FLU awarded for Global Learning initiatives

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The University was recently recognized for its efforts in the Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative, a curriculum and co-curricular program that provides students with multiple opportunities for active, team-based and interdisciplinary exploration of real-world problems, according to their website.

The Institute of International Education, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to advance international education and access to education worldwide, awarded the University the 2016 Andrew Heiskell Award for Innovation in International Education. The award distinguishes our Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative as a best practice for successful campus internationalization,” wrote University Provost and Executive Vice President Kenneth Burton in a University-wide memorandum.

IIE awards a few universities each year for different areas of innovation and international education. According to Hilary Landorf, director of Global Learning Initiatives and associate professor of international and intercultural education, this is the broadest award.

“There are two awards that are given in the United States for internationalizing campuses: the Paul Simon Award and this one,” she said. “IIE is international and has a very wide reach. They run the Fulbright program and are known internationally, with over 1,400 institutions that belong to them and reaching over 10,000 people worldwide. It’s a big deal and quite an honor for us.”

The award validates their work in internationalizing the campus through their Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative, said Landorf.

“One of the goals of our founding president, Charles Perry, was for FIU to be on the forefront of international education,” she said. “In many of his speeches, he talked about internationalization of the curriculum and how important it is for FIU to be an international university. This award brings us full circle back to the goals of our founding president and gives substance to them.”

In summer, 2008, the University engaged in a University-wide effort to reinvigorate the “I” in FIU. Research conducted by the Office of Global Learning Initiatives and the Office of Research revealed an “internationalization gap,” which, according to Landorf, was a discrepancy between the University stakeholders’ valuation of University diversity and the extent in which diverse perspectives were being cultivated and used in the classroom.

“A survey went out to over 3,500 stakeholders and the most important finding that diversity at FIU was perceived as our top strength,” said Landorf. “However, the survey also revealed that the University was not taking advantage of the diverse perspectives of our students in the classroom. In other words, the diversity of the classroom was not being used in the classroom.”

In order to close this internationalization “gap,” the Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative was implemented in 2010, said Landorf.

The initiative, still in use today, includes a two-course global learning graduation requirement for all undergraduate students, among other things.

“We now have over 160 courses that have these requirements,” Landorf said. “AForum for Free Student Expression at Florida International University

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Housing policy accommodates comfort pets

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Sofia Alberto, a freshman majoring in recreational therapy, attends FIU with her 8-month-old dog named Charlie. Charlie serves as Alberto’s emotional support animal, or comfort dog, and lives with Alberto in her dorm at Lakeview Hall South.

Alberto is a survivor of Ewing’s sarcoma, a form of cancer, and has recently been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. All of this, combined with her hesitation in taking a prescribed route for her condition, revealed her vital need for Charlie as her comfort animal.

“He brings Alberto relief and is trained to calm her anxiety attacks.

“He seems like a normal dog, but to me he’s the best medicine I’ve ever received,” Alberto said.

FIU’s strict housing policy regarding animals in the residence halls has undergone some adjustments to accommodate students like Alberto who are in need of emotional support animals. According to Andrew Naylor, associate director of housing, approximately 15 students currently have emotional support or service animals residing in on-campus housing.

“If the student has a need for an emotional support animal and has roommates, there are some negotiations that have to go on,” said Naylor.

The course of action would be centered on the medical conditions of the animal owner’s potential roommates. Housing’s goal is to assure that medical arrangements are made pertaining to particular situations such as allergies.

There is also the question of how an individual can be approved for an emotional support animal.

“I think the first thing is making sure that the student that has identified that they have need for an emotional support animal, that all their documentation is legitimate,” said Naylor.

Naylor reassured that FIU strives to hold higher standards pertaining to the legitimacy of the student’s emotional need.

“We make sure that it is a legit therapy or mental health situation,” said Andrew. The housing department works in partnership with the Disability Resource Center in the process of verification.

Stephen Lynam, access consultant manager, says “The DRC works with various entities on campus to implement accommodations. As for authenticating letters, we typically call the therapist or doctor’s office that wrote the letter.”

The goal is to investigate each emotional disability case, seeking evidence of a sound and solid relationship between the student and therapist. The task of Housing and the DRC can become complicated due to what Naylor mentioned as the latest alternative, an online therapist.

Websites such as thegoodtoronline.com, claiming to be America’s number one online emotional support animal approval site, make it possible for anyone to obtain the proper documentation to acquire an emotional support or service animal—whether they need the animal or not.

These websites require an online medical exam and provide the option of selecting between three different payment plans, one of which does not require re-evaluation.

Once the exam is reviewed and approved by medical professionals, the student will take approximately 48 hours until the patient receives the prescription letter via email. These alternative can potentially pose as a barrier in terms of discerning who needs a comfort animal who is trying to cheat the system.

Emotional support animals aid patients of various conditions and are utilized for therapeutic methods and counseling. This especially applies to cases where Alberto’s situation needs a pet in order to prevent the occurrence of emotional turmoil that could disrupt her ability to successfully navigate college.

Charlie is currently undergoing the process of training to become a certified service dog to further ensure Alberto’s safety. Once training has been completed, he will have the ability to open doors, contact help in case of an emergency and serve as protection.

“If we weren’t for him I wouldn’t be able to control my attacks and I would’ve failed out of the semester,” explained Sofia.
Mediation sessions at College of Law begin

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In Caracas, the capital, tourism businesses have shifted their attention from foreign tourists to what is known here as “full day” tours—one day trips, mostly for people who live in or near Caracas, to places such as Choroni, a tourist destination tucked into a national park about 40 miles due west of Caracas that was once a hive for foreigners and their money. These trips are creating a growing market for domestic tourism, said Marjorie Leal, who works for a company that sells full day trips. That market also is benefiting from Venezuelans’ inability to get permission or enough American dollars to travel to the United States, Leal said. With foreign tourists no longer taking trips in their own country.

Venezuela’s crisis remakes its tourism industry

Gavin B. Atchak’s commanding officer at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina ordered him to avoid unprotected sex after Atchak tested positive for HIV in 2011. The officer also directed Atchak, an enlisted man in the Air Force security forces, to inform future sex partners that he carried the virus that can cause AIDS. Atchak disobeyed and engaged in unprotected sex.

Military appeals courts confront sexual activity by HIV-positive troops

Atchak, an enlisted man in the South Carolina-based airman, and others, including a former airman. Atchak, an enlisted man in the South Carolina-based airman, and others, including a former airman. Atchak, an enlisted man in the South Carolina-based airman, and others, including a former airman.

Nine months after the Zika virus was first discovered in Southeast Asia, international health organizations are still struggling with how to confront what appears to be the largest global public health crisis since Ebola decimated eastern Africa in 2014. U.S. researchers have blasted the World Health Organization for what they say has been a slow response, and some pressed the international organization to declare a public health emergency before the mosquito-borne virus becomes an “explosive pandemic.” Officials from the World Health Organization acknowledged Thursday that the Zika virus was “spreading explosively” in the Americas and set an emergency meeting for Monday to decide whether to declare a public health emergency.

Possible public health emergency over Zika

A few minutes of meditation can be useful for the University community. “We need these classes at the University because most of us start the day with the stress of driving to work, classes, academic load and also with personal issues,” she said. “A few minutes of meditation classes during the day at the University helps to calm us down.”

Workshop attendees will learn the different techniques of Preksha Meditation, the practice of purifying the emotions and conscious and realizing the self own.

According to Veeramachaneni, it is a combination of spirituality and science that helps develop “attitudinal and behavioral change.”

Andrea Seidel, associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies, thinks that meditation is important for calming the mind and developing self-awareness of negative mental states in particular.

“In a culture where nearly everyone is externally focused and multi-tasking on IPads, iPhones, computers and other media, meditation provides a tool for observing the mind and its often chaotic nature,” she said. “Success in life and career is largely rooted in the behavior and psyche of an individual. If one is not well-balanced, it will affect every aspect of life.”

Veeramachaneni thinks the classes could be useful for the University community. “I get really stressed throughout the semester. This is just a way for me to relax and reflect on certain situations in my life.”

To meet the needs of University students and staff, the University’s College of Law Library has started offering a series of workshops called Guided Meditation for Relaxation.

Sofa Galiano meditates at least three times a week. According to her, it can prevent heart disease, reduce stress and significantly lessen ADHD.

“It’s a place that allows me to examine myself in a more meaningful way,” said Galiano, sophomore education major. “As a college student and a full-time employee, I get really stressed throughout the semester. This is just a way for me to relax and reflect on certain situations in my life.”

“Meditation is a way to keep calm and inner transformation. It’s important for balanced perception and it helps in developing concentration power and memory.”

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Segel teaches Yoga at the University and, over the course of a semester, sees many changes in students who apply themselves to the class.

“I tell my students: if your life doesn’t change somewhat for the better, then you have probably done very little in the class,” she said. “The rewards are reapplied according to the amount of effort, dedication, and commitment to learning and applying the various tools and philosophical principles.”

“For her, yoga is not a religion but a ‘spiritual science.’ ” It’s a science of life, so one can learn great lessons in how to live a life of integrity, responsibility and belonging to higher principles that serve humanity,” said Segel. “Yoga is a tool that helps to achieve this goal, body, and spirit and emotions. If further the inculvable process of ‘knowing thyself’ and it fosters great moral values.”

Though the workshop series initially started for law students, it is open to anyone in the University community. “Not only does it benefit law students, it benefits all of us,” said Veeramachaneni. “Meditation helps in developing insight and wisdom through which a student becomes better able to release stress, improve communication skills, and to have content mind which helps them to stay positive.”

The workshops will be held in the Modesto A. Maidique Campus Library Seminar Room, RDB 2000, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

To sign up and view the specific workshop dates, go to law.fiu.edu.

They are free and open to the public. [Mediation] is better than sleeping,” said Galiano. “When you’re sleeping, you’re not reflecting on your life. There’s no illumination or great realization. When you’re meditating, it’s a whole different experience. You dig deep and you look into yourself. You’re more relaxed and attuned to your body and feelings. There’s nothing better.”

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For Landorf, the award means fundraising opportunities. “I think the award will engender more collaboration in terms of research and partnerships,” she said. “We know from feedback we go to conferences that many universities use our website to get ideas of how they can globalize and there are a few universities that require that their students be involved. When we are, by far, the largest, deepest and most robust initiative in the University and we are so honored to be recognized.”

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Institute of International Education recognizes FIU

AWARDS, PAGE 1

elements,” said Landorf. “It’s by far the largest initiative in the United States, particularly the largest initiative where the University has global learning as a requirement.”

Amanda Daniels, freshman business major, is glad that the University got recognized internationally. “I knew I picked the right school to come to,” she said. “A lot of my friends told me to go to an Ivy League school and not to stay in Miami, but I knew from the very beginning that FIU was special and that, even if it wasn’t Ivy League, it would go far. It’s just glad I wasn’t wrong. I don’t see anyone else winning international awards.”

But Eric Jacobs, junior philosophy major, is skeptical about what this means for the University. "I mean, it’s great for them, but I don’t think this really affects me at all much," he said. "It’s not like they’re getting money to support the initiatives we already have. It’s just an award and I’m not sure how they can use that to make things better.”

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The importance and strength of neglected back muscles

The back is one of the most important parts of the human anatomy. It is also one of the most neglected. Back muscles give power to the body, they play a major role in all functions. They connect the hips, butt, chest, shoulder and neck. It is a conjunction between the major body muscles of human body parts. Strengthening our back muscles should not be treated as a luxury, but rather an obligation. These muscles do not only serve us in spotting activities and power workouts, they serve us in our daily lives.

Aesthetically, working out the back will give a slimmer waistline and help to create the perfect upper body look, working out our upper back and abdominals with lower back to achieve strong chiseled abs, then working out our lower back is essential. Without a strong lower back, any regular ab workouts such as sit ups, planks and many more cannot be performed properly. The back gives the body the power and support to do all those ab crunches. Similarly, for strong chest muscles, working out our upper back muscles is indispensable. To have the perfect upper body look, working out our back part of the body is just as important.

If we consider our daily lives, we find we are either sitting or sitting every single moment of the day, therefore good posture is important and it requires strong back muscles. Sitting down for hours on end will cause back pain. This pain is extremely common in American adults due to every single day activity of sitting down for long periods and with untrained posture. Strong back muscles are essential and directly correlated to good posture.

Cook and Brew

FIU Master Chef meets Brew Miami, a culinary mashup

FIU Master Chef competition. The event kicked off with 13 amateur chefs composed of FIU students, staff, faculty and alumni. The winner was decided by a panel of judges from four local restaurants and one guest judge. The panel included Eileen Andrade, owner of Finka Table & Tap; Gus Montes, chef at Panther Premier; Benjamin Murray, chef at Arat; and Albert Diaz, chef at Zuma.

Three rounds comprised the competition. In the first, seven contestants were eliminated, three in the second - those winners competed in the final round for the title.

The final round was close, almost ending in a tie, but due to scoring in the previous round Elias Bardawil, director of wellness and recreation, was announced champion in a tie, but due to scoring in the previous round.

Bardawil gave FIUSM a brief interview describing his experience, “If I could defend [my title] I would defend. I’d go back again.”

He has words of advice for future chefs and culinary enthusiasts alike.

“In life, just believe and it’ll come true. Never stop cooking in anything you do: in the kitchen, in the classroom, in your professional career. Always put your best foot forward [and] everything good will happen after that.”

Following his own advice, Bardawil does not plan to stop cooking anytime soon. He looks forward to another competition next year of Master Chef and Brew Miami it was great,” said Vince Rivas, a junior majoring in advertising and a FIUSM photographer. “If FIU had only marketed the event better we would’ve seen more students, because who doesn’t want free food?”

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Monique Strider

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The importance and strength of neglected back muscles

South Florida’s spring music lineup

Surviving the winter blues

Back muscles

South Florida’s spring music lineup

The year 2016 has already promised bountiful entertainment for South Florida, for just the second month of the year more than 13 musicians have announced tours for their spring tours.

This lineup ranges from hit pop artists such as Fall Out Boy to head-bangers such as Ice Nine Kills.

The earliest dates are set in February, while the latest come in during May. And once May is over, plenty of summertime entertainment comes into play.

The first musician to stop by is indie electronist Robert Delong. Delong’s single “Don’t Wait Up” has gathered massive air time on South Florida’s very own Alternative radio station, The Beacon.

Despite this, tickets are still available at an affordable price - $15 - for Delong’s Feb. 25 concert at Ft. Lauderdale’s Culture Room.

Following immediately after him are Fall Out Boy, headlining their own tour with AWOLNATION and PVRIS accompanying them. Although there are still tickets left for their Feb. 26 date at Hard Rock Live in Hollywood, FL, they are leaning on the pricier side, the cheapest starting at $99.

Once March rolls around, a different crowd of musicians is stopping by.

First off, hard rockers Buckcherry, famous for their 2006 single, “So Very,” are stopping by the Ft. Lauderdale Culture Room on March 4. Tickets just went on sale, so expect plenty at an affordable price.

A few days later are the pop-punk kids, Neck Deep, Knuckle Puck and State Champs. They will be playing Orlando’s House of Blues on March 6, with tickets still available at $17 for general admission and $30 for VIP. VIP includes express entry, elevated view and access to a private bar.

Also in Orlando, Ice Nine Kills and Like Moths to Flames are stopping by to rock the night on March 21 at the BackBooth Bar and Venue. Tickets are on sale, and at an extremely affordable $15. Since neither band tends not to tour so far south, definitely take this opportunity to experience them.

The heavier August Burns Red and Between the Buried and Me are taking over Ft. Lauderdale’s Revolution Live on March 7, with plenty of tickets still available at prices starting at $40.

A few music festivals are also coming to Florida this spring.

The Rock Festival is happening over Ft. Myers for the weekend of April 30. There are numerous ticket packages available at various prices - a single ticket for both dates is currently $99.50.

This festival is well worth seeing when one considers that big timers such as Rob Zombie, A Day To Remember, Five Finger Death Punch, Issues, Anthrax, SxS A.M., GHOST, Bring Me the Horizon, 3 Doors Down and Bullet for My Valentine are only a few of the musicians playing.

Playing a show less than two weeks later is The Script. They’ll be playing Miami’s Bayfront Park Amphitheater May 11. Tickets are leaning on the pricier side, but you can find the website used since many are on resale.

Finishing May off is Florence + the Machine, accompanied by Of Monsters and Men, playing at the American Airlines Arena May 31. Tickets are on sale now, but prices vary depending on the website due to the fact that they are mainly resale tickets.

With such a talented list, not including local concerts, spring 2016 will undoubtedly have a source of entertainment for everyone.

Music Notes is a column that covers South Florida bands. For suggestions or commentary email life@fiusm.com

The “cold weather blues” are not a myth. They’re absolutely real. The cold months are a season to watch your health.

The term used by experts is Seasonal Affective Disorder, in extreme cases.

According to Clevelandclinic.org, a non-profit academic center, four to six weeks out of the year, people during the cooler months. For some, it could be traumatic to detach themselves from sunny summer days. Luckily, there’s a lot that can be done to prevent the blues.

Do a little home improvement

If you’re home most of the time, you might as well paint that room you’ve been putting off all summer. Practice a little Feng-Shui, a Chinese philosophical method for rearranging the area around you to help soothe and increase the flow of energy in your living or work environment.

If you’re in a dorm, rearrange your furniture or get some new dorm accessories. You can also clean out that closet that’s been begging for some assistance. Make your time indoors as productive as possible.

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Change your diet

If you’re suddenly feeling depressed because of the weather, there may be some foods that can boost your mood. Your diet has more of an effect on your mood than you think. It is important to keep your blood sugar steady, which means eating fewer refined sugars and starches that can spike it up. An ideal food to keep a positive mindset this winter is orange juice. It is loaded with vitamin C.

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Winter has arrived in South Florida - sort of. As Panthers kick off spring semester, it’s clear that the warm sunshine has been replaced by a crisp breeze, flip flops by boots and iced coffee by warm lattes - which are a hit for these cooler mornings when it is harder to wake up.

This weather is a nice break from the heat; however, it’s only natural that days get shorter and the nights get colder. This can bring even the best of us down.

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FIU drops 71-69 decision to rising 49ers

The senior defender describes winning the championship as the best moment of his career, calling it the "best day of my life." Of course things didn’t always look so bright for Lopez, whose collegiate soccer career did not necessarily start off as he planned. The 6-foot, sports and fitness studies major, played high school soccer at Archbishop Coleman F. Carroll High School in Miami, Florida, where he shined on the pitch for the Bulldogs. Lopez started all four years at ACC and lead his team in goals and assists both his junior and senior season, earning him team MVP honors in back-to-back years.

Despite his impressive high school campaign, Lopez was not offered any Division I scholarships after graduating. "I was playing in different adult leagues around Miami, staying in form and waiting until I got my chance," said Lopez.

Just as he hoped, the opportunity came knocking when FIU assistant coaches Jean Camere and Kevin Nylen provided Lopez a chance to try out for the FIU men’s soccer team as a walk-on in 2013. "I was presented the chance to have a spring season trial and it was up to me to show if I was capable of playing at this level or not," Lopez continued. "I knew coming in, it would be a huge learning curve for me trying to catch up with the rest of the guys who had already had a chance to play at this level."

As Lopez started his career at FIU, the program underwent a huge change when Scott Calabrese was named the new head coach of the team. Camere and Nylen, this year’s Glenn “Moom” Myerick Assistant Coach of the Year for the Southeast region, saw the potential in Lopez after bringing him in and Calabrese approved, keeping him on the squad for the 2014 season.

Lopez's first year with the team was definitely not what anyone would describe as a breakout year. Finding the pitch only six times on the season, the Miami native struggled to find minutes with the squad, notching only 476 total minutes on the season.

"I don’t think there was ever a low point for me, but being a competitor, I’d be lying if I said it doesn’t get frustrating being on the bench," Lopez admitted to being frustrated, but also made it very clear that he had nothing but respect and trust for the coaching staff who had brought him in and given him his chance.

"The one thing I really enjoyed about our coaching staff was the open dialect between us players and the coaches. When I felt those lows, or thought to myself ‘why am I doing all of these things and I’m not even getting on the field?’ I could just easily go to Scott, Kevin or to Jean and express my concerns and they would immediately give me feedback." Lopez said.

Just one year later, things went a little differently for Lopez than his first season with the team. After only getting to start in five games and make a total of six appearances his first year, Lopez played in all but one game for the Panthers in the 2015 season.

The Panthers stumbled out of five wins; two careless turnovers on offense led to an early 11-6 Charlotte lead. Davion Draper scored the first points of the game for the Panthers on a baseline jumper. The senior would go on to fill out the stat box, nothing

Panthers projected to finish fourth

With the FIU baseball season set to kick off in just under three weeks, it’s about that time for publications and college coaches to make their 2016 predictions.

Just like last season, both Division I Baseball and the Conference USA head coaches agree on who they expect the Panthers to finish in the conference standings.

Both have the defending C-USA champion Panthers finishing fourth place in the conference this season, behind Rice University, University of Southern Mississippi and Florida Atlantic University. Last year’s predictions from each of the polls had FIU finishing in second place before they were overtaken by a miraculous post season run to win C-USA, with Rice being the lone team ahead of FIU in both.

The lower expectations for the 2016 Panthers don’t come as a surprise, as many of the players who were key in orchestrating FIU’s C-USA Championship run have moved on from FIU.

The Panthers will have to find a way to replace their top slugger Edwin Rios and 2015 batting average leader Brian Poretti, among quite a few other holes that have been created in the lineup.

In addition to being dropped to fourth in this year’s predictions, the C-USA coaches also did not pick a single FIU player to be on the preseason All-Conference team. Last year there were two FIU players on the list - pitcher Chris Mourelle, who will be returning for his junior season after leading FIU in innings pitched last year, and third baseman Josh Anderson, who played a key role for the Panthers in 2015.

Despite these predictions not being
Panthers keep game close against 49ers

CLOSE, PAGE 6

24 points on 10-15 shooting, seven rebounds and four assists.

The Panthers made a run thanks to three point baskets from Donté McGill and Eric Nottage and FIU took its first lead of the night at 17-16. However, Turnovers and second chance opportunities crippled the Panthers, and at halftime the 49ers led FIU 37-36.

In the second half Adrian Diaz led the Panthers down-low, scoring 17 points on 7-10 shooting.

Despite FIU’s struggles on offense, they did enough on defense to keep the game close late in the second half. The Panthers had a chance to make a comeback down 71-66 with three minutes to play, but the chance at a late run disappeared when Draper committed back-to-back turnovers and junior guard Ray Rodriguez air-balled a three point attempt. Draper was fouled on a three point attempt. Rodriguez air-balled and junior guard Ray Rodriguez went back-to-back turnovers at a late run disappeared 71-66 with three minutes the Panthers had a chance to in the second half. The Panthers did enough on defense to struggle on offense, they shooting.

Adrian Diaz led the Panthers, and at halftime the night at 17-16. However, Turnovers and second chance opportunities crippled the Panthers, and at halftime the 49ers led FIU 37-36. In the second half Adrian Diaz led the Panthers down low, scoring 17 points on 7-10 shooting.

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CARTA and SMJC merger further explained

SUDYEN NAVARRETE  
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Early December 2015 it was announced that the School of Journalism and Mass Communications will be integrating with the College of Architecture and the Arts.

In the fall the provost asked CARTA and SJMC to merge; a committee was assigned for both schools and voted in favor of the merge at Biscayne Bay Campus.

Many students reacted negatively towards the integration. Some believed it could devalue the school's accreditation or that money was in the way of everything.

"As a student, I believe it won't affect us in a bad way," said Anuela Vanegas, a junior broadcast journalism major. "However, now we depend and operate under a new department that can be very different from journalism and mass communication majors. I think each school needs their own dean that has relations to the field.

However, there’s also students that favored the merge.

"I think that this is a great opportunity for our school," said Jayda Hall, a junior broadcast major. "We need more resources and our school needs to be exposed."

Professor Frederick Blevens, of the Journalism and Broadcast Department, is working on updating SJMC's curriculum to be done and take effect by mid-summer.

The updates on what Blevens is revising has a purpose.

"Students will be able to get through the program more quickly, graduate on time and progress through the curriculum," Blevens said.

There’s been problems with students not being able to get through graduation, according to Blevens.

Some of the updates revolve around the admission requirements as well as the credit hours and grade point average.

"We eliminated the 60-hour requirement, which will take effect starting in the fall, and we lowered the GPA to 2.85," said Blevens.

According to Blevens, there are two important steps into the process. "How do you get into the program and get accepted?"

The school will retain the limited number of student admittance but barriers will be met through courses. It will be up to the students to meet the requirements or not.

"We will still remain a limited program with barriers for admittance," said Blevens. "Barriers are going to be different, competency and performance based."

Students coming from high schools will be able to declare their majors and get admitted by their sophomore years, not junior as it usually is, as long as admission requirements for SJMC are met.

Another possible change that has been mentioned but not approved or discussed is the barrier exam, Language Skills Test, an entry grammar exam that SJMC students must pass to continue onto their major track.

"Language skills tests have become something in the past, some states are no longer using barrier exams anymore but instead course work to make sure students are competent," said Blevens. "I don’t think it’s a good idea to hold students hostages in a class for a test."

For now that’s just a possibility. "It’s not going to be easier to get into the program, it’s just different," Blevens said.

Overall, Blevens said he was in favor of the merge, and it’s an integration that must have been done long time ago.

Throughout the holiday break, students were being informed about the integration through newsletters, student media and even the Miami Herald.

Blevens said the communication was poorly distributed to students, angering them and leaving them in the unknown about the merge leading to negative views about it.

"Some of it was generated by a misunderstanding from Miami Herald stories, the advised report hadn’t had a clear understanding, students were misinformed," said Blevens. "The reporting didn’t reflect the reality of the situation."

Dean Brian Schriner will lead SJMC under CARTA's umbrella with the help of recently named interim executive director of SJMC, Julieta Pinto, an associate professor of the journalism and broadcast department.

"I am enjoying getting to know the SJMC’s students, faculty, professional staff, advisory board members and alumni," said Schriner.

In response to the merger, according to the Dean, CARTA students have favored the change.

"My interactions with students, whether from CARTA or SJMC, have been very positive," said Schriner. "The students' initial questions or concerns have focused on how the integration might impact their current major, the name of the degree they are pursuing, the name of their home department, etc."

Part of the dean’s personal goals for the integration is to increase strategic enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate level, increase the number of full-time faculty - potentially as cluster hires - in the areas of digital media, communication, digital arts, graphic design and public relations and to enhance the administrative teaching and research support to the faculty," said Schriner.

Incoming freshmen from high schools will experience the new changes between the schools.

"They will have access to additional resources and will graduate with the confidence they have a skills-set that gives them a competitive advantage in the 21st century’s information, innovation, and technology economy," said Schriner.

Pinto said that SJMC will retain its own entity and accreditation, and the purpose is to grow and expand by reducing inefficiencies and making everything better.

"What CARTA represents to us is an opportunity to resources such as their 3D printers, their Miami Beach Urban Studios and many more that can help our students think creatively," said Pinto.

In SJMC, faculties have been placed in committees to better SJMC, such as what Professor Blevens is doing.

Pinto said, "most of our faculty and staff are on committees to work with the curriculum, governance, space and staffing to make ourselves better."

In addition of directing SJMC, Pinto is also communicating with sponsors for fundings.

"I am also out in the community looking for engagement and partnership to help us get resources that we need."

The faculty-led process will also create a new name that represents both schools.

"The entire point of this integration is to make everything stronger and CARTA is the right place for SJMC, we’re all looking to help the industries that students wish to go into," said Pinto.

All structures shall be placed no later than July 1 of this year.