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FIU awarded for Global Learning initiatives

NICOLE MONTERO
Staff Writer
nicole.montero@fiusm.com

The University was recently recognized for its efforts in its Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative, a curricular and co-curricular program that provides students with multiple opportunities for active, team-based and interdisciplinary exploration of real-world problems, according to their website.

The Institute of International Education, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to advance international education and access to education worldwide, awarded the University the 2016 Andrew Heiskell Award for Innovation in International Education.

"The award distinguishes our Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative as a best practice for successful campus internationalization," wrote University Provost and Executive Vice President Kenneth Furton in a University-wide memorandum.

IIE awards a few universities each year for different areas of innovation and international

education. According to Hilary Landorf, director of Global Learning Initiatives and associate professor of international and intercultural education, this is the broadest award.

"There are two awards that are given in the United States for internationalizing campuses: the Paul Simon Award and this one," she said. "IIE is international and has a very wide reach. They run the Fulbright program and are known internationally, with over 1,400 institutions that belong to them and reaching over 10,000 people worldwide. It's a big deal and quite an honor for us."

The award validates their work in internationalizing the campus through their Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative, said Landorf.

"One of the goals of our founding president, Charles Perry, was for FIU to be at the forefront of international education," she said. "In many of his speeches, he talked about internationalization of the curriculum and how important it is for FIU to be an international university. This award brings us full circle back to the goals of our founding president and gives substance to them."

A GUIDING LIGHT



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Leandra Alonso (right), senior in international relations and part of Shalom FIU and Regina Del Castillo (left), a freshman in communications and part of Hillel at FIU, light candles the Holocaust Day of Remembrance event, Wednesday, Jan. 27. Photo by Megan Tait.

In summer, 2008, the University engaged in a University-wide effort to reinvigorate the "I" in FIU.

Research conducted by the Office of Global Learning Initiatives and the Office of Research revealed an "internationalization gap," which, according to Landorf, was a discrepancy between the University stakeholders' valuation of University diversity and the extent in which diverse perspectives were being

cultivated and used in the classroom.

"A survey went out to over 3,500 stakeholders and the most important finding was that diversity at FIU was perceived as our top strength," said Landorf. "However, the survey also revealed that the University was not taking advantage of the diverse perspectives of our students in the classroom. In other words, the diversity of the classroom was not being used in the classroom."

In order to close this internationalization "gap," the Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative was implemented in 2010, said Landorf.

The initiative, still in use today, includes a two-course global learning graduation requirement for all undergraduate students, among other things.

"We now have over 160 courses that have these

SEE AWARDS, PAGE 2

Housing policy accommodates comfort pets

MORGAN BENOIT
Contributing Writer
news@fiusm.com

Sofia Alberto, a freshman majoring in recreational therapy, attends FIU with her 6-month-old dog named Charlie. Charlie serves as Alberto's emotional support animal, or comfort animal, and lives with Alberto in her dorm at Lakeview Hall South.

Alberto is a survivor of Ewing's sarcoma, a form of cancer, and has recently been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. All of this, combined with her hesitation in taking a medicated route for her condition, revealed her vital need for Charlie as her comfort animal.

He brings Alberto relief and is trained to calm her anxiety attacks.

"He seems like a normal dog, but



MORGAN BENOIT/THE BEACON

to me he's the best medicine I've ever received," Alberto said.

FIU's strict housing policy regarding animals in the residence halls has undergone some adjustments to accommodate students like Alberto who are in need of emotional support animals.

According to Andrew Naylor, associate director of housing, approximately 15 students have emotional support or service animals residing in on-campus housing.

"If the student has a need for an emotional support animal and has roommates, there are some negotiations that have to go on," said Naylor.

The course of action would

be centered on the medical conditions of the animal owner's potential roommates. Housing's goal is to assure that medical arrangements are made pertaining to particular situations such as allergies.

There is also the question of how an individual can be approved for an emotional support animal.

"I think the first thing is making sure that the student that has identified that they have a need for an emotional support animal, that all their documentation is legitimate," said Naylor.

Naylor reassured that FIU strives to hold higher standards pertaining to the legitimacy of the student's emotional need.

"We make sure that it is a legit therapy or mental health situation," said Andrew. The housing department works in partnership with the Disability Resource Center in the process of verification.

Stephen Loynaz, access

consultant manager, says "The DRC works with various entities on campus to implement



MORGAN BENOIT/THE BEACON

Sofia Alberto, freshman recreational therapy major, poses with her comfort pet Charlie.

accommodations. As for authenticating letters, we typically call the therapist or doctor's office that wrote the letter."

The goal is to investigate each emotional disability case, seeking evidence of a sound and solid relationship

between the student and therapist. The task of Housing and the DRC can become complicated due to what Naylor mentioned as the latest alternative, an online therapist.

Websites such as thedogtoronline.com, claiming to be America's number one online emotional support animal approval site, make it possible for anyone to obtain the proper documentation to acquire an emotional support or service animal -whether they need the animal or not.

These websites require an online medical exam and provide the option of selecting between three different payment plans, one of which does not require re-evaluation.

Once the exam is reviewed and approved by medical professionals, it will take approximately 48 hours until the patient receives the prescription letter via email. These alternative can

potentially pose as a barrier in terms of discerning who needs a comfort animal who is trying to cheat the system.

Emotional support animals aid patients of various conditions and are utilized for therapeutic methods and counseling. This especially applies to cases like Alberto's that require a pet in order to prevent the occurrence of emotional turmoil that could disrupt her ability to successfully navigate college.

Charlie is currently undergoing the process of training to become a certified service dog to further ensure Alberto's safety. Once training has been completed, he will have the ability to open doors, contact help in case of an emergency and serve as protection.

"If it weren't for him I wouldn't be able to control my attacks and I would've failed out of the semester," explained Sofia.

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Venezuela's crisis remakes its tourism industry

In Caracas, the capital, tourism businesses have shifted their attention from foreigners to what is known here as "full day" tours - one-day trips, mostly for people who live in or near Caracas, to places such as Choroní, a tourist destination tucked into a national park about 40 miles due west of Caracas that was once a hive for foreigners and their money. These trips are creating a growing market for domestic tourism, said Marjorie Leal, who works for a company that sells full day trips. That market also is benefiting from Venezuelans' inability to get permission or enough American dollars to travel to the United States, Leal said. With foreign travel out, they take trips in their own country.

Military appeals courts confront sexual activity by HIV-positive troops

Gavin B. Atchak's oral and anal sex with fellow commanding officer at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina ordered him to avoid unprotected sex after Atchak tested positive for HIV in 2011. The officer also directed Atchak, an enlisted man in the Air Force security forces, to inform future sex partners that he carried the virus that can cause AIDS. Atchak disobeyed and engaged in unprotected

Possible public health emergency over Zika

Nine months after the Zika virus was first discovered in South America, international health organizations are still struggling with how to confront what appears to be the largest global public health crisis since Ebola decimated eastern Africa in 2014. U.S. researchers have blasted the World Health Organization for what they say has been a slow response, and some pressed the international organization to declare a public health emergency before the mosquito-borne virus becomes an "explosive pandemic." Officials from the World Health Organization acknowledged Thursday that the Zika virus was "spreading explosively" in the Americas and set an emergency meeting for Monday to decide whether to declare a public health emergency.

Meditation sessions at College of Law begin

NICOLE MONTERO
Staff Writer
nicole.montero@fiusm.com

Sofia Galiano meditates at least three times a week. According to her, it can prevent heart disease, reduce stress and significantly lessen ADHD.

"It's a place that allows me to examine myself in a nonjudgmental way," said Galiano, sophomore education major. "As a college student and a full-time employee, I get really stressed throughout the semester. This is just a way for me to relax and reflect on certain situations in my life."

To meet the needs of University students and staff, the University's College of Law Library has started offering a series of workshops called Guided Meditation for Relaxation.

Last spring, Pushyamitra Veeramachaneni, head of Access Services and Outreach at the University's College of Law Library, attended a meditation session conducted by the Religious Studies Department.

She loved it and the project soon took off.

"I mentioned it to the library director and she said that she would be happy to have sessions here," she said. "Meditation is a path to well-being and inner transformation. It is important for balanced management of sensory perception and it helps in developing concentration power, decision power and memory."

Veeramachaneni thinks these classes could be useful for the University community.

"We need these classes at the University because most

of us start the day with the stress of driving to work and classes, academic load and also with personal issues," she said. "A few minutes of meditation classes during the day at the University helps to calm us down."

Workshop attendees will learn the different techniques of Preksha Meditation, the practice of purifying the emotions and conscious and realizing the own self. According to Veeramachaneni, it is a combination of spirituality and science that helps develop "attitudinal and behavioral change."

Andrea Seidel, associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies, thinks that meditation is a "strategy" for calming the mind and developing self-awareness of negative conditions, in particular.

"In a culture where nearly everyone is externally focused and multi-tasking on iPads, iPhones, computers and other media, meditation provides a tool for observing the mind and its often chaotic nature," she said. "Success in life and career is largely rooted in the behavior and psyche of an individual. If one is not well-balanced, it will affect every aspect of life."

Seidel teaches Yoga at the University and, over the course of a semester, sees many changes in students who apply themselves to the class.

"I tell my students: if your life doesn't change somewhat for the better, then you have probably done very little in the class," she said. "The rewards are reaped according to the amount of effort, dedication, and commitment to learning and

applying the various tools and philosophical principles."

For her, yoga is not a religion but a "spiritual science."

"[It's] a science of life, so one can learn great lessons in how to live a life of integrity, responsibility and dedication to higher principles that serve humanity," said Seidel. "Yoga is a tool that helps to integrate the mind, body, spirit and emotions. It furthers the invaluable process of "knowing thyself" and it fosters great moral values."

Though the workshop series initially started for law students, it is open to anyone in the University community.

"Not only [does] it benefit law students, it benefits all of us," said Veeramachaneni. "Meditation helps in developing insight and wisdom through which a student becomes better able to release stress, improve communication skills, and to have content mind which helps them to stay positive."

The workshops will be held in the Modesto A. Maidique Campus' Law Library Seminar Room, RDB 2080, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

To sign up and view the specific workshop dates, go to law.fiu.edu/library.

They are free and open to the public.

"[Meditation] is better than sleeping," said Galiano. "When you're sleeping, you're not reflecting on your life. There's no illumination or grand realization. When you're meditating, it's a whole different experience. You dig deep and find things out about yourself. You're more relaxed and attuned to your body and feelings. There's nothing better."

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Modesto Maidique Campus:
GC 210, Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m.-5 p.m.
(305) 348-2709
news@fiusm.com

Biscayne Bay Campus:
WUC 124, Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m.-5 p.m.
(305) 919-4722
bbc@fiusm.com

Fax:
(305) 348-2712

Editor-in-Chief:
(305) 348-1580
sam.smith@fiusm.com

Advertising:
(305) 348-6994
advertising@fiusm.com

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Institute of International Education recognizes FIU

AWARDS, PAGE 1

elements," said Landorf. "It's by far the largest initiative in the United States, particularly the largest initiative where the University has global learning as a requirement."

Amanda Daniels, freshman business major, is glad that the University got recognized internationally.

"I knew I picked the right school to come to," she said. "A lot of my friends told me to go to an Ivy League school and not to stay in Miami, but I knew from the very beginning that FIU was special and that, even if it wasn't Ivy League, it would go far. I'm just glad I wasn't wrong. I don't see anyone else winning international awards."

But Eric Jacobs, junior philosophy major, is skeptical about what this means for the University.

"I mean, it's great for them, but I don't think this really affects me all that much," he said. "It's not like they're getting money to support the initiatives we already have. It's just an award and I'm not sure how they can use that to make things better."

For Landorf, the award means fundraising opportunities.

"We hope that the award will engender more collaboration in terms of research and partnerships," she said. "We know from feedback when we go to conferences that many universities use our website to get ideas of how they can globalize and there are a few universities that require the global learning for their students, but we are, by far, the largest, deepest and most robust initiative in the United States and we are so honored to be recognized."



Cook and Brew

FIU Master Chef meets Brew Miami, a culinary mashup

DANILO SANTOS
Contributing Writer
life@fiusm.com

Friday, Jan. 22, marked the very first FIU Master Chef competition. The event kicked off with 13 amateur chefs composed of FIU students, staff, faculty and alumni. The winner was decided by a panel of judges from four local restaurants and one guest judge.

The panel included Eileen Andrade, owner of Finka Table & Tap; Gus Montes, chef at Panther Premier; Benjamin Murray, chef at Azul; and Albert Diaz, chef at Zuma.

Three rounds comprised the competition. In the first, seven contestants were eliminated, three in the second - those winners competed in the final round for the title.

The final round was close, almost ending in a tie, but due to scoring in the previous round Elias Bardawil, director of wellness and recreation, was announced champion and Master Chef.

He described the whole competition as

“exhausting.” Each round, every competitor was required to use three mystery objects, straining their creativity and forcing each of them to cook unique dishes.

Bardawil gave FIUSM a brief interview describing his experience, “If I could defend [my title] I would defend. I’d go back again.”

He has words of advice for future chefs and culinary enthusiasts alike.

“In life, just believe and it’ll come true ... Never stop cooking in anything you do: in the kitchen, in the classroom, in your professional career. Always put your best foot forward [and] everything good will happen after that.”

Following his own advice, Bardawil does not plan to stop cooking anytime soon. He looks forward to another competition next year in hopes of defending his title.

FIU’s Master Chef also garnered support from the local community. Miami foodie staples El Mago de las Fritas and Misha’s Cupcakes provided food for the audience.

Judge Andrade, head chef and owner of Finka Table & Tap, had nothing but praise for the event.

“I thought it was awesome, I hope they do it again next year,” she said.

Following Master Chef was Brew Miami, an outdoor event held between the Blue and Gold parking garages.

Local breweries and restaurants were invited to promote their brands of food and beer. Guest were treated to unlimited drinks and food through the night.

J. Wakefield Brewing and Miami Brewing Company were among the breweries providing guests with beer. J. Wakefield teamed up with El Mago de las Fritas to bring a new “Pan con Beersteak Frita,” cooked with J. Wakefield’s amber ale.

All proceeds raised by the events went to the United Way Miami campaign.

“This is awesome. The turnout was mostly friends and family, but for the first year of Master Chef and Brew Miami it was great,” said Vince Rivas, a junior majoring in advertising and a FIUSM photographer. “If FIU had only marketed the event better we would’ve seen more students, because who doesn’t want free food?”



Chef Ramon, an FIU Master Chef contestant, is critiqued by a panel of judges.

The importance and strength of neglected back

MOTIVATION MONDAY



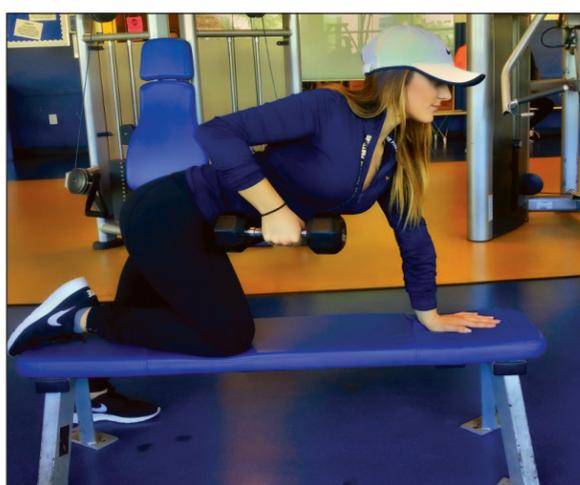
NIHAT STRIDER

The back is one of the most important parts of the human anatomy. It is also one of the most neglected. Back muscles give power to the body, they play a major role in all functions. They connect the hips, butt, chest, shoulder and neck. It is a conjunction between the major body muscles of human body parts. Strengthening our back muscles should not be treated as a luxury, but rather an obligation. These muscles do not only serve us in spotting activities and power workouts, they serve us in our daily lives.

Aesthetically, working out the back will give a slimmer waistline and help to create the hourglass body. Working out the upper back will make us stronger and create the

V-shaped fitness model look from the rear view. Often, we are concerned how our muscles and body look from the front, as that is the only side we see in the mirror. Whether for men wearing suits or for women wearing dress, a perfect back gives the perfect look for a night out on at Miami Beach.

Scientifically, every muscle in our body is directly correlated with its counterpart. For example, biceps with triceps, chest with upper back and abdominals with lower back. to achieve strong chiseled abs, then working out our lower back is essential. Without a strong



NIHAT STRIDER/THE BEACON

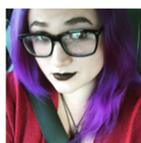
Valerie Bello, FIU Golden Dazzler and junior psychology major, performs an exercise to engage her back.

lower back, any regular ab workouts such as sit ups, planks and many more cannot be performed properly. The back gives the body the power and support to do all those ab crunches. Similarly, for strong chest muscles, working out our upper back muscles is indispensable. To have the perfect upper body look, working out our back part of the body is just as important.

If we consider our daily lives, we find we are either standing or sitting every single moment of the day, therefore good posture is important and it requires strong back muscles. Sitting down for hours on end will cause back pain. This pain is extremely common in American adults due to every single day activity of sitting down for long periods and with untrained posture. Strong back muscles are essential and directly correlated to good posture.

South Florida's spring music lineup

MUSIC NOTES



NADINE RODRIGUEZ

The year 2016 has already promised beautiful entertainment for South Florida, for just the second month of the year more than 13 musicians have announced tours their spring tours.

This lineup ranges from hit pop artists such as Fall Out Boy to head-bangers such as Ice Nine Kills.

The earliest dates are set in February, while the latest come in during May. And once May is over, plenty of summertime entertainment comes into play.

The first musician to stop by is indie electronic artist Robert Delong. Delong's single "Don't Wait Up" has gathered massive air time on South Florida's very own Alternative radio station, The Shark. Despite this, tickets are still available at an affordable price - \$15 - for Delong's Feb. 25 concert

at Ft. Lauderdale's Culture Room.

Following immediately after him are Fall Out Boy, headlining their own tour with AWOLNATION and PVRIS accompanying them. Although there are still tickets left for their Feb. 26 date at Hard Rock Live in Hollywood, FL, they are leaning on the pricey side, the cheapest starting at \$99.

Once March rolls around, a different crowd of musicians is stopping by.

First off, hard rockers Buckcherry, famous for their 2006 single, "Sorry," are stopping by the Ft. Lauderdale Culture Room on March 4. Tickets just went on sale, so expect plenty at an affordable price.

A few days later are the popular pop-punk kids, Neck Deep, Knuckle Puck and State Champs. They will be playing Orlando's Venue 578 March 6, with tickets still available at \$17 for general admission and \$30 for VIP. VIP includes express entry, elevated

viewing and access to a private bar.

Also in Orlando, Ice Nine Kills and Like Moths to Flames are stopping by to rock the night on March 21 at the BackBooth Bar and Venue. Tickets are on sale, and at an extremely affordable \$15. Since neither band tends not to tour so far south, definitely take this opportunity to experience them live.

The heavier August Burns Red and Between the Buried and Me are taking over Ft. Lauderdale's Revolution Live on March 7, with plenty of tickets still available at prices starting at \$40.

A few music festivals are also coming to Florida this spring.

The Fort Rock Festival is taking over Ft. Myers for the weekend of April 30. There are numerous ticket packages available at various prices - a single ticket for both dates is currently \$99.50. This price is well worth the money when one considers that big timers such as Rob Zombie, A Day to Remember, Five Finger Death

Punch, Issues, Anthrax, Sixx A.M., GHOST, Bring Me the Horizon, 3 Doors Down and Bullet for My Valentine are only a few of the musicians playing.

Playing a show less than two weeks later is The 1975. They'll be playing Miami's Bayfront Park Amphitheater May 11. Tickets are leaning on the pricier side, but vary depending on the website used since many are on resale.

Finishing May off is Florence + The Machine, accompanied by Of Monsters and Men, playing at the American Airlines Arena May 31. Tickets are on sale now, but prices vary depending on the website due to the fact that they are mainly resale tickets.

With such a talented list, not including local concerts, spring 2016 will undoubtedly have a source of entertainment for everyone.

Music Notes is a column that covers South Florida bands. For suggestions or commentary email life@fiusm.com

Surviving the winter blues

CRYSTAL FERNANDEZ

Staff Writer

crystal.fernandez@fiusm.com

Winter has arrived in South Florida - sort of. As Panthers kick off spring semester, it's clear that the warm sunshine has been replaced by a crisp breeze, flip flops by boots and iced coffee by warm lattes - which are a hit for these cooler mornings when it is harder to wake up.

This weather is a nice break from the heat; however, it's only natural that the days get shorter and the nights get colder. This can bring even the best of us down.

The "cold weather blues" are not a myth. They're absolutely real. The term used by experts is Seasonal Affective Disorder, in extreme cases. According to Clevelandclinic.org, a non-profit academic center, four to six percent of the population of Florida may suffer from SAD, and 10 to 20 percent might have a milder version - dubbed the winter blues.

The disorder is characterized by mild depression, lack of motivation and low energy - sound familiar? These symptoms are common experiences in people during the cooler months. For some, it could be traumatic to detach themselves from sunny summer days. Luckily, there's a lot that can be done to prevent the blues.

Do a little home improvement

If you're home most of the time, you might as well paint that room you've been putting off all summer. Practice a little Feng-Shui, a Chinese philosophical method for rearranging the area around you to help soothe and increase the flow of energy in your living or work environment. If you're in a dorm, rearrange your furniture or get some new dorm accessories. You can also clean out that closet that's been begging for some assistance. Make your time indoors as productive as possible.

Change your diet

If you're suddenly feeling depressed because of the weather, there may be some foods that can boost your mood. Your diet has more of an effect on your mood than you think. It is important to keep your blood sugar steady, which means eating fewer refined sugars and starches that can spike it up. An ideal food to keep a positive mindset this winter is oatmeal. Try it warm with blueberries for an enriched and flavorful meal. It contains whole grains and fiber, which help stabilize blood sugar. The best part? It's often fortified with an element called selenium, which may help ease anxiety and depression and make you less tired. Foods that contain vitamin D are also ideal. Most people get a lot of this vitamin during the summer from the sun, because there are more outdoor activities to do. But when the weather gets cold, we tend to stay inside. Bike riding is something you can do at any time and the Biscayne Bay Campus Wellness & Recreation Center's Bike Sharing Program facilitates, which allows students to use the bicycles at no charge. Go for a bike ride and embrace the lower temperatures, it's not nearly as refreshing once summer comes around. Other great sources of vitamin D are fish, eggs and milk.

Embrace the Season

Instead of always avoiding the colder temperatures, look for the best that it has to offer. Host a bonfire and make s'mores, go for a walk outdoors or attend one of monthly drum circles held in Miami Beach.

Don't quit your exercising routine

When it's cold out it can be difficult to find motivation to work out, but staying active will boost your energy. According to WebMD, our bodies release chemicals called endorphins during a workout. These chemicals interact with brain receptors that reduce pain and trigger positive feelings.

The temperature drop can be tough to deal with for South Floridians. The rest to the country may consider this a winter paradise but we would like our warm Miami sunshine. In the meantime, stay warm and stay happy.

up



PHOTOS BY VINCENT RIVES/THE BEACON

stant, prepares a meal that will be

Back muscles

Our spine holds our entire body together and upright and it is completely surrounded by the back muscles. Maintaining a strong back will help us stay strong and healthy. Why wait until later and get back pain? Remember the old adage: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Motivation Monday is a weekly column covering fitness and health. Strider is a certified personal trainer, for comments or questions email life@fiusm.com

MONDAY FEB. 1	TUESDAY FEB. 2	WEDNESDAY FEB. 3	THURSDAY FEB. 4	FRIDAY FEB. 5
Panther Alumni Week Kickoff 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. GC Pit	Panther Alumni Week Events happening all day	Panther Alumni Week Events happening all day	Panther Alumni Week Events happening all day	Panther Alumni Week Events happening all day
Town Hall Meeting 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. GC 230	Dancing with the Wolfe noon to 1 p.m. WUC 160, BBC	ExxonMobil Global Energy Outlook at FIU 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. MARC Pavilion	Mardi Gras 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Panther Square	Nature Preserve Volunteer Day 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Nature Preserve
"In Deep With Diatoms" 3 p.m. Glenn Hubert Library, BBC	Tuesday Times Roundtable 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. GC 150	Sex Carnival 2016 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. GC	FIU women's basketball vs UAB 7 p.m. on Lime Court at FIU Arena	Free Fridays at The Wolf 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Wolfsonian-FIU
SGABBC Senate Meeting 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. WUC 301, BBC	The Mitzvah Project 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. GC 243	Net Working Noon to 1 p.m. WUC 255		Book Club: The Everglades: River of Grass 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The Wolfsonian-FIU
	SGA MMC Senate Meeting 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. GC 150			

MEN'S BASKETBALL

FIU drops 71-69 decision to rising 49ers



MICHAEL SLOAN/THE BEACON

Sophomore guard Eric Nottage drives in for a layup against the University of North Carolina at Charlotte 49ers. The Panthers' next game is Thursday, Feb. 4, at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

DAVID DRUCKER

Staff Writer

david.drucker@fiusm.com

Just when Florida International University's men's basketball team thought their consistency struggles were behind them, old business resurfaced in ugly fashion Thursday night as the Panthers (11-10, 5-3 in Conference USA) fell to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte 49ers in a frustrating 72-69 loss. A lack of energy and careless turnovers - issues that FIU hoped were corrected during its successful Texas road trip - came back to haunt the Panthers as the wheels came off late in the second half.

"It's a learning process. We need to learn to play with the same energy we've had all year and have to stay focused. I don't think we played with energy tonight. I think we came out flat," said Head

Coach Anthony Evans.

FIU entered the game as the winners of seven of their last nine games. In Charlotte's last time out, the 49ers scored 51 points in the second half of their win over Western Kentucky University. A core of young players had been developing nicely for this year's Charlotte team heading into the contest, leading them to a two-game winning streak. Freshman guard John Davis highlighted his team's growth, as shown by his 22.0 points per game average in the week heading into Thursday's game.

The Panthers stumbled out of the gate; two careless turnovers on offense led to an early 11-6 Charlotte lead. Daviyon Draper scored the first points of the game for FIU on a baseline jumper. The senior would go on to fill out the stat box, notching

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PANTHER PROFILE

Pat Lopez: From the outhouse to the penthouse

ALEJANDRO SOLANA

Staff Writer

alejandro.solahna@fiusm.com

The walk-on athlete has long been the unheralded mainstay of collegiate athletics, and that was never more evident than this season for the FIU men's soccer team.

The unwritten code of walk-ons suggests that most players who walk-on to college sports teams are the less talented players of the squad, the players who weren't good enough to get noticed before college, roster fillers.

But we've all heard of Rudy, right? The undersized and unskilled kid from Illinois, who stopped at nothing to wear those blue and gold uniforms. Or what about Scottie Pippen? Pippen, only 6-foot-1 when he graduated high school, couldn't find a single team who wanted him.

FIU men's soccer player Patrick Lopez's story is no different. No, Lopez will definitely never win six NBA titles like Michael Jordan; however, he did help win one title.

The Panthers were the Conference USA Men's Champions this year, and it was Lopez who scored the lone goal of the championship game. In the 75th minute of a nil-nil draw, senior Daniel Gonzalez played a ball into the box and Lopez got his head on it, sending the ball into the near post past the keeper. The goal was good enough to secure a 1-0 win over Marshall University sending FIU to its first NCAA tournament win since 2004.

The senior defender describes winning the championship as the best moment of his career, calling it the "best day of my life." Of course things didn't always look so bright for Lopez, whose collegiate soccer career did not necessarily start off as he planned.

The 6-foot, sports and fitness studies major, played high school soccer at Archbishop Coleman F. Carroll High School in Miami, Florida, where he shined on the pitch for the Bulldogs. Lopez started all four years at ACC and lead his team in goals and assists both his junior and senior season, earning him team MVP honors in back-to-back years.

Despite his impressive high school campaign, Lopez was not offered any Division I scholarships after graduating.

"I was playing in different adult leagues around Miami, staying in form and waiting until I got my chance," said Lopez.

Just as he hoped, the opportunity came knocking when FIU assistant coaches Jean Camere and Kevin Nysten provided Lopez a chance to try out for the FIU men's soccer team as a walk-on in 2013.

"I was presented the chance to have a spring season trial and it was up to me to show if I was capable of playing at this level or not." Lopez continued, "I knew coming in, it would be a huge learning curve for me trying to catch up with the rest of the guys who had already had a chance to play at this level."

As Lopez started his career at FIU, the program underwent a huge change when Scott Calabrese was named the

new head coach of the team. Camere and Nysten, this year's Glenn "Mooch" Myernick Assistant Coach of the Year for the Southeast region, saw the potential in Lopez after bringing him in and Calabrese approved, keeping him on the squad for the 2014 season.

Lopez's first year with the team was definitely not what anyone would describe as a breakout year. Finding the pitch only six times on the season, the Miami native struggled to find minutes with the squad, notching only 476 total minutes on the season.

"I don't think there was ever a low point for me, but being a competitor, I'd be lying if I said it doesn't get frustrating being on the bench."

Lopez admitted to being frustrated, but also made it very clear that he had nothing but respect and trust for the coaching staff who had brought him in and given him his chance.

"The one thing I really enjoyed about our coaching staff was the open dialect between us players and the coaches. When I felt those lows, or thought to myself 'why am I doing all of these things and I'm not even getting on the field?' I could just easily go to Scott, Kevin or to Jean and express my concerns and they would immediately give me feedback." Lopez said.

Just one year later, things went a little differently for Lopez than his first season with the team. After only getting to start in five games and make a total of six appearances his first year, Lopez played in all but one game for the Panthers in

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BASEBALL

Panthers projected to finish fourth

JACOB SPIWAK

Asst. Sports Director

jacob.spiwak@fiusm.com

With the FIU baseball season set to kick off in just under three weeks, it's about that time for publications and college coaches to make their 2016 predictions.

Just like last season, both Division I Baseball and the Conference USA head coaches agree on where they expect the Panthers to finish in the conference standings.

Both have the defending C-USA champion Panthers finishing fourth place in the conference this season, behind Rice University, University of Southern Mississippi and Florida Atlantic University. Last year's predictions from each of the polls had FIU finishing in second place before they went on their miraculous postseason run to win C-USA, with Rice being the lone team ahead of FIU in each poll.

The lower expectations

for the 2016 Panthers don't come as a surprise, as many of the players who were key in orchestrating FIU's C-USA Championship run have moved on from FIU.

The Panthers will have to find a way to replace their top slugger Edwin Rios and 2015 batting average leader Brian Portelli, among quite a few other holes that have been created in the lineup.

In addition to being dropped to fourth in this year's predictions, the C-USA coaches also did not pick a single FIU player to be on the preseason All-Conference team. Last year there were two FIU players on the list - pitcher Chris Mourelle, who will be returning for his junior season after leading FIU in innings pitched last year, and third baseman Josh Anderson, who played his final season for the Panthers in 2015.

Despite these predictions not being

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MEN'S BASKETBALL



MICHAEL SLOAN/THE BEACON

Center Adrian Diaz preparing to send the ball through the hoop as part of an alley-oop. The Hialeah Hammer scored 17 points against the University of North Carolina at Charlotte 49ers Thursday, Jan. 29

Panthers keep game close against 49ers

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24 points on 10-15 shooting, seven rebounds and four assists.

The Panthers made a run thanks to three point baskets from Donte McGill and Eric Nottage and FIU took its first lead of the night at 17-16. However, Turnovers and second chance opportunities crippled the Panthers, and at halftime the 49ers led FIU 37-36.

In the second half Adrian Diaz led the Panthers down-low, scoring 17 points on 7-10 shooting.

Despite FIU's struggles on offense, they did enough on defense to keep the game close late in the second half. The Panthers had a chance to make a comeback down 71-66 with three minutes to play, but the chance at a late run disappeared when Draper committed back-to-back turnovers and junior guard Ray Rodriguez air-balled a three point attempt. Draper was fouled on a

successful three point shot with 1.4 seconds left to play to close the score to within two points. The intentional miss on his free throw did not find a Panther, however, and FIU dropped the game 71-69.

Diaz expressed after the game what he can do as a senior leader on the team to dial up his team's energy in the future.

"[I can] try to be more vocal out on the floor. Try not to attack personal players and give them encouragement and hope that they respond from that," said Diaz.

FIU ended the game shooting 49 percent from the field - a number that was inflated by 38 points in the paint. The Panthers held Charlotte to 40 percent from the field, but allowed them 17 second chance points. FIU recorded 11 blocks compared to Charlotte's one.

The Panther's next game is Thursday, Feb. 4.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

T-TIME



GIANCARLO NAVAS

OK guys, it's been a rough season: 2-16 overall, Kiandre'a Pound missing the year and FIU suffering blowout loss after blowout loss. The Panthers are in a rebuilding phase under new head coach Marlin Chin and it's going to get worse before it gets better.

You can't even say the team is close because their point differential is -12.5 and they have only mustered up two wins in an 18 game stretch. The don't have much in place to build off of. They are rarely in games in the second half and are losing by double digits most games.

Taylor Shade is arguably FIU's best perimeter player and one of the few bright spots.

She is shooting around 36.6 percent from the three-point line with 71 attempts on the season (around four a game). That is huge. She is shooting efficiently from a spot on the floor that gives you more points. Because she is shooting a lot of threes her overall FG percentage will obviously be down (40 percent for the season), but that is because she is taking more threes which is a more valuable/more difficult shot than a two-pointer.

This is basically the concept of effective field goal percentage. Which is a weighted FG percent that takes into account the difficulty and value of threes. If you shoot 50 percent on 10 two-point field goals you get 10 points. If you shoot 40 percent on 10 three-point field goals you will have 12 points. See how this works?

Shade is shooting the ball about as well as Chris Bosh is for the Miami Heat. He is

shooting 37 percent on the season with a hair above four attempts per game. That is pretty great company.

Tianah Alvarado is doing something similar. She is at 37 percent as well with about five attempts per game.

So FIU has two pretty good shooters and yet they sport a subpar offense. It goes to the idea that FIU pieces to build around, are just not all there yet.

Due to Conference USA's lack of advanced stats available, it's difficult to evaluate how offense runs from a statistical standpoint are because all C-USA offers are non adjusted counting stats that don't take things like pace into account.

Another alarming thing about this team is how poor they rebound. FIU is last in C-USA with a -9.5-rebound margin. That is awful. While this isn't the biggest reason

why the Panthers are losing, it certainly doesn't help either.

FIU's tallest player who has more than two minutes, Janka Hegedus, doesn't average over five rebounds per game. Context is also important, as Hegedus plays on the perimeter a lot. However when your rebound production is so poor from someone so big it's difficult to be good in the field.

FIU is not just having a rough season, it's a near disaster. However, as previously mentioned it is a transition year for the program. There are some positives, some negatives and a lot of time to get it right.

T-Time is a biweekly column about women's basketball in FIU. To contact Giancarlo email him at giancarlo.navas@fiusm.com

SOCCER

Lopez prepares for the big leagues

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2015. 16 games started and 19 total appearances adding up to 1,613 minutes, over triple the amount of minutes he played in 2014.

"It was a nice relief once I did get to start to play and be on the field. It's one thing seeing the game from the outside, from the bench, but it is totally different actually being there," said Lopez.

Along with his championship game winner, Lopez tallied two other goals earlier in the season, one of which was also a game winner against Old Dominion University. While Lopez was able to find the back of the net three times, he also managed to set his teammates up and record two assists on the season.

The coaching staff taking a chance on a kid who was playing in recreational leagues around the city, tied to finding a player who found his way consistently to the lineup helping the team go 12-7-1 on the season, and

not to mention a conference championship and a place on the all-conference tournament team.

Though some in Lopez's shoes would brag or go after the doubters, but the humble defenseman partakes in none of that. "I credit all of my success to my teammates, coaches and of course my family. They have been with me from the beginning and it's big that they were there for me, reminding me not to give up and keep working. They helped me enjoy the moment."

When asked if the whole walk-on experience was worth it, Lopez quickly exclaimed, "absolutely. The bond I built with my teammates is a brotherhood and I'll never forget that."

As for what's next for the senior?

"Professional [soccer]. That's the next step. That's what I'm working to get to and if I'm able to accomplish that, this whole story that has been a blessing continues and that is all I can ask for."

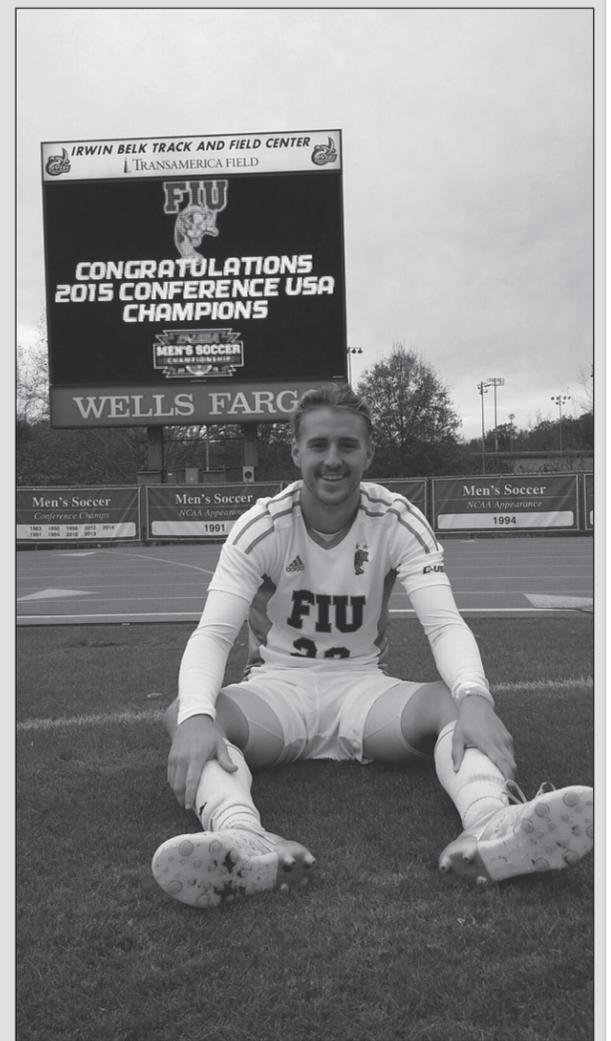


PHOTO COURTESY OF PAT LOPEZ

BASEBALL

Players prepare for C-USA

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overly optimistic for the new-look Panthers, they shouldn't cause FIU fans to panic too much. FIU underperformed throughout most of the 2015 season, but showed up when it mattered and took home the C-USA crown.

Anything can happen regardless of expectations, and the Panthers were a

prime example of that in 2015.

The Panthers will likely need to spend the early part of the season establishing chemistry and hammering out a solid lineup. The pitching staff, which will see most of their top pitchers from 2015 returning, seems to be the biggest strength that FIU can build on during the season. If they can pitch up to their potential and some of these

junior college transfer position players work out, the Panthers may just make some more noise in C-USA this year.

FIU will look to prove the doubters wrong this season, and their mission to repeat as C-USA champs will begin when they kick off their first series of 2016 against the University of Mississippi Friday, Feb. 19.

CARTA and SMJC merger further explained

SUDYEN NAVARRETE
Staff Writer
sudyen.navarrete@fiusm.com

Early December 2015 it was announced that the School of Journalism and Mass Communications will be integrating with the College of Architecture and the Arts.

In the fall the provost asked CARTA and SJMC to merge; a committee was assigned for both schools and voted in favor of the merge at Biscayne Bay Campus.

Many students reacted negatively towards the integration. Some believed it could devalue the school's accreditation or that money was in the way of everything.

"As a student, I believe it won't affect us in a bad way," said Anzela Vanegas, a junior broadcast journalism major. "However, now we depend and operate under a new department that can be very different from journalism and mass communication majors. I think each school needs their own dean that has relations to the field."

However, there's also students that favored the merge.

"I think that this is a great opportunity for our school," said Jayda Hall, a junior broadcast major. "We need more resources and our school needs to be exposed."

Professor Frederick Blevens, of the Journalism and Broadcast Department, is working on updating SJMCs curriculum

to be done and take effect by mid-summer.

The updates on what Blevens is revising has a purpose.

"Students will be able to get through the program more quickly, graduate on time and progress through the curriculum," Blevens said.

There's been problems with students not being able to get through graduation, according to Blevens.

Some of the updates revolve around the admission requirements as in the credit hours and grade point average.

"We eliminated the 60-hour requirement, which will take effect starting in the fall, and we lowered the GPA to a 2.85," said Blevens.

According to Blevens, there are two important steps into the process, "How do you get into the program and get accepted."

The school will retain the limited number of student admittance but barriers will be met through courses. It will be up to the students to meet the requirements or not.

"We will still remain a limited program with barriers for admittance," said Blevens. "Barriers are going to be different, competency and performance based."

Students coming from high schools will be able to declare their majors and get admitted by their sophomore years, not junior as it usually is, as long as admission requirements for SJMC are met.

SING TO ME



JASMINE ROMERO/THE BEACON

Mechanical engineering junior Randy Calhoun and junior journalism major Carolina Estrada lip sync at the Blue & Gold Recruitment Week: Councils Unplugged event, held at Panther Square, Thursday, Jan. 28.

Another possible change that has been mentioned but not approved or discussed is the barrier exam, Language Skills Test, an entry grammar exam that SJMC students must pass to continue onto their major track.

"Language skills tests have become something in the past, some states are no longer using barrier exams anymore but instead course work to make sure students are competent," said Blevens. "I don't think it's a good idea to hold students hostages in a class for a test."

For now that's just a possibility.

"It's not going to be easier to get into the program, it's just different," Blevens said.

Overall, Blevens said he was in favor of the merge, and it's an integration that must have been done long time ago.

Throughout the holiday break,

students were being informed about the integration through newsletters, student media and even the Miami Herald.

Blevens said the communication was poorly distributed to students, angering them and leaving them in the unknown about the merge leading to negative views about it.

"Some of it was generated by a misunderstanding from Miami Herald stories, the advised report hadn't had a clear understanding, students were misinformed," said Blevens. "The reporting didn't reflect the reality of the situation."

Dean Brian Schriener will lead SJMC under CARTA's umbrella with the help of recently named interim executive director of SJMC, Juliet Pinto, an associate professor of the journalism and broadcast department.

"I am enjoying getting to know the SJMC's students, faculty, professional staff, advisory board members and alumni," said Schriener.

In response to the merger, according to the Dean, CARTA students have favored the change.

"My interactions with students, whether from CARTA or the SJMC, have been very positive," said Schriener. "The students' initial questions or concerns have focused on how the integration might impact their current major, the name of the degree they are pursuing, the name of their home department, etc."

Part of the dean's personal goals for the integration is "to increase strategic enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate level, increase the number of full-time faculty – potentially as cluster hires – in the areas of digital media, communication, digital arts, graphic design and public relations and to enhance the

administrative teaching and research support to the faculty," said Schriener.

Incoming freshmen from high schools will experience the new changes between the schools.

"They will have access to additional resources and will graduate with the confidence they have a skills-set that gives them a competitive advantage in the 21st century's information, innovation, and technology economy," said Schriener.

Pinto said that SJMC will retain its own entity and accreditation, and the purpose is to grow and expand by reducing inefficiencies and making everything better.

"What CARTA represents to us is an opportunity to resources such as their 3D printers, their Miami Beach Urban Studios and many more that can help our students think creatively," said Pinto

In SJMC, faculties have been placed in committees to better SJMC, such as what Professor Blevens is doing.

Pinto said, "most of our faculty and staff are on committees to work with the curriculum, governance, space and staffing to make ourselves better."

In addition of directing SJMC, Pinto is also communicating with sponsors for fundings.

"I am also out in the community looking for engagement and partnership to help us get resources that we need."

The faculty-led process will also create a new name that represents both schools.

"The entire point of this integration is to make everything stronger and CARTA is the right place for SJMC, we're all looking to help the industries that students wish to go into," said Pinto

All structures shall be placed no later than July 1 of this year.

SWEET LIPS



ERICA SANTIAGO/THE BEACON

Angelica Walker, junior hospitality major (right), and Catrease Ancion, senior psychology major (left) serve cotton candy to students participating in the SPC's Lip-Sync Battle hosted at the Wolfe Center Thursday, Jan. 28