Florida legislation proposes 6 percent increase to tuition

MIARIELLA ROQUE
Staff Writer

While members of the Florida legislature are considering a 6 percent tuition increase, members of the University’s administration are not considering an increase at all. The House’s budget currently recommends a mandated 6 percent increase, but it is yet to be seen whether the Senate will agree to the increase or make a different decision.

According to Steve Sauls, the University’s vice president of Governmental Relations, University students will only experience the legislature’s tuition increase and not one from the University itself.

“We’ve taken a lead advocacy role on behalf of student financial aid,” Sauls said. “The President has spoken out repeatedly on behalf of financial aid.”

“I’m told the Senate is considering something,” said Sauls.

Both chambers have agreed to restore the $300 million cut from state universities last year.

“That’s very good news, that’s worth over $24 million to FIU,” Sauls said. “The state doesn’t seem to be cutting our budgets further and they’re restoring money that was cut before and maybe provide some additional money beyond that, and some of that might be a small tuition increase.”

Florida currently ranks 41 in the country in terms of tuition, although House Speaker Will Weatherford previously noted that it ranked 22.

“We were 48, but in recent years we are now 41,” Sauls said. “There are nine states that have tuition on the aggregate less than us, so comparatively we are still a low-cost tuition state.”

Last year, the Florida Board of Governors approved a request from the University to increase tuition by 15 percent. Despite the series of increases in tuition, some of our neediest students did not experience an increase because they got more FIU scholarships and they got more student financial aid dollars,” Sauls said.

The legislative session is set to end May 3 and the joint budget at that point will be sent to Governor Rick Scott for his signature.

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Texting Service unfamiliar within University

MARIA BRITOS
Contributing Writer

When anyone has a concern or comment about transportation within the University, most students remain quiet or simply complain to their friends. What they don’t know, or haven’t heard of, is the Department of Parking and Transportation’s text messaging service. Promoted on the buses and shuttles, this service is a text messaging service that provides bus routes and schedules, safety rules and allows riders to text comments and concerns. These texts are immediately replied by the Department of Parking and Transportation with a list of options for the person to pick according to the purpose of the text.

Lissette Hernandez, director of Parking and Transportation, said that this service is a partnership with the University and a vendor which Parking and Transportation has hired. This vendor is called Solstice Transportation Group, which specializes in providing large institutions with the proper tools to develop better transportation systems. The department uses the company’s services for bus passenger transportation consulting, evaluation and service performance analysis. STG attends and participates in a variety of educational seminars and conferences provided by industry leadership associations including the International Parking Institute, BusCon, the American Public Transit Association, the Parking Association of Georgia and the Carolinas Parking Association. Most of their clients include colleges and universities, city transit systems and larger institutions.

“This is how we hope to know how the bus service does on a daily basis and we can get firsthand information from the riders,” said Hernandez. “We get a report weekly, aside for the immediate notification when an email or text is sent.”

Hernandez also said that this service is covered by student tuition, which then is given back to students.

“It is part of the parking and transportation overall operation,” said Hernandez.

“However, the problem is that the service isn’t being used as much as it should be and the little that it is used, the category with the highest feedback is the ‘complaints.’”

“I have honestly never heard of it, but I’m guessing it could be beneficial to the buses,” said Mitch Prieto, a sophomore public relations major, who commutes by buses.”

“The more this service is advertised and the riders are aware of it, the more effective it will be,” said Hernandez.

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North Korea speaking of possible threat to US

JESSICA MESZAROS
Contributing Writer

While students and faculty went about their everyday tasks on Thursday, South Korea’s defense minister announced that North Korea has moved a missile in range to its east coast.

According to The Associated Press, North Korea has been raising against U.S.-South Korean military exercises, which began in March and are scheduled to continue until the end of April. The North calls these exercises “rehearsals for an invasion” and said it needs to defend itself with nuclear weapons.

Astrid Arraras, senior lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Relations, has been with the University for 13 years. She said that North Korea is doing this in a very public way on purpose.

“They want to intimidate, or create some fear in order for them to achieve whatever goals they want to achieve,” said Arraras.

Arraras said that she saw photographs of Kim Jong-Un, leader of North Korea, with a map in the background that supposedly illustrated desired targets for the missile.

The Pentagon announced that it will deploy a missile defense system to the U.S. territory of Guam to strengthen regional protection against a possible attack, according to AP.

The U.S. is concerned that the production of all these weapons can escala- tate, and this can turn into our conflict,” said Arraras.

“So it’s part of U.S. policy to reduce the production of these weapons.”

Arraras said that for the moment, North Korea and the United States are just showing force on both of their parts. She said that North Korea is indicating that it is a threat, and the U.S. is demonstrating that it is prepared to protect itself.

“Honestly, I don’t think there is anyone that hasn’t heard about it,” said journalist freshman Jose Dominguez.

“You’re kind of annoyed that everyone is taking it as a joke.”

Dominguez said that there are many memes circulating around the Internet having to do with North Korea. Memes are photographs that usually have comical captions within them. He finds them funny because he feels the North Korean leader doesn’t know what he is doing, but still believes him to be a serious threat to the nation.

Ghazal Soleimani is a doctoral candidate for the Department of Epidemiology. She said that sanctions in North Korea, or in general, aren’t always the best idea because they don’t always consider the people that suffer as a result.

“A lot of times they do these types of things as a plea for attention, and it’s the corrupt leaders in those countries that are to blame, and I think it’s really unfor- tunate,” said Soleimani.

“We’ll see what will be the response from the other countries, and we’ll see if he goes through,” said Arraras. “But it will be suicidal.”

-news@fiusm.com

The National Organization of Women at FI organized a “slut walk,” which took place on April 3, to spread awareness about the many forms of violence against women.

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Contributing Writer

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-news@fiusm.com
Federal Aviation Administration delays closing of control towers

Putin urges peace talks to end Syria ‘massacre’

President Vladimir Putin said the civil war in Syria has become “a massacre” that must be stopped through peace talks between the government and the opposition, and repeated Russia’s firm rejection of calls for Syrian President Bashar Assad’s ouster.

Speaking to the German ARD television in remarks released by the Kremlin on Friday, he rejected the Western criticism of Russia for continuing to supply weapons to Assad’s regime.

Expert: Warlord Kony under pressure to free women

The fugitive African warlord Joseph Kony is jettisoning women and children in a possible desperate bid to keep his weakened group lean and mobile, an expert said Friday, after three women freed by the Lord’s Resistance Army arrived home in Uganda after spending years in the bush.

Haiti historian who chronicled capital dies at 88

George Corvington, a prominent Haitian historian best known for his exhaustive study of the Caribbean nation’s capital of Port-au-Prince, died Wednesday at age 88, a close friend said.

Fellow historian and longtime friend Georges Michel said that Corvington died peacefully in his sleep at his home in the capital he wrote so much about.

For more world news, check out www.FIUSM.com.
Students gather, dress down to walk for a cause

LAUREN BANA
Staff Writer

This past Wednesday, I had the amazing opportunity to join the National Organization for Women at Modesto Maidique Campus at the first ever Miami SlutWalk.

There was an amazing turnout, and I couldn’t believe how many strong women and men came out to spread awareness of rape culture in our community.

As we waited for the walk to begin, people were preparing signs, sharing ideas and discussing opinions.

“SlutWalk is one of many calls to action to put an end to victim blaming,” said sophomore Anamaria Zambrano. “The victim is not at fault for rape. The rapist is.”

I felt so proud to be a woman. Walking with other women, who passionately spoke their minds.

So many people were utilizing their right to protest. And all to confidently speak out against the epidemic of rape culture.

I had a chance to interview Gabriela Bonilla, a member of NOW, to discuss the overall success of the SlutWalk, and ask how she felt this would impact the people of Miami as it opens its new chapter here.

She said that she was very pleased with how many people arrived to support victims of sexual abuse, and that she was “happy to see this movement reach people outside the FIU community, and had supporters from all different ages groups, especially happy to see so many men show up.”

I was also surprised to see so many men coming out to both, represent men who have been sexually abused, and to support their female friends. I think that this alone really shows the potential that Miami has to stand up for victims of sexual assault.

When I asked Bonilla what her stance was on how an event like this would affect Miami locals, she stated that it was an empowering experience to be a part of, and that she hopes for it to affect the people who witnessed it, and people who just heard about it.

I could tell that she was very passionate about this, and she really invoked a fiery spirit inside of me to continue to argue against people who will ignorantly combat against this issue.

“Though the turnout was impressive, Bonilla did have a few concerns about the accomplishments of the event and whether or not it got enough attention.

[It] could have reached a larger audience in our education initiative,” she said. “I still feel like there are a lot of students, and people of the community, who don’t understand the meaning behind the movement.” During the walk Bonilla also voiced her opinion about the word ‘slut’ and what she believes is the meaning behind it.

[It] is not conducive for an environment free of sexual violence. The language we use to describe women is just another way in which we facilitate violence against women,” she said.

“It’s time Miami becomes intolerant to all forms sexual violence,” she said, and I couldn’t agree more.

LAUREN BANA/The Beacon

Miami Dade Transportation: a love/hate relationship

VINSON PRESLEY
Staff Writer

I sit on the bus stop bench at the Biscayne Bay Campus waiting patiently for the number 75 bus to arrive. The bus pulls up – after about 45 minutes – and everyone sprays to catch it, but suddenly the bus driver turns off the bus and casually stroll’s off the vehicle without a care in the world.

Although our transportation system has its advantages, it also has character flaws.

A small percentage of MDT’s bus drivers display unpredictable, irritable and curt attitudes toward passengers at times.

There have been several instances where I would ask a bus driver a simple question and was met with a very sharp response that was really unnecessary.

Maybe the bus driver had a bad day or experienced endless traffic, it doesn’t make it right to take it out on passengers, but to me its no big deal. I just pay my bus fare experienced endless traffic, it doesn’t make it right to take it out on passengers, but to me its no big deal. I just pay my bus fare, and was met with a very sharp response that was really unnecessary. I could tell that she was very passionate about this, and she really invoked a fiery spirit inside of me to continue to argue against people who will ignorantly combat against this issue.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Editorials are the unified voice of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor in chief, management, and the editors of each of the five sections. The Beacon welcomes any letters regarding or in response to its editorials. Send them to opinion@fiusm.com.
“It’s a chance to demonstrate what Americans are potentially contributing to the world in the future.”

Butler was just one of the 12 seniors who began presenting their senior projects on April 4 and 5, and will continue on April 11 and 12 at 8 p.m. in DM 150, where they had to write, direct, produce and star in their own 30-minute one-person shows.

Lucille Coco, whose project is titled “The Lost Chord,” struggled with choosing one persona for her project, eventually deciding on Julie Andrews after hearing about her throat operation in 1997, which ruined her voice for many years.

“When you come into the program and see other projects you start thinking ‘what can I do’ and how can I make it better, but the person choices you sometimes and when I saw an interview with Julie Andrews I thought ‘how can I make this project work in which he will be the writer, director and actor in her own show and perform the words she wrote to an audience. ‘It’s been hard because you’re usually given someone else’s words and those are your lines but performing a script you write has added a much more personal level to this project than anything else I’ve been involved in.’

Jason Caceres, whose senior project will be titled “Drella: When the Shoe Doesn’t Fit...” based on the life of Andy Warhol, has embraced the project as a chance to explore himself within another character that is closely related to who he is.

“We chose something that means something to our lives. It’s a rite of passage into becoming the artist because it’s hard to write a conflict with just one person and make it interesting.”

For Caceres, solo performance has been key to making his project work in which he will be alone on stage with only 100 shoe boxes to keep him company.

“There are boundaries to what we can make up but there are ways around that. My piece has nothing to do with Andy Warhol but every-thing to do with him.”

Jordan Clara Ihlilani Sasaki’s senior project, entitled “My Name is Butterfly,” will be based on Julia Butterfly Hill’s three years living in a 1,905-year-old California Redwood tree from 1997 to 1998. The idea stems from her love of nature and global environmental issues.

“It’s a topic I’m passionate about and my research allowed me to rediscover her story.”

Sasaki also had to adjust to being the writer, director and actor in her own show and performed the words she wrote to an audience. “It’s a topic I’m passionate about and my research allowed me to rediscover her story.”

This is the final presentation/thesis type thing for us but I feel, as artists, that we are being born because most of us, for the most part, have been actors. This

University community honours founding father Butler Waugh

EDWIVE SEME Staff Writer

The University community has honored Butler Waugh and celebrated his achievements by joining together in front of the DE building to pay tribute to Butler Waugh, who died on November 7, 2012 at 78, in consideration one of the four founding fathers of the University and moved on to become the College of Arts and Science’s dean.

Becoming a founding member, dean and teaching for 40 years was an adventure for Butler. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he went on to earn his bachelor’s degree in Washington and Jefferson College. He continued to earn his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1969.

The kick-start of his career was at the University of Kansas, but in 1961 he moved to Florida to become an English professor at the University of Florida. But his career wasn’t going to end there; it would keep growing at FIU.

But when FIU was nothing more than an abandoned airfield in the late 1950’s, Charles E. Perry, FIU’s founding father, called to creating a university from scratch was an experiment to him, an experiment that watched grow and succeed.

“He was smart, funny, he didn’t have too much of a sense his own self-importance,” said colleague James Sutton, chairperson of the Department of English. “He was hard working: he was just what FIU needed at the time.”

When FIU opened its first college in 1970, the College of Arts and Sciences, Waugh was chosen to be its founding dean. The College of Arts and Sciences became his own personal project; he was responsible for choosing all the faculty members that would start up the College, and monitoring the education of the first 5,667 students to enroll in 1972.

“His heart was always in the classroom,” said James. After stepping down, Butler had a better idea of what to do and what not to do with his career. “It clari-fied for him why he wanted to read literature and talk to people of English.” He was hard working: it was just what FIU
A tribute to renowned film critic Roger Ebert

Finding the right words to pay tribute to someone who’s passed on is always difficult, even more so when that person is someone you’ve never known, but respected immensely. Sadly, that person is renowned film critic Roger Ebert.

I can honestly say Roger Ebert was a man I didn’t always agree with. We had more than enough one-sided yelling matches when it came to genre film ratings, but something always kept me coming back for more. That something was pure and unashamed honesty. Whether he loved or hated a film, Ebert never backed it up with solid reasoning. It’s a quality that’s actually rare in the world of film criticism nowadays, where hatred and misinformed criticism are abundant.

When we agreed, it was a wonder to read through every scene analysis he wrote online, he went from just being a Pulitzer Prize critic to a guiding voice in my life. I could still hear his voice in his writing.

It’s a voice that will continue on over the years, guiding budding young film lovers and critics to find wonderful classic works, especially through his Great Movies pieces. All those willing to look at art through a critical lens will find something to appreciate in the writing that Ebert has left behind.

Anyone who can bring humor, grace and intelligence into their words and opinions like he did, and is able to provoke people into thinking deeper about their film experiences is a man worth respecting and looking up to. That is something that I can honestly say about the latest flicks, guiding budding young film critics and film lovers and critics to find wonderful classic works, especially through his Great Movies pieces.

Regardless of our differences, your writing will always have a place in my heart, and I’ll always be thankful you gave us “Beyond the Valley of the Dolls” along with every word of film criticism.

Juan Barquin is a junior FIU English major.

Finding balance can be challenging with all of the demands on our time and attention. With a little perspective, mindfulness and planning you can help get life back to a manageable pace. First, I would clarify your values. Find out what is important and meaningful to you.

While that seems like something completely miniscule and pointless in hundreds upon hundreds of reviews, it’s still something that gave a budding writer like me confidence.

It’s really those little bits of inspiration all around the world that really add up to how much of an influential presence Ebert was.

There’s no doubt in my mind that thousands of others found their budding interest in film affected by Ebert’s writing.

A good friend of mine who also studied English and Film at the University, Francisco Pedro, told me something that really hit me after Ebert’s death. “Once his voice was gone and Ebert was reduced to silence, all of us were at odds, I was still kept back for more.”

For those living in a world where film is everything, he meant something. Being a kid and waiting to see those thumbs up and thumbs down, or just sitting in front of your TV to watch Ebert chatting it up with Siskel or Roeper about the latest flicks, has almost been a rite of passage into the film criticism world.

Ebert’s writing is something that gave a budding writer like me confidence. It is able to provoke people into thinking deeper about their film experiences. Balance is key.

Be Well - nick

Dear Nick,

How can I deal with a rocky relationship while dealing with school and the everyday stresses of life?

J.J.

Finding balance can be challenging with all of the demands on our time and attention. With a little perspective, mindfulness and planning you can help get life back to a manageable pace. First, I would clarify your values. Find out what is important and meaningful in your life. Relationships can be a wonderful source of gratification and fulfillment. Speak with your partner, let him or her know about the demands on your time and resources. Plan a date night each week when you can set aside the stresses from everyday life and school and focus on your relationship. Overall, we function better when we prioritize, take action to make sure we are doing what is important and meaningful in our life, and take care of ourselves. Try exercising or picking up yoga. With the end of the semester near you might even begin to practice meditation to help you keep a clear mind. Life can get a little overwhelming sometimes; just remember that with the right tools and a good positive outlook, you can overcome many obstacles! Good luck with your relationship and best wishes for the end of the semester.

Be Well

Nick Scheidt, M.S. is a Doctoral Psychology Intern at FIU Counseling and Psychological Services. He is a Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate from Carlos Albizu University. Once he completes his internship at FIU, Nick plans to work as a Psychologist, Writer, and Professor.

Do you have questions you would like to Ask Nick? Send an email to: Nscheidt@fiu.edu

Balance is key

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Balance is key
Making history was not enough to keep men’s basketball Head Coach Richard Pitino motived with the Panthers and now the search is on for a new coach.

On April 3, news broke that Pitino reached a verbal agreement to be the new coach at the University of Minnesota.

The stunning departure comes less than a month after Pitino finished a season where he led the Panthers to an 18-14 season and the program’s first Sun Belt Conference championship game.

No one on the basketball team knew that Pitino planned on leaving.

“We had one of the best seasons in FIU history and we were going in the right direction. I’m just shocked he would leave right now,” senior guard Manny Nunez said.

Malia Smith, the team’s leading three-point shooter and second on the team in points per game, indicated via Twitter that he was going to ask his release immediately.

“It might be time for me to part ways for FIU,” Smith said via Twitter.

Pitino leaves the program after year one of a five-year, $1.25 million deal that he signed in April 2012. His contract states that because he left before April 2015, he must now pay FIU one year’s base salary worth $250,000.

Retaining Pitino was something Pete Garcia, executive director of sports and entertainment, attempted, but in the end couldn’t.

In a press conference on April 4, Garcia said he sat down with Pitino at the end of the season and they had agreed to a modest pay raise, but once Garcia realized Minnesota offers, he knew it’d be tough to keep the 30-year-old coach.

Pitino’s deal with Minnesota is six years with a base salary of $1.2 million per year, totaling $7.2 million.

“I want somebody that’s going to do things right. I want somebody that’s going to demand that the kids go to class and graduate,” Garcia said. “I know we have a good list of candidates and there’s a lot of people interested in this job.”

One out hanging over the head of the incoming coach is the academic troubles of the squad.

Garcia hinted that the FIU men’s basketball may soon be slapped with a postseason ban for the 2013-14 season for sub par academic progress rate scores.

The likely ban stems from the poor scores the team achieved during former Head Coach Isiah Thomas’ three-year tenure.

The NCAA draws the cutoff mark for penalties at 900. The maximum score is 1000.

In the 2009-10 season, the team had a single-year mark of 902. The 2011-12 scores have not been released, but they’re expected to be below 900. APR is a metric created by the NCAA to gauge how much progess institutions are making in graduating their student-athletes.

The number is derived from two factors, worth one point each: eligibility and retention.

In other words, players get their two points if the athlete meets the GPA cut off mark and if they stay in school that year. Points are then tallied up, divided by the maximum amount of possible points.

SEE BASKETBALL, PAGE 7

Softball team adjusts to adversity on the road

JOHNSON DIAZ
Contributing Writer

Facing high caliber teams, dealing with long bus drives and taking on away crowds are just some of the extra obstacles FIU softball runs into when going on road games.

The Panthers are 4-7 on the road and wrapped up a series against University of Louisiana at Lafayette at the end of March where they were swept for the second straight series. Although they had their struggles, the players focus on zoning out the crowds and not letting their away record interfere with their mindset and how they perform on the field.

“At the end of the day, it’s all the same game,” junior outfielder Brie Kay said. “You just need to prepare yourself mentally to deal with the away game atmosphere.”

There have been many highs and lows when the Panthers play on the road. A game against University of North Florida led to 12 panther hits and 16 total bases, the most this season in both categories. However, a game in Louisiana-Lafayette led to 11 Panther strikeouts, and they gave up 11 North Florida runs, the most the Panthers have given up to any team this season.

To the players, home games and away games are nothing but a ball game. When it comes to preparation, they do exactly what they do to prepare for a home game.

That usually involves reviewing opposing teams and players.

The “I” in FIU is certainly represented in the softball team with players from all parts of the U.S., from Camas, Wash. where junior pitcher Mariah Dawson is from to Rose Hill, Kan., outfielder Marisa McGregor’s hometown. So even playing home games at the softball field in FIU still doesn’t feel like home to most of the players.

“We go away, the crowds are bigger and even more different, it stills feels the same for me because I’m not used to having fans.”

The Panther games never take place the same day as the bus drive over to their opponent’s field, so the trip heading over proves to be more relaxing for the players. It’s one of the few days they have off and get to enjoy the trip.

“It’s honestly really nice on travel days,” Kay said. “We get to relax on the drive over, prepare mentally for the game so the drive over there actually is an advantage to us.”

The Panthers 16-10 home record proves that the players feel more comfortable playing on home turf. This is where the Panthers have executed their best offensive performance. In a home stand against Middle Tennessee State University in March, they swept the Blue Raiders, outscoring them by 27 runs in the series, scoring just under 30 and allowing only seven runs.

“I personally love it at home,” Kay said. “They have to come and eat our home crowd. That’s what motivates us.”
Panthers’ own dual threat may create havoc for opponents

PATRICK CHALVIRE
Staff Writer

Athletes spend years, some their whole lives, perfecting their craft at a position. There are certain cases, however, where an athlete is expected and able to compete and perfect two positions in one sport. Richard Leonard is one of those cases.

Leonard, a junior cornerback from Miami Killian Sr. High School, is considered a dual threat to both the Panthers’ offense during practice, and opponents during games. Not only does Leonard spend his time harassing receivers and taking on any running back that may get past the line of scrimmage as a corner-back, he also showcases his ability returning punts and kicks as a returner on special teams.

“It’s a plus for our special teams,” Jason Brooks said, defensive secondary coach for the Panthers. “Having him back there as a return guy with his speed and athleticism, I think it’s fantastic.”

In 12 games last season, Leonard averaged 70.2 all-purpose yards a game. He racked up 758 out of his total 843 yards on kick returns. Leonard’s 29.2 average on kick returns placed him second in the Sun Belt Conference, just a yard short of Reggie Whatley of Middle Tennessee State University.

Though the Panthers are under new management with new Head Coach Ron Garcia said he has a strong vision of the program’s future. “We want to be successful in the NCAA,” Garcia said. “We want to go to the NCAA tournament and be successful there. We want to win in everything we do.”

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VP of student affairs candidate speaks to students

Patrick Rombalski, former vice president of student affairs at Boston College, spoke to students in the Wolfe University Center as part of an open forum. Rombalski prefers a diverse population in the student body as well as academics, both of which FIU has to offer. When asked how he would deal with the imbalance of attention between campuses, Rombalski said that each campus should forget about comparisons and focus more on how to be unique in its own way.

"I know there are families with autism. As a behavioral analyst and certified behavior analyst, Gutierrez is able to design and supervise behavior analytic interventions, such as the one implemented in his work. Gutierrez said that there is a program available before school system services, known as the Birth to Three System, but funding is typically low, and by extension, the depth of the services.

"We thought that we would set up this program to be a low-cost option; it is $500 a month, which at the hourly rate for intervention is incredibly inexpensive," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said that autism spectrum disorders are characterized by symptoms of impaired social interaction, restricted interest and repetitive behaviors whose manifestations can vary, such as rocking and hand flapping. Meeting criteria for diagnosis can differentiate from person to person, which is why the early intervention program works on many aspects of the disorder.

"We work on all the domain areas that they need help with: communication, expressive language, receptive language, play skills, self-care, toileting training, picky eating if they have eating restrictions or if they don't have a very wide array of foods that they'll eat, and independence," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said the program acts as a preparatory step for the child before entering a school program.

"Our classroom attempts to look like the next setting so we’ll have areas for independent work systems, areas for play, and areas for one-on-one teacher time," said Gutierrez.

The program takes place from Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There is a 1:1 child to child ratio and the staff is completely made up of undergraduate and graduate students from FIU.

"The ability for students to gain meaningful clinical and research experience in autism exists at FIU; that's kind of exciting because not everyone has that," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said there are differing views in terms of what aspects of the disorder should be emphasized, such as discovering causation and curing or working on clinical work and interventions.

His research with the Behavior Analysis Autism Research Lab at FIU is driven by developing and implementing procedures used in clinical interventions.

"My research isn’t about causes or cures, my research is about interventions and just helping people today get better services and better interventions," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said the autism community shows interest in both and agrees that there should be an equal combination of the two.

"Although there may not be a definitive answer for causation, the controversial linkage between vaccinations and autism has at least been disproven as reported by a study published in the Journal of Pediatrics on March 29. Gutierrez said that the 18-24 month mark is the point in development in which typically developing children can be differentiated from those with autism."

This differentiation was associated to the number of vaccines children get around this time, which provoked fear in people.

"I know there are families who are not giving their kids vaccines and now they’re at risk for developing these conditions that we kind of had eradicated many years ago; now there are kids dying from these other really awful diseases," said Gutierrez.

In regards to its awareness, Gutierrez said the autism community certainly knows more than they used to and that it is an issue people are conscious of but it still has not received a federal mandate for insurance coverage.

"It's crazy to think that you can have a condition that isn't covered by your insurance," said Gutierrez. "When you stop to think about how big as autism is and as aware we are, it's probably not anywhere close to where it should be. It would be great if there are cases where there is and given how much it affects people's lives."