Russell Simmons talks economy, inequality and the vote

With only three days left for people to register to vote, volunteers and members of the political sphere are rushing to make every citizen count. On Wednesday, Oct. 3, entrepreneur Russell Simmons stopped by the Graham Center to talk issues.

FIU Student Media: What made you get involved with this campaign? What makes you so passionate about it?

Russell Simmons: It’s the same reason I’m here today. Because I believe passionately in the president’s vision and I believe that a lot of the people, that are going to be disenfranchised, are going to be people who are going to voting for the president. We all know that there was absolutely no fraud... that whole idea is a fraud; the idea was to disempower the middle class and underserved communities. And so it was easy to join.

FIUSM: You have said in previous interviews that poor people are the first ones to be suppressed when it comes to voting? Why and how so?

Simmons: Well, I mean all of America. When people are not given the opportunity to be competitive, or not being educated properly or don’t have health care, that affects everyone, no one escapes. No one escapes this idea that corporations benefit in special interests. Any
Involvement to impact social outcomes

TALK, PAGE 1

person who has a heart knows we should be responsible, we should give all Americans health care, they should respect them [other individuals],” De Gani said.

Simons: I think there is a dramatic difference between the candidates, and when we say it doesn’t matter, we always find out later that it did. I remember people saying that Al Gore and Bush were the same, and then the war came and it destroyed our economy. This is something that Al Gore wouldn’t have promoted. It affected everybody. It affected our education today. It affects our health care today. It affects everything we do today... If you’re a woman, an equal salary is important. If you’re gay, “don’t ask don’t tell” is a statement to the world and the president speaking about gay marriage is a statement to the world. These are things we have to fight for...so that can be solved through the legislatures and Congress.

FIUSM: Do you think that social issues such as gay rights, immigration, etc. should be a priority to the country, instead of the economy?

Simons: The economy is a funny thing. I’m a business guy. I hire somebody for a dollar and I hope their work makes our company $1.50. I pay taxes after. I don’t hire a guy based on a tax break, so that’s misinformation. If you give a rich guy a tax break, he’ll give more jobs. Well that’s not true. It’s a very important point, it’s not true. Empowering rich people with more corporate welfare is disastrous. If you give a rich guy a tax break, he’ll give more jobs. If you give a rich guy a tax break, he’ll give more jobs.

The difference between then and now is that the University of Florida, University of South Florida and Florida Atlantic University both received yellow ratings. The one category that the University did receive a green light was in “admitted commitments to free expression.” When asked whether he was content with the Universities rating, Lansford responded, “Probably not, I wish they would understand the compromise, if that’s the right word or the grey area. We don’t go out and... look for violators, if we did you would hear about it. “They say there shouldn’t have anything, but... deep down, do they really want to see a young male or female student being harassed verbally and sexually and call that harassment?” said Lansford. “We are going to disagree as a university because I believe part of our mission is to teach civility and respect for others and respect for differences.”

*stephan.aseche@fiu.edu*

Land swap: we can’t survive without it

FAIR, PAGE 1

Iez-Levy said. “We have a time constraint.” According to Gonzalez-Levy, it is too early in the process to determine whether or not a referendum will be necessary. “I worry about the Youth Fair changing their minds,” Paig said. “The land issue is priority and our timetable is critical.” Rosenberg also discussed a “Plan B” if the University were unable to acquire the land. “We’re confident given our new [facility] offices... we would be able to accommodate,” Rosenberg said. “The land issue is priority and our timetable is critical.” Rosenberg mentioned the expansion of online classes and providing labs on Sundays.

[The University is] carefully activating parts of a Plan B,” Rosenberg said, also noting a possible capping of enrollment. “Another part [is] a more aggressive approach to some of the property, said Rosenberg. “There’s a lot of moving parts to this.”

If the University were, however, to acquire the property, Rosenberg mentioned a partnership with Miami-Dade Community College that the fair grounds would be transformed into “joint-use facilities” where high school students would receive university-level instruction during the day and University students would make use of it during the evenings.

“There is no similar piece of land that can be leveraged and that’s what we have to keep in mind,” Rosenberg said.

-mariella.roque@fiu.edu
Catch the news… from a newspaper

JULIA DUBA  Staff Writer

I walked toward the Glenn Hubert Library at about 8:13 a.m. after missing the Golden Panther Express shuttle for the third time this semester. Having accepted the fact that I could sit back and calmly read a chapter of my assigned reading for the next 5 hours, I noticed The New York Times stacked high in front of the library. I looked at the newspaper stand, the papers stacked almost taller than me with copies of The New York Times.

It was still early in the morning, so nobody else had picked up a copy to glance at the front-page picture and then throw it away in an FIU mixed recycling bin (hopefully). I grabbed a copy at the top of the pile and, yes, looked at the front-page picture. Then I walked up the stairs, glazing over a few headlines about Syria, President Barack Obama, and Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney’s offshore tactics.

As I prepared to unzip my laptop case and get started on my emails and check Facebook, I noticed a headline on the front page that intrigued me.

In an attempt to fulfill my obligation as a journalism major to read more news and perhaps feeling a little guilty for shoving the paper aside to make room for my laptop, I started to read the small print. Before I knew it… "Continued on Page A3."

What was I to do? Where is page A3? I awkwardly unfolded the newspaper and turned a page over, and there I read the rest of the story. It was about a new generation of young, urban citizens turned hunters living countrysides who now hunt their own protein and then write books about the connections they feel to nature and their new-found gratitude for the food they eat.

Interesting. I flipped the page again and again; a short story about Syria’s foreign minister blaming other countries for the crisis, another about Swiss cows texting their farmers when they’re in heat, and then another about letters written by prisoners in solitary confinement.

I was converted. No search engine on the top of the screen to tempt me to veer away from the story, no colorful ads sandwiching the columns of words, no hyperlinks in the middle of the text to navigate me to an entirely different story – just paper and ink.

When you’re forced to read articles that you didn’t search for yourself, you’re forced to read news you didn’t know about in the first place.

I plan to fit newspaper reading into my schedule, like a 20-minute workout, three to four times a week.

I no longer imagine the traditional journalist voicing his concerns as an old man swinging a cane in people’s faces yelling, “Back in my day, we read news on paper!”

I understand the concerns for print journalism in a different light and want newspapers to stick around. And you should too.

-julia.duba@fiusm.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ECONOMY A KEY ISSUE

As students, we’re asked to make choices every day. This election, we’re being asked to make another one between Mitt Romney and Barack Obama.

Choices are nothing new to us. Whether it be studying in order to prepare for an exam or meeting with someone who can provide advice and insight into our futures, we’re entrusting others to make the best choices possible for our lives.

However, a student’s ability to determine what major to study or what classes to take isn’t determined by the University. It’s determined by the student, based on careful study of his or her options.

So, in that vein, let’s look at the Obama administration’s record. The massive debt incurred by the administration and its tax-and-spend policies have done nothing to bring us closer to an economic recovery. In fact, they have only further burdened our generation.

The unemployment rate for young people is 16.4 percent, double that of the population at large. Half of new college graduates are unemployed or underemployed. The number of young Americans living in poverty has risen by 23 percent and a record 5.9 million young Americans now live with their parents. These facts likely lead us to only one conclusion: the Obama administration has not improved the economy nor provided the relief young Americans so desperately need.

Mitt Romney’s plan to strengthen our economy, to provide school choice and simplify the tax code, will provide a great opportunity to use the help we need. As he recently said, the best thing the president can do to help students effectively deal with student debt and other obligations is to make sure they have a job. Romney’s plan to cut unnecessary regulations and lower taxes to stimulate the economy will incentivize businesses to create jobs. His plan to advance school choice will make American students more competitive in the global economy and raise scores on a host of independent measures, since when we have to compete, the consumers – in this case students – reap the benefits.

In the final calculus, the choice is clear. The Obama record has produced negligible gains for students. Romney’s solutions will jumpstart the economy and provide benefits to students now and at graduation, without leaving future generations holding the bag.

This election, our choice is clear and that’s Mitt Romney for President.

Keith Fernandez (BA ’10), a visiting student at the Rafael Diaz-Balart College of Law, and Daniel Leyte-Vidal, a political science major, are the co-chairs of Young Americans for Romney at Florida International University.
Mammography Art Initiative raises $6,000 for cause

Students at the University are combining their efforts, artistically and financially, to raise awareness of breast cancer this month. It can affect people directly, as well as indirectly, through the actions of loved ones. Many people who are unaware that they have breast cancer don’t know it because they either think they don’t need to get a mammography, or they don’t have the money to afford one. That is where the Green Family Foundation comes in, as well as the University’s College of Medicine. After launching an art contest, the College of Medicine hosted the Mammography Art Initiative on Sept. 29 at the Frost Art Museum.

The event displayed the artworks collected from the contest, which were based on two themes: "Radiology Meets Art" and "Breast Cancer Can Hide in Anyone." The event also had multiple speakers, ranging from doctors, faculty and students, to breast cancer survivors. The Mammography Art Initiative was founded and carried out by students of FIU’s Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, as a community-service learning project, to raise money for low income women, from the Green Family Foundation NeighborhoodHELP in the Miami area, to get mammograms and work on getting treatment for their breast cancer. The Green Family Foundation is a family foundation that provides grants to organizations that work on education, health services and reaching out to the community.

The University’s College of Medicine also collaborates with this foundation for their program called Green Family Foundation NeighborhoodHELP (Health Education Learning Program), which revolutionizes the way medical students are taught. Teams of students are sent into communities to help families stay healthy. Each team is assigned one to two households. The teams include medical students and others in social work, nursing and public health, and in the future it may even include students studying business and law.

To reach their goal of $8,000 to help 80 women from the foundation, the students organized an art exhibit from the contest. Three winners were chosen and awarded during the event. Their winning artworks, along with other participating works, were voluntarily auctioned. The event also consisted of live music by students and consisted of speakers, such as Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology Carolyn D. Runowicz. She’s globally known for her research in women’s health and gynecologic cancer. The president of the foundation, Kimberly Greene, also spoke of her personal experience with cancer and her inspiration for working with affected women locally, and also in Haiti.

Some other speakers included breast cancer survivors who found help through the Green Family Foundation NeighborhoodHELP, such as Roma James, who exhibited an art piece and presented the struggles she went through during her cancer. At the end of the event, the College of Medicine was able to fundraise $6,000 and are still accepting donations in hopes of reaching their goals to help women in need and join the fight against breast cancer.

Homecoming is offering students a variety of events

Homecoming is offering students a variety of events, including a concert on Oct. 7 and a Homecoming monium Concert will be at the U.S. Bank Century Arena. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and a ticket is required.

On Friday, come to the National Pas Hellenic Council Step Show. The show will feature different teams who will battle for the title of Best Step. So get your self a ticket and head on over to U.S. Century Bank Arena on Oct. 12; doors open at 6:30 p.m.

The Homecoming week finale is on Saturday, Oct. 13. Approximately three hours before the FIU vs. Middle Tennessee game, enjoy the Homecoming Parade, which will start at Lot 3 and end in Lot 6. Come out and celebrate with faculty, students, alumni and friends, as they march in Panther spirit. The parade will feature floats, performers and different FIU organizations.

The parade will then lead to the tailgate before the big game. The game is set to start at 6 p.m. at the FIU Stadium. Don’t forget to get your ticket, and join the fun!

For more information on events and tickets, visit http://the.fiu.edu/, or pick up a flyer around campus.
Students reflect on author J.K. Rowling’s new novel

It’s not Harry Potter, but I understand that she’s just moving in a different direction. I think it’s going to be difficult though, for her to break away from the shadow she created for herself.

- John Garcia, Junior Economics major

It’s not about wizards, secret chambers or a world inhabited by magic, but world-acclaimed author J.K. Rowling has taken the literary spotlight once again in her recently released novel, “The Casual Vacancy.”

However, with the book’s synopsis suggesting a focus on adult themes and political undertones, even grown-up fans of her world-renowned children series seem to generally be at a crossroad with how they feel about reading this non-Potter novel.

“The Casual Vacancy” ironically begins where a politician’s life has abruptly and ironically begins where a politician’s life has abruptly terminated. The town of Pagford is a seemingly well-kept community that, in truth, is unraveling with corruption.

As hatred, treachery and an overpowering thirst for power are set to overcome the populace, the battle for Pagford’s control sinks deeper into civic life, the battle for Pagford’s future plays out against the backdrop of the election day.

“I think it’s going to be difficult though,” said senior Olivia Sanchez. “It sounds like an interesting read. I get the feeling she’s moving on like her fans, so it’s good seeing something different from her.”

News of Rowling’s new series has since aroused excitement in the virtual world, resulting in its success to hold several coveted number one sales spots. Even with pre-order sales alone, stores like Amazon and Barnes and Noble had “The Casual Vacancy” at number one much before its scheduled Sept. 27 release date.

However, when asked how they feel about Rowling’s new novel, FIU students responded with mixed feelings. Long-established Rowling fans, like FIU graduate Vanessa Thompson, expressed that one of the main reasons for the book’s appeal is their unwavering appreciation for the author’s storytelling skills.

“It’s not Harry Potter, but I understand that she’s just moving in a different direction. I think it’s going to be difficult though, for her to break away from the shadow she created for herself.”

- marcy.diaz@fiusm.com
VOLLEYBALL

JONATHAN JACOBSKIND
Staff Writer

Turning point: two words that can sum up this week’s array of practices as is the Panther’s slogan for the 2012 campaign. After posting a dismal 1-3 record in conference play along with a 4-12 record, the team has dug themselves into such a huge hole that it may take a drastic turn around in order for the Panthers to salvage what it left of the regular season.

As the Panthers continue to struggle with their set-receive woes as well as not properly getting low enough on defense, assistant coach Travers Green and a volunteer assistant coach held the girls accountable and the consequences weren’t pretty.

The girls were given the job of completing repeated “latter” drills in which emulate suicide running drills in basketball; were players must run back and forth from baseline to baseline. However, to bring up the intensity a notch, in “latter” drills simply touching the line does not suffice, in volleyball the objective is to hit the deck as if a player were to be diving for a ball.

On a lighter note, FIU finally received some reinforcements last weekend against South Alabama and Troy as senior setter Renele Forde made her 2012 season debut.

The 6-foot-3 standout was out with an abdominal injury that had her sidelined for four weeks where Forde was forced to remain stagnant due to the severity of her injuries.

“I’m just jumping right in and contributing as much as I can,” Forde said. “I mean it’s not easy, I’ve been out for a month and I could not anything since I was physically inactive.”

After spending the past month on watching her inexperienced teammates fight through the growing pains and play on, Forde is all smiles about being able to finally take the floor.

“Now that I’m back I focusing on motivating the team and get back in proper volleyball shape to help out our young players,” Forde said. “I’m going to work as hard as I possibly can to bring us back from the losses that we’ve had this season.”

With Forde coming back, FIU now must await the arrival of their star and 2011 All Sun Belt hitter, Jovana Bjelica. Bjelica has been sidelined with a broken bone in her right hand after colliding with a teammate minutes before FIU came up against Florida. 

The Serbian native was handed a 4-6 week timetable for her return. As the fifth week looms over since the injury, Bjelica has not shown any signs of a return in the near future as she remains to sport a protective cast along with her physical therapy.

With Bjelica, she is continuing to rest her hand so we are hoping to get her back in the next few weeks,” Head Coach Trevor Theroulde said.

The thing is even if she is back is take a while to get into volleyball shape with running and conditioning.

Still without the services of Bjelica, FIU will take on another conference foe this weekend as it prepares to take on Louisiana Lafayette on Monday, Oct. 8. As the Panthers have a split their home record in 2012 as it defeated Arkansas State but was shutout by the Trojans of Arkansas Little Rock. The match is slated for 6:30 pm.

A return in the near future.

While the rain was certainly no unwellcome, Martinez said earlier practices in the week proved vital.

“We try to practice two to three times a week, depending on our schedules. But luckily we were able to get in two practices this past week to prepare for this game and it was in similar weather conditions that helped us,” said Carabeo.

PIKE will go on to face Pi Kappa Phi (2-1) on Oct. 8 in their fourth game of the season.

SIGME DIAL

The FIU intramural field was packed with members of both fraternities and sororities as they face off with their undefeated brothers. On Monday, Oct. 1, the rain poured down on the teams, but in the end, Sigma Alpha Mu (3-0) won a nail-biter in a flag-football game against Sigma Phi Epsilon (2-1).

Sig Ep put the first six points on the board on a 22-yard kick to the front right corner of the end zone from quarterback Jared Rock to Michael Sommo.

The Serbian native was able to bring the ball on a 10-yard bubble from Carabeo. Sig Ep went into the half with a 7-6 lead over Sammy.

Sig Ep attempted to milk the clock on the second drive of the half as Rock rushed on the first two plays for over 30 yards. SAM rolled out to the right, found a returner minutes before the final whistle was blown. “We were caught in a bad place at a bad time, but we got lucky he dropped it and we came out on top,” said Carabeo.

Sigma Alpha Mu looks to remain undefeated as they take on Sigma Chi next Monday, Oct. 8.

-Tarek Hamzeh

-sports@fiusm.com

PIKE routs Theta Chi; Sammy stays undefeated

FIUSM SPORTS STAFF

As rain swept across FIU’s intramural field, PIKE and Theta Chi prepared themselves for a wet flag football matchup on Oct. 1.

It was a game that started with players from both sides of the field fighting through the rain, and ended with a victory for PIKE defeating Theta Chi 32-6.

The game had a rough start; rain came down hard on the players and you could see both teams struggling to stay connected. Nonetheless, within 10 minutes of play, PIKE (2-1) got on the board with a touchdown from quarterback Cameron Stolz. Combined with a completed one-point conversion, PIKE picked up the early seven-point lead.

The mushy footsteps of the players running through the field were a constant reminder that the rain was not stopping anytime soon. Judging by the 19-0 deficit Theta Chi (1-2) faced by halftime, the rain affected their defense the most.

It continued in that same pace throughout the second half. PIKE receivers Alain Ghamin, John Ramirez and Eric Martinez all contributed to the cause by adding five touchdowns. Fortunately for Theta Chi, they avoided the blowout and ended the game with a 32-6 score.

While the rain was certainly welcome, Martinez said earlier practices in the week proved vital.

“We try to practice two to three times a week, depending on our schedules. But luckily we were able to get in two practices this past week to prepare for this game and it was in similar weather conditions that helped us,” said Carabeo.

PIKE will go on to face Pi Kappa Phi (2-1) on Oct. 8 in their fourth game of the season.

-Janet Diaz

The FIU intramural field was packed with members of both fraternities and sororities as they face off with their undefeated brothers. On Monday, Oct. 1, the rain poured down on the teams, but in the end, Sigma Alpha Mu (3-0) won a nail-biter in a flag-football game against Sigma Phi Epsilon (2-1).

Sig Ep put the first six points on the board on a 22-yard kick to the front right corner of the end zone from quarterback Jared Rock to Michael Sommo.

The Serbian native was able to bring the ball on a 10-yard bubble from Carabeo. Sig Ep went into the half with a 7-6 lead over Sammy.

Sig Ep attempted to milk the clock on the second drive of the half as Rock rushed on the first two plays for over 30 yards. SAM rolled out to the right, found a returner minutes before the final whistle was blown. “We were caught in a bad place at a bad time, but we got lucky he dropped it and we came out on top,” said Carabeo.

Sigma Alpha Mu looks to remain undefeated as they take on Sigma Chi next Monday, Oct. 8.
SPORTS

The Beacon – Friday, October 5, 2012

www.fiusm.com

PANTHERS’ SOCCER

MICHAEL ORTEGA
Contributing Writer

The defending champion Panthers are looking to claw their way back up to the top of the Sun Belt; this will begin with a tough road match against North Texas when they head to Denton on Sunday.

FIU faced the Mean Green last year at home, winning 1-0. This year, however, it will not be so easy as UNT is tied for first in the conference at 4-0-0 and showing much improvement this year.

The Panthers will focus on improving their struggling offense this week in practice to be able to keep up with UNT who has scored nine goals in just three Sun Belt matches so far this season.

“We are going to game plan this week with film from last year and from this past weekend,” said Head Coach Thomas Chestnutt. “The girls will be ready for North Texas.”

The Panthers have been very strong on defense this year, holding most opponents to only one goal per match. The team is looking to create goal scoring opportunities from turnovers and force outs.

“Like I say constantly, this team is all about defense and making offense from the turnovers,” said Chestnutt.

Another test for FIU will be playing away from home; the Panthers are only 2-3-1 away. Those two wins came against two conference opponents in Troy and South Alabama. The Panthers have struggled when they go on the road, only scoring less than one goal per game.

Key goal scorers will have to be playing at the top of their games on offense such as forwards Chelsea Leiva, Scarlett Montoya and midfielder Johanna Volz, who have combined for 13 goals this season, will have to continue to show their strong offensive skill in the upcoming games.

They will have to try to score and improve the low shot count of the team. On defense, goalies Kaitlyn Savage will have to be a presence in the goal and in the box; Savage now has a total of 65 saves so far in the season.

“We’re going to have to stay pumped up and work hard this week in practice for North Texas,” said sophomore forward Caroline Hernandez. “We are definitely going to win the next game.”

If they win this weekend against the Mean Green, they will be in second place in their Sun Belt, only behind Middle Tennessee, because of the loss they suffered by them at home last Friday: the only loss at home for the Panthers, as well as the only conference loss.

After this weekend’s game the schedule becomes more favorable for the Panthers, facing only teams with under 500 records in the conferences. With three of those next five games being at home, where the Panthers are 4-1 so far, giving FIU a better chance to become the champions for the last time in the Sun Belt Conference.

“We can’t focus on the past games anymore. We need to look forward and make history now,” said Johanna Volz.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ex-NFL WR appears in court again on drug case

NOMAA N MERCHANT
AP Staff

Former NFL wide receiver Sam Hurd, whose young career was brought to a halt by accusations that he tried to set up a drug-dealing operation in the middle of a season, is scheduled to appear in court Wednesday on new charges.

Arrested last December, Hurd is due in Dallas federal court Wednesday afternoon to plead on a new indictment with charges of trying to have a cousin related to his time out on bail earlier this year.

Hurd is accused of trying to have a cousin distribute in the Chicago area.

Hurd’s arrest during last year’s NFL season shocked his teammates on the Chicago Bears. Authorities have accused him of trying to set up large-scale purchases of cocaine and marijuana— and accepting 1 kilogram, to set up large-scale purchases of cocaine and marijuana — and accepting 1 kilogram, 2.2 pounds, of cocaine from an undercover and 1,000 pounds of marijuana.

The third person charged in the alleged conspiracy, Toby Lujan, has already pleaded guilty to a cocaine possession charge.

Hurd is accused of trying to have a cousin arrange a deal to buy 5 kilograms of cocaine and 200 pounds of marijuana.

The 27-year-old Hurd is being held in federal prison near Dallas.

His cousin, Jesse Tyrone Chavful, and his other alleged co-conspirator, Toby Lujan, have signed guilty plea agreements.

Agents were waiting outside the steak - house to arrest him.

Hurd pleaded not guilty and was released on bail. The Bears eventually cut him.

The San Antonio native played at Northern Illinois University and spent five seasons with the Dallas Cowboys before signing with the Bears in 2011. The deal was reportedly worth up to $5.15 million, including a $1.35 million signing bonus and base pay this season of $685,000.

Hurd was living in Texas earlier this summer when he fell back into trouble. Authorities say he failed two drug tests and also tried to arrange another deal for cocaine and 500 pounds of marijuana through Chavful, his cousin.

Chavful, in documents signed Monday as part of his plea agreement, said Hurd contacted him at his T-shirt shop in San Antonio and asked to “get him cocaine and marijuana.”

According to the documents, Chavful said he set up a deal to purchase the cocaine and marijuana, but was arrested by an undercover officer.

Chavful’s attorney, Laura Harper, denied that Chavful was pleading guilty in a bid of leniency at sentencing.

“Rather, he is truthfully admitting what he did because he believes that it is the right thing to do,” she said.

The third person charged in the alleged conspiracy, Toby Lujan, has already pleaded guilty to a cocaine possession charge.

Hurd’s attorney, Jay Ethington, said Tuesday that Chavful is lying.

“It’s Chavful’s attempt to shift blame and save himself from a long prison sentence,” he said.

Prosecutors last month filed a guilty plea agreement signed by Hurd. But Ethington said the document was a draft and no plea agreement had been reached. The U.S. attorney’s office has not withdrawn the plea documents.

We can’t focus on the past games anymore. We need to look forward and make history now,” said Johanna Volz.

Jasen DelgaDo
/The Beacon
Jose Antonio Vargas, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, came to speak at the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre on Oct. 1. In 2011, Vargas founded Define American, a nonprofit organization with the goal of elevating the conversation about the immigration reform, the DREAM Act and other immigration issues by inviting the people to share their stories.

His request is for students and faculty’s stress relief. "We want to help reduce students’ minds are often racing about all they have to do for classes and work, and they do not always take the time to relax and breathe so they can focus on what they are doing at that moment, which is why mindfulness meditation on campus may be able to lend a helping hand," Miranda said.

Every Tuesday from 12 to 1 p.m. on the Biscayne Bay Campus, room 246B in Academic II, Jose Miranda, clinician in the Office of Employee Assistance, coordinates Mindfulness Meditation, which is a meditation that focuses on the present moment, open to all faculty members and students.

"We want to help reduce students and faculty’s stress levels by helping them take an hour out of their busy week to focus on the present moment," said Miranda.

Mindfulness meditation is free for all students, offered at both BBC and the Modesto Main/Adelanto Campus. At MMC, the group meets Wednesday from 12 to 1 p.m. in room 314 of the Graham Center. According to Miranda, the meditation is getting more popular at MMC, around five to seven students usually attend.

There are no students involved at BBC yet, only faculty members. They are looking for new students.

In mindfulness meditation, attendees can lead the group with their own personal meditations. Students and staff can share quotes or personal experiences throughout the hour-long session.

If not, a digital recording gives directions to participants through the breathing exercises and calming tones. The meetings are held in a small room with one couch and three chairs, leaving enough room for about seven people.

"Through mindfulness meditation, stress relief is achieved," Miranda said.

He explained that the meditation does not focus on judgment, on the future or on the past.

"We emphasize living in the moment, letting everything you may have been worried about before you came leave your mind. Stress can become dangerous for students when it interferes with their abilities to concentrate and can even affect their mental health," Miranda said.

"We have been holding these mediation meetings for over a year now," said Miranda. "And although we began at MMC we really want to raise awareness at BBC to get more students involved." To find out more about Mindfulness Meditation, contact Dr. Jose Miranda at 305-348-2469 or email: Jadmir@fiu.edu.