University students protest FIUPD militarization

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The University’s Police Department has been expanding its military equipment.

“Police militarization, the act of small police departments acquiring dangerous and unnecessary weaponry from the military, has expanded in the past two decades nationwide,” said Natalie Alatriste.

In various cities, local police departments have gained weapons such as M16s, large rifles used in war; armored cars, better known as MRAP’s—Mine-Resistant Ambush Protection—grenade launchers and tanks. In the last couple of years, the FIU Police Department received 50 M16 assault rifles and an armored truck.

The 1033 program issued by the Defense Department allows departments to receive these kinds of military hardware.

According to CNN, the program has transferred $4.3 billion in military equipment to local police forces since 1996, all in response to the war on drugs. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the government made additional equipment available to local and state departments.

“The program was originally implemented for economic reasons. According to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1990 and 1991, it is more costly for the government to warehouse this type of machinery while it’s not being used. So, instead, the government makes it available to police departments at low costs. When an interview was requested, the FIUPD never responded. The army itself in a newsletter even recommended against using MRAP’s, even at U.S. military bases [because] on paved streets in the United States, it’s actually unsafe—they tear up the streets and have a high roll-over potential,” said expert Radley Balko in an interview with CNN.

Balko is the author of the book “The Rise of the Warrior Cop” and a reporter for the Washington Post who presented “We’re involved in this campaign seeking the demilitarization of our campus police because if we don’t, then the next generation of students will never know a campus that isn’t militarized,” Ocbe said. “To them, it will be normal.”

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Bracy is the author of the Florida Student Union, an organization that aims to build student power.

“Last semester, the Florida Student Union drafted a statement in opposition to the militarization of the police and delivered a letter to FIUPD stating their formal disagreement. Currently, the Union is seeking other organizations to support the cause. It also plans to deliver another letter on March 3 with this support. A petition campaign is currently being conducted for interested individuals to sign. A panel event on Feb. 24 is also scheduled to expand public knowledge.

If nothing comes of this, the students plan to rally sometime in April.

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Bracy, a third-year law student, agrees with this and believes that it’s important to raise awareness.

“It’s this fear of this highly salient, disturbing event that is propelling this heavy arming of the police, and people in schools wanting to arm up, too, in case of school shootings.”

Noah Weisbord, a professor at the University’s School of Law, also commented.

“There’s something about an atmosphere of violence now that connects the wars with these racialized events in Ferguson and in New York City, and it ties in with the observation that Radley makes—[but] these fears are misguided,” he said. “It’s this fear of this highly salient, disturbing event that is propelling this heavy arming of the police, and people in schools wanting to arm up, too, in case of school shootings.”

Two University law students, Kaplin Ocbe and Bobby Joe Bracy, Jr., are petitioning FIUPD from obtaining these weapons. They feel police militarization on campus will constrict students’ freedom of speech and assembly.

“We’re asking why they need it,” Ocbe said. “We’re only ever going to see these weapons when there’s [an] organized effort by students on campus and the police want to stop it.”

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Turkey says it’s reached accord with US on training Syrian rebels, but not on who wins

The United States and Turkey will soon sign an accord to train and equip at least 2,000 Syrian fighters this year, but the two NATO allies have been unable to agree on what enemy the Syrians will be preparing to fight, Turkish officials said Tuesday.

Tanju Bilgic, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, said the memorandum of understanding will permit the training of moderate rebels to begin next month. The training site previously announced is Kirshehir-Hifran, in central Anatolia.

Despite six weeks of talks, the two sides couldn’t agree on whether to train the Syrians to fight the Islamic State, which the U.S. priority, or the Assad regime, the Turkish preference. “It’s open,” said a senior Turkish diplomat, who could not be identified because he was not authorized to speak on the record.

Islamic State’s beheadings

West back into Libya

For nearly four years, the West has largely stayed on the sidelines as Libya descended into post-revolution chaos. Now the beheadings of a group of Egyptian Christians at the hands of the Islamic State group could draw the international community back into the densely complex tangle of fighting in the oil-rich North African nation.

Egypt, seeking retribution for the cruel, cinematic execution of 21 Coptic men who had gone to Libya to work as laborers, carried out at least two waves of airstrikes Monday in neighboring Libya. The warplanes targeted what Egypt said were training camps and weapons caches belonging to a Libyan offshoot of Islamic State, which in recent months has made inroads in several parts of the country, seizing on the power vacuum left by the chaotic but so far inconclusive struggle among an array of militias.

Despite grisly executions, expanded campaign against Islamic State seems unlikely

In the space of two weeks, two grotesque executions by the Islamic State, the first the immobilization of a Jordanian pilot held in Syria and the second the beheading earlier this week of 21 Egyptian guest workers in Libya, have dragged America’s two most militarily competent Arab allies into what appears to be an expanding regional campaign against the self-proclaimed caliphate.

But the deeper involvement of Jordan and Egypt in the fight against the Islamist radicals seems at this juncture unlikely to lead to an expanded campaign by the United States and other members of the anti-Islamic State coalition.

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

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OPINION

“50 Shades Of Grey” shouldn’t be a replacement for sex education or serve as a manual on how to “spice up” your love

By STEPHANIE PIEDRAHITA

Anastasia

BDSM is an abbreviation for bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism. BDSM partners do research to get the most pleasure without physically or psychologically harming one another. Safe, sane and consensual are the three principles that have emerged in the BDSM community in order to prevent abuse and to soften up stigmas.

Having read the books myself, I recall one scene that bothered me. A “cruel” man, Christian presents Anastasia with a contract which is written with explicit rules and standards he wants her to follow if she had any interest in maintaining a relationship with him. These lines include much more than sexual acts, however, noting what food she’s allowed to eat and the type of clothing and grooming he demands.

If the contract handed to her without education from him on the matter wasn’t a red flag indicating that Christian is not a sane partner, then the instances where he buges her phone, buys the company she works for or intimidates her into emotional submission to have more control, should have been.

Trust is important in BDSM relationships as in traditional ones, so I question why the author and film producers paint a manipulative stalker as someone who trusts his partner or even worse, as someone who is trustworthy. Ultimately, she verbally consents only because she fears losing him, which now leads me to the consensual standard.

When consent is given in any sexual interaction, it should come easily, free of pressure to follow through. Out is one of the spanking scenes where Anastasia has this internal dialogue going on: “And he hits me again and again. From somewhere deep inside, I want to beg him to stop. But I don’t. I don’t want to give him the satisfaction.”

The second you feel uneasy during sex, you have the obligation to continue. Not only did Anastasia feel scared about expressing herself, Grey drives her to the point of tears and vulnerability she isn’t used to yet, which happens on multiple occasions. Hurting yourself to keep someone in your life is never acceptable. This lack of compassion from Christian and the forced obedience of Anastasia has created a new and harmful depiction of what consent looks like.

“50 Shades of Grey” should not be a replacement for sex education or serve as a manual on how to “spice up” your love. A quick search can refer you to information on the BDSM lifestyle and link you to porn videos that instruct you on how to pleasure your partner. Only then should you start to consider looking into it. To be honest, there is better naughty literature out there, so don’t waste time making yourself ignorant in matters of love and sex by taking these books seriously.

Don’t fall for this false presentation of love. Don’t let this movie fool you into thinking disregarding someone else’s well-being is a turn on.

Photo courtesy of trailers and vultures.com
Dakota Johnson (left) plays Anastasia Steele and Jamie Dornan plays Christian Grey in “50 Shades of Grey,” a movie based off an erotic romance novel by British author E.L. James.

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Steamy, heavy-breathing and finger craving are some of the words people use when they talk about the novel, and now film, “50 Shades of Grey.” The book is breaking records for the fastest selling paperback with just the first novel release, surpassing the Harry Potter series. It is riveting to get to know the face behind the rare feat in the self-publishing industry.

E.L. James, a middle age wife and mother to two boys, living in Britain, considers herself a typical woman, just one with a great imagination which led her to success. Inspired by the Stephanie Meyer Twilight series, James began writing erotic fantasies on fanfiction.net about the sparkly vampires.

Soon enough, she adapted her own version of a romantic erotic-fiction where her main characters had fans screaming. Entrepreneur and bachelor Christian Grey, who happens to be a dominant, and shy, self-conscious, Anastasia Steele, who is a college virgin, meet when Anastasia’s best friend Katherine who writes for the student newspaper is ill. Anastasia then enters Grey Enterprises Holdings Inc and is immediately attracted to Christian within seconds of meeting him. Their relationship opens with explicit erotic scenes and thus begins the story of their romance.

James later published the novel on her website, FiftyShadesOfGrey.com. After, her e-book was picked up by Australian virtual publisher, The Writer’s Coffee Shop. Soon, large publishing companies were jumping to buy her novel. She also had proposals for the movie rights to her novel. Her fantasies became an overnight success.

Although criticized for the context, James has broken the boundaries in women’s literature, with a mass appeal in the market towards adult women.

Alison Baverstock, an associate professor in publishing at Kingston University said her research showed a clear gender split, with 65% self-publishers being women and 35% men. Although self-publishers are often criticized, they know their audience and are confident about their work.

James, amongst other successful female writers, is an example of how well-educated women are dominating the growing e-book publishing market.

James is a game changing author whose humble and cunning personality were key elements in making her novel successful. Her novel has impacted a great audience, including readers and authors. Without a doubt, James is an inspiration for all women, demonstrating that anything is possible with perserverence and a little imagination.

Send Us Your Letters
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Dr. Andrew Hudson, head of the United Nations Development Programme’s Water & Ocean Governance Programme, travelled around the world calculating water sanitation and supply. His latest research reveals a devastating truth—our international system is facing a water crisis.

On Tuesday Feb. 18, FIU hosted Hudson as a guest speaker in Green Library Room 220, sponsored by Global Water for Sustainability Program and the FIU School of Environment, Arts and Society.

Hudson devised a lecture to share with students about the current state of water supply and sanitation. He began by providing statistics about the many countries in crisis of not being able to provide the basic human right—water.

Through the statistics, he highlighted many key points and offered a general outlook of these communities living with poor water supply and sanitation. He explained how this basic need is something many people overlook and neglect. The death rate and infectious diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery and typhoid fever, have continued to increase due to lack of proper water intake and sanitation.

Some major at-risk countries include Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Guatemala. These countries in particular are suffering from poverty and inequality. Hudson explains that these countries need more women involved in pushing the story, claiming that women in these countries seem to have a better understanding of the importance of water and sanitation.

“To push water and improve water sanitation up the political agenda, we need to make the case to governments, decision makers, financial planners and planning agencies,” Hudson said. “We have to achieve universal equitable access [of clean water] for all countries.”

International water crisis brought to light in lecture

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Coca-Cola’s “Comparte el Movimiento” is having a dance competition that gives 14-19 year olds the chance to win up to $3,000 for a school of their choice.

We spoke to Nick Garcia, who was in the top 20 of “So You Think You Can Dance” season 11, about the competition and him being a judge for it.

“When they told me about “Comparte el Movimiento,” it was more of a movement and cause, and a way to look at dance in a different way rather than judging dancers just solely on dance,” said Garcia.

“After giving tango lessons at Brown University, tango enthusiast, Radu Jianu and his partner, Erika Latham, decided to offer free lessons at FIU.”

Top left photo: Radu Jianu and dance partner Erika Latham dance Tango on the Beach.
Top right photo: Radu Jianu, an assistant professor in the computer science department, dances with partner Erika Latham at the Puerto Rico Tango Marathon.
Bottom left photo: Radu Jianu and dance partner Erika Latham consider themselves Tango enthusiasts. This is them dancing at the Puerto Rico Tango Marathon in 2014.
Bottom right photo: After giving tango lessons at Brown University, tango enthusiasts, Radu Jianu and his partner, Erika Latham, decided to offer free lessons at FIU.

What can you bring to the table that’s different from everyone else?

Nick Garcia
Comparte el Movimiento

Local dancer to judge charity competition

MARLISA PONCE
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BRING IN THE DANCING PANTHERS

Nick Garcia
Judge
Comparte el Movimiento
I’m not asking to be paid for this service because I understand a student’s budget.

Radu Jianu
Position
Department

“I’m not asking to be paid for this service because I understand a student’s budget, and my end goal is to get more students involved in our tight-knit tango community,” Jianu said.

Jianu spoke passionately about why Argentinean tango was close to him.

“I liked dancing, but I was always too shy. I need rules and tango has a lot. I think rules make tango easy for college-educated scholars to follow,” said Jianu.

Jianu’s passion for teaching, years of experience with tango and willingness to be of service to the community make him an experienced dance instructor.

He smiled shyly and admitted that his interest in giving lessons is also for selfish reasons.

“The tango community at FIU and in Miami is rather small, so I would love to teach and have the opportunity to dance with different partners,” said Jianu.

In Providence, he had the pleasure of watching his inexperienced partner grow from shy to active invested dancers in the tango community. He feels confident that FIU students would be able to do the same.

“I have a different mentality from the people in GC. I think it should be about the students and honestly want nothing to do with GC anymore,” said Jianu.

To make his class happen on his own terms, Jianu created a website: fiutango.com. He would love students to experience at least one lesson and see how their body can move.

“Even if I have to hold a class outside on campus with my own radio, I’ll make it happen,” said Jianu.

To get involved or for more inquiries: contact Radu Jianu at rjadun@cis.fiu.edu. Tango lessons are free.

Once the five finalists are announced, their names will be posted and ready for public voting that opens March 1-8. Using #BailaConCoke, fans can vote for their favorites.

The three finalists with the most votes will perform live on the Coca-Cola stage at the Calle Ocho Festival March 15.

As a judge, Jianu said he’ll be looking for a group that stands out and advises contestants to be out of the ordinary.

“How could you be different? What can you bring to the table that’s different from everyone else?”

Jianu said those should be the questions the finalists should ask themselves before the competition.

For more information visit the website: http://comparteconcoke.com/

Assistant professor offers free Tango lessons for students

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Increasing tuition rates, paying triple per hour over 138 credits, the $2.50 one-way ride to and from the Biscayne Bay Campus and the inability to redeem coupons on campus offered by off-campus food establishments all point to one fact: Florida International University loves our money.

An interview with Radu Jianu, an assistant professor in the computer sciences department, added something else to this growing list: tango lessons.

After giving tango lessons at Brown University, tango enthusiast, Radu Jianu and his partner, Erika Latham, considered themselves Tango enthusiasts. This is them dancing at the Puerto Rico Tango Marathon.

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**SPORTS**

**BASEBALL**

**HIT THE ROAD**

Panthers go on first road trip to play in Coastal Carolina Tournament

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After taking two of three from No. 25 Tennessee this past weekend, the Panthers hit the road this weekend to compete in the Coastal Carolina Tournament in Conway, South Carolina. There, the Panthers will play four teams: Georgia Tech, Coastal Carolina, Albany, and North Carolina State. These games will be non-conference games but will be a true test to see how the team can handle playing on the road and away from their home field. FIU is going into this tournament having the latest ranking of No. 23 in the nation and they will start off the tournament playing a double header first against Georgia Tech and then play Coastal Carolina. The Georgia Tech yellow jackets are 3-1 to start the season. The reason for this hot start is their offense has been consistent each game. The Yellow Jackets are scoring about eight runs per game. The FIU pitching rotation is coming off a home series where they did not give up a lot of runs to Tennessee which is another good offensive team. The pitching rotation is looking to do the same to Georgia Tech and silence their bats. Coastal Carolina, the hosts of the tournament, is playing on the exact opposite note compared to Georgia Tech. They are coming off a painful loss to Canisius losing 13-3. The Griffs are having trouble scoring runs and limiting other teams from scoring runs which is why that play style has led to an average 2-2 start. FIU needs to start the game on an aggressive note and put runs up on the scoreboard early in the game. This puts pressure on Coastal Carolina to answer back which is very difficult especially when the team is struggling to score.

The next day of the tournament, Saturday, the Panthers will take on the University of Albany. They have not played yet so this tournament will be their first taste of the season. This team is headlined by junior infielder Matt Hinchy and senior catcher Craig Lepre. They were appointed to be the co-captains of the team by Head Coach Jon Mueller. Hinchy was named to the America East All Rookie Team helping the Great Danes to an appearance in the American East Conference Tournament.

Last year in his sophomore year he was plagued by injuries limiting him to 14 games but he’s looking to have a bounce back season to follow up his great freshman year. Lepre, entering his senior year, has been the everyday starting catcher since his freshman year. He was one of the main offensive weapons on the team having a .273 batting average with 28 RBIs, 10 runs and he also hit seven doubles last season.

The final day of the tournament, the Panthers will finish their road trip against North Carolina State. The Wolfpack is undefeated so far this season with a 2-0 record. Both their wins are commanding ones as they scored a total of 22 runs and have only given up eight runs. This will be another game in which the Panthers’ pitching rotation needs to come through and hold down N.C. State’s offense.

Chris Mourelle is coming off a great pitching performance last week in which he did not give up any runs in 5 innings. Mourelle could be heavily depended on for this game and even this entire tournament. FIU has a tough task ahead of them as none of these teams have a losing record as they all started the season off on a winning note just like the Panthers. Playing back to back games can be difficult especially when not on their home turf.

Now being ranked No. 23 the Panthers have something to prove to these other teams, that there is no mistake why they are ranked and it starts Friday, Feb. 20 at the Coastal Carolina Tournament.

Wednesday’s game versus the Stetson University Hatters was not completed at the time of production.

**SOFTBALL**

Panthers head west for Madeira Beach Invitational

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The FIU softball team will travel to Madeira Beach this weekend to partake in the Eastern Michigan University Spring Invitational. They will take on the Villanova Wildcats, Wichita State Shockers, Columbia Lions, Texas State Bobcats, and North Dakota.

The Villanova Wildcats will be opening up their season with FIU today. Last year they went 18-34 overall and 5-16 in the Big East conference. Their star shortstop Ali Lowe graduated last spring but the majority of their starting lineup from last year will come back this season. Junior catcher Kate Poppe who had 13 wins last season with a 2.05 earned run average, 219 innings pitched and 284 strikeouts will be back as well. Wichita State is entering this tournament 6-3 to start off their season. They take command on the field but do have a young roster that gives them a few weak points defensively. The one thing the Panthers should look out for is junior Cayc Williams. The Shockers will also open up their season at this tournament and play the FIU softball team on Saturday. The Lions finished at .500 last year (22-22) and went 9-11 in the Ivy League. Texas State is coming in even at 5-5. They finished last season 26-30. Ariel Oriz is one of the Bobcats most dominant players. She took control at the Hampton Inn tournament in Texas where she finished going 11-for-17 with three home runs, one triple, five doubles, seven runs batted in, and a slugging percentage of 1.588. Despite having one player do it all, you need a team to win and that is where FIU could take charge over the Bobcats. The FIU softball team has chemistry on the field that helps them overcome opponents.

North Dakota University is coming into this tournament 4-6. The Bobcats will play them on Sunday to close out the tournament. There is no doubt that the depth in FIU’s pitching staff could handle all of these teams. Junior Corinne Jenkins, along with senior Shelby Graves, always put up a fight in the circle. The bullpen for the softball team also dominates with freshman Rachel Dwyer and sophomore Brianna Bartuccio. The combined ERA is 3.59. Offensively the Panthers have combined for a .393 slugging percentage, .349 on base percentage, and 38 runs batted in which is very productive thus far in the season.
All-star games: Do something or just go away

The most recent game, which sparked my interest in this topic again was the NBA All-Star Game - divided Eastern Conference versus Western Conference - to wrap it up.

The game had a final score of 163-158 with the West winning. This is the best and worst part at the same time. Yes, there was a bunch of offense but that also means that there was no defense. I am one of the people who, when I watch a basketball game want to see some defense. Maybe some defense could be brought back into that game.

I think unless the game begins to mean something, then it should not be played anymore. There is no reason, during the middle of the season, to have players have an extra chance to hurt themselves.

That is an awful idea in general. What happens, if say, Jared Allen, a defensive lineman from the Chicago Bears, sacks his own franchise's quarterback Jay Cutler and breaks his throwing arm or makes his teator rotator cuff. Those types of injuries could change Cutler forever from having arguably the best arm in the league.

I have three simple suggestions for the Pro Bowl to not only make it watchable, but to give it a reason to still exist.

The first is that the teams need to be switched back to a matchup of the conferences. As simple as that, it would give each team a chance to show that their part of the league is better.

The second would be to make it count, not for "home-field" advantage in the Super Bowl but right to be the home team of the best things I think about all the time.

The third thing is just a preference thing, but move it back to Hawaii. Having it in Hawaii is one of the best parts of the game and withit it you are not only losing a fan base - which incoming rookie Marcus Mariota from the University of Oregon may help get some back - but you are also losing on some great opportunities both financially and expansion team wise. If they were to get a large enough, the Hawaii-based fan base, an expansion team could work there.

The other option that could help is if the inter-conference play throughout the season is to be that every team would play one another. The conference was eliminated but being the realist that I am, I know that that is not going to happen.

MLB

Woohoo, the MLB All-Star Game is coming to Miami in a couple of years. Oh wait, I forgot that I don’t really care about baseball and that the MLB All-Star Game is just an even longer baseball game. Baseball is a slow game in general and one would think that putting the best players, both on offense and defense, in one game might speed it up a bit. However, in my past experience that is not the case.

It is shorter than the longest game, which went for almost 24 hours, but it is pretty long compared to games like football and basketball.

As I mentioned before, I am not completely sure if this game will have home field advantage for the winner out of the American or National leagues. If it still does then that is one less thing to change. If it no longer does, they need to change it back.

Also, I truly think that ending the ability for players to switch back-and-forth from the AL to the NL and vice versa would make it more interesting but I know that return more than likely won’t happen in my lifetime. There are too many games in the MLB season for the leagues to not play amongst themselves.

I would also move it just like my proposed NBA move, to directly before the finals of the World Series. If you want the players to have a break mid-season, just have the season take a 7-10 day break in the middle.

Rhuby’ Piece is a weekly column on both FIU and National sports news that goes on. The views shown by Rhys’ Piece are not necessarily the views of The Beacon, its Editorial Board or Rhys’ Piece. Check back every Friday for the latest edition of Rhys’ Piece! email rhys.williams@fiusm if you have a topic you would like to suggest.
WINE AND,DINE

SOBEWFF brings opportunities for Chaplin students

CAMILA,FERNANDEZ
BBC,Managing,Editor

With,a,dash,of,spice,an,d,a,spoonful,of,sugar,for,a,heap,of,visitors,from,across, the,country,are,expected,to,be,present,at,this,year’s,14th,Annual,Food,Network, &Cooking,Channel,South,Beach,Wine, &,Food,Festival,a,national,wine,and,spirits,showcase,event.

Hosted,by, the, University, and, Southern, Wine,&, Spirits, of, Florida, the, event, has, helped, raise, over,$20, million, for, the, Chaplin, School,of, Hospitality, & Tourism, Management.

The,funding, supports, the, School, ’s, recently, added, Wine, Spectator, Restaurant, Management, Laboratory, as, well,as, their, Southern, Wine,&,Spirits, Beverage, Management,Center,at,FIU.

The, event, is, held, from, Thursday,Feb.,19, to,Sunday, Feb.,22, during, which,more,than,70, events, will,be,hosted,by,more,than, 150,celebrated, chefs, and,250,global,wineries, and,spirits,producers.

“it’s,a, tremendous,convergence,of,what,we,do, in, the,festival, combining, the, guest,chiefs, coming, from, out-of-state, [and], associate, support, of, the, Chaplin, school,” said, Lead,Culinary,Instructor,Michael, Moran, who, is, also, known,for,his,efforts,with, the,festival.

According, to, Moran, SOBEWFF, is, a, great,way,for,Chaplin,students, to, network, with,leaders, in, the,industry, and, apply,what,they,learn,through,internship.

“It,gives,us,an,opportunity,to,take,what,we,do,here,in,theclassroom,and,kind,of,get,together,with, the,industry,” Moran,said. “When,they,come,back,from, the, festival,after, it’s,over,”they’re,so,excited,that, it’s,almost,hard,to,keep,them, in, the, building.”

He,also,said,it,helps,students,clarify,and,narrow,down,their, trajectory, of, where,they, want,to, go, when,they,graduate.

For, this,year’s,festival, Moran,worked,closely,with,award-winning,FIU,graduate,Eddie,Zeng, to, help,coordinate,operations,for,Thursday’s,Italian,Al,Fresco,Feast, on, the,best,hosted,by,Debi,Mazar,and,Gabriele,Corcos,from,Cooking,Channel.

Zeng,who,will,now,participate,in,his,third,year,at, the,festival,as,declared,last,year’s, winner,of, the,Second,Annual- FIU & Badia, Spice, Competition,for, his,seafood, spice,creation,”Biscayne,Bay.”

He,was,awarded,a,$5,000,scholarship,for,his,blended,spice,which,includes, thyme,kosher, salt,celery,seed,fennel,seed,cumin,paprika,black, pepper, and, smoked,paprika.
The,spice,will,be,sold,with, five,percent,of,all,global,sales,to, give, back, to, the, Chaplin,School’s,funding.

“I,believe,it’s, the,balance,of, the,spices,that,makes, the,difference, and, the, quantities,that,you,put,together,and,blending, the, spice. So,it’s kind of like, chemistry,” said,Zeng.

“SOBEWFF,helps,me, put,my,foot, in, the,door, into, large scale, events, being, able, to, communicate,with,a,participating,chefs,”Zeng,said.

As,an,undergraduate, electrical,engineering, major,Zeng,involved,with, the,University’s, Student, Programming,Council.

This,helped, him, realize, his,passion,for,hosting,events.

At,age,15,he,worked,at,a,small,Chinese, restaurant, and, he, was, encouraged, to, try.

“I, got,kind,of,like, in, a,way, sucked, into, it, without, knowing it,” Zeng,said.

“I,my brain just goes, ‘I want to do this,’” Moran,believes,that,Zeng, has, been,a, leader, in, coming, up, with,new,ideas,for, the,Festival.

“We’re,really,on,a, very, progressive,track,of, constantly,trying, to, do, new,things, and,he’s,at, the, forefront, of, helping,us, with,experiments, and, coming, up, with, new,flavor,profiles,” Moran,said.“He’s,absolutely,fantastic, and,just,one,of, many, great,students,that,we,have,here,at,FIU.”

Festival,giving,chances,to,showcase,skills

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Students,are,preparing,to,participate, in, this,year’s,14th,Annual,Food,Network,South,Beach,Wine,&,Food,Festival, and, the, Chaplin, School,of, Hospitality, & Tourism,Management, is,making, sure,they’re,ready,to,take, on, responsibility,for, an, event.

The,festival,has,hosted,close,to,80, events, expanding,all,waysto,Fort,Lauderdale, Beach. It,has,also,raised,more,than,$20, million,for, the, Chaplin, School, attracting, chefs, and, companies, from,all,parts.

Through, the,University’s,SOBEWFF, Ambassador,Program, students, can, network, and, learn, from, these, culinary, professionals.

“I,heard,of, students, getting,seven,job, offers,after,one,week,at, the,festival,”said,Velez.

Velez said that they try to pair students with the job they want because, “not everyone wants to cook,” she said. These jobs can range from customer service, hospitality management to culinary assistant.

The,star-studded,festival,has,grown,significantly,since,it,started,in,1997,as,Florida,Extravaganza. For,five,years,local,restaurants,and,chefs,worked,with,Chaplin,students, to, showcase,national, and,international, wines, at, the,Biscayne,Bay,Campus. It, wasn’t,until,2002,that, the,University,partnered,with,Southern,Wine,&,Spirits,of,America,Inc.,to,create,what, it, is, today.

Tylar,Segal,a,senior, hospitality and,management, major, sees, the, festival, as, a, stress, free, job, for, the, festival.

“I, would,love,to,be,a,special,event,director,” said, Galanis. She said that the festival has taught her about the small but important details that help run an event, like sponsors and creating rosters.

This,year, the, festival, will, also, showcase, the, new, Badia, Spice, winner, “Biscayne, Bay” created,by,FIU,graduate,Eddie,Zeng.

This, is, just, one, of, the, many, successes, stories, from, the, Chaplin, School, and, is, why, students, are, so, eager, to, expose,themselves, to, opportunities, with, big,industries.

“One, I volunteered for the event, I knew this is what I wanted to do,” said,Segal.

Segal said she wants to continue working for the festival and be recognized for her work. She said the festival experience is different from learning inside a classroom.

“You, actually, see it get done, and, even, though, I have a small role in it, I want to make a big impact.”