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Middle school students introduced to STEM with EV3 Robotics program

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The University created a new after school program this year to introduce middle schoolers to the STEM fields.

The EV3 Robotics program hopes to expand the minds of young students and to encourage anyone who is interested in pursuing a degree in a STEM field.

through robotics to learn the sciences,” said Adly Norelus, associate director of the Office of Pre-Collegiate, Grants and McNair programs.

Not only will the students be learning the basics of robotics, as well as more advanced components, but they will also be able to compete in both local and national competitions.

Miami Edison Park K-8 Center and North

Despite this, Norelus and George Simms, the assistant vice provost of Student Access and Success, see a bright future of expansion for this program and think that it will go beyond to reach more students other than just sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

“Right now we are in the process of writing a grant to expand the program to high schools,” said Norelus. “Which will cover ninth through twelfth grade.”

The program is also predicted to expand to other middle schools in the area, providing more opportunities to the students of Miami-Dade County.

According to Norelus, not many students show interest at such a young age for the sciences because there are not many opportunities provided that allow them to gain hands-on experience.

“These middle school students will feed into these high schools and continue to participate in the program, even during the summer,” said Simms. “The ultimate goal is for these youngsters to



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIU MEDIA RELATIONS

Students at Edison Park K-8 Center are take part in the EV3 Robotics program, intended to raise interest in STEM among middle schoolers. Only Edison Park K-8 Center and North Miami Middle School are currently involved in the program.

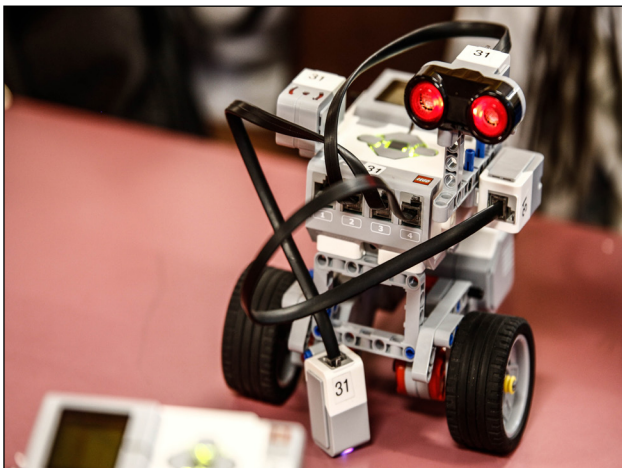


PHOTO COURTESY OF FIU MEDIA RELATIONS

Students participating learn the basics of robotics, as well as more advanced components. The students who complete the EV3 program have the opportunity to apply for partial scholarships to the University.

“The idea began that every student could be involved in STEM Miami Middle School are currently the two schools involved in the program.

continue their education after high school at FIU.”

The EV3 Robotics program also provides opportunities for current students at the University.

“We have currently three students involved in the program -- as tutors, mentors, and teaching assistants,” said Norelus.

As the program expands at the University, it could mean an eventual expansion in the STEM fields, resulting in a larger program with more opportunities for

its students, according to Simms.

“FIU plays a strong role in the program,” said Norelus. “We meet with [students] throughout the program, we provide college prep workshops that help [them] learn time management, as well as career exploration.”

During the summer, the middle school students will be on campus to tour the University facilities and explore the college culture.

According to Norelus, the only requirement to

be in this program is to be interested in learning more.

The students who complete the EV3 program have the opportunity to apply for partial scholarships to the University, whenever their time to potentially attend the University comes.

“Once again, FIU proves that it is worlds ahead,” said Simms.

University announces its current travel policy towards study abroad in Cuba

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Even though the federal government has announced changes regarding regulations on traveling to Cuba, the University will not be changing its travel policy toward the country.

These federal travel changes allow academic travel to Cuba without requiring a special license from the Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control. In other words, the new regulations allow all students enrolled in degree programs at accredited United States academic institutions to access programs to study abroad in the island nation.

The new regulations were created with the purpose of facilitating travel to Cuba for U.S citizens. Despite this, acts implemented in Florida prohibit

the use of University funds for travel to the Caribbean country.

In 2006, the University Senate and individual faculty members from the University and other universities in the state joined the American Civil Liberties Union to challenge the constitutionality of Florida statutes 1011.90(6) and 112.061(3)(e), which essentially prohibits state universities and agencies from using funds from any source for travel or travel-related costs to countries designated by the U.S. Department of State as state sponsors of terrorism.

Sebastian Arcos, the associate director of the Cuban Research Institute at the University, explained that new travel regulations to the country were modified this year due to Barack Obama’s presidency.

“It is easier for American tourists who have no familial connection with Cuba to travel

to the island by simplifying the permit process, which was complicated before,” Arcos said.

On Tuesday, April 14, President Obama informed Congress that Cuba would be removed from the state sponsor of

assured that it will refrain from demonstrating any support for any act of terrorism in the future.

When the official change of removing Cuba from the list is made, the Florida statutes proscribing the travel will no

“

It will be interesting to travel to Cuba and know its history, but this is not the time.

Cesar Alcides
Graduate student
School of Journalism and Mass Communications

terror list. He cited that the island nation has not demonstrated any type of support for international terrorism in a period of the last six months, according to the Associated Press.

He also added that Cuba has

longer apply and University funds may be used for going to the island.

In addition, both countries are taking steps toward stabilizing political relations.

“This is happening as a result

of the agreement reached by the two countries, announced Dec. 17, 2014,” said Arcos. “They are moving to normalize diplomatic relations [and the] United States announced to eliminate most of the restrictions to Cuba.”

Javier González, a graduate student in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, agrees with Arcos about the changes to diplomatic relations.

“The political and social relations among Cuba and the United States are getting closer,” González said. “We are seeing changes in the travel restrictions to the island. Americans can go and do tourism.”

But González believes that this is not the time for modification to the statutes in Florida or to the University’s current policy.

“I think that FIU must keep

SEE CUBA, PAGE 2

Presidential candidates break the mold in 2016

JENNIFER BLANCO
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The 2016 presidential election is slowly approaching and political parties are getting ready to choose the best of the best to represent them. This election, like any other, decides the course the nation will take for the next four years.

Despite familiar names like Bush and Clinton, it's exciting to hear new and inspiring stories of our potential candidates.

Over a dozen candidates from both parties have shown interest in becoming the 2016 presidential nominee, but only a few have officially announced their participation.

The Democratic Party has one candidate who has officially

announced her running: Hillary Clinton.

Although I would love to see a woman as president, I don't think

really inspire or empower women. From taking down Gennifer Flowers to covering up Monica Lewinsky, Clinton is known to be

With two hispanic hopefuls and a woman in the running, chances are we'll be seeing a change to the status quo.

Marco Rubio's poignant speech definitely made him a strong contender in the 2016 presidential elections. If he is elected as the Republican nominee, he will be the first hispanic man to run for president.

Thus far, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and Rand Paul have officially announced their running for 2016 Republican presidential nominee. Marco Rubio, an inspiring young leader, announced his participation at Miami's Freedom Towers. Rubio couldn't have chosen a better location to share the news with his supporters, as this historic site was refuge to thousands of Cubans escaping Castro's dictatorship.

Rubio is from a working-class family of Cuban immigrants who share stories much like those of the Cubans who once walked through the Miami Freedom Towers.

"My candidacy might seem improbable to some watching from abroad," Rubio said. "In many countries, the highest office in the land is reserved for the rich and powerful. But I live in an exceptional country, where even the son of a bartender and a maid can have the same dreams and the same future as those who come from power and privilege."

Rubio may not be the obvious choice, but as we have seen in previous elections, it's sometimes the least obvious choice that comes out of nowhere and wins over the hearts of millions of ordinary Americans.

“With two hispanic hopefuls and a woman in the running, chances are we'll be seeing a change to the status quo.”

Clinton is the candidate for that role. To see another Clinton or Bush become president would be more like a monarchy run by a royal family, than a democracy.

Frankly, Clinton's story doesn't

strongly influenced by her husband. She is not exactly the prototype for a strong female leader.

I think Obama's administration broke the cycle of male WASP domination over the presidency.

FRANK AND IRENE:
Tram Troubles



SAMUEL PRITCHARD-TORRES/THE BEACON

Is there still such a thing as ‘good’ music?

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In the world of music there is no such thing as good or bad, there are only differences of opinion. As long as there are fans listening and relating to it, nothing else matters.

There are two sides to music. On one side, music is a unifier. At a party, any combination of people will come together to chant along to Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" or Britney Spears' "Oops!...I Did It Again." Iconic songs like these take the listener back in time to when they first heard it. As diverse as these iconic songs are, they all have one thing in common: they were popular.

At some point in time, those iconic songs were the prevalent sounds a mass majority of people listened to.

This leads to the other side, where music causes separation. A lot of people are often criticized or even bullied for their choice in music if it is not widely known or liked. Punk music is seen as kiddie rock, metal is satanic and pop is the drones of mindless moneymaking. No matter what genre someone listens to, there will always be a critic saying that it is not "good music".

But really, what is "good music?" If the lyrics resonate and the sound makes people move,

why not listen to it?

The only rule in music is that there are no rules. Music, like any art, is about self-expression. Not everyone is going to like the same music, but this creates endless sound possibilities, with different fans and interpretations. Musical diversity should not be a bad thing. If two people disagree about a certain band, artist or genre, neither of them is necessarily right or wrong. Their respective musical preferences are their own and they should be proud of them.

“People should not have to justify why they prefer one type of music to another. Appreciating music does not mean people have to be a fan of every sound that is made -it's more about respect.”

If someone is a music enthusiast, they are the last one who should be sound-shaming others. Claiming to have the "true" sound or the "best" sound is limiting. If there was only one kind of music, there would be no innovation. Rock 'n' roll was a product of the blues, country, gospel and pop were created from rock 'n' roll elements. Music builds on music.

People should not have to justify why they prefer one type of music to another. Appreciating music does not mean people have to be a fan of every sound that is made -it's more about respect.

While music can be serious and influential, its power comes from being so carefree. To many people music is a way to escape reality - going to a concert or blasting one's favorite song is

like going to a different planet where fun reigns and worries and fears are put aside. To criticize someone because they have a different taste is disgraceful.

Rock the music that you love because you love it. The things we love make us who we are, and to hide a part of ourselves for the benefit of others is exactly what music tells us not to do.

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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GLOW STICK JAMMING



Above: Jean Pierre Nkama(right), a junior studying mechanical engineering, plays foosball with Kassim Kaba(left), also a junior studying mechanical engineering, at the Glow Jam on Tuesday, April 14.

Center: Students in the housing quad enjoyed free food, games and live music to prepare them for the Uproar Concert.

Right: Isabela Ceglia, a senior studying psychology, plays mini golf at Glow Jam.



ALL PHOTOS BY JASMINE ROMERO/THE BEACON

Grime, struggle and faith in Marvel's 'Daredevil'

ON THE TUBE



EVAN BURR

In today's pop culture, you'd have a hard time finding anyone not pulled in by either Netflix or the Disney/Marvel superhero dynasty that has commanded movie theaters, television, comic books, and now, the Internet.

"Daredevil" is another step taken by Marvel to cement the fact that it doesn't matter how strange the concept, what the medium, or how bad the stigma towards a particular series might be (I'm sure I'm not the only one who remembers the 2003 Daredevil film starring Ben Affleck). If you put the Marvel name on something, two things are guaranteed: People will flock to it and it will be fantastic.

"Daredevil" tells the story of Matt Murdock, played by Charlie Cox, a lawyer who was blinded in his youth while saving an old man from a truck.

Over time, he learned to hone his other senses to the point where he can hear a heartbeat across a room or smell the cologne of someone two stories up from him. Using this, he fights crime in the courtroom during the day and, at night, dons a mask and deals out his own form of justice on the streets.

Personally, I've dismissed Daredevil as a superhero for a long time; as far as I could tell he was just a blind ninja with the power to see. Essentially his power made him a regular guy. But this series shows a side of the character that those unfamiliar with comics would rarely see.

Murdock isn't just a justice obsessed ninja with a cool mask. He's a man torn apart by his own actions.

For every criminal he takes down, two more seem to pop up, worse than before. Throughout the series, he walks the line of what he considers evil.

Does he kill someone committing horrific

acts and condemn his own soul, or does he allow them to live, let the law handle things, and risk them coming back for revenge against those he cares about? It all boils down to one of the most important aspects of the character: his Catholic guilt.

Murdock is a deeply religious man and he struggles over these decisions on a regular basis with a priest, discussing the specifics of good and evil, of the true meaning of the devil.

On the other side of things, Murdock is facing his ultimate threat in the form of Wilson Fisk, played by Vincent D'Onofrio, the large, ruthless kingpin of crime.

As much as "Daredevil" is the origins of the hero, it is just as much the origin story of the Kingpin, one of Marvel's most intimidating and dangerous villains.

D'Onofrio plays Fisk with a childlike personality. He's awkward, seems to force words out when speaking. He's a romantic, he's something of an artist, he's lonely and conflicted. And when someone makes him angry, he will grab their head and bash it in until they're nothing more than a bloody mess.

As exceptional as Cox's performance is, the series would be incomplete without D'Onofrio's interpretation of Fisk as something more than just pure evil.

By the end of the series, you know exactly why people are afraid to even mention his name at the beginning.

The Kingpin is one of those few villains who is openly committing crimes and evil acts, yet no one lifts a finger against him. "Daredevil" shows you exactly why.

The supporting cast manages to really bring a level of quality and emotion to the show that you might not expect from a superhero series.

From Deborah Ann Woll and Elden Henson, playing Murdock's two associates Karen Page and Foggy Nelson, to Fisk's inner circle of Leland Owlsley, Vanessa Marianna, and James

Wesely, played by Bob Gunton, Ayelet Zurer, and Toby Leonard Moore, you truly get a feeling that there is more to the setting of the show than just the conflict between Murdock and Fisk. Each of these characters are unique, with their own lives and their own agendas.

The standout performance, in my opinion, comes from Vondie Curtis-Hall, who plays journalist Ben Urich, a character that comic fans should be familiar with.

An aging reporter, struggling with his desire to tell important, groundbreaking stories with his need to care for his ailing wife and the safety of himself and his sources. He makes for such a compelling character that if the series was only following him, I would still enjoy every moment of it.

Of course, there is more to the series than just the acting. The use of color is particularly stunning, with frequent shades of yellow and red following Murdock and his associates, and black and white being near constant colors surrounding Fisk.

The city is almost alive, with noises coming from all around, dirt and grime and violence is around every corner.

You're left wondering why these people care so much about the city, why they work so hard to save it from itself, yet through it all you can't help but root for them in the hopes of seeing the outcome of all their efforts.

And, of course, there's the costumes.

Every superhero changes their costume from time to time, from Iron Man and Spiderman, who go through new variations every few years, to even Moon Knight and The Punisher, who have had a change or two over the years.

Daredevil however, with the exception of his early yellow costume and a brief stint in a black mask, he's pretty iconic for his sleek red suit.

And the Kingpin, more or less, hasn't been outside of his white suit and cane throughout the years. However, for the majority of the series,

Murdock stays as the man in the black mask and Fisk is seen wearing black or gray suits. For those costume aficionados out there, I can give a bit of good news: by the end of the series, you will see Murdock in red and Fisk in white.

The series poses one of the most interesting conflicts seen in a crime series. Two characters with the same goal of cleaning up Hell's Kitchen.

One is a man with such power and influence, he has nothing standing in his way, nothing to be afraid of.

The other is a man with every reason to give up, struggling with adversity, no money, no influence, nothing but truth and justice, yet notoriously without fear. And although they share a goal and conviction, their journey to get there is completely opposed to each other.

Only one can succeed, but neither are the type to quit.

Over the course of 13 hours, "Daredevil" makes you feel exactly what the characters are feeling, whether it's their hope, their desperation, their hatred and admiration. You root for people who are pure evil, against those fighting for good, at times even wishing the heroes would give up for their own safety.

And if you're a fan of the comics, you'll be in for a subtle reference or two and should assure yourself that just because a character is alive or important in the comics doesn't mean they'll survive on screen.

But whether you're a fan of comics, superheroes, or just enjoy a good crime show, "Daredevil" will be among your favorites of 2015.

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"On the Tube" is a column that reviews and critiques different on-going series on television.

‘Game of Thrones’ begins the emotional rollercoaster

ON THE TUBE



EVAN BURR

This past Sunday, April 12, HBO brought us the fifth season of the acclaimed fantasy series “Game of Thrones,” based on the “A Song of Ice and Fire” saga by writer George R.R. Martin.

Having read the series, I go into watching an episode with certain expectations. Storylines to be met, characters to be portrayed and certain dialogue to be spoken.

However, ever since seeing the third season end with Daenerys Targaryen striking an actual Jesus pose and crowd-surfing across a sea of freed slaves chanting her name, I’ve come to the acceptance that what I watch and what I read are going to be two completely different things, for better or for worse.

The season opens with a bit of a surprise: the first flashback and the first prophecy in the series (the books have many more). We see a young Cersei Lannister visiting a witch who, essentially, plants the seeds of paranoia that dominate the character.

In King’s Landing shortly after, we see her sneer her way through interactions with her subjects and more importantly her family, which brings back some characters introduced early in the series: her uncle, Kevan (who, if he’s anything like he is in the books, should be bringing some of the snappier one liners in the future), and her cousin, Lancel, now a bit of a religious extremist.

Outside of Lannister intrigue, the Tyrells go scurrying about, with Margaery moving in as queen and Loras remaining completely unlike his book counterpart, with the writers strangely taking away every aspect of his personality and making him nothing more than a “token gay character.”

On the bright side though, the sets are stunning, with a particular mention of the Sept of Baelor, which really captures the magnificence and opulence from the books.

In the Vale, we see some interactions between Sansa Stark, now in disguise as the daughter of Littlefinger, and the already mentioned false father figure. It shows a bit of intelligence on Sansa’s

part, as she keeps up with Littlefinger’s scheming, but it seems that she is going to have a very different storyline than she does in the books.

More notably, on The Wall we see Jon Snow trying to create compromise between his two new father figures, Mance Rayder and Stannis Baratheon.

Unfortunately for him, neither one is big on being told what to do.

Stannis seeks an army in order to reclaim the North from the people who murdered Robb Stark, Mance has an army, but no desire to see them fight. The situation brings about some of the best acting in the episode and includes the first notable death of season five.

That’s right, episode one and they’re already starting something of a bloodbath.

And, of course, we can’t forget fan favorites Tyrion Lannister and Daenerys. Tyrion arrives from his little boat trip in Pentos, along with Varys, and they plan their next move there. In Meereen, Dany faces significant resistance from the people she “liberated.”

A murdered soldier, requests for fighting pits and even some of her

own advisors suggesting she give in a little. I find this section to be somewhat disappointing.

Plotwise, these sections stay true to the source material, however, there is a notable attempt by the writers to remove the negative traits of these two characters.

All in all, the episode was mostly introductory, perhaps a bit more interesting to those who have read the books. With a few issues, it was entertaining and captivating, leaving me with a desire to see what happens next and hope that the writers are learning from some of their past mistakes.

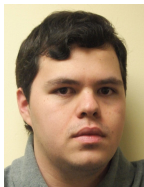
With a promise of a major death in each episode, I’m sure the coming weeks are going to be an emotional rollercoaster for fans of the show.

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‘The Warriors’ a worthy retelling of classic Greek tale

CULT CLASSICS



RAFAEL ABREU

What are the odds that a street gang from Coney Island can make it all the way back from The Bronx in one night while the whole city is after them? Not very high.

“The Warriors” is a 1979 cult classic directed by Walter Hill, based on the Sol Yurick novel, with both the film and novel taking inspiration from the Greek tale “Anabasis” by Xenophon.

The film concerns the aforementioned titular street gang being framed for a murder, resulting in them needing to get back to their home turf before someone else gets to them first.

The film is supposed to take place at some point in the near future, but the film

never makes this too clear in any way. Besides, if I had to guess without knowing the film’s release date, I’d correctly say late ‘70s – some styles and aesthetics are just impossible to disguise.

However, you’d be wrong if you think this does the film a disservice; on the contrary, putting the film in this time period allows for one to enjoy the film’s sometimes campy nature, as well as put a historical spin on things.

When I first saw this film, I originally assumed it was an exaggerated reflection of the times, what with New York City basically being overrun with colorful street gangs around every corner.

One can see “The Warriors” as a modern day “Anabasis” retelling taking advantage of a famous but rotten city where even surreal things as seen in this

film don’t seem all that off in real life.

On a purely visual and atmospheric level, “The Warriors” works masterfully. You can already see this film as mindless entertainment, so it helps that the film’s look is unique and appropriate. Colors are natural, but stand out when certain gang members are around; The Warriors themselves dress in red and tend to stand out in more subtle ways (their graffiti tag is less subtle).

Along with the colorful gangs and New York locations is the film score by Barry De Vorzon; right from the opening credits, it sets the mood perfectly, starting with synth, then bringing in guitars and percussion.

There are plenty of moments where there is no score present, but the filmmakers knew just when it was needed.

Not only that, but a few actual songs show up, too, to great effect (Joe Walsh’s “In the City”, which was written for this film, plays during the end credits).

“The Warriors” was disliked by most critics when first released, but has since grown in stature, to the point of having its own video game developed by Rockstar Games.

For a film that works as a modern day retelling of a classic Greek story, it’s relatively simple on the surface.

While one can watch the film and see nothing but action and thrills, one can also see social commentary, anxiety, bravery, and loyalty. Throw in memorable characters, music and atmosphere and you have yourself a film deserving of cult status.

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Future of education includes video games in classrooms

BRIAN CRECENTE

Polygon
TNS

A lot of modern students spend as much time playing video games as they do attending school, according to research by the University of Indiana.

Some may view that as a shocking affirmation that video games are eroding the education of an entire generation, but the U.S. Department of Education sees it as an opportunity, a chance to reinvent education in a way that makes it more relevant to today’s student.

“If you look at the life of a student ... a lot of students play on average about 10,000 hours of video games by the time they are graduating high school. That is almost the same amount they are spending in schools,” said Erik Martin, the U.S. Department of Education’s Games for Learning lead. “You can imagine a lot of the time which of the two activities they might feel more engaged in or more relevant.

“If you can take that experience of getting outside of school and make it feel just as relevant and just as compelling when they’re in school learning stuff and doing stuff and doing something that’s interesting and educational, that’s that

bridging we want to sort of provide.”

Later this month, the U.S. Department of Education holds its first Games for Learning Summit in New York City, a gathering of educational experts, students, teachers, game publishers and developers. Summit organizers hope to use the event to help break down the barriers that exist between the interests of game developers and needs of educational games. The outcome, organizers hope, will be new ways to make and distribute engaging and educational video games to classrooms.

“I think the education community is ready to really use technology in innovative ways,” said Richard Culatta, the director of educational technology at the U.S. Department of Education. “But I think we are largely dependent on the people who are building these tools and solutions to provide apps that meet educational needs.

“Part of the message we are trying to send here is, if you’re building and designing games for learning you have to connect and work with teachers and with school leaders to make sure you are building games that are meeting the needs.”

Among the sessions are two from massive game-maker Ubisoft. The publisher will have developers at the

summit to talk about its rhythm-meets-education guitar game “Rocksmith” and the health benefits of dance game “Just Dance.” Perhaps most surprisingly, the publisher will also be talking about its incredibly popular action, assassination game “Assassin’s Creed” and a game it published about the first World War.

“From the very first ‘Assassin’s Creed,’ which took place during the ‘Third Crusade,’ to the latest, ‘Assassin’s Creed Unity,’ the development teams have gone to great lengths to be historically accurate on multiple levels,” said Michael Beadle, associate director of public relations at Ubisoft. “Over the years we’ve heard of universities across the U.S. using the games to engage students, compare the in-game history with the history they learned in class or simple to show students what these periods of history looking like visually.”

Beadle points to the level of high definition detail in “Assassin’s Creed 2’s” representation of the Renaissance architecture and work with key cultural and linguistic experts to include an accurate representation of the Kanien’kesha:ka (Mohawk) Nation in “Assassin’s Creed 3,” as examples.

“Each game has a database where players are able to further explore and

learn about key historical moments they have played through or about a building they just passed or climbed,” he said. “History is a core component of the Assassins’ Creed franchise and one that we know has taught millions of players over the years about key characters and historical events by experiencing pivotal moments in history.”

The daylong summit is the latest sign that the Department of Education recognizes the power of games for learning. And, Culatta says, the department is committed to fostering a broader adoption of high quality games for education.

In fact, he says it’s an inevitability that games will become an important part of education in the future.

The summit is a direct response to President Barack Obama’s ConnectED initiative, a push to provide, among other things, Internet connectivity to schools across the country. That connectivity made the idea of using games to transform learning more practical.

“Along with that comes this challenge of what do we do with that connectivity?” said Culatta. “How do we use it to have more than electronic text books, which is not the goal.

FOOTBALL

Springing into football with spring game

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Football is back. Well, sort of. The FIU football team will be strapping up Friday, April 17 at 7 p.m at Ocean Bank Field. This season should be a make or break year for Head Coach Ron Turner. This will be his third season with the Panthers after finishing the last two seasons below 500. Yet, he managed to add new but proven assistant coaches, recruiting heavily in the state of Florida, and having majority of their key starters back on both offense and defense. As we are counting down the days until the official spring game, here is what to expect for Friday night’s game.

QBs

Its pretty clear that Alex McGough will be the starting quarterback for this

coming season, and we all expect this true sophomore to take first team reps Friday night. However, the backup position is up for grabs, and it will come down to either Redshirt Freshman Bud Martin or early enrollee Christian Alexander. Martin, so far, has been really competitive throughout the whole spring, and he definitely knows how to throw a spiral compared to other QBs. Christian Alexander on the other hand, has shown flashes as a pocket passer, but he is still a raw talent that needs to be developed for this True Freshman.

New Weapons

We all know Jonnu Smith is our main guy at the tight end position. But who is going to be that number one target at the wide receiver position? This position has been competitive all spring and get ready for some new faces.

There’s Juwan Caesar and his 6-foot-5 219 pound frame, who’s finally going to seek action after sitting out for the entire season because of NCAA transfer rules. There’s also senior starter Clinton Taylor who has also been having a productive spring as he has been the most consistent player in the receiving corp. There’s also the freshman sensation Anthony Jones, who has been wowing the coaches with his breakaway speed and elite athleticism. Expect this true freshman out of Miami Central to fly around the whole entire game with a position of his own called “Rocket.”

Defense

Everybody knows that the Panthers biggest strength is their defense, that finished in the top 35 in the country. Majority of players are back, including our star cornerback Richard Leonard, who

decided to withdraw from the NFL and stay for his senior season. Expect this defense to fly around and make turnovers and make big hits Friday night. Defense wins football games. Overall, I expect the panthers to be more explosive than last year and make the game fast pace. With majority of the players coming back, plus adding some young players in the mix, I won’t be surprised if the Panthers become a huge threat in the conference. This will be a great opportunity for all students, alumni and parents to come out and get a good taste for what’s to come this season. The annual spring game starts this Friday at 7 p.m. I expect a huge crowd during this Friday Night Lights at Ocean Bank Field.

BASEBALL

Panthers look to turn season around versus WKU

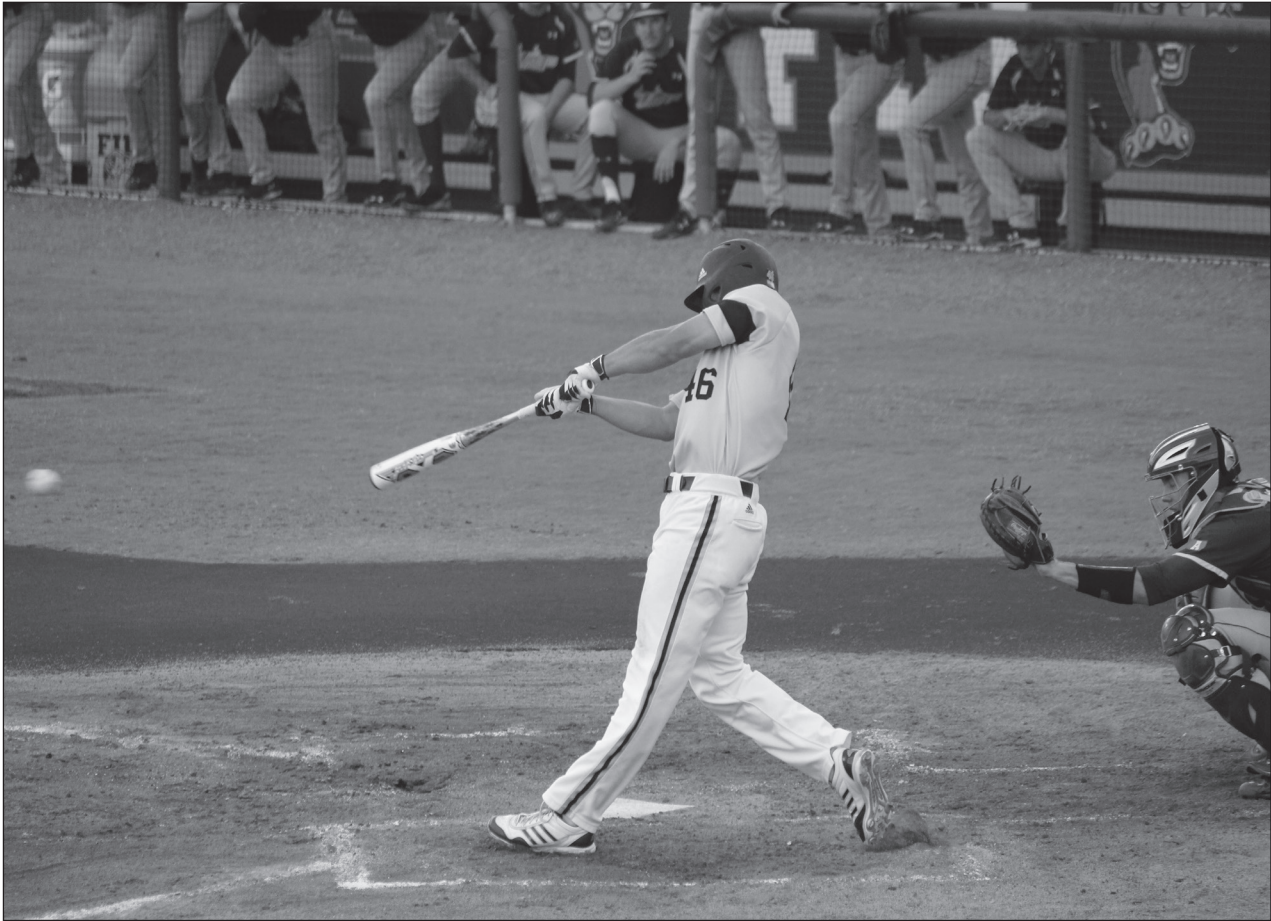
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Coming into the season projected to finish second and currently at eighth place in the Conference USA standings is not what

As of now, they still have a chance to do a complete 180 and finish this season on a high note. There are 18 games left in the season with the bulk of the games against conference opponents. That’s what the team has

“After losing back to back C-USA series against Florida Atlantic University and University of Texas San Antonio, the Panthers need every available player on the roster for the rest of the season because it is going to take the entirety of the team to finish as a top seed.”

the baseball team expected to be at in this point of the season. They have been struggling as of late which has been costly to the team. to focus on now because that C-USA record is what matters the most. This Friday, April 17 the Panthers take on Western



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Senior outfielder Brian Portelli swings and makes contact at the game against the University of Southern Florida on Tuesday, April 7.



KRONO LESCANO/THE BEACON

Freshman outfielder Ricardo Pozo fist bumps senior infielder Julius Gaines in the game against University of Texas at San Antonio on Friday, April 3. This Friday, April 17, the Panthers take on Western Kentucky University.

Kentucky University for a three game weekend series. Every game from here on out is crucial. This series can determine the direction of the team as WKU is a conference opponent and is one spot ahead of FIU in the standings. Both teams have the same record at 7-8 but what determines that WKU is ahead of the Panthers is their overall record. WKU has a 17-16 record while FIU is below .500 with a

losing record of 16-20. After losing back to back C-USA series against Florida Atlantic University and University of Texas San Antonio, the Panthers need every available player on the roster for the rest of the season because it is going to take the entirety of the team to finish as a top seed. Some players that need to lead the charge are seniors Brian Portelli, Julius Gaines and junior Edwin Rios. Offensively, all three swung the bat well last series against FAU. Portelli improved his team-leading batting average to .338 and Rios hit his team-leading 11th home run. Gaines had a great series with the glove too as he anchored the defensive infield alignment. These three players need to carry this successful play into the series versus the Hilltoppers. While sweeping the Hilltoppers might be too much to ask for, taking two

out of three is a must for FIU. Doing so, they climb the standings and can go ahead of WKU and even University of Alabama at Birmingham. This would put them in the top half of the standings with 15 games left to play which is enough time to finish at an even higher seed. Lets hope for the best for the Panthers as they have to scratch and claw to make it to the top.

SAND VOLLEYBALL

Sand volleyball finishes season at No. 3

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The sand volleyball team has finished the regular season with a record of 18-1, its best in program history, and riding a seventeen game win streak. The Panthers also finished at the No. 3 spot in two rankings: DiG Magazine Collegiate Poll and AVCA Sand Poll.

The Panthers are currently behind the University of Southern California and the University of Hawaii,

which rank No. 1 and No. 2, respectively. USC is undefeated with a record of 19-0 and Hawaii only one loss at 12-1. These two programs have been in the top three the entire year, unlike the Panthers who have climbed up the rankings during the season.

The team has had impressive victories all throughout the year. It defeated Florida State University 3-2 earlier in the season when the Seminoles were ranked No. 2. The Panthers also defeated No. 3 Pepperdine University and No. 17 University

of South Carolina in the Palmetto Invitational in Columbia, South Carolina, proving to be the team’s best weekend of the year.

This past weekend, the team traveled to Siesta Key, Florida to take on Stetson University in the Fiesta on Siesta. Stetson gave the Panthers their only loss of the season in early March.

This match was very crucial because a loss would’ve potentially knocked the Panthers back a few spots. Fueled by its impressive slate of wins, the team defeated the

Hatters 4-1 and evened the season series to 1-1.

Overall, the Panthers are 4-0 against current AVCA teams and 5-1 against DiG magazine Top 20 opponents.

The team has also won big in many occasions by sweeping opponents 5-0 in 12 different matches.

This includes a complete sweep in the Doctors Hospital FIU Surf and Turf Invitational in Miami Beach. The Panthers defeated Webber International University, Stanford University, Carson-Newman

University and Florida Atlantic University in convincing fashion as they held their home court.

Senior Maryna Samoday and freshman Anja Licka have been the duo driving the team. The Panther’s No. 1 duo have played like it the entire season. Aside from the Fiesta on Siesta, which led to a withdraw due to an injury, the duo is 17-1 in dual matches the 18 previous matches.

Graduate student, Kristine Monfronte and senior, Summer Nash, have also been very impressive. They are the

No. 2 duo for the Panthers and have a 17-1 record in dual matches as well. Both duos, No. 1 and No. 2, have fueled the team throughout the season.

The Panthers are set to return to the AVCA National Championships in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The team was eliminated last season by FSU in the first round and will be looking to improve.

The Panthers will need the leadership of their top two duos to make a deep run in the tournament and bring the program’s first championship.

NBA

The Heat’s 2014-15 season was not a waste

DRUCKER DIGEST



DAVID DRUCKER

If there’s one thing I can say confidently about the 2014-2015 Miami Heat season, it’s that almost none of my predictions came true.

In the beginning of the season I believed that the Heat were a top five seed in the East.

Although they were LeBron-less after the offseason, I thought that they would have enough experience behind All Stars Chris Bosh and Dwayne Wade to be competitive.

For a short time, I was right: the Heat jumped out to a 5-2 record and even led the Eastern Conference for a bit. Then I was really wrong.

Three issues held the Heat back in the first half of the season: they had no true center, no true point guard and no depth.

Although Pat Riley would fill the first two holes with point guard Goran Dragic

and center Hassan Whiteside, the Heat’s lack of quality bench players and a host of other problems caught up to them.

I don’t think anyone can pinpoint exactly when the Heat went up in flames.

Injuries to key players were tacked on every few weeks. The defense slowly corroded as the season dragged on.

Somewhere along the way, the Heat lost their “clutch” gene and started blowing double digit leads regularly.

This season was so out of left field that even Riley couldn’t right the ship. Just when he acquired Dragic from the Suns, Bosh was admitted into the hospital. Just when it seemed that the Heat pulled off the steal of the century in signing Hassan Whiteside, the center flared his maturity issues.

Now, the marathon that is the NBA regular season is finally over and with it the Miami Heat’s chance at defending their Eastern Conference title.

The Heat were officially eliminated from playoff contention on Tuesday night when the Pacers defeated the Wizards, but a long list of losses in which the Miami Heat dropped the ball deserve the blame first.

If you’re a Miami Heat fan, you can view this season as either a train wreck or a gift from above.

The basketball gods plagued the Heat with injuries; Bosh, Wade, Josh McRoberts, Shabazz Napier and Luol Deng all missed significant playing time.

As a direct result of those injuries, however, players like Whiteside and Henry Walker received playing time and were able to come into the fold.

Without the bad this season, the pieces that the franchise needs for the future may have never been discovered.

I say “So what if the Miami Heat have to watch the playoffs from the outside this year?” They’ve made the postseason in all

but two years in the Dwyane Wade era.

Maybe the Heat deserve to rest for a while, which might not be too difficult to do knowing that they can expect a starting five of Dragic, Wade, Deng, Bosh and Whiteside next season. The future is bright.

The most important thing to remember about 2014-2015 is that it was not a waste of time just because they missed the playoffs. The Heat core spent the year developing chemistry and adding pieces that will pay off in a big way one day.

In the meantime, it’s all up to the Marlins now to make sure that South Florida doesn’t go a full calendar year without playoffs.

Now that’s a future that terrifies me.

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MLB

Marlins disappoint fans at start of 2015 season

MARLIN MADNESS



LOUIS AGUDELO

After another fireworks show of an offseason, the Miami Marlins seem to be up to their old tricks.

The Marlins have a bad habit that has yet to be broken in their 22 years of existence.

They like to throw flashy stars, flashy play, promotions, new stadiums and even a couple World Series Championships at their fans, just to pull a sort of trap door out from under them milliseconds after.

The Marlins’ faithful fans have barely had a chance to celebrate. Almost immediately after, being dropped right back down into Miami Sports Fan Purgatory, where the teams that you love and support your entire life should be good, and repay you for your loyalty, but they just don’t, and you’re left

wondering why you ever thought that anything would change.

Although It’s obviously much too early to look upon the 2015 season retrospectively and speak on whether it was a failure or success, I think everyone would agree that Opening Week didn’t go at all as expected.

Not only did the Fish lose both opening series, but they were swept by none other than their long-time NL East Division rivals, the Atlanta Braves.

This was embarrassing on many levels, one of which being that the Braves aren’t expected to even contend for the division crown. That crown is supposed to be between the Washington Nationals, and yes, the Miami Marlins.

After dropping the opening series so anti-climactically, and following that performance up by losing two of three games to in-state-but-out-of-league rivals

the Tampa Bay Rays, the Marlins need to right the ship quickly, if for nothing else, to keep attendance and revenue up.

Anybody with a working pair of ears heard the explosion that the team was responsible for involving trades and locking up their own players this winter.

The Marlins and their owner Jeffrey Loria went out and traded for second basemen, speed-demon Dee Gordon and veteran pitcher Dan Haren.

While Gordon is off to a great start, batting .346 in his first six starts along with three stolen bases and Haren posted a 1.50 era in his first start for the Fish.

Their other out-of-organization acquisition third baseman Martin Prado only has four hits in his first 20 at-bats.

In-house talent like corner outfielders Giancarlo Stanton and Christian Yelich were signed

to seemingly large contracts, to lock up young talent in Miami, something the organization hasn’t been known for, ever.

Yelich has posted a solid .304 average in the first two series, but the \$325 million dollar man Giancarlo Stanton has struck out more than twice as many times as he’s come away from an at-bat with a hit.

If there are any more moves to be made before the trade deadline to improve offensive production, dealing Stanton would not only be idiotic, but impossible, as the MVP hopeful also has a no-trade clause for the first seven of the thirteen years on his contract.

Veteran catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia seems to be the player to be dealt, with potential Gold Glove Shortstop Adeiny Hechavarria. The pair didn’t even bat a combined .200 in their first six 2015 games, and neither has looked

great offensively in recent history.

This Marlins team has put up half as many runs as their pitching staff has given up, and has already been shut-out twice in six games.

Face-of-MLB Giancarlo Stanton is going to have to bat a bit better than his current .158 average, to help his team sit somewhere near the .500 mark.

Until at least mid season when the Marlins ace, and former Rookie of the Year Jose Fernandez steps back onto the field after his surgery, if they have any hope of playing baseball in October in south Florida, for this first time since 2003, and pull the South Florida fan out of Limbo, for at least one more postseason.

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BRINGING BIG CHANGES: SGC-BBC PRESIDENT CONQUERS

“ I FEEL LIKE A LOT OF THE
CHALLENGES THAT WE’VE HAD,
WE’VE CONQUERED THEM.

JAZMIN FELIX
PRESIDENT
SGC-BBC ”

CAMILA FERNANDEZ
BBC Managing Editor
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Jazmin Felix didn’t even want to be in student government.

Coming to the University as a nursing student, Felix had her sight focused on studying and no campus life involvement.

Yet, after being Student Government President in middle school and Vice President in high school, being in SGA-FIU was inevitable.

“I walked passed the SGA office and it was like, ‘Jazmin, Jazmin, apply... and I was like, ‘no, no, no,’ and I kept walking and I turned right back around and I picked up an application,” Felix said.

Her passion for helping others and putting students first triumphed.

She began as a Lower Division Senator, then a Nursing & Health Sciences Senator and Speaker of the Senate.

At just eighteen years old, no one expected a freshman to thrive in the SGA at such a fast pace.

“She believed in what student government stands for and to this day, she believes that and it makes it easier for her to follow up with her convictions. It is rare finding students that dedicated that early,” said Rafael Zapata, interim director at the BBC Office

of Campus Life.

“It didn’t surprise me that she would potentially be president,” Zapata said.

Felix soon became the BBC Student Government Council President her junior year in spring 2014.

As part of her platform for SGC-BBC President, she used the acronym BBC, Bringing Big Changes and that’s what she did.

“I feel like a lot of the challenges that we’ve had, we’ve conquered them. I was very aggressive with my goals and I knew what I wanted to do -- I had such an amazing team,” Felix said.

During her tenure, the council funded the renovation of the Wolfe University Center.

The \$4.2 million construction process included changes in the BBC Panther Square and the Panther Plaza and its addition of a panther statue.

They also added phone charging stations, lockers for student storage and a computer lab in the second floor of the WUC.

“I think the greatest achievement over the past five years is the funding and purchase of a panther statue,” said Alexis Calatayud, SGC-MMC president.

“During her tenure, Jazmin has taken a role in advocating for the Biscayne Bay Campus in budget deliberation, University

committees and state advocacy. These tools, when utilized well, are invaluable to the betterment of student experience,” Calatayud said.

In terms of having a stronger collaboration between MMC and BBC, Calatayud, who was re-elected president for the 2015-2016 school year, said topics that directly and equally impact both campuses will be discussed.

However, she said it is important to understand that sometimes their unique goals and needs must be met individually.

Camille Williams, vice president of the SGC-BBC, said she appreciated the way Felix adapted to working differently with each individual she worked with.

“She’s really a great person at bringing out the best in people,” said Camille Williams, vice president of the SGC-BBC.

“We all managed to work very well with the other campus councils and we got the job done and that was a great accomplishment because we all worked together despite our differences,” she said.

Williams referred to the Inter-Council Coalition, a new partnership started by Felix, to address student needs between SGA and the rest of the BBC’s major student organizations.

Williams said that Felix’s humor brought life to the council.

“She can make anybody laugh. She could talk to a brick wall and it would talk back. That’s the character she brought to every meeting that we had and it was always very easy, but also very focused,” said Williams.

Felix is the youngest out of six brothers and sisters and a family from Turks and Caicos Islands in the British West Indies.

“I’m the baby, but you know, it’s funny because people would think I’m suppose to be the brat, right? I’m the last one, but my mom has always

instilled in me good work ethic so I’ve never been like a bad brat... I’ve been a good brat,” said Felix.

Larissa Adames, SGA coordinator at the BBC Campus Life, said she always involved everyone in the council when decisions were made.

“She always thought of others so that kind of made her stand out. Once she puts her mind to something, she goes ahead and does it,” Adames said.

“She doesn’t wait for anything, or anyone. Once she sets her goal, she goes and she does it,” said Adames.

Elina Sibony, SGC-BBC Chief of Staff,

said Felix changed her heart. Sibony thought that when she entered SGA, there was going to be no room for friends because it’s a serious job.

“But, she got me this small cute box of chocolates [on Valentine’s Day] and she goes, ‘Will you be my Valentine?’ and it was just so cute. She really made SGA like a family to me and it altered my heart,” Sibony said.

“She has so much on her plate, she never loses her cool, she’s always relaxed, she’s always having a great time. It’s inspiring for me because that’s what I strive to be like. I absolutely love her,” Sibony said.



ALL PHOTOS BY KRONO LESCANO/THE BEACON

Jazmin Felix, a senior studying nursing and SGC-BBC 2014-2015 president, had her sights originally set on no campus life involvement. Yet, after being Student Government President in middle school and Vice President in high school, being in SGA-FIU was inevitable.