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Florida International University

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SELENE BASILE/THE BEACON

Joshua Muñoz Jimenez, organic garden manager at FIU, speaks about the importance of the nature preserve in our community, Friday, Feb. 26 in the Nature Preserve

Students protest Nature Preserve remodel

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The Northern 2.8 acres of the Nature Preserve could possibly be diminished to have two athletic practice fields built over it, after the motion was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Questions were raised by a group of students who spent the last three months protecting and cleaning the Nature Preserve from invasive species.

Anas Rojas, a senior Environmental Studies major is the president of Growth of Leadership Academics and Diversity in Ecological Sciences and an urban forestry intern, said, "The

Nature Preserve is a small piece of the Everglades right here on campus, we are so fortunate to have it."

Rojas also said, "It is home to many birds, foxes and other animals since 1978 and that's what makes it so special."

Rojas shared her disappointment toward the situation after all the efforts her team made to restore this part of the Nature Preserve. She pointed out that there are a lot of different species that depend on the wetland area, and to diminish that specific area could potentially cut off resources for organisms who reside there.

"As students who volunteer for the restoration effort, we should have been informed," Rojas said.

"The process was not at all transparent since not even the Office of University of Suitability was informed," she said.

Rojas invited all interested students to join their campaign "Save the Nature Preserve." Their hashtag #SaveitDontPaveit is specifically for the new movement to stop construction over the Nature Preserve.

"The area that we have been restoring has improved so much that we received a grant of \$4,000 from the FWC, which is the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission," Rojas said.

She said, "The state agency's grant was going to allow us to remove the invasive and put native plants in

this area. We were just about to make those changes, but now we cannot proceed with it."

"We have a Facebook page for the campaign and a drive where we save all of the important documents on the matter. We also have a survey available to figure out how this is affecting students. It can be taken anonymously if preferred."

"We understand the need for athletic fields. We are not saying don't build them; all we are saying is: Don't build it on the Nature Preserve!" Rojas said.

The GLADES committee is asking for the administration to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment.

SEE PRESERVE, PAGE 2

SGA talks Nature Preserve remodel

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Monday, Feb. 29, in the SGA Chambers, SGC-MMC made a resolution against building on FIU's nature preserve.

According to Alian Collazo, speaker of the student senate, SGA does not support building a practice field for intramural sports on the nature preserve. However, SGA does support building it somewhere else.

"We want to make it clear that in this resolution, we at Student Government do not support the building of these intramural field on the preserves. Or any building of anything on the preserves," he said at Monday's SGA meeting.

"We have to be unbiased and we have to understand that although we stand with the preservation of the nature preserve, we also understand there is a massive need for students to have more space to have extra curricular activities, specifically in the area of intramural sports," said Collazo.

According to Collazo,

SGC-MMC will look for an alternative solution for the sports fields.

"We will be working diligently to find a location for these intramural fields to be placed somewhere that helps our students, but at the same time doesn't go against the preserve."

Collazo clarified that SGC does not have the power to make a concrete change in the plans to diminish the preserves in favor of intramural sports.

"Does that mean we can you guarantee you change? No," he said.

"What that means is that we can guarantee that we will stand by the voice of students," said Collazo.

SGC will be hosting a Town Hall meeting next week to give students the floor to express their concerns for saving the nature preserve.

"We are going to have a Town Hall meeting in these chambers. We're going to have the Vice President of Student Affairs along with Dr. Kenneth Jessel, chief financial officer of the University, come and have a conversation with students," he said.

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Assistant professor charged with research fraud

An assistant professor at Washington State University has been charged with engaging in a scheme to defraud the federal government of \$8 million in federal research funds. Haifang Wen, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at WSU, has been arrested and charged by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of New York. He has worked at WSU's Pullman campus since August 2008, WSU officials said. "We're aware of the general nature of the charges and cooperating with the federal investigation," said Robert

Strenge, a spokesman for the university. According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Wen, 41, of Pullman; his brother Bin Wen, 44; and Bin Wen's wife, Pang Wen, 43, both of Great Falls, Va., were arrested.

They were accused of fabricating letters of support and investment, providing false information in research grant proposals and reports, and providing falsified reports and emails regarding how federal research funds were spent, according to a statement released earlier this week.

Jewish inmate's petition rejected by Supreme Court

North Carolina prisoner Israel Ben-Levi wanted an opportunity to worship with other Jewish inmates, and when he didn't get it, he hand-wrote a plea to the Supreme Court.

The 68-year-old convicted rapist failed Monday, when the

court denied his petition. But in an illuminating twist, Ben-Levi's painstakingly scrawled petition won over one of the court's staunchest law-and-order conservatives who has become a notable supporter of devout inmates.

Mark Ruffalo, 'Spotlight' creators join Catholic sex abuse victims' rally in downtown LA

About 20 protesters who rallied against sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church in downtown Los Angeles were joined by "Spotlight" actor Mark Ruffalo; the film's director, Tom McCarthy; and its writer, Josh Singer, on Sunday. Protesters, many of whom identify as victims of abuse by Catholic priests, marched and brandished banners outside the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels Sunday morning.

Ruffalo, Singer and McCarthy, who were invited by the group to appear, joined them in calling on the church to take greater action against sexual abuse and release the names of known abusers. The "Spotlight" creators each held a section of a banner printed with the victims' childhood photos and addressed the protesters before heading to pre-Oscar parties and the red carpet.

Students prone to mental health issues

MIND, PAGE 8

with a common, treatable mental health.

"It was nice using CAPS because it's right on campus and free since you already pay for it in the tuition," said Tania Cohen, a freshman psychology major.

"So if you can't really afford to go outside of campus, which is like \$150 per session, you could always just go there," she said

Cohen did experience an issue with scheduling, however.

She said, "Personally, my psychologist, the one I used to see, would be jammed packed with appointments most of the time. So I really couldn't see him when I wanted to. It was based on his time, which kinda sucked."

CAPS also provides online workshops and resources that can help assess the individual's

skills and offer solutions for common stressors such as finding out if you're good at time management and then providing for ways to improve your time management.

Furthermore, it provides various programs including the Body Acceptance program, consultations & referrals, Group counseling, and Individual and Couples counseling.

There are also programs dedicated for parents should they have any concern about their first-year college student, as well as psychiatric services and victim services through the Victim Empowerment Program.

Freshman and psychology major Kimberly Lopez said, "As someone who used to go to CAPS, it sure was nice having someone to talk to without worrying about what they're thinking of

me. It was liberating, in a way because whatever you want to say, you can just say it."

After operation hours, a 24-hour hotline is also available at 305-348-3000 should you experience any emergencies.

4 out of every 5 college students who either contemplate or attempt suicide show clear warning signs, according to Healthline.com

The website also reports that a lack of sleep, poor eating habits, and not enough exercise are driving factors for depression among college students.

The stress that comes with obtaining the highest marks includes the pressure to get good grades, financial worries, failed relationships and conflicts with roommates all of which are enough to force some students to leave college or worse.

Students organize campaign to protect Nature Preserve

PRESERVE, PAGE 1

Rojas said, "We believe that if we can get a third party as an unbiased outside source, perhaps things will be different."

She mentioned that "if they are not, so be it, but at least we will know the true worth of the wetland area."

Joshua Muñoz-Jimenez is the Organic Garden manager. As a senior, he will be the first student to graduate FIU with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural sciences.

According to Muñoz-Jimenez, many species such as native box turtles, fish, native frogs, foxes and snakes depend on the lake in the wetland. He also says every mammal, every bird that lives in the Nature Preserve also depends on this lake as it's their only water source.

"The issue with the lake removal is that it takes about 30 to 40 years to make it environmentally stable for native species to use it. So replacing it and putting it on another side of the Nature Preserve would not work," Muñoz-Jimenez said.

"It all works together as a system; like a car, for example, it would not function if you take one part out so removing the lake would make the entire ecosystem collapse," he said.

Muñoz-Jimenez pointed out that older citizens in their 50s and 60s outside of FIU also use the jogging path to walk and that building over the Nature Preserve would not only affect FIU students but

the community as a whole.

This issue also alerted past students who are now part of the alumni community.

Tom Condon is an active alumni who graduated FIU last year with a Bachelor's degree in English and a minor in History.

"In addition to offering an area for research, the Nature Preserve provides students with both physical and mental health benefits by giving them an area in which they can exercise and relax." Condon said. "Although building over the Nature Preserve may be a cheaper alternative, I believe it's ultimately worth investing an additional 1.5 million dollars in order to provide these long-term benefits to students."

Another alumni, Adonis Alvarez graduated FIU in the spring of 2014 with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental studies and a minor in Agroecology. He was also the President of the organic garden when he was a student.

As a response to what he termed as an "abuse of power," Alvarez encouraged students to take part in the campaign and take a stand against the project to build on the Nature Preserve.

"I would tell students to think of their kids; do we want to leave a world where most of the environment is concrete walls and most of the plants have been destroyed?" Alvarez said that "we have the chance to stand up for what is right and protect nature for future generations."

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Caffeine: the drug ruining our bodies

PANTHER HEALTH



MAYTINEE
KRAMER

As busy students, it's only natural to seek additional energy sources to help us get through the day. Without it, we struggle to stay focused in class, and work and life become a drag.

As soon as we wake up in the morning, most of us reach out for a cup of coffee or an energy drink. As we know, coffee contains caffeine, which many believe boosts energy, while energy drinks contain caffeine and loads of sugar.

However, what many of us don't know is the cost of consuming energy stimulants and how our bodies react to them.

Drinks high in sugar can do a lot to our body, but a new study shows that when the sweet stuff hits our brains, it can be as damaging as being exposed to extreme types of stress or abuse.

The caffeine in caffeinated drinks stimulate the heart, causing it to beat rapidly and raise one's blood pressure. Despite a rewarding boost in energy, the effects of caffeine are temporary, which is why many people drink more than one cup throughout the day.

When combined with sugar, the surge of energy increases while

also causing blood glucose levels to go up. The "high" eventually wears off, leading to a crash.

Researchers from the University of New South Wales Australia studying the effects of sugary drinks on the brain observed extensive changes to the part of the brain that controls behavior and emotions called the hippocampus.

For fifteen weeks, female rats were exposed to adverse conditions while being fed a sugary solution. Brain scans showed that the rats exposed to stress without sugar intake and stress-free rats that drank sugar water had similar changes to the memory center of the hippocampus. In addition, the stress group took in more calories.

Overall, the study showed that the effect of sugary drinks on the brain was similar to those caused by extreme early life stress, which can impact mental health and function.

Under regular stress, the adrenal glands make extra cortisol, a hormone used to manage stress. Cortisol also manages blood sugar and fat metabolism to produce energy. In the consumption of sugary drinks in high quantities, blood sugar spikes, causing the adrenal glands to produce excess cortisol in order to metabolize the increased glucose in the body.

In other words, the more uneven our blood sugar levels,

the more uneven our moods. This soon gives way to a crash; especially when one feels stressed.

Though these aren't definitive findings on how sugary drinks can harm the human brain, the researchers did find that the changes in the brain are a cause for concern "given the high consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, with particularly high consumption in children aged nine to 16 years."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention further reports that American teens and young adults consume the most sugary drinks out of any age group.

Looking closer to home, FIU students may notice that consumption and sale of sugary drinks all over campus. In 2010, Pepsi replaced Coca-Cola as the official beverage at FIU.

Through this partnership, the university saw a line of products that include Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Sierra Mist, Lipton Iced Tea, Sobe Lifewater, Gatorade, Propel, Aquafina, Muscle Milk, Amp Energy, ROCKSTAR Energy Drink and Starbucks Frappuccino.

FIU is committed to serving its students the best and pushes its initiative to maintain a happy and healthy environment. While a sweet drink may be refreshing once in awhile, the university should emphasize fresh, healthier drink options.

Some tasty alternatives could be sparkling water flavored with fresh fruit, more tea options or even more fresh smoothie places.

In addition to the university taking an initiative, students should also find ways in keeping their health at an optimal level.

Rather than guzzling down another Starbucks coffee or ROCKSTAR, Panthers should make it a goal to improve the function of the mitochondria, which is the energy powerhouse of our cells.

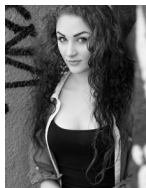
The mitochondria creates ATP, a chemical energy found within all cells. To create this energy, cells need healthy protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. Eating real, unprocessed food and drinking water is key to producing that natural energy the body needs to function.

So, if FIU students are looking to increase their energy levels, a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables, healthy proteins and complex carbs, drinking lots of healthy liquids, as well as sleep and exercise are important.

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.

FIU to build bridge over Eighth Street

THE LEVELER



AUBREY CARR

Plans are underway to build a \$9.3 million, 320 foot long pedestrian bridge across Southwest 8th Street, making it easier for students, faculty and visitors to get from Sweetwater to the MMC campus.

Munilla Construction Management and FIGG Bridge Engineers are teaming up to make the plans a reality and the bridge is expected to be completed by summer 2018.

"The MCM-FIGG Team is honored and blessed to have been selected to build this iconic bridge. It's even more satisfying to serve the students and faculty of FIU again," Jorge Munilla, the president of Munilla Construction Management said.

The building of the bridge isn't the first time MCM has worked on an FIU-related project. The August 2012 expansion of the football stadium was also a success. Although proclaiming the bridge to be "iconic" will be a premature use of the adjective, the bridge will undoubtedly earn its own nickname as all the other FIU structures have.

The funds come from a grant by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation for \$11.4 million. Leftover money will be used for improving the MMC entrances and the general 109th

Ave. area. Another impressive use of the funds will be allocated towards the development of a smartphone app that will let users know what spaces may be available in a new FIU garage, in addition to traffic patterns and other transportation systems like the new Miami-Dade bus system.

While no student's personal expenses are funding the project, there is a debate concerning whether or not the bridge is a good use of the grant money. There are certain side effects that could arise from its production, like exacerbated traffic or damaging the environment more with the flow of construction, whether it's through added pollution from machines, cutting down trees or other waste.

On the other hand, it could alleviate traffic and car pollution post-construction for those who wish to walk or bike through the bridge rather than drive to their classes, since many students are commuters.

The construction also includes a concrete canopy that is 30 feet wide and overall, "enough width to allow for the comfortable passage of bikes and pedestrians as well as a space for special events and student seating," according to FIU News.

Once the novelty and grandeur of the walkway wears off, the bridge can provide an excuse for students to exercise more. It

would certainly be a more pleasant walk than taking the risk to cross 8th street.

A Randy Burkett-designed lighting system may aid in preventing crimes such as mugging or sexual harassment that would otherwise be covered up by darkness. This and keeping students dislocated from traffic are the main points of the safety goals and another major reason to be pro-construction.

Kenneth Jessell, the FIU Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer, would agree.

"The pedestrian bridge along with inviting walkways, lighting and landscaping, will offer a safer transportation route for our students and visitors between the Modesto A. Maidique Campus and the City of Sweetwater," Jessell said.

The bridge will be a great addition to this area of Miami and to FIU. Miami needs more pedestrian-friendly parts and this might spark a movement in that direction. The bridge will be safer, more visually pleasing and it could bring people together to study, attend events and exercise more.

The Leveler is a column on global social justice and political commentary. For further commentary please contact Aubrey at opinion@fiusm.com.

THE BEACON | Editorial The woes of Wi-Fi

Access to the Internet is an integral part of being a student at FIU.

With many courses connecting students and professors over Blackboard and email, a strong wifi connection is often needed simply to pass a class.

Other programs like Pearson require Internet connectivity to access textbooks and assignments. Many professors require students to submit their work to TurnItIn, a website which runs documents through anti-plagiarism software.

For group projects, many students must be able to connect with one another through Skype, WhatsApp and Google Drive.

Wallace Cure, a junior mathematics major, has had difficulties in the past with the school's wifi.

"The dorms and GC have pretty bad wifi, but it gets to be the absolute worst around midnight," he said. "I guess because everybody has assignments due at 11:59."

Cure's experience with poor connectivity in the evening has impacted his ability to complete assignments on time.

"The biggest issues I have are slowness - to the point that pages load with broken images on them - and being logged off the wifi and having to reconnect," he said.

For on-campus students who have jobs and classes during the day, these late hours might be the only time available to do class work.

"10:30 is an important time of the night," Cure said. "Even if I've been working since 7, as soon as it gets late, everything stops working. I can't load assignments and reading, and I can't submit stuff to TurnItIn."

Many places around campus also have a weak signal, particularly outdoors.

FIUSM found that connecting to the wifi in the gondola seats outside GC was difficult, despite its being a common study-spot for students. Inability to connect to the wifi is also a common complaint among students living in Lakeview Hall.

Students living on campus do not have the option of a hard connection to the internet in their dorm. Connection points have either been disabled or removed in each bedroom.

Andrew Naylor, the Associate Director of Housing at FIU said these connection points were disabled before he began working there a year and a half ago.

"Many campuses across the country have taken out the hard-line connections in favor of wifi because students were demanding it," he said.

Connecting at BBC can also be difficult, especially in the Wolfe University Center - there are many dead zones at BBC, using cellular service often isn't an option.

It is the opinion of this editorial board that FIU must invest more in its wifi capability, perhaps increasing their bandwidth at high traffic hours to accommodate students.

Panthers should not have to be paying tuition only to fail assignments based on a lack of infrastructure.

In the meantime, we at FIUSM suggest students avoid submitting assignments between 11:30 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. to prevent any difficulties. We understand that sometimes that is the only option. In these cases, try saving your files to a flash drive and using a wired connection at one of the school's computer labs.

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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CULTURALLY COOL



Left: Jose Ferrand and Andre Fiallos demonstrate their karate skills at the Cool@Japan event, Feb. 28.

Right: Ferrand and Fiallos perform self-defense techniques.

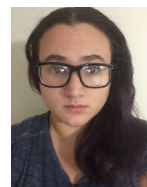
Bottom: Fushu Daiko, a Taiko drum group, performs for the GC Pit audience.



MICHAEL SLOAN/THE BEACON

Fall Out Boy brings Wintour to South Florida

UNGODLY REVIEWS



NADINE RODRIGUEZ

With over a dozen awards, six songs featured in movies and video games and a passionate fandom that has lasted for over 15 years, Fall

Out Boy has multiple accolades under their belt.

This spring they add another: Wintour. Consisting of 20 shows, the good old Chicago boys hit the road with AWOLNATION and PVRIS Feb. 26, at Hollywood, Florida's very own Hard Rock Live.

PVRIS started off the night well, building up excitement for the following acts.

After a quick six song set, PVRIS departed from the stage,

allowing AWOLNATION to take over.

With a mix of eccentric vocals, incredible, fast-paced drum beats and sporadic lights, AWOLNATION came and delivered.

Their set was slightly longer than PVRIS, reaching a grand total of nine tracks, including the band's extremely well-known song, "Sail."

However, once they departed the true excitement settled in.

The air shared by thousands of fans in the arena was charged with eager eyes set on the stage.

After the light blue curtain rose after AWOLNATION finished their set, the screen spanning the entire stage lit up: it displayed a video of a skier soaring through a blizzard. Suddenly, snow began to fall in South Florida. Wintour

had started.

And with it, an unforgettable performance. Fall Out Boy's newest single, "Irresistible" was the opening track, the fake snow in the air gave the illusion that the band was performing in a blizzard.

The single was followed by an oldie that caused fans to rejoice and belt out the classic emo lyrics to "Sugar, We're Goin' Down." Each track had its own memorable aspect.

The screen panned the stage displaying different graphics for each performance.

One of the most memorable of the night was "Save Rock and Roll," the last track on the band's comeback album of the same name.

This song particularly memorable because Fall Out Boy

used it as a tribute to the late David Bowie.

His lightning bolt appeared on what seemed to be Mars' landscape and then slowly transitioned to a black and white portrait of the rocker.

The tribute was extremely moving, with lead vocalist Patrick Stump playing the piano as the lyrics: "I will defend the faith/ Going down swinging/I will save the songs/That we can't stop singing."

Yet, Wintour's first date was not perfect. As for the venue, the Hard Rock's handling of the line of fans waiting to enter the show was extremely poor, resulting in a general admission pit before entering the concert.

In regard to the band's management, obvious inclination toward attendees that paid more

was disheartening. The VIP pit, which cost more than the regular general admission pit, appeared to be extremely comfortable and spacious.

Meanwhile, sections of the regular general admission pit could not see the stage due to how it was designed. Consideration should have been taken for these attendees.

Overall, the Wintour tour is definitely a must-see.

Talented, passionate bands combined with incredible light designs resulted in an unforgettable night.

Ungodly Reviews is a weekly column covering albums and concerts. For suggestions and comments contact Nadine at nadine.rodriquez@fiusm.com

FIU music students exhibit their talent at International Miami GuitART festival

JAY VANPARIA
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The FIU School of Music and CARTA jointly presented the Miami International GuitART festival at the Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center, Feb. 24-28. The festival covered concerts, lectures and master classes from internationally renowned artists like John Schneider, Corey Harvin, Zuleida Suarez and Benjamin Verdery, just to name a few. The festival also incorporated a composition competition wherein aspiring musicians were provided with an opportunity to be recognized for their talents.

The tickets for various events were available to the FIU students at a discounted price of \$5 and many students took this opportunity to their advantage and came to witness this spectacular festival.

“Although I have zero knowledge about guitars, I am here to experience something new,” said Bhumi Patel, a first year biological science major. “You never know, if I like this event, I might start learning the guitar.”

A remarkable and innovative Luthiers Expo was also a part of the festival where a variety of hand-

built guitars were put on display. The featured luthiers were renowned guitar maker Kenny Hill who received the Industry Leadership award by the Guitar Foundation of America and Amalia Ramirez, the fourth generation of the legendary Spanish guitar maker Jose Ramirez.

The festival participants had a chance to meet the luthiers, try their guitars and even buy one.

The Expo was held in the Patricia and Philip Frost Art Museum Café area from Feb. 24-28, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The festival saw eminent guitarists from around the world come together and provide a fantastic and euphoric spectacle which surpassed the audience’s expectations. On Feb. 27, the FIU guitar students were given an opportunity to showcase their skills and to sway the audience with their outstanding concert. The concert was conducted by Mesut Ozgen, the Artistic Director and founder of the festival.

“It is honor and privilege to serve as the Artistic Director of the MGIF inaugural edition, which has been a dream of mine for a long time,” Ozgen said.

The student showcase concert was also aided by Benjamin Verdery, professor of guitar at the



NICOLE MEZA/THE BEACON

Composer Celso Cano performs solo at the the GuitART festival’s opening ceremony at the WPAC concert hall.

Yale University School of Music.

“The students were absolutely flawless in their performance and it was a great honor for me that I was invited to be a part of this mind-blowing festival,” said Verdery.

The students performed modern guitar masterpieces like “Tantra,” “Mountain Mission,” “Aquarela do Brasil” and “Scenes from Ellis Island.”

Composers Carlos Rafael Rivera and Benjamin Verdery, who wrote “Tantra” and “Scenes from Ellis Island,” respectively, were present. Rivera was invited by Ozgen for an impromptu conduction of the masterpiece.

According to Ozgen, “Even though the students did not rehearse with Carlos, they did a fantastic job, given the fact that [Rivera] has a really spontaneous style of conducting performances.”

Apart from the orchestra, there were several solo performances by FIU guitar students Carlos Serrano, Roberto Rodriguez and Ari Howard, who brought a fresh perspective to the concert. Moreover, the audience remained glued to their seats during

a duet performance with Thomas Caprara and Felipe Carvajal accompanying him with the guitar.

The star of the show, however, was the final performance of “Scenes from the Ellis Island.” That was the only orchestral piece of the concert that made use of the organ, played by Dan Hardin. The performance took a slow tempo in the beginning but it was not long that the players picked up their pace, which gave rise to a spectacular euphoria amongst the audience.

Towards the end, the music stopped dramatically and that is when Benjamin Verdery himself threw himself on stage with his electric guitar and started playing fusion with the students. This unexpected twist left the audience mesmerized from his high energy and effortlessness.

“To be honest, that surprise was a planned one and I had practiced with the students a couple of times prior to the performance,” said Verdery. “However, the students did way better than the practice sessions and all the credit goes to the enthusiastic and encouraging audience.”

Blown away by the final performance, the audience requested the orchestra to treat them to one more fusion performance. Verdery, Ozgen and the students readily agreed and the show ended on a high note.

Such events help the FIU community to be recognized at international levels. The MIGF is yet another feather in the cap of FIU, after the South Beach Wine and Food Festival.



JAY VANPARIA/THE BEACON

Carlos Serrano, FIU music graduate student performs solo at the the GuitART festival on Feb. 27, at the WPAC concert hall.



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Carlos Serrano, FIU music graduate student performs solo at the the GuitART festival Feb. 27, at the WPAC concert hall.

British artist releases debut album ‘Phases’

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At just 24 years-old, the British artist Jack Garratt is taking the industry by storm. Having won the BRIT Critics’ Choice Award in November and the BBC Sound poll of 2016 in January, Garratt seems to be exploiting his promising potential. Just last week he released his debut album “Phase” after a short series of EPs and singles.

After signing with Island records, a division of Universal Music Group, back in October 2014 they made sure that his road to

success was not an absurdly swift one. This created an effect of authenticity for Garratt, which British listeners truly appreciate.

“Phase” makes quite an introduction with its first track, ‘Coalesce (Synesthesia Pt. II),’ where Garratt lures us in with a delicate verse that quickly heightens into the essence of the album that keeps a consistent vibe with the dance music influences of dubstep and house funk.

Along with these rhythms; Garratt ties in his ability as a songwriter with gentle and at times melancholic vocals that contrast the rough textures of the backdrop. With an effortlessly flowing chorus

and Garratt’s soulful voice, ‘Breathe Life’ is one of the catchiest tracks.

Following that is “Far Cry.” The production is filled with highly, boosted bass and shrieking synthesizers that will get you pumped enough to consider getting a gym membership. The mood is reestablished into a more nostalgic direction where the lyrics delve into deeper and more generic themes such as coming of age in “Weathered.”

Although it is not unpalatable, it touches on a social topic that has become overdone.

Garratt is a pop artist and the genre is known for many things but

ingenuity of themes is not one of them. People like to listen to things that sound like what they have heard before with slight modifications.

Not to take away from Garratt’s artistry but it is not difficult to notice how mainstream the songwriting is throughout the majority of the album. On tracks such as “Fire,” “I Know All What I Do” and “The Love You’re Given” there is no lack of overly exaggerated sentimentality and in an attempt to portray a man in despair he flirts with the boundary of sounding cynical.

To give him some credit though, in “Worry” Garratt’s genuine sound

pulsates as his vocals and instrumentals complement each other gracefully.

Unfortunately, this track was placed smack in the middle of the album where it may easily go unnoticed. “Synesthesia Pt.III” is somewhat refreshing in the sense that it differentiates significantly from “Synesthesia Pt.II,” which is very similar to the first.

The rawness of his sound as heard in “My House Is Your Home,” the final track on his debut album, demonstrates his ability as a vocalist. With a profound bluesy feel and a soulful, gospel influence, Garratt exhibits a different, much less structured facet of his artistry.

The lack of production and the sound of his squeaking tool give the listener a feeling of transparency and a better understanding of his desire for intimacy, over the multiple influences of various genres in his music.

His talent and potential for commercial success are undeniable but from the Ed Sheeran performance style to a seemingly parallel sound with Sam Smith, folk influences of Mumford & Sons, and rays of EDM vibes, perhaps the final track of “Phase” is an indication of what is to come from Garratt’s future projects.

BASEBALL



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Right handed pitcher, Willy Fabra tosses an inning and a third of relief on Wednesday, Feb. 24. The Panthers dropped that game 7-6 versus the University of Missouri and used a total of seven pitchers.

BASKETBALL

FIU's big three deliver in win over FAU

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It wasn't quite a rivalry renewed, but the University's men's basketball team (13-16, 7-9 in Conference USA) outlasted Florida Atlantic University in a 71-63 victory on Saturday, Feb. 27, to snap their two-game losing streak.

The Owls (7-22, 5-11 in C-USA) cut the Panthers' 19-point lead down to six with less than a minute left, but FIU was able to stay ahead thanks to big games from senior forward Daviyon Draper (21 points), junior guard Donte McGill (19 points) and senior Adrian Diaz (17 points).

In FIU and FAU's previous meeting this season, Diaz scored a game-high 23 points while his Panthers crushed the Owls 76-59 in the C-USA opener.

This weekend's game was a far cry from that hopeful beginning of the conference stretch.

Instead, with a chance at a first-round bye being distant, the men's basketball team fought to avoid their football program's mistakes by defeating another bottom-dwelling FAU team hungry for an upset.

Both teams had a poor first half of offense - FIU went 13-34 from the field while FAU shot 7-26. Diaz scored FIU's first basket 1:01 into the game, but the Panthers wouldn't

score again for another 6:18. McGill broke that scoring drought with a layup with 12:43 left in the half to put FIU up 5-4.

This sparked a run by McGill, who scored FIU's next five points. FAU kept the game close as both teams failed to convert shots.

Draper ignited a small FIU run with 6:24 left in the first half and put FIU up 15-14. The senior forward scored the game's next seven next points to give the Panthers a 22-14 lead with 3:50 left in the first half.

Neither team was able to score in the half's last four minutes and the Panthers took the 22-14 lead into halftime.

The Owls cut the Panthers' lead to as little as four with 15:02 left in the second half before the Panthers went on a 20-5 run over the next 7:17 to take a 55-36 lead. With 7:22 left, however,

FAU was able to get the lead back down to six with 16 seconds left to play. They missed the three pointer to cut the lead down to three though and dropped the game 71-63.

FIU closes out its regular season in a two-game home stand beginning on Thursday night when they host the University of Alabama at Birmingham Blazers, who clinched the C-USA regular season title on Saturday in a 71-67 win over Western Kentucky University.

The Panthers then host Middle Tennessee on Saturday, March 5, at 6 p.m. in their last game of the regular season.

Panthers turn tides against Pirates

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As of Sunday, Feb. 28, the baseball team has won four of their last five games following the three losses in their first games of the season.

This team's first game after a disappointing opening weekend at Ole Miss was against the St. Thomas University Bobcats, at the FIU Ballpark on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

Head Coach Turtle Thomas threw in left-hander Alex Demchak (1-0).

An underwhelming performance from the Bobcats on offense helped Demchak on his way to his first win of the season, with a final score of 6-1.

Demchak also only gave up two hits through five innings of work.

The bats were working for the Panthers as well, as Kenny Meimerstorf went 2-4 at the plate with a home-run.

FIU followed up the

of, as they'll see plenty of competition from that conference when it comes time for the NCAA tournament if they make it that far this season.

After splitting both games from the business week, FIU looked towards the weekend to make things a little better.

The Seton Hall Pirates made the trip from New Jersey to Sweetwater to take on the Panthers.

Sophomore Right-Hander Andres Nunez (1-1) was again entrusted with the role of "Ace".

Nunez took the mound for the first time since giving up five earned runs to Ole Miss and did so with a vengeance.

He allowed only two earned runs through 8 innings of work, and struck-out 6 batters, coming just a few outs short of a full game.

The Panthers peppered the field with 14 hits to start the four-game series against the Pirates with an 8-3 win.

Saturday night's game featured a batting order

as a chance to complete the sweep.

This series is not "normal", in that sense, and would merely be a their chance to even their record up.

There was no need for extra motivation this particular afternoon as the wave of momentum the Panthers were carrying could be more accurately likened to a tsunami.

FIU already had 63 hits in their last five games before tacking on another 10 runs and 15 hits to their stat-line on Sunday. Kenny Meimerstorf, J.C. Escarra, and Irving Lopez each had two hits, adding 6 as a trio to the 15 hit total.

Right-hander Garrett Cave (0-1) struck out 7 batters, the highest strikeout total posted by any FIU pitcher in a single outing yet this season, but was pulled early in the fifth inning after letting two Pirates on base.

Right-hander Nate Pearson (1-0) came in to relieve Cave and recorded his sixth strikeout of the season, and his first

“

It's only weekend 2, out of 14, we've still got a long way to go

Turtle Thomas
Head Coach
FIU Baseball

”

triumphant win with falling behind early to another Southeastern Conference opponent in the Tigers from the University of Missouri.

Right-hander Cody Crouse (0-1) was given the opportunity to start this game, but the Tigers proved to be too much for the junior as they scored five of their runs in the first three innings against him.

While the Panthers managed to answer with 16 hits of their own it wouldn't be enough and they'd come up short Wednesday, Feb. 24, 7-6.

FIU is 0-4 record against SEC opponents so far this season, something they should be aware

from FIU that was hitting .391 at home and the deal would only get sweeter from there.

The home-team managed to record double-digit hits for the fifth time this season and scored five runs on those 10 hits.

After giving up one run in the first inning, right-hander Chris Mourelle (1-1) buckled down, didn't allow much more offense from the Seton Hall and struck out five batters.

Kenny Meimerstorf and Austin Rodriguez each hit triples in Saturday's contest to push FIU to a 5-1, and one game under the .500 mark at 3-4.

Normally, this game on Sunday would be the one that would be sought after

win, as the Panthers would go on to defeat Seton Hall, yet again, 10-1.

The Panthers will wrap up this long set against Seton Hall on Tuesday when Cody Crouse is given his second start and another chance at a win.

As far as if this rotation that redeemed themselves as a whole since last weekend, and whether or not Nunez, Mourelle and Cave will be the Panther's go-to 1-2-3, Thomas said to student media, "It's only weekend 2, out of 14, we've still got a long way to go" and they do, but for now they seem to be righting-the-ship against the Pirates

SOFTBALL

Kugelmann shines with no hitter against CCSU

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Freshman Megan Kugelmann stole the spotlight of the weekend by tossing her first collegiate career no-hitter in the midst of a six game weekend.

After a lone game on Thursday, Feb. 25, FIU softball concluded their 16 game home stand with the Felsberg Invitational this past weekend.

The Panthers went 3-2 in the tournament, which will mean an 11-5 record for FIU as they prepare to hit the road for the first time all season.

The weekend started early for the Panthers, with an exhibition game on Thursday against Central Connecticut State University.

FIU found themselves in an early hole, being down 4-0 in the fourth inning. However, FIU made their way to the scoreboard in the next three innings and had a 5-4 lead heading into the final inning of play.

CCSU were then able to bring in two runs, taking the lead and ultimately the game. The final score was 6-5 as FIU went into the weekend suffering their first loss of the season. Abby Summers (3-1) gave up her first loss of the season as a relief pitcher.

Stephanie Teixeira batted in her 13th and 14th runs of the season in the loss.



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Sophomore pitcher, Rachel Dwyer goes against Sienna in which FIU lost the game 5-4. Overall, FIU went 3-2 in the 2016 Felsberg Invitational including a no-hitter against CCSU.

The tournament officially got underway on Friday, Feb. 26, with Siena visiting the Panthers for the first game of the day.

FIU found themselves in an early deficit yet again. Siena held a 5-1 lead in the fifth inning, but not before the Panthers made a late game rally.

With two outs in the bottom of the fifth, FIU managed four hits, highlighted by a Teixeira two run double. This surge gave the Panthers three more runs, but the final score would end at 5-4 with a Siena win.

This led to FIU's biggest losing streak of the season at two. The Panthers left runners in scoring position stranded in the final two innings of play.

Rachel Dwyer (2-1) was penalized with the loss. Dwyer allowed eight hits and gave up two walks in her 4.1 innings of play. She also struck out three batters.

With no time to dwell, the Panthers had the second game of a doubleheader on Friday night against CCSU. After losing the previous day, it was a completely different story

this time around

FIU cruised into a 10-1 win. Summers (4-1) got back in the winner's column with no earned runs in 6 innings.

The score might tell a different story of how the game went, as it was tied 1-1 heading into the fifth inning. A three run home run from Teixeira started the rout and FIU went on to take a 7-1 lead. In the sixth inning, Teixeira knocked another one out of the park, her seventh home run of the season.

The show was stolen the following day by

Kugelmann. The freshman pitcher took the mound for another game against CCSU to start the action on Saturday.

Kugelmann started the day by hitting the first batter she faced, but the jitters were clearly gone when she sent away the next 12 batter she faced.

Kugelmann (2-0) struck out six and gave FIU an 8-0 victory. A.J Belans and Teixeira both had 2 RBI's in the win, which improved the Panthers to a 10-4 overall record.

The Panthers couldn't keep up the pace in the

second game of the double header as they matched their biggest loss of the season with a 7-1 defeat at the hands of Delaware.

Corrine Jenkins (1-2) had the loss, allowing seven hits in four innings.

FIU went down 4-0 in the fourth and had no signs of recovering. FIU was only able to scuffle five hits for the game, while Delaware managed 10.

The 7-1 loss matches the biggest loss for the Panthers since the season opener when the nationally ranked No.10 Florida State Seminoles ran away from the Panthers with a 7-1 victory in Felsberg field.

The final game of the tournament for FIU was against the Siena Saints. This would be the final game of the 16 game home stand for FIU.

Summers (5-1) had no problem with Siena, just allowing four hits all game. She started off strong, retiring the first nine batters she faced and throwing her third complete game of the season, leading to a 6-1 FIU win.

Ashley Leon and Deven Kennedy both led the Panther bats with two hits apiece with Aleima Lopez hitting a home run in the opening inning.

FIU finished their home stretch with an overall record of 11-5. They now travel to Gainesville for the UF invitational, opening up against Illinois State on Friday, March 4.

TENNIS

Tennis sweeps third consecutive weekend

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The No. 62 ranked women's tennis team was all smiles after they swept their third consecutive weekend at the FIU Tennis Courts from Feb. 26 – 28.

The Panthers (7-1) swept the Eastern Michigan Eagles, 7-0, on Friday, Feb. 26, and defeated the University of Texas at Arlington Mavericks, 4-1, on Sunday, Feb. 28.

"We came out aggressive and with high energy in our matches this weekend," said Head Coach Katarina Petrovic after the team's 4-1 win over the Mavericks. "We've been more focused on doubles over the past few weeks and it's paying off. I'm very pleased with how we're playing right now."

The wins over the weekend improved the Panthers' home record to 2-1 and extended their winning streak to six games. The Panthers are undefeated this season when they clinch the doubles point.

Friday's 7-0 victory over the Eagles was the fifth time this season that the Panthers have swept an opponent. The Panthers are off to their best start since 2001, when they ended the year ranked at No. 24 in the nation.

However, Petrovic is not too concerned about her team being undefeated when they win the doubles point.

"It's all about maintaining a high level of energy and sticking to our game plan," said Petrovic. "Our players aren't used to playing doubles. I just want them to have the same ritual heading into every match."

In the match against the Eagles, the Panthers clinched the doubles point when senior Carlotta Orlando and redshirt freshman Andrea Lazaro defeated Ani Gogvadze and Renu Sharma, 6-2, and sophomore Nerma Caluk and senior Kaitlin Brozovich beat Anna Veleva and Alejandra Barcelo, 6-0.

The Panthers continued their dominance against the Eagles heading into singles play, when

the team won five out of six of its matches in straight sets.

Junior Nina Nagode got the first singles point for FIU when she defeated Gogvadze, 6-2, 6-0. Freshman Maryna Veksler clinched

“We've been more focused on doubles over the past few weeks and it's paying off. I'm very pleased with how we're playing right now.”

Katarina Petrovic
Head Coach
FIU Tennis

her 21st win of the season when she defeated Klaea Supejova, 6-2, 6-2.

Orlando clinched the match for the Panthers with a 6-0, 6-2, win over Marie Mayerova. Lazaro won her eighth-straight singles match when she defeated Veleva, 6-1, 7-5.

Caluk defeated Sharma, 6-1, 7-5 and Brozovich topped Barcelo, 1-6, 6-1, 6-1, to clinch the sweep for the Panthers.

"I'm more confident in my game," said Orlando after the match. "I wanted to move [Mayerova] around as much as I could because she was not as agile as I was. By moving her around some, I was able to get some shots to go my way."

However, a much tougher opponent in UT Arlington awaited the Panthers on Sunday, Feb. 28.

Heading into the match, UT Arlington was 5-0 and was coming off a win over University of Central Florida the day before.

In doubles play, the Panthers got off to an early lead as Veksler and Nagode defeated Elizabeth Thoms and Angeles de los Rios, 6-2. Orlando and Lazaro came back to win, 6-4, over Astrid Gehre and Jessica Birowski to clinch the doubles point.

In singles play, the Panthers continued the fight against the Mavericks, taking three out of the

four matches.

Caluk won in her match against Gehre, 6-3, 6-3, to claim her 19th win of the season. Orlando defeated Birowski in straight sets, 6-4, 6-4 and improved to 14-8 in singles play. Veksler clinched the match for FIU when she defeated Thoms, also in straight sets, 6-4, 6-2.

UTA got their sole point when Brozovich lost to Luxizi Meng in straight sets, 6-4, 6-4.

"This was the feistiest match of the year so far," said Petrovic. "We faced a very good team in UTA and I'm happy that we got the win."

Veksler's win in Sunday's match was her 22nd singles win of the season.

"I'm happy to be a part of this team," said Veksler. "In matches like this, we have to show our best game early and not let our opponent get the best of us. It's all about energy."

The Panthers will hit the road for their next match against Conference USA rival Marshall. First serve from Huntington, West Virginia, is set for Friday, March 4 at 5 p.m.

BACK TO BACK

Panthers win Conference-USA Championship again

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The Panthers get to hoist up the Conference USA trophy another year. The swimming and diving team won their second C-USA championship in a row Saturday Feb. 27. They were able to make conference history by scoring the second-most points in C-USA Championship history.

The Panthers put their name in the school record books by winning 28 medals, including 15 gold, while setting seven school records. Out of the 21 total titles, FIU won 15 of them during the four-day championships which led to a 954-point result. No other school came even close to put up a fight as FIU beat second-place Rice by 318 points. That margin of points was another record as the most-decisive victory in C-USA Championship history. The other schools that competed were Marshall (618.5), North Texas (467), Florida Atlantic (380.5) and Old Dominion (360).

Not only did FIU win the championship, but the Panthers' dominance



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIU SPORTS

William Penn House, Jr., Entertainment Specialist at Penn House Productions,

of the 2016 C-USA Championships resulted in sweeping the specialty awards. Head Coach Randy Horner was named C-USA Coach of the Year, Diving Coach Rio Ramirez was named the C-USA Diving Coach of the Year, sophomore Naomi Ruele was named the C-USA Swimmer of the Year and sophomore Rebecca Quesnel was named the C-USA Diver of the Year.

This was the third time Coach Horner's career that he won The Coach of the Year award, while Ramirez

earned his second-straight Diving Coach of the Year. Ruele, who claimed seven gold medals during the championships, kept the FIU streak going by becoming FIU's third-straight C-USA Swimmer of the Year. Quesnel, a seven-time C-USA Diver of the Week and the C-USA Champion in the 1-meter and platform programs, becomes the Panthers' second Diver of the Year award winner. The first was Sabrina Beaupre in 2013-14.

Every day of the

championship, FIU was able to increase its lead with each event. Going into the final day, the Panthers had a 233-point lead and were seven events away from winning it all. All eyes were on FIU entering the final day poised to run away with the championship. The Panthers set the tone from the start as sophomore Kyna Pereira set the school record in the 1650 Free with a time of 16:24.36 to claim her fourth title of the championships.

Ruele earned the

Panthers' second first-place finish of the day with a 49.30 in the 100 Free. The time set by the native of Botswana broke the school record previously held by last year's C-USA Swimmer of the Year Johanna Gustafsdottir (50.01). Sophomore Letizia Bertelli claimed the silver in the event with a personal-best time of 49.89.

Sophomore Chase Harris medaled in the 200 Breast, topping her previous career-best by over two seconds with

2:16.01. The time was good enough to win the bronze.

Senior Valerie Inghels won the gold in the 200 Fly. The Saleilles, France, native scored a time of 1:58.49 – less than three-tenths of a second off of her school record time of 1:58.24, set at last year's C-USA Championships.

In the platform program, FIU took first and third adding to an overwhelming lead heading into the final event – the 400 Free Relay. Quesnel claimed her second gold of the championships, scoring a school-record 299.80. Sophomore Laura Coronado took third with a career-best score of 221.95.

The Panthers finally shut the door to the championship as they earned a clean sweep of the relays, winning the 400 Free Relay as the team of Bertelli, Marie Lauridsen, Pereira and Ruele finished with a time of 3:20.10 and the team's final 40 points of the championships.

Up next are the NCAA Zones, which takes place March 7-9 in Atlanta, Georgia, and the NCAA Championships March 17-19.

Mental health, a growing problem for college students

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According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in four college students have a diagnosable mental illness.

Further research projects that 40 percent do not seek help, 80 percent feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities and 50 percent have been so anxious they struggled in school.

Common mental health issues affecting college students today include suicide and depression, stress and anxiety, alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders and self-injury, according to learnpsychology.org.

Poor mental health among college students can hit close to home for FIU Panthers.

Monday, Feb. 8, the entire FIU and Miami community were put on alert for missing FIU student, Karen Wright.

According to CBS Miami, Wright vanished after leaving

work at 4 p.m. from 600 Brickell Avenue leaving behind her car, purse and wallet. Concerned about her whereabouts, her parents contacted the police.

Family members later found her early Wednesday near 182 Street and Biscayne Boulevard.

Her parents reported that she was taken to a hospital to be checked out.

Though her parents said she was working two jobs to get her own apartment and had been acting strange lately, including by increasingly isolating herself, it is still unclear as to whether or not her disappearance had to do with depression or anxiety.

Wright is supposed to graduate from FIU this upcoming May with a major in marketing.

Whatever her motive might have been, however, it remains increasingly evident that college students seem the most prone to suffer from mental illness, according to Boston University Today.

"People do the best that they

can, and at the time they may think they are doing the right thing, but at that point their judgment is actually impaired," said Kate Kominars in an interview

“People do the best that they can, and at the time they may think they are doing the right thing, but at that point their judgment is actually impaired.”

Kate Kominars
Associate Director
Counseling and
Psychological Services MMC

with Student Media. Kominars is an associate director at FIU's Counseling and Psychological Services at MMC. She is also a licensed psychologist with clinical experience.

"That's why it's so important to not be afraid or ashamed of

reaching out to others," she said.

"There are many things students can do to address their own mental health, as well as that of others," said Kominars.

CAPS is located at MMC and BBC in SHC 270 and WUC 320, respectively.

Kominars strongly suggests students understand when to confide in others and be honest when they can't deal with whatever situation they find themselves in.

"It is okay to let others know that you need help because needing help is normal and everyone needs help from time to time," said Kominars.

According to Kominars, during the period when an individual feels helpless, anxious or depressed, he or she may begin to lose perspective or misperceive situations.

"Unfortunately, many don't know that with assistance there are better and healthier alternatives that can help them cope with whatever issue it

is they are suffering," said Kominars.

She explained that no two individuals have the same coping skills, even if they do have the same experiences and are diagnosed with the same illness. Coping skills differ with family background, for instance.

"Every man is an island," says Kominars, "because no two people are alike."

Kominars said, "[CAPS] does outreach to make it easier for students to reach us without actually coming to us in person if they don't want to."

CAPS also provides services online where staff can request workshops for their class and online assessments that offer anonymous and confidential online screenings for depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

Completing these online screenings will help determine if an individual's recent thoughts or behaviors may be associated

SEE MIND, PAGE 2