Panel to have discussion on Cuba at the University

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Martin Palouš spent a portion of his life living in a totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia under Gustáv Husák, which included 18 years in prison.

Palouš, the former Czech ambassador to the United States, is a Permanent Representative to the United Nations for the Czech Republic and director of the Václav Havel Initiative for Human Rights & Diplomacy at the University, admits that the transitional phase of his country in 1989 is similar to the situation that several Cubans may find themselves in following President Barack Obama’s declaration last December to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

In light of this declaration, the Václav Havel Initiative for Human Rights & Diplomacy will be hosting a panel discussion on the future of the island and its ties with the United States and the European Union.

The event, titled, “Cuba and the World in 2015 Between the Past and the Future,” will examine the nation’s place in the international realm at the moment and its future.

The panel will host four distinguished scholars who will examine the debate surrounding the new diplomatic ties.

The panelists are Alexis Jardines, the Perez Bengochea director of the Pace Center for International Affairs and associate dean of the School of International and Public Affairs, the Václav Havel Center for Human Rights and Democracy director; and added that he was aware that people stand on one of two sides of the reactionary continuum regarding the issue, as well as the situation within the island is not as dangerous as one found in the Middle East or Ukraine at the moment. Palouš said that, at present, what can be done with Cuba’s political situation is to make it more visible for the community to understand the issues. As he put it, the case of democratization is very interesting and what’s happening now is an opportunity for people to think about the island’s issues more seriously and to see its relevance in the realm of international relations.

While the event is open to the public, it will be good for students who are interested in both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, according to Palouš. Students shared their thoughts.

“I don’t think much will come of the new diplomatic ties,” said Hanse Cruz, a junior biology major. “Only the governments, as I see it, will see the benefits.”

Others expressed different sentiments.

“The whole issue with these ties between Cuba and the United States needs to be discussed, and this panel will give the community that opportunity,” said Yeneliz Hernandez, a sophomore psychology major.

As Palouš considers it, while the Castro brothers want to achieve normalization of diplomatic ties on their own terms, it’s important to come up with alternative and realistic ideas as well.

He believes that Cubans want a peaceful transition and to be able to participate in economic changes in a fair and reasonable way.

For Palouš, the event will allow those in attendance to reflect and pose questions on the topic of Cuba in the world.

The event will take place on Wednesday, March 4 at 6 p.m. in the MARC Pavilion in the Modesto A. Muiñeiro Campus.

“I think Cuban people want democracy,” Palouš said.

Researchers, the Václav Havel Initiative, and others have already started working on establishing ties with the Cuban community to understand the issues. As he put it, the case of democratization is very interesting and what’s happening now is an opportunity for people to think about the island’s issues more seriously and to see its relevance in the realm of international relations.

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Reza Aslan engages students with Islam debate

Dr. Reza Aslan speaks to students at the Beyond Fundamentalism: Islam in the 21st Century lecture on Thursday, Feb. 19. The lecture was co-sponsored by the Initiative for Muslim Student-World Studies and the Middle Eastern Program.

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The doors to the School of International and Public Affairs kept opening every few seconds to allow people in.

They were gathering inside SIPA’s Room 125 to see Dr. Reza Aslan, a New York Times Best Seller, who spoke to faculty and students about Islam in the 21st Century, last week, in an event sponsored by Ruth K. and Shepard Broad Distinguished Lecture Series.

Recently his interview with media outlet CNN went viral on social media.

In his interview, he slammed Bill Maher and CNN anchors Don Lemon and Alisyn Camerota for their overgeneralization and mischaracterization of Islam.

Within a minute of his opening, Aslan told audience members that he will avoid the typical lecture format and instead try to engage the audience by treating his lecture like a lively debate.

He spent the first few minutes explaining the concept of Christian nationalism.

“IT did not take him long before he routed his conversation toward the topic that the majority of the audience expected him to speak on—the role of Islam in today’s world.

Aslan defined the concepts of Islamism and Jihadism and showed how these terms can help classify different Islamic states and groups around the world.

While talking about national
With Islamic State threatening, Turkey abandons historic tomb in Syria

After months of siege by Islamic State extremists, Turkey early Sunday sent an armored column into Syria to evacuate troops that had been guarding the tomb of Suleyman Shah, the grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire.

The government announced that nearly 600 soldiers were deployed to the site on the Euphrates river late Saturday, traveling in more than 100 tanks and armored personnel carriers, and aided by airborne early warning and control aircraft, and military helicopters and drones. The troops removed Suleyman Shah’s sarcophagus, and then destroyed the mausoleum. Turkey said it would honor Suleyman Shah’s remains in the Ashura region, close to the Turkish border, after a new mausoleum is built.

The operation ended what in effect was a long-running hostage crisis, which began when Islamic State forces cleared the area surrounding the enclave about a year ago.

Kerry meets with Iranian foreign minister in another push for nuclear deal

Concerns over what ability to enrich uranium Iran would keep and whether it would maintain its controversial plutonium reactor at Arak remained points of disagreement Sunday as U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, began another round of top-level talks.

Both issues are critical to limiting Iran’s ability to the quick development of a nuclear weapons, and must be resolved if Iran and the world powers are to reach a long-term agreement on Iran’s nuclear program that would allow the lifting of economic sanctions.

The student expressed his interest in discussing the impact of the Iran-Americans Society at FIU with Aslan, and Aslan agreed to meet with him and other students who were interested in the society. He also expressed his interest in the opportunity to speak with the students in the future.

Anyone can be a Muslim just by saying he is and nothing else.

Aslan believes that pop culture is a more effective tool that can propagate rightful messages about culture than media.

Not all, including Muslims, received Aslan’s comments on Islam warmly. Aslan is sometimes met with strong criticism. One particular question from the audience stood as a testimony to this.

The student expressed his dissatisfaction with Aslan’s comments on religious leaders and their use of theological manuscripts and ideas.

Aslan responded, with a hint of passive aggressiveness and said that it’s the behavior and not beliefs that are important — a statement that was received with instantaneously applause.

Aslan also made himself available and open to talking with students.

His response to a student who brought up the issue of a transgendered mosque was to come and chat with him after his talk.

Throughout the lecture, Aslan spoke as if his every thought landed on a conveyor belt and went through a series of inspection points before being presented in an eloquent manner.

Overall, Aslan’s visit to FIU intellectually highlighted the common issues with Islam perception today.
Tough choice: Graduate school or nah?

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When I start thinking about graduation at the end of this semester, I get happy as my family is for me. In fact, graduating is scary because it gets closer and closer whether you’re ready for it or not, like the big drop in a rollercoaster. Reaching the end of undergrad is like climbing slowly up that first hill and watching the ground get farther and farther away. You look back up, and you see nothing ahead of you. You have no idea what’s going to happen next. All you know is that things are going to change, and that you might throw up.

As I reach that big drop, I am faced with one of the most decisions of my life will I go to grad school, or will I not? I’m not pre-law or pre-med. I have a major that can (hopefully) do me fine upon graduation. My major guides me in my career options, additional job safety as it will be seen as an expert amongst my peers, and most important, it will bring a much closer education. It’s been said it’s a driving paycheck to paycheck. Looking at all of these reasons, it makes sticking with my Bachelor’s degree give me more in my favor. The last thing I want is to dig myself deeper into debt because of something that may end up being unnecessary. One of my greatest advocates for grad school is my mom, and she is pushing me to go for a plethora of reasons: getting a Master’s degree will give me more

But as much as she wants me to believe it, I know that I am not hopeless if I choose to stick with my Bachelor’s Grad school is expensive in some cases more expensive than undergrad. If I decide against it, I can save my money and focus every hour of each day on building my career. One

Better days arrive eventually, when Fresh actually has food to feed students throughout the entire day. These days only occur when the supervisors are in the cafeteria keeping an eye on the cafeteria staff. It is unbelievable how spectacular their services are when they are being watched and made sure they are catering to our needs, as they should.

When supervisors are not in the cafeteria, many of the staff tend to lounge around holding cups not because each other without even acknowledging hungry students waiting in line for food. So, is this the service of a meal plan when you are barely ever satisfied after leaving the cafeteria? Why should students constantly go to Fresh to only be disappointed?

Simple because they have no choice. The meal plan entails Fresh Food Company as the main staple of food. Every day, students wonder if there would be improvement, and change has yet to occur.

Consistency is necessary in the cafeteria as food is a very important part of a student’s day. Food gives students the energy to get through the rest of their classes or even to win an upcoming sporting event.

Fresh Food Company needs to improve or else the number of meal plans bought at FIU will start to dwindle excessively. Students will start to inconvenience their schedules by trying to cook in their dorms or even start buying food from other restaurants. This will end up being more costly and not benefiting the student in the long run. Having a meal plan is a huge benefit to a college student and should be accessible and worth having.

I’m not pre-law or pre-med. I have a major that can (hopefully) do me fine upon graduation.

Fresh Food Company: Not so fresh at all

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There are many features of living on campus, but a well-built network of friends, participating in school related activities, getting to class on time and especially having a meal plan so you don’t have to cook every day are some of the best things offered to us. But what happens when you start going to the cafeteria and there’s nothing to eat?

Fresh Food Company is the main cafeteria here at the University and on many days, I overhear complaints from students. Sometimes going to the cafeteria is pointless as there is nothing to suffice the hunger of a student after a long day. If the cafeteria is closing at 11 p.m., staff workers and students alike need something to eat. They start packing away food trays, cleaning up tables and closing down stations. This minimizes the options left for students to eat.

Since there is no food at the stations, hungry, irritated people gravitate towards the salad bar, which by 9 p.m. is rarely served! On other days, there is food; however, there is no variety. The stir fry station usually has commendable fried rice, but sometimes the options are only pork and beef. What about the people who don’t eat pork or don’t like tofu? A university cafeteria is suppose to cater to all of the possible likings of the school. Also, the vegetarian options are limited. There are only two vegetarian dishes served. Although there is a salad bar, vegetarians include a lot more interesting dishes in their diet than just salad.

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Better days arrive eventually, when Fresh actually has food to feed students throughout the entire day. These days only occur when the supervisors are in the cafeteria keeping an eye on the cafeteria staff. It is unbelievable how spectacular their services are when they are being watched and made sure they are catering to our needs, as they should.

And how can you really know what you want to specialize in before you know what it looks like and feels like in the workplace? Going to grad school is something to be commended, but it is important for students to know that you are not hopeless if you decide against it. Your parents and your advisors will tell you otherwise, but there are people who have become successful without a college degree at all. If you decide to go to grad school, just make sure it’s because you want to, not because people are pushing you to go. The drop is steep with just a Bachelor’s, there’s no doubt. But success will find you if you work for it, no matter what degree you have. Meal plans bought at FIU will start to dwindle excessively. Students will start to inconvenience their schedules by trying to cook in their dorms or even start buying food from other restaurants. This will end up being more costly and not benefiting the student in the long run. Having a meal plan is a huge benefit to a college student and should be accessible and worth having.

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When we pick our classes for next semester, there are usually additional fees you’ll notice added to our tuition that may have nothing to do with classes themselves. Is this pretty much all this extra money go for? This age old question has followed every college student since the beginning of educational institutions and has continued to be the central conflict between the student body and the administration on any campus. Even Florida International University is no stranger when it comes to controversy surrounding students being charged fees and health fee, for example, that are seen as a necessity for the University to operate to it’s best capacity to accommodate everyone even though there are disagreements with the amount charged or lack of use by the students themselves. One addition to our tuition that has never been addressed are Activity and Service fees which currently stands at $12.87 per student credit hour. This fee in particular covers expenses of extracurricular agencies like Homecoming, the Black Student Union, the Council for Student Organizations. It also covers operating costs of important facilities on campus such as the Career Services and Recreation Center. The budget itself is first divided by the Student Government Association to these bigger councils who then hold meetings or budget hearings to decide who ultimately gets a bigger or smaller percentage of the budget on a yearly basis.

The budget could not be found online but it was made available to anyone who came to person to their office with the updated amounts for this year. According to the summary, the grand total estimated revenue coming from the A&S fees is $16,380,156, which includes an additional 2 and 1 million to the Modesto Maidique Campus and Biscayne Bay Campus respectively. Huge dollar amounts will raise doubts but SGA and the administration have been transparent as shown by the detailed breakdown of the projected amounts given to these different organizations. These numbers, however, have a possibility of fluctuating due to the three year cycling of increases awarded to different departments of the University. This year, if Activities, and Services chooses to do so, there could be a possible five percent increase to the fee making a small jump to $14.85 per credit hour. This is where concerns start to arise but, unlike other increases in the past, this could possibly fix many problems the student body faces today and add the student government benefits effective in our immediate future.

The increase itself would generate an additional $1,899,192 that would go toward funding programs that are in danger of being cut, help grow the Career Service department in order to provide more internships for more students and finally begin the expansion of our own recreation center. These are all improvements in our eyes and serves as a major push from the administration to make quality of life here at FIU more worlds ahead. There is discord between the Government and SGA but no real reasoning behind other than maintaining his political capital and using financial burden as a way to keep the student body under control. We as students have to maintain our trust with our SGA and Student Affairs administration and support the increase we want. We have to hope of being able to support our own future students. No, a biggest university in the nation definitely has it perks but it requires a little sacrifice in order to see it grow.
Homefield Comedy Club’s ‘Comedy On Tap’ brings Miami improv to Kendall

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It felt like home to some who celebrated the NBA championship games, and it contained the screams of football fans during the World Cup. Homefield Sports Bar has been a hot spot for sports but now it’s giving locals the opportunity to sit back and enjoy an evening of jokes, laughter and drinks.

When The Miami Improv in Coconut Grove closed its doors in Miami Improv with a one night only special event of his ‘Hot Mess Comedy’ Tour. 

“We don’t have any comedy clubs in Kendall, so when we headlined names such as Rob Schneider, Michael Yo and Carlos Mencia the feedback was phenomenal,” said Gibson.

When football and basketball season came around, the improv shows came to a halt so that the venue can cater to the sports fans. But it wasn’t long until comedy made its way back to Homefield.

Claudia Angulo, Homefield Comedy Club Coordinator said, “We detailed a little because of the sporting events but here at homefield really liked the idea of a comedy club and we felt Miami needed one.”

The venue has undergone a few changes for its new theme. To keep the familiarity for the locals, the same logos remains but the words “love to laugh” have been added. Soundproof curtains, acoustical tiles, glass dividers and adjustments to the sound system have been added to fit the new theme.

“We’re really going for a long term comedy club and we want it to be the real deal,” said Gibson

A regular show starts with a local comedian or host, followed by a feature comedian and finally the headliner. The two-hour national comedic shows run on Friday and Saturday. Some headliners this month include Alex Reymundo, Michael Kosta and Carl LaBove.

Once a month, the comedy club hosts a ‘New Faces in Comedy’ show. This is an open mic event that anyone can attend and participate. Who knows? The next Rob Schneider could be walking the halls of FIU.

“We had this one guy show up last month and he was like, ‘Hey, I have ten people with me can I get on stage for a few minutes?’ and we were like yeah sure go ahead,” said Gibson.

Gibson said he would love to see more students at the shows. Whether its been a tough week at work or you’ve just finished a marathon study session, a good laugh can always make things better.

“Comedy crosses all demographic lines and income levels. When you have a long day really all people want to do is laugh and that’s what we want to provide for them,” said Gibson.

November of 2013, Miami was left in a comedy drought. With a team effort and a little help from big names in comedy, Homefield Sports Bar became Homefield Comedy Club, Miami’s new laughter machine and ‘Comedy On Tap’ was born.

Homefield has already built a reputation for its laid-back bar feel and a good game of pool.

It’s 8,000 sq. ft that fits approximately 450 people and is popular for sports games and events. Homefield Comedy Club Manager, Bill Gibson, feels the sports bar reaches its full potential when big events crowd the venue.

“We found that the venue was most packed when we had a big event. Its a big spot, we get great use of it. The atmosphere is amazing and its great for business,” said Gibson. Which is why when the owners of the Coconut Grove Comedy Club and Homefield Sports Bar worked together to bring Miami Improv back the feedback was just as expected.

On March 22, 2013 Michael Yo kicked-off opening night of The
FIU League of Legends community preparing for Panther’s Rift

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Over the past few years, E-Sports have steadily gained popularity around the globe due to competitive multiplayer games such as League of Legends and Dota 2. Last year alone, the League of Legends 2014 World Tournament was streamed by 40 private broadcasters in 19 different languages and had over 27 million viewers.

With its popularity among FIU gamers, it is no surprise that FIU will be hosting its largest League Tournament ever named Panther’s Rift.

The tournament is a joint effort between STARS and Association for Computing Machinery, both of which are under the School of Computing and Information Sciences, to promote programming education among FIU students.

The tournament itself began preparations early spring semester among a group of students from both organizations lead by STARS President Gio Peralto-Pritchard, whose vision of the event is to bring together a community with a common interest.

Students have actually sent me emails and messages saying thanks for hosting this tournament, this is a great idea. The positive feedback has proven to me already that this is a good idea,” said Peralto-Pritchard.

“Originally, I aimed for a 40 person tournament because that is what Riot Games requires for sponsorship for an event, but the day after we opened registration we had 40 people and we felt we could make the cap larger.”

The tournament consists of 16 teams of five that will battle through a first phase elimination qualifier March 7 and the main event on March 21. Semifinals will be best out of three and finals will be best out of five. All standard League of Legends rules apply to the tournament. There will be plenty of space for spectators and the team is planning to stream the tournament on the popular streaming site Twitch for outside League fans to see.

The tournament as of now is going through its final preparations. STARS and ACM members have assembled a Solutions Engineering team specific to solving the technical and logistic issues of hosting an event of this magnitude such as creating algorithms to evenly distribute individuals to teams, handling online participant registration and create live video streaming solutions for the event.

“It may not sound like a big deal, but when you get to the fine math of it we have to incorporate a lot of mathematical/computational theory and efficiency,” said Peralto-Pritchard about the work his solutions engineering team has been doing.

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Panthers break even at Caravell Resort’s Baseball at the Beach Tournament

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This past weekend, the baseball team competed in the 6th Annual Caravell Resort’s Caravell Beach Tournament. They played against ACC rivals on Saturday versus No. 28 Georgia Tech and then squared off against N.C. State. The final day of the tournament, the Panthers had a double header against N.C. Central. FIU entered the tournament coming off a rough loss versus Stetson losing 12-2 so it was important for the Panthers to play strong on the road and get their first win away from their home field.

Sophomore Cody Crouse took the mound for the Panthers in game one. It was his first ever matchup against Georgia Tech. The second game against N.C. State, Chris Moulere started the game and unfortunately for the Panthers, they weren’t able to capitalize and dropped both games. In game one versus Georgia Tech, the Panthers fell behind early to the Yellow Jackets, 6-0, before rallying to take a 9-8 lead into the ninth inning. FIU scoring single runs in the fourth through sixth innings before taking the lead in the seventh. The rally for FIU fell short in the ninth when they couldn’t hold the lead that inning. What sealed the win for the yellow jackets was an A.J. Murray grand slam that made the final 14-9.

In the nightcap of Saturday’s doubleheader, the Panthers offense fizzled out in a 3-1 loss to North Carolina State. Eddie Silva provided the only run for FIU with his first college home run in the third inning. The solo shot tied the score at 1-1 before the Wolfpack were able to get a run off of Moulere in the bottom of the third inning. Moulere had a solid outing pitching five and two-thirds innings and allowing just one earned run.

On Sunday, two freshmen took the bump for the Panthers as FIU squared off with N.C. Central for the first time in school history. Right-handed hurler Andres Nunez started the first game versus N.C. Central and another right-hander, Garrett Cave, took the mound for the second game.

In the opener of the doubleheader, Nunez had an amazing performance pitching six and two-thirds shutout innings walking none and striking out four batters to record the win in a 4-0 win over the Eagles. The victory came in Nunez’s first college start. FIU scored all their runs in the third inning and from that point on they never looked back. Brian Portelli delivered the big blow with a two-run double down the left field line to make it 3-0. Junior Zach Soria followed with an RBI single to bring in the fourth run for the Panthers.

The second game of Sunday’s two game series versus N.C. Central had a dramatic twist to it. FIU was down to its final out in the bottom of the 10th inning. Unlikely hero freshman Mitchell Robinson single home sophomore Kolby Follis. Follis was able to reach scoring position after stealing second base before the Robinson single. With that run scoring in the tenth inning the game continued to go into extra innings until the 13 inning. Freshman Jack Schauf belts a two-run home run off James Vernon over the right field wall in the bottom of the 13 inning to have the final score of 7-5. This was an incredible walk-off victory for FIU and with the win it completed a doubleheader sweep of N.C. Central.

After this tournament, FIU now has a record of 4-4 and more importantly, they displayed that they are capable of playing on the road. This tournament they went 2-2 and showed they can win even when they are down. FIU heads back home to Miami to host a four-game series against Manhattan College on Friday, Feb. 27.

Offense shines at Madeira Beach Invitational

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The FIU softball team (11-6) took on the Villanova Wildcats (1-4) and took command in the circle pitching a complete-game, four-hit shutout.

Sophomore center fielder Gabby Spallone hit the first grand slam of her career against the Wildcats. The first three batters in the lineup walked and Spallone took a 2-1 count over the right field fence for her first home run of the season. The Panthers killed the Wildcats 4-0.

The next game was an exciting win against the Wichita State Shockers, improving the Panthers record to 2-0 to start the tournament. Junior Corinne Jenkins (6-4) logged her fifth complete game this season, striking out three and only allowing five hits.

Sophomore Stephanie Tesexia went 2-for-3 and took the three-run home run to the parking lot in the third. Wichita was able to tie up the game in the fourth inning with a hit-by-pitch and two-out error in the outfield. The Shockers then got the go-ahead run in the fifth due to a passed ball and throwing error.

Junior Aleima Lopez went 2-for-3 and hit a two-RBI double in the sixth inning to win the game for the Panthers 6-5.

The next day of the tournament FIU softball team split a pair, first destroying the Columbia Lions 7-0, before being shut-out by the Texas State Bobcats 8-0.

Senior Shelby Graves (3-2) pitched a one-hit shutout against Columbia striking out a season high of seven batters. Tesexia is always dominating offensively and took Columbia’s pitchers deep going 2-for-2 with two RBIs and got her third multi-home run game of her career.

Senior Krystal Garcia went yard in the third inning as well going 2-for-3 with two RBIs. The FIU Panthers went 7-0 against the Ivy League Columbia Lions.

Jenkins started the next game that day against Texas State and got the loss only allowing three innings before handing the ball to freshman Rachel Dwyer.

Jenkins did a good job of keeping her composure in the circle striking out one in a pivotal moment of the game with bases loaded and one out. She then got the fly-out that would leave three Bobcats on base.

The second inning was just as troubling but Texas State was able to take a 2-0 lead. Questionable calls in the third inning would give Texas State two additional runs and two more came across the plate in the fourth.

FIU had a rally started in the fifth inning with two outs and two on base, but a call at the plate ended the inning and the game in a loss to Texas State 8-4.

The loss against Texas State awakened the heart and soul of the FIU softball team. The final day of the tournament was closed out with a ravaging 15-2 win over North Dakota.

Graves controlled the first three innings retiring five of the twelve batters she faced while only allowing three hits.

The Panthers offense lit up the last day of the tournament as both junior Dominique Grossman and freshman Jessica Hallett went deep for two-run home runs.

FIU went through the whole lineup in the first inning, putting up five runs to start the game and continued to post up runs on the board with multi-run innings, taking a dominating 15-2 win over North Dakota.

The FIU softball team travels back home now where they will host the Panther Invitational Feb. 27 through March 1.

Junior Corinne Jenkins delivers a pitch during the FIU Invitational. The Panthers finished the Madeira Beach Invitational with a record of 4-1.
Successful offeseason gives new hope for 2015

As the FIU football team prepares to begin spring practices next month, it's a good time to look back on the extremely active offseason the Panthers had.

The biggest difference between the 2014 and 2015 teams will be the coaching staff. Starting very early in the offseason, various coaches departed from FIU for other vacancies around the country. Many view this as coaches using a smaller program like FIU as a springboard to a bigger job, as former defensive coordinator Josh Conklin and former linebackers coach Rob Harley both accepted offers from the University of Pittsburgh, and former running backs coach Kerry Dixon II went to UF.

This is something that has been occurring in college football for years, and it will continue to occur. Coaches spend their time at smaller, less established programs to build up a resume and improve their abilities, and leave when they get the attention of larger schools. While it is not necessarily fair for schools like FIU and especially schools in the lower divisions, it’s important for the development of college football. There are always jobs that need to be filled, and there’s nothing wrong with someone wanting to get the big bucks and have more national exposure. It’s an unfortunate reality that FIU currently has to deal with, but as the football program continues to grow and improve, they may start becoming one of those schools that more coaches will aspire to work for.

Overall, despite losing out on some of the key coaches from years past, the changes to the coaching staff will improve the team going forward. Obviously it’s too early to tell exactly how effective the new coaches will be, but the guys head coach Ron Turner brought in are extremely qualified to continue moving the Panthers in the right direction.

The most important hire was that of Tim Harris Jr. from Booker T. Washington High School as the new running backs coach. The void left by coach Dixon will be very hard to fill, especially when it comes to recruiting. Dixon was very active in acquiring players from Miami-Dade County, but a guy like Harris is exactly who you would like to see in that position. Booker T. Washington is one of the best high school football teams in the nation, and is right in the heart of Miami-Dade. Harris definitely has ties and connections throughout the county that will help FIU sign players not only from Booker T. Washington, but also at other schools in the county. Dixon did a tremendous job in his one season here getting those Miami kids, but Harris has even more potential in that area.

His on-the-field production is obvious as well, as he was the head coach for a 14-0, state champion, nationally ranked high school team at Booker T. Washington. He was also the offensive coordinator there for five seasons, so there’s no question that he’ll be able to come in and help the FIU running back core improve.

The 2015 class also looks to solidify the offensive line, which will have a completely new look next season. New talent was also added at quarterback with the additions of Christian Alexander and Tim Harris Jr.’s high school star in Maurice Alexander.

In total, FIU added two quarterbacks, two running backs, four wide receivers, one tight end, three offensive linemen, four defensive linemen, one linebacker, five defensive backs, and one kicker/punter this offseason. 22 of these 23 players came from the state of Florida, so a lot of local talent was brought into the team. 2015 looks like it can be a very exciting season for the Panthers, and after an offseason like the one they’ve had, the team can exceed expectations.
Swimming and diving brings first Conference USA championship to FIU

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The FIU swimming and diving team clinched the Conference USA title in Knoxville, Tennessee on Saturday, Feb. 21. The Panthers blew out their C-USA rivals by over 100 points to secure the school’s first title.

During the event, FIU won eight races. The Panthers also broke a total of 11 school records while competing in Knoxville.

Senior Johanna Gustafsdoettir was the biggest contributor to FIU’s C-USA title, winning three events over the four-day competition.

Another valuable athlete was breakout freshman Silvia Scalia, who added two more wins to an already outstanding season. Breaking a school record for each of her events, Scalia was a school record holder for the entire season.

Another valuable athlete was breakout freshman Silvia Scalia, who added two more wins to an already outstanding season. Breaking a school record for each of her events, Scalia was a school record holder for the entire season.

“People don’t understand,” Brown said. “They think you have to go through,” Brown said.

The event’s purpose was to create awareness and discussion of issues that society faces everyday but very seldom discuss.

“Often times, people use the fact of not knowing about the issue (sic) as an excuse to ignore the problem,” Brown said.

A guest speaker will assist participants and ask questions to explore ways to address and improve upon the presented issues of oppression with a Tunnel of Hope at the end.

The twenty-four-year-old director of marketing for WSF, “We’ve had over 300 submissions and almost 1,000 people confirmed to attend.”

“I literally sat on Facebook all day, every day and sent out tons of messages. I’ve actually sent out over 11,000 messages to invite and make people aware of the event.”

Florida International University alumnus Jarrod Knowles makes his debut this weekend as president and founder of the first ever Widescreen Film and Music Video Festival.

FIU alumni creates new indie film festival to begin in late February

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“I literally sat on Facebook all day, every day and sent out tons of messages. I’ve actually sent out over 11,000 messages to invite and make people aware of the event.”

“The emotional experience of The Tunnel of Oppression

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To raise awareness on societal issues, students will embark on a journey through a “Tunnel of Oppression,” an interactive exhibit hosted by the BBC Student Programming Council.

The showcase is part of the SPC’s Arts of the Week where students are encouraged to experience different cultural arts from across the globe.

According to Tiffani Brown, graduate assistant at the Wolfe University Center, the exhibition challenges students to step out of their comfort zone and face the realities of oppression we are confronted with all the time.

It is a demonstrative experience where attendees walk through a simulated tunnel with booths and stations, each focusing on a different topic of oppression.

“One of the highlights and the reason of the event is that a lot of issues are not touched upon and people don’t really know the severity of it. It allows them to step out of their comfort zone,” Brown said.

“I literally sat on Facebook all day, every day and sent out tons of messages. I’ve actually sent out over 11,000 messages to invite and make people aware of the event.”

Jarrod Knowles  
President and Founder  
Widescreen Film and Music Video Festival

I literally sat on Facebook all day, every day and sent out tons of messages. I’ve actually sent out over 11,000 messages to invite and make people aware of the event.

“We are looking for the underdog, the unheard hero, those who are working hard but are not getting the recognition simply because they don’t have a voice. We want to be that voice.” Knowles said.

“Our mission for the festival is to inspire the creation and distribution of art while ultimately enhancing the creative mind.”

The twenty-four-year-old director implemented the idea Oct. 12, 2014, and in less than four months received hundreds of film submissions.

“We received submissions from all over the world,” said Karen Slosaski, director of marketing for WSF. “We’ve had over 300 submissions and almost 1,000 people confirmed to attend.”

Slosaski and Knowles make up half of the WSF executive team, three of whom are FIU alumni. Together, they advertised the event on a nonexistent marketing budget, turning social media into their marketing platform and heavily using Facebook to their advantage.

“I literally sat on Facebook all day, every day and sent out tons of messages. I’ve actually sent out over 11,000 messages to invite and make people aware of the festival,” Knowles said.

By using social media, the team managed to acquire submissions from 28 countries. Some of the featured participants are traveling from their respective countries to participate in the event.

“We have a filmmaker who’s coming from Rome, another from Bangladesh and countless people from around the US,” Knowles said.