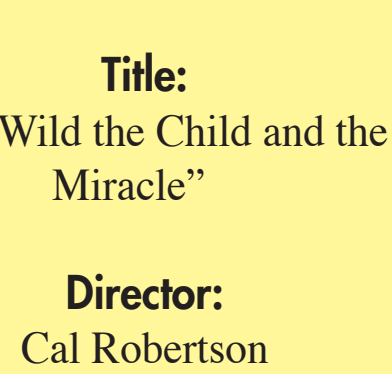
Knowles hopes to make the festival a yearly event and inspire artists to partake in the movement to support up-and-coming filmmakers.

“You can dream bigger - be the one that creates the opportunity instead of being the one chasing it,” said Knowles.



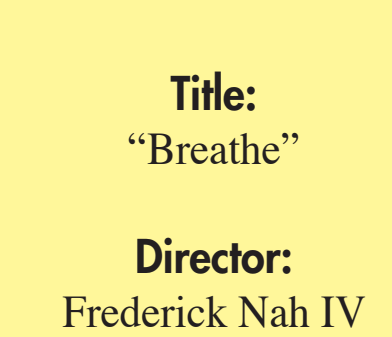
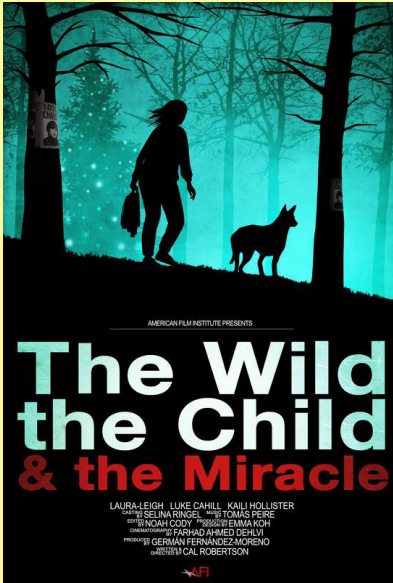
Title:
“I Before Thee”

Director:
Aaron Abelto



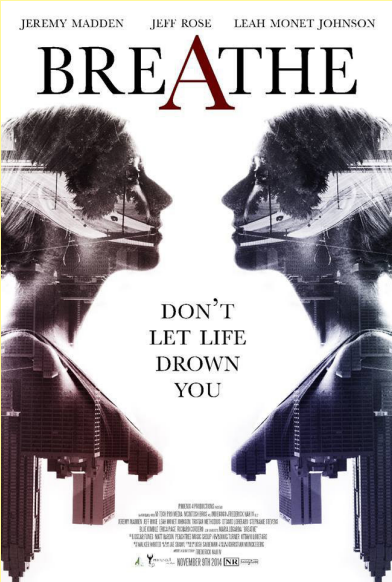
Title:
“The Wild the Child and the Miracle”

Director:
Cal Robertson



Title:
“Breathe”

Director:
Frederick Nah IV



Title:
“Passage”

Director:
Kareem Mortimer

BASEBALL

Panthers break even at Caravell Resort's Baseball at the Beach Tournament

ALEJANDRO AGUIRRE

Asst. Sport Director

alejandro.aguirre@fiusm.com

This past weekend, the baseball team competed in the 6th Annual Caravell Resort's Baseball at the Beach Tournament. They played against ACC rivals on Saturday versus No. 28 Georgia Tech and then squared off against N.C. State. The final day of the tournament, the Panthers had a double header against N.C. Central. FIU entered the tournament coming off a rough loss versus Stetson losing 12-2 so it was important for the Panthers to play strong on the road and get their first win away from their home field.

Sophomore Cody Crouse took the mound for the Panthers in game one. It was his first ever matchup against Georgia Tech. The second game against N.C. State, Chris Mourelle started the game and unfortunately for the Panthers, they weren't able to capitalize and dropped both games. In game one versus Georgia Tech, the Panthers fell behind early to the Yellow Jackets, 6-0, before rallying to take a 9-8 lead into the ninth inning. FIU scored single runs in the fourth through sixth innings before taking the lead in the seventh. The rally for FIU fell short in the ninth when they couldn't hold the lead that inning. What sealed the win for the yellow jackets was an A.J. Murray grand slam that made the final 14-9.

In the nightcap of Saturday's



KRONO LESCANO/THE BEACON

Junior outfielder Edwin Rios takes a big swing against the University of Tennessee. The Panthers have a record of 4-4 after the Baseball at the Beach tournament at Caravell Resort.

doubleheader, the Panthers offense fizzled out in a 3-1 loss to North Carolina State. Eddie Silva provided the only run for FIU with his first college home run in the third inning. The solo shot tied the score at 1-1 before the Wolfpack were able to get a run off of Mourelle in the bottom of the third inning. Mourelle had a solid outing pitching five and two-thirds innings and allowing just two earned runs.

On Sunday, two freshmen took the bump for the Panthers as FIU squared off with N.C. Central for the first time in school history. Right-handed hurler Andres Nunez started the first game versus N.C. Central and another right-hander, Garrett Cave, took the mound for the second game.

In the opener of the doubleheader, Nunez had an amazing performance pitching six and two-thirds shutout innings

walking none and striking out four batters to record the win in a 4-0 win over the Eagles. The victory came in Nunez's first college start. FIU scored all their runs in the third inning and from that point on they never looked back. Brian Portelli delivered the big blow with a two-run double down the left field line to make it 3-0. Junior Zach Soria followed with an RBI single to bring in the fourth run for the Panthers.

The second game of Sunday's two game series versus N.C. Central had a dramatic twist to it. FIU was down to its final out in the bottom of the 10th trailing 5-4. Unlikely hero freshman Mitchell Robinson singled home sophomore Kolby Follis. Follis was able to reach scoring position after stealing second base before the Robinson single. With that run scoring in the tenth inning the game continued to go into extra innings until the 13 inning. Freshman Jack Schaaf belted a two-run home run off James Vernon over the right field wall in the bottom of the 13 inning to have the final score of 7-5. This was an incredible walk-off victory for FIU and with the win it completed a doubleheader sweep of N.C. Central.

After this tournament, FIU now has a record of 4-4 and more importantly, they displayed that they are capable of playing on the road. This tournament they went 2-2 and showed they can win even when they are down. FIU heads back home to Miami to host a four-game series against Manhattan College on Friday, Feb. 27.

SOFTBALL

Offense shines at Madeira Beach Invitational

ALANNAH ALFONSO

Staff Writer

alannah.alfonso@fiusm.com

The FIU softball team (11-6) took control at the Madeira Beach Invitational and finished 4-1 with some outstanding highlights.

Sophomore Brianna Bartuccio (2-0) started her first game as a Panther against the Villanova Wildcats (1-4) and took command in the circle pitching a complete-game, four-hit shutout.

Sophomore center fielder Gabby Spallone hit the first grand slam of her career against the Wildcats. The first three batters in the lineup walked and Spallone took a 2-1 count over the right field fence for her first home run of the season.

The Panthers killed the Wildcats 4-0.

The next game was an exciting win against the Wichita State Shockers, improving the Panthers record to 2-0 to start the tournament.

Junior Corinne Jenkins (6-4) logged her fifth complete

game this season, striking out three and only allowing five hits.

Sophomore Stephanie Teixeira went 2-for-3 and launched a three-run home run to the parking lot in the third.

Wichita was able to tie up the game in the fourth inning with a hit-by-pitch and two-out error in the outfield. The Shockers then got the go-ahead run in the fifth due to a passed ball and throwing error.

Junior Aleima Lopez went 2-for-3 and hit a two-RBI double in the sixth inning to win the game for the Panthers 6-5.

The next day of the tournament the FIU softball team split a pair, first destroying the Columbia Lions 7-0, before being shut-out by the Texas State Bobcats 8-0.

Senior Shelby Graves (3-2) pitched a one-hit shutout against Columbia striking out a season high of seven batters.

Teixeira is always dominating offensively and took Columbia's pitchers deep going 2-for-2 with three RBIs

and got her third multi-home run game of her career.

Senior Krystal Garcia went yard in the third inning as well going 2-for-3 with two RBIs.

The FIU Panthers won 7-0 against the Ivy League Columbia Lions.

Jenkins started the next game that day against Texas State and got the loss only pitching three innings before handing the ball to freshman Rachel Dwyer.

Jenkins did a good job of keeping her composure in the circle striking out one in a pivotal moment of the game with bases loaded and one out. She then got the fly-out that would leave three Bobcats on base.

The second inning was just as troubling but Texas State was able to take a 4-0 lead. Questionable calls in the third inning would give Texas State two additional runs and two more came across the plate in the fourth.

FIU had a rally started in the fifth inning with two outs and two on base, but a call at

the plate ended the inning and the game in a loss to Texas State 8-0.

The loss against Texas State awakened the heart and soul of the FIU softball team. The final day of the tournament was closed out with a ravaging 15-2 win over North Dakota.

Graves controlled the first three innings retiring five of the twelve batters she faced while only allowing three hits.

The Panthers offense lit up the last day of the tournament as both junior Dominique Grossman and freshman Jessica Hallett went deep for two-run homeruns.

FIU went through the whole lineup in the first inning, putting up five runs to start the game and continued to post up runs on the board with multi-run innings, taking a dominating 15-2 win over North Dakota.

The FIU softball team travels back home now where they will host the Panther Invitational Feb. 27 through March 1.



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Junior Corinne Jenkins delivers a pitch during the FIU Invitational. The Panthers finished the Madeira Beach Invitational with a record of 4-1.

FOOTBALL

Successful offseason gives new hope for 2015

COLUMNIST



JACOB SPIWAK

As the FIU football team prepares to begin spring practices next month, it's a good time to look back on the extremely active offseason the Panthers had.

The biggest difference between the 2014 and 2015 teams will be the coaching staff. Starting very early in the offseason, various coaches departed from FIU for other vacancies around the country. Many view this as coaches using a smaller program like FIU as a springboard to a bigger job, as former defensive coordinator Josh Conklin and former linebackers coach Rob Harley both accepted offers from the University of Pittsburgh, and former running backs coach Kerry Dixon II went to UF.

This is something that has been occurring in college football for years, and it will continue to occur. Coaches spend their time at smaller, less established programs to build up a resume and improve their abilities, and leave when they get the attention of larger schools.

While it is not necessarily fair for schools like FIU and especially schools in the lower divisions, it's important for the development of college football. There are always jobs that need to be filled, and there's nothing wrong with someone wanting to get the big bucks and have more national exposure. It's an unfortunate reality that FIU currently has to deal with, but as the football program continues to grow and improve, they may start becoming one of those

schools that more coaches will aspire to work for.

Overall, despite losing out on some of the key coaches from years past, the changes to the coaching staff will improve the team going forward. Obviously it's too early to tell exactly how effective the new coaches will be, but the guys head coach Ron Turner brought in are extremely qualified to continue moving the Panthers in the right direction.

The most important hire was that of Tim Harris Jr. from Booker T. Washington High School as the new running backs coach. The void left by coach Dixon will be very hard to fill, especially when it comes to recruiting. Dixon was very active in acquiring players from Miami-Dade County, but a guy like Harris is exactly who you would like to see in that position.

Booker T. Washington is one of the best high school football teams in the nation, and is right in the heart of Miami-Dade. Harris definitely has ties and connections throughout the county that will help FIU sign players not only from Booker T. Washington, but also at other schools in the county. Dixon did a tremendous job in his one season here getting those Miami kids, but Harris has even more potential in that area.

His on-the-field production is obvious as well, as he was the head coach for a 14-0, state champion, nationally ranked high school team at Booker T. Washington. He was also the offensive coordinator there for five seasons, so there's no question that he'll be able to come in and help the FIU running back core improve.

DENNIS THE MENACE



JINETTE GARCIA/THE BEACON

Senior guard Dennis Mavin strips the ball during the team's loss to North Texas University on Feb. 21. The Panthers lost that Conference USA contest 70-56.

Other highlights from this new-look staff are defensive coordinator Matt House, who held the same position that Josh Conklin now holds at Pitt, as well as new cornerbacks coach Greg Moss.

The other major part of this offseason was National Signing Day, in which FIU added a plethora of new and exciting talent.

There will be 23 new Panthers on the roster in 2015, all of which will be given a chance to contribute right away. Positions of need were filled, namely the wide receiver position when FIU got a signed letter of intent from Miami Central High School's Anthony Jones. Jones is considered one of the most explosive offensive talents in the state, and coach Turner said he expects Jones to play right away.

The 2015 class also looks to solidify the offensive line, which will have a completely new look next season. New talent was also added at quarterback with the additions of Christian Alexander and Tim Harris Jr.'s high school star in Maurice Alexander.

In total, FIU added two quarterbacks, two running backs, four wide receivers, one tight end, three offensive linemen, four defensive linemen, one linebacker, five defensive backs, and one kicker/punter this offseason. 22 of these 23 players came from the state of Florida, so a lot of local talent was brought into the team.

2015 looks like it can be a very exciting season for the Panthers, and after an offseason like the one they've had, the team can exceed expectations.

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SWI-NNING

Swimming and diving brings first Conference USA championship to FIU

REINALDO LLERENA
Staff Writer
reinaldo.llerena@fiusm.com

The FIU swimming and diving team clinched the Conference USA title in Knoxville, Tennessee on Saturday, Feb. 21. The championship is FIU's first ever C-USA title in any sport since joining the conference in 2013. The Panthers blew out their C-USA rivals by over 100 points to secure the school's first title.

During the event, FIU won eight races. The Panthers also broke a total of 11 school records while competing in Knoxville.

Senior Johanna Gustafsdottir was the biggest contributor to FIU's C-USA title, winning three events over the four-day competition. Another valuable athlete was breakout freshman Silvia Scalia, who added two more wins to an already outstanding season.

Gustafsdottir managed to break a school record for each of her wins. Because of her performance during the regular season and in the C-USA championship, Gustafsdottir was named the 2014-2015 C-USA Swimmer of the Year.

Head coach Randy Horner was



JEFFREY PIERRE/THE BEACON

Swimming and diving brought back the first Conference USA title for FIU since joining the conference on July 1, 2013. Head Coach Randy Horner was also named C-USA Coach of the Year.

presented with the conference's Coach of the Year award at the event.

"I'm proud of our team," Horner said. "They competed like champions all week and earned this title. I'm so happy to bring FIU our first C-USA Championship."

After the first day of

competition, the Panthers were ten points behind Rice University and Western Kentucky University. During the day, Scalia, senior Klara Andersson, freshman Letizia Bertelli and sophomore Jennifer Deist teamed up to finish third in the 200 medley relay. With a time of 1:39.28, the quartet broke the

previous 1:41.78 school record set at the Mizzou Invite last November.

Highlighting the second day of the event were Gustafsdottir and Bertelli. Gustafsdottir claimed a conference title in the 200 IM with a time of 1:57.33 and Bertelli posted a time of 22.94 seconds in

the 50 freestyle to take a conference title of her own. Both times were new school records. At the end of the day, the Panthers led 256-235 on second-place WKU.

The Panthers entered the third day of competition with a comfortable lead. Scalia earned the conference title in the 100 backstroke with a time of 52.97 seconds in the preliminaries, a new school record. Gustafsdottir set a new C-USA record in the 400 IM, with a time of 4:11.83 in the final round. The time allowed her to claim her second conference title of the event.

Sophomore Lily Kaufmann dove with a final score of 253.10, which was enough to earn her a second-place finish in one-meter diving.

Entering the final day of the competition with a 73-point lead, FIU had its best day at the competition, taking home the 200 breaststroke, 200 backstroke, platform diving and winning the conference with the 400 freestyle relay.

The swimming and diving team is expected to compete next at the NCAA championships March 19-21 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The emotional experience of The Tunnel of Oppression

MARIA C. SERRANO
Staff Writer
maria.serrano@fiusm.com

To raise awareness on societal issues, students will embark on a journey through a "Tunnel of Oppression," an interactive exhibit hosted by the BBC Student Programming Council.

The showcase is part of the SPC's Affair of the Arts Week where students are encouraged to experience different cultural arts from across the globe.

According to Tiffani Brown, graduate assistant at the Wolfe University Center, the exhibition challenges students to step out of their comfort zone and face the realities of oppression we are confronted with as a society.

It is a demonstrative experience where attendees walk through a simulated tunnel with booths and stations, each focusing on a different topic of oppression.

"One of the highlights and the reason of the event is that a lot of issues are not touched upon and people don't really know the severity of. It allows them to step out of their comfort zone," Brown said.

Kaytien Franco, student assistant at BBC Campus Life,

agrees that the showcase forces students to confront societal issues such as abuse and discrimination.

"Those who partake in the tunnel will be challenged to think about contemporary issues of oppression, privilege and power," Franco said.

She said the objective of each station is to provide information or build an experience in several ways that will stimulate attendee's minds or even jolt their emotions.

"Oppression is having your freedom taken away, having barriers put in front of you due to stereotypes, being judged by the color of your skin or where you are from. The list goes on and on..." Franco said.

Many times, oppression takes extreme forms even at home. According to the Washington Post, more than 1,000 women were killed by their partners in the United States in 2005.

A third of those women were killed by their boyfriend or husband.

"People don't understand the struggle that other people have to go through," Brown said.

Sudyen Navarrete, a junior journalism major, said that because of her Nicaraguan

roots, she has been called "peasant" and "ignorant" in several instances during high school.

"I felt oppressed during school (sic), but I got through it because I learned to ignore it," Navarrete said.

Issues related to inequality and stereotyping will also be exposed to motivate people to take an in-depth look at them.

According to Brown, the purpose of the event is to create awareness and discussion of these issues that society faces everyday but very seldom discuss.

"Often times, people use the fact of not knowing about the issue (sic) as an excuse to ignore the problem," Brown said.

A guest speaker will assist participants and ask questions to explore ways to address and improve upon the presented issues of oppression with a Tunnel of Hope at the end.

The event will take place Thursday, Feb. 26 at the WUC Ballrooms. The tunnel will run in increments of 15 minutes and will be ongoing from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To volunteer at the exhibit or to RSVP, students and faculty can contact BBC Campus Life at (305) 919-5804.

FIU alumni creates new indie film festival to begin in late February

MELISA BORGES
Contributing Writer
life@fiusm.com

Florida International University alumnus Jarrod Knowles makes his debut this weekend as president and founder of the first ever Widescreen Film and Music Video Festival.

"I literally sat on Facebook all day, every day and sent out tons of messages. I've actually sent out over 11,000 messages to invite and make people aware of the event."

Jarrod Knowles
President and Founder
Widescreen Film and Music Video Festival

"We are looking for the underdog, the unsung hero, those who are working hard but are not getting the recognition simply because they don't have a voice. We want to be that voice," Knowles said. "Our mission for the festival is to inspire the creation and distribution of art while

ultimately enhancing the creative mind."

The twenty-four-year-old director implemented the idea Oct. 12, 2014, and in less than four months received hundreds of film submissions.

"We received submissions from all over the world," said Karen Slosaski, director of marketing for WSF. "We've had over 300 submissions and almost 1,000 people confirmed to attend."

Slosaski and Knowles make up half of the WSF executive team, three of whom are FIU alumni. Together, they advertised the event on a nonexistent marketing budget, turning social media into their marketing platform and heavily using Facebook to their advantage.

"I literally sat on Facebook all day, every day and sent out tons of messages. I've actually sent over 11,000 messages to invite and make people aware of the festival," Knowles said.

By using social media, the team managed to acquire submissions from 28 countries. Some of the featured participants are traveling from their respective countries to partake in the event.

"We have a filmmaker who's coming from Rome, another from Bangladesh and countless people from around the US," Knowles said.

SEE FILM, PAGE 5