University students aid U.S. Dept. of State through research

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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.

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 global 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 into the issues that are in the interests of the State Department,” Cruz said.

FIU Sea Level Rise Student Project to be aired on WPBT

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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 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 prime time 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 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 after parts of the students’ pieces were done, the material was shown to Max Duke, vice president of content for WPBT.

After the meeting, the idea was to create a YouTube video with each of the pieces shown to him.
Parents of American hostage seek private contact with Islamic State

Islamic State extremists said Friday that the Jordanian warplanes attacking militant targets had 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 had killed an American female hostage, Kayla Mueller, 26, a humanitarian worker, who was being held near the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, an Islamic State stronghold.

Mueller’s parents said they are having another telephone conversation with their daughter’s captors and asked for private contact 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 the connection control.

Paulick admitted that he has created an opportunity to have HBO Go service off-campus.

Those using their computer, iPad, or Android device can access to the HBO GO service readily available on campus.

Some students shared their thoughts.

“It’s always cool to have new ways of entertaining yourself,” said Hannah Torres, a sophomore studying 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 Paulick, the new service is an attempt to the already large variety of options that students have to use, such as Netflix, Spotify and iTunes Radio.

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

HBO Go service offered to students living on campus

**ADRIAN SUAREZ AVILA**

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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 living on campus came from the National Association of College Auxiliaries conference in the fall, when Joe Paulick, director of Housing, approached HBO representatives and asked if there were any new developments that were being offered for students.

Following the conference and update on HBO GO being offered in other colleges 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 the connection control.

According to Paulick, who joined the Housing department in October of last fall, students living on campus now had access to HBO for around five years, with the chance to see 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 Paulick 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, iPhone, or Android device can have access to the HBO GO service off-campus.

Paulick 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 have another entertainment option to HBO for around five years, students living on campus now have another entertainment option to have HBO Go service off-campus.

According to Paulick, the 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.
Visual art to be enjoyed by the visually impaired

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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 it?

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 breaks the boxes 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.

Velázquez’ “La Fragua de Vulcano,” Goya’s “El quijote,” da Vinci’s “La Ginecista” 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 every kind of public.

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We live in a society that the concept of individuality 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 so that it has become the common but incorrect, because the person you’re trying to convey gets lost in translation due to you having to be politically correct, the reason why they aren’t meant to be offended, but the people that are offended by the people that you’re addressing can’t handle some straightforward criticism.

But the concept of political correctness has been abused and is adding a filter to our current language. This is evident when in reality there’s nothing nice that could be said about said person’s performance.

So the message you’re trying to convey gets lost in translation due to you having to be politically correct, because the person you’re addressing can’t handle some straightforward criticism.

You as a professional adult should be able to speak your mind and tell a coworker what’s on your mind without having to rethink what you’re thinking to say, by that same token the recipient of the news should be damn mature enough to take what is being put down like an adult and not be insulted by it.

Now let me reiterate, I’m not saying to go out and start dropping F-bombs and offending people just because. There is a line between slurs and speaking like a human being.

But the concept of political correctness has been abused and is adding a filter to our current common sense (which evidently doesn’t seem to be so common) filter. Its taken the human factor out of our day to day vernacular.

Soon we will have to adopt this line of thinking in the workplace, when it’s evidently necessary. When entering a men’s bathroom, 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 are a positive 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 under 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 people. 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.

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

After the publishing of a Miami Herald article regarding Florida State’s plan 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 transgendered individuals.

Wherever one finds oneself along the reading 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 are a positive direction to transform the University into a more inclusive environment for all.

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Snapchat’s latest updates

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For those that want to remain mysterious while going crazy when it comes to communicating with 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 Yesulu [YesJulu], 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.

Homophobia in Hispanic culture

Madari Pérez

Growing up in Miami, it was always obvious that within the Hispanic culture there was homophobia. Whether it presented itself in the form of machismo - an intense obligation to “manhood” - or from the quotidian slurs used to disparage gays and lesbians. When asked to give an example of when she’s witnessed homophobia in the Hispanic culture, Dehina Trigoura, a junior 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 dog’s (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 big role in it. 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.

It is not the first time that each person is fighting their own battle and an outsider’s/own judgment is unnecessary. "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 Mendora. "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 LGBTQ characters in shows and films. It is possible.

*Last name was changed.
Wachowski’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 Abrasax family, who is saved by Channing Tatum (as Caine Wise) from its script, consisting of a story that is too convoluted and poorly. There is an equal amount of poor acting, bad effects and poor story, occasionally silly dialogue, incomprehensible moments and slight over-indulgence that the film features. Why? Because I love science-fiction. If nothing else, I have major respect and admiration for the Wachowskis’ vision and ambition.

Because “Jupiter Ascending” is still one of the most original films I’ve seen in years. It may not be perfect, its story might be flawed and the finished result may be unfavorable for many, but for me, it was exactly the kind of sci-fi tale I never get to see. It was the kind of story that takes cues from fairy tales, the Wachowskis own interests and general fantasy to create a space opera the likes of which never get released, let alone imagined.

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 to 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 poetically 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 maybe too much going on in it. It’s never a good thing when I have to be tracking and re-capping the plot in my head as the film goes along, filling the story with more and more plot.

At least the overall story and themes were made clear to me by the film’s end, but among all that, it can get frustrating trying to understand what’s going on and why. It is unfortunate that the vision put forth by the Wachowskis came up short when put in motion. It’s all there. The movie can be understood better with repeated viewings, but so far, I can forgive “Jupiter Ascending” and the Wachowskis.

I can forgive the convoluted plot, occasionally silly dialogue, incomprehensible moments and slight over-indulgence that the film features. Why? Because I love science-fiction. If nothing else, I have major respect and admiration for the Wachowskis’ vision and ambition.

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I can forgive “Jupiter Ascending” has so much going on so much of the time that the film doesn’t get the chance to explain every little thing. However, and this may be wrong of me, I can forgive “Jupiter Ascending” and the Wachowskis.

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**Athletics**

**GOING, GOING, GONE?**

Alumni Association president calls for termination of Pete Garcia

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Some serious controversy is brewing behind the scenes of FIU athletics, as CollegeAD.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 conference play due to the postseason play difficulties FIU has had in recent years.

“In both men’s basketball and football, our academic progress rate is among the worst in Conference USA,” Pena said. “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.

“2012-2013, athletics was at 40 percent of its fundraising goal,” Pena said, “which was last for all university units. One year later, athletics was at 48 percent of its goal and was still in the bottom quarter of all departments.”

Finally, Pena touched on something anybody who has attended a Panthers sporting event recently can point to as a glaring weakness - the lack of fan support. It’s no secret that FIU doesn’t have the fan support and attendance that most Division 1 athletic programs receive. Pena goes as far as calling their football attendance “embarrassing.”

“This past football season, FIU ranked 127th out of 129 FBS teams with an average attendance of 11,986. Said Pena. “The previous season our program was 120th with an average attendance of 15.4. In fact, it can be safely said that local high schools draw higher attendance in their weekly games.”

Garcia and his decisions as the director have been under fire numerous times over the years.

Some of the notable occasions were when he refused to grant the Miami Herald beat writer media credentials for the 2014 football home opener against Bethune-Cookman, and when he allegedly pulled thousands of dollars from women’s athletic teams to fund January’s Miss Universe pageant.

This is not the first time somebody has publicly aired their grievances over Garcia’s job performance.

Over the years, many faithful FIU football fans have started chants, held up signs and worn shirts calling for Garcia to be terminated as the Director of Sports and Entertainment.

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

**Softball**

Softball team ‘took a dominant lead’ at Sand Dollar Classic

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The FIU softball team traveled to Gulf Shores, Alabama this past weekend to compete in the Sand Dollar Classic where they finished 4-0.

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 with 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 Ashley Leon came up in the seventh inning and beat out an infield single to hit 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 7-0.

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 Gabby Spallone (1-for-3) led the Panthers with two RBIs.

The Panthers combined for seven hits against Alabama, the most allowed this season. Texeira had a 2-RBI single in the bottom of the fifth for the only two runs scored against the Crimson Tide.

The Panthers finished 11-2 against No. 3 Alabama in a hard fought pitching duel for Shelby Graves, who pitched phenomenally throughout the first three innings keeping Alabama off the scoreboard.

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Men’s basketball tries to get back on track as they travel to Southern Mississippi

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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 botched comebacks in their last games and claim a win in a late-season Conference USA matchup.

The Panthers will likely look to senior guard Dennis Mavin to lead the scorers, a feat that he has done many times this season. Mavin is tied with T.J. Price from Western Kentucky University at 17.2 points per game. 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.

Contributing Writer

Women’s basketball team looks to win first road game

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On Thursday at 6:00 P.M., FIU will take on The University of Southern Mississippi Golden Eagles (5-7). This is one of their four remaining home games, which the Panthers hope to steal couple of wins from, considering that two of their wins on the season have come at Lime Court at FIU Arena.

The women have lost 18 of 21 so far this season, and haven’t won a single game away from their Miami home. FIU will have to look to something more than just pictures of their old court to turn the tide if they hope to finish this last stretch of games on a positive note and try to gain something, if anything, in the department of momentum going into the CUSA Championships to be held at Birmingham, Alabama March 11th-14th.

Junior guard 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.

TENNIS

Tennis team unable to hold lead against Yale

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The women’s tennis team lost another close match this past Monday at the Cullman-Heyman 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 to remember by taking an early 1-0 lead. FIU took 2-0-3 matches in doubles play to keep the bulldogs from gaining any momentum.

In the doubles play, Yale won the first match as junior Kaatlin 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 sophomores Nina Nagode and junior Carliotta 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, the games were shaky and out of hand for the Panthers. In singles action, the Bulldogs were able to tie the match at 1-1, as Finke defeated Caluk, 6-2, 6-1. Yale didn’t stop there as they took 2-1 lead following a 6-1, 6-3 loss by Brozovich to Shklov. FIU was able to stop Yale from taking the match in the next set. Orlando willed her way to tie up the match for the panthers. With the match at 2-2 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 L. Di defeated Nagode, 7-6, 6-3.

The final line was FIU losing and Yale took the contest 4-2. The Panthers put up 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 play 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...