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A closer look into student loan debt

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After graduating, affording school evolves into a new monster of affording loan payments, which stops adults in their early 20s to buy a car or a house.

But depending on a student's loan debt, that could be the sort of expense a student is looking at and trying to afford, with one of the few assurances being a financial services firm can't repossess a degree.

A project of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth - founded by John Podesta, former chief of staff to President Bill Clinton and chairman of the Center for American Progress - maps out student loan default rates along with average income and average loan balance per zip code.

For Kendall 33183, the median household income is \$55,153, in Westchester 33165, it is \$44,863 and in Hialeah 33018, it is \$27,371.

The study found that

“I receive financial aid from FIU to help pay for my education; but I have to take out loans in order to pay the bill in full, which wasn't an easy choice for me to make.”

Fabienne Fleurantin
Junior
Broadcast Media

higher default rates occur in low-income zip codes and affluent zip codes show a higher loan balance, but that tends to be because those people are able to pay back those loans.

“I receive financial aid from FIU to help pay for my education; but I have to take out loans in order to pay the bill in full, which wasn't an easy choice for me to make,” explained columnist and SJMC student Fabienne Fleurantin in her op-ed “Obama's Nation: Affordable Education.”

“Trying to pay off loans is a headache I wanted to avoid because I knew it came with repercussions,” she said.

David Wessel, former Wall Street Journal economics editor and director of the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy at the Brookings Institution, broke down the present student loan issue in a video produced by Brookings.

“The bulk of the increased borrowing is by students who went to for-profit and community colleges - a big change from the past,” Wessel said.

“And which students are most likely to default? Those very same students, the ones who went to for-profit schools and community colleges. Twenty-one percent of the borrowers at for-profit schools and community colleges defaulted within two years. But, only eight percent of those at four-year colleges and two percent at graduate schools.”

And it bears out in debt load rankings. For-profit schools rank 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, 20 and 24 on the top 25 colleges where students owed the most in 2014. In 2000, only one school, the University of Phoenix, made the list, which was then made mostly of flagship state public universities.

“Students who went to for-profit schools or community colleges tended to borrow less, but they also tended to come from lower-income families, were less likely to complete their programs and fared much worse in the job market during the Great Recession and the ensuing slow recovery,” Wessel said.

An Equifax statement in June 2015 - the WCEG used data from an Equifax competitor, Experian, in its report - said one of the reasons millennials aren't buying houses is their loan debt.

“Equifax data suggests that the conventional theory - millennials are the rental generation and uninterested in home ownership - is only a part of the story,” Equifax Deputy Chief Economist Dennis Carlson said.

“Importantly, large amounts of student debt and less than stellar job prospects for recent college graduates make the dream of homeownership shine less brightly than in the past. But we also see indications that they will eventually want the family, the car and the house that older generations desired, just with a significant delay.”

Additional reporting by TNS Staff

THE SCIENCE OF LOVE



SELENE BASILE/THE BEACON

Santiago Laphitzondo, an electrical engineering junior speaks with students tabling at the Healthy Relationships event hosted in the Engineering Center Pit by Student Health Services.

Tourism officials alarmed by new Zika cases in Caribbean

CAYLA BUSH
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As global fear regarding the Zika virus increases, many South Florida residents are concerned with travel to Latin America and the Caribbean.

To ensure the safety of Florida residents, State Surgeon General John Armstrong released an update to keep citizens abreast of changes in status.

According to the update, there are eight travel related cases confirmed in South Florida.

“There have been no locally-acquired cases of Zika in Florida. None of the confirmed cases involve pregnant women,” the update says.

The Pan American Health Organization added Jamaica and Costa Rica to the list of countries in the Western Hemisphere where the Zika virus has been detected as officials warned pregnant women in particular not to travel to the area.

Caribbean and Central American businesses are working with health officials to protect the tourism industry from the Zika virus.

Tourism accounts for nearly 30 percent of Jamaica's economy and more than 12 percent of Costa Rica's, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council.

Adding to concerns about the spread of the mosquito-borne virus, which has been linked to birth defects, health officials in Dallas have reported a case of the virus being transmitted

sexually by a person who had recently returned to Texas from Venezuela.

“It's a concern of everyone,” said Guadalupe Monge, a travel agent with Miami-based Costamar travel agency. “I'd say 100 percent of our customers are asking about Zika. They want to know how bad it is. Is it safe to travel? Can they change their tickets?”

“We can never let our guard down where infectious diseases are concerned, and that is particularly so in our tourism-dependent Caribbean region.”

Dr. C. James Hospedales
Executive Director
Caribbean Public Health Agency

Monge estimates that the agency, which organizes trips and tours throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, has lost about 20 percent of its business as news of Zika has increased.

The timing is terrible, as Carnival season is picking up and spring break season is around the corner. Both draw tens of thousands to the region.

Caribbean public health officials launched a new public

awareness and health campaign last week geared toward protecting the region's \$29 billion industry.

“We can never let our guard down where infectious diseases are concerned, and that is particularly so in our tourism-dependent Caribbean region,” Dr. C. James Hospedales, executive director of the Caribbean Public Health Agency, said at a news conference in Trinidad and Tobago, another tourist-dependent nation.

While supporting recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that pregnant women postpone trips to infected countries, officials in those countries say others shouldn't be dissuaded. They advise taking standard precautions to prevent mosquito bites, including using repellent, sleeping inside and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

“Don't let the mosquito ruin your travel,” the Caribbean Public Health Agency says in a fact sheet on its website.

Tourism is important to economies around the world but especially so in the Caribbean and Central America, where millions depend on the industry for their livelihood.

The Caribbean Tourism Organization reported that a record 26.3 million tourists and 24.5 million cruise ship passengers visited the Caribbean in 2014. They spent \$29.2 billion,

SEE ZIKA, PAGE 2

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

University Daily Kansan editors sue KU Chancellor over funding cut

The editor-in-chief of the University Daily Kansan has sued University of Kansas Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little, claiming the student newspaper's funding was cut because of its coverage.

Gray-Little and Tammara Durham, vice provost for student affairs, were named in the suit filed Friday in federal court. The suit says a \$45,000 annual reduction in student fees for the newspaper was retaliation for an editorial criticizing the Student Senate.

Kansan editor Vicky Diaz-Camacho and former editor Katie Kutsko brought the suit, alleging that student government leaders, in a series

of February meetings on Kansan funding, complained about a May 2014 editorial before voting to cut the newspaper's funding.

In later meetings, a Student Senate member allegedly said the newspaper "bit the hand that fed" it and the staff "got what you deserved," according to the suit.

The Student Press Law Center told KU officials the funding cuts were unconstitutional.

The lawsuit seeks an injunction against the administrators to stop the funding cut, plus attorneys' fees and "nominal" damages.

Apple begins offering trade-in credit for damaged iPhones

Apple Inc. has begun offering trade-in credit for damaged iPhones, a strategy that could encourage people to buy a newer model rather than try to fix or bear with their current device.

Previously, Apple required iPhone displays, buttons and cameras to be intact for consumers to get up to \$350 toward the purchase of a new iPhone.

Cracked screens and other issues will cut into the trade-in value, limiting it to between \$50 for the iPhone 5S and \$250 for the iPhone 6 Plus, an Apple spokesman said Friday.

Apple is directing people to its stores to get the most accurate appraisal, though trade-ins also may be processed online.

Samsung and Pebble came in second and third, respectively, for the year.

Apple hasn't provided exact sales figures, other than to say that more Apple Watches were purchased in the fourth quarter than the third. The company hasn't launched a trade-in program for the Watch, a spokesman said.

Alarming Zika cases grab tourism officials' attention

ZIKA, PAGE 1

a record for Caribbean tourism.

Nearly half of the visitors to the Caribbean, almost 13 million, come from the United States.

Zika is also driving fears about the Summer Olympics in Brazil, considered the epicenter of the Zika outbreak. More than 4,000 babies in Brazil have been born with microcephaly, a rare neurological disorder associated with developmental problems that has been linked to the mosquito-borne virus.

Since the first case was discovered in Brazil last May, Zika has been found in 27 countries and territories in the Americas. There have been cases in at least 11 states, including nine in Florida and four in Miami-Dade County.

Tuesday Feb. 2, health officials in Texas announced they had identified a patient in Dallas who'd contracted Zika through sex. The patient, identified as

Patient 1, is the first known case of the virus being transmitted in the United States. Patient 1's partner, identified as Patient 0, had recently returned to the state from Venezuela. Dallas authorities said Patient 1 had had no other possible exposure to the virus.

"Now that we know Zika virus can be transmitted through sex, this increases our awareness campaign in educating the public about protecting themselves and others," said Zachary Thompson, the director of Dallas County Health and Human Services.

The Dallas County health department added using condoms to its list of recommendations for anyone returning from an infected area.

The CDC already recommends that U.S. doctors test newborns who show signs of the Zika virus, especially in states such as Florida, where mosquitoes are a daily nuisance.

Colleges open food banks for needy students

SCOTT TRAVIS Sun Sentinel TNS

College students are supposed to arrive hungry for knowledge, but some local schools say too many just arrive hungry.

As a result, a growing number of Florida colleges have created food pantries to assist students struggling to buy food.

Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton opened a food pantry last week, while Palm Beach State College in Lake Worth opened one last May. Florida International University in Miami and Miami-Dade College's south campus also have created food banks in the past few years.

"We have students in dire financial situations, and they'll say to their professors, 'I'm hungry. I can't write a paper when I don't have food in my stomach,'" said Jeannie Hoban, director of the counseling center at Palm Beach State College, which also provides needy students with travel-size toiletries.

So far, the Palm Beach state pantry has served 30 students, but "the word is not out. It's been under the radar. Once we make signs and put on our website, I'm sure the numbers will increase," Hoban said.

Nationwide, more than 250 college campuses now offer food banks, including most of the public universities in Florida and several community colleges. They generally receive donations of

canned and boxed items from faculty, staff and students. Many student organizations hold food drives to collect goods.

Colleges started noticing demand for these services during the recession, with Florida State University in Tallahassee and the University of Central Florida in Orlando among the first to respond in 2009. UCF averages about 12,000 visits a year. FSU received 1,101 visits last year from 456 students.

At an increasing number of colleges, the average student isn't an 18-year-old receiving support from parents, but an adult working full-time and supporting a family, according to the national College and University Food Bank Alliance.

Most of South Florida's colleges, including FAU and FIU, educate a large number of working adults.

But even traditional schools have discovered a need, including the University of Florida in Gainesville, which serves mostly young students from middle class or affluent backgrounds.

"We just had multiple students within a short period of time that came in who all had this issue," said Tanja Philhower, assistant dean of students.

UF's pantry has had about 3,300 visits, both from students and employees, since opening last summer.

FAU partnered with the nearby food bank Boca Helping Hands for its effort. The program is called "Beyond Food,"

because staff members meet with students to find out if they are experiencing other problems, such as academic difficulty or domestic violence. They are then referred to other departments for support, as well as receiving a three-day emergency bag of food, said Nori Carter, director of FAU's Weppner Center, which is housing the program.

FAU officials say they don't know how large demand will be yet.

"This program was developed as an awareness that there are students who are hungry and developing such a program will prompt students to seek assistance," Carter said.

FIU has been offering a similar program since 2014 and has served 320 students.

Some students using these services are homeless, while others are just struggling to pay all their bills, officials said.

"I think some of the students are working, but working just enough to pay for tuition, books, rent and electricity," said Joanna Garcia, who directs the program on FIU's main campus. "If you pay for all that, maybe you sacrifice and go a week without eating."

There are no income requirements for students to collect the food, but schools say they haven't seen any abuse.

"We found that there is already such a stigma coming to a food pantry that we think people are coming because they need food," Garcia said.

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International students strain for jobs

THE BEACON | Editorial

POLITICOBUZZ



FABIENNE FLEURANTIN

In the words of Big Sean, I feel blessed.

You know why? Even though I have to pay for tuition, our university comes at a fairly cheap price.

I have various alternatives available at my disposal to help pay for these costs. Financial aid, loans, grants, scholarships, jobs on and off campus—these are the things that give my wallet some relief.

Unfortunately, these aren't the same opportunities offered to international students.

They do have some options available, like the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals scholarship. This scholarship claims to "waive the out-of-state fee for all students, including undocumented students," but it comes with certain conditions.

For example, one of the obligations listed is that they would have had to "attend a high school in the state of Florida for three consecutive years."

What if the student just came from their country and needed funds for their education immediately but didn't meet this

requirement?

They also have the choice of getting a job on campus, which is fantastic. However, it can be very difficult at times as the waiting list is quite lengthy. If that's the case, then they should have the option of getting work outside of campus, right?

Wrong.

"That's a little bit more difficult," Vivian Betancourt, an international student, told Student Media. "You can't unless you have a special permit granted by the school and Homeland Security. However, if you've finished your associate's or bachelor's degree, you can approach your international student advisor for an OPT, which allows you to work in the state in something related to your major."

OPT stands for Optional Practice Training and is a paid job that needs to be approved by the school. Still, international students can't go through the same channels as regular students. They have to wait a number of years to start working at a real profession.

Another international student, Anna Fache, said that these work policies are a concerning situation for her.

"My status only allows me

to have a job on campus. If I do get a job outside of campus, I'll have problems and can get kicked out," Fache said.

Kicked out? For wanting a job to pay for school? That doesn't seem fair to me.

According to our university's International Student Handbook, "As international students, you must have a clear understanding of how hard it can be to finance your education in the U.S. Compared to other countries, American higher education is quite expensive."

For an undergrad Florida resident attending our university, tuition is \$6,168. For non-residents, it's \$18,568—over three times the amount of regular students. If their tuition is that expensive, then why aren't they allowed to work off campus?

Not only are international students burdened by the fact that they're coming into a foreign country unfamiliar to them, but their tuition is inexplicably higher without having the proper channels to help pay it off.

Not all international students have the aid of their families to help them through college. Some families are struggling back home in their country and

sent their children away on a path toward a higher education and a better life.

With all the expenses that they have to pay off, it would be reasonable for them to have access to a job or a means of income to help them with finances, just like regular students.

Let me be clear, this isn't an attack on our university. Our university does provide ways to help these students. This is a statement saying that the laws that have been established to help international students are insufficient and need to be changed.

They're inadequate to the needs of these students, in terms of accumulating income that could be used to pay off other finances, including tuition. International students are being treated unfairly because of their status and the limitations placed on them is hindering their rights as students.

PoliticoBuzz is a commentary that raises awareness about political issues in the US and worldwide. Fabienne Fleurantin is a contributing writer for FIU Student Media. For more commentary, contact her at opinion@fiusm.com

Communication between administration and students is key

President Rosenberg addressed issues during the Feb. 1 Town Hall Meeting in which we, at FIUSM, have been interested. These included transportation and the CARTA-SJMC merger.

These have been the subjects of more than one of FIUSM's editorials - we do not believe that simply acknowledging an issue is the same as addressing it.

For example, Rosenberg discussed the addition of departures to the Golden Panther Express shuttle service to and from BBC and MMC. While this is helpful for students with early classes, it does nothing to alleviate the cost of attending courses at BBC.

Concerns are raised with his mention of the potential implementation of a train system to transport students. Knowing where exactly the money for such a project would come will be something to pay attention to in March.

Although it was addressed that the CARTA-SJMC merger would not result in the dismantling of either school, the changes involved are still unclear to many students, including this editorial board.

It is encouraging to think that more courses and more opportunities will be available to students. However, it would be even better if Panthers knew what those would be.

Much the same could be said regarding the newly formed College of Arts, Sciences and Education.

This editorial board also hopes that programs about consent, sexual assault and sexual health will not be allowed to fall to disrepair, despite the potentially waning "It's on Us" campaign.

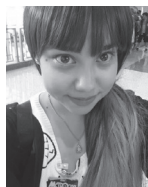
As much as the renovation of Panther Square and the BBC tennis courts may be, one must wonder at the prioritization of a remodel rather than explaining issues which are perhaps more pertinent.

Communication between administration and students is key to understanding both problems and successes. These town hall meetings should be held more often to ensure that.

What FIU needs to prove to its students is that it makes good on its promises, and let us walk with them every step of the way.

Panthers need to disconnect from technology

PANTHER HEALTH



MAYTINEE KRAMER

Technology has evolved over the years and now has the ability to do a lot of wonderful things. From social connecting to keeping track of our health, technology has taken a lot off our shoulders and showed people a more

efficient way of doing things. However, like anything, when used in excess, it can have a dark side too.

Despite how far technology has taken humans, and how convenient and seemingly necessary it may be to everyday life, there are still some disadvantages to its constant use. Cellphones in particular are something many people don't give much thought to. We use cellphones to stay connected, to network, to get fit and so much more. But, in all their glory, cell phones are also a distraction and can be an addiction.

On campus, most, if not all, students are preoccupied with their cellphones. Among the many common problems associated with looking down at the phone for too long are Anterior Head Syndrome and eye problems.

Looking down for too long strains the neck, pushing the head forward past the center of gravity. This can lead to

muscular tension, damaged vertebrae and even compressed and degenerated discs in the back. Prolonged staring at the screen causes squinting and straining of the eye muscles, which can lead to headaches. Blurry vision, dry eyes and even long-term nearsightedness can occur in the long run.

Cellphones can also harm our ability to communicate with people face-to-face. Conversations have come to seem simpler and easier through text, which could lead to meanings being misinterpreted. Students are also easily distracted in class when they receive notifications of a new messages, notifications or emails.

Yet, despite all of these issues, Panthers remain connected, but not always in the best way.

One junior, Vanessa Macias, says that using a cellphone does have its advantages.

"Smartphones today allow us to have a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips. They allow people to converse with each other and are especially helpful in the case of emergencies," Macias said.

However, she does admit that cellphones have their disadvantages, and uses her cellphone more than she'd like to admit.

"Disadvantages are more on the social and psychological side. Most are simply

checking social media or playing games," Macias said.

A senior, Jimmy Zeledon, admits to using his phone often enough in a day.

"I have sometimes strained my eyes by staring at my phone excessively. On some occasions I've even gotten headaches from sitting uncomfortably and using my cell phone," Zeledon said.

It all comes down to whether we use technology for our progress and prosperity or for our destruction. Our cellphones are definitely not supposed to make us sick, nor was it meant to hinder our communication skills.

Rather than spending all day scrolling through Instagram and messaging on Facebook, Panthers should engage in healthy daily activities. Whether it be going out with friends, exercising, enjoying a lovely date or putting in that extra time toward studying, Panthers should take a little break from technology. The mobile phone is one of the best innovations of our era, but we should use it wisely.

Panther Health is a commentary on college health in nutrition. Maytinee Kramer is a staff writer for FIU Student Media. For more commentary, please contact Maytinee at opinion.fiusm.com.

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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Astrophysicist takes over the Wolfsonian FIU for a tour

LESLIE OVALLE
Staff Writer
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Astrophysicist Jorge Perez Gallego will be taking over Wolfsonian-FIU Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. for a tour of the museum's special exhibition "Margin of Error."

The event is part of the museum's "Takeover Tour Series," created in an attempt to bring knowledgeable professionals to lead tours of the museum's collections.

"The idea is that this person will bring a fresh perspective, an interesting new angle to look at the art from," said Heather Cook, public programs manager at the Wolfsonian-FIU.

"Margin of Error" is an exhibition found on the museum's sixth floor galleries that explores modern age's responses to mechanical mastery and engineered catastrophes.

The exhibition contains over 200 works that range from the mid-nineteenth to twentieth centuries, including industrial artifacts, paintings, graphic and decorative art, photography, ephemera and sculptures.

Major artists and designers showcased are Lewis Hine, Julius Klinger, Man Ray, Margaret Bourke-White and many more.

Gallego holds a Ph.D. in Astronomy from the University of Florida.

He is a designer, educator and exhibition developer at the Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science.

Gallego will be speaking about the science behind the accidents portrayed in the exhibition, exploring what creates the margins of error in these situations.

Museum curator and curator of

this exhibition, Matthew Abess, will be joining Gallego in leading the tour.

According to Cook, Abess is a literary man, so it is expected that he will draw upon his background in literature and literary culture.

"He [Abess] will be bringing insight on the left side of the brain - the more humanities focused side," said Cook. "And Jorge will be bringing the right side of the brain that we don't really talk much about in an art museum, which is the science and technology side."

Gallego is looking forward to this tour and to tackling this subject, which he describes as not the most pleasant to talk about. This is because it deals with small errors that translate into catastrophes and pain.

"Progress, a lot of times, comes at a price," said Gallego.

He will be speaking about catastrophic events including the space shuttle Challenger accident that occurred in 1986, early railway and factory accidents and the Titanic.

"The mistakes we make are an opportunity for us to learn and do better, they help us realize that we need a greater understanding of the things around us," he said.

Gallego promises to allocate time to go off on tangents, allowing the audience to participate and be involved in the conversation.

The Takeover Tour is \$10 for non-members. It is free for members and FIU students.

RSVP is encouraged and available on the museum's website.

For more information about Gallego's Takeover Tour and the "Margin of Error" exhibition contact the museum at 305-531-1001 or visit wolfsonian.org

MAINTAIN THE GREEN



NICOLE MEZA/THE BEACON

Ileana Coarsi, a senior studying biology, participates in the annual Nature Preserve Volunteer Day, Friday, Feb. 5. Volunteers helped to improve and maintain the preserve.

Disney's new film one of 'the finest hours' you will spend

LIFESTYLE POINTS



JOSEPH CARDEMAS

The Walt Disney Company follows yearly tradition by premiering a movie based on a true story. Their latest leap, "The Finest Hours" is no exception. Based on the 1952 Pendleton rescue mission, chronicled in the 2009 book "The Finest Hours: The True Story of the U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue" by Michael J. Tougas and Casey Sherman, the film follows the events of the book. It stars Chris Pine ("Star Trek", "Into The Woods"), Casey Affleck ("Interstellar", "Tower Heist"), Holliday Grainger ("Cinderella", "Anna Karenina") and Eric Bana ("The Hulk", "The Time Traveler's Wife").

Following several months after meeting his girlfriend Miriam (Grainger), Bernard Webber (Pine) starts to face an internal struggle with what he feels and what he wants when Miriam proposes to him. Since we're talking about the early 50s, the men who work at the Coast Guard station with him make a laughing matter out of it. Meanwhile, two oil tankers off the coast of Cape Cod are caught in a nor'easter storm that tears both ships apart. On one of the tankers, the S.S. Pendleton, some of the crew still

remain and are forced to weather the storm and keep what's left of the tanker afloat until help can reach them. Daniel Cluff (Bana), Chief Warrant Officer of the station, sends Webber and three other men out on a rescue mission to bring back the surviving crew, braving treacherous waters and a deadly winter storm.

While certainly not the best film of all time, and surely not the best the year would have to offer, it was still a great spectacle. It keeps you on the edge of your seat, anticipating what could possibly happen with just the right amount of suspense to keep the audience wanting more. It's a truly thrilling adventure, filled with well paced writing and well placed emotion. Pine and Grainger not only play well off each other but also prove they can carry the intensity of the film on their own. The star of the pair, though, is Grainger, who takes you along her emotional journey.

The film is rated PG-13 and is playing in theaters, including in Real-D 3D. A great watch if you're looking for something to pass the time until the summer blockbusters. It's nothing groundbreaking or spectacular, but without a doubt, a very good movie.

LifeStyle points is a weekly column by Joseph Cardenas, for suggestions and comments email life@fiu.edu

FIU clubs welcome Panthers in the global first year

JAY VANPARIA
Contributing writer
life@fiusm.com

Freshman year can be stressful, considering the awkward attempts to fit in, adapting to a different culture, and dealing with homesickness.

According to Victoria Vaccari, a student services advisor for the Global First Year, this nervousness can be overcome by getting involved on campus in any manner, but most freshmen are unaware on how to take the first step.

"I meet lots of international students who

are apprehensive about their first year in college,"

Vaccari said. "For most of them, it is their first time away from their homes."

For freshmen, the foremost recommended campus activity is getting involved in a club that caters to their interests. With over 200 clubs to choose from, there is something for everyone here. However, in case a student does not find a suitable club to get involved in, it is more than easy to create your own club or organization.

"Registering a club is easy; interested

individuals have to fill out a form online and attend an Orgsync orientation," said Nadine Matas, Vice President of the council for student organizations.

Orgsync is an online portal which contains the information of every single club at FIU. It also acts as medium of communication between the club members regarding meetings, activities and goals.

"We even provide funds to run the organizations, thanks to the student government association", Matas said. "We try to encourage more and more freshmen to join clubs."

For the hobbyists, there are numerous organizations within FIU that range from niche, "Anime Etc." for anime enthusiasts, to nature-friendly clubs like "Wings @ FIU," which aims to create awareness and danger that threatens the natural habitats of birds. The billiards, Astronomy and Chess clubs are perfect opportunities to pursue a different hobby while learning something new.

Hamdan Albalawi, a member of the Billiards club at FIU said, "We, the members of the club, promote billiards to students ... represent FIU

by competing against other schools and organizations, and ensure members have a great time."

For freshmen who are still uncertain of what club they want to join, they can explore and weigh their options at the convention for clubs and organizations, put forth by the council of student organizations during the first week of every semester. Representatives and members from various clubs set up stalls in GC ballrooms and provide information about their club, along with engaging activities and free food.

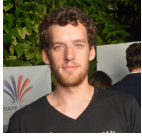
Moreover, for those who wish to get involved in University governance, several student organizations are influential, voicing different student opinions to the University administration.

The Student Government Association is one such organization at FIU. It is a united student body that aims to establish a student government providing representation for students in administration. The sheer choice of academic related clubs is helpful for

SEE PANTHERS, PAGE 5

Sick Flicks' 10 most anticipated films of 2016

SICK FLICKS



DAVID SEELY

While January and February are notoriously slow months for new movie releases, there are tons of reasons to get excited about the rest of 2016.

It will no doubt be a huge year for superhero films and franchise sequels and prequels, but there are a number of other films that will fight for a piece of that box office pie. Here are my top 10 most anticipated movies.

No. 10. *The Lobster* (March 11): This film was released in the UK in late 2015, but will finally get a proper release in the US at the beginning of March. The plot alone should pique your interest enough to give this film a try. Sometime in the future all single people get sent to "The Hotel" where they must find a romantic partner within 45 days or be turned into an animal of their choice.

No. 9. *Sausage Party* (August 12): Seth Rogen and his merry band of comedy pranksters are at it again but this time they get animated - as different grocery store foods. While the premise sounds ridiculous the prospect of hearing the voices of Jonah Hill as a sausage, Kristen Wiig as a hot dog bun and Edward Norton as a bagel is enough to get me excited.

No. 8. *Assassin's Creed* (Dec. 21): Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard will lend their immense talent to this film based on the popular video game series. While movies based on video games have not been very successful in the past, Cotillard and Fassbender might have the power to make an exception to the rule.

No. 7. *The BFG* (July 1): Steven Spielberg's new movie is an adaptation of the classic Roald Dahl children's book, *The*

BFG (aka "Big Friendly Giant"). As "Hook" and "E.T." are highlights on his resume, Spielberg is an expert in bringing emotional family stories to life on the big screen.

The film was written by Melissa Mathison who co-wrote "E.T. The Extra Terrestrial" with Spielberg back in 1982.

No. 6. *Suicide Squad* (August 5): This film will be unlike any other superhero movie we have seen because it's all about the bad guys. When the government needs to perform a dangerous and highly classified mission, it brings together a group of supervillains to either get the job done or take the blame if something goes wrong. These villains include Will Smith as Deadshot, Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn, and Jared Leto with his own interpretation of the iconic Joker.

No. 5. *The Birth of a Nation* (Release TBD): The breakout hit of this year's Sundance Film Festival is a biographical telling of Nat Turner's slave rebellion in 1831. The controversial film is seven years in the making for writer, director and star Nate Parker.

It could not have come at a better time, with the important racial discussions happening around the country. Fox Searchlight won the distribution rights to the film for \$17.5 million; keep an eye on this film to get an official release later in the year.

No. 4. *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Dec. 16): The first spinoff in the "Star Wars" universe will introduce us to a group of fighter pilots on a mission to steal the Death Star's blueprints. After the now \$2 billion release of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," the series is at a fever pitch and Disney is hoping these spinoffs will keep the money rolling in.

This film will expand the ever growing universe and will hope-

fully answer at least some of the unknown questions from Episode VII.

No. 3. *Silence* (Release TBD): Martin Scorsese's new film does not have a release date yet, but one is expected toward the end of 2016.

This new film from the filmmaking legend sounds just as unconventional as it does intriguing. It stars Adam Driver and Andrew Garfield as two Jesuit Priests who travel to 17th century Japan to spread the teachings of Christianity and seek out their mentor played by Liam Neeson.

No. 2. *The Nice Guys* (May 20): If you haven't seen "Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang" from director and writer, Shane Black, drop everything you are doing and watch it immediately. His new film "The Nice Guys" looks like it will have the same, quick comedic writing and original visual storytelling that Black is known for. The film stars Ryan Gosling and Russell Crowe as two cops in a dark comedy, mystery-thriller that promises to be one of the most entertaining movies of the year.

No. 1. *Midnight Special* (March 18): Jeff Nichols is a name that you should really get to know. The three movies that the 37-year-old has directed so far are deeply personal and are done with the confidence and simplicity of someone twice his age. He continues his streak of intimate family dramas, but in this case he throws his hat into the science fiction genre.

An eight year old boy is found to have a special gift, and his family must race him to a secret location while being hunted by the government as well as an extreme religious group.

Michael Shannon has starred in all of Nichols previous films and returns along with Joel Edgerton, Adam Driver, and Kirsten Dunst.



CHRIS RODRIGUEZ

FIUSM Staff

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These are the albums getting the most spins on FIU Student Radio. Tune into 95.3 to hear songs from these great albums and more.

1. Beach House/Thank Your Lucky Stars
2. Hibou/Hibou
3. Wray/Hypatia
4. Shannon & The Clams/Gone By the Dawn
5. Hinds/Leave Me Alone
6. Daughter/Not to Disappear
7. Protomartyr/The Agent Intellect
8. Helvetia/Dromomania
9. Childbirth/Women's Rights
10. Cheatahs/Mythologies

FIU clubs welcome

PANTHERS, PAGE 4

freshmen with undecided majors, as they can explore various clubs and rule out on a major to pursue.

For every major, there is at least one club that caters to students interested in the field.

The former president of the American Marketing Association, an organization under the College of Business said, "Everything we do is marketing-related. Our members have the opportunity to carry out on-campus promotions, conduct marketing research, and develop integrated marketing campaigns and more! In addition, we are extremely active. We meet twice every week."

The club also manages its own

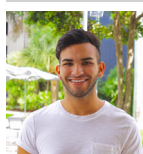
blog, posts internship opportunities and provides career advice. Each year, they take part in a case competition which includes brands like Vitamin Water and Ice Breakers.

This is just one of many academically influenced clubs available on campus. Such clubs are equipping their members with the necessary skills needed to succeed in their respective careers. Many alumni who visit the campus for talks and speeches testify to the fact that enrolling in clubs like these provided the head start they needed to survive and succeed in their respective fields.

The full list of clubs and organizations at FIU is available at www.orgsync.com.

Sia makes it out alive on her seventh album

ERIC'S CORNER



ERIC DURAN

We all have jammed out to a Sia song, whether we want to or not. She has single handedly infiltrated our radios and yet fans still do not

have a face to match the name.

Many music enthusiasts have become aware of Sia's influence on their ears. The Kiwi singer is responsible for Beyoncé's "Pretty Hurts," Rihanna's somber single, "Stay" and Katy Perry's "Firework," along with other notable hit songs.

In an effort to avoid the spotlight, Sia has opted to write chart-topping hits for music's biggest stars.

This is Acting, Sia's seventh studio album, is in essence a reject album. Composed of songs originally written for Beyoncé, Rihanna, Adele and Katy Perry, Sia has recycled what other artists have scrapped. The album's title cleverly reflecting Sia's portrayal of the artists the songs were meant for.

"It's like when you have a bunch of stuff in the fridge that's about to go bad, but you're such a great chef you make something delicious out of it," Sia said on "The Ellen Show."

This Is Acting is a collective of potential radio hits; making it impossible not to love every song. Singles include "Cheap Thrills," "One Million Bullets" and "Bird Set Free."

With a voice as powerful as Sia's, any song can become a hit. But Sia does not settle, charging her album with rhythmic beats and pulsating electronic synths, united with her unforgettable melodies.

Her voice overpowering the background, building into a climactic chorus she has become known for. *This Is Acting* is eclectic; each song varies in influence, from the Latin beats in "Move Your Body" and "Cheap Thrills" to the soft sounds of a piano in "One Million Bullets." There's a song for everyone.

For the full story, visit FIUSM.com

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE



SELENE BASILE/THE BEACON

Jennifer Low, associate professor of English at Florida Atlantic University, speaks to audiences about typography and woodcut design in the edition of Hamlet produced by the scene designer Edward Gordon Craig at the "Book as Artifact" panel hosted by Green Library.

SOFTBALL

Panthers ranked sixth in C-USA

SANTI'S ARCH



SANTIAGO ARCHIERI

The softball season begins this weekend with the Panthers ranked sixth in the final Conference USA preseason poll. The results came off a pool of league coaches within C-USA. Last year, the University was ranked first in the conference in the same preseason poll. However, FIU ended up missing the C-USA tournament.

"The way we played last year, I think that is a fair rating," said Head Coach Gator Rebhan.

The team is not paying too much attention to the rankings, but with the season right around the corner, it will be some extra motivation to prove the naysayers wrong.

Coach Rebhan is going into his second season as head coach for the softball squad.

Although a 30-24 overall record last season might be a great way to start off his campaign in South Florida, the 10-14 C-USA record demoralizes the Panthers.

Their below .500 C-USA record might not bring this

talented group to be a part of the conference tournament, a tournament which FIU hosted.

With last season long behind them, the team is optimistic about the future.

The Panthers have 16 letter winners returning, along with seven starters and two pitchers.

When it comes to the pitching rotation, Rebhan showed his enthusiasm about starting a season fresh with Corinne Jenkins and Rachel Dwyer, the two best statistical pitchers from a year ago.

As the rotation might revolve around them, the team is also welcoming two freshmen pitchers and a leftie transfer.

Perhaps one of the biggest parts for the upcoming season is bringing back a powerhouse offense. FIU finished last year ranked second in doubles and triples, while fourth in RBI among C-USA teams.

The Panthers will be bringing back their hitting core, as the three strongest hitters in the 2015 season will be back.

Leading the way will be Stephanie Texeira, the two time All Conference USA Preseason team winner and league leader in walks and on-base percentage last year. Along with these two titles, Texeira was third in batting

LIGHTNING STRIKES



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Senior guard, Taylor Shade, dribbles the ball to set up a shot for the Panthers against Middle Tennessee State University, Saturday, Feb. 6. The Panthers lost 62-85. Next up for the Panthers is an away game at the University of Texas at El Paso, Thursday, Feb. 11.

percentage with .444, which marked the school record for the Panthers.

With so many positives going for FIU looking ahead into the season, a sixth place spot in the polls wasn't exactly what they were expecting, at least not Rebhan.

"I think we are much better than a sixth spot, but that is a fair assessment based off last season," said Rebhan.

The 2016 season kicks off against nationally ranked Florida State Seminoles at FIU and continue to play five games over the weekend. *Santi's Arch* is a weekly column that discusses various sports topics. To offer commentary or suggestions, email santiago.archieri@fiusm.com.

TENNIS

Dominant play secures Panthers' six match win

REINALDO LLERENA
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The FIU women's tennis team swept Stetson University and Bethune-Cookman University the weekend of Feb. 6-7 at the Mandy Stoll Tennis Center in DeLand, and rebounded from a frustrating home opener.

The Panthers (3-1) dominated throughout the weekend, sweeping both opponents, 7-0, and did not lose a match. The dominating weekend started when the Panthers played the Stetson Hatters (1-2) on Saturday, Feb. 6.

After the home opener, junior Nina Nagode said the team needed to play more aggressive in doubles and not come out as tired as they did versus Troy.

In the match against the Hatters, the Panthers won all three doubles matches to claim the first point of

the match. Senior Carlotta Orlando and redshirt-freshman Andrea Lazaro defeated Arijana Korac and Carolina Meregalli, 6-1. Freshman Maryna Veksler and Nagode defeated Eveline Lepinay and Maja Salibasic, 6-2, to clinch the doubles point. Senior Kaitlin Brozovich and sophomore Nerma Caluk defeated Alexe Viaud and Alexandra Lyubimova, 6-3, to complete the doubles sweep.

Heading into singles play, the Panthers were up on the Hatters, 1-0, after the doubles sweep. Lazaro added another point for the Panthers when she dominated Lyubimova, 6-0, 6-0, and Orlando put the Panthers up, 3-0, when she defeated Korac in straight sets, 6-3, 6-0. Nagode clinched the match for the Panthers with her 13th win of the season, defeating Salibasic, 6-1, 6-3.

The Panthers continued to dominate the match, winning the next three singles matches to shutout the Hatters, 7-0. Brozovich defeated Brittany Hill, 6-2, 6-1, and Veksler defeated Lepinay in straight sets, 6-2, 6-3. Caluk finished the shutout when she won her match, also in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4, over Meregalli.

Head Coach Katarina Petrovic said after the opener the team needed to execute their shots better and be more consistent in their matches moving forward.

In the match against the Bethune-Cookman Wildcats (1-3) on Sunday, Feb. 7, the team continued their dominant play from the day before. Orlando and Lazaro defeated Hilary Hanton and Karen Romero, 6-1, and the duo of Caluk and Brozovich defeated Ancia Ifill and Alejandra Vidal, 6-2. The two victories put

the Panthers up 1-0 against the Wildcats.

The consistently dominant play continued into singles play, where the Panthers won all six matches. Veksler defeated Mina Matsuba in straight sets, 6-1, 6-2, and Nagode defeated Matea Roki, 6-1, 6-1, to put the Panthers up 3-0 in the match. Orlando defeated Hanton to get the match-clinching fourth point, but there were two matches still playing. Caluk defeated Romero, 6-2, 6-0, and Brozovich beat Vidal, 6-1, 6-2, to sweep the Wildcats, 7-0.

With the wins over the weekend, the Panthers improved to 19-5 all-time versus the Hatters and 4-0 all-time versus the Wildcats.

The Panthers will take on the Georgia State Panthers in Atlanta, Georgia, Friday, Feb. 19. First serve from Atlanta is set for 4 p.m.

FOOTBALL

FIU welcome 24 new signees

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Wednesday, Feb. 3 was a busy day for Head Coach Ron Turner and his football program.

As college prospects signed their letter of intent to play at the university of their choosing, Turner brought in a total of 24 signees as part of the recruiting class of 2016.

Out of the 24 signees, 13 players are on offense and 10 are on defense. 21 players are from the state of Florida and seven are from South Florida. Four players have already enrolled this semester to participate in football activities.

17 players attended Turner's football camp this past summer in Miami,

Tampa and Jacksonville.

"I am very pleased with this year's class. I think it's got a lot of versatility and a lot of good athletes. We had a good number of guys in our camp, so we know them," Turner said.

"We hit the positions that we needed and did a really good job on the defensive and offensive lines. We also got some corners that we definitely needed. We have some guys that will come in right away and make an impact. I'm really excited."

After getting all the letters from his recruits and press conference, he hosted a National Signing Day banquet where he and his staff announced the signees and showed highlight clips of the upcoming freshmen that will be playing for FIU.

During the banquet, he announced that on Monday, March 7, the football team will begin spring practice.

One of the early signees, offensive lineman Dallas Connell was excited to come and play for FIU. Now a freshman, he and his twin brother Doug, who also plays offensive lineman, are loving every minute of FIU.

"I love FIU so far," said Connell. "It's been great with all my classes and meeting with the team, it has been a great experience so far. I just love the atmosphere and great mindset for this coming season. I think coach Turner has been doing great things here."

THE GREAT OUTDOORS



JAVIER SANLEY/THE BEACON

Katherine Maichel, a senior studying music, Tranae' Robinson, an international business freshman, and Jonathan Gonzalez, a sustainability and the environment junior, listen to instructor Barbara Pazos on wildlife during the Ecology of South Florida field trip in Everglades National Park.

Community unites to save trapped kitten

SOPHIE HERBUT
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Dean Diann Newman took another approach to demonstrating the importance of team as she brought her class together to help save the life of a kitten.

After a student discovered a kitten trapped under cars in the BBC faculty parking lot, Newman's students worked together to save it.

"[A] student saw the small kitten with no food or water and became concerned for its safety," Officer David Navas said. "In fear of a car running the kitten over, the student called FIU Police."

According to Navas, Officers Deanna Sydnor and Douglas Sykes answered the call at about 9 a.m. and attempted to lure the cat out from under the cars.

After the kitten avoided and dodged several attempts at capture from the officers it stayed stationary under one particular car and could not be reached by Sykes, Sydnor or the student.

The officers contacted the owner of the car, Jill Brookner, an

instructor with Newman for a class on Leadership Training for Team Building.

"[Brookner] was with them in the parking lot for over 40 minutes," said Newman. Brookner came back unsuccessful and said she needed to call for AAA to lift her car.

Brookner and Newman were in the middle of class when the police contacted Brookner. When they heard of the news, the students immediately reacted and offered to lift the car themselves, according to Newman.

Two students had jacks in their car and they brought them over to lift the car. Another student then reached under the car to scoop the kitten. The students tried for about 45 minutes to save the kitten, said Chelsea Kinjorski, a higher education administration grad student.

"When the kitten was rescued, we all cheered," said Newman, Associate Dean of the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management.

After the students lifted the car, Kinjorski put the kitten in a box and it stayed with them throughout the

rest of class time. She then decided to take the kitten home.

Kinjorski said her neighbor fosters stray cats and there were several students who could not take the kitten home, so she took it home knowing she might be able to find it a home.

The class named the American short tail kitten Jack after the jacks they used to lift the car. Kinjorski took the cat to the vet and found out the kitten was female so she changed her name from Jack to Jackie.

Jackie is about 6 weeks old and was infested with fleas, ear mites and ringworm. But the vet agreed the kitten was in good health for being a stray, Kinjorski said.

"I have never had a cat of my own before, but I knew as soon as I saw her, I had to keep her," she said.

Kinjorski is expected to keep Jackie under her care and is currently tending to her with "lots of patience and anti-bacterial soap."

"I learned that when a group puts their mind to something, it can be accomplished," Kinjorski said.

Panthers end regular season on high note

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The FIU swimming and diving team was able to end the regular season on a high note, defeating the Florida Atlantic University Owls 115-71, Sunday Feb. 7.

This win follows last week's season low loss against the University of Miami Hurricanes, 95-205. It also adds extra momentum to the team as they gear up for the Conference USA Championships.

Marking its second win over the Owls, the team took home seven first-place finishes from five individuals and two relay teams.

The Panthers kicked things off early with junior Jennifer Alfani, freshman Nicole Hunnewell, junior Jennifer Deist and sophomore Naomi Ruele placing first in the 200 yard medley relay. The women finished with a time of 1:46.69.

Sophomore Kyna Pereira followed this up with an individual win in the 200 yard freestyle, with a final time of 1:51.05. Pereira, two-time C-USA Athlete of the Week, is most notably known for finishing the regular season undefeated in the 1000 yard freestyle at dual meets.

Following these back-to-back wins, the match

followed a give and take pattern, with the University winning one and then losing one.

Sophomore Letizia Bertelli claimed the win in the 50 yard freestyle with a 24.07 second finish. There wasn't another win until two events later, with Deist claiming a second win in the 100 yard butterfly.

Senior Jessica Piper placed first in the 500 yard freestyle with a final time of 5:02.44 and Pereira finishing in a close second at 5:04.13. FIU shut out this event, only allowing Owls to place fifth and below.

Ruele followed up this win with another of her own, topping off the 100 yard backstroke in 56.11 seconds.

The Panthers closed out the meet with a first and second place win in the 200 yard freestyle relay. Alfani, Bertelli, Deist and Pereira taking first with a final time of 1:37.17, and sophomore Skye Carey, junior Anna Jonsson, freshman Marie Lauridsen and Piper finishing second with a 1:40.24 time.

Overall, the University brought home seven wins of the 12 events, coupled with seven second place finishes.

Next up for the Panthers is the C-USA Championship run, in Atlanta, Georgia. Conference championships begin Feb. 24, and end Feb. 27.




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