FIU to offer only doctrate of its kind in U.S.

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Imagine having to travel to another continent to pursue studies in an academic discipline not offered in your country.

For Harry Rhea, assistant professor of criminal justice, this was a reality that he had to confront.

Although he wanted to pursue doctoral studies in international criminal justice, the only programs in his field were being proposed with none being offered in the U.S.

But that is about to change.

Starting in the fall semester of 2015, the University’s Department of Criminal Justice will be offering the nation’s first doctorate program in international crime and justice.

According to Rhea, who attended the National University of Ireland, Galway for doctoral studies, criminal justice curriculums in the United States feature a traditional approach to the discipline, offering courses that deal more with domestic affairs in the U.S., such as policing, court corrections, and juvenile justice.

His interest in international crime was piqued at the undergraduate level.

While pursuing a joint bachelor’s-master’s degree at Rutgers University, Rhea became acquainted with research topics in criminal justice that dealt with international law, genocide, and crimes against humanity, among others.

Generally, students in the U.S. who are interested in topics within the realm of international crime attend law school, according to Rhea.

However, the difference between attaining a law degree with a specialization in international crime and a doctoral degree in the same field is that law school involves preparation to practice law on the subject, not to research it and perhaps become a government advisor or academic.

While researching doctoral programs in his desired field of study, Rhea set his sights on the National University of Ireland, which was home to one of the most prolific scholars in international law, William Schabas.

When travelling to Miami on a professional visit to the University, Rhea was astonished when Lisa Stolzenberg, chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, informed him that a doctoral program in international crime and justice was being considered.

“Within one second I knew I was taking the job,” said Rhea.

Rhea admitted that he saw an opportunity to expand the traditional criminal justice curriculum, stating that he saw it as a chance not to create a specialization in undergraduate studies, but a more elaborate and focused Ph.D. program.

Some students think the new doctoral program is ideal.

“Since Miami is so diverse and FIU houses students from so many countries, I think the Ph.D. program will align perfectly with the school’s mission to develop globally aware students,” said Marie Desir, a senior biology major.

Stolzenberg agreed with the idea, stating that the city is a premier location for the Ph.D. program, considering the fact that Miami is home to an internationalized community.

Rhea mentioned that Florida is no stranger to international crimes.

According to Rhea, border states, such as Florida, are rife with crimes of forced labor, human trafficking, and sexual slavery among others.

Immigration issues are also common in the state, with many individuals seeking asylum within the peninsula’s borders.

“FIU... offers a great contribution to Miami and the state of Florida,” said Rhea, who cited that people in the area will get the chance to not only study in Miami but perhaps also apply what is being learned in the classroom within the same city without having to relocate.

However, a lot of work did go into paving the way for the program’s existence.

According to Dr. Robert Guerette, associate professor of criminal justice, discussions on the creation of the doctoral degree started around 10 years ago.

Ph.D. programs have to be approved at the state level, and the Department of Criminal Justice needed to create a proposal for a doctoral program.

“Florida doesn’t duplicate any already-existing programs in the state or country,” said Rhea.

In the effort of trying to identify something new, the idea for the program was the only one of its kind in the U.S., filling a unique niche to further the understanding of international crime and justice issues.

Various University committees, the Provost’s office, the Board of Governors of the University, and the state’s committee had to approve that the program was unique.

Lisa Stolzenberg, along with Rhea and others, spearheaded the efforts to start the program, citing that the time was right—that the program went hand-in-hand with the University’s strategic global initiative.

As the doctoral degree program was initially proposed as an online program, it was decided that the program more than deserved to be cast.

Once it was decided to be an on-site degree, it was approved.

The doctoral degree in international crime and justice will be open in the fall semester of 2015.

Regardless of one’s undergraduate training, those interested in the topics covered within the program can already start applying.

University to host deferred action seminar in GC

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Last fall the University’s chapter of Students Working for Equal Rights, an organization that seeks to garner support for the rights of undocumented individuals, celebrated FIU becoming Florida’s first public college to offer an out-of-state scholarship for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals students.

In spreading the word for the announcement last year, SWER held information sessions to inform students about the requirements for the program. This semester the organization has more information to share.

In keeping with its commitment to helping undocuments individuals, the organization seeks to provide other forms of support for those who can benefit from services such as the DACA program.

The newest development from President Barack Obama’s executive action is the Deferred Action Parental Accountability program, which serves to extend the benefits of DACA to eligible parents of lawful permanent residents and U.S. citizens, according to Claudia Galaz, president of SWER at FIU.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, those who qualify for deferred action must prove to be no risk to national security or public safety, and must abide by several rules and regulations. The DACA program essentially allows children that were brought to the country before reaching 16 years of age to remain within the U.S. for a period of time without the risk of removal proceedings from the country.

Despite the fact that the deferred action program is school grounds undocumented minors, the idea for the program to remain in the United States for a certain period of time, it does not provide a “lawful status” to those who are approved.

“Any of our students and a lot of students’ parents would qualify for deferred action programs such as DACA and DAPA if they became aware of the procedures and qualifications that Galaz said.

At this time, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is not accepting new applications for DAPA or the expanded DACA, according to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Only renewals are allowed from those that qualified in the June 2012 DACA criteria.

With these new developments, activists await the final announcement of the DACA and DAPA passing. DACA begins accepting applications on Feb. 20, 2015, and DAPA on May 20, 2015.

However, the acceptance of these bills is still pending, as Congress can still veto the proposals. Galaz, as well as all the members of FIU’s SWER, as leading activists for FIU, are currently looking at alternative solutions for these programs.

The current background is what inspired him to become an activist.

Having been born and raised in Chile, and having moved to America eight years ago, Galaz recently attained his residency. His largest concern is that those who qualify be aware of the laws currently in place and make steps to begin the DACA and DAPA.

“We don’t want people going to public notaries or immigration consultants and giving them money, thinking ‘they’ll get something in return,’ he said. “If someone needs help with this matter, they should visit a certified immigration lawyer only.”

He says these commons commonly take money from people who are simply just trying to get help with their situation. SWER will be hosting a public seminar on the topic of deferred action on Feb. 11, 2015 at the Student Center at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus at 11a.m.

This informational session will give further insight and knowledge for deferred action.

“Even though immigration reform hasn’t been possible yet, I’m grateful that the President was able to pass these laws,” said Galaz. “It’s a step closer in the right direction. We need to keep fighting for those who don’t have a voice.”
Libya oil production plummets as tribes fight to control field in south

Ubri, a ramshackle desert hub hundreds of miles from Libya’s populous cities on the Mediterranean coast, was once a favored tourist destination, a picturesque pocket of the Sahara with dramatic sand dunes, oases and volcanic mountains.

Now, however, it’s best-known for a bloody power struggle in the desert near the southern borders where Libya meets Algeria, Niger and Chad, a desolate expanse where Libya’s warring factions, unleashed by the revolt and NATO air campaign that toppled Moammar Gadhafi, battle for control of oil fields and smuggling routes.

CORRECTIONS

On page of 1 Vol. 26, Issue 35, the name of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity was misattributed to Stephanie Cruz. On page 5 of Vol. 26, Issue 35, the Student Phi Alpha starts Too Dapper Tuesday trend” was misattributed to Samantha Cruz instead of to Stephanie Cruz. On page 8 of Vol. 26, Issue 35, the quote in

Manhunt halted hours after FIU Alert released

Zapata’s escape, Southwest 127th and 137th avenues and Eighth and 18th streets were sectioned off to continue the search.

At 2:22 p.m., about an hour after the University issued its

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

The Beacon

December 28, 2015

NEWS

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Obama watches the spectacle of India on parade

There were elaborate floats and colorfully attired children dancing, ornate floral displays and lots of soldiers, tanks and missiles. Even a camel-mounted military force complete with its own marching band.

And for the first time in history, U.S. president in a place of honor to witness all of the grandeur that is India’s Republic Day, which celebrates India’s transformation from colony to independent nation and the adoption of its constitution in 1950. President Barack Obama served as the chief guest of one of this country’s most patriotic holidays, a reminder of the inextricable tie the world’s two largest democracies share despite a sometimes tense relationship.

Libya oil production plummets as tribes fight to control field in south

He said a text message was sent to its residents at 12:40 p.m. through the hall’s personal emergency text messaging system. At this time only residents were allowed to enter the building. Later, at 1:10 p.m., the hall issued another text stating the lockdown was lifted.

Do you have mild to moderate acne?

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Media priming helps and hinders freedom of speech

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The role of mass media and its different platforms like television, radio, and newspapers, has recently been at the forefront of its own exertion of freedom of speech. It is true that the media, especially the well-known news sources, drives the discourse on culture and society.

This type of influence is called priming or media priming. Priming is the duration of an issue, or the amount of time the media keeps information alive and how often they provide it.

The longer the media devotes itself to that issue, the stronger the public view will become.

The recent events of the Sony Entertainment hacking by North Korea and the horrible terrorist attack in Paris have changed the way priming affects freedom of speech, which is a journalist’s number one right.

Although freedom of speech is evidently necessary, it goes to show how unfortunate it can turn out.

The hacking of Sony was not in any way physically violent but it jeopardized the public safe and did not contribute to the distribution of hacked information.

Media coverage dedicated most of the cyberattack controversy to the release of the comedy film “The Interview,” based on the assassination of North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un. Major theater companies were fearful of terrorist attacks and only limited theaters released the movie. Shortly after the debate to release the film, media coverage noticeably died down.

A limited showing of the film was a good decision but the hackers ultimately threatened our right of expression. The lack of media coverage towards the end, in a way, kept cultural and religious humor. Printing weekly, it keeps current news alive.

The Muslim extremists who killed 12 people at Charlie Hebdo had a vendetta against freedom of expression. It built intimidation within every facet of the media from the big news sources to small magazines like Charlie Hebdo.

Freedom of speech was violently shut down as this terrorist attack gruesomely let the world know not to insult their religion, not even by drawing.

The mass media and even French citizens used this event to march the streets as a form of expression and resistance towards the attack and the importance of freedom of expression.

In this case, media priming has not ceased. The mass media is so influential that it spreads a global stereotype of a culture, thereby linking an individual to that society. Satire is clearly not taken lightly but even at the risk of violence, freedom of speech must always triumph over any obstacles.

This type of influence eventually lessens its influence on the public. Much like “The Interview,” French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo devotes itself to challenging public opinion through their political

FRANK AND IRENE: Easily Offended

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For a country that prides itself in giving everyone an equal opportunity to succeed, there hasn’t been much done recently by our government to make this a reality. However with the introduction of President Obama’s plan to offer free community college throughout the nation, there finally seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel that is student debt.

Students everywhere voiced their extreme regret for this measure by flooding multiple social media outlets with praise for this executive order, showing the country and world how big of an impact this proposal can have. If this resolution passes and is signed into law, not only will we see an increase of college graduates but we also hope to disenfranchised students who never had a chance before to pursue the American dream.

It’s important to note how big things are for students in the current system: According to the Huffington Post, 30 percent of students, including upper and middle class, drop out of highschool and never pursue a degree. The national average of student debt due to loans is approximately over $20,000 even if they did complete high school and got accepted into a public university, according to studentdebtprojection.com.

These statistics published by different researchers and news outlets do vary from state to state and change by a small margin every year but it is still very disturbing how much the system in place does not work in favor of the students. We often hear about motivated and hard working students from impoverished neighborhoods who kill themselves from student debt.

However, we need more than the student debt problem. The American Dream is not in reach for everyone, especially the well known unfortunate it can turn out.

Think of all the students who aren’t necessarily in the top percentage of their class but could still benefit from going to trade school or completing an associate degree in an effort to become more marketable for employers. By doing this, those who never believed they could rise above tough circumstances like poverty now become part of the workforce which also helps the state of our economy.

Passing this plan also helps students that are currently going through the struggle of paying for their own tuition. Usually, most people decide to attend community college first in an attempt to save some money on credit hours and then transfer over to finish the remainder of their track. If the first half of a person’s education was virtually free, we would see so many more students applying to big universities that weren’t as affordable before and we would eventually see a larger amount of people graduating at a faster rate.

The history of our University saw an initial student body population of students who were completing their third or fourth year of their degree after attending junior college. Considering how this might affect our University personally, we might see history repeating itself, leaving the general student population being comprised of individuals completing their degrees after having attended community college for free. This would go against the University’s general goal of having students go through our programs for all four years.

The proposal certainly is a solution in terms of the accessibility of education for most, but it could also act as a hindrance in the University’s mission.

In the grander scheme of things, accessibility to education for everyone trumps one university’s goals of profiting from student attendance.
Save Lolita movement sparks artistic expression and protests in Miami

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The five-ton jade Buddha exhibiting at Ichimura Miami-Japanese Garden until Feb. 8 wasn’t the only massive display at the event. A mural painted by Michael Gray, dedicated to the three-ton orca whale named Lolita, made participants gaze into the eyes of an old whale currently living in Miami Seaquarium.

“This was painted in honor of the whale’s here [Miami Seaquarium],” said Gray, 28. “She’s been here for 45 years and I painted this in honor of her situation.”

According to Gray, Lolita is the longest living whale in captivity and was captured in 1970 off of the northwestern coast in Washington when she was four years old, an age when orcas travel in herds,” said Gray. “The whole purpose here is to raise awareness and have her transferred back with her cousins in Washington.”

Gray has his mural of Lolita inside The Bodhi Festival, a world peace art and spiritual-healing exhibition sponsored by the ChakraSamvara Center, a Buddhist healing center in Miami Beach.

The festival’s main attraction is the largest Buddha statue made entirely out of jade, which according to legend is said to possess healing powers.

Gray hopes his mural will spread not only energy but raise awareness of Lolita’s situation, similar to how her story affected many on Jan. 17, when hundreds of protesters marched from the entry of Key Biscayne to Miami Seaquarium.

Many of whom, were angry over the aquarium’s decision to place Lolita in a tank that did not reach the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s size regulations.

“Ours travel in herds,” said Gray. “The whole purpose here is to raise awareness and have her transferred back with her cousins in Washington.”

Michael Gray, a freelance visual artist, web designer and working graphic designer, shows off his mural of Lolita, the longest living orca in captivity.

According to Local10 News, Miami Seaquarium has been previously fined for $7000 by the OSHA for allowing trainers to work with a killer whale without sufficient protection.

Today, its employees can say they have worked with Lolita all their life. She is that old.

The protest was called Miracle March for Lolita and according to it’s fundraising page on GoFundMe.com the march raised almost $22,000 in donations.

Gray’s mural, though not part of Miracle March, is part of the non profit organization called the Peace Mural Foundation’s Ocean US project, which serves as a platform to bring awareness to all the damage of marine life through art.

You can see Gray’s mural at the Bodhi Festival on 1101 MacArthur Causeway (Parrot Jungle). The event is open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tickets can be found at http://jadebuddhamiami.com/site/, or at the front door for $10 on the weekends and free admission on weekdays.

‘Dear White People’ film makes ‘a cultural statement’

Tessa Thompson (bottom left) leads the satirical charge in “Dear White People.”

As a cultural statement, “Dear White People” speaks volumes. Set in Winchester University, a fictional Ivy League, the film derives its title from Sam White’s satirical and racially provocative radio show.

The plot is carried by four characters that struggle with their own stereotype casted shadows. Troy Fairbanks, the student government president who secretly writes comedy and smokes marijuana.

And White, who has mixed background conflicts with her feelings of being pressured to “choose a side” for her identity. Troy Fairbanks, the student government president who secretly writes comedy and smokes marijuana.

And White, who has mixed background conflicts with her feelings of being pressured to “choose a side” for her identity.

Then there’s Colandra ‘Coco’ Connors, a student striving for the spotlight and compromises her behavior to spark racially-driven controversy in order to get attention.

Finally, Lionel Higgins, an undeclared major who wants to write for the school newspaper, but has no desire to fit into a certain group based on his racial or sexual identity.

In the film’s culmination, huge controversy erupts when the prestigious university magazine, Pastiche, decides to host a racially offensive party, which the Black Student Union refuses to tolerate.

As confrontation escalates quickly to violence, Sam White captures the outbreak on footage for her film project to describe the current state of racial relations on campus.

This film comes equipped with an incredibly topical script, as Justin Simien, the film’s director, achieves a unique plot scheme embedded with real-world context that is difficult to digest in one sitting.

The dialogue is burdened with strong racially charged tones, and the scenes speak to real situations every student has witnessed. But more than a decomposition whether it stems from social circles, other movies or profit-driven reality TV shows.

We see both the oppressor and oppressed in almost every character as they are sized with labels.

But we also see that every character contributes to the conversation of race, of which the film has done a fantastic job.

After you watch “Dear White People,” you’ll want to keep the conversation going.
LGBT professor is a positive role model

D r .  J u l i e  M a r i e  W a d e is one of many accomplished writers and poets. She has received eight Pushcart Prize nominations and in 2014, she received the To the Lighthouse Poetry Prize from the A Room of Her Own Foundation, a nonprofit organization working on behalf of women writers, for her poetry collection, "SIX."

In spring 2016, her collection of lyric essays, "Catechism: A Love Story," will be published by Noctuary Press. She also coordinates the writing on the Bay, an annual writing retreat at the Biscayne Bay Campus, which brings novelists, memoirists and poets to FIU to read from their books and engage in substantive discussions about literature and the processes of writing.

Wade is an openly lesbian professor and writes extensively about her coming out experiences, the dichotomy of gender, the epiphanic moments that helped her realize her sexual identity, the struggles of finding acceptance as a gay person, and the dissolution of friendships that often occurred after the revelation of one’s sexual orientation. She also writes a lot about love.

Coming out as gay, bisexual, lesbian or transgender is a difficult process. One fraught with the disillusionment of friendships, tense familial dialogues and the revelation of one’s sexual identity, the struggles of finding validation and more idiosyncratic, the constant need for clarification and frequent accusations of making up one’s mind about one’s sexual identity. This is the best you can do.” Wade explained.

The legal system is a bureaucratic nightmare for gay couples to navigate, often hypocritical and insensitive. For instance, many gay couples cannot put their significant other on the health insurance they’ve chosen to keep. Wade’s partner of eleven years on her health insurance plan, even after they were legally married in Washington State. Regarding this matter, Wade said, “Our legal marriage wasn’t transferred to life in Florida, as we knew theoretically it wouldn’t, but I was still dismayed that my marriage license meant nothing to my employer, and I had to own up to the state from recognizing me as a married person or granting my spouse the same benefits as a different-sex married couple. I recognize that my employer is not a member of the LGBT community at FIU and produce a column that will consists of keen analysis within the daily live’s LGBT students and faculty. You may call it their researched opinion or call it what they decided to name it; a Pride Guide. Make sure to read more and fiusm.com.

Every Wednesday Madari Pendas and Chris Portilla will go where no column has gone before. Together they will take a deeper look into the LGBT community at FIU and produce a column that will consists of keen analysis within the daily lives of LGBT students and faculty. You may call it their researched opinion or call it what they decided to name it; a Pride Guide. Make sure to read more and fiusm.com.

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RUN PANTHER, RUN
Sophomore athlete sets new heptathlon record mid-season

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Tennis opens season on high note

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The FIU Panthers faced a daunting task coming into the first serve of the 2015 season. They prepared open their schedule against the hot Liberty University Flames, who were 2-0 after two convincing 6-1 victories coming against Wofford College, and North Carolina Central University. Both of their wins came on their home courts in Lynchburg, Va., and they looked poised to take a road trip south to spoil the Florida International University’s home opener.

FIU opened doubles play without any troubles and the 1-0 lead with the easy 6-1 defeat of Emily Groenveld and Valerie Thong by Nina Nagode and Carlotta Orlando. Unfortunately, the Panthers would follow up the win by dropping the next two matches. The first loss came when Vana Koroleva and Nenna Caluk lost 6-2 to the pair of Maria Khval and Brittany Yeng. The second was when Valentina Briceno and Kaitlin Brozovich came up short against Belen Rivera and Evangeline Crist.

With FIU going down to LU in the doubles matches, the home team went into singles play with a 1-0 deficit to overcome, although it didn’t take long for the ground to be made up as senior Vana Koroleva (No. 1) topped Mariely Hassey 6-1 and 6-3, knotting things up at 1, where junior Carlotta Orlando (No. 2) put FIU in the lead with her win over Belen Rivera. The Lady Flames weren’t going without a fight, as Nicola Weilman brought the score back to even at 2-2 by defeating FIU sophomore Valentina Briceno (No. 6) 6-2, and 6-2.

Florida International reclaimed the lead with the defeat of Maria Khval 6-3, and 6-2 at the hands of sophomore Nina Nagode (No. 4). The Liberty, no surprise, came back as junior Kaitlin Brozovich (No. 5) dropped a close match to Evangeline Crist 6-3 and 7-5, tying the score at 3. Nenna Caluk (No. 3) stepped back onto the court against Emily Groenveld with a shot at redemption from losing in her doubles match earlier in the day. She secured the home-opener win for FIU with the 7-6(3) and 7-6(4) victory.

The Panthers look to keep a good thing going as they welcome the Stetson University Hatters on Friday, Jan. 30. First serve is to come at noon on the home court of the undefeated FIU Panthers.
Rec center expansion plans are underway

REC CENTER, PAGE 1

Whoever is concerned about the gym being closed during the construction time frame shouldn’t be worried because the rec center will be 100 percent fully operating during the expansion.

The current Rec Center building was opened in 2005 and, at the time, was built for 27,000 students. That number has now doubled. Even with the opening in 2005 the construction of the building was only the beginning.

Everyone likes how Parkview looks and it was a great quality team. We are expecting that same kind of quality on the expansion.

“The building was first built it was planned as phase one,” Frye said. “A few years ago we went back to the original architects for this building and asked them to put together a vision plan of how the building would expand. They produced some drawings for us which we used to try and capture what the actual building could look like.”

The overall expansion of the Rec Center will be about 9,000 square feet of fitness space that includes free weights and cardio spaces.

Another addition to the Rec Center that absolutely will be welcomed with open arms is a new three court basketball gymnasium that will go along with the two courts that are already there.

With the new courts, more basketball games can be played involving more students and eliminating long waits to play in the next game.

Three group fitness areas will be added to the second floor of the new Rec Center. One will be a dedicated spinning room, the other will be a matted room for martial arts groups, and the third will be a small group fitness room.

The small group fitness room is a great way to get six to eight of your friends together and work as a team doing exercises led by a trainer.

Another exciting addition is there will be one racquet ball court and one convertible squash and racquetball court.

The last noticeable change that will be made is the expansion of the men’s and women’s locker room.

All this construction will be taking place on the south side of the gym where the parking lot of the health center is today.

There is a lot to look forward in the expansion of the Rec Center which is continuing the trend the university is trying to show as a growing school and community.

Once this project is complete, it will capture the attention of students who normally don’t visit the Rec Center. This is because the way the new part of the gym will look is being planned by the same architects who designed the Parkview dorms.

Frye has all the confidence in the architects and builders for the expansion after seeing them build the Parkview dorms.

“Everyone likes how Parkview looks and it was a great quality team,” Frye said. “We are expecting that same kind of quality on the expansion.”

Robert Frye
Director
Recreation Services

The FIU Recreation Center will soon begin updates and renovations to better help the students who use their

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University crowns Mr. and Miss FIU 2015

On the right, Miss FIU 2014 Andrea Mirabal puts on her crown as she prepares to host Mr. and Miss FIU on Saturday, Jan. 24. On the bottom left, the Mr. FIU contestants line up during the Mr. FIU pageant. On the top left, Mr. FIU contestant Joannier Pinales prepares for the pageant backstage.

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While the world had their eyes fixed on the U.S. Century Bank Arena for the Miss Universe Pageant, the University hosted its own students for the Miss and Mr. FIU Scholarship Pageant.

On Saturday, the day before the Miss Universe pageant, eight women and eight men showcased their talents and finesse at the Biscayne Bay Campus’ Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre. Tereya Whittaker, a sophomore broadcast media major, won Miss FIU; and Michael Cabral, a senior majoring in management information systems, was crowned Mr. FIU.

Whittaker received a $1500 scholarship and Cabral received a $500 scholarship. Miss FIU is part of the Miss America organization and will go on to participate in future events and competitions. Louis Macias, the assistant director for the Multicultural Programs and Services office and executive director for Mr. and Miss FIU says this is the first year the Mr. FIU winner received a scholarship.

“We want to try and grow as an organization,” said Macias, the first time executive director. “We’re hoping that it gains popularity.”

The Miss Universe Pageant attracted negative attention— from the community, students and faculty— for spending University money for what many are calling crass use of funds. Macias says the Mr. and Miss FIU competition is, however, an empowering experience based on the “well-roundedness” of students contestants.

“Physical beauty is heavily weighted with the Miss USA [pageant],” Macias said. He adds that the talent and interview portion hold more weight than lifestyle and fitness. “That says something about what’s valued.” The contestants agree.

“Physical beauty is heavily weighted with the Miss USA [pageant].”
Louis Macias
Assistant Director Multicultural Programs and Services

Yeferson Acosta, a senior majoring in psychology, says he entered the competition to connect and build with new people. Acosta, who is involved with Baptist Collegiate Ministry on campus, says he wants to encourage students to be more proactive during their college years.

“It’s a bit intimidating for students to get involved,” Acosta said. Acosta was one of the founding members of BCM at FIU, and helped the organization grow to 115 members. He says personal engagement can help break the ice for shy or unengaged students. “Personal invitations is much better than social media. [Social Media] is important too, but personal invitations will always get students to join organizations and becoming active on campus.”

Macias said each contestant, like Acosta, had character and aspirations, but in choosing a winner, they looked for the most “dynamic” individual who could “think on their feet.”

In March, the University will host their annual Torch Awards where Miss FIU will be greeting donors and working directly with the University president Mark B. Rosenberg. In June, Miss FIU will go on to represent the University in Miss Florida.

“We needed someone who is ready for all that,” Macias said.

Swimming and diving claims first ever win against FGCU

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The women’s swimming and diving team defeated Florida Gulf Coast University 167-133 in the ladies’ last home meet of the season.

The seniors, who were honored before the game, were represented well by Johanna Gustafsdottir as she claimed first place in the 200 freestyle, the 200 breaststroke, and the 200 individual medley.

Junior Valerie Inghels also touched the wall first in the 200 butterfly in 2:03.28. The freshmen also swam well in their seniors’ last regular season competition at Biscayne Bay.

Freshman Kyna Pereira earned two first place finishes, once in the 1000 freestyle with a pool record of 10:09.80, and again in the 500 freestyle with 5:01.42.

Freshman Silvia Scalia also bested the other swimmers once in the 200 backstroke with a mark of 2:00.75.

The Panthers’ last event of the meet, the 400 freestyle relay, highlighted a successful outing for the Panthers; they set a pool record of 3:29.05.

Florida Atlantic University will host the Panthers next Friday, Jan. 30 in Boca Raton. The women will have one more meet the next day at the University of Miami before the Conference USA Championships begin on Wednesday Feb. 18.