A look into the A&S fee budget

ADRIAN SUAREZ AVILA
Staff Writer
adrian.suarezavila@fiusm.com

Students curious about where their fees went may now find out. The 2014 to 2015 activity and services fee budget added up to a grand total of $16,380,154 - over $20,000 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 on the University in order to keep them running, according to Alejandro 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, Senate 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 $2,877,600, while SGC-BBC and Florida International University’s Bower Pines Center received one of $1,000,540.

Students weighed in on the results.

“It was the budget, and I’m pretty pleased with the breakdown,” said Lorena Machado, a senior chemistry 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.

In making the decisions, the committee considers the membership total of the organizations, along with the expected impact of the organization’s influence on campus culture, according to Calatayud.

She provided Panther Camp as an example.

“It has significant impact on the students that participate in it, so that’s something that you would weigh in the decision,” Calatayud said.

In the case that a tie is reached, 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.
University comes together to cope with Eldercare

GYM, PAGE 1

Rec Center hosts Ladies’ Night event

they are just going to the gym to workout with their friends,” Roman said.

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 out 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,” Aguilar said.

“Want girls to pretend like

ROMAN IS COMING TO YOUR CAMPUS

Remarkable career opportunities. Recruiters ready to chat. Mark your calendar now!

Florida International University MMC Fall Career Fair & Information Session

Wednesday, October 1 - Thursday, October 2

WHERE INTELLIGENCE GOES TO WORK®

U.S. citizenship is required. NSA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants for employment are considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or status as a parent.
Online classes are not for everyone

DIEGO SALDAÑA-ROJAS
Staff Writer
diego.saldana@fiusm.com

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 texts that I only have access to for a semester. I also only have access when there is internet. I wouldn’t be 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.

FIU Athletics should weigh options beforehand

The U.S. Century Bank Arena recently suffered damage to its 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 repainting 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 attention 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.

Flasy 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.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions presented within this page do not represent the views of The Beacon Editorial Board. These views are separate from editorials and reflect individual perspectives of contributing writers and/or members of the University community.

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.

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

SAMANTHA DAVIS
Staff Writer
samantha.davis@fiusm.com

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 Werth Performing Arts Center. The play deals with political corruption and blackmail as well as British social behavior in the late 19th century.

Erick Rodriguez, the sound designer and a junior BFA Performance major, is responsible for creating this 19th Century atmosphere and the examination of marriage and the ideal husband.

“It’s very interesting coming into the show round out the whole world of the play,” Rodriguez said. “I’m not anyone’s boss but I’m the center of the show on. Sophomore Luisa 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 the centerpoint. I got 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.

Snickers with some snack-sized life lessons


This anthology contains several short stories that consist of Manion’s real life experiences and short narratives filled with funny life lessons. It seems his teeny-tiny lessons are geared toward the tech-savvy morally depraved college students.

Reading the introduction, I couldn’t stop smiling and even had to stifle a few giggles. He’s straight to the point and gets rid of any

“Manion stirs emotions as he shares his experiences with death and the thing that hangs between the legs.”

fancy fluffy wording. His message gets across. You can hear Manion’s voice and character emerge through the words. According to Manion, the introduction isn’t meant to make any sort of sense.

“I’m literally struggling to get through this introduction,” he said.

But reading it is part of the ride.

The first couple of short stories explore humanity through Manion’s eyes. Even though it sounds quite boring, Manion stirs emotions as he shares his experiences with death and “the thing that hangs between the legs.”

Along side the stories of his previous experiences, little narratives are thrown in giving the collection of short stories a bigger bang. The arguments on class identification with nuts is especially thrilling.

Not only humorous, the narratives are thought provoking. The stories force the reader to question their place in the world, maybe even humanity – not in a bad sense. It will make them question who they are and if life really is a “Council of Jeffs.”

The anthology is geared for a college-aged audience who wants to escape for a couple of hours from the tedium of grades, homework and college essays. If you’re into dark satirical stories, pick up a print copy or download it from Amazon.
There’s a job waiting for you after college. And the benefits start right now.

Did you know the Coast Guard has a scholarship program that will cover tuition and fees, pay you a monthly salary, and guarantee you a career after graduation? Open to students at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) Scholarship Program is giving college juniors and seniors hands-on training, leadership experience, and unparalleled benefits. After completing CSPI, graduates are guaranteed careers in fields like humanitarianism, search and rescue, and many more.

Visit GoCoastGuard.com/CSPIScholarship to learn more.
 Bicycle kick wins SDSU game in dramatic fashion

ALEJANDRO SOLANA
Staff Writer
alejandro.solana@fiusm.com

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 game winner chilena, or bicycle kick, in extra time to secure 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 display of fashion, was a fabulous bicycle kick with a bite, allowing the ball to roll off what is arguably the best play to occur in soccer, the bicycle kick, and securing a come from behind win for the Panthers, who desperately needed it.

The win for the University pushes their record to 2-3-1 as they avoid losing back-to-back games for the second time this season. SDSU, who came into Miami riding a five-game winning streak, lost only for the second time this season, dropping their record to 5-2.

Before entering into extra time, the first 83 minutes of the game were anything but golden for Head Coach Scott Calabrese and the Panthers, who found themselves in a 1-0 hole in the 83rd minute.

Freshman forward David Olsen capitalized on a sloppy play and miscommunication between the Panthers back line and the goalkeeper. Olsen tucked in an early for the first goal of the evening putting the Aztecs on top. Once again, the Panthers found themselves down early, a theme that continues.

As the Aztecs controlled the first half and Olsen gave them the lead heading into half time, the Panthers once again found themselves down early. Despite the deficit, the Panthers did not fail to create their chances as they outshot their opposition 25-14 with 11 total shots on target.

In the second half, the University continued pressuring the Aztec defenders, desperately seeking an equalizer. The Panthers missed several easy chances including three one on one plays with the San Diego State goalkeeper. Albrecht himself missed two chances in front of the goal that should have gone in but were sent just wide of the mark.

“It’s really tough when you miss easy chances like we did. You have to stay confident and forget about those chances. It’s never easy but we outplayed them tonight. We had so many chances, the whole team was fighting through and eventually, in soccer, you get lucky,” said an overjoyed Albrecht after the game when asked about how difficult it is to stay focused when faced with a group of defenders.

It was indeed Albrecht who won the game, but it was also Albrecht who scored the equalizer in the 84th minute of the game giving the Panthers their chance to win it in extra time.

Senior midfielder Roberto Alterio dribbled the ball down the right flank past the Aztec defenders and centered a beautiful cross right at the penalty mark connecting with the German native, who was flying in uncharacteristic.

Albrecht headed the ball into the bottom right corner leaving Aztec freshman goalkeeper Adam Allmuras with no chance.

After the equalizing goal, the game momentum shifted completely towards the Panthers for the final six minutes and for the extra time which ensued. The Aztecs did get a shot off early in overtime, however redshirt sophomore goalkeeper David Mitchell, was there for the save.

Minutes into overtime, a cross was delivered to the box and once again Albrecht came Albrecht to make contact with the ball. Once only, it was his chance to make his goal, his third of the season, something special.

The game winner had the 479 fans in attendance in shock, as the majority of the stands erupted with chants of “FLU” as the team celebrated around their captain and the man of the match.

“My coaches are constantly telling me, ‘Get in the box,’” said Albrecht. “Then, I saw [the ball] and said, ‘Hey.’”

Albrecht’s header began the barrage of chances on goal for the Panthers. Head Coach Thomas Chestnutt’s team was clicking on all cylinders. Both teams had five shots on goal at the end of 90 minutes, but momentum was with the Panthers’ direction.

Chesnutt had ‘em on the ropes at the end of the half,” said Chestnutt. “(Long Beach) had no answer. They were ripe for the picking. It was unfortu- nate we didn’t capitalize on those chances.”

Moments that included Leiva on a breakaway due in part to senior midfielder Johanna Vonbo’s smooth through ball and senior forward Ashleigh Shim’s one-on-one show up with 49ers sophomore goalkeeper Ashton McKown (seven saves, one goal allowed). “I’m gonna have nightmares about that tonight,” said Shim. “It’s stuff like this that has to be done...it’s gotta be better.”

Half time ended and the momentum for the Panthers unfortunately swung away. Defense was stout for most of the day, but the Panthers’ iron- core could only stifle Long Beach’s attack for so long. Shim didn’t begin the half, along with Leiva being subbed out at the 56th minute.

The heat began to play a factor and Chestnutt had decisions to make. “We came back out with a game plan to keep Long Beach under pressure,” said Chestnutt. “Ultimately, players have to get rest. Attackers, especially, can’t play a 90 minute game. Just can’t do it.”

At the 62nd minute, the 49ers’ junior midfielder MacKenzie exploited the Panthers’ defense off a corner kick. Down 2-1, the game still wasn’t over, but a “now or never” feeling over- came the game. At the 70th minute, Chestnutt subbed in Shim and Leiva, which produced an offensive product similar to the first half.

At the 82nd minute, Shim found her second one-on-one opportunity with McKown, but failed to find the back of the net. On how she found opportunities like this all game, Shim said: “I just really like to use my quick- ness and get the defender off-balance...A quick shift and it could be over.”

The final dagger came at the hands of Robles, capping her second Long Beach State goal for Se- ven. At that moment, 3-1 proved to be too much of a deficit to overcome. Thus, the final whistle blew and the three- game winning streak was snapped for the Panthers.

With the loss, the Panthers are 3-3 at home on the eve of Conference-USA play. What stalled the offense for the Panthers in the second half was not a mystery—it was just executing when the chances presented themselves.

“(Long Beach) took all the opportunities that they had,” said Montoya. Chestnutt and the Panthers look to get back on track against Old Dominion University, the first C-USA opponent of the season, Friday Sept. 26 at 7 p.m.
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, has 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, drummed 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 the Miami-Dade PrideLine, 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
bbc@fiusm.com

There is a bookshelf in the library of classic novels wrapped in chains, and written in red letters on pages are the words “Forbidden” and “Banned.”

The display on the first floor of the Glenn Hubert Library is for Banned Books Week, an annual event honoring classic works of literature that have been regarded as obscene and unsuitable for high school audiences or the general public.

This event is celebrated around the world during the last full week of September, and each year during the Banned Books Week at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

On Thursday, Sept. 25 from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., Lauren Christos opened the display of books for this year’s event, along with her fellow librarians George Pearson and Eduardo Fojo.

Banned Books Week was established in 1982 by Judith Krug, former director of the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom.

The event was created to honor the First Amendment and promote intellectual freedom at schools and libraries.

Schools around the country can participate by hosting live or virtual read-out events.

Christos said some journalism professors participate and bring their students to the event because it deals with first amendment freedoms. She is expecting at least one journalism class to attend this year.

Students who didn’t know about Banned Books Week still 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 librarians understand why public schools would prohibit books containing inappropriate content as part of the curriculum.

But she said that shouldn’t stop students reading out loud as they go through the visual medium of a book.

“Many people will choose to put the book down and go to the visual medium, which allows us to 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,” 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 I have been taught. Grades provide a standard to measure a student’s understanding, but have we gotten to a point where grading takes 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 his or her life. Realizing this is enough for me to value moments of joy and insanity while studying in college.

BAY CLEAN UP

TOP: Alisa Willis(left), junior in hospitality and Diana Marfitt(right) a senior in Biology pick up trash at the bay with Alternative Breaks on Sept. 20.

BOTTOM: Geraldine Gascon, a sophomore in psychology, picks up garbage as part of the bay clean up.