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Yoani Sanchez spreads message of courage

MARIELLA ROQUE  
Staff Writer

The closed doors of Cuba and its people have been cracked open by Yoani Sanchez. Sanchez stepped on U.S. territory on Thursday, March 28 and has an itinerary that includes a visit to the University today, April 1, where she will also be awarded the University’s Medallion of Courage.

Sanchez rose to national fame with her blog “Generation Y” that receives 14 million hits a month and is translated into 17 languages.

Cuban Research Institute Director Jorge Duany said Sanchez is an accomplished writer who uses all kinds of literary and rhetoric strategies to convey her messages—messages on topics such as freedom of speech, politics and everyday life of Cubans.

Sanchez will speak on the topics of social media and Cuba. “Her visit is going to promote exchanges of ideas between Cubans, particularly in South Florida,” Duany said. “It will be an opportunity to be open and frank about difficult topics.”

Sanchez, 32, reunited with her family when she arrived at Miami International Airport, and she expressed via Twitter that her and her sister had been separated for two years with 90 miles in between them, which is the “drama” a lot of Cuban families go through.

Sanchez also writes of the issue of family separation in “Generation Y.” “Most Cubans sympathize with Yoani’s very honest and very personal criticism of the lack of freedom in Cuba,” Duany said. “That’s what she stands for.”

Sanchez has been awarded the Ortega y Gasset Prize for Journalism, the Maria Moors Cabot Prize, the World Press Freedom Hero and the Prince Claus Award. In 2012, she was among the top 10 most influential Ibero American Intellectuals by Foreign Policy magazine.

Sanchez was unable to claim these awards because the Cuban government refused to let her leave the island until recently receiving permission to leave in

SEE SANCHEZ, PAGE 2

A controversial topic with a matching title

VINSON PRESSLEY  
Staff Writer

When a student hears the phrase “slut walk,” the initial reaction may be shock or to take offense to the phrase. But, there is a purpose behind the words.

On April 3, the National Organization for Women at FIU will organize a “Slut Walk” to spread awareness about the many forms of violence against women. The walk will begin at 4:30 p.m. at the Graham Center Fountains at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus.

Gabriela Bonilla, president of NOW said the purpose of this event is to call to action an end to rape culture, victim blaming and sexual violence.

“We teach people ‘don’t get raped’ instead of ‘not to rape,’” Bonilla said.

Bonilla said the latter philosophy should be embraced, encouraging people not to rape or harm others; this philosophy differs because it holds the perpetrator accountable for their violent acts, not the victim; unfortunately, the latter philosophy is not always applied to survivors of traumatic experiences.

Bonilla said the name of the movement resulted from an incident where a member of the Toronto Police department during a discussion with students that “women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized.”

Some students find the practice of victim-blaming appalling and inappropriate.

“Doesn’t matter what you wear, doesn’t give [anyone] the right to sexually harass a person,” said Janina Ordonez, president of FIU Students for Justice in Africa.

Sophomore social work major Yoannie Corbil said that society places the blame on the wrong person and the people who commit these acts are not held responsible for their actions.

“[There’s] a double standard in which women get usually blamed for a lot of things,” Corbil said. “Although Corbil is in favor of the movement, she is not a fan of the name “Slut Walk.”

Corbil said the title of the movement should have positive connotations and that they should not “stoop to the officer’s level.”

Sabrina O’Keefe, assistant director for the Center for Leadership and Service at Biscayne Bay Campus, said the title could be hurtful because it could evoke emotions, stereotypes or offend some people who hear initially hear the phrase “slut-walk.”

However, O’Keefe did say the title of the movement can also be helpful because since the term “slut” has the ability to grab attention and may urge people to ask for an explanation of why the movement has that title, opening the door to a dialogue and spreading awareness about violence against women.

The opinions of the title of the movement may vary, but the mission of the movement and organizations like NOW promote female empowerment and advocate against rape, sexual assault and domestic violence.
Student Media executives appointed

FISU Staff

Last week the Student Media Board appointed the Student Media executives who will start in their positions summer 2013. Brandon Wise was appointed as editor-in-chief of The Beacon, Luis Bolanos as FISU.com director and Kyle Pineda as general manager of WRGP Radiate FM.

Current editor-in-chief, Philippe Buteau, will maintain his position until the end of spring semester. “This was a good year as editor,” said Buteau. “I’m happy with what me and my editors did with the paper, and I hope the next editor and his staff follow the vision.” Wise expressed his excitement for the semester to come. “We have been working extremely hard to prepare for next year,” Wise said. “We have put out great content throughout the semester and will continue next year. Over the next few weeks The Beacon will conduct interviews for its editorial board.

Sanchez, Page 1

February, following the relaxing of strict travel regulations in Cuba. “You’re one person if she’ll be allowed to go back to Cuba or what kind of consequences this step will have on her and her family,” Duany said.

“She’s a brave woman.” Sanchez has also published two books: “Cuba Libre/Havana Real,” a collection of her blog posts, and “Word Press: A Blog for Speaking to the World,” a manual explaining how to set up a Wordpress blog.

KING, PAGE 1

The nonconfrontational and laid-back style of interviewing that King has mastered is something that many people have grown to admire, particularly students studying journalism. However, although King has been involved in journalism throughout his entire life, he doesn’t consider it “work.”

“You know who works? Bus drivers work. Astronauts work... Street cleaners work. Cops work. Journalists? I mon. You sit down. They pay you. You cover an event, you ask questions, then you get to tell people about it. It’s gotta be the world’s greatest job,” said King.

King’s love for journalism and talking to people has led him to incredible achievements and awards, including the George Foster Peabody Award for Excellence in Broadcasting and the News and Documentary Emmy Award for Outstanding Interview/Interviewer.

King advises students that succeeding in journalism is something that requires skill, heart and perseverance.

“If you have talent, you will make it if you really want to make it. You can’t give up. You’ll get turned down. When I came here, I knocked on doors of radio stations and they told me to leave,” King said. “But I wanted it so much. You have to have the tools, but [like] Woody Allen said, showing up is 80 percent of it.”

“When asked whether or not he thinks Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks are helping or hindering the current state of journalism, King has two minds.

“I think it’s a mixed bag. There’s a lot of good in all the information we have, but the bad is there’s a lot of misinformation. Bad information. But you can’t stop the tide,” King said.

“I liked it better when the information was more accurate than it is today. But, it is what it is. I love my daily newspapers. I like the feel of a newspaper. I like newspaper ink on my fingers. I’d be lost without The New York Times,” said King.

Although King’s reign on CNN with “Larry King Live” ended in 2010, he is staying current with “Larry King Now,” his talk show web series. King is also active on Twitter and Facebook. If anyone is wondering whether or not his Twitter account is really Larry King, there is no need to question the blue check mark.

“My Twitter account is mine,” said King. “I dictate everything that’s said, but I don’t type it in myself.”

While King’s 25 years on CNN are over, there is much to look forward to with “Larry King Now,” and King is content.

“I raised children, I go to movies, I go to theatre, I go to ball games and I try to stay young. I have children, and that will keep you young. I have a full life,” said King.

Jorge Duany Director Cuban Research Institute

Most Cubans sympathize with Yoani’s very honest and very personal criticism of the lack of freedom in Cuba. That’s what she stands for.

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SANCHEZ, PAGE 1

Duany noted that Sanchez is considering starting her own digital magazine in Cuba.

“If I’m extremely excited, even though I won’t be able to see her in person,” said Christina Rivera, sophomore computer science major. “I’ll definitely be watching on TV.”

The event will be broadcast live on Univision, Univision Radio and via live webcast available on the University website.

“For students, it’s going to be a great opportunity to see a very important public figure,” Duany said. “She represents a whole generation and a large portion of Cuban society that doesn’t have a say.”
Getting creative with the University’s curriculum

ASHLEY VALENTIN - Staff Writer

I found out the University is going to start an entrepreneurship class in fall 2014. The addition of such an important course in the curriculum reminded me of the University’s more relaxed courses to make up for something that we could do instead of buying croqueta every week.

The course would help us prepare for a very serious disaster. My time and my Pell Grant money would be well spent. On a more serious note, we need classes on safety. I’m slightly appalled that FIU wouldn’t take the needs of the students seriously enough to help us prepare for a very serious disaster. This is why I’m proposing ZOM 3386 - Zombie Apocalypse Training. The course would help students hone their survival skills like: hunting, fishing, hand-to-hand combat, treating wounds, how to distinguish zombie types, and raising moral questions such as, “Are zombies people, too?” And once a week we can watch the TV show “The Walking Dead” and play the video game “Plants vs. Zombies” to help us gain useful real world experience. When the zombies attack, every student in the class would be that one friend who could successfully lead a survival group to safety.

These classes would enrich our learning experiences and help every student to be successful outside of the confines of our school walls.

The Youth Fair: fun time, hellish traffic

NERLYN GALAN - Contributing Writer

The Youth Fair always brought me a little nostalgia with its games, carnival shows, concerts, elephant ears, candy apples, cotton candy and tons of rides including the iconic Ferris wheel. Each year the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition comes to town settling in its usual spot next to the Modesto Maidique campus bringing with it the usual, slightly overpriced, family friendly entertainment and attractions.

This attraction, while it may bring joy to many people and the general public, gives plenty of headaches to University students. As we all know, the majority of our student body commutes, so traffic and parking in and around MMC are pretty rough on a normal schedule.

When the fair shows up, they’re impossible. The number of cars increases drastically, all of them trying to make it to the fair parking next to the stadium. So much so that extra police officers are called in to direct the flow of traffic to, from, and around the fair as well as the pedestrians that are crossing the streets and walkways.

Sure if you have classes in the morning you have no problem, but if you come to school or are leaving anytime after 6 p.m. expect to be at least 20 minutes late to wherever you’re going. A student told me how it took her nearly an hour and a half to take the exit ramp off the turnpike into the school. I was stuck for at least an hour just trying to get out of campus. It was ridiculous.

While the fairgrounds did have extensive parking in the open field, eventually the whole area became a sea of cars, which you could see perfectly from some of the taller attractions at the fair. When that happens, the University allows the fairgoers to park on campus without any problems. This causes even more traffic and congestion within our own school roadways.

Adding to the problem is the fact that when the fair arrives the University closes down the parking lot next to the music building making it even harder for students to find a spot. I find that to be just a little unfair. Especially when you take into account that our University doesn’t own or sponsor any part of the Youth Fair. The county and the mayor denied us ownership of the land, and yet here we are stuck with this downtown of fair-goers. Why should our students, faculty, staff and visitors suffer because Miami-Dade couldn’t find an area with more available parking?

So while the fair might be a good thing for the community and great thing for the economy, it’s not such a fun thing for a student dealing with the increase of traffic and the parking issues it brings.

To be quite honest, I had plenty of fun when I went the other day but I’m glad it’s over so I can finally find some parking.
Seniors producing shows for final semester projects

ALFREDO APARICIO
Staff Writer

For Mariana Vallejo, her senior project is the defining moment of her years as a theater student. Embodied in La Isla Catalina in her piece called “Huellas,” Vallejo said the project taught her not to be so hard on herself and “so final about things.”

“I used to write my drafts like they were the final ones and then realized during the rehearsals, a line or action had to be changed,” Vallejo said. “It made me realize that, while I have a lot of ability to change everything, it can’t be about age. It has to be about what fits the greater need of my show.”

Vallejo is one of 12 seniors who will explore the final frontier of their education at the Department of Theatre’s BFA performance program by being, writing, directing and producing their own 30 minute one-person shows for their senior projects at the end of their final semester.

The process begins with choosing a person the project will be based on, the key is that this person has to have existed.

“This makes sense because part of the idea of theatre is to take an idea and information and translate them into the language of the stage,” said Michael Yawney, assistant professor in the theater department. “If you use someone who’s fictional, half the work is done for you because their whole life is exciting. The challenge is to take someone from the real world and find the monstrosity of life speak on stage. That’s more of an achievement.”

Zakiya Markland, whose project, “Color Me Blue,” is based on Josephine Baker, stresses that the responsibility to make her character something other than “At Last” James’ most famous song.

“She’s a big name, and when ever I mention her people tell me they love ‘At Last’ but to me she’s someone that should be acknowledged for more than she was,” Perez said. “There’s something about every person that is us and I think that’s something that’s really interesting for artists and for people to come and see.”

Choosing James was not a task that came easy for Perez, however, and as the project has evolved Perez has become more protective of her work.

“She kept coming back to me to the point where I was like ‘yes I’ll do it’ but at the time I didn’t understand why,” Perez said. “Now, I feel like had to tell her story and show people discover things about her you can’t look up on Wikipedia. She was someone I thought I knew but has been completely different from what I thought.”

For Tariata Pandiani, whose project “(estoy) Viva” will be based on artist Frida Kahlo, hopes those who attend realize the immense amounts of hard work that has gone into preparing these projects.

“Us as actors are making the editorial decisions, building costumes, choosing when to input video and sound, building the design and I think it reflect the intention of the program that has always wanted us to learn beyond the scope of the act,” Pandiani said. “They will see that each of us are responsible for many other things besides being actors.”

Pandiani’s biggest challenge when working on her project was noticing her own flaws while on stage by herself. “Because it’s a solo performance, you become more aware of everything and it highlights all the traps and things you’ve been told from the beginning not to do. The basic stuff I still can’t do like walking and saying your line because you’re out of practice so you have to relearn some things.”

Despite all the hard work and adjustments and trials, Dana Chavez, whose project is based on Typhoid Mary and entitled, “Yum, Yum, Sick,” has one final piece of advice.

“You get what you give,” Chavez said. “What you put into the project, the more you care, the better it will be.”

Messy Francisus, whose project, “Inside My Head,” is based on Helen Keller, was not available for an interview.

ALFREDO APARICIO /The Beacon

Overfishing causes marine ecosystem disruption

DANIEL URIA
Staff Writer

The ocean is home to a complex ecosystem that contains many diverse creatures. But this ecosystem is also fragile, and according to members of the Marine Science Program it faces serious threats from humans in the form of overfishing.

Overfishing refers to the practice of catching marine species faster than they are able to reproduce. Over time the removal of these species through overfishing causes a disruption in the marine ecosystem.

According to Kevin Boswell, a fisheries ecologist and assistant professor with the Marine Science Program, the most common form of disturbance comes from the removal of the top predator.

“The classic case is the trophic cascade, whereby removing the upper trophic level, those below are actually impacted and can impart substantial shifts in lower trophic level,” he said.

Michael Heithaus, an associate professor of the Department of Biological Sciences has experienced this type of disturbance in his studies with sharks. The shark population has been declining rapidly in recent years due to rampant overfishing.

“As top predators, sharks can keep populations of their prey in check,” he said. “If sharks disappear, the numbers of their prey can go way up and then they over-consume their foods and the whole ecosystem could be disrupted.”

He cites his studies with tiger sharks in Australia’s Shark Bay as an example. “If we lose tiger sharks, sea cows and sea turtles might eat too much sea grass and the system could collapse. Without enough sea grass there won’t be places for small fish, shrimps and crabs to grow up – that would mean less there for tuna and the whole ecosystem.”

Aside from sharks that Boswell says are, “certainly among the top of the list of concern for species experiencing overfishing,” he also said that regional species such as blue fin tuna and gulf red snapper and certain groupers are also victims of overfishing.

Overfishing occurs all over the world for a variety of different reasons. In the case of sharks, Heithaus said, in Asia they are fished for a delicacy known as shark fin soup that is in high demand.

“The increasing demand for fins to be used in shark fin soup, as well as for meat, has led to increasing pressure on shark populations,” Heithaus said.

Boswell says that the largest contributor to overfishing is the lack of sustainable practices. The managers and stakeholders are seeking to curb the intake of shark fin soup and the dish is no longer served at official Chinese banquets.

And with a move towards more responsible fishing practices it is conceivable that the effects of overfishing can be erased or at the very least minimized.

“There is quite a bit of compelling evidence that appropriate management strategies can act to sustain populations and recover populations with a reasonable level of harvest,” Boswell said. “It takes the willful buy in of the managers, stakeholders, and public. Can you reverse its effects? Maybe. Can we observe noticeable changes in the marine ecosystem? Yes indeed.”

If sharks disappear, the numbers of their prey can go way up and then they over-consume their foods and the whole ecosystem could be disrupted.

Mariana Vallejo
Senior Bacheral of fine arts performance students at the Department of Theatre will bring to life various historical figures for two weeks as part of their senior projects.

“Inside My Head”, is based on Helen Keller, and entitled, “Yum, Yum, Sick,” has one final piece of advice.

“You get what you give,” Chavez said. “What you put into the project, the more you care, the better it will be.”

Messy Francisus, whose project, “Inside My Head,” is based on Helen Keller, was not available for an interview.

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Does fashion need to have a guidebook for political correctness? I’ve been pondering this question for a while now. It’s one that is hard to approach for me especially as I feel like I am someone that is on the outside looking in. By that I mean that I am from the foothills of North Carolina and I have no real culture that I consider myself to be a part of outside of my mixed Western European heritage.

A few months ago I became friends with a girl named Anam who is originally from Tanzania. I was fascinated by her traditional garments and she was generous enough to give me a few pieces. I see many girls around FIU campus wearing these long scarves as hijabs, yet my friend does not, even though she follows the religion Islam.

I became curious and asked her if it was a choice or if people’s parents make them wear it? She told me that it was a choice and that from time to time she will wear hers but uses it more as a fashion accessory that also is revealing her spiritual beliefs.

I myself have always wanted to wear scarves in these same styles but have never wanted to be seen as wearing it frivolously or disrespectfully and thus have not. Strangely I have no issue wearing other traditionally rooted garments but when it comes to wrapping my head with a scarf I feel like I am trespassing on taboo territory. Perhaps because the hijab is such a major symbol for the religion of Islam, my lack of belief makes the wearing of a hijab style feel insulting. Nevertheless, I still love the style and understand its history and think it is beautiful and the history behind its meanings is beautiful. Art history major Jackie Velken commented on the subject saying, “I know a lot of girls that wear scarves in the style of hijabs that aren’t from that culture and it’s really hard to say because I think I lack a knowledge of knowledge and artistic expression can change the way the piece is interpreted.” With Google at our fingertips in today’s day and age it is unacceptable to claim ignorance. Maybe you don’t know what you bought into when you purchased that tribal print skirt but if you are confronted with the knowledge of its deeper historical roots one day it is your job to read more into. To understand what you are presenting yourself as and from there you can understand what you are doing differently with it and if you’re ok with that.

Fashion is a serious and extremely complex industry. It can be looked at from multiple perspectives with extreme differences in meaning ranging from surface frivolity to cultural and individual insight. It is clearly an industry of both which makes it all the more challenging sometimes to understand or fully accept. The frivolousness of fashion makes it easy for us to look past the ways it could be mocking or poking fun at religions or cultures.

So whether you are wearing bindi jewelry, scarves wrapped around your head, tribal prints or logo sweaters it’s important to understand its history so as not to reinforce the frivolous and trivial reputation fashion already has.

I believe morality can exist in fashion; we just have to be willing to put in the research hours.

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Volleyball player shines on and off the sand

Daniel Brey Contributing Writer

Her presence is undoubt-
edly noticeable, her demeanor unique.
Junior Maryna Samoday is a rare breed of sand volleyball player.

What separates Samoday from the average athlete is not her six-foot one inch frame, or even her bone-chilling kill, it is her attitude.

The manner in which Samoday conducts herself within the confines of the sand courts and in the classroom is what really highlights her various attributes.

"Maryna is such a great volleyball player," sand volleyball head coach Rita Buck-Crockett said. "She is so disciplined inside and outside the classroom."

Samoday, a native of Sumy, Ukraine, has been playing volleyball, both indoor and sand, since she could stand on two legs.

"I have been playing volleyball my entire life," Samoday said. "I think that is when I began to play volleyball, it is sometimes very difficult to be away from him."

Soraya has also influenced another close individual in Maryna’s life, her brother, Valeriy Samoday Jr. Samoday Jr., a two-time under-21 sand volleyball world champion, grew up with Maryna in Ukraine, and both continue to have a sister-brother relationship that could only be described as inseparable.

On Maryna’s 20th birthday, in a phone call, Valeriy surprised her sister with a rather permanent method to solidify their relationship.

“When my brother surprised me with a tattoo of our initials together I started to cry,” Samoday said. “I was never a fan of tattoos, but it meant a lot to me that he would do that, so when I arrived home in Ukraine I got a tattoo as well.”

Not only does Samoday have an air-tight bond with her family in Ukraine, but even in Miami she has managed to find a family contrived of her sand volleyball teammates, and women’s basketball player Marita Davydova.

“We are like a family,” Samoday said. “Marita and I have a really great bond because we are both from Europe. “As for the team, they really support me, and I feel that [Miami] is my home away from home.”

Although Miami may provide a temporary home for the sand volleyball superstar, Samoday noted that her mother’s cooking far surpassed any “arroz con pollo” or “biste” Miami had to offer.

“Don’t get me wrong, I like Miami food,” Samoday said. “But my mother’s cooking is just so good.”

Before taking her talents to FIU, Samoday attended Seminole State College in Tallahassee, Fla. where she earned All-Region recognition in 2010, and led the Trojans to a 35-5 record in her final year at the institution.

After the end of her sophomore year at SSC, Samoday was heavily recruited by various schools including Louisiana State University, Oregon State University, and Arizona State University.

Maryna finally decided to dock in South Beach to be a part of the inaugural season of FIU sand volleyball.

Her decision to come to FIU was a no-brainer, said Samoday, once the University hired the great Olympic silver medalist Buck-Crockett to become head coach.

“The main reason I came to FIU was because of Rita Buck-Crockett,” Samoday said. “I felt that she would give me the best coaching, being that she is very knowledgeable, and a former player.”

Her career at FIU began with a sudden speed bump, which sidelined her for the 2012-2013 indoor volleyball season with a serious elbow contusion.

Since the injury, Samoday has played her best volleyball of her sand volleyball career.

Samoday has put quite a show in her first year at FIU, managing to win all of her doubles matches this season except for a lone loss coming against her teammates Kate Stepanova and Ksenia Sukhareva in the Hawaii tournament finals.

“I feel that I have played well so far this season,” Samoday said. “My teammates, especially my duals partner Jessica [Mendosa], have really been the reason for my success.”

Sports@fiusm.com

Tennis players adjust from clay to hard courts

Steven Rowell Contributing Writer

As if the foreign players on the tennis team didn’t already have to worry about the culture shock when coming to Miami, they also had to deal with a radical change in the courts they played on.

In Europe, where six of the tennis players hail from, courts tend to be red clay courts. That’s a stark contrast to the hard concrete courts in the U.S. and on the FIU courts.

Players such as junior Giulietta Boha, freshmen Carolina Orlando, and Aleksandra Trifunovic recall playing the majority of their tennis on clay courts back home in Europe.

Head Coach Katarina Petrovic recalls playing on grass and clay courts when she was living in Serbia.

“In Serbia, I grew up playing on clay courts but the best results I ever had were on hard courts and on grass courts,” Petrovic said.

Whether playing on concrete courts or on red clay courts, the type of surface has an impact on how players have to play and the approach and style they need to have.

Boha said that red clay courts slow down the game because the ball bounces slower with more spin, causing a player to run more and extend rallies.

“You have to be better conditioned since the points are longer and you are able to run more,” Orlando said. “Also on clay courts usually the player stays back towards the baseline the whole time.”

Concrete courts, however, speed up the ball and make it difficult to catch balls that hit the corner, Orlando said.

According to Petrovic, Trifunovic, Boha, and Orlando, who are all European natives, the biggest difference in the style of play from clay courts and hard courts is that on clay courts, players tend to be more defensive while on hard courts players are forced to be more aggressive.

With the different challenges and the different style of play each court has, there come the adjustments Boha, Trifunovic, and Orlando needed to make when coming to FIU to play college tennis.

“Of course it is a big difference and you have to get used to it, you will probably need one or two weeks to get used to hard court,” Boha said. “When I got here, it took getting used to. I had to make sure I had a good serve and a good spin ball.”

“Never practiced in Italy on the hard court, so here is the first time I really practice and play on the hard court,” Orlando said.

“The first week I got here it was tough because I couldn’t move a lot but working with the coaches really helped me get better.”

Orlando said she plays better on clay courts than hard courts, but Petrovic downplays that idea and thinks she can play well on any court.

Petrovic says that it is easier to adjust from clay courts to hard courts than from hard courts to clay courts, but that it’s nothing any college player can’t handle.

“It’s only a matter of adjustment and any good tennis player can play good no matter the type of court,” Petrovic said. “For these girls, I think the bigger adjustments are getting used to going to classes, and being ready for practice.”

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Redshirt sophomore wide receiver Clinton Taylor participates in pass and catch drills last Thursday during the fifth of 15 practice sessions of spring football.

Hauling it in

Rain delays are a thing of the past, but otherwise, Marlins home games this season will be a lot like the old days.

That means no waiting for hot dogs, modest competition for foul balls and lots of appeal for folks who like to be by themselves.

As the Miami Marlins begin their second year in a futuristic, retractable-roof stadium that was supposed to transform the franchise, they’re returning to the past. A small payroll will likely ensure a familiar combination: few spectators and plenty of losses.

The latest roster sell-off angered fans who expected the team to be more competitive financially in its new home. Instead, after a brief spending splurge, owner Jeffrey Loria ordered the payroll reduced this year to about $40 million — second-smallest in the majors — from $90 million in 2012.

As a result, the roster is a mix of young, unproven players and thirtysomething veterans trying to stave off retirement, such as outfielder Juan Pierre. He was with the Marlins when they won the 2003 World Series and subsequently dismantled, so he has performed for swaths of empty seats before.

“The front office, whatever they did with the fans, that’s something they’re going to have to mend,” Pierre said. “And I know how it goes in Florida. If you win, fans will come out. Usually. ‘All we can do is control how we go about our business on the field, and hopefully the city will get behind us, especially a bunch of young guys going out and busting their butt every day.”

The best of the young guys do bear watching. There’s Giancarlo Stanton, the reigning NL slugging champion at age 23. Donovan Solano, 25, and Adeiny Hechavarria, 23, form a promising double-play combination. Closer Steve Cishek, 26, won saves for his pitching in the World Baseball Classic. Starting pitchers Jacob Turner, 21, Henderson Alvarez, 22, and Nathan Eovaldi, 23, are touted as potential fixtures for years to come.

And then there’s right-hander Jose Fernandez, 20, and outfielder Christian Yelich, 21, who will begin the season in Double-A but are top prospects likely to join the Marlins by summer.

That might not be enough to prevent a 100-loss season, though.

Last year, the additions of manager Ozzie Guillen and All-Stars Jose Reyes, Mark Buehrle and Heath Bell made the Marlins the buzz of baseball. Then the team went 69-93 and finished last in the NL East.

Reyes, Buehrle, Bell and Guillen are all gone, as are 2009 NL batting champion Hanley Ramirez and 2010 NL ERA leader Josh Johnson.

“It kind of stinks for fans,” Pierre said, “because you do get attached to a player, and they trade him away for business purposes. Fans don’t want to hear that. But these guys who own the team are businessmen first.”

Loria waged a brief, widely mocked public relations campaign at the start of spring training, saying the Marlins needed to hit the restart button, so he ordered the breakup of a losing team going nowhere.

A year ago, the Marlins’ baseball people thought they had assembled a playoff-caliber team. What do they anticipate in 2013?

“They’re 0 for their last 1, because they said we weren’t going to lose 93 games last year,” team president David Samson said. “Last year they said, ‘Here are the five things that have to happen and we’re a very good team.’ Those five things didn’t happen.
Laughing the end of the semester away

JENNIFER SANS
Contributing Writer

April begins the end of the semester countdown and the Student Programming Council knows students deserve a good laugh.

SPC will host a comedy show on Thursday, April 11 at 7 p.m. in the Mary Anne Wolfe Theater at Biscayne Bay Campus.

Sofia Bodniza, SPC comedy director at BBC, organized this and last semester’s comedy show. The comedy show will feature comedian Chello Davis, who performed last semester as host, stand-up comedian and actor, Gary Owen. Owen has been featured in movies such as Thunk Like a Man and Daddy Day Care, and in the television series, House of Payne.

“We definitely had to bring back Chello Davis to perform again for this show because everyone was talking about how much they loved him as host,” said Bodniza.

Bodniza not only organized this show, but she is also going to perform as host, introducing Davis and Owen to the stage while also doing some of her own stand-up.

“I’ve got some jokes written out. I want to go into comedy and acting so doing this event is exciting for me,” said Bodniza.

There will also be students featured in other shows, including the FIU Live Concert on Friday, April 12. Students are looking forward to the laughs the comedians’ acts will bring, some for the second time.

“Gary Owen is so funny,” said Larry Prince, freshman sociology major.

Tamicha Roger, undecided junior, said, “last semester’s show was really funny, I can’t wait to go to this show, as well. I like Davis’ type of humor and I’m excited to see Gary Owen.”