109 Tower poses parking issues

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Back in August 2014, the city of Sweetwater and the University celebrated the opening of 109 Tower, a 15-story apartment building across the street from PG5. But, almost six months later, city residents and tenants of the tower are unhappy with the living arrangements and parking conditions that the apartments had to offer.

At a planning and zoning board meeting in 2012, residents of the area brought up concerns that reducing the number of parking spaces of the tower from 224 to zero would cause parking problems for adjacent condominiums and housing, according to the meeting minutes.

The residents’ concerns turned out to be true.

“This [building] has zero parking and, frankly, to me that’s insane,” said Guillermo Cuadra, chief of staff of the city of Sweetwater. “It has created a whole host of problems and, even though at the time FIU and the previous administration here supported it, now we have to deal with the problem.”

According to city police, they started getting calls from neighbors that the Tower’s residents were parking their cars on the streets of the city, sometimes blocking driveways.

“It’s just uptsmarting,” said Maria Luisa Jimenez, a homeowner near the apartment building. “Sometimes I have to leave quickly because I’m late and I go out and find that my driveway is blocked and I can’t get out. It’s unfair to me and my kids.”

Jimenez, 36, an immigrant from Nicaragua, has three kids in elementary school. She wakes up every morning at 5 a.m. to make sure that her driveway isn’t blocked and that she could get her children to school on time.

According to the Miami Herald, three condominium associations appealed to the city commission to revoke the parking variance that had been approved for the building. The appeals were dismissed for failing to specifically explain how the decision would become a problem and how the neighboring condominiums would be affected.

Mayor Jose M. Diaz, who was the president of the commission in 2012, said that waiving the parking requirements probably wasn’t worth it, according to the article.

“The previous administration just convinced the commissioners that it was a good idea,” Cuadra said.

The city was able to provide the parking variance by making an agreement, forcing over 400 leaseholders to park across the street in PG5. The agreement allowed the residents of the tower to park on campus with a decal and provided free transportation in the city trolley and the FIU CATS Shuttle.

But, for 109 Tower residents and frequent visitors, this wasn’t enough.

“I’m always there and my car has been towed twice,” said Alexandra Blanco, a sophomore biology major. “They have the 30-minute parking spots and sometimes we’re unloading groceries there and they’ll call the tow truck before the time is even up. My best friend’s car got towed after just 17 minutes.”

Anthony Ghanem, a student at the College of Law, supports this claim.

“Once I left my car down there for about 40 minutes and, when I went back inside, they said I had left it for over 15 minutes of the allotted time,” he said. “My thing is that doesn’t take the tow truck at least 10 minutes to get down there? My car has already been towed four times and it was $140 to pick it up each time.”

For him, this was an extreme amount.

“This is a college building, with college students living there,” he said. “The cost of the tow is a little expensive for the average college student. People complain about getting FIU tickets but getting towed is so much worse… Why make students go through this entire hassle for so much money because of the level of incompetence in infrastructure?”

109 Tower has 25 parking spaces, which are mostly used by staff and building managers.

“We have made everyone aware that parking is prohibited here at 109TOWER,” said building management through a post via Facebook. “We have resident and employee vehicles blocked in due to parked vehicles in non-parking areas. Please move your vehicle immediately to avoid being towed…”

According to Cuadra, the city has just empowered a task force to help deal with the parking situations of the tower tenants and the upsted city residents, including a pedestrian bridge to go over Eighth Street.

“It was a known fact amongst all FIU students promoting 109 that there would be a bridge on top of the street so that we could walk during rush hour,” Blanco said. “There is no bridge. It’s just an extreme inconvenience.”

For Cuadra, this whole thing was just a poorly planned situation.

“We tell our team here all the time that no matter what they’re gonna do, make sure that you plan,” he said. “After you plan the work, then you work the plan. This was just a situation that was poorly planned… And, if it was planned, it was almost premeditated for those problems to be there… So, now, it’s something we’re trying to cure.”

Wellness Center to offer safety advice for spring break

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For Jimmy Egas, there is always something to do in Miami.

According to U.S News and World Report, Miami Beach ranks number one on their “Best Spring Break Destination” list because of its beaches and clubs.

Egas, a freshman majoring in business administration and marketing, agrees with this ranking.

“Not only do you have the beach, but [you have] nonstop partying going around,” he said. “Aside from parties there is a lot of culture and the city is beautiful.”

While the beaches and clubs make it one of the best spots, Miami has also been ranked in the tenth most dangerous spring break destinations by NY Daily News.

On this list, Florida has the most cities — from Miami, Fort Lauderdale, the Daytona Beach, Panama City to West Palm Beach.

The Wellness Center, Counseling and Psychological Services and the Victim Empowerment Program are partnering to educate students on their accessibility and services.

“Students can learn about healthy behaviors that will help them to have a healthier Spring Break,” said Stephanie Caceres, senior health educator of University Health Services.

I love Public Health, and educating students about safe behavior during Spring Break makes me feel like I am making a difference.

Stephanie Caceres
Sr. Health Educator
University Health Services

Because of this, the University’s Wellness Center will be hosting an event where students can learn about staying safe during Spring Break.

The Wellness Center, Counseling and Psychological Services and the Victim Empowerment Program are partnering to educate students on their accessibility and services.

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Egas believes that an event like this one makes a lot of sense.

“That’s why Spring Break is before Ultra Music Festival, because can you imagine the madness?” Egas said.

According to theistivism.com, more than 1.5 million students will party during Spring Break and, while the average college student has about six drinks per week, during Spring Break this average goes up to ten drinks per day.

The event will provide information about Student Health Services, including information about the services available to students – counseling, dietitian services, stress management, massage therapy and more.

Educational topics like safe alcohol consumption, sexual health, drug use/use, consent and general safety will also be addressed.

“These are all topics that are important to remember during Spring Break,” Caceres said.

The event will also have “freebies,” along with free sandwiches and other things provided by invited vendors, according to Caceres.

It will be held on March 2 at 11 a.m. at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus in the Graham Center.

“I love Public Health, and educating students about safe behavior during Spring Break makes me feel like I am making a difference,” Caceres said.
Hundreds of pits filled with oil wastewater discovered in California’s Kern County

Unbeknown to California officials, oil producers in Kern County have been disposing of chemical-laden wastewater in hundreds of unlined trenches in the ground without proper permits, according to an inventory that regional water officials completed this week.

The Los Angeles Times obtained the results of the survey conducted by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, which uncovered more than 300 pits that officials previously didn’t know existed. Expected to be released by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, which uncovered more than 300 pits that officials previously didn’t know existed. Expected to be released

Michelle Obama pitches fruits, veggies at health summit

First lady Michelle Obama on Thursday reaffirmed her commitment to healthy eating and encouraged a gathering of health and policy experts focused on ending childhood obesity.

“I might be in my final stretch as first lady, but I have no intention of slowing down on this issue,” she told the crowd. “I do not have a one- or two-year horizon for this work. I have a rest-of-my-life horizon, and I know that all of you do, too. Because that’s what it’s going to take.”

While also celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Let’s Move! initiative to end childhood obesity, Obama helped announce a new marketing effort called FNV, which aims to market fruits and vegetables to children, during her keynote address at the Partnership for a Healthier America 2015 Building a Healthier Future Summit.

rubio on immigration: ‘i’ve learned my lesson’

Chris Adams

McClatchy Washington Bureau

Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida delighted a gathering of conservative activists from around the country Friday morning, saying America doesn’t owe him anything but that he owes “a debt to America that I will never be able to repay.”

Before a mostly full ballroom at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference outside Washington, the Republican and potential presidential candidate recounted his personal history, one that took his parents with little money, no connections and limited education from Cuba to South Florida.

“Less than four decades later, all four of their children live the lives and the dreams that my parents once had for themselves,” Rubio told the gathering. “For me, America isn’t just a country. It’s the place that literally changed the history of my family.”

“The fact that the son of a bartender and a maid that worked in a hotel is sitting on the stage with you today,” he added later, “that’s why America is special.”

Rubio also worked to confront one of the most damaging _ at least from the perspective of this audience _ episodes in his young political career: the 2013 debate over immigration.

“Well, it wasn’t very popular. I don’t know if you know that from some of the folks here,” he quipped, to widespread chuckles.

The possible path to 2016 is tricky and tight for Rubio, once a darling of the nation’s conservatives but now viewed skeptically by many. Despite one of the most conservative voting records in the Senate, Rubio lost many of his conservative fans when he pushed a bipartisan overhaul of the nation’s immigration system that made it through the Senate in 2013 but stalled in the House of Representatives.

Rubio said he’d learned from 2013.

“What I’ve learned is you can’t even have a conversation about that until people believe and know _ not just believe, but it’s proven to them, _ that future illegal immigration will be controlled,” he said. “That is the single biggest lesson of the last two years.”

Addressing both foreign policy and domestic themes, Rubio riffed on several “imagine” _ statements conjuring what a new direction for the nation could bring.

Imagine if we repealed and replaced Obamacare, he said to applause.

“Imagine if we had leaders that understood that the family, not government, is the most important institution in society,” he said to more applause.

“Imagine if our laws protected innocent human life, from conception to natural death,” he said to even bigger applause.

Finally, to both applause and raucous laughter: “Imagine if we had a president who doesn’t travel the world bad-mouthing America. After all, that’s the U.N.’s job.”
An Oscar’s night that will be committed to memory

JOHANNA CARRASCAL
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This year’s 87th Academy Awards ceremony, also known as The Oscars, served as a platform for celebrities to bring awareness about topics they are passionate about and are affecting today’s society. Celebrities took a portion of their acceptance speeches to touch delicate subjects such as suicide, racism, equal pay, immigration, and more.

The Oscars, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is designed to honor the hard-working and prestigious actors, actresses, film makers, directors and anyone who was involved in producing these successful films. It is the night celebrities, especially those in film, all wait for. From the glitz and glamour of who wore it best and lavish afterparties, celebrities and home viewers tune in for the much anticipated event.

Yet there was something magical about this year’s Academy Awards that left me in awe. It seems to me that celebrities are finally using their power for good. Although there were many inspirational speeches, there was a certain few that stood out and had people talking still days after the event.

First-time nominee Graham Moore won the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for his work on the film “The Imitation Game.” Moore took his inspiration from the man in the center of the plot, Alan Turing, who was an important element in the advancement of computer science and cracked the impossible German code during World War II, giving the allies an opportunity to change the course of the war. However, he was later prosecuted for being an openly gay man which ultimately led him to take his life.

Graham started off his speech by sharing intimate moments of his life where he too has thought about taking his life because he was not always accepted or simply called weird. Moore stated, “I would like for this moment to be for that kid out there who feels that she’s weird or she’s different or she just doesn’t fit in. Yes you do. Promise you do. Stay weird, stay different.” This speech made such an impact that social media frenzy was filled with stay weird hashtags, showing great support from fans and fellow colleagues.

They say you can’t win when you talk politics at the Oscar, but that didn’t stop Patricia Arquette. Academy Award winner for Supporting Actress in “Boyhood,” Arquette took the stage for her acceptance speech, but did not leave before clearly leaving her point of view on equal pay. “To every woman who gave birth to every taxpayer and citizen of this nation, we have fought for everybody else’s equal rights. It’s our time to have wage equality once and for all and for all equal rights for women in the United States of America!”

This feminism inspired speech received applause from the audience, including myself. Arquette had whopping reactions from Meryl Streep and Jennifer Lopez.

Undeniably, this year’s Oscars was one for the books. I look forward to future Award shows, not for the designer dresses strutting the red carpet, but for more inspiring and pro-active speeches that I am sure are soon to come. With a much more connected society we live in now thanks to social media and other technologies, it is speeches like these that start a movement to create a greater world.
George Takei, famous for playing Lt. Hikaru Sulu on “Star Trek” and admired for his work on “Futurama” as a disembodied talking head, visited FIU last week in the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

In the first row were members of Stonewall; behind them were SGA members, and filtered throughout the grid of chairs were people with “Star Trek” shirts and snapbacks. It resembled what Takei called, “infinite diversity in infinite combinations.”

A representative came out and introduced the event. He flubbed the name and introduced George Takei as George Takee—a mistake never corrected.

Takei walked out with his catchphrase, “Oh, my!” His gruff, baritone voice echoed across the arena. Even without the microphone, he would have been easy to hear.

He began by speaking about equality. Speaking about the founding fathers, the first functionaries of egalitarianism, but “who kept other people as slaves.” Equality was not done yet, Takei explained - a theme of his speech.

He spoke about the inequality he had experienced in his life. When he was five years old, he and his family were sent to a Japanese-American internment camp during World War II.

“Our bank accounts were frozen...and they began rounding us up.”

Americans, rounding up people based on their ethnicity, resembled their enemies. He recalled the day they took him. An officer stood outside their home while the family scrambled to get their belongings.

“My mother took the longest,” he said. “She came out holding my baby sister in one arm, crying, while wheeling a suitcase with all her belongings.”

The Japanese-Americans in the camp were described as “enemy non-alien?” and had to forswear their allegiance to the Emperor of Japan.

“As if we had some genetic loyalty to the emperor,” Takei explained. “And if we forswear our ‘allegiance’ we would be admitting to having one, which we didn’t.”

Takei’s family was just as American as any other family; both of his parents had been born in the United States.

“We need to hold democracy’s feet to the fire.”

The Japanese-Americans who volunteered to fight in the European theater during WWII were placed in a segregated, all Japanese-American unit. This was the 442nd Infantry Regiment, which after the war received 21 Medals of Honor. Their motto was “go for broke” because of their indefatigable desire to prove their loyalty to the United States. Takei described the unit’s heroism during the battle at the Gothic Line. The allies had been stalemated and could not push forward into the Italian territory. The 442nd Unit decided to scale the cliff behind the enemy battalion because they knew a surprise attack from behind would guarantee victory.

“The members who fell off, fell silently, each and everyone, as to not give away their position,” Takei said. “We not only fought the enemy, but prejudice, and we won.”

The discussion then shifted to another form of inequality.

“I knew I was different,” Takei said.

He explained how no one in Hollywood would hire a gay actor and thus his silence began. “I loved my career,” Takei repeated as he explained his reason for not being openly gay. He met an older gay man who told him about the raids that would occur at gay bars. Police would raid, arrest, and fingerprint the men. “They ruined many people’s lives...some even killed themselves.” These men and women were publicly shamed and humiliated.

The first time Takei publically presented himself as a gay man was after Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the same-sex marriage bill that would have legalized gay marriage in California.

“We need to hold democracy’s feet to the fire,” Takei said. He concluded his speech by announcing, “At the age of 77, I will be making my Broadway debut.”

The musical is titled “Allegiance” and focuses on a romance in a Japanese-American internment camp. The message of the musical, which connects with the theme of Takei’s speech, is “being able to find joy even in the harshest of circumstances.”
‘Arrow’ ends with right amount of action, emotion

Talk about a great way to leave the show with a 2-week cliffhanger! Ra’s Al Ghul actually wants Oliver to be the next leader of the League of Assassins?

And from what the previews show, it seems like Oliver agrees to that deal! My mind is still boggled by all of this.

I give this episode of “Arrow” an 8.5/10. It had the right amount of action for a usual episode, it had the emotion in there that keeps the audience’s attention.

But what it didn’t have was more A.T.O.M. time which really irked me because the trailer for this episode really hyped him up and I was looking forward to seeing him in real action.

Besides that being the only negative in this episode, I was in awe at the choreography of the fighting in this episode. The fights between Oliver and Nyssa Al Ghul and Malcolm Merlyn and Nyssa and Nyssa were to ones to really pay attention to. It was nearly flawless with every move and kick.

It always excites me to see Katrina Law come back to the “Arrow” episodes as Nyssa Al Ghul because I met her last summer and she’s such a sweetheart.

This episode in particular is a gut-wrenching one for a couple of reasons: This episode shows how Thea’s angrily dealing with her newfound grief by going around and blabbing to everyone in the gang about what she did when Oliver specifically told her to keep it to herself.

She told Roy, Laurel and worse, she told Nyssa and gave her back her sword, to only leave that standoff unanswered. Now, let’s take an actual look at Nyssa Al Ghul. All I’ve talked about her thus far is her fighting and how beautiful she is. But I haven’t yet touched on how they actually bring in a character into a superhero show and make her homosexual. I find that dynamic to be very inspiring and intriguing, too. It shows the progression of the superhero movement and how it involves more than just race, but it involves sexuality, also. And Katrina Law plays the character with such respect and it’s just perfectly believable.

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Now we get a real glimpse into the brotherhood that Diggle and Oliver share with one another. When they are captured by the League of Assassins and are chained in a prison cell together really allows them to show one another how they feel as if the other is family.

Diggle goes as far as asking Oliver how he’d feel about being his best man at his next wedding and Oliver agrees.

Brotherhood truly is a powerful force to be reckoned with.

To finish, Ray Palmer has finally become the hero we all know as the A.T.O.M. The only thing I’m left wondering is, will he have his ability to shrink to subatomic sizes or not.

Patience, my DC soldiers. Our heroes will come back bigger and better than ever!

“DC on TV” with Chris is a column covering the latest episodes of the ongoing series The Flash and Arrow.

For the full story see fiusm.com.

Dr. Melissa Chiu, Director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Photography by Ashley Gilbertson

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4 | 6:00 PM

The Steven and Dorothea Green Critics’ Lecture Series announces the launch of its 34th season at the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum FIU with guest-lecturer Melissa Chiu’s presentation of “Making A Museum in the 21st Century” on Wednesday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m. at the Frost Museum with a reception immediately following.

Dr. Chiu is the new director of the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. The Hirshhorn is part of the Smithsonian Institution, and is considered one of the “big five” modern arts museums in the United States. Chiu has published numerous books on Chinese contemporary art, and is one of the world’s leading authorities on modern and contemporary Asian art. She is a board member of the Association of Art Museum Directors, the American Alliance of Museums, and the Museum Association of New York.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum
10975 SW 17th Street, Miami, Florida 33199
T: 305.348.2890 | W: thefrost.fiu.edu
Athletics announces changes to spring football practice schedule

JACOB SPIWAK  Staff Writer  jacob.spiwak@fiusm.com

FIU announced Friday morning that they would be altering their original spring practice schedule that was released last week.

The new opening date for the practices has been pushed back a few days to Thursday, March 19th, with a start time 9:00 AM.

In the past, when I have gone to these games the Marlins have their projected opening day starters on the field just to keep a “small ball” mentality since they do not have those big bats in the lineup like the Marlins have.

Another aspect of this game that could be interesting for FIU is that they will be playing this game using wood bats. In case you’re wondering, at the collegiate level players do not use wood bats and even before that at the high school level.

Major League Baseball responds to pace of play complaints with new rule changes

JACOB SPIWAK  Staff Writer  jacob.spiwak@fiusm.com

In recent years, Major League Baseball has begun to lose popularity, and has had a lot of trouble attracting younger audiences. Despite being America’s national pastime, for various reasons baseball has been unable to attain the success it once had.

The MLB is still reeling in a tremendous amount of revenue every year, so on the surface it looks as if the sport is fine. However, ratings continue to drop seemingly every year, and leagues like the National Football League and the National Basketball Association draw higher numbers.

One of the reasons that is always pointed to for the MLB’s decline is the pace of play. MLB games take significantly longer to finish than other major sports with all the down-time between pitches, and the league is finally doing something about it.

It was announced to teams after they started Spring Training, that the returning Richard Leonard can duplicate his tremendous performance last season that led him to the All-Conference USA team.

The Spring Game that caps off the practice schedule will also carry a lot of excitement, as the live scrimmage will see everybody on the roster playing at full game speed. Each spring practice will be open to the public, and FIU encourages their fans to come out and watch the team in their first organized practices of the offseason.

There are a few rules for those attending, as still photography, video recording, and live reporting of the practices through social media are all prohibited.
Do you like sports?

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to cover a sporting event?

If you answered “YES” to both questions, then:

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DRUCKER DIGEST

The women’s swimming and diving team made history in every way possible Saturday night.

They became the first team at Florida International University to bring a Conference USA title to Miami.

The team claimed their first ever championship in any sort of league since their founding in 2003. The student athletes set 11 new University records over the course of the four-day event. In the words of Head Coach Randy Horney, the women truly “competed like champions all week and earned this title.”

Where is the recognition for these girls?

It is no secret that FIU has a history of struggling to draw out fans to sporting events. But for a crew of C-USA champions and rapid record-breakers, will there be an exception?

The one time I went to a FIU swimming and diving event this season, it felt like watching Netflix; the collective event is made of individual episodes that can be digested by themselves, one at a time, yet are all part of a bigger picture.

If FIU’s athletes touched the wall before their opposition (Florida Gulf Coast in this meet) in a variety of events and the excitement grew with each victory. Like diving into a show, there are moments where I was completely confused — I didn’t get the intense “oo-ing” and “ah-ing” sounds that the parents and coaches produced — but there was an understood atmosphere about the meet.

If the team had the support that a champion typically does, the crowd would stretch into Biscayne Bay.

I understood that the swimming and diving team was for real just by being there. The parents, coaches and players were more intense and more involved than at any other sporting event I’ve seen on campus.

Not a single fan at the event left or went inside when the weather turned to rain. The people who were there support were going to stay there, even if that meant getting a little wet.

The changes for 2015 will be that managers must initiate all instant replay challenges from the dugout, but on the field. Others, including a play clock for pitchers. Arizona Fall League, which decreased the time of games significantly. There’s been a lot of trial and error with the new rule changes, but the further this goes on, the closer MLB will be to figuring out and fixing the issues.

I’m personally somebody who never had a problem with the time of games. I grew up religiously playing and watching baseball, and to me the down-time between pitches was part of the enjoyment of the game. Despite this, I personally think those publicly bashing the MLB for making an attempt to speed up the game need to open their eyes.

In a world of increasing technology, the average person’s attention spans are decreasing significantly. Baseball needs to appeal to younger people in order to have sustained success, and if the game isn’t keeping children’s attention then something needs to be done.

The MLB has always been the last to adapt and evolve, and while it’s unfortunate to baseball purists like myself who loved the game the way it was, a change like this to improve baseball’s longevity is necessary.

Not all of the rule changes are great; I’ll never be convinced that instant replay (which was implemented in 2014) has a place in the MLB. Some of the changes may not work, but that’s okay as long as progress is being made.

I’ll always love baseball no matter what, and part of me is extremely upset that rule changes like this have to happen. I understand the necessity, though, and soon even the most old-school baseball purists will adapt to the changes as well.

MLB PAGE 6

Training that there would be new rules regarding pace of play. These changes, presumably drawn up by the recently formed “pace of play committee”, aim to keep the game moving at a somewhat quick pace.

The changes for 2015 will be that managers must initiate all instant replay challenges from the dugout, batters must keep one foot in the batter’s box at all times, and the rule that games will sometimes take somewhat quick pace.

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C-USA Champion swim and dive team deserves attention

Now, the University’s swimming and diving team can call themselves champions. Will more fans turn up to the pool next season? I believe that there are no excuses for them not to.

Here’s a popular excuse: it takes a hike for many students to watch the team. Swimming and diving is based at the University’s Biscayne Bay Campus.

Few people want to drive through the heart of Miami traffic to go see the team, but then again, how many students who attend FIU aren’t used to the horrid Miami traffic? The C-USA champions deserve a commute.

Another reason that swimming and diving deserves more fan attention is that it’s not a terribly difficult sport to grasp. Sure, there are technical aspects to the sports, but it boils down to who touches the wall first. Even the most casual sports fan can root for this.

The followers of FIU swimming and diving already fill up the small poolside bleacher section allotted for them, but this isn’t enough. The University should have to add another set of bleachers.

If the team had the support that a champion typically does, the crowd would stretch into Biscayne Bay. In the meantime, just a few more fans at the University’s first C-USA champions’ meets next year won’t hurt.
CAMILA FERNANDEZ
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Award-winning television anchor and correspondent Soledad O’Brien said she experienced discrimination growing up. Now, she brings questions about police and police brutality into light through her national Black in America tour.

According to Jones, the plans for the renovations began when he first came to the University roughly two years ago. The funding came from the Student Government Association, the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Academic Affairs.

O’Brien also thinks that the renovations for the theatre should have started a long time ago.

The interior of the theater will be redesigned and the layout of the seats will be changed from a center aisle to two aisles directly off the lobby doors. The new seats will also host power and USB capabilities, like plug-in means for students, to meet the requirements for the partnership.

“We’ve done a variety of things relating to the classroom, with course capturing and other things that academic departments have indicated they need,” said Jones, who completely reimagined BBC and it’s important that we make sure the facilities remain up to date and meet all student needs.”

According to Jones, the plans for the renovations began when he first came to the University roughly two years ago. The funding came from the Student Government Association, the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Academic Affairs.

“Angelica Johnson, a junior public relations major, is particularly excited about the new plug-in capabilities that the theatre will offer. "I really can’t tell you how many times I’ve looked for an available plug in that theater," she said. "There’s like maybe five plugs in that room and, when you walk in, there’s a class full of students and all use computers to take notes, that isn’t enough."" Johnson also thinks that the renovations for the theatre should have started a long time ago.

“It’s just that, compared to the MMC campus, I feel like we’re always a step behind," she said. “I’m really happy to see that BBC is stepping up and is ready to make a more-modern building – kind of like what they did with Panther Square." Panther Square, the area just outside of WUC, was renovated a little over a year ago.

Demetri Aristil, a senior journalism major, wasn’t too fond of the renovations for the square. Nonetheless, he thinks that the theatre needed improvement.

"It’s not going to look like two separate spaces," he said. "We had such success with the renovations of Panther Square and we’re really looking to carry that energy forward in pantherizing the Mary Ann Wolfe Center."

Demolition of the theatre has already begun. The project is scheduled to be completed by Aug. 17. Jones asks students and the surrounding BBC community to stay clear of the theatre, lobby and backstage area during the construction phase.

"I think it’s going to be a wonderful project," he said. “I’m really looking forward to see how students will utilize the space once we’re completed with it.”

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To kick off the dynamic week, Monday, March 2 will be a carnival-themed day from noon to 2 p.m. at Panther Square. On Tuesday, there will be a Panther’s Cafe hosted by the Creative Photography Video and Fashion Club from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Panther Square. Students are encouraged to come out and relax with entertainment from FIU students.

Wednesday is expected to be a movie day where students are welcomed to watch award-winning film “Beyond the Lights”, starring Gugu Mbatha-Raw and Nate Parker. There will be two showings with one at noon and another at 5 p.m. The event is hosted by the Student Program- ming Council and it will be held in Room 157 of the Wolfe University Center.

On Thursday, students will go back in time at FIU Flashback. Students are encouraged to wear their favorite decade attire as they relive University BBC memo- ries. There will also be a session of t-shirt tie-dye. The event will take place at Panther Square and Panther Plaza from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Hosted by the BBC Recreation Center, there will be a Yoga by the Bay from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the lawns by the bay. Finally, on Saturday, there will be a Coun- cils vs Staff Field Day hosted by the BBC Student Government Council.

Students are encouraged to come out and network with student leaders and staff. Food and games are included.