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College of Law receives grant to train students for capital cases

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Florida has the second highest number of inmates on Death Row in the country, according to the Florida Capital Resource Center. It is also the only state that allows a jury to decide the factors and to recommend death by a majority vote of 7 to 12. As a result of this, the Themis Fund, an organization aimed at abolishing the death penalty, has given the University’s College of Law a $620,000 grant to help improve how defense lawyers handle capital cases.

“Florida is the new Texas right now,” said Rebecca Ritters, director of Themis Fund. “It has a death row of 404 people right now and has one of the highest execution rates in the country.”

The funding will help the College of Law’s Death Penalty Clinic, a one semester clinical course that allows students to be involved in actual death penalty cases under the supervision of Stephen K. Harper, professor, lawyer and mitigator.

“One of the things that’s really apparent in this state is that access to counsel is important when giving people a fair trial, especially in capital cases,” Ritters said. “In Florida, there hasn’t been enough capacity to support people who are being charged with capital offenses.”

She added that she and other members of the Themis Fund are hoping that, by giving the College of Law the grant, they will be able to increase the capacity and ability to obtain legal counsel for those individuals who are being tried for capital offenses.

The grant will support costs of traveling around the state of Florida and will fund lawyers who are experienced with capital cases.

“I’m trying to sort of groom a new group of law students who will eventually do capital cases,” said Harper. “They’ll be able to understand how mitigation works and how powerful it can be, all while focusing on raising legal issues and, ultimately, on how the law can be used to make sure you get a fair trial.”

The project itself will be directed outside the classroom traveling around Florida and providing consulting services in capital cases.

Inside the classroom, Harper will be teaching law students how to handle a death penalty case and how to help the lawyers they’ll be working with.

“The Clinic is not really so much an anti-death penalty clinic,” he said. “It’s a clinic teaching lawyers how to be good lawyers.”

Nevertheless, Harper thinks that the $620,000 grant is both wonderful and sad.

“It’s wonderful because we’re being given this opportunity to teach and train lawyers,” said Harper. “But it’s sad that this has to be done because you expect lawyers handling cases as serious as a death case to understand and to do all the things that, essentially, we’ll be teaching at the Clinic.”

According to Ritters, the grant came about because of the leadership that the College of Law had demonstrated and provided over the years to address issues of capital punishment in Florida – in particular under the leadership of Harper.

“You’re blessed to have such an extraordinary man in your faculty,” she said. “It’s through his leadership that we became involved at FIU and, because of him, there wasn’t another option for this grant. It was always Steve. It was always FIU.”

Law students around the University are excited for what this clinic and grant could mean for them.

Christopher Flech, a pre-law student, is one of them.

“This is such great news for...”

New additions to be made to Engineering Center

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Nearly 200 students gathered at the University’s College of Engineering and Computing for a town hall meeting on Friday, April 10.

At the town hall meeting, engineering students had the chance to speak directly to engineering and computing administration about opportunities for the College.

The meeting was held at the Panther Pit located on the second floor at the Engineering Center. Attendees included Dean Amir Mirmiran, Elizabeth Naranjo, administrative operations manager and Stephanie Strange, associate director of the Office of Student Access and Success, among others.

At the meeting, students expressed concerns for more space for relaxation at the Engineering Center as one of their main points.

A biomedical student also expressed that the biomedical department should incorporate more SolidWorks Design classes for the program – which is vital for today’s workplace in engineering.

Despite popular belief, the administration is listening. They’ve already made changes to the Panther Pit at the Center.

A new microwave was added for both students and faculty to use, and another will soon be added. This is something that has been a concern for students because of the long lines that formed during lunch hours.

The Center will also add a foosball table this week for students to enjoy.

Miracle Ultimate Skin Care donated the foosball table and one of the microwaves.

Since most of the activities and programming events normally take place at the Molder and Maille Endowed scholarships, the administration of the Engineering Center expressed that it wanted to bring this element to engineering students, especially considering that the Center is not too far from the MMC.

“It’s important for students to take a break from studying sometimes,” wrote Santiago Norena, a senior majoring in mechanical engineering and computing and the Student Government Association at the MMC, in an email to Student Media. “This is why we brought in the foosball table.”

He used himself as an example of someone who needs to unwind every now and then.

“As an engineering student, I [know] that after hours of studying there are times I need to take a break because my mind gets blocked,” he said. “A good break allows me to keep studying efficiently.”

Norena recently surveyed engineering students and 90 percent of them agreed that more entertainment should be added to the Center.

The Center will also gain a new pool table due to Norena’s efforts.

SGA will be able to fund either a brand new one or refurbish the one that’s currently there, according to the announcement Norena made at the town hall meeting.

He said the town hall meetings are important because it really gives students a chance to relay any issues they find.

“The dean and other faculty directors really do listen to what we, students, have to say,” Norena said. “They take action, even if it takes time.”

For some time he has also wanted to add more outdoor study areas.

Although this project is time-consuming, he already started the process by surveying students to show the administration that this particular expansion is in popular demand.

Julian Roza, a junior majoring in mechanical engineering, attended the town hall meeting.

He suggested a recreational area for physical activities, too, such as running.

“If you keep your body healthy, your mind will be, too,” he said. “I am an active athlete and I find this to be important.”

Jorge Cisternas and Juan Narvaez will assume the new engineering and computing senator seats in the Student Government Association at MMC for the 2015-2016 school year.

Norena said he’s extending this information to Cisternas and Narvaez so the project continues. Up until he is replaced, he will be working with the administration to improve the Center.

The next town hall meeting is projected to take place next semester. The official date will be determined later and will be announced to all engineering students.

“It’s important for students to attend these meetings so they can voice their opinions,” Norena said. “FIU will always be a mark on our lives. We are an evolution and attending events like the town hall meetings gives students the opportunity to be a part of it.”
Obama, Cuba’s Castro vow to ‘turn page’ on bitter history

President Barack Obama met privately with Cuban leader Raul Castro Saturday, ending more than half a century of U.S. diplomatic attempts to isolate Cuba and cast it as a pariah state. “This is obviously an historic meeting,” Obama said as the two men sized each other up on a lawn with identical wooden armoires in a small room at a convention center here. Obama said that more than five decades of U.S. policy on Cuba had failed to bring change to the communist nation, and “it was time for us to try something new” even as both nations deal with “deep and significant differences.” He declared that it’s time “to turn the page and develop a new relationship between our two countries.” A few aides were in the room with the two leaders, and a U.S. press pool observed part of the meeting.

Cops: Mom who led quadruplets son in woods hospitalized

The little patch of woods is a place where people drink beer, have sex in the dirt and dump their trash. Dozens of tall cans of cheap beer, a few condom wrappers and old, wet clothes were scattered there Sunday afternoon, right near a line of police tape that stretched from tree to tree. The blanket that Nydia Parker allegedly used to cover her quadruplets son before she abandoned him there last week was gone. The Bible she allegedly left on his chest, perhaps hoping a higher power could sort it all out, was gone, too.

Obama calls for respect, Raul Castro for patience in historic talks

For the first time in more than half a century, the presidents of the United States and Cuba met face to face Saturday, formalizing their joint bid to restore diplomatic ties and break from the nations’ Cold War past, an effort President Barack Obama said could be a “turning point” for the region. But far more tangible hurdles must still be overcome, in negotiations between the two governments over reopening embassies, ending Cuba’s designation by the U.S. as a state sponsor of terrorism and other topics, and in Congress, where lifting the decades-long embargo is an all-but-certain non-starter.

New center to train law students on capital cases

The U.S. closed its embassy in Havana in January 1961. Three months later, it backed the failed invasion of the island by Cuban dissidents that drew the Castro regime to the same site of the landing: the Bay of Pigs. “A lot of the meeting was spent on just taking stock of how significant this moment is,” said an official who requested anonymity while discussing the talks. Obama ran in 2008 on a platform that included re-examining the U.S.-Cuba relationship and engaging even personally with longtime adversaries. In December 2013, Obama and Raul Castro shook hands briefly at the funeral of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, just before aides would begin substantive discussions that paved the way for the conversation in December between the two launching formal normalization efforts.
Bye bye, Beacon

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When I am asked what I’m majoring in, I quickly say psychology and criminal justice. But there’s always a catch that’s not what I want to pursue anymore. That is the truth I am facing now as I near graduation.

What changed that for me was FIU Student Media. I didn’t realize it back when I first joined in fall 2011 as an opinion writer for The Beacon, but journalism has slowly become the one thing I really want to do in life. The market might be a tough one to enter and my days might be stressful and inconsistent but it turns out I’m the right kind of crazy to gladly take all of that with open arms.

I realized this as I eventually worked my way up the ladder after being tired of remaining stagnant. What was at first just a means of having a platform for my writing soon turned into a platform for my career. A carefully planned out strategy for where I wanted to be.

It all started in late November of 2012. That is when I first walked into the second floor office at the Graham Center and applied for a position at The Beacon. I did not know then that it would be such a large part of my future career.

I came in originally to get a few extra copies of the paper which I was included in a picture on the front page with Russell Simmons from a President Barack Obama event but thought there was a pretty good sports section so far. I applied and thought nothing of it either.

My first story was on the then present archery club and it was boring as all hell but something that most new students believe: “I am going to be the best writer they have and be covering the biggest sport by the end of the year.”

My second story though, was a pretty heavy one. I got the biggest story of my life by walking to class and seeing guys talking on the basketball court. I wrote on the painting of the basketball court at the U.S. Century Bank Arena with a beach design and even spoke with Executive Director of Sports and Entertainment Pete Garcia on the subject. It was also my first of what would be a few national college football stories over the years.

A few months later I was named by a new sports director to cover the Panthers football team for the first year of Head Coach Ron Turner’s tenure here at the University. It was an experience unlike any I could have imagined at any other university or just as a regular student here. It gave me in tough times a place and a group of people that I could look at and work with in being better.

I continued to cover college football stories for the SB Nation. Describing a regular student here. It gave me in tough times a place and a group of people that I could look at and work with in being better.

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I truly believe that steps would have to be there with taken by others in student media and that would not have happened. However, on the brighter side, I gained not only work connections but friends that I can talk about random sports topics with and they will have an actual idea of what is going on. Those people as well as others who I know that those connections will always be there with and I thank FIU Student Media for helping me to create.

The heart of fiusm.com are the students and the FIUSM Media Board. I’m thankful for everyone that have created and edited articles, photo galleries, videos, audio clips, infographics, playlists and more. Without this content, fiusm.com wouldn’t exist.

There are things from my time with student media that I would change from what others did, just the same as I am sure there are things that I did that others would change about me. What I wanted to do was make the sports department of FIU Student Media the best it had ever been by being solely focused on this subject, covering football games and other WRGP Radiate FM. I am so happy that fiusm.com provided the top place for the student body and others to gain news and knowledge about FIU sports. I truly believe that those steps would have to be taken by others in student media and that would not have happened. However, on the brighter side, I gained not only work connections but friends that I can talk about random sports topics with and they will have an actual idea of what is going on. Those people as well as others who I know that those connections will always be there with and I thank FIU Student Media for helping me to create.
A night of art and music at the Frost

CHRISTOPHER RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer
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This evening, the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum is hosting the opening of the Aesthetics and Values Art Exhibition. The exhibit features showcased artwork by nine local Miami artists in an event organized by students of Professor John Bailey’s Aesthetics and Values class.

The opening event is free and open to the public and will feature music provided by DJ’s from WRGF, FIU’s student radio station and free food and drinks. The exhibit will run until May 10.

Students in Professor Bailey’s class develop an understanding for the work ethic involved in organizing and curating art events. This is largely due to Bailey’s unorthodox hands-on approach which includes various off-campus trips to local museums such as the Perez Art Museum and Vizcaya.

“Our professor wanted a hands-on experience with art, not just sitting in a classroom,” said Kyle Hirshon, an electrical engineering major who registered for the course based on the recommendation of friends and found a newfound appreciation for the diverse local art scene.

As a part of the course, students are paired up with local artists in order to engage in a creative collaborative relationship which requires them to organize an exhibit for their artwork. The process includes choosing the specific pieces that are showcased.

“The biggest thing was learning how to take initiative and get something done,” said Hirshon as he reflected over this event, which has the entire semester to plan. “People have ideas and we have to implement those ideas. We have to take action.”

‘Percy Jackson’ goes out with a fizzle

TURN THE PAGE

Warning: this article contains spoilers.

“The Blood of Olympus” is the final installment in Rick Riordan’s “Heroes of Olympus” series. Year after year from the beginning, with “The Lightning Thief,” I have been following the story of Percy and his fellow demigod friends.

Now it is officially over.

Frankly, I read the final book of the whole shibang rather late - a whole year late - mostly out of fear. I did not want the story to end; I wanted to keep expecting a new book every year. I wanted to know what Percy, Annabeth and Jason were up to now. But it is now over.

In the first four books of “The Heroes of Olympus” series, Riordan built up suspense around the fact that one of the seven demigods, Percy, Annabeth, Jason, Piper, Leo, Frank or Hazel, was going to die in the final book of their quest. It is one thing for a story to be over, but it is another thing that a series should end in death. Someone was going to be no more - and I was not okay with that.

After finally reading the last and final installment, to say that I am neither happy nor sad. “The Blood of Olympus” did not live up to its prequels.

While the previous were fun and exciting, keeping your fingers trembling at the end of the page ready to continue reading, “The Blood of Olympus” did not create that sensation.

Overall, though, I felt that Riordan did not achieve his best work. Though it seems disappointing to hardcore Percy Jackson fans like myself, “The Blood of Olympus” must be read. All good things have to come to an end, and now it is Percy Jackson’s turn.

While I was hooked on the story, I didn’t experience the dire need of knowing what happened next as I did with the previous books. I was thrilled that Nico di Angelo finally got his own point of view chapters, and ever more thrilled on how nicely his story arc ended. It was everything I could have imagined but better.

While Nico finally achieve happiness, realize that he does have friends who care about him and finally letting his grief over his older sister Bianca made my heart melt into a warm puddle of goo. If Nico is happy, I am happy.

There were many points in the final story that I found satisfying, like Nico’s happiness, Frank’s leadership, Percy’s goofiness, Reyna’s growth, Octavian’s death and “Solangelo” becoming a canon relationship.

Unfortunately, though, there were quite a few points that aggravated me eternally.

First of all, the big final battle between Gaia, the God who wanted to destroy the universe, and his child, the heroine, was pathetic. One moment she rose from the earth in the Camp Half-Blood hill, ready to bring death and chaos.

Then the next moment she is captured by Festus the Dragon’s claw and is lifted high in the sky. Percy charm-speak her to sleep, Leo and Festus exploded and that was the end of it.

The big bad villain Mother Earth was dead (well, gone, because Gods can’t die). Five books of quests and torture and fear of Gaia, and she came and went in less than ten pages - maybe five minutes in battle time if you want to get technical.

The battle the seven demigods vs. the prophecy had with the Giants in Athens was much cooler and action-packed. I had to read that chapter twice just to picture it perfectly.

Percy battled alongside his father, Poseidon, Jason with Zeus, Frank with Ares, Annabeth with Athena, Hazel with Hephaestus and Leo with Aphrodite.

Even the Fates were in the battle - three little old women were fighting giants with golden clubs. It was like it was Christmas.

Overall, though, I felt that Riordan did not achieve his best work.

While Mad Men never only interested me as I feel that’s the right way for things to end. But I also hope things stay on planet Earth, for at least some of these people deserve genuine happiness.

On the Tube

So much has changed in the world of “Mad Men” since we last saw it.

Roger has a long mustache, Peggy wants to go to Paris, Ken is getting fired rather than hired and Nixon is pulling out 150,000 troops from Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Don continues to be pathetic as his life seems to be going nowhere faster and faster as time moves along.

The first episode of the second half of the final season, “Severance,” isn’t as fast paced or floor stopping as I might have expected. Instead, it’s something unexpected. Instead, it’s something new.

“Severance,” isn’t as fast paced as time moves along.

Meanwhile, Don continues to be pathetic as his life seems to be going nowhere faster and faster as time moves along.

If there’s one thing I really loved about this episode (besides everything), it’s the dream. Dreams were a big theme this episode, from Don having one about Rachel, to Ken wanting to pursue his own dreams. I hope that these final episodes keep things a little “out there,” as I feel that’s the right way for things to end. But I also hope things stay on planet Earth, for at least some of these people deserve genuine happiness.

“The On the Tube” is a column that reviews and critiques different ongoing series on television.

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Returning to the mad world of ‘Mad Men’

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A legal fight is brewing over possession of the master recording tapes to one of the defining albums of grunge, “Temple of the Dog,” the sole endeavor by the supergroup of the same name whose lineup included members of Soundgarden and Pearl Jam.

“Temple of the Dog” was recorded in 1990 at London Bridge Studios in Seattle and became a platinum seller that brought together members of two of the city’s defining bands. The story behind the making of the album, recorded in just 15 days, has become a thing of grunge legend.

In a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Seattle recently, A&M Records, which claims it bought the album from the band in 1991, alleges a Seattle man, Rajan Parashar — co-founder of London Bridge Studios — has the master tapes and won’t turn them over.

Parashar’s attorney, Warren Rheaume of the Seattle firm Davis Wright Tremaine, acknowledged on Friday his client has the master tapes.

“T. He’s had them all along,” Rheaume said. “They’re his.”

The band Temple of the Dog was founded by Soundgarden frontman Chris Cornell, who was joined by guitarists Mike McCready and Stone Gossard, bassist Jeff Ament, Soundgarden drummer Matt Cameron and a second vocalist who had just arrived in Seattle named Eddie Vedder.

Cornell had been the roommate of Andrew Wood, the singer for the band Mother Love Bone, whose members included Gossard and Ament. After Wood died of a heroin overdose, Cornell wrote several songs about him and then recruited McCready and Gossard to join him in recording them.

Later that year, Vedder, Gossard, Ament and McCready would form Pearl Jam, which has since been joined by Cameron.

The self-titled album “Temple of the Dog” was released by A&M Records in 1991 to critical acclaim, but it did not chart, according to the history and music-industry news. That changed the following year, when A&M realized it was sitting on a collaboration of two of its most popular acts. The album was reissued in 1992 with a video of the single “Hunger Strike.” The album peaked at No. 5 on the U.S. Billboard 200.

According to the lawsuit, London Bridge Studio owner Rick Parashar, Rajan Parashar’s brother, initially produced Temple of the Dog on a verbal agreement with the band. After the album’s success, the lawsuit said, they memorialized the deal in a contract signed in 1993, in which A&M alleges Rick Parashar agreed to turn over the master tapes and all rights to them for $35,000.

The Parashar brothers built the studio in 1985. Helmed by Rick Parashar’s production and recording services, London Bridge became the vortex for the Seattle grunge recording scene. Rick Parashar’s credits include multiplatinum releases for Temple of the Dog, Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, Blind Melon and Dinosaur Jr.

Rheaume said that Rajan Parashar was not part of any agreement between his brother and A&M.

Temple of the Dog recorded that one album and played only a single full concert set before its members went their own directions, although Cornell has joined Vedder and Pearl Jam several times to perform some Temple of the Dog songs.

According to the lawsuit, A&M “believed the artists to be in possession of the master recordings” until May 2013, when “a representative of the artists contacted A&M and informed A&M that (Rajan Parashar) and Rick Parashar” had them.

The lawsuit claims that Rick Parashar failed to respond to several requests by A&M’s attorneys at the Seattle law firm of K&L Gates to turn over the tapes. Rick Parashar died in August. Eventually, the lawsuit claims, Rick Parashar’s manager said the tapes were in the possession of Rajan Parashar.

The lawsuit demands he turn the tapes over immediately, and asks the court for damages and attorneys’ fees.
The Beacon – 6 Wednesday, April 15, 2015
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SPORTS

the 2015 Wings for Life World Run, a “Catcher Car” will set off a half-hour after the race has begun. At first it will start very slowly, around three miles per hour, but will gradually pick up speed as the runners pick up pace. Once the Catcher Car passes a runner, the runner’s race is over at that very moment. The final female and male runner to be caught in the world will be crowned male runner to be caught because I’m exhausted.’ When you are racing and the car doesn’t catch you to ‘I want the car to catch me because I’m exhausted.’ When you see the car though, you speed up hoping that the car does not catch you. As a runner, you have a tendency to remain calm and relaxed, but with this event, I find myself always worrying about the car.”

In other words, Ruiz states that the World Run is a unique experience, even to veteran marathoners and triathletes alike. However, Mayor Ryan has a different point of view to the event than Ruiz. “There is so much that goes into a spinal cord injury than people might think. There is so much that goes into a spinal cord injury outside of not just being able to walk,” Thabit said. “There are very secondary health conditions like bad circulation and low bone density from not walking. Physical therapy is really intense and one of my favorite parts of my day is when I get out of my chair and walk around.”

Mayor Ryan also summarized how the City of Sunrise is sympathetic to those affected with spinal cord injuries, like Thabit. “Here at Sunrise, we are very sensitive to spinal cord injuries and the Spinal Cord Injury Support Group of South Florida is headquartered in Sunrise. We do a lot of work to try to raise awareness and attention for the cause and this event was just the perfect fit for us here at Sunrise.”

The Wings for Life World Run will commence at the BB&T Center on Sunday, May 3 at 7 a.m. All proceeds from the event will go to the Wings for Life Foundation for both spinal cord injury research and to find a cure for spinal cord injuries.

Training for the most unique marathon in the world

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On a blistering early Saturday morning in the shadow of the BB&T Center in Sunrise, participants in the second annual Wings for Life World Run took part in their official training day for perhaps the most unique marathon in the world. The Wings for Life World Run, which Red Bull sponsors in conjunction with the Wings for Life Foundation, is the only marathon across the globe where all participants can choose to race in Turkey and is sympathetic to those affected with spinal cord injuries.

During the morning of training day, runners were able to meet the ambassador of the sunrise, Brooke Thabit. Thabit, a former sufferer, suffered a spinal cord injury and is now paralyzed from the waist down. Accompanying Thabit were LPGA Champion Lexi Thompson, 2014 Wings for Life World Run female champion Haley Chrun, Sunrise Mayor Mike Ryan and Miami Marathon co-founder and FIU alum Frankie Ruiz.

Typically in a race you have a runner that you will ever experience in a race,” Ruiz said.

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Panthers swept in weekend series versus UTEP

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The FIU softball team got swept this weekend in El Paso, Texas by the University of Texas El Paso Miners.

Senior Shelby Graves pitched the first game on Saturday, April 11 and ended up with a no-decision. After pitching the first 3.2 innings, Graves gave the ball to sophomore Brianna Bartuccio in the fourth inning as she went on to pitch 2.1 strong final innings. She picked up the loss but held the Miners to just two hits.

Offensively the Panthers started out great as sophomore Ashley Leon led off the game with a bunt single and advanced to second on a ground out.

Sophomore Gabby Spallone’s fielder’s choice to short had Leon running and the throw to third was wild and went into the FIU dugout allowing Leon to score on the play.

Defensively, Graves worked a quick first inning and faced some trouble in the second inning.

In the third inning, three straight singles loaded the bases full of Miners and a sac fly tied the game at 1-1.

Graves then forced a fly out to senior Rebekah Sanchez in left field to keep the score even. UTEP took its first lead of the game in the fifth inning off a two-run home run but a quick 6-4-3 double play stopped the momentum.

Senior Krystal Garcia hit a double into left to start up a rally in the sixth inning but the Panthers struggled to reach base.

The Panthers fell to the Miners in the first game of the series 3-2.

The second game was played right after with Jenkins in the circle.

Junior Corinne Jenkins got her 80th career start as a Panther but only lasted 1.2 innings before turning the ball over to Bartuccio who went the next two full innings.

Freshman Rachel Dwyer came into the game and threw the final four innings and got the loss.

Leon led off the game with a hard hit single up the middle and sophomore Stephanie Texeira worked the count for a walk.

With two on, Spallone reached on a fielder’s choice and an error on the UTEP shortstop sent Leon home.

A two run home run in the bottom of the inning put UTEP ahead 2-1.

FIU rallied back and it was a back and forth battle that kept the score close the entire game.

The bats were on fire in the fifth to put up some runs of their own but costly errors put them back and UTEP took advantage.

The Miners found the game-winner on a single up the middle in the bottom of the eighth and the FIU softball team fell 11-10.

The next day, the Panthers dropped the final game of the series, 9-1 on Sunday morning.

Jenkins got the loss despite throwing a strong first three innings.

Spallone got her league leading 15th double of the season but the FIU softball team fell to the Miners in a sweep in El Paso.

The FIU softball team will return home this week to host Western Kentucky University in a three game weekend series.

Senior Shelby Graves looks up after Michigan State makes a run on Saturday, Feb. 28. Graves pitched the first game on Saturday, April 11, against the University of Texas at El Paso and ended up with a no-decision.

The FIU softball team fell to the Miners in a sweep in El Paso.
Day of Silence, students protest LGBT bullying

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In protest against bullying and harassment to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Ally community, students across the country will remain in silence. A nationally celebrated event, Day of Silence encourages people to peacefully promote anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in schools as a way to call attention to the issue. In the context of the protest, the Biscayne Bay Campus Multicultural Programs & Services LGBTQA Initiatives will host Day of Silence Thursday, April 16.

“We want to support awareness for LGBT education,” said Edwin Serrano, a graduate student for BBC MPAS, “and for those whom have always been silenced and pushed back into the closet.”

Serrano referred to how LGBTQA students are quiet to share their sexuality and gender identity in fear of discrimination and lack of support. Day of Silence began with a group of students from the University of Virginia who wanted to promote a safer environment for the community. It is, however, commemorated on April 17.

Serrano said that the LGBTQA Initiatives will “hang up ‘speaking cards’” to students who choose to remain silent during a timeframe of eight hours. According to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Network, students have the right to participate and remain silent, but if during class they are asked to speak, they cannot refuse. It says students should alert their professors to prevent misunderstandings. The speaking cards will serve as a way for others to acknowledge student participants and their support for the LGBTQA community. Serrano said the LGBTQA Initiatives focuses on serving everyone on campus — straight, lesbian or gay. He also said it aims to bring together FIU alumni to provide more visibility of LGBTQA students on campus.

Vanessa Cuadros, a junior broadcast media major, said all students have the right to identify themselves as whatever gender. “I do think several FIU students are accepting towards LGBT,” Cuadros said. “I believe everyone has a right to be with who they want, regardless of their gender,” she said.

Franklin Pineda, a senior criminal justice major, said he too supports LGBTQA students and acknowledges the University’s participation in supporting them. “I support them, and I’d remain silent to show it,” Pineda said. “I do think FIU is supportive, even students. There’s also clubs and organizations for them to education people around campus,” he said.

According to the LGBTQA website, the program provides a safe zone by offering mentorship programs, student counseling, advise student groups and scholarships. It also promotes awareness by reaching out to the community by participating in off-campus events and by offering workshops.

Day of Silence will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the BBC Panther Square. There will be photo props for students to take pictures with and to show that they support the act of silence. At the end of the event, students will scream for ice cream to finally break from the silence and have free ice cream in celebration.

The Modesto A. Maidique Campus will also host Day of Silence Friday, April 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Graham Center Pit. Students will also be provided with the speaking cards, crafts, t-shirts and information.

RSVP for the event can be found in the program’s website, lgbt.fiu.edu. “Students can make bracelets, get t-shirts and learn about how long LGBTs have been silenced for years,” Serrano said.