After falling short in the Sun Belt Conference tournament a season ago to North Texas in the championship match, the FIU women’s tennis team came back strong this year to capture its second conference title in three years. It is the fifth SBC title the team has won as a program.

Many players stepped up to provide a consistent winning season for the Golden Panthers, including Seniors Maria Spenceley and Liset Brito. They formed a good tandem as they went 15-8 as doubles partners, including winning nine of their last ten matches.

With the conference title in hand, FIU is practicing and waiting to play in the NCAA tournament. In the midst of preparation for the tournament, Spenceley is gearing up for another event—graduation.

“For Spenceley, the title is not only vindication for the entire team, but also a parting gift as she graduates from the University. “It was amazing since we struggled last year. I’m grateful that we did it this year, since I’m a senior, and it’s my last year and I won’t get this opportunity any more. I’m really happy for me and my girls for winning the title this year,” said Spenceley.

Coming off the heels of this victory with her team, Spenceley feels that FIU has an opportunity, more now than ever, to become a stronger presence on and off the tennis court.

“I feel that the program can be way more appreciated if FIU goes out more. I feel like it’s always a budget problem. We’re not as big as the University of Miami in many ways. I don’t why but my hope is that one day FIU is as big as UM, if not bigger,” said Spenceley.

Majoring in hospitality, Spenceley is planning to work in the hotel business and pursue a real estate license simultaneously. Off the tennis court, Spenceley appreciates the guidance she has gotten from the University to pursue her career.

“Since I changed my major to hospitality, I felt the professors’ were very helpful and also impacted me in a very personal way as well. FIU has helped me in a lot of ways,” said Spenceley.

As her final days at the University and in the tennis team approach, Spenceley realizes what words of wisdom could be passed down to incoming students to ease the transition and journey.

Spenceley added: “I would say know what you want. Know what your goals are. When I came in, I really didn’t know what I wanted and it really affected me and it slowed down the process. I would definitely say know your goals and follow through with it.”

Despite the plans she has set ahead of her, Spenceley knows that she will miss her team, even “all the drama and practices that go on.”

“I’m going to miss the physical workouts that I have. I’m not gonna work out as hard anymore obviously since no one is going to make me.”

RICO ALBARRACIN
Asst. Sports Director

MEMORY LANE

Graduate asserts force on the court and in the classroom

I’m going to miss the physical workouts that I have. I’m not gonna work out as hard anymore obviously since no one is going to make me.

Maria Spenceley, Senior
Tennis player and hospitality major

The Beacon Photographers

Congrats!
College newspaper shaped editor in chief's career and life

If you work your way up the ranks of a college newspaper, you won't just be a better journalist; you'll be a better person. Take me for example.

Two years ago, I walked into The Beacon as a young marketing major wallowing away in business school with nothing but a mildly successful opinion blog to my name.

My patient mother had been witnessing my demise as a career minded individual up until that point. Working at a law firm paid the bills, pretty nicely actually, but both her and I thought it definitely wasn't a career I was supposed to be traveling down. And my direction—I was basically staring into empty space and waiting for my future to appear.

So what's the point? How does a college newspaper make a better person? Well the knowledge and character I've gained working my way up to editor in chief something that I never thought I'd be. The Beacon has made me a better, more driven person and in return gained some life long friends.

The Beacon taught me a lot, but the way it taught me was by giving me the responsibility and letting me learn on my own.

No matter what position you get, a job at a college newspaper will make you a better person, a better employee. When I dropped off my job application I was a guy who had no idea what I wanted to do.

In the process I gained countless friendships, two mentors, great sources, knowledge, experience and the confidence to apply it without fear.

The Beacon taught me that even if you don't have your life set out in front of you, it's okay—something about this story got me hooked on the job and has kept me coming back to the same office for two years, eventually working my way up to editor in chief something that I never thought I'd be. Since I've been at the paper, I have learned more than I could anywhere else.

The knowledge and character I've gained from the advisors and colleagues along the way have proved that a college newspaper will eat you up and spit out a good journalist and a damn decent human being.

By learning how to report a story I learned how to approach people, how to develop sources and how to get what I need from them to make a good story.

As an assistant editor I learned how to work well with others. I think we put together a section and I chased some of the best stories of my young career, each contributing something to me as a person. As editor in chief I was humbled to find a group of people who were excited to work with me and who shared my vision for what the newspaper should be. We did a lot of great things and published a lot of great stories.

But to be fair, I learned a lot from them and in return gained some life long friends.

So what's the point? How does a college newspaper make a better person? Well the reasons and the lessons are too many to list, but I'll pick one.

The Beacon taught me a lot, but the way it taught me was by giving me the responsibility and letting me learn on my own.

No matter what position you get, a job at a college newspaper will make you a better person, a better employee.

Congratulations 2011 Grads!

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