New technology simplifies faculty-advisor communication

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A new feature has been added to the PantherSoft Faculty Center that will facilitate communication between faculty and academic advisors.

The program aims to allow faculty members to contact advisors as a form of early intervention for students who are identified as struggling in certain courses.

According to Dr. Douglas L. Robertson, dean of undergraduate education, the Early Alert feature is part of the University's Graduate Success Initiative, a specific brand of academic intervention to help students succeed.

Consisting of four main objectives, the initiative involves helping incoming students identify a major early, providing a clear path to excellence in education for a diverse student body, according to HispanicBusiness.

The University also achieved a ranking of fifth in the country, among other high-performance universities, with their Model UN Team ranked 24th in the "Washington Monthly" national universities rankings and maintained the title of national leader in awarding STEM bachelor's degrees to underrepresented minorities.

"It sends the message that FIU can compete wherever it goes," Rosenberg said.

Developing avenues for more University research was also a topic of discussion at the meeting.

The goal for research expenditures of $126 million was surpassed by $4 million, and total research doctoral degrees awarded increased by two percent.

"I want to point out that this is especially good news," Rosenberg said. "...The federal government, as you know, is either freezing the research funding or cutting it back. And yet we continue to grow; we've grown 30 percent since 2009."

The first ten goals in the "36-goal Self-Evaluation Scorecard" were performance goals, which, if achieved, would bring the University closer to its final state funding.

These ten goals vary from increasing academic progress rate to not increasing the average cost of undergraduate degrees.

Member of the BOT and Student Government Association President at the modesto A. Madiquie Campus, Alexis Calatayud, took a special interest in one of the ten goals to have seventy percent or more bachelor's graduates employed and/or continuing their education one year after graduation.

"Really that's why we go to school," Calatayud said. "Either to create a foundation for even more education, which leads to their dream, or to get a job that they really want.

This goal was far exceeded with seventy-seven percent of the students employed and/or continuing their education.

According to Calatayud, it is not easy to raise those percentage points.

Five hundred students are contained within one percentage point and, according to her, a lot of strategic planning must be done for goals like this to be achieved.

Rosenberg also drew attention for receiving the votes for the University's appropriation of the 64 acres of the fairgrounds.

According to Rosenberg, this was something that took a lot of effort and campaigning, but he is very proud and excited about the results.

Calatayud is also excited about this expansion. "We have to sit down at the table before we can even eat, and this [expansion] is kind of us sitting down at the table," Calatayud said. "We are not leaving until we've eaten."

Rosenberg was commended by many for this self-evaluation presentation.

According to Maury, Monica Hosseini, the chair of the Florida Board of Governors, found the presentation to be fairly impressive.

"I had a nice lengthy discussion with the chair [of the BOG] and he is very happy with the performance of the president and the institution," Maury said. "He was very impressed with the way we presented it to him, in fact, his words were, 'I'm going to take this one as a sample to the governor so we can have all the presidents in the university system evaluate the same way!'."

Since the software already existed, it just needed to be modified to fit other course groups.

One of the intended purposes of the Early Alert system is to provide a manner of intervening early in the academic career of a student that a professor deems to be at risk for failing.

Professors using the feature will be able to navigate between different columns of academic progress, such as attendance and assignment completion.

Robertson believes that faculty members are just as responsible as students.

"Every school should have this type of technology. This makes it a lot easier, more streamlined, for a professor to lead students to make the right decisions when they are struggling in class.

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Abel Tomlin
Junior Mechanical Engineering

In order to develop the program, the department of Undergraduate Education, along with different members of the University community, such as those within the College of Arts and Sciences, where all of the Title V gateway courses are housed, met with University technology services.

The program took less than two months to finalize, and it went live on Jan. 10.

While all students can walk in to speak with an advisor in regards to their academic progress, each student is assigned a specific advisor at the moment of enrollment into a specific major.

This policy, however, was not employed until 2012, Robertson said.

At present, the University boasts an advisor-to-student ratio of around 400-to-one, a significant drop from a previous ratio of around 1000-to-one, all due to the University's efforts of hiring more advisors to serve the student population.

Some students believe that the program doesn't hold much promise.

If an advisor notified a student of a risk on performance contacts a student, the decision of whether or not to meet with the advisor rests with the student.

"I don't think it'll do much," said Laura Fernandez, a junior architecture major. "It's likely that a student will be called to speak with [his or her] advisor and they will just ignore the advisor's request."

Robertson admits that while advisors have many ways of reaching out to students, such as through text messages, emails and phone calls, they can only do so much to ensure that a student pays them a visit to discuss their progress.

There is a certain point at which a student's sense of responsibility must kick in.

Other students, however, actually believe the Early Alert feature will yield positive effects.

"Every school should have this type of technology," said Abel Tomlin, a junior mechanical engineering major. "This makes it a lot easier, more streamlined, for a professor to lead students to make the right decisions when they are struggling in class.

Robertson says that the current step is to educate faculty members about this feature available to them, to encourage them to make active use of it.

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NATIONAL & WORLD BRIEF

**Jordan executes 2 prisoners to avenge pilot Islamic State burn**

Jordan executed two prisoners early Wednesday morning to avenge the burning alive of a Jordanian fighter pilot in a move that seemed likely to thrust the usually peaceful country into the front lines of the battle against the Islamic State.

Jordanian state television said one of the executed prisoners was Sajida al-Rishawi, the 44-year-old Iraqi woman whose release the Islamic State had demanded in return for the life of a Japanese hostage killed last week. The other was Ziad al-Karbouli, a jihadist who once worked with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of al-Qaida in Iraq, who was the precursor to the Islamic State.

China fears Japan will use hostage crisis to drop pacificist policies

When news broke Sunday that militants from the Islamic State group had beheaded journalist Kenji Goto after killing another Japanese citizen, much of the world condemned the executions and offered Japan condolences.

Not China. In Beijing, concerns over Tokyo’s possible response to the beheadings — a building block of Japan’s military — trumped diplomatic niceties.

On Tuesday, Global Times, China’s state-owned English-language newspaper, said it was the second time in as many days that the paper had taken that tack.

Panama’s ex-president trots globe, one step ahead of corruption probe at home

Panama has long been a haven for dictators and foreign oil do-wells, but now its citizens are watching the curious spectacle of their own former president trotting the globe in a private jet, perhaps looking for refuge himself.

If former President Ricardo Martinelli returns to Panama, the likelihood of his arrest on corruption charges appears to grow by the day.

Martinelli left Panama last Wednesday aboard a 15-seat Hawker jet for Guatemala, then continued for refueling stops in Florida, Canada and Ireland before landing in Bologna, Italy.

**Technology allows faculty to contact advisors with ease**

Robertson says that the current step is to educate faculty members about this feature available to them, to encourage them to make use of it.

Robertson admits that several people have questioned whether Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe might exploit the situation to beef up his country’s military and explore “a new model” for national security.

It was the second time in as many days that the paper had taken that tack.

The state does encourage students to participate in this three-part internship program by providing scholarships for a large portion of the costs. Students can receive up to $50,000 in scholarship money to attend the program, but these funds can only go towards the internship program if the internship is done for school course credit with your university.

The opportunity offers three parts of the internship program, which matches students to multiple types of internships that they may choose from; the scholastic portion, which requires the student to pick one of thirty courses taught by local or agency professors and the leadership forum, where students work with a specific engagement project, such as how to confront homelessness.

The program also covers living costs. Participants stay in a flat with a roommate which includes a room and kitchen space.

The Washington Center prides itself in the multiple features of its program that other programs don’t offer, such as networking opportunities and site visits.

The experience is offered throughout the year and is divided by semesters in the spring, summer and fall terms. Dr. Shlomi Dinar, the University’s campus liaison for the program, highly encourages students to join.

“This is a great opportunity to network,” Dinar said. “These days, securing a job is difficult. The Washington Center helps expose students to networking opportunities that are difficult to find.”

What makes the program so spectacular is its versatility towards any major, said Dinar. The Washington Center will find suitable options for any majors.

Those interested must be accepted into the program, with letters of recommendation being part of the application requirements.

“Any student will benefit from the program,” he said.

**Partnership for internships to students in D.C.**

“We’ve had students from our nursing program, political science program, psychology program and history program intern with the Washington Center.”

Tiffany Roman Biffa, vice president of the Student Government Association at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus, attended the program last summer.

“This program gave me the opportunity to change my community,” she said in an online testing forum for the program. “[It gave me] the opportunity to connect to others inspiring individuals and the opportunity to become a better leader.”

Roman Biffa interned for CentoNia, a multicultural learning community with a pioneering approach to bilingual education.

According to the online video, others in the program have worked with companies such as Politico, Mapbox, Museum of Unnatural History and NASA.

Dinar said there are multiple ways to gain financial assistance to make participation in the program possible.

Scholarships and financial aid are definite options to consider.

The priority deadline to apply for this summer is Feb. 18. Those interested in applying should speak to Dinar or visit www.twc.edu for more information.

“The program is about finding the answers to your interests,” Roman Biffa said. “...And finding out what you can do for that individual to impact the cause.”
Reducing our footprint by going local

AMID BENNAIM
Staff Writer
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Since the 1970s there have been a lot of people who turn to vegetarianism as a way to reduce their negative effects on nature, the general pain and gloom of life for livestock and the guilt that comes from knowing that, when it comes down to it, steak is animal muscle.

There are two types of people who live this way. The first and largest group will eat fish and parts of harvested animals without killing them. Vegans, however, won’t eat any sort of animal product; they rely solely on first-tier energy producers like plants.

Let’s keep in mind the benefits of the vegetarian lifestyle.

Animals suffer in captivity. While the extent of this suffering can’t really be measured empirically, life is rough for livestock. Also, according to the EPA, raising these animals creates an environmental impact, mainly from methane created by cattle—yes, cattle farms—that traps much more heat than CO2.

Additionally, agriculture is one of the most destructive human activities. The farmer must clear acres of wild land to make space for the produce that the farmer will plant. Habitat loss is arguably the biggest threat to animal species worldwide, except perhaps climate change. The problem is that it takes more land to grow the equivalent of a cow’s worth of protein than the space that such a cow would take up.

However, this is not the true genocide. Mice are exterminated by the millions through agriculture. There is rat poison in the grain silos that store grain and there are mice that die from field pesticides.

A study from Australia (the only place where such research exists) found that there are 500 to 1,000 mice per hectare of farmland and 80 percent of them are killed. If the land used for agriculture accounted for just 1 percent of Australia’s land mass it would be 7,686,850 hectares of land, so 2.5-6 million mice die every year due to agriculture in that country alone.

If everyone became a vegetarian, these numbers would skyrocket.

Even though pesticides and fertilizers are mostly made from petrochemicals, the organic alternative is also damaging to the environment. While organic farms do less damage to the soil that they cultivate, the runoff of excess fertilizers causes putrefaction in nearby bodies of water. The Gulf of Mexico is a perfect example, most of which has slowly died due to the fertilizers that find their way into the Mississippi River.

It is necessary to remember that the mother’s well-being makes it fair to understand that not only is the mother’s well-being necessary, but also that of her offspring.

To add on to this, it is unfair that a child would have to live a life knowing who their father is because of rape, the reality that there are times not all rapists are able to be exposed. An example of this would be a woman being calcified on the streets followed by sexual harassment which leads to rape from a stranger. It’s another reason that supports why abortion is a better logical decision.

However, this same notion of abortion is relevant towards the connection it has with situations involving incest. Unlike certain situations where a child is unfamiliar with their father because they were born out of rape, it is equally unfair that a child conceived out of incest would have to live a life knowing that their father is also their brother, or any double familial role that they are born in. Abortion may be a crucial decision, but it could also be the fairest plan for a child that strays from shame within a family, and most importantly one that is forbidden by law. It is necessary to remember that the child did not ask to be born in the first place.

Based upon the circumstances of the time when the woman was impregnated, she should be able to determine whether or not having a child would free her from her victimization, or hold her back. At the end of the day, it is up to her, not us.

Abortion should be a woman’s option

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No woman should have to be held accountable for the life of a child she did not agree to make due to rape and certain situations involving incest. The reasons that support this stance in society makes it fair to understand that not only is the mother’s well-being necessary, but also that of her offspring.

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Frank and Irene: Payday

Amid Bennaim
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SOUND OF MUSIC

Have to “go” somewhere on campus? I can speak for the guys on this when I say that a nice bathroom is a home away from home sometimes. I have been, at some point or another during my tenure at FIU, to a bathroom in most of the buildings here.

A good bathroom should be comforting, clean and not full - which is sometimes the most important aspect. The following are my top three men’s bathrooms at the University.

No. 3
The third best men’s room on campus has to go to the location on the second floor of the Ernest R. Graham Center that is near the Student Government Association office.

The reason this location is up there is that, in my history of being in GC and needing to use them, it is never really full. Yes, it may not always be the cleanest, but it is good when the need comes. It is, however, the best bathroom in arguably the most crowded building on campus.

No. 2
This one may have the most backlash out of any of my picks, but my second highest rated men’s restroom is the one at the U.S. Century Bank Arena. Out of the many sets of restrooms here, the set I find the best are in the corner between the hallway with classrooms near the student entrance and the back hall with the racquetball courts.

They are usually clean and always empty. The worst part is that the temperature is a little high because there are no windows around the staircase to the outside world directly across from them.

No. 1
The penthouse suite of FIU may not be in the tallest building, but it houses the top dog of the University in President Mark B. Rosenberg. That is the office of the president and several other members of the administration for the University.

Near the hallway that leads you past the office of the board of trustees, heading down to the office of the president, is a set of bathrooms. These are my top bathrooms for the University on the men’s side.

They are clean a majority of the time, and I have had a class in Primera Casa every semester since I have been at FIU. I usually take the elevator ride up a couple seconds to the fifth floor to use these facilities if I am in the building or area and feel the need to “go.” The bathrooms are also always filled with the necessities of toilet paper, hand soap and paper towels.

Top Tres is done for every Friday issue of The Beacon and on fiusm.com. The view of the Top Tres do not represent the views of FIU Student Media. If you wish to suggest an FIU “top three” topic for Rhys Williams, send him an email at rhys.williams@fiusm.com.

Highest ranked men’s bathrooms at MMC

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, PAGE 1: FIU’s Ensemble-in-Residence, the Amernet String Quartet, performs alongside guest Cellist Christopher Rev (third from the left).
It’s because of the weather.

Around two years ago. We

Nobody was doing regular club

I guess they didn’t have

Everything just fell into place

Mrs. Yancey [J Dilla’s mother]

Right.

Parents and over-achieving brother. As they are helping

(Akhavan) has recently broke up with her girlfriend,

DillaWeekend happening Feb. 5-8

FIUSM had a chance to sit down and talk

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ANGELO LOPEZ
Staff Writer
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In anticipation of DillaWeekend,

DillaWeekend, which started on

Heron:

So why Miami? Why not, for example,

Atlantic’s cold in February also.

Why does Miami have a J Dilla

Miami metro area?

Correct… It’s a performance

Wreckonize from ¡MAYDAY!... Statik

From Termanology, a performance from

Termanology, a performance from

Chuck Strangers, Camp Lo, and I think we

probably the only one in Miami that has a

song with J Dilla called “The Apartment.”

It’s an official song. Klassik is DJ’ing,

so is DJ Sharpsound and I’ll be DJ’ing

also. Tony Touch too.

Saturday the seventh is probably the

meat of the [weekend], right? It’s

shaping up to be an all day thing.

Heron:

Yeah. That’s just the daytime.

That’s just from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. at night.

mean, by 9 p.m. it’s gonna be pretty

much done.

Then at night-time at The Stage we got

Slum Village and Pete Rock, right?

Heron:

Right. 

Dead Prez is slated for Sunday?

Heron: Not only that, we just added a lot

more to Sunday. We added a performance

from Termology, a performance from

Wreckonzine from ¡MAYDAY!... Statik

Selektuh is going to do a DJ set.

‘Appropriate Behavior’ somehow both ‘ugly and beautiful’

Desiree Akhavan is the producer,

writer and protagonist for the new film

“Appropriate Behavior” which opened

in select theaters on Jan. 16. Bi-sexual, 

Iranian, Early Twenties Brooklynite and

unemployed graduate are the ingredients

for Akhavan’s breakout film.

The film is like watching your best

friend’s post-breakup and witnessing the re-

bound stage: petty, ugly and beautiful

all at the same time. In the film, Shirin

(Akhavan) has recently broke up with her girlfriend,

Maxine, played by Canadian actress Rebecca Henderson.

In one scene, Shirin is in her new apartment with her

parents and over-achieving brother. As they are helping

her organize her belongings, they awkwardly mention

how she has never had a boyfriend.

In another scene, her brother questions what she will

do with her master’s in journalism. I’m pretty sure I had

pit stains from how nervous I got when I heard this. I’m

currently working on my bachelor’s in journalism.

As the films progressed, I couldn’t help but identify

with Shirin’s character because anyone can relate to a

crappy breakup with leftover messy emotions (social

media stalking included.)

Topics such as coming out, sexual orientation,

in denial parents and identity issues are just some

addressed in the movie. The real treat for audiences is

that Shirin embraces her bi-sexuality. I rarely see shows

or films represent bi-sexual orientation.

For the most part, I feel like the “b” in LGBT is

underrepresented.

I’ve always heard that bi-sexuals are confused and
don’t know what they want. Shirin explains she is

bi-sexual because although she is attracted to girls, she

was equally into the guys she had once dated. The movie

also showed how she dated both genders without making

her seem desperate. She is just a young woman exploring

her sexuality.

I would recommend anyone to watch this film. LGBT

or not, the film has such a broad spectrum from family

issues to sexual exploration, and the witty humor is a

great touch.

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A sit down with popular local DJ Heron

ANGELO LOPEZ

Staff Writer

ANGELO LOPEZ

Staff Writer

In anticipation of DillaWeekend,

FIUSM had a chance to sit down and talk

with DJ Heron.

DJ Heron is hosting and organizing

DillaWeekend, which started on

Thursday, Feb. 5 and will go on until

Sunday, Feb. 8.

Heron: I’m just a Miami DJ. I do a lot of

parties down here in Miami, and I have a lot of fun doing them.

You’re not just a DJ though. Somewhere along the line, you decided,

“We’re lacking something.” What was it?

Heron: Nobody was doing regular club

shows trying to bring individual artists

like Raekwon, Black Rob, or any shows

like that… Plus, my genre, I really don’t

cater to the new style of hip-hop that’s out

there now. I really play that old boom-bap

stuff… and I was just like “You know

what? Let me just do what me and my

boys want to see and see how it goes from there.”

Around what year?

Heron: Around two years ago. We

started with Raekwon first.

So it was Raekwon [first], and from there, things just fell into place?

Heron: Everything just fell into place and

people saw there was a market down here. Sponsors came out… That’s where it

all took off.

How did that lead to Dillafest?

Heron: Mrs. Yancey [J Dilla’s mother]

reached out to me in late November and

father RJ, who is Young RJ’s father from

Slum Village. Mr. Rice, he reached me up also, and they were looking for me because

they wanted to do Dilla Day in Miami… I gave them the idea… and I was like “Well,

Mrs Yancey, Mr. Rice, I think instead of

just doing a J Dilla day, we should do a

Dilla weekend.”

If you’re coming from Japan, or

coming from England, you don’t want to

just come to Miami for one day.

So why Miami? Why not, for example,

“Atlanta? Is it because they saw there

was a track record there in the previous two years?

Heron: It’s because of the weather.

Atlanta’s cold in February also.

Why does Miami have a J Dilla

weekend whereas Los Angeles only have

a day, and is three times the size of the

Miami metro area?

Heron: I guess they didn’t have somebody like me to come up with the

concept.

Friday, Feb. 6 is at The Stage, it’s Talib

Kwel and Black Milk, right?

Heron: Correct… It’s a performance

from Talib Kwel, and it’s a drum machine

and video performance from Black Milk, plus there’s also a performance from Da

Vinci from Miami Beat Wave, and also

there’s a performance from Dynas…

probably the only one in Miami that has a

song with J Dilla called “The Apartment.”

It’s an official song. Klassik is DJ’ing,

so is DJ Sharpsound and I’ll be DJ’ing

also. Tony Touch too.

Saturday the seventh is probably the

meat of the [weekend], right? It’s

shaping up to be an all day thing.

Heron: Yeah. It starts at 2 p.m. It

starts with the Dunk Xchange first. Then

we have Joey Bada$$, Mobb Deep, the

Soulection barbeque with Esta and Starro,

Chuck Strangers, Camp Lo, and I think we

just added Kaytranada.

That’s just the day?

Heron: Yeah. That’s just the daytime.

That’s just from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. at night.

mean, by 9 p.m. it’s gonna be pretty

much done.

Then at night-time at The Stage we got

Slum Village and Pete Rock, right?

Heron: Right.

Dead Prez is slated for Sunday?

Heron: Not only that, we just added a lot

more to Sunday. We added a performance

from Termology, a performance from

Wreckonzine from ¡MAYDAY!... Statik

Selektuh is going to do a DJ set.

MIAMI’S MUSIC

DillaWeekend Lineup

FRIDAY, FEB. 6 AT THE STAGE
TALIB KWELI BLACK MILK

SATURDAY, FEB. 7 AT LIMN
JOEY BADASS MOBB DEEP DILLA BIRTHDAY BBQ WITH ESTA AND STARRO CHUCK STRANGERS CAMP LO KAYTRANADA DILLAN DUNK XCHANGE

SATURDAY, FEB. 7 AT THE STAGE
SLUM VILLAGE PETE ROCK

SUNDAY, FEB. 8 AT THE STAGE
“MAKE EM NV” BEAT BATTLE DEAD PREZ
SPORTS

2015 Conference USA football schedule announced

JACOB SPIWAK
Staff Writer
jacob.spiwak@fiusm.com

After weeks of speculation over how the final schedule would look, Conference USA has finally unveiled their official football schedule for the 2015 season.

When it was announced that the University of Alabama at Birmingham was no longer carrying a football team, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte’s football team would be making the jump to Division I and joining C-USA, there were many different potential scenarios drawn up as to how the conference would align the divisions.

The final alignment has the Conference split into two divisions, East and West, made up of seven and six teams respectively. FIU split into two divisions, East and West, made possible by the conference realignments that took place in 2014.

Unlike last season (in which FIU opened its season on Saturday, Sept. 5, against in-state rival University of Central Florida. The last time these two teams met, UCF shut out FIU 38-0 in Miami. The Panthers will then travel to Bloomington, IN to take on the Indiana University Hoosiers. FIU will be looking to avenge their 38-10 loss at the hands of the Panthers earlier in the season.

FIU will return home the following week to play the Charlotte 49ers, marking the first time the Panthers will face their new C-USA opponent. Saturday, Nov. 14, may prove to be FIU’s toughest day of the season, going on the road to face Marshall, the reigning conference and Boca Raton Bowl champions. FIU will close out the season on Saturday, Nov. 21, with a home game against Western Kentucky.

The C-USA Championship will feature the winners of the East and West Divisions on Friday, Dec. 11. This game will be televised nationally on either ESPN or ESPN 2. The official television schedule for the conference will be announced on a later date.
National Signing Day adds 18 new Panthers

JACOB SPWAK
Staff Writer
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Starting Wednesday morning, high school athletes started signing their letters and officially joining their universities they plan to call home.

National Signing Day took place on Feb. 4, and FIU solidified their 2015 recruiting class.

First to sign with the Panthers Wednesday was Collin Olsen, a four-year letterman running back from Spruce Creek High School. A few hours and 17 commits later, First-Team All-Dade County cornerback Olin Cushion III from Miami Central High School was FIU’s last signee.

Head Coach Ron Turner was excited about this signing class for FIU’s last signee.

Rob Harley, who left to fill the same position at the University of Pittsburgh in January.

“Te’em is a bright, young defensive coach, who was a key part of our staff at Rutgers and at Tampa Bay,” said former NFL Head Coach Greg Schiano.

“Te’em has made a great fit for FIU and Head Coach Ron Turner.”

Lukabu served under Schiano for two years with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He was in charge of the defensive line in 2012 and the linebackers in 2013. He went on to coach the outside linebackers at the University of Tennessee in 2014 before arriving at FIU.

Coach Turner discussed the importance of having players sign who want to be part of the university.

“The group of athletes brought in can be key in helping the Panthers for the next four years.”

Turner said, “We addressed our roster’s depth, and helped get players that we think will have an immediate impact.”

When asked which players may see significant playing time early on in their careers, Turner said that the players at skill positions will have a great chance to contribute early on.

One of the players to look out for is wide receiver Anthony Jones from Miami Central High School.

The first one that comes to mind is Anthony Jones,” Turner said. “He’s a tremendous player.

You watch him film, and you see him making play after play after play. Very talented guy, and he’s here in the spring so that’ll help him a lot as well.”

Another player who enrolled early is Quarterback Christian Alexander from Lakeland Christian High School.

“Another player that spoke highly of him and the other quarterback commit from the 2015 class, Maurice Alexander from Booker T. Washington High School, and helped make this possible quarterback competition during the offseason.”

Lukabu was excited about the two quarterbacks, Christian Alexander and Maurice Turner, Alexander said, “I think they are both very good quarterbacks, and they’re going to come in and compete right away. That’s something that Alex [McGough] knows, as he came in last year and competed for the starting job.

I think both Alexander have something special, ability-wise, leadership-wise, and character-wise, they have what you’re looking for from a QB.”

The Panthers had an impressive signing class but they did lose out on players as well.

The most notable loss for FIU was when Safety Ocie Rose, one of FIU’s highest rated defensive recruits, decided to play at a different school.

Two weeks prior, former FIU offensive lineman commit Richard Williams dipped his commitment over to the Owls.

Turner was excited to have players sign who want to be part of the university.

“We want great guys who want to be here and believe in what we’re doing,” Turner said.

Including the three early enrollees and previously gray shirted cornerback Tyrone Johnson and preferred walk-on kicker/punter Stone Wilson, the Panthers 2015 class sits at 23 players.

Turner placed emphasis on recruiting in-state talent, and the team accomplished just that. 21 of the 22 players they sign are from Florida, nine out of Miami-Dade County.

Breaking down the class by position, there are two quarterbacks, two running backs, four wide receivers, one tight end, three offensive linemen, four defensive linemen, one Linebacker, five defensive backs.

Therefore, the season of snubbing for the NFL

ROB HARLEY
Contributing Writer

This past weekend was one of the biggest games of the entire regular season. However, the 2014 NFL Honors didn’t exactly reflect that.

Tis the season of snubbing for the NFL

DAVID DRUCKER
Contributing Writer

This is where the regular season awards were given, as the defensive player of the year, the offensive and defensive rookies of the year, the comeback player of the year and the Walter Payton Award winner, among others.

The most notable omission was the selection of Rob Gronkowski for the Most Valuable Player award.

“Gronk” was not even a finalist in the voting with Drew Brees, Tom Brady, and Jacoby Brissett being named for the award.

If a defensive player has no chance of winning, such as J.J. Watt, should have this season - even with having offensive statistics - then the award should be separated and an overall MVP should be awarded.

My vote for the MVP of the 2014-2015 NFL season was J.J. Watt.

The defensive player of the year award went to Rob Gronkowski.

This one is a personal vendetta, but I think it should have gone to the Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Jeremy Maclin.

Gronkowski played in 13 games during the 2013-2014 season at which point he was injured. Maclin missed the entirety of 2013 with a leg injury.

The following men were announced as finalists for the 2015 Pro Football Hall of Fame.

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My vote: Jeremy Maclin

2015 Super Bowl MVP
Winner: Tom Brady
My vote: Julian Edelman

2015 NFL MVP
Winner: Aaron Rodgers
My vote: J.J. Watt

2015 Pro Football Hall of Fame Inductees

Winners: Junior Seau, Tim Brown, Jerome Bettis, Charles Haley, Will Shields, Bruce Smith, Deion Sanders and Mick Tingelhoff.


It’s the season of snubbing for the NFL

RHYS WILLIAMS
Contributing Writer

This past weekend was a big weekend in the NFL.

While not the only big game of each football season--Super Bowl XLIX--but also the 4th annual National Football League Honors award.

This is where the regular season awards were given, as the defensive player of the year, the offensive and defensive rookies of the year, the comeback player of the year and the Walter Payton Award winner, among others.

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RHYS’ PIECE
FOOTBALL

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MAST @ FIU receives national award in STEM

CAMILA FERNANDEZ
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The school was selected from hundreds of high school applicants across the nation that offer a curriculum in STEM. They were evaluated based on their use of interdisciplinary curriculum, collaboration, design, problem solving and overall STEM experiences with real-world applications.

“It came as a complete surprise,” said the school’s principal Matthew Welker. “I went in with great interest regarding the announcement as to whether or not we were anywhere in the running,” he said.

Finalists in the high school division also included Chartiers Valley High School from Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, and Park City High School from Park City, Utah. According to Welker, the award was due to a successful partnership between M-DCPS and FIU.

The faculty involvement of the University’s School of Environment, Arts and Society enriches the academy’s academic experience, as well as student access to university resources such as internships, lectures and career exploration, said Welker.

“There are no partnerships that are just the academy. It’s a partnership that’s just going to get bigger and bigger,” said Roch.

“The minds that are over there – there’s just something about you in to want to work with these students and the faculty – there’s an energy in there,” Gutsche said.

“My vision as the principle of MAST @ FIU is to create the image that [the academy] is the absolute best high school in the nation,” Welker said. “What leverages that position and assumption is the ongoing relationship that we have with the University.”

According to Welker, the academy’s most exemplified relationship that we have with FIU.

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“Also, Roch said that MAST @ FIU and the University benefit from each other mutually, not just the academy.

“Our school centers its curriculum on science, technology, engineering and mathematics to provide students with a leading edge in the rigorous fields,” he said. “The team has been lifted by freshmen Silvia Scalia and Camila Quesnel, both of whom have competed in the CAMO International National Youth Championships. Scalia has proven to be a very important aspect of the team.

On Jan. 19, MAST @ FIU received the 2015 STEM Excellence Award at the 35th Annual Florida Education Technology Conference in Orlando, Florida. It was the only Florida school to be recognized.

The school was selected from hundreds of high school applicants across the nation that offer a curriculum in STEM. They were evaluated based on their use of interdisciplinary curriculum, collaboration, design, problem solving and overall STEM experiences with real-world applications.

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“Also, Roch said that MAST @ FIU and the University benefit from each other mutually, not just the academy.

“This award, at least to me, is an indication of the real passion of faculty and staff of MAST, as well as the pure brilliance of the students there,” he said.

Last year in October, over 50 hand-selected students from the school gathered at Miami Beach during King Tides Day when ocean tides are the highest around the world. This has led to massive floodings in South Florida.

Students built sensors called Coqui, that test water salinity. With the buzzing sensors, they participated in the public data collection of scientific information to investigate the effects of king tide.

“We had them all through Miami Beach – they were collecting samples, little water samples, to see what were the effects of the tides, of the water coming up on the streets,” Roch said.

“They were involved, their voices were being heard, they were able to build the sensors, go out in the field... They were responsible for a lot of parts of the whole process, and the kids enjoyed it,” he said.

Also, Roch said that MAST @ FIU and the University benefit from each other mutually, not just the academy.

“We always think that the students have the most to gain, but the professors also have access to our students and a potential student body,” Roch said.

“These students are going to be the future scientists or future leaders... So we want to work with FIU and hopefully it’s going to be a partnership that’s just going to get bigger and bigger,” he said.

Top swimmers earn Conference USA recognition

STEFANO RIVERA
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The swimming and diving team could not have ask for a better start to the season. Sitting at 10-0, the Panthers' have not only been one of the elite teams in Conference USA, but the nation as well. They seem to be hitting their stride as their regular season schedule comes to an end.

The team has been lifted by freshmen Silvia Scalia and Rebecca Zoeller. Scalia, a native from Italy, has been swimming for many years. In Italy, she participated in various events including the European Junior Championships, the Milan Trophy, and the Multination Games. She won a gold medal at the 2013 Summer National Youth Championships.

Scalia has proven to be a very important aspect of the team.

Quesnel, an Ontario native, is a nationally ranked diver and has competed in the CAMO International Invitational, Canadian Junior Elite Nationals and was named an alternate for Team Ontario in 2013. Quesnel proves to become an elite diver for the Panthers.

This past week, Scalia and Quesnel were named C-USA Swimmer and Diver of the Week, respectively.

This was Scalia’s fifth Swimmer of the Week award, setting a C-USA record. Quesnel has collected six Diver of the Week awards this season, becoming the fourth diver in C-USA history to achieve such a feat. Even more impressive is the fact that both of these athletes are only freshmen.

They accomplished this by putting up impressive performances against instate rivals Florida Atlantic University and the University of Miami.

On Friday, Jan. 30, Scalia participated and won in three events, two of which included the 200 medley relay and the 200 freestyle events against FAU. Scalia and her teammates would go on to defeat the Owls in both events in convincing fashion.

Quesnel scored a 293.02 in the one-meter dive, which was good for first place. Quesnel took second place in the three-meter dive with a score of 293.02 as well. This was good enough to defeat the Owls and record their ninth win of the season.

On Saturday, Jan. 31, Scalia continued to show her dominance as she faced UM. Scalia had a total of four wins, three individual and one medley.

As always, she was a threat in the backstroke event as she won the 100 and 200 events. She clocked in at 55.56 in the 100 and 2:00.23 in the 200.

Scalia’s final individual win of the day was in the 200 IM, where she posted a time of 2:04.89. The Panthers would sneak by the Hurricanes 150-149.

After impressive performances from Scalia and Quesnel this past weekend, the Panthers get to rest until the C-USA Championships on Wednesday, Feb. 18, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

For the first time in school history, the Panthers will pose as the biggest threat the Panthers have faced this season.

Scalia and Quesnel will need to bring out their best performances in order for the Panthers to succeed against the tough competition.