Obama appoints alum as inaugural poet

Richard Blanco scores a number of firsts as the 2013 inaugural poet – the first Hispanic, the first gay, the first Puerto Rican – and the first to write his own words for the office.

"He's diversity is only a bonus," said Campbell McGrath, poet and Patricia and Phillip Frost professor of creative writing at FIU. "He is a great poet."

Blanco will compose an original poem for President Barack Obama's second ceremonial inauguration, which is scheduled for Jan. 21 on the steps of the Capitol.

"There were talks on various groups in regards to their law or cultural identity," said McGrath. "I spoke English; my parents didn't. None of my brothers or cousins were named Greg, Peter, or Marsha; we were not the Brady Bunch," Blanco wrote in "America," a poem from his book "City of a Hundred Fires."

On his website, the 44-year-old said that this poem originates from one of his earliest memories of the clash between the two cultures that shaped him.

"A week before Thanksgiving I explained to my abuelita about the Indians and the Mayflower, the first Christmas, and the Native American and the Indians and the Mayflower, the poem continues. "Until they finally agreed: this Thanksgiving we have turkey, as well as pork."

Blanco's America is similar to Obama's America, and his appointment as inaugural poet sends the nation a subtle, underlying message – a message of reform.

The inaugural poet's diverse demographic complements Obama's vision for America that promises the reform of immigration laws. During a time of great change, Blanco will not only represent immigrants and gays alike, but every person struggling to find their identity in the country people call a melting-pot.

"His diversity is only a feature, it's not a story," McGrath said. "I use it for referrals all the time," said MacRobert-Ruiz, vice president of the FIU Law Alumni Executive Committee. "We've been trying to do this for the past three years," said MacRobert-Ruiz, "and finally, the school signed a contract at the beginning of 2012 with [a] company, that launched and created the way that we wanted it [to be]."

The database works like any other social networking site, like LinkedIn and Facebook.

"The database also allows alumni to invite others to events and share an article, anything. You can invite alumni to join, so if you're a part of the class of 2007, class of 2008, you're automatically enrolled in that group, by virtue of your class," said MacRobert-Ruiz. "There's a wall, like on Facebook, and there's also different groups that you can join, so if you're a part of the class of 2007, class of 2008, you're automatically enrolled in that group, by virtue of your class," said MacRobert-Ruiz. "You can upload files, if you want to share a statute, like for attorneys, if you want to share an article, anything. You can invite alumni to join if you notice that they're not using it."

Alumni can also make groups in regards to their law specialty. MacRobert-Ruiz says lawyers practicing in certain areas, can create groups and share legal advice and ideas with other lawyers. He uses it for referrals all the time, said MacRobert-Ruiz, who is also a martial and family lawyer. "In family law, we need bankruptcy advice for our clients sometimes [and] real estate law advice." The database also helps alumni find jobs.

"I would go to my class group and put 'I am seeking employment in this area,'" said MacRobert. "Or if you're interested in Bankruptcy law [for example], I would go to the Bankruptcy group, and post there, and maybe upload, since you can upload files, you can upload your resume."

The database also allows alumni to invite and RSVP other alumni to events happening at the college. This can be done under the calendar section that appears at the home page of the database. The database can be found on the College of Law's website, under the "Alumni & Friends" tool. Under the tool and the "Alumni Directory" tab, the login page appears for the database.

MADISON FANTOZZI
Asst. News Director

Online database connects College of Law alumni

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Poet joins the ranks of Maya Angelou and Robert Frost

DIEGO SALDANA
Staff Writer

Guns have stolen the attention of the media with proposed bans and laws made by Congress. FIU, however, has its own policies and restrictions when it comes to this matter.

According to FIU Student Code of Conduct, the “possessions, storage or use of firearms, explosives, ammunition or other weapons or dangerous articles or substances, including, but not limited to tasers, switchblade knives and non-lethal weapons such as air guns and Chinese stars. The use of any item as a weapon.” by any student, will be penalized.

Aphonse Ianniello, assistant chief of the University Police Department, clarified the University’s policies regarding weapons.

“No weapons in a car [on campus] or on campus even with a permit,” said Ianniello.

Freshman and biology major Georgina Todd thinks knives shouldn’t be allowed at all, however, tasers and mace should be.

“A taser could come in handy,” Todd said.

Todd also says students who possess firearm permits should not be severely punished if caught with a firearm in their vehicles because “in Florida its legal with a license.”

Though students like Natalie Cardona, a sophomore and chemistry major, thinks students should not be carrying weapons on campus.

“No weapons because that’s where violence comes from,” said Cardona.

Cardona said she understands why someone would want to carry a weapon, but mentioned she hasn’t “gotten to that point.”

TASCANY, PAGE 8

Calvo said the trip was a graduation trip from her dad because she’s always been obsessed with Italy and had always wanted to go. One of her favorite memories from the trip was a day that included learning how to process real Parmigiana di Rana cheese, a visit to a prosciutto factory, a balsamic tasting, and a family dinner style dinner on a farm.

“I would recommend anybody to go because it’s a once in a lifetime experience and you never forget those memories,” Calvo said she is even looking into attending the trip again this year.

Moran said another student, Dante DiGiacomo, also attended the first trip to Tuscany and is planning to attend again this time with his father. Moran said when DiGiacomo first attended the trip last year, his major was undecided.

After attending, however, DiGiacomo made the decision to switch to a major in CSHTM.

The deadline is Jan. 18 to sign up to attend the trip with a guaranteed flight included. However, Angelo said students are still able to sign up until Jan. 31 but will be responsible for obtaining their flight on their own.

Moran said although it can be a bit nerve-wracking, he feels the trip was worth it for him because everyone from last year’s trip really bonded.

He hopes to continue this trip in the future and has already been discussing plans for next year.

“The amazing human connection and being able to connect with people that are natives of Tuscany was really special,” said Moran.
A new play for SJMC: sports journalism

SHANNON COPELAND
Contributing Writer

A conversation about sports is one of the most interesting conversations you can have, right after music and food. Here at FIU, sports play an integral role in our collegiate lives. As a sports fan, however, I think more could be done educationally.

I am an aspiring sports journalist who can’t get enough of a good soccer game on a Saturday morning and I must to see Cristiano Ronaldo showcasing his skills. But, at times, I feel as if sports journalism is overlooked at FIU.

Here at FIU, we have sports fans with interests ranging from basketball to soccer, baseball to track and field. Sports journalism is a profitable field. It is diverse, versatile and you can make quite a career out of it.

In journalism, there are many ways to write and present a story, and many ways to conduct an interview. But for each story, there is certain approach that needs to be taken.

Journalism is an art and I believe sports journalism is a very special segment of it. True sports fans know that you cannot be taught how to love sports, but you can be taught how to use that love for the good of the game.

I think a sports reporting class could guide journalism majors, and others with an interest in sports, in the right direction for becoming a better journalist.

In these classes, students could learn how to conduct a sports interview, how to ask probing questions to certain tight-lipped coaches, and also how to better connect athletes with their fans by asking the right questions.

To me, a good sports story should make a rival respect a rival, even when they really don’t like one another.

Miami is also a perfect city for journalism majors. The Sun Life Stadium, Marlins Park and American Airlines Arena are within a reasonable distance to FIU, and also home to some amazing games.

With a sports reporting class, I think relationships could be forged with prominent television stations, allowing students to get their hands-on experience and elevating The School of Journalism and Mass Communication to another level.

JUNETTE REYES
Staff Writer

The first day of class tends to act as a preview for the rest of the semester in terms of what to expect: the grading system, class content, assignments, examinations and so on.

Each professor lays down what their expectations are in terms of assignments and examinations and the possibility of making up for these in case they are missed. Each professor has his or her own policy.

The policies for make-ups vary from course to course; with some professors forbidding them, while others make exceptions for illness, transportation difficulties and/or personal or family issues.

Such events are, at times, unforeseeable and it is the student’s responsibility to immediately inform their professors should any of them occur.

The topic of make-ups can be quite tricky for professors. It can force them to go out of their way in order to set up a meeting place for the inconceivable number of students who need to re-take, or make up, exams when class hours, office hours and the like are not an option.

The absence of a teaching assistant only makes the situation even more difficult for professors who can easily spread themselves too thin.

One solution that many professors have opted for is a policy that does not allow any sort of make-ups.

This, however, might not be the most popular or fairest option when it comes to students. The events that can justify a make-up can be unpredictable, and the way students perform or function can vary greatly.

Especially when dealing with personal or family illness and death in the family.

A possible option would be to simply drop the grade for the exam or assignment that could not be completed, due to serious circumstances, so as to not allow it to affect the student’s final grade.

It would not eliminate the necessity for make-ups as a whole, but it is certainly a possible alternative to the frustrating situation.

Especially if students go about it intelligently, saving their “get out of jail” free card, so to speak, until absolutely needed.

Creating a new strategy for making-up...
I don’t like to put things that I consider private on Instagram now. I wouldn’t want to see something I considered private out somewhere public and have somebody make money on that.

Chloe Reyes
Sophomore
Majoring in Biological Science

Instagram’s terms of service update, not a pretty picture

Daniel Uria
Staff Writer

In December, Instagram users were met with a notification that Instagram would be updating their terms of service. It was not well received.

The message read: “Some or all of the Service may be supported by advertising revenue.

To help us deliver interesting paid or sponsored content or promotions, you agree that a business or other entity may pay us to display your username, likeness, photos (along with any associated metadata), and/or actions you take, in connection with paid or sponsored content or promotions, without any compensation to you.”

The app’s users met this announcement almost immediately with outrage, and Instagram CEO Kevin Systrom quickly restored the original terms of service and apologized for the incident, labeling it a misunderstanding.

Despite this quick turn around, various news outlets have reported daily usage plummeting from 16.35 million to 7.42 million. College students are some of the largest users of the app, which caught on like wildfire in 2012 and for some, Instagram even surpassed social network juggernaut Facebook, which bought the company last April.

“It basically took over Facebook for me,” said freshman Mirina Monroy. “I don’t use my Facebook anymore because I would just upload pictures there, and now it’s just Instagram.”

Despite it’s popularity, several FIU students claim that if Instagram were to implement a policy that would allow them to sell user photos to advertisers, they would no longer use the app. Junior biological science major Danny Gallo feels profiting off user content without their consent is “unfair.”

Despite admitting to not using Instagram often in the first place, Gallo claims that if they sought to profit off his content, he would stop using it altogether.

While having their creative property sold without their consent is clearly upsetting to students, many admit that they use Instagram in a more social capacity and object to the idea of seeing photos of themselves and or their friends being shared without their consent.

Chloe Reyes, a sophomore majoring in biological science, says she uses Instagram just about equally as a creative outlet and a social tool, but explains that the controversy has caused her to alter what she decides to post.

“I don’t like to put things that I consider private on Instagram now,” said Reyes. “I wouldn’t want to see something I considered private out somewhere public and have somebody make money on that.”

Senior Edwin Andres has been following the story since the announcement was made and also edited his usage in response to the change.

“I would use it to see other people’s pictures, but I stopped posting my own,” said Andres.

Continuing the trend, Andres also stressed that the reproduction of photos of himself and his friends being sold without his consent is his biggest fear.

“It’s a privacy thing. That’s why I have my account set on private so all my friends can see it and not the public.”

- life@fiusm.com
"A Royal Affair," a well-performed period piece

W ith the Academy Awards right around the corner, it's time to reflect on some of the year's less accessible pieces, and that means foreign cinema. One of the most interesting features hails from Denmark, and is a force to be reckoned with. Nikolaj Arcel's "A Royal Affair" follows the story of a young queen (Alicia Vikander) who is married to an insane king (Mikkel Boe Følsgaard). When a new physician (Mads Mikkelsen) is appointed to help keep the king's madness at bay, the queen finds herself swept into an affair.

Together, the queen and the physician begin to enlighten the country with ideas of freedom over censorship by manipulating the king, but a forbidden romance reveals a picture of life and love that people who have been reading about the consequences come rolling in.

One of the many appealing factors of "A Royal Affair" is the fact that not all the characters are easy to feel compassion for, unlike characters in plenty of other stylish period pieces. The sheer awkwardness of the king, two entirely unfamiliar people coming to the meeting after being married for some time is shown from the start. We can instantly see the king's childish nature and the queen's hesitation to love this insufferable man she has married.

What makes Vikander's performance so appealing is the pure emotion she brings to the role of the queen in good times and bad. Her supporting work in the recent movie "Anna Karenina" was a great start, but she leaves quite an impression with her role in "A Royal Affair." In turn, Følsgaard is outstanding as the raving king alongside the ever-entrancing Mikkelsen, who American audiences will remember for his stint as a Bond villain in "Casino Royale." The bond that forms between their two characters is what drives the film, and convincing performances from both men makes it all the more difficult to choose whose side to take when things get tough.

Regardless of excellent performances, this lengthy period piece comes with faults. The film boasts impeccable production design, but a pretty look doesn't excuse letting a film drag on.

Thankfully, the final act delivers the film's darkest and most fascinating moments in one full swoop, serving as a refreshing treat to a lagging middle act. While it does suffer from some of the same pacing issues that many a period piece does, Nikolaj Arcel's solid direction, a mostly compelling narrative and all around excellent performances make "A Royal Affair" quite the worthy contender at the Oscars this year.

Jean Banquin is a junior FIU English major. For the past year and a half, he has written more than 80 movie reviews for YAM-Magazine and is pursuing a certificate in Film Studies at the University.
Brothers start FIU lacrosse club, hope to join NCAA

JOLSON DIAZ
Contributing Writer

A long-handled stick, a rubber ball, a mask to protect your face, shoulder pads, gloves and sometimes even rib guards: What sounds like a mix of baseball, hockey and football is actually the sport of lacrosse.

While not at the level of popularity as the NBA or NFL, lacrosse is growing rapidly at about 10 percent popularity per year based on a 2005 U.S. Lacrosse participation survey. This is exactly where then-president of FIU’s Lacrosse Team, Javi Oliuat, and his brother Alex Oliuat, got things started during the fall of 2009.

“Me and Alex used to play when we were younger,” said Javi Oliuat. “But when he graduated from Columbus High School in 2007, he couldn’t play for a couple of years because of college. So as soon as I graduated high school, it gave him motivation to want to start playing again.”

With the help of flyers plastered around the Modesto Maidique Campus, more than a dozen students started taking interest. The Oliuat brothers welcomed everyone to join at no cost, even those who had little to no experience playing the sport.

Starting a club from the ground up was new to the Oliuat brothers and they had no idea what was in store for them.

“When we first started the club, we didn’t know what would happen because we didn’t have a coach, and no money from the school to pay for one,” said Alex Oliuat.

The club caught a break when they came across Alex Lerner, who voluntarily coached the club for the first two seasons. He got things going for them and did so free of charge by hiring a full-time head coach.

There has been much improvement in the popularity of the sport at FIU since its inception. Alex Oliuat moved up to become the president of the team and is assisted by Kevin Ortega, vice president. The club plays in-state teams that include the University of Miami and Florida Gulf Coast at least once a season. The club, however, is aiming for a more competitive future.

“Our long-term goal is to eventually become a part of the Men’s Collegiate Lacrosse Association and be a competitive team,” said Alex Oliuat. “Hopefully we can even become so good that we eventually get into the NCAA Division I level.”

There are currently 61 teams in Division I lacrosse. FIU is not in Division II or III. The Oliuat brothers know how to keep their sibling rivalry away from the field in order to reach that goal. They understand in order to move forward as a club, working together as a team is an important factor.

Counting down the days

From leisure to adrenaline, FIU cycling club does it all

MICHAEL ORTEGA
Staff Writer

Once a week, Jason Diaz, a cycling enthusiast, leads the FIU cycling club on a ride through North Miami Beach. With the sun rising and the sights of the beach life all around him, he forgets about the rest of the world around him.

As lead cyclist and club captain, Diaz has worked with help from others to put together the FIU cycling club and team. Even though the club enjoys leisure riding through Miami, Diaz says there’s a lot more to the club than meets the eye.

“This club isn’t just for the relaxing style of riding through Miami-Dade,” Diaz said. “We try to kick it up a notch and compete in races and marathons through the city and other parts of Florida.”

The club gives all riders what they want; they don’t focus on just one style of cycling and range from mountain biking to trick riding. The club also isn’t limited to experienced cyclists. Students with little experience are welcome to join.

“All the members are there to help anyone with something if it’s how to pop a trick correctly or if it’s tips on how to maintain your bike, or how to fix a tire,” said Diaz.

The club meets every week at 6:30 a.m. on Thursdays and at 7 a.m. on the first Sunday of every month.

“They try to get together as much as possible for two reasons. One, we love cycling and hanging out with our friends, and the second reason is to get ready for any upcoming races or marathons,” Diaz said.

The club took part in the Rosewood Miami Lakes Championship race on Sept. 23, 2012 where USA Cycling recognized the club for the first successful university cycling team in South Florida. Member Alex Gil also won the Fastest Mile at the local Velodrome, recording a new record for the course and beating out four national champions, including the former record holder.

Despite some of the leisure activities, there are adrenaline-filled events members can do. Some of the members join the cycling team to take part in marathons and races through Miami sponsored by FIU and others like the Rudy Project, SunTrust and Bike Werx.

“We have competed in a few races in the last years, but we are still looking to do more and hopefully one day travel across country to perform in different races,” Diaz said.

The club accepts any cycling enthusiast from FIU to come join them. They also allow other members to join from other locations. The only draw is that they cannot compete in the races or marathons on the FIU cycling team.

“We started doing this so we can get some of our other friends that don’t go to FIU to join us as well, but to our surprise we have had a couple of other riders come and join from just word of mouth throughout the community. This is making our club bigger and more adventures,” Diaz said. “I always enjoy adding more members to the team; it brings more life and depth to the club.”

You can reach the club through Facebook.com/FIUcyclingteam or Twitter through @FIUCycling.
Injuries remain a hurdle before tennis season starts

STEVEN ROWELL
Contributing Writer

With spring semester almost two weeks old, the FIU tennis team is wrapping up its preparation for the beginning of the spring season.

As the Panthers prepare for the upcoming spring season, first-year Head Coach Katarina Petrovic is using this time to get the team completely healthy as the team has been battling injuries. Petrovic will use this time to make sure her team is in shape and get the new recruits up to speed with the rest of the players.

“Right now we still have some players coming back late from vacation, and I have new players and some injuries,” Petrovic said. “We have good players who know what they need to do, we just need to make sure we are all on the same page.”

In the fall season, the Panthers competed in the Fall Opener Tournament that saw the team go a combined 2-9 in singles matches and a combined 1-3 in doubles matches.

The Panthers, however, bounced back with a much better performance in the End of Fall Tournament in early November. They went a combined 5-1 in doubles and 5-6 in singles matches. The duo of Magali Holt and Giulietta Boha went 3-0 in doubles matches winning their flight in the championship.

The Panthers look to carry the momentum from their End of Fall Tournament into the spring season. FIU opens their season on Jan. 26 at home against Florida Gulf Coast University.

Between the beginning of the fall season and the End of Fall tournament, Boha and Rita Maisak went to Tampa to compete in the ITA Southeast Regionals.

The two of them finished 2-2 in doubles together. In singles, both reached the round of 32 before falling to defeat.

“The fall tournaments really helped us. They went pretty good for us, especially in doubles since it has been our weakness,” Boha said. “Now after the tournament I feel like it’s becoming our strength.”

For Boha and Maisak, the main thing they want to work on as they prepare for spring is to be mentally tougher and to have the durability to last through the long season.

“We mainly have to be mentally ready. We already know how to play. We just have mentally be there,” Maisak said. “I have been working on my conditioning a lot since the season is quite long for us, so it’s really important to stay in shape.”

So far, Petrovic is four months into her first year as FIU’s women’s tennis coach and the players have bought into what Petrovic has to offer.

“I knew her from before, when I played at South Carolina,” Maisak said. “She is an assistant, so it was an easy transition for me. I think she is a great coach and a great recruiter.”

Maisak said. “She brought some great recruits for this spring. I feel great about her because I feel she does a good job, she gets us ready, and we have great practices with her.”

SPORTS

SUDDENLY UNWANTED, TEBOB HAS UNCERTAIN NFL FUTURE

DENNIS WASZAK JR.
AP Sports Writer

Tim Tebow was two wins from the Super Bowl a year ago. Now, he’s pretty much a player without a team — likely to be released by the New York Jets after the season.

Sanchez struggled so badly that he was benched for the first time in his career.

“Every opportunity you get, you want to make the most of,” Tebow said. “Every chance I get, I want to see if I can make the team. And it’s that kind of thing.”

It didn’t even come when Mark Sanchez struggled so badly that he was benched for the first time in his career. Instead of going with Tebow, the No. 2 quarterback on the depth chart, Ryan went with third-stringer Greg McElroy.

Tebow, reportedly working out in Arizona with a personal trainer, could still land somewhere in the league as a project player.

New York is expected to trade or release him in the next few weeks. So far, destination unknown.

“I can’t imagine a scenario in which he’ll be a Jacksonville Jaguars,” new general manager David Caldwell declared last week. “(Even if he’s released).”

While there’s an outside chance Tebow could remain a New Yorker, depending on the whims of the still-to-be-hired GM, it appears highly unlikely.

So, that’s two NFL teams down — the only ones, at that, who showed any interest last offseason when Denver shopped him — and the 25-year-old Tebow’s options appear to be dwindling.

Tebow went from being considered a key part of Rex Ryan’s offense to almost non-existent. Offensive coordinator Tony Sparano didn’t know how to use him effectively, and Tebow wasn’t particularly productive when he got his few snaps in the wildcat-style formation. He made his biggest mark on special teams as the punter punt protector, and did all he could to hide his frustration at not playing.

But the numbers said it all: a mere 102 yards rushing and 6-of-8 passing for 39 yards. And, the most damming stat of all: zero touchdowns.

“I wouldn’t have liked to see him get a chance,” defensive end Mike DeVito said.

Although Tim Tebow has never lived up to the “Heisman winner” hype, he insists he’s a quarterback.

“You have to be a little bit of an optimist, right?” he asked.

“Every opportunity you get, you want to make the most of.”

According to Tebow, the No. 2 quarterback on the depth chart, Ryan went with third-stringer Greg McElroy.

Tebow has a bruised ego to go along with the two broken ribs that limited him earlier in the season.

“Every opportunity you get, you want to make the most of,” Tebow said a few weeks before the season ended, “and I’d have loved to have more of an opportunity to just play quarterback.”

Acquiring Tebow ultimately helped lead to Tannehill and Sparano losing their jobs. And, it clouded Tebow’s prospects in the NFL. No matter what, though, he insists he’s a quarterback.

Tebow, reportedly working out in Arizona with a personal trainer, could still land somewhere in the league as a project for an offensive coordinator willing to learn from the Jets’ mistakes.

“He’s still worth a try and I think somebody will sign him, but it’ll be under the condition that it will be as something other than as a quarterback,” said Brandt, who thinks Tebow will stay on offense.

“If Al Davis were still here, he’d take him in a second and try to turn him into a tight end for the Raiders.”

Or, Tebow could simply swallow his pride, head to Canada and become a huge star there with the CFL’s wide-open field. And then, who knows? Maybe he would come back to the United States — the same route Warren Moon, Doug Flutie and Jeff Garcia took to NFL stardom.

“Then there’s no shame at all in going to the CFL,” Crouch said. “They’d take him right now and he’d get a lot of tape, and if he’s there two years, he’d have 50 games under his belt playing defenses and coverages. Let the NFL scouts make their decisions then.

“And, hey, he might have so much fun there actually playing, he might not want to ever come back.”

PANTHER OF THE WEEK

JeniCoyle/The Beacon

Jerica Coley, who celebrated her 21st birthday on Wednesday, averaged 26 points, 8.5 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 blocks and 2 steals over her last two games against Arkansas State and UALR. The All-American is third in the country at 23.8 ppg.
THE Panther pride puts on its best dress for Miss FIU pageant

NATASHA ROQUE
Contributing Writer

The Office of Multicultural Programs and Services and the Center for Leadership and Service are sponsoring the Martin Luther King Day of Service, which will take place tomorrow, Jan. 19, at Colonial Drive Park and Zoo Miami.

The event, open to all students and faculty, will run from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Transportation to and from the parks will be provided by the University for all volunteers.

“The goal of this day is to get out of our comfort zones, gather together, and serve others through hands-on projects in honor of this extraordinary man who once lived,” said Ashley Mulet, marketing and business major participating in the event.

Those leaving from the Modesto Maidique Campus must be ready to depart by 8 a.m. and those leaving from the Biscayne Bay Campus will depart by 7:30 a.m.

While the project changes annually, this year’s Day of Service efforts seek to clean up and beautify two of Miami-Dade County’s key community recreation areas: Colonial Drive Park, located at 10750 SW 156 Terr. in Miami and Zoo Miami, located at 12400 SW 152 St.

“Though technically a ‘day off,’ a projected 400 FIU volunteers -- an increase from the usual 250 -- will help preserve and make improvements to the two recreational parks.

Students and staff can register to volunteer online on the CLS website. Day of Service tasks at both locations will include: edging baseball field, re-striping parking lots, repainting basketball hoop poles, cleaning playground area, repainting playground equipment, removing trash and organizing food for mealtime.

Both breakfast -- fruits, yogurt, bagels, orange juice, and water -- and lunch -- sandwiches, chips, fruits, water, and soft beverages -- will be provided. It is advised that all volunteers wear closed-toed shoes and comfortable clothing with sunscreen and bug repellent.

Volunteers are also urged to bring canned goods along with them to support the MLK Food Drive.

The Day of Service takes away titles, meaning there is no faculty, no students, just people who have sincere desire to help other people who come together on this day… They have fun and get to know each other outside of the classroom, outside of the University,” said Janice Spann-Givens, associate director in the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services. “I believe it gives the students a moment to reflect on the struggles that their parents and grandparents had to endure so that they could have the many opportunities to get the quality education they are getting here at FIU,” said Spann-Givens. “As a result they get a sense of appreciation and respect for Dr. King and his use of such peaceful means during volatile times.”

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Time off in Tuscany: A spring break escape to Europe

STEPHANIE MASON
Staff Writer

With the sharp taste of fine wine paired with authentic Italian cuisine, students can celebrate spring break bonding with Italians and the beautiful scenery of Tuscany, Italy.

From March 8 to 16, the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s Chef Michael Moran will host the second annual trip to Tuscany.

Over ten students have already registered to attend this year’s trip although there is room for a maximum of 20 attendees. The cost of the trip with round-trip airfare is $3,040. This price includes accommodations in the villa complex, roundtrip transportation, as well as the many activities.

The trip is not limited to CSHTM students. According to Myriam Angulo, the trip’s tour operator, the trip is open to FIU alumni as well.

Kyle Gibbons, a junior majoring in business, said he studied abroad in Italy in 2009 and would love to go back. “Italy is an amazing country [and] it’s always great to incorporate wine and food to take a trip to Italy,” Gibbons said. There are no courses for this trip as, according to Moran, its purpose is to simply be a fun trip for Spring Break.

However, there is much planned for the trip such as cooking with Italian chefs, embarking on wine tours, and exploring the “highlights of Tuscany,” according to Angulo, such as Siena and Florence.

“It’s living the true Tuscan experience in every way,” Angulo said.

Kristen Calvo, University alumna who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in wine and minor in Beverage Management this past May, attended Moran’s first spring break trip to Tuscany in 2012.

SELENA HUSSAIN
Staff Writer

Glittering evening gowns, philanthropic, school-spirited young women, a talent series, and a swimsuit wear round are just a few things to watch out for in the coming Miss FIU 2013 pageant.

The pageant, which is the preliminary round to the Miss Florida scholar pageant, will be held on Sunday, Jan. 20, in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre on the Biscayne Bay campus. “This is the first time we’re holding the pageant at the Biscayne Bay campus,” said Isamar Huingo, executive director of the competition. “We wanted to go back and forth between campuses to reach out to different people, like public relations majors and hospitality majors. We’re very excited to have the pageant at BBC this year.”

Melissa Vasquez, a contestant in the pageant, is equally enthusiastic.

“I’m really excited because there’s an actual audition and stage, so it will be better for not just the contestants, but the audience as well,” said Vasquez.

The Miss FIU 2013 pageant began in 2004 as a way for women in college to not only earn scholarship money, but to become well-rounded, healthy, and charitable individuals.

It is currently one of the world’s largest scholarship providers for young women.

The contest, which is modeled after the Miss America pageant, is divided into five different sections: formal interview, talent, lifestyle and fitness, evening-wear, and an on-stage question interview. Questions vary for each contestant depending on their specific platform, or charitable organization the student supports. The future Miss FIU 2013 will have to dedicate herself to her platform for one year after winning the pageant.

Gabriela Pomar, a senior majoring in criminal justice, is passionate about her platform, Women in Distress.

“[Women in Distress] is an organization concerned with domestic violence, which is something I feel very strongly about—especially since I’m a criminal justice major,” said Pomar. “I’m very passionate about women’s empowerment and hope to go further with the organization once Miss FIU is over.”

Aside from supporting a charitable cause, each contestant has to prepare herself both mentally and physically for the pageant. “I’ve been going to the gym a lot, eating healthy, watching previous Miss America pageants…” said Vasquez, who is majoring in early childhood development.

“I’m not that nervous [for the pageant] because I feel like I’m prepared. I’m excited and can’t wait to do everything we’ve practiced.”

Pomar is also eager to participate in the pageant.

“It’s a story of adventure from the very beginning,” said Pomar. “I’m sure that later on, the nerves will kick in, but right now I’m full of energy and excitement.”

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