The Latin American and Caribbean Center, an institution within Florida International University, has partnered with the University of the Republic of Uruguay to conduct a research project on the legalization of marijuana in Uruguay.

Jorge Zumaeta, director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center, explained that the partnership was initiated to study how Uruguay approached the legalization of marijuana and to see how it would be measured against the standards of policy and other legal measures.

The partnership aims to analyze Uruguay’s experience with the legalization of marijuana and to compare it with the policies of other countries that have legalized marijuana. The research will cover the impact of legalization on public health, education, and public safety.

The goal of the initiative is to create a model for other countries to follow. The findings will be presented at a conference in Uruguay, and the report will be published in a scholarly journal.

The partnership is also an opportunity for students to participate in research and gain experience in the field. The research team is comprised of undergraduate and graduate students from FIU, who will work with their counterparts from the University of the Republic of Uruguay to conduct the research.

The research team is made up of students from various disciplines, including law, public policy, and social sciences. The students will be supervised by experienced faculty members who will guide them throughout the research process.

The research will be conducted over a period of two years, and the findings will be analyzed and presented in a conference in Uruguay in 2020. The report will be published in a scholarly journal, and the findings will be shared with other countries that are considering legalizing marijuana.

The partnership is an opportunity for students to gain valuable experience in research, and the findings will contribute to the global discussion on the legalization of marijuana.
Jordanian fighters strike Islamic State positions

Jordanian warplanes bombed suspected Islamic State hideouts in Syria in a show of the kingdom’s determination to maintain its presence in the U.S.-led coalition even as other U.S. allies hold back.

State-run Jordanian TV on Thursday said the royal air force carried out a mission without saying where. Arabiya TV said it was over Raqqah, the group’s de facto capital, in Syria.

The jets “rocked the cowardly terrorists in their holes and hideouts since the morning,” Jordan’s Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh posted on his Twitter account. The planes flew over the pilot’s hometown of Karak on their return as he, the king and other officials were with the father offering condolences, he said.

Former members of France’s military have joined Islamic State

At least 12 former members of the French military are among the estimated 1,000 French citizens who have joined the Islamic State group, including one highly trained special forces commander who was radicalized while working as a security contractor in the Persian Gulf, according to French officials and analysts as well as Arab security services.

One French intelligence official said the number is a reflection of France’s changing demographics, even though mandatory military service ended in France in 2001.

Torn apart by Tiananmen, father and son still fight for free speech in China

He spends his days under house arrest in a grungy west Beijing apartment block. Government minders track his every move and communication.

At age 82, Bao Tong has every right to be bitter. He once was a top dog in China’s Communist Party, but for a quarter-century, his former comrades have kept him on a leash.

Yet even when he recalls the seven years he spent in prison, mostly in solitary confinement, Bao shows few signs of anger. He exudes the air of a man who feels unshackled, even with the partial loss of his personal freedoms.

Legal battle expected in wake of status change for orca

A Puget Sound orca held for decades at Miami’s Seaquarium will gain the protection of the federal Endangered Species Act, a move expected to set the stage for a lawsuit from advocates seeking the whale’s release.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced Wednesday the decision to list Lolita as part of the southern resident killer whales of Puget Sound, which are already considered endangered under the federal act.

Whale activists, who petitioned for this status, have long campaigned for Lolita’s return to Puget Sound. They hope the listing will provide a stronger legal case for releasing Leisure than did a previous law suit that centered on alleged violations of the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act.

“This gives leverage under a much stronger law,” said Howard Garrett of the Whidbey Island-based Orca Network, which hopes a San Juan Island cove or mainland area, could become a netted area of the cove, Lolita calls for her to be taken to.

Orcas, also known as killer whales, are found in many parts of the world’s oceans. The southern resident population, which spends several months each year in Puget Sound, is the only group listed in the U.S. under the Endangered Species Act.

The controversy over releasing captive whales has been heightened by the experience of Keiko, a captive orca that starred in the 1993 movie “Free Willy,” about a whale that escaped to his native waters off Iceland to reintroduce him to life in the wild. That effort ended in 2002 when he died in a Florida aquarium.

Garrett, who visited Keiko in Iceland in 1999, said he was impressed by the reintroduction effort, and that there was plenty of evidence that Keiko was able to catch fish on his own.

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In decades to come we may well be defined as the “social media” generation. The ones who tell Facebook about our achievements, who judge our attractiveness by Instagram likes and find solidarity in Twitter hashtags. But the thing that makes social media so very addictive is the same thing that could cause – and already is causing – a very big societal problem.

I’m not pointing at the fact that when you go out in public, you’ll see more people with their eyes glued to their iPhone screen than you had conversations with each other. That is a big societal problem, yes, and one that frustrates me in unbellevable amounts. But I think there’s a deeper problem with the simplicity of social media – and it’s a problem because people don’t know it’s a problem.

Social media can make anyone an expert. It can do a huge amount of good – through the level of attention it can generate, it has the capacity to influence change for the better. One picture or one Twitter hashtag can cause global public interest and/or division, but doesn’t mean it is accurate. If only takes a few choice words to stir up controversy, and a lot of people who find themselves feeling strongly about that message in those few moments probably don’t feel strongly enough about it to actually look up all the facts and the whole story.

I read an excerpt from a book recently called “Made to Stick” by Dan and Chip Heath. It talks about a set of six principles that almost all “sticky” ideas have in common – six traits that make them memorable to others. The first one they mention is simplicity. Social media hands this to us on a plate. People browse social media during the breaks in their day, but they aren’t doing it to read lengthy articles or engage in discussions. That’s why there’s a character limit on Twitter and that’s why Instagram is for image purposes. Yet they are hugely popular.

You only have to look at the biggest current issues to see these principles in play. “Black Lives Matter” and “I can’t breathe” both relate to the race and police problems in the United States at the moment. Chances are, you don’t have to look up either of those phrases – you already know where they came from and what brought them to public attention – they “stuck” with you. As well as simplicity, they both use other principles mentioned by the Heath brothers – concreteness, emotion, story and credibility (the video footage from the Garner case). In just three words, five out of the six principles of sticky ideas are hit, and they’ve sparked a huge movement in the US.

“Weiss Charlie” is another example, which is trying to promote solidarity with freedom of speech following the horrific terrorist attacks in France. Not many people would have known anything about the Charlie Hebdo magazine, but this simple message allows them to show their support. In both cases, the support that has been generated is overwhelming and almost reassuring – clearly, there are people that care.

The problem I have is that when something so inextricably complicated – race, religion, freedom of speech – gets boiled down to three words, surely we are missing parts of the story. We as a society shouldn’t need issues to be made concrete with specific, targeted attacks or a face we can put a name to understand that there is a bigger issue there. Maybe we want to feel a part of something in a world that is leaving us increasingly detached from each other. But it shouldn’t take a three-word Twitter trend to get us to care.

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Aside from the obvious benefit of paying less at the pump, many FIU students will feel the effects of lower gas prices in ways that they perhaps did not expect.

While the president and many politicians on both sides of the isle rush to call this a “$750 tax break” for the average American, it is unknown. It actually comes down to simple economics. Fracking and horizontal wells have allowed American energy sector although the extent by which it does market price of oil to be at around $70 or more in order to forced to sell. This massive increase in supply is responsible reserves and empty tankers offshore in order to maintain current prices -- which hovers around $50 per barrel -- while American companies suffer.

This is because fracking is expensive and requires the market price of oil to be at around $70 or more in order to be profitable. In the long run, this will likely hurt the overall American energy sector although the extent to which it does is unknown.

Environmentalists are also concerned about falling oil prices. Many people look for higher fuel efficiency in their automobiles and appliances because they want to save money on fuel. While many Americans still care about the environment, lower oil prices will make it harder to justify paying more for a hybrid. The good news for them is that while prices have gone down, consumption has not gone up. This suggests changing trends in the way that Americans consume oil.

There are, however, even bigger losers. Our diverse student body will likely be affected by the fallout that this turn in oil prices will have in South America. The problem is that many economists believe that the Venezuelan economy will collapse this year. The government of that country calculated its budget based on $100 to $120 per barrel of oil. Petroleum exports account for 90 percent of Venezuela’s exports, so there is little doubt that this fall in prices will exacerbate many of the already rampant problems in Venezuelan society and lead the country to default on its debts.

In the event of economic collapse in Venezuela, it is likely that many other countries will suffer because of the interconnectivity of the Latin American economies. Undoubtedly, Cuba stands to lose the most as Venezuela is their largest trade partner and provides billions of dollars every year in humanitarian aid and oil.

This is perhaps the reason that the island’s government’s is so willing to work with the United States. Argentina, Bolivia and Jamaica will also likely see economic slowdown if the trade and aid from Venezuela were to cease. Argentina would probably be hit very hard because of their relationship with Venezuela through Mercosur. After Argentina refused to pay some of its debt last year, it will be very hard to find countries that are willing to give Argentina a loan with a payable interest rate.

While it might seem like so many stand to lose, it is important to remember that many of us stand to win. Most Americans will have a little extra cash to spend and this will likely stimulate the economy overall. That being said, don’t expect the low prices to last forever, they will rise again.

The questions are when, and by how much.

FRANK AND IRENE: Smugglers

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Symposium to celebrate Bob Marley

Amanda Rabines
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As a young child growing up in Jamaica, Michael Barnett, wanted to start a record collection of reggae music.

“I would eat some really dreadful food or a piece of cake because I wanted to buy lunch money to buy a vinyl,” said Barnett, a sociology professor who specializes in Caribbean culture and African diaspora studies. “I still have a few of those seven inches [records].”

Barnett grew up listening to reggae his father would play on his old turntable. He was in his pre-teens when his father would play classic Bob Marley albums such as Catch a Fire, an album released by The Wailers in 1973.

“He was big into music so maybe I got that from him,” Barnett said. “The seventies for me was the golden age of roots reggae, that’s when you had the culture, like the Mighty Diamonds and many other quality reggae groups.”

Today Barnett is a panelist at The Marley Symposium, an academic discussion seminar that was constructed to take a critical look at Marley’s life, music and message.

“It’s about having another look and another perspective about what Bob was about and what he had to offer to the world in general,” said Barnett. “It was more than ‘One Love’; it was about fighting against oppression, social injustice and fighting for equality.”

The Marley Symposium will be on March, 6 at 7 p.m. in WUC 155 at FIU Biscayne Bay Campus.

Including, Barnett, participating panelists are Jahabali Tafari, founder and editor of Roots Reggae and Kulcha Magazine, a local business in Hallandale Beach, Florida, and Roger Steffens an author and international multi-media lecturer who is known for having one of the world’s largest Bob Marley archive collections.

According to Barnett, Steffens will share rare footage of Marley.

“That’s a special treat for anyone who attends,” said Barnett. “It’s a big plus for students. It’s a look at an artist that’s very good.”

The symposium will also serve as a celebration of the artist’s life.

Friday, Feb. 6, as most Marley fans would know, would have been the artist’s 70th birthday and Barnett said he would celebrate in a cliché manner.

“Not to sound corny, but I intend to be listening to a lot of Bob Marley music,” said Barnett. “I’ll be going on the internet, seeing what documentaries are being shown and what interviews are being scheduled.”

Some key points that come up often when discussing Marley include his legacy as well as activism, the decriminalization of marijuana and his music.

All of which, Barnett has studied and familiarized himself with.

“One of the first things that comes up is the legalization of marijuana,” said Barnett. “The decriminalization of marijuana, the smoking of marijuana. Why is it so stigmatized? And why do people class it as a narcotic drug?”

He continues.

“Another topic that comes up is his message, regarding the fight against social injustice,” said Barnett. “The song ‘Get up, stand up for your right’ he co-wrote with Peter Tosh and ‘Get up stand up for your rights’ is about positive affirmation.”

The discussion will also tie Marley’s songs to Africa, neo-colonialism and the fight against oppression.

“Some people say that he was so revolutionary in his thinking, that the truth of the matter is he probably wouldn’t have lived till 70 anyway,” said Barnett. “I really wonder if the world would be a different place.”

Johnny Mnemonic: a movie so bad, it’s actually good

Released in 1995, directed by Robert Longo, with a screenplay by William Gibson (based on his own short story), the film stars Keanu Reeves as the titular character Johnny, playing a data trafficker in the year 2021. After overloading his brain with data, he must find a way to safely dispose of it before it seeps completely and kills him.

It’s a classic example of cyberpunk fiction in film, featuring cyberspace, weird fashions, a dystopian MegaCorp run world, and VCRs.

You can forgive the film for its outdated look at the internet and the future, or other things. However, you can’t forgive a film for strange direction, awkward acting, and a plot hole ridden story that makes almost no sense.

With all the wrong that “Johnny Mnemonic” does, I can’t help but like it. Maybe I’m just a sucker for the genre and the type of film it is, but something about it makes me enjoy it all the way through.

From the visuals to the soundtrack to the overall concept, it’s a film that’s become somewhat of a cult favorite for a reason. Whether it’s the hammy acting by Dolph Lundgren, the not-eventhworth-talking-about plot, Ice-T, or Keanu Reeves screaming about room service, there is a certain charm to “Johnny Mnemonic.”

P.S. If you watch this film and genuinely like it, you can look up the rarely seen Japanese cut, which is almost ten minutes longer, has a different soundtrack, features more screen time by famous Japanese actor Takeshi, and uses alternate shots of scenes, among other differences.
First annual Rolling Loud ‘mega-concert’ to be on Feb. 28 in Miami

VINCENT RIVES
Staff Writer
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It’s springtime in Miami. As the days get warmer and the sands of South Beach fill up, the Ultra promoters show up in full force: girls in eccentric outfits, flying banners and EDM tunes blaring from speakers, reminding beach-goers that Festival season has returned.

We had this nice oak bar, this kegerator that fit two kegs, and a 120-inch projector screen to watch football games on.

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Addition of quarterbacks may lead to competition

JACOB SPIWAK
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National Signing Day saw FIU get a lot of new, exciting talent on both sides of the ball. Along with the optimism this day brings to coaches, players and fans alike, it also brings controversy about which true freshmen may have a chance to win a starting job from players already on the roster.

Specifically, one of the positions where there is at least a possibility of a new starter is at quarterback.

Sophomore Alex McGough took over that spot in his true freshman season last year, and is expected to start when the season opener rolls around on Saturday, Sept. 5 against the University of Central Florida.

Alexander was a five year starter in high school who finished fifth in the history of Florida in career touchdown passes with 110 and ninth in career passing yards with 8,299. Coach Turner has spoken very highly about him, and really likes what he offers the Panthers.

“He’s a very smart, instinctive guy and a natural leader,” Turner said. “He has everything that we are looking for in a quarterback.”

The other quarterback commit of FIU’s 2015 class is Maurice Alexander from Booker T. Washington High School. Alexander was named First-Team All Dade County, and led Booker T. Washington to a state championship with a perfect 15-0 record this past season. He was also named Second-Team All Dade County in his junior season.

“He came into camp and everyone said ‘he’s too short and he doesn’t weigh enough’,” Turner said. “I saw him walk out on the field, and I knew he had the it-factor you look for in a quarterback. Then I saw him throw and I said ‘that’s enough, let’s offer this kid.’”

McGough, the current starter, is coming off a fairly decent true freshman season. He completed just over half his passes for 1,680 yards, 14 touchdowns, and 10 interceptions.

After officially winning the job from E.J. Hilliard a few weeks into the season, he started to grow into his role and showed a lot of progression as the season went on.

As much as McGough improved over the course of the season, one of the Alexanders very well may challenge him for that starting spot. Coach Turner has shown his willingness to let a true freshman start at quarterback, and his comments in the post-Signing Day press conference hint at a potential quarterback competition this offseason.

“The Alexanders are going to come in and compete right away,” Turner said. “That’s something that Alex [McGough] knows, as he came in last year and competed for the starting job.

However, he will have to beat out two dual-threat players who were recently added to the roster to retain his position.

The first of the new quarterbacks on the roster is Christian Alexander, an early enrollee from Lakeland Christian High School.

Christian Alexander, an early enrollee from Lakeland Christian High School.

“[The Alexanders are] 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.”

Ron Turner
FIU Football

COACH EVANS

Looking forward to March Madness

JORGE CORRALES
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March Madness is just around the corner and college basketball’s best teams are laceing up their dancing shoes.

For those who don’t know, March Madness is a term used in college basketball to describe the post season tournament; it is also sometimes referred to as “The Big Dance.”

In total, 68 teams get invited to dance in this single-elimination tournament. Teams can get in by winning their regular season conference title, winning their conference tournament or being invited as an at-large participant.

Tournament games take place all over the country until the “Final Four” which will be played at Lucas Oil Stadium in Houston, Texas.

With just a few weeks left in the regular season, the University’s men’s basketball team finds itself floating around .500 and living in the middle of the pack in the Conference USA standings.

Despite outstanding play from both Dennis Mavin and Adrian Diaz, it is unlikely that the Panthers will receive an at-large bid to the tournament.

The only C-USA to ever win the NCAA tournament was Texas Western University, now referred to as UTEP.

Their only hope will be to make a run in the C-USA tournament and earn the automatic bid.

The Panthers only have one tournament title in their history. They earned a bid in 1995 when they won the Trans Atlantic Athletic Conference (now the Atlantic Sun Conference) tournament. They entered the tournament as a 16 seed and fell to eventual champion UCLA by a score of 92-56.

They got close again in 2013. The Panthers, then members of the Sun Belt Conference, entered the conference tournament as the four seed.

They were one game away from a potential upset before losing to Western Kentucky in the conference championship game.

That would be the Panthers’ final run in the Sun Belt Conference as they made the switch to C-USA the following year.

Joe Lunardi or ESPN predicts only two C-USA teams in the tournament: Old Dominion (7-4) and Louisiana Tech (7-6).

C-USA has a storied history in basketball.

The chart shows the Panthers’ struggles and coaching changes over the last decade.

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Mike Loccisano/The Beacon

COACH EVANS

Head coach Anthony Evans speaks to the men’s basketball team during the game against University of Texas at San Antonio. The Panthers lost against UTSA 63-74.

Jorge Corrales/The Beacon

Finer points in the conference tournament for the Panthers. The team is looking for an at-large bid to the tournament.

Steve Perrin/The Beacon

The chart shows the Panthers’ struggles and coaching changes over the last decade.

Aubrey Ellis/The Beacon

Four years after the entrance into the Conference USA, the Panthers are still looking for the first tournament bid.
Women’s tennis suffers first loss of the season

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The FIU women’s tennis squad faltered against the Penn State Quakers (2-0), 4-1 on Friday at the Hecht Tennis Center in Philadelphia.

The loss signified the first loss of the season for the Panthers, who were undefeated heading into the match against the Quakers.

The lone bright spot for the Panthers came in the form of junior Kaiflin Borozvich. In the match, Borozvich claimed her 12th singles victory of the season and the second of the spring, defeating Lina Qostal of Penn State in consecutive sets 6-3, 6-2.

Borozvich’s victory would represent the Panthers’ sole point in the match against the Quakers.

The meet against Penn State did not begin the way the Panthers had envisioned, however, as they dropped two of the three doubles matches.

The duo of Borozvich and senior Yana Koroleva defeated the Quaker pair of Sonya Latycheva and Luba Vazhenina, 6-2 in the first doubles match.

From there, though, the Penn State Quakers rallied to take the following two doubles matches and claimed the doubles point.

Trailing 1-0 heading into singles play, the Panthers looked to its players to spark a rally of their own, hoping to earn a come-from-behind victory.

Unfortunately, the Quakers claimed the first two singles matches at a 3-0 lead before Borozvich defeated Qostal to make the score 3-1.

The Penn State Quakers finished off FIU when Sol Eskanazi defeated Koroleva in three sets, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1. Eskanazi’s victory ended the match with the Quakers defeating the Panthers by a final score of 4-1.

The tennis team will look to rebound against a warm St. John’s University in Jamaica, New York, on Saturday, February 7.

The Red Storm defeated Fairfield University 5-2 in their first match of the season before collapsing against Columbia University.

The Red Storm then swept LIU Brooklyn, 7-0, to claim their second win of the season. The first serve is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

2014-2015 Heat Season: a buzzkill we will all get used to

It wasn’t bad to begin with this year; the Heat was 5-2 at one point and Chris Bosh was earning every cent of his top-dollar contract. Shawne Williams even looked like the second coming of Ray Allen for a stretch.

All was well, but it was not going to last. The Heat was 11-12, but even its dominant play has not been enough to get its team even close to .500.

Now, the Cavaliers are riding the NBA’s best winning streak and are the third seed in the East. Sure, David Blatt still does questionable things from time to time and Cleveland still relies heavily on isolation offense but they are getting it done.

The Cavaliers have too much sheer talent for failure. The Miami Heat, however, can’t get enough players working together to maintain a ten-point lead over the Timberwolves.

The worse part of it all, The Heat has no quick fix. A stroke of luck came along in the emergence of Hassan Whiteside, but even his dominant play has not been enough to get his team even close to .500.

His team needs upgrades at point guard, depth at shooting guard and better scorers on the wings. If the day comes when Wade returns, Bosh finds himself again, and Whiteside continues to produce, then the Heat may be one of the better teams in the East again – if that day ever comes.

Now that Miami is just clinging on to a playoff seed in the NBA’s weaker conference, the concept of “every game will count” is no longer some misdirected sense of hope for fans anymore – it’s a reality that the Heat have to deal with.

Until the next free agency extravaganza in 2016, Miami Heat fans should be prepared. There will be plenty of back-and-forth, a ton of missed opportunities and an overwhelming abundance of normal.

March Madness approaching quickly, teams prepare

March Madness, Page 6

March Madness is always looking for talented and reliable individuals to join the staff. If you have an interest in writing, photography or even grammar, don’t be shy.

Stop by one of our offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124 or apply at fiusm.com.
LLK Center hosts leadership webinar

CAMILA FERNANDEZ
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Still today, men continue to dominate the media industry. Despite challenges, women journalists too are advancing and playing important roles in the field.

To demonstrate their growing influence, the Lillian Lodge Kopehnaver Center for Advancement of Women in Communication will host a webinar with guest speaker NBC News Vice President of News Partnerships, Dianne Festa.

As part of a monthly leadership series, the center aims to motivate and provide students, particularly women, with tools to become transformational leaders in communications.

In the field.

The webinar will be held live at the center, but for those who are unable to come can also follow the discussion through its website link. There will be a moderator and students can ask Festa questions directly online.

Around that time, Festa was also the Weekend News Manager. She was responsible for coordinating worldwide news coverage for NBC News. She has also served as the acting bureau chief in Amman, Jordan during the Persian Gulf War.

According to Sigal Seglev, associate director at the LLK Center, the leadership series provides valuable insight for students from those who have climbed the ladder in their respective careers.

Seglev said that journalism students and all other communications majors can learn much about their fields of interest, especially since they are similar to each other in the media industry.

“Students are very different, yet they share many aspects. It is relevant to any student that seeks a career no matter what discipline they choose in the end,” Seglev said. “(Students) can learn from a leader in their field that achieved a lot in their career.”

Recently, as Vice President of the News Partnerships team, Festa has leveraged the department’s relationship with its affiliated stations.

She has also increased local participation on NBC News projects and prime stories such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina.

The webinar will be held live at the center, but for those who are unable to come can also join the discussion through its website link. There will be a moderator and students can ask Festa questions directly online.

Isracl Enriquez, a senior recreation sports manager major, agrees that women continue to triumph in the journalism field. Interested in sports news broadcasting, Enriquez said there continue to be more female sports reporters.

He also said students can learn from leaders like Festa who have a can-do attitude.

“She’s probably worked hard to get where she’s at, so I think what they can learn from that is to not give up on your dreams and keep fighting for it,” said Enriquez. “Women are on the rise.”

The webinar will take place Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Bisacay Bay Campus in the Academic 2 Building room 252. Participants can also use the link: https://connect.fius.edu/llkcenter to view the webinar in real-time.

Admission is free.