A look into the A&S fee budget

ADRIAN SUAREZ AVILA
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Students curious about where their fees go may find out.
The 2014 to 2015 activity and services fee budget added up to a grand total of $16,380,154—over $200,000 more than last year’s budget, reflecting the increase in student enrollment.

The A&S fee is a $12.87 per-credit-hour charge taken from student tuition that is appropriated toward the various student organizations in the University in order to keep them running, according to Alex Calatayud, the Student Government Council at Modesto A. Maidique Campus president.

While the University decides the fee amount, SGC leaders at both MMC and the Biscayne Bay Campus determine the budget.

Budget hearings are held during the fall, when student organizations, agencies and bureaus may present funding proposals. By spring, SGC leaders from both campuses come together to deliberate.

University-wide allocations are taken care of first. Before coming together to decide the University-wide distribution of funds, however, campus-specific committees meet on their own, according to Jazmin Felix, SGC-BBC president.

These campus-specific committees are comprised of the SGC president, vice president, comptroller, senator, speaker, speaker pro tempore and finance chair of the respective campuses.

However, according to Felix, there is no speaker pro tempore who sits in during the BBC committee hearings.

When both campuses come together to decide how to handle the University-wide budget, the finance chairs do not participate in the deliberations.

Since the A&S fee is determined by student enrollment, MMC will receive a larger piece of the pie as compared to BBC. This year, SGC-MMC received a budget of $2,457,600, while SGC-BBC and Florida International University’s Broward Pines Center received one of $1,000,540.

Students weighed in on the results.

“I saw the budget and I’m pretty pleased with the breakdown,” said Lorena Machado, a senior chemistry major. “I think they did a good job distributing the funds throughout the university.”

Others were not so pleased.

“Don’t see the point of giving over $90,000 to the [FIU Model United Nations team],” said Rodrigo Enesfart, a sophomore history major.

“It seems crazy giving so much money to an organization people barely hear about in school.”

To understand each organization’s needs, the SGC-MMC Senate Operational Review Committee, performs audits of the respective departments, checking to see how well money was spent.

“If you still have money in your account by the end of the year, then that means we probably gave you too much in the first place,” Felix said.

Student attendance at events hosted by the organizations is also taken into consideration, along with receipts of purchases, when determining the funding that each organization will receive.

While voting on the budget, SGC leaders are accompanied by the SGA advisors and coordinators of the respective campuses. However, neither advisors nor coordinators may vote.

“Things got heated sometimes,” said Felix in regards to the voting process.

She drew attention to the fact that since the amount left for campus-specific expenses is quite limited, SGC leaders may become strong advocates for certain organizations they are passionate about.

Decisions are made on a majority vote basis.

In the case that a tie is reached, the corresponding comptroller of the campus in which the meeting is held will have the final say.

A look into the A&S fee budget

SUMMARY OF BUDGET

| BUDGET’S GRAND TOTAL                      | $16,380,154 |
| SGC-UMaine Campus                         | $8,648,908 |
| SGC-Biscayne Bay Campus & Broward Campuses | $2,457,600 |
| CDC                                  | $1,000,540 |
| Alternative Breaks                       | 77,000      |
| Black Student Union                      | 80,000      |
| Homecoming                              | 550,000     |
| Celebration and Parent Programs/Proctor Hill | 307,198   |
| Center for Leadership & Service          | 242,193     |
| Relay for Life                          | 3,000       |
| Dance Marathon                          | 2,000       |
| Model United Nations                    | 2,000       |
| Sorority and Fraternity Life-Greek Affairs | 105,500   |
| Student Programming Council-MMC         | 613,400     |
| Student Programming Council-BBC         | 211,000     |
| Student Government Council              | 417,000     |
| SGC-Emblems (stipends)                  | 96,047      |
| SGC-BBC Emblems (stipends)              | 82,910      |

Leaders’ Night: own the weight room

MACKENZIE BARTELS
Staff Writer
newstlfiu.com

Athina Lampru, a junior hospitality management major and creative body builder, says that she has many friends who refuse to go to the gym with her no matter how many times she asks them.

Her friend tells her they’re afraid of looking “stupid” when using the equipment to work out at the FIU Recreation Center.

To help women become comfortable in the weight room, the Rec Center started hosting fitness events called “Ladies Night at the Bar.” It started in September and they meet the first Wednesday of every month at the Rec Center Weight Room at 5:30 p.m.

At this event, personal trainers guide through various workout routines and show them how to incorporate the weight room into their exercises.

Maria Roman, a senior with a physical education: sport and fitness studies major, coordinated this event to help women gain confidence so they can go to the gym and enjoy a workout by themselves.

Similar to Lampru, Roman says that her friends often shied away from the gym or asked Roman to go with them because she “knows what she’s doing.”

Roman, who works as a fitness instructor at the Rec Center, knows that the weight room can be extremely intimidating for a lot of young women.

“Many of them don’t know where to start or what to do,” she said.

During the summer, Roman went to a workshop where a lot of fitness instructors and personal trainers asked how to get women involved.

That’s where “Ladies’ Night” began.

The riding groper on campus is at it again.

REBECA PICCARDO & JEFFREY PIERRE
FlUSH Staff
newsflush.com

The riding groper on campus is at it again.

After two reported incidents since June, the University alerted students that an unknown male, who has been grabbing women’s buttocks while passing on his bicycle at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus, has assaulted two more people over the weekend.

The most recent incidents occurred on Saturday, Sept. 20, at approximately 8:30 p.m., and on Sunday, Sept. 21, at approximately 9 p.m.

The first incident took place by the Wertheim Conservatory at about 7 p.m. on June 24. The second incident happened by the Green Library Breezeway at about 6:50 p.m. on Sept. 2. The third incident occurred on Saturday, Sept. 20, at approximately 8:30 p.m., and on Sunday, Sept. 21, at approximately 9 p.m.

With the increased frequency of these incidents, University officials are encouraging students to report any suspicious activity, no matter how minor.

To help further investigation, the FIU Police Department asks students with additional information to contact them at 305-348-2626 or online at the FIUPD website.

This story will be updated as more information becomes available.
University comes together to cope with Eldercare

AUGUSTA DOBSON
Contributing Writer
newslouisiana.com

Shortly after learning how to manage and cope with her mother-in-law’s Alzheimer’s disease, undergrad Academic Advisor Maria Valenzuela noticed similar symptoms emerging in both of her parents. Feeling frustrated and angry after having to accept and adapt to a very different parent-child relationship, she reached out to Norma Trabanco, a representative and certified Alzheimer’s educator from VITAS Innovative Hospice Care. Much to Valenzuela’s surprise, she found other people at the University with the same issues and concerns. According to alz.org, the disease can be recognized through 10 early symptoms, including memory loss that disrupts daily functions, a change in personality and confusion with time or place to name a few.

“Being a caregiver made me feel very isolated, as if I was the only one going through this,” she said.

Assuming the responsibility of caring for both of her parents, dozens of questions began to surface. Valenzuela managed to find help through Trabanco. Trabanco led a support group outside of the University which inspired Valenzuela. She arranged to bring Trabanco and her services to the University, thus starting the Eldercare Support Group at FIU.

The program is new, beginning this past June, and currently has about a dozen loyal participants. At the group meetings, which take place the last Friday of every month, Trabanco addresses a wide array of questions: Where do I find assisted living facilities? What is Medicaid? What is the best hospice for my parents? How do I care for my patients when I’m at work or school? “[Trabanco] was instrumental in helping me to cope with my mother-in-law’s diagnosis,” said Valenzuela.

In addition to educating its members about Dementia and diseases such as Alzheimer’s, the group provides a welcoming, nonjudgmental and comforting environment for people to discuss similar experiences and frustrations. “I don’t know where I would be without that lady,” Valenzuela said, referring to Trabanco. Jose Miranda, a licensed psychologist, was responsible for bringing the pieces of this program together.

Aside from serving the University community through seminars and one-on-one appointments with students, staff and faculty members, Miranda is diligently working to spread awareness about this support group.

“It allows members to connect with people in similar situations,” Miranda said. “It gives them the resources they need to make caring for a loved one less overwhelming.”

Valenzuela said she has acquired a new and refreshing positively outlook thanks to Trabanco and the support group. “I’ve learned to look at this situation as an opportunity to show my love in a sacrificial sort of way — and that love is a deep love,” she said.

Consisting mainly of faculty and staff members, the support group is eager to get students signed up as well. Miranda, the group’s coordinator, encourages students who are caring for loved ones with any kind of illness or impairment to reach out and get involved.

The next meeting for the Eldercare Support Group is Sept. 26 in Student Health Center, room 230 from noon to 1 p.m.

Rec Center hosts Ladies’ Night event

GYM, PAGE 1

comes into play, Roman said. “Hopefully this [event] will help [girls] to not see the weight room as a foreign place where girls get eaten alive,” she said.

Roman hopes that this event will encourage women to step out of their comfort zone and allow themselves to step into the weight room feeling comfortable with what they’re doing.

Laura Aguilar, senior psychology major, said that she goes to the gym to stay healthy, but not necessarily to build muscle.

Although her workout regimen might not require weights or the weight room, she does feel that the gym can be an uncomfortable atmosphere for those less experienced.

“When [there are] more experienced people working on machines next to you, it can make you feel self-conscious about your workout,” Aguilar said. “You lose focus on the routine and begin to worry about what everyone else is thinking.”

Aguilar thinks that having an event like “Ladies’ Night” is a great idea because it’ll bring these girls together. As a group, everyone will be learning exercises and working towards their physical goals together.

“Women don’t have to register for the event or pay a fee. There are no requirements for this event and it is open to all ages and fitness levels. It is a great idea because it’ll bring these girls together. As a group, everyone will be learning exercises and working towards their physical goals together,” Aguilar said.

“I want girls to pretend like they are just going to the gym to workout with their friends,” Roman said.

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NATION & WORLD

BRIEFS

L.A., Houston, Philadelphia mayors vow more action on climate change

Mayors of three of the nation’s largest cities are pledging to take more action on climate change by implementing new projects to cut greenhouse gas emissions and persuading other leaders to do the same. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Houston Mayor Annise Parker and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter will announce the new initia-
Online classes are not for everyone

DIEGO SALDAÑA-ROJAS
Staff Writer
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Online courses are excellent for the student who works full-time, works odd hours, or has family to look after. Students can login on their own time to complete coursework, travel abroad and simultaneously advance their careers. But from my own experience, I prefer a Friday 8 a.m. class and an hour long commute to the Biscayne Bay Campus than to take anymore online classes. Here’s why:

Access codes

All the online classes I’m taking this semester do not require books, but rather access codes. The publishing companies have found a way to win. Instead of being able to buy a cheaper or older version of a book on Amazon or renting a book from Chegg or even the bookstore, I have to pay $60 to $70 or more for access codes. The publishing companies have found a way to make money from these online classes, but not when we provide it to be accessed online material, I now have to deal with not only two separate interfaces, but two separate interfaces that aren’t always user-friendly.

Specifically, the one function that makes working in Blackboard difficult is the messaging system. I’ve logged into my Blackboard home page to find 30 unread messages. It would be ideal if I could forward those messages to one of my email accounts. It would at least then I was able to access the text on the highway where I am writing from. Some electronic texts do allow users to download a PDF, sometimes only a few pages, but for the most part that’s not enough. By incorporating assignments and quizzes into the book’s site, publishing companies make a package deal for universities and professors. If you don’t pay for this package, you not only don’t get access to the text, but you also can’t complete quizzes for class. This may not be everyone’s case, but all of my online classes rely on Pearson Higher Education to deliver reading and testing material.

Fees

Access codes are an expense, but they can be cheaper than some books. I remember foolishly spending $600 my freshmen year buying all of my books from the FIU Bookstore. At least then I was able to sell back brand new books on Amazon and the bookstore to regain some of my money. Renting one print book can be comparable to paying for one access code, although renting does provide a physical copy, which I much prefer. What’s truly expensive are the extra fees you pay for online classes. I paid about $480 in fees for three classes.

I understand the University and Blackboard need to maintain their servers, but anymore money than the tuition and fees I already pay will hurt my already tight finances.

Interfaces

After paying to be able to enroll and then paying to access the online material, I now have to deal with not only two separate interfaces, but two separate interfaces that aren’t always user-friendly.

Specifically, the one function that makes working in Blackboard difficult is the messaging system. I’ve logged into my Blackboard home page to find 30 unread messages. It would be ideal if I could forward those messages to one of my email accounts. It would

be even better if I could sync the class calendar with one of my digital calendars.

Logging in to see messages and what’s due is part of the deal, but integration with a messaging system and calendar I actually use, like Google’s, would make the class easier and more enjoyable.

Lack of social interactions

Many online classes make introducing yourself an assignment. I actually go through these posts, but in my four years here, I can’t remember anyone who I had in these virtual classes, professors or students. The opposite is true for classes in a physical classroom.

I’ve had professors like Manuel Duasso and Melissa Baralt that have changed the perspective of my beliefs and sense of self. Without the one-on-one interaction that the classroom provided, their lessons would have been simply notes scribbled down on a notebook to later be thrown away.

FLU Athletics should weigh options beforehand

The U.S. Century Bank Arena recently suffered damage to it’s court arena. An athletic event held there from Sept. 13 to Sept. 14 caused parts of the wooden flooring to break and split. The event was insured and damages to the court will be repaired. What is uncertain is if the insurance will cover the cost of repairing the court along with the wooden repairs.

For now, the courts will be covered by temporary flooring in order to proceed with arena events as previously scheduled. Some athletic events have already been forced to be held in the FIU Recreation Center, the same center that refused to hold the event that damaged the arena’s court.

Much of collegiate athletics has been strongly concerned with aesthetics. For instance, the University of Oregon got a lot of attention for uniforms with an eccentric design. This attention is fine as it can attract fans’ eyes and increase attendance to games. This heightened attendance can increase team morale and performance. The resulting increased wins brings the student-athletes and the program increased profits. It’s simple advertising, but we ask where to draw the line.

FIU Athletics took the initiative to paint the courts with a vibrant beach theme. The design served as a great attraction to the arena, but came at a cost of thousands of dollars. Flashy paint jobs caught media attention, but when and how does the University’s investment on the court pay off? Have there been more recruits because of it? Have we won more games? Have more students and alumni shown up to watch?

The University deserves nice things, but not when we provide it to be borrowed at any request. When athletics wants to bring attention to a program, it should be through the success of its athletic programs or individual athletes’ accomplishments. If we need a fancy court, provide it some security so we won’t have to kick out the very same athletes it was originally intended for.

If the arena’s court needs to be repaired, we believe the money allocated to a flashy paint job should go elsewhere.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Editorials are the unified voice of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor in chief, management, and the editors of each of the five sections. The Beacon welcomes any letters regarding or in response to its editorials. Send them to opinion@fiusm.com.

OPINION

OCTOEGER

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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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Blackmail & deceit: Department of Theatre prepares to open ‘An Ideal Husband’

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Staff Writer
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On Sept. 26 at 8 p.m., the Department of Theatre will put on the opening performance of “An Ideal Husband” by Oscar Wilde at the Wurt-heim Performing Arts Center. The play deals with political corruption and blackmail as well as British social behavior in the late 19th century. It begins in London at Sir Robert Chiltern’s house dinner. A lady by the name of Mrs. Cheveley attempts to lure Chiltern, a politician, into a fraudulent scheme to buy a canal in Argentina. What follows is a series of lies, deceit and the examination of marriage and the ideal husband.

Erick Rodriguez, the sound designer and a junior BFA Performance major, is responsible for creating this 19th Century atmosphere and the aesthetic movement. It made him an eccentric person in the eyes of a Puritanical Victorian society. Everybody walked around looking the same, with their frock coats, top hats and gloves while Wilde walked around in his green jacket,” said Church.

“If you fast forward to the 20th and 21st centuries, Wilde is like a David Bowie or Lady Gaga. It’s difficult to think of Bowie and Gaga as contemporaries, but they are. Wilde’s philosophy was individualism; for him it was not about transparency. The protagonist, Sir Robert Chiltern, is dealing with blackmail and afraid of losing his wife because he lives in a world where women will leave a man in an instant if she finds out he is less than ideal.”

Church explained that there are two classes of women in the play, with Lady Chiltern and Lady Marchmont as another. In particular, Mrs. Cheveley has spent all of her time in high circles of Vienna society.

According to Church, the play is very contemporary and moves in on social themes such as integrity, honesty and political transparency. The protagonist, Sir Robert Chiltern, is dealing with blackmail and afraid of losing his wife because he lives in a world where women will leave a man in an instant if she finds out he is less than ideal.

Church explained the biggest challenge of putting on this production: the dress, body movement and speech. One of the actresses who plays Lady Basildon, senior and Bachelor of Fine Arts major, Natalie Bremes, would agree.

“The corsets we have to wear make it difficult to breathe sometimes. The speech is also a challenge but in a good way because I’ve learned more about how to pronounce everything properly,” Bremes said.

“Another challenge for me is not having many lines but still having to be in character and react to everything. My role in the scope of the play is not big, but it’s a necessary role. My character is very present,” Bremes said.

Some of the students involved in this production have been working since April to put this show on. Sophomore Luna Rodriguez, who is a BA Theatre major with a focus in Stage Management, has been working on “An Ideal Husband” since end of April.

“This is my first production as Stage Manager, so I’m figuring out what works for me and what doesn’t; what makes people happy and what creates chaos,” Rodriguez said.

“I’m not anyone’s boss but I’m in the center-point. I get to see all the elements before anyone else. Phillip’s vision, the process of creating the characters and the creation of the set,” Rodriguez mentioned.

“I’ve had many sleepless nights as Stage Manager but there’s nothing else I’d rather be doing. I love it,” said Rodriguez.

“An Ideal Husband” will run from Sept. 26 to Oct. 5. Tickets are $10 for FIU students, $12 for faculty/staff, $15 for the general public and they can be purchased at wpac@fiu.edu or by calling 305-348-0496.

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SPORTS

Bicycle kick wins SDSU game in dramatic fashion

ALEJANDRO SOLANA
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Senior forward, Quentin Albrecht, put the team on his back Friday evening Sept. 19, scoring two goals in the Panthers' come from behind win over No. 25 San Diego State University.

Albrecht’s second goal was an incredible winner chilena, or bicycle kick, in extra time, securing the 2-1 comeback win for the Panthers.

“I didn’t even think about it. It was over time, and I just tried to get the ball. I felt that I hit it good, but didn’t even see the ball go in; I just saw everyone celebrating” said Albrecht.

His game winner, which came in a tremendous exciting fashion, was a fabulous finish after the game when asked about how difficult it was to get it.

“Believe they did, and it paid off as the Panthers finally got their first home win of the season and the first home win for Cal State in his first season as coach after their tough loss to Stony a few weeks ago.”

“I think the win shows the character of this group to be able to fight back and I agree it’s a great thing, it’s a 90 minute game, and sometimes a little more,” said Calabrese.

He seemed much more calm after his first home victory then he did in the previous 109 minutes of the game as he watched his team come from behind for the first time this season.

“Luckily, its the score at the end of the game that matters,” Calabrese said.

This is, without a doubt, the best win of the season for Calabrese and his team in a roller coaster of a ride game. The Panthers will look to keep this momentum going as they will play game two of their three game homestand Wednesday, Sept. 24 against Florida Gulf Coast University at 7:30 p.m.

After their match-up against FGCU, the Panthers will finish off their homestand Thursday, Sept. 25 against the University of Alabama at Birmingham, beginning their Conference USA play.
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
13TH ANNUAL BISCAYNE BAY CAMPUS

Diversity Day
Tuesday
SEPT.30.’14
9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wolfe University Center (WUC) | FIU-BBC

9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. | ALEXA CHAVARRY METAMORPHOSIS FROM SELF-HARM TO SELF-HELP | WUC THEATER
10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. | GAYLE BROOKS EATING DISORDERS & CULTURAL DIVERSITY | WUC THEATER
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | LIDA WINFIELD IN SEARCH OF AIR: GROWING UP DYSLEXIC | WUC THEATER
12:15 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. | LUNCH
1:15 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. | TONY PORTER TED TALK VIDEO & PANEL DISCUSSION "THE MAN BOX" | WUC BALLROOMS 244
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. | BRYAN ANDERSON NO TURNING BACK | WUC BALLROOMS 244
3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. | BOOK SIGNING AND DESSERT
3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | MARILYN K. VOLKER TRANSGENDER PANEL | WUC 223

METAMORPHOSIS FROM SELF-HARM TO SELF-HELP
ALEXA CHAVARRY is the creator of butterfly-project.tumblr.com, an anonymous blog that has helped thousands, including herself, recover from self-injury, eating disorders, addiction and suicide. Chavarry asks her readers who are thinking of hurting themselves to instead draw a butterfly on themselves and name it after someone they care about. Today, the blog has more than 14,000 followers who have submitted their stories.

EATING DISORDERS & CULTURAL DIVERSITY
GAYLE BROOKS is Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer of The Renfrew Center. For the past 25 years, she has treated patients from diverse backgrounds who suffer from eating disorders. Dr. Brooks served as the eating disorders specialist in the HBO film Thin, which appeared on Good Morning America and has been featured in the following publications: The New York Times, People Magazine, Essence Magazine and Perspectives, The Renfrew Center Foundation’s journal for professionals.

IN SEARCH OF AIR: GROWING UP DYSLEXIC
In this dance and theater performance based on her experience growing up with a learning disability, Vermont dancer, choreographer and spoken word artist LIDA WINFIELD shares the gifts and heartache that accompanied her struggle to learn to read—which did not occur until her early twenties. This show is a mixture of funny, sad and ironic moments strung together in a creative and captivating format. Lida’s presence on stage expresses her life so clearly that it brings us closer to our own.

TED TALK VIDEO & PANEL DISCUSSION "THE MAN BOX"
TONY PORTER makes a call to men everywhere: Don’t “act like a man.” Telling powerful stories from his own life, he shows how this mentality, drilled into so many men and boys, can lead men to disrespect and abuse women. His solution: Break free of the “man box.” Porter’s message self-examination has connected powerfully with numerous domestic and sexual violence programs for such high-profile groups as the National Football League and the National Basketball Association.

NO TURNING BACK
BRYAN ANDERSON was injured in 2005 by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) that resulted in the loss of both legs and his left hand. As a result of his injuries, he was awarded a Purple Heart. Bryan is one of the few triple amputees to have survived his injuries in Iraq. He is the National Spokesman for Quantum Rehab, a division of Pride Mobility Corp. He travels the country making numerous personal appearances while delivering his message of perseverance and determination.

TRANSGENDER PANEL. MODERATOR
Dr. VOLKER, sexologist for almost 40 years, has helped to establish the Institute on Sexism and Sexuality at FIU and later Miami-Dade, Pridelines, Miami’s first LGBT teen group, Health Crisis Network, Miami’s first HIV-AIDS community-based AIDS project, and the first Women’s History Project in Miami-Dade. She currently trains counselors/teachers to become sex therapists. Dr. Volker invites ALL to honor your unique sexuality and to be SAFE out there—physically, emotionally, and sexually.

FREE LIVE STREAMING OF LIDA WINFIELD’S “IN SEARCH OF AIR” PERFORMANCE
NEW.LIVESTREAM.COM/CAMPUSLIFEBBC/WINFIELD
Banned Books Week returns, reminds students of their freedoms and rights

KARLA REYES
Contributing Writer

The display in the library.

texts on the Banned Books Week returns, reminds students of their freedoms and rights.

"The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger are among the classics that are known as "Forbidden" and "Banned." The event was created to honor the First Amendment freedoms. Some students who didn’t know about Banned Books Week still agreed they should have the freedom to choose what they read. Students who didn’t know about Banned Books Week stick agreed they should have the freedom to choose what they read.

Students who didn’t know about Banned Books Week stick agreed they should have the freedom to choose what they read.

"If you want to further your knowledge for a certain subject, why should you be told not to do that?" said Sam Smith, a sophomore journalism major.

Dayana Arzumanova, a freshman majoring in health sciences, said the importance of public schools prohibiting books containing inappropriate content as part of the curriculum. But she said that shouldn’t stop students reading or writing about books for themselves.

Each year, a different theme is chosen by the American Library Association to narrow the selection of books discussed during the week. However, schools can also choose their own. The Glenn Hubert Library chose to go with the ALA’s theme of graphic novels this year.

University librarian Pearson selected the books for the graphic novel collection on the second floor of the library. Two titles she shared were: "Oniisama e...", a Japanese graphic novel also known as manga, that was challenged for themes of suicide, drug abuse, incest and homosexual relationships, and "Judgment Day," a comic from the 1950s that was almost censored for featuring a black male astronaut.

Students, professors and other faculty could participate in the live readings in the past, but this year only the librarians will be reading. Because it is a visual medium, there will be projected images from the graphic novel for the audience to see.

"There will be someone reading out loud as we go through the visuals," said Pearson.

Christos said the graphic novels theme is important because it shows a broad spectrum for the kinds of books that are challenged and how these challenges are an attack on fundamental civil rights.

Forget about grades, earn an education

Grades are important. At least that is what we have been taught. Grades provide a standard to measure a student's understanding, but let's face it, grades take precedence over the educational experience! I think so.

I traveled half the world throughout my life because of my dad’s job working as a mechanical engineer. Every few years, my family and I would travel to a new country or continent, which meant I attended several schools. Even though I couldn’t choose where I went to school or my teachers, I had a great overall experience. Most instructors made me and my classmates feel as though grades didn’t matter. Of course we all wanted to pass, but learning took priority over exam grades and extra credit assignments.

Since moving to the U.S. in 2010, I’ve attended three universities. I’ve taken math, sociology, art and journalism classes with professors from the West Coast to the East Coast, which gave me an opportunity to experience different teaching methods. I also realized the luxury students have of choosing who teaches them. If they don’t like a professor, they could simply drop the course and take another.

Most importantly, I noticed some professors care less about a student’s learning experience and more about how well they perform in a course. I had my first taste of college at De Anza College in California. I felt immense pressure to get good grades and prove myself, given that English was my third language. Thankfully, I had Julie Madigan as a professor.

Professor Madigan was an English as a Second Language instructor, who truly cared about her students. She made me feel comfortable and made me forget about being classified as an “A,” “B” or “C” student. Her focus was on making sure students understood, learned and grew in her class, rather than ace an exam.

Being in her class made me forget about being graded and freed me of pressure, which showed in the good grade I got at the end of the term.

I wondered if it was just professor Madigan, or if other professors had the ability to create such a great learning environment. I found my answer during my sophomore year at De Anza in a sociology course. And again last year, in a communications course at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. Even here at FIU, in an international relations course at the Biscayne Bay Campus this semester.

Since starting at FIU, I noticed professors encourage students to value both a great learning experience and earning good grades, rather than focusing on one or the other. This is particularly true for hands-on courses in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, many of which I have already taken. Friends of mine said the same for several of their hospitality courses.

I strongly believe taking pressure off a student’s shoulders to do well in a class is beneficial to their learning progress, especially in college. We chose to be here, therefore we shouldn’t need professors to force us to put more effort to get a better grade. Getting an education is one of the most precious things a person can do in this or her life. Realizing this is enough for me to value moments of joy and insanity while studying in college.

"If we lose that, we start losing other liberties," she said.

BAY CLEAN UP