Students at the University are engaging in research that helps the United States Department of State draft policies.

The research is conducted through the Diplomacy Lab, a project created under the collaboration of the University’s Latin American and Caribbean Center, the Applied Research Center and the U.S. State Department.

According to José Miguel Cruz, visiting assistant professor of politics and supervisor of the Diplomacy Lab, the program started in the spring semester of 2014 and serves as an opportunity for students to conduct research on topics that are of interest to the U.S. Department of State in developing activities and proposing policies.

Cruz’s duties involve supervising the student researchers as they undertake their semester-long research project. The group is comprised of both undergraduates and graduate students who may have knowledge on the research topic in question as a result of their academic interests.

He admits that the Lab takes an interdisciplinary approach when selecting candidates, looking for students in a variety of academic disciplines who may provide diverse pieces of knowledge. Since the program is fairly new to the University, faculty members of the LACC identify students who they consider to be outstanding examples of people who can contribute to the research efforts of the Diplomacy Lab.

Working with the Lab provides its student researchers an opportunity for them to be involved in an effort that opens doors for interaction with officials from the U.S. Department of State.

These interactions take the form of phone calls and video conferences between the officials and students, through which they discuss the progress of their project.

The papers that the student researchers compile may range from 15 to 60 pages.

According to Cruz, the University is one of only three institutions of higher learning in the country that are partnering with the Department of State for these research efforts.

The second other institutions are the College of William and Mary and the University of Virginia.

Students shared their thoughts.

“This program is the sort of thing that I feel more students should know about, especially considering that many people here are interested in what’s going on around the world,” said Jasmine Rodriguez, a senior history major.

Cruz stated that this partnership benefits the University to the extent that it allows students to have direct interaction with issues on an international scope and provides students a chance to understand how our globalized country functions and interacts with other nations and cultures.

While the Department of State provides the LACC with a list of research topics, the members of the department are in charge of deciding the topic for the semester.

The first semester of the program saw the examination of issues dealing with prisons in Latin America, and the second semester covered the issue of gender-based violence in the Caribbean.

This year the topic deals with judiciary reform in Latin America.

In choosing the topics, the directors of the Diplomacy Lab take into consideration the capabilities of the University’s faculty and its ability to contribute its expertise on the research topic.

Taking into consideration the security and governance program it offers, the LACC chose this year’s topic in order to further understand a related issue.

Usually, the research involves literature reviews of online and print sources. Rarely do the student researchers rely on interviews.

“Because of the diversity of our faculty and our students [this] opens a lot of opportunities to get deeper on the issues that are in the interests of the State Department,” Cruz said.

Spearheaded by University students, a project on sea level rise will soon be broadcast on television.

The project, titled, “Eyes on the Rise,” was completed by students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and will be broadcasted by WPBT and YouTube.

Work on the sea level rise project started when the documentary “South Florida’s Rising Seas,” produced by University journalism professors Katherine MacMillin and Juliet Pinto, aired on WPBT in January 2014.

After the program aired, MacMillin and Pinto worked on the project with two other University professors, Susan Jacobson and Ted Gutsche Jr., to apply for the “2014-2015 Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education” micro-grant.

The professors were awarded $35,000 from the micro-grant and the University became one of thirteen colleges to have obtained the grant.

Among the organizations that provide the funding for the grant are the Online News Association, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, the Excellence and Ethics in Journalism Foundation and the Rita Allen Foundation and the Democracy Fund.

“We created a project titled eyesontherise.org and we set out to create new curricula for the SJMC that would become the beginning of new classes on how to communicate sea level rise,” MacMillin said. “Since my background is in television production I thought we should try to collaborate with WPBT.”

On the project, the professors allowed groups of students to select and work on a sub-topic of sea level rise to document it using science-based journalism in multimedia platforms.

“During my drive to FIU’s Biscayne Bay Campus, I saw some street flooding in North Miami Beach Boulevard and stopped to take pictures and uploaded them to the website of the project,” said Luis Castro, a senior majoring in Journalism.

In addition, Duke suggested that MacMillin do a half-hour program in primetime at the end of April with the best pieces.

Students offered their opinions, citing that projects like these provide real-world experience.

“I think that any work at school is encouraging because it gives you experience to apply in the many aspects outside of school,” said Angela Abdala, a senior journalism and marketing major.

By airing the product of the effort of the students, WPBT creates awareness for other students who are not aware of the consequences of sea level rise.

“As for now, I am not concerned at all about sea level rise because I am not aware of the situation as much as I should,” Abdala said.

Others, on the other hand, are worried about the issue.

“I am concerned with sea level rise,” Castro said. “I live in an area of Kendall that is prone to flooding.”

The YouTube series will be uploaded by the middle of November and the half-hour program will air at the end of April.

“Many of us feel the responsibility to help educate our public and the students. By educating the students we are helping the students educate their families and communities about the impact of sea level rise,” MacMillin said.
NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Ukraine crisis dominates Western powers, Russia

Islamic State extremists said Friday that the United Nations has resumed peace talks as part of the U.S.-led coalition attacking militant targets that has killed an American female hostage, an assertion greeted with deep skepticism in Washington and Amman.

In a statement posted on a Twitter account, the radical group said the Jordanian bombardment hit a compound where the hostage, Kayla Mueller, 26, a humanitarian worker, was being held near the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, an Islamic State stronghold.

"The crusader criminal air force struck a site outside of Raqqa city today at noon during Friday prayers, and the strikes lasted for one hour," said the Islamic State message. "And we have confirmed the death of the American hostage by bombs that fell on the site."

Yemen rebels assume control in Sanaa; US resumes drone strikes

Amid deepening political turmoil here, the United States has resumed drone strikes against al-Qaeda’s most feared franchise without seeking approval from the Shiite Muslim rebels who have tightened their control of a government once considered a close American ally.

The insurgents, known as Houthis, dissolved Yemen’s parliament Friday and announced plans to set up interim bodies to run the government, a move that opponents said amounted to a coup.

The capital was calm but tense as the Houthis seized the presidential palace and put U.S.-backed President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi under house arrest on Jan. 22, leading him and his Cabinet to tender their resignations.

Parents of American hostage seek private contact

Parents of the captured American hostage are requesting a private diplomatic briefing from the U.S. government.

Serious tension continued an international security conference Saturday as the United States and its allies traded blame with Russia for the fighting in eastern Ukraine, fueling uncertainty about a new diplomatic effort by France and Germany to end the worst violence in five months.

The differences were underlined in tense speeches and a burst of derisively undiplomatic language that greeted Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s claim that Russia’s annexation of Crimea last year followed a legitimate vote held under the gun of thousands of Russian troops and unrecognized internationally—for self-determination.

HBO Go service offered to students living on campus

University students who live on campus now have another entertainment option to take advantage of. All housing students now have free access to HBO GO, according to an email sent to all students living on campus on Tuesday, Feb. 3.

The discussion to make the service readily available to students came from the National Association of College Auxiliaries conference in the fall, when Joe Pauklick, director of HBO, approached HBO representatives and asked if there were any new service developments that were being offered for students.

Following the conference and update on HBO GO being offered in other college and university campuses around the United States, it took around five months to make the service available to the University.

During this time, authentication of the program took place and practice runs were conducted to check on connection to the HBO network.

According to Pauklick, who joined the Housing department in October of last fall, students living on campus now have had access to HBO GO for around five years, with the chance to see about four or five of the network’s channels, as they are the only ones currently offered by the Housing department to its students for free.

As Pauklick described it, HBO GO offers users the chance to have access to films, shows and documentaries featured by the network.

Housing students can access the service directly from their computers, iPhones, Androids, Apple TV, and even gaming devices, such as Xbox.

Those using their computer, iPad, or Android device can even have access to the HBO GO service off-campus.

Pauklick admitted that he actively looks to expand opportunities for students at the University, and providing HBO GO for free is a way of doing this.

He also admitted that despite the fact that the Housing department doesn’t always receive positive emails from students, the offering of this new service has created an opportunity to receive emails on a more regular basis, explaining that students have thanked the department for the additional entertainment option.

Some students shared their thoughts.

“It’s always cool to have new ways of entertaining yourself,” said Hannah Torres, a sophomore in communication arts major. “The University has a lot of fun resources for people to stay active, but it never hurts to just relax in bed and watch television.”

According to Pauklick, the new service is an addition to the already large variety of options that students have to keep them entertained, such as Netflix, Spotify and iTunes Radio.

He also reiterated the fact that this new service is free to housing students and that the prices of the University’s housing options have not increased as a result of its offering.

He hopes to add more entertainment options to students living on campus, such as High Definition sports channels and internet radio, a service that he admits several students have requested in the past.

A message from FIU Housing: Just a reminder that Fall 2015 Housing Agreements are due by Saturday, February 14th, if you want to participate in Room Selection.

Along with receiving notice from the FIU Housing office about their access to the HBO Go services, students who currently live in housing got text messages warning them that the last day to turn in housing agreements will be Saturday, Feb. 14.

SJMC hosts international event

Program in Media, Communication and Information and Culture hosts annual conference.

The next day, Saturday, Feb. 14, is expected to be a more hands-on day at Lab Miami in the Wynwood Arts District. There will be talks on new media technologies and learning tools and skill-sharing sessions. It will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Mahlia Hernandez, a junior public relations major, thinks that this event will be an opportunity for all students to learn about the importance of social media and journalism today.

She said that Miami is the right city to host the event since it is the hub of Latin Americans. “We are more connected to each other, not only here, but in Latin America, Europe, Asia,” said Hernandez. “[Technology] is getting everybody even better connected and we are just more advanced in what is happening right now.”

Tickets for the general public are $45 and $20 for University students. Registration is available at http://www.mediamartymiami.com.

THE BEACON.

E-BOARD AND PRODUCTION STAFF

Editor-in-Chief
Janette Reyes
BBC Managing Editor
Carla Fernandez
Production Manager
Conor Reyes
News Director
Adrian Suarez Avila
Asst. News Director
Seth Gekkens
Micah Montes
Sports Director
Jose Contreras
Asst. Sports Director
Almeida Almeida
Entertainment
Ahimsa Rogers
Director of Student Media
Marcelo Dui Drago
Business Manager
Carrie Gusi
Director of Student Affairs
Robert Jones
Asst. Director of Student Media
Ahnousa Seth

CONTACT INFORMATION
Medrano Madrile Campus: GE 210, Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-5 PM p (305) 348-3799 n news@fiusm.com Biscayne Bay Campus: WSC 124, Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-5 PM p (305) 919-4722 n bbc@fiusm.com
Fax (305) 348-2712 Email-in-a-Croft (305) 348-1500 philip@fiusm.com Advertising (305) 348-4694 n advertising@fiusm.com

THE BEACON.

Along with receiving notice from the FIU Housing office about their access to the HBO Go services, students who currently live in housing got text messages warning them that the last day to turn in housing agreements will be Saturday, Feb. 14.

SJMC hosts international event

MEDIA PARTY, PAGE 8

coming from Latin America, even in terms of using databases and using information to give more access to people and more access to information,” Reis said. “I really want the students to be a part of that, not only the journalism and mass communication students, but all students.”

The first day of the event will be held Friday, Feb. 13 at the Koren Center on the Biscayne Bay Campus from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. There will be talks, workshops and networking with the media industry.

The next day, Saturday, Feb. 14, is expected to be a more hands-on day at Lab Miami in the Wynwood Arts District. There will be talks on new media technologies and learning tools and skill-sharing sessions. It will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Mahlia Hernandez, a junior public relations major, thinks that this event will be an opportunity for all students to learn about the importance of social media and journalism today.

She said that Miami is the right city to host the event since it is the hub of Latin Americans. “We are more connected to each other, not only here, but in Latin America, Europe, Asia,” said Hernandez. “[Technology] is getting everybody even better connected and we are just more advanced in what is happening right now.”

Tickets for the general public are $45 and $20 for University students. Registration is available at http://www.mediamartymiami.com.
Visual art to be enjoyed by the visually impaired

PABLO TORRES
Contributing Writer
opinion@fiusm.com

Although museums can be places that some people struggle to go, they pretend, through different ways of creativity, to promote the message that everybody has the right to approach art. But, do we all have the same accessibility to art?

Have you ever wondered what happens when a visually impaired person wants to visit a museum? How would the experience be for them? Do museums provide supply for this kind of demand?

Well, in their new project, the Prado Museum of Art in Madrid, has broken the limits of visual art by implementing, through Didú technology, a way to admire this same art in a sensory way.

The Museum has opened an exhibition called “Hoy toca el Prado” (Touch the Prado today), where the religious painting, the mythology, the genre painting, the portrait and the still life are the genres reproduced on versions of relief with textures and volumes of up to six millimeters, that through touch are accessible for the first time to visually impaired people.

Vélezquez’ “La Fragua de Vulcano,” Goya’s “El Quitasol,” da Vinci’s “La Gascendra” and Greco’s “El Caballero de la Mano en el Pecho” are some of the paintings included on the exposition.

The museum also offers dark sight-impeding glasses to those who have normal vision in order for them to live the experience.

The project, which has been developed in collaboration with professionals in visual disability, also includes braille panels, information boards and audio support guides complimenting the tactile exploration of the paintings.

Since going to a museum is an activity of just a few, I believe this is an initiative worthy of recognition. This is what art is all about: creating; and in its different ways of expression, it should be accessible for everyone to live of public.

The most offensive word of the 90’s

JEAN-PAUL BOSQUE
Contributing Writer
opinion@fiusm.com

We live in a society that the concept of individualism has been pushed so much that it’s become mainstream to be an individual. So much so, that conformity is an out of the box concept.

We no longer tell you how to dress or how to act (or so you think). We let you be “you” and not care what others have to say about it.

We as a society value the “I” in Individuality so much that it has become the common but mainstream to be an individual. So pushed so much that it’s become a museum? How would the right to approach art. How would the accessibility to art?

Have you ever seen something on your mind? Send your thoughts (400 words maximum)

Send us your letters

The opinions presented within this page do not represent the views of the Beacon Editorial Board. These views are separate from editors and reflect individual perspectives of contributing writers and members of the University community.

There’s no denying that issues dealing with the LGBTQ+ community comprise some of the modern day’s top hot button topics. Specific concern to some individuals are the issues within the realm of transgender rights.

After the publishing of a Miami Herald article announcing the University’s plans to turn a storage closet in the Graham Center into a single-stall gender neutral bathroom, reader responses ranged from enthusiasm to rage, expressing particular outrage at the idea of a restroom specifically for transgender individuals.

Wherever one finds oneself along the gender spectrum, it is important to understand that these bathrooms are gender neutral; free to be used by anyone regardless of gender identity.

Like many social issues that dominate discussion forums throughout the country, the topic of gender neutral bathrooms may require people to step back from their personal prejudices and place themselves in the shoes of those who identify as transgender.

What we believe these bathrooms provide is not an unfair advantage to people who are transgender, but an opportunity for these individuals to feel comfortable using a bathroom that doesn’t require that they reveal the gender identity that they may hide from public scrutiny. Taking this into consideration, the University’s efforts to provide gender neutral bathrooms in the rec center, housing complexes, and GC aim to further the right direction to transform the University into a more inclusive environment for all.

However, when taking one step forward, some feel the need to take two steps back.

Frank Artiles, a Florida Representative proposed a bill titled HB 583 that seeks to demand that people use only restrooms and other facilities designated for the sex which they were assigned at birth.

While some may argue that making accommodations for transgender individuals creates opportunities for, say, a cisgender female (a woman whose gender identity matches the sex she was assigned at birth) to enter a men’s bathroom, Frank Artiles’ amendment suggests that the argument that she “feels like a man” on a given day, others believe that there are other options more effective than Artiles’ proposal.

Community and family bathrooms that already exist can be used as an example. In these, there is usually one toilet, a sink, diaper changing table and an enormous amount of space to accommodate parents if they are traveling with children.

Trans-friendly bathrooms don’t have to be as big. They can be created as a single restroom featuring a toilet and a urinal, or a series of these in order to accommodate more individuals. When it comes to crime, there are people who already take advantage of others to commit sex crimes in public restrooms. One way to keep the public safe in general is to put cameras outside the restrooms to discourage any violent acts, a precaution that should be taken towards all individuals.

Frank Artiles’ bill needs to be re-addressed. There is a need to create restrooms that are gender neutral, free to be used by anyone of gender identity.

EDITORIAL POLICY

effectual 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.
Homophobia in Hispanic culture

Vanessa Martinez / The Beacon

Homophobia is love," said Trigoura. "I wish

The Beacon –  4 Wednesday, February 11, 2015

With the number of apps skycracking in the smartphone world today, Snapchat remains on the top for its photo-sharing maap

However, with the newest inclusion of the “Discover” feature, it displays a collaboration of various

storytelling formats from world-class leaders of media around the globe, the experience for some users may not turn out to be what they expected.

Unlike the majority of most popular and recent content seen on social media, the feature enables one to come to face with what is important within the stories.

It is supposed to be a form of engaging with the latest editions of flattering layouts, advertising and, of course, interesting selections of videos and photos.

Although these details may sound enticing, apparently that may not be the case for certain artists who would hope to accommodate to the changes made towards the creative community.

The addition to this multimedia craze has eliminated the “Best Friends” feature which shows the user which people they have interacted with the most.

This idea takes away from informing them other on who else they have sent snaps to.

This could mainly apply to significant others that are wary about their partners skipping photos or video clips to people they are suspicious about.

It might just be a good thing for those that want to remain mysterious while going crazy when it comes to communicating with a certain someone.

Natalie Pacheco, a current student majoring in Art at FIU, uses Snapchat every day. She says she could have done without the updates.

“I don’t like that new Discovery (sic) news channel. It really slows down the app, and it kills your battery like crazy,” Pacheco said.

While frowning upon the new channels on Snapchat, Pacheco mentions her fondness of one of the recent additions in the app.

Snapchat has included Geo-filters which come with a variety of overlays that can be accessed when the user is in a certain location.

For example, students located at the MMC campus while accessing the app would see one saying “Welcome to Westchester” with the Miami-Dade County Community label at the bottom of it.

Snapchat can now become a more personalized experience, but with that it has also become a more open one, thanks to the new stories added to the app last year.

Some stories famously known are Miami’s Yeyi & Wasi’s, with over 30,000 views per day, according to the 305.com and Jared Leto (@JaredLeto) for his decorative self-portraits.

Fun snapchats can make up for some who may not be too pleased with the Discover channel features, but even before the update happened Snapchat remains an addictive less-than-10 second-escape from reality.

Dr. Sharon Simon of the University of Miami’s College of Nursing and Health Sciences explains to students the dangers of sexual activity while under the influence of alcohol and drugs at the Sex Carnival on Wednesday, Feb. 4.

I think educating people is an important step. Most people are afraid of the unknown; some people don’t even know what bisexual is,” said Mendoza.

“So, when you tell them you’re bisexual, or homosexual, or demi-sexual, they just think it’s weird and make fun of it.

Education and teaching is a key step in breaking down barriers.”

Through acceptance and education we can rid our community of these prejudices. And it’s not one of those abstract goals whose results we won’t witness in our lifetime, but something we are already beginning to witness within our generation and the way popular culture is beginning to have more representative LGBT characters in shows and films. It is possible.

*Last name was changed.

THE BEACON  |  Wednesday, February 11, 2015  |  LIFE!  |  fiusm.com

SAFE IS SEXY

Vanessa Martinez Contributing Writer

PRIDE GUIDE

Growing up in Miami, it was always obvious within the Hispanic culture that homophobia was present itself in the form of machismo - an intense obligation to “manhood” or from the quotidien slurs used to disparage gays and lesbians.

When asked to give an example of when she’s witnessed homophobia in the Hispanic culture, Delshina Trigoura, a junior and environmental science major, said “The typical machista telling his son that he needs to be a ‘man’. Or my own mom telling me ‘you like woman, (she points at the dog bowl) and tells me to get to feeding my dogs’ (sic) because those will be the only children I will have and should have because a child does not deserve two women raising him/her. Also, I know friends who have been kicked out of their home for their sexuality preferences. I have three that have been [kicked out].”

But, where does this homophobia come from? Is it just a vestige of an older mindset, or is it firmly intertwined with the Hispanic milieu?

“I think that religion plays a huge role in most people [homophobic Hispanics] using the bible to defend themselves. Most Hispanics are Catholic or Christian, so they tend to not be as open-minded about different sexualities and ways of life,” Nadine Mendoza* said, a junior and music journalism major.

Religion is, and has been, an important aspect of daily life for most Latinos. I grew up with several copies of the Bible in my home; and in my grandmother’s house there were small shrines to different saints, like San Lazaro and La Virgen de Guadalupe. Religion, specifically Christianity, is an integral part of the culture.

According to a Pew research study conducted on Hispanics across the United States, their data said “nearly seven-in-ten (89 percent) of U.S.-born Hispanics.”

However, the religious indoctrination which is losing zeal with the younger generations makes the coming out process more difficult.

But what can be done remedy homophobia? “Accept, Accept that love is love,” said Trigoura. “I wish it kills your battery like crazy,”

While frowning upon the new channels on Snapchat, Pacheco mentions her fondness of one of the recent additions in the app.

Snapchat has included Geo-filters which come with a variety of overlays that can be accessed when the user is in a certain location.

For example, students located at the MMC campus while accessing the app would see one saying “Welcome to Westchester” with the Miami-Dade County Community label at the bottom of it.

Snapchat can now become a more personalized experience, but with that it has also become a more open one, thanks to the new stories added to the app last year.

Some stories famously known are Miami’s Yeyi & Wasi’s, with over 30,000 views per day, according to the 305.com and Jared Leto (@JaredLeto) for his decorative self-portraits.

Fun snapchats can make up for some who may not be too pleased with the Discover channel features, but even before the update happened Snapchat remains an addictive less-than-10 second-escape from reality.

*Last name was changed.

WANT TO BE A REPORTER? JOIN THE BEACON! APPLICATONS: GC 210 WUC 124 FIIUSM.COM MMC: 305.348.2709 BBC: 305.919.4722
Wachowskis’s overly ambitious in Jupiter Ascending

I love science-fiction. In film, in video games, in literature – it’s my favorite genre. Whether the story is extremely fantastical or extremely grounded, it’s bound to interest me in some way. I can forgive bad acting, bad effects and bad story so long as the film’s sci-fi world, lore and tech keep me interested.

It took Lana and Andy Wachowski, the film’s writers, producers and directors, a while to get “Jupiter Ascending” released, and their ambition, with a $175 million movie budget, shows with flying colors.

The film stars Mila Kunis as Jupiter Jones, a long lost decedent of a royal Abraxas family, who is saved by Caine Wise (Channing Tatum), a genetically engineered former-soldier. Jones soon learns about her lineage and is taken on an intergalactic journey involving family, betrayal and, of all things, business.

“Jupiter Ascending” is a visual feast first and foremost—I have never said “cool” so much during a movie. The effects in this film are nothing like refinery to a classic looking kingdom - a very urban “cesspool” and a cyberpunk-and memorable one way or another, from anti-gravity boots, make-up laden some people.

Wachowski’s overly ambitious in Jupiter Ascending

The characters are an interesting bunch, ranging from down-and-out (Sean Bean as Titus) to brooding-but-interesting (Tatum), as well as ranging from subtle - over-the-top (Tuppence Middleton, Douglas Booth and Eddie Redmayne as Kalique, Titus and Balem Abraxas).

The Abraxas family is a noticeable one, since each sibling is unique and memorable, either for their personalities, environments or both, as their motives are very similar. Kalique is a subtle person, introducing herself to Jones politely and explaining how certain things in their family’s world works; Titus is a handsome playboy who further fleshes out their world for Jones - and was the one who hired Wise to find Jones - in the first place; and then there is Balem, who serves as the main villain and eldest Abraxas sibling, who’s main goal is to kill Jones and claim complete control over the planet Earth.

Balem to me is such a fun and silly character, because he really is over-the-top: his voice is low and gruff and his mannerisms are effeminate. He’s a good example of a laughably bad and cringe-worthy villain, but those precise criticisms are what for me made him such a great space opera antagonist.

For all the things “Jupiter Ascending” does so well, there is an equal amount of things it does, for lack of a nicer word, poorly.

Most of the film’s flaws come from its script, consisting of a story that is too convoluted and has maybe too much going on.

Most of the film’s flaws come from its script, consisting of a story that is too convoluted and has maybe too much going on. We’ve never before come across these characters and worlds, though they definitely feel like they’ve been around. The Wachowskis truly know how to create and firmly establish a universe that is both believable and enjoyable, such as their “Matrix” trilogy and recent film “Cloud Atlas.” “Jupiter Ascending” is a film full of all kinds of details, small and large.

The characters are an interesting bunch, ranging from down-and-out (Sean Bean as Stinger Apini) to brooding-but-interesting (Tatum), as well as ranging from subtle - over-the-top (Tuppence Middleton, Douglas Booth and Eddie Redmayne as Kalique, Titus and Balem Abraxas).

The Abraxas family is a noticeable one, since each sibling is unique and memorable, either for their personalities, environments or both, as their motives are very similar. Kalique is a subtle person, introducing herself to Jones politely and explaining how certain things in their family’s world works; Titus is a handsome playboy who further fleshes out their world for Jones - and was the one who hired Wise to find Jones - in the first place; and then there is Balem, who serves as the main villain and eldest Abraxas sibling, who’s main goal is to kill Jones and claim complete control over the planet Earth.

Balem to me is such a fun and silly character, because he really is over-the-top: his voice is low and gruff and his mannerisms are effeminate. He’s a good example of a laughably bad and cringe-worthy villain, but those precise criticisms are what for me made him such a great space opera antagonist.

For all the things “Jupiter Ascending” does so well, there is an equal amount of things it does, for lack of a nicer word, poorly.

Most of the film’s flaws come from its script, consisting of a story that is too convoluted and has maybe too much going on. We’ve never before come across these characters and worlds, though they definitely feel like they’ve been around. The Wachowskis truly know how to create and firmly establish a universe that is both believable and enjoyable, such as their “Matrix” trilogy and recent film “Cloud Atlas.” “Jupiter Ascending” is a film full of all kinds of details, small and large.

The characters are an interesting bunch, ranging from down-and-out (Sean Bean as

Rafael Abreu

Rafael Abreu

RAFAEL ABREU

FIU students on the Grammys

“I was watching the walking dead.” Elsa Guevara, junior psychology major

“No offense, Rihanna “da fuq” was that. I thought ‘is she pregnant’ and being very successful and as a rising singer. Whatever you do never give up.” Richie Belal, senior criminal justice major

“I really liked usher’s performance. Usher inspires me as far as being a Haitian singer and being very successful and as a rising singer. Whatever you do never give up.” Richie Belal, senior criminal justice major

“I liked Sam Smith Mary J. Blige, John Legend and Common. I’m a fan of Beyonce and I was a little disappointed because she doesn’t have a choirly gospel voice, she has a pop voice and needs to stick with that” Zakiya Becca, senior communication arts and women’s studies

Film: Jupiter Ascending Rating: ⭐⭐⭐⭐
Some serious controversy is brewing behind the scenes of FIU Athletics, as College AD.org released a statement from the President of the FIU Alumni Association Frank Pena calling for the termination of Director of Sports and Entertainment Pete Garcia.

The main points Pena cites in his statement are FIU’s recent struggles on the field/court, many players failing to meet academic standards, Garcia’s inability to fundraise sufficiently and the lack of fan support FIU’s athletic teams receive.

FIU has only won two conference championships since 2012, and neither were in large revenue sports.

The Panthers won the conference in women’s soccer in the 2012 season and in 2013, they won a women’s golf conference championship.

Pena was very proud of these championships, but in his eyes they’re not enough to consider the University’s athletic programs successful as a whole.

“Our football program has a combined record of 8 wins and 28 losses over the last three years,” Pena said, “[including] two losses to Bethune-Cookman University, an FCS school. Since the 2006-2007 season, our program was successful as a whole. Academics have been a glaring weakness for FIU athletics over the years. The 2013 football season was marred by players who were declared academically ineligible, and they ended up finishing the season 1-11. This trend continued last year when the men’s basketball team was not allowed to participate in postseason play due to the team’s low GPA.

“Last year, FIU had just 19 Conference USA Academic Medalists [which was] fewest in the conference. Pena also highlights the difficulties FIU has had fundraising for athletic programs in recent years.

“College AD.org released a statement from the President of the FIU Alumni Association Frank Pena calling for the termination of Director of Sports and Entertainment Pete Garcia.

The university is yet to issue a public response to Pena’s statement.

JACOB SPIWAK
Staff Writer
jacob.spiwak@fiusm.com

The FIU softball team traveled to Gulf Shores, Alabama this past weekend to compete in the Sand Dollar Classic where they finished (4-2).

Junior ace Corrine Jenkins (4-0) pitched and dominated on the rubber for the Panthers to take down University of Houston (3-3) and Eastern Kentucky University (3-3) now in her 27th career complete game.

The first game against Houston was one to remember. Sophomore Stephanie Texeira led FIU offense going 2-3 with four RBIs and a shot over left field for her first home run of the season.

FIU exploded in the second inning, scoring five runs off six hits. Freshman Ashley Belans hit a double to left-center and drove in two runs that gave FIU a 7-1 lead.

The Panthers finished the game 8-1 for the victory of the season.

The next day the Panthers took on the Lamar Cardinals (3-3).

Senior Shelby Graves struck out four and held the Cardinals hitless through four complete innings. The Panthers struggled offensively until Texeira roped a triple to right center in the fourth inning to give FIU the upper hand.

The Lamar Cardinals then had four hits in the sixth including two HRs with no outs to tie the game at 3-3. This broke Graves streak of 19.1 scoreless innings.

Sophomore Ashleigh Leon came up in the seventh inning and beat out an infield single hit to short and moved junior Dominique Grossman, who reached on a fielder’s choice to third.

The Auburn transfer tricked the Lamar catcher with a delay steal and beat the rundown that allowed the go-ahead run to score. The Panthers finished the game 4-3.

Later the same day, the FIU softball team fell to the McNeese State Cowgirls (3-2) as result of a pinch-hit home run in the bottom of the sixth.

Jenkins started the game for the Panthers and went 4.1 innings until Graves came in for 1.2 innings and got stuck with the loss.

Texeira let out a two run homerun in her first at bat of the game giving FIU an initial 2-0 lead.

The McNeese State bats were on fire in the fifth inning and a pinch-hit two run homerun by McNeese State’s Rachel Smith put the Cowgirls ahead 3-2 in the sixth inning.

On Saturday afternoon, the FIU softball team won 4-1 against the Eastern Kentucky Colonels (3-3).

Jenkins struck out a season high eight batters while Leon went 3-for-3 with two stolen bases.

The top of the batting order took control as senior Krystal Garcia pulled FIU ahead with her first home run of the season and Texeira went 2-for-2 with two RBIs.

Auburn transfer Ashleigh Leon came up in the seventh inning and beat out an infield single hit to short and moved junior Dominique Grossman, who reached on a fielder’s choice to third.

The McNeese State bats were on fire in the fifth inning and a pinch-hit two run homerun by McNeese State’s Rachel Smith put the Cowgirls ahead 3-2 in the sixth inning.

On Saturday afternoon, the FIU softball team won 4-1 against the Eastern Kentucky Colonels (3-3).
David Drucker
Contributing Writer
sports@fiusm.com

The men’s basketball team (11-12) will travel to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to play the Southern Mississippi Golden Eagles (6-16) on Thursday, Feb. 12. Both teams will be looking to move on from botted comebacks in their last games and claim a win in a late-season Conference USA matchup.

The Panthers will look to senior forward Kris Gulley to lead the scorers, a feat that he has done many times this season. Gulley is tied with FJ Price from Western Kentucky University at 17.2 points per game for lead scorer in C-USA. Junior forward Adrian Diaz has also made an impact; he is averaging 13.5 points, 6.7 rebounds and 2.6 blocks per game this season. Junior forward Daviyon Draper has also come into his own lately for the Panthers. The Los Angeles native averaged 10.6 points over the Panthers’ last seven contests, including a 21-point performance in his team’s last-minute loss to University of Texas at El Paso.

Southern Miss is led in scoring by guards Chip Armelin and Matt Bingaya, who average 15.3 and 14.1 points per game, respectively. Their team’s average of 29.2 rebounds per game is one of the worst marks around the NCAA. The Golden Eagles lost a close game against the University of Alabama at Birmingham after they were outdueled at the free throw line. Thursday’s game should be a close matchup, according to C-USA’s statistics. The Panthers’ offense is eleventh best in the league with an average of 62.7 points per game, while Southern Miss has the eleventh best scoring defense, allowing opponents to score 69.0 per game.

The team’s records say otherwise: the Golden Eagles are riding a four-game losing streak and are 1-10 against conference opponents, while the Panthers have been around .500 for most of the season and are 4-6 in C-USA.

Tip-off is scheduled for 9 p.m. ET from Reed Green Coliseum.

Junior guard Taylor Shade (left) signals for teammate senior guard/guard Zakia Ledbury (right) to move up in the game against Old Dominion. The Panthers currently are 3-18 and play Southern Mississippi on Thursday, Feb. 12.

The true test for the Panthers will come in stopping, or at least slowing down Senior Star Tamara Jones. She’s averaging 14 points per game, and is liable to out-do her average at any moment. Hopeful to put score and outshine Jones, Kiandre’a from the win.

Florida International will have to look to rally behind the veteran leadership of Marita Davydova, who is averaging a double double with 11.5 points per game, and 10.3 rebounds.

The Senior Center out of Moscow, Russia has over 200 rebounds just this season, and is looking to control and dominate the paint against Southern Miss.

She’ll likely be matching up against Voche’ Martin, from a place not quite as large as Russia, but might as well be, standing the same height a Davydova at 6 feet 3 inches, a senior from Desoto, Texas.

The competition Martin brings under the basket is how she is averaging 2.5 rebounds per game, and Davydova also takes on the job of stopping Martin from reaching her season average of 3.7 points per game, to give the Panthers a shot at the win.

The women’s tennis team lost another close match this past Monday at the Cullman-Heimay Tennis Center in New Haven, Connecticut. They went up against a very competitive Yale team. The Yale Bulldogs are ranked 48th in the nation and with the win over the Panthers they move their record to 2-3. The match ultimately ended in a 4-2 decision.

From the way the match started it seemed like the Panthers can pull off an upset by remembering to take an early 1-0 lead. FIU took 2-of-3 matches in doubles play to keep the bulldogs from gaining any momentum.

In the doubles play, Yale won the first match as junior Katiez Brozovich and sophomore Valentina Briceno lost to Ree Bee Li and Valerie Shklover, 6-0.

FIU didn’t let that intimidate them as they responded winning the next two matches as sophomore Nina Nagode and junior Carletta Orlando defeated Hanna Yu and Courtney Amos, 6-3, and senior Yana Koroleva and freshman Nerma Caluk defeated Sherry Li and Carol Finke, 6-3.

After the doubles play, things got shaky and out of hand for the panthers. In singles action, the Bulldogs were able to tie up the match at 1-all, as Finke defeated Caluk, 6-2, 6-1. Yale didn’t stop there as they took a 2-1 lead following a 6-1, 6-3 loss by Brozovich to Shklover. FIU was able to stop Yale from taking the match in the next set.

Oroldo willed her way to tie up the match for the panthers. With the match at 3-2 it could have gone any way with no lead safe during the match. Unfortunately for FIU. Yale responded winning the next two singles matches as Caroline Lynch defeated Briceno, 6-0, 6-4, and S. Li defeated Nagode, 7-6, 6-3.

The final line was FIU losing and Yale took the contest 4-2. The Panthers put an incredible fight against one of the better teams they will face this season. There are plenty of good things to look forward to this season. Their next match will be away at Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts to take on Boston College on Friday, Feb. 20. First serve is set for 5 p.m.
This Valentine’s Day, media innovators from all across the Americas will join forces at this year’s Media Party Miami, a premiere showcase of digital media.

Hosted by the University’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication and Hacks/Hackers Miami, the two-day event will feature panels on media innovation and hands-on learning with leaders in U.S. and Latin American media.

The event addresses how society is forced to compete and redefine innovation in software, increased access to data and new media models in the industry. Over 100 people are expected to attend.

According to the Dean of the SJMC, Paul Reis, it’s important for students to be engaged in digital innovation; especially because of its significant presence in the media landscape.

“We want students not only to know the latest technology, but also to be the ones who will come up with the new ideas and technology - that’s what innovation is all about,” Reis said, “Technology is changing, so it’s a matter of also thinking in different ways.”

According to the European Travel Digital Commission, Latin America corresponds to only 8.3 percent of worldwide internet users. However, tech-savvy countries like Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Mexico and Chile show significant social media usage.

One of the panel speakers include Mariana Santos, a Knight International Journalism Fellow who has led teams of artists, developers and journalists to improve visual and interactive media storytelling in Latin America.

One of her projects was the creation of Chicas Poderosas, a phrase meaning “powerful women.”

Founded in Costa Rica, the group aims to encourage women in Latin America to be involved in technology and interactive design to address societal problems.

Trei Brundrett, Vice President of Product and Technology at Vox Media will also speak at the event. Through a platform that he and his team created, they have delivered content and community with a readership of more than 150 million. Brundrett has also developed projects for Fortune 500 companies, political campaigns and clients such as Microsoft XBOX, Shell Oil, U.S. Senator John Kerry and Texas Monthly.

“A lot of great ideas are...