FIU's University City Prosperity Project has released new details on its $15 million project that may provide a new hangout spot for students, while strengthening the connection between FIU and the City of Sweetwater.

"At FIU, we're bridge builders. We like to build bridges between people. We like to build bridges between communities. We like to bring people together and there's no better example of this than the actual bridge we're building," said FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg.

Funded by a TIGER grant, the University City Prosperity Project plans to make improvements to the infrastructure and community transit of FIU and Sweetwater, as well as develop the Informed Traveler Program and Applications.

Enhancements to infrastructure include the pedestrian bridge and plazas on SW 8th St. and 109th Ave. that are being constructed from a partnership between FIDG Bridge Engineers and Munilla Construction Management.

The 32-foot wide bridge will not only connect plazas on the south end of Sweetwater and the north end of FIU, but its unique features may also make it a new place for students to hang out.

While on the bridge, students can use its Wi-Fi, electrical outlets and sit at the built-in table and chairs in the shade provided by a cover. A bike-tire track along the side of the stairs will make it easy for students to walk their bicycles up the stairs without having to lift it up each stair.

Also, the bridge benefits FIU students by providing a safe way to cross over an arterial road.

"He [FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg] wanted to really build a relationship with the City of Sweetwater ... So it's a way of linking the two communities," said Kenneth Jessell, FIU senior vice president for Finance and Administration and chief financial officer. "It's almost a Berlin Wall trying to cross 8th street ... It's very dangerous so we've always worried about the safety of our students and others."

The construction process to prepare the bridge for construction to Student Media on Friday, September 9th 2016.

**SEE BRIDGE, PAGE 2**

### Community construction

**New details released on FIU’s University City Prosperity Project**

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Spirit council brings back mid-day event

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This fall semester, Panther Power, the spirit council at FIU’s Biscayne Bay Campus, is bringing Panther Power Spirit Hour back to campus. The hour is dedicated to providing a fun, mid-day opportunity to help bring spirit to campus with free food, music, games, giveaways and prizes.

Taking place on Thursday, Sept. 22, the spirit hour will take place at Panther Square from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. The event is free and open to students, faculty and staff. To improve the experience, all participants are advised to wear school gear or the colors blue and gold.

The event was started to evoke a sense of spirit by bringing it to the students, while exposing students to what it’s like to be a panther so they can be proud of it.

Rosemona St. Jean, the president of Panther Power, explains the benefits of having school pride.

"It’s important because school spirit creates a sense of community, which helps students be more involved which leads to new professional challenges." Rosenberg said in the press release.

Under Garcia’s tenure, some of the sports teams have seen a decline in national performance and recognition, including baseball, men’s soccer and both basketball programs, though football, swimming and diving and women’s soccer have seen improvement.

"Pete has led our athletic program during a pivotal decade in its development," Rosenberg said in the press release. "Thank Pete for his leadership and the commitment he brought to the job."

There is no word on when Rosenberg will begin the search for Garcia’s replacement for 2018.

**SEE BRIDGE, PAGE 2**
Two California lawmakers lambaste Snowden in report summary

The California leaders of the U.S. House Select Committee on Intelligence are condemning former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden after a two-year inquiry into Snowden’s actions, methods and alleged motivations.

The full 36-page Intelligence Committee report has been marked classified but Reps. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., and Adam Schiff, D-Calif., released a three-page summary Thursday.

Russia’s courting of Nicaragua concerns Washington

Russia’s cozy military relationship with Nicaragua, which is rapidly evolving into a single-party state, is raising concerns in Washington.

Russia recently sold Nicaragua 50 tanks, won access to Nicaragua’s airspace and ports, and is building a law enforcement center near the Pacific coast.

The Obama administration is “closely monitoring” Russia’s presence in Nicaragua and is expressing concern about the lack of democratic space. The White House tried unsuccessfully to pressure President Daniel Ortega to hold international observers for the critical November elections.

Russia’s eager to patch up relationship with Nicaragua

Russia is eager to patch up its relationship with Nicaragua, which is rapidly evolving into a single-party state, but has been stymied by the United States.

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The Obama administration is “closely monitoring” Russia’s presence in Nicaragua and is expressing concern about the lack of democratic space. The White House tried unsuccessfully to pressure President Daniel Ortega to hold international observers for the critical November elections.

AMANDA DELGADO Contributing Writer

The Beacon – Monday, September 19, 2016

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Two California lawmakers lambaste
The follies of Colin Kaepernick’s logic

We all know the horrible history of racist atrocities in America — from slavery to segregation to lynching. But we must not forget the antidotes America has produced against its own racist poison.

Are we if it had not been … for cheap labor. I am speaking very seriously … I picked cotton, I carried it to the market, I built the railroads under someone else’s wish for nothing. For nothing. The Southern oligarchy … was created by my labor and my sweat and the violation of my women and the murder of my children. This is the land of the free, the home of the brave.

The debate, which can be found on YouTube under the previously mentioned title, displayed the masterly rhetorical skills of both Buckley and Baldwin. Despite the fact it took place over 50 years ago, there is much we can learn from the insight of these two great minds.

Baldwin began with a denunciation of America that makes one feel both compassion and outrage. “From a very literal point of view,” he said, “the harbors and the ports and the railroads of the country — the economy, especially in the South — could not conceivably be what they are if it had not been … for cheap labor. I am speaking very seriously … I picked cotton, I carried it to the market, I built the railroads under someone else’s wish for nothing.”

Baldwin was a black activist, novelist and social critic. In 1965, he faced off in a debate with the conservative intellectual William F. Buckley about whether “… the American Dream has been achieved at the expense of the American Negro.”

He adds that the sin of slavery is not even debatable. It is a terrible thing for an entire people to surrender to the notion that one-ninth of its population is beneath them, “I challenge you to name me another civilization anywhere, anywhere, in the history of the world in which the problems of the minority…is as much a subject of dramatic concern as it is in the United States.”

There is other such civilization. According to the Cato Institute, since Lyndon Johnson declared a “War on Poverty” in 1964, the U.S. government has spent an extraordinary 15 trillion dollars on social welfare programs. While these programs also benefit whites, they disproportionately go to minorities, as a result of their lower incomes. A U.S. Census Bureau study authored by Shelly Ireland indicated that 41 percent of African Americans and 36 percent of Hispanics are welfare recipients compared with 13 percent of non-Hispanic whites. But it’s not merely a matter of statistics.

Aside from the untold trillions spent on programs, how many books have been written in America attempting to remedy the condition of minorities? How much time has been spent discussing solutions? And what of affirmative action, housing projects and the innumerable community efforts expended in attempting to improve the lives of minorities?

We all know the horrible history of racist atrocities in America — from slavery to segregation to lynching. But we must not forget the antidotes America has produced against its own racist poison.

This country does care about its minorities and its poor. Just ask any student here at FIU, or at any other university, about the status of African American minorities. Whatever their opinion may be, there will be no lack of concern for fellow countrymen, regardless of the color of their skin.

If there is to be hope for minorities, not just in America but in every country on earth, it’s going to come from reaffirming the profoundly American ideals of liberty and equality. We ought not denounce the whole of America, or disrepect our national symbols, let alone question what the U.S. stands for; we should instead challenge our government to vehemently stand behind the ideals it preaches, and to criticize it when it fails to meet our expectations.

But to adopt anti-American ideas of people like Fidel Castro as Kaepernick suggests is to give up the very notion of the American dream and hope for the improvement of the most vulnerable members of society.

Christian Gonzalez, is a contributing writer for FIU Student Media. His column, Conservative Corner, is a commentary on foreign affairs, culture, and social sciences. For suggestions or comments, please contact Christian at opinion@fiusm.com.
Nonbinary student exists in ‘gray area’ of identity

ERIKA SANTIAGO
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Noel Cerulean is a student living in a “gray area” of multiple identities. Cerulean, a senior majoring in nutrition and dietetics, is a first-generation Cuban-American who also identifies as non-binary and asexual; the former describes someone who identifies as neither male nor female, and the latter describing someone who does not experience sexual attraction.

I’m a mesh of everything so at the same time I’m not anything," said Cerulean, who uses they/them pronouns.

However, there is one aspect of their identity they consider to be the most important.

“The biggest aspect of my identity … is my identity as an activist who fights for causes that are important to me and who fights to make the world a better place for everyone, so that people don’t have to feel like they have to fit in to be someone who matters,” they said.

Fitting within certain spaces, particularly Cuban, has been difficult for Cerulean due to their multiple identities.

“My family is really Cuban. I go to all the family events and I hear them speaking super Cuban Spanish … about Cuba,” they said. “But I can’t relate so much to that because I’m not from Cuba.”

However, Cerulean doesn’t identify fully with “American” either.

“Whenever I go anywhere in the country … and I’m with my family speaking Spanish, people look at us like we’re different,” said Cerulean, recalling a time their family was discriminated against while on vacation.

“I went to Coco Beach [with my family] and my grandma was speaking Spanish to us, and the family next to us started speaking ‘mock-Spanish’ – making fun of us.”

Along with being pressured to identify as either Cuban, American or both, Cerulean also feels pressured to conform to gender roles.

“I don’t really identify with being a man but if I want to put my foot through the door in some places, and I deviate from male, I’m not going to get that opportunity,” they said.

Though Cerulean prefers “they” or “them” pronouns, they often hesitate to tell others their preferred pronouns.

“If someone asks, I’ll say [my preferred pronouns],” they said. “Because if they’re asking they’re probably aware, but otherwise I never say it because I know the backlash I’ll get.”

It’s been through Cerulean’s activism and involvement with groups like the Students for Justice for Palestine that they have found their niche and people who accept them for who they are.

“I feel really comfortable with SJ because I know that I can just be myself,” they said.

They also feel at home with the friends they made in student housing.

“We understand each other on a deeper level, our friendship is personal,” said Cerulean. “It’s about getting to know each other.”

When asked how to best connect with people who live at the intersection of many identities, Cerulean says the answer lies in listening.

“Listen to the people you are standing in solidarity with, take what they’re saying about themselves [and] what you’re doing as an ally and listen to what they’re saying,” they said.

Allies can also use their privilege to help other communities, according to Cerulean.

“For example, if you’re white and you’re trying to help Black Lives Matter, you speak to other white people, get other white people on board with Black Lives Matter,” they said. “Amplify and don’t speaker over. Speak to the ones who aren’t listening.”

Drug-user photo exhibit launches

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The Green School of International and Public Affairs and Kimberly Green Center Latin American and Caribbean Center will be showcasing the hardships of heroin addicts in the Dominican Republic through photos.

The Lens Project, spearheaded by Padilla and Armando Matiz Reyes, was a two-year-long project that placed cameras in the hands of addicts and taught them to be social analysts in an effort to educate and inform the community and policy makers about addiction.

Padilla, a global and sociocultural studies associate professor, said the project began after a group of the community approached researchers in Santo Domingo requesting help to be heard.

“We were doing research on HIV and drug abuse in the Dominican Republic on a larger project, and we met a small group of heroin users in this neighborhood that we visited as a part of our research,” Padilla said.

“They began to tell us their stories and how they felt essentially abandoned by society. They said ‘We are ready to tell our stories, and we don’t want to be invisible anymore.’”

Padilla said that the participants were, at the time, homeless and current drug users, and also lived in horrific conditions, but the fact that they suggested and were dedicated to the project made it easier to complete.

He and Matiz Reyes began to

SEE DRUGS, PAGE 6
Organic foods are the healthier option

Whether it’s on the products you see in the grocery store or in an article published in your favorite health magazine, you have surely heard of organic foods.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, organic food products are those that follow the production restriction imposed by the association, which limit the use of chemicals, hydrocyanation, trans-fats, pesticides, antibiotics, and hormones. These products are often more expensive than the conventional ones, however, is their nutrition quality worth spending a few extra bucks on?

A great debate has sparked concerning the organic food products that, lately, have been increasingly demanded by consumers, according to the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. A study was conducted by the AICN to seek evidence proving that organically produced foods had better nutritional quality than conventional foods; results showed there is no difference in nutrient quality between the two.

The issue here is, can that be concluded based on nutrient content alone? Is the value of food defined merely by it?

There are multiple factors to consider when making the decision of grabbing the regular or the organic package of an item. Taste, cost, and the presence of pesticides, antibiotics and chemicals in foods also contribute to their value.

The presence of pesticides in fruits and vegetables is a reality, and so are the associated health risks. Cancer, hormone disruption, infertility, birth defects, and toxicity of the brain and nervous system are just some of the issues on the rise.

A study conducted by the National Resources Defense Council found that memory and hand-eye coordination impairment, low physical stamina and other health issues were found in children exposed to pesticides.

In addition, genetically modified organisms should also be considered when defining the value of foods.

Currently, there are no regulations on GMO labeling in food products and yet, they are associated with several health risks: liver problems, reproductive problems, infant mortality, and allergies.

Organically produced food products are the number one alternative to avoid these risks. Even though they tend to be more expensive, preventing these health issues will save you the big money in the long run.

To conclude that organic foods are no different from conventional foods based on nutrient quality is quite unfair. Shop locally, buy from the farmer’s market, because the very small difference in nutrient content, organic foods are the healthier choice to feed your body today.

SDA health is a column written by members of the Student Dietetic Association focused on healthy living for students. To contact SDA, email life@fsam.com

‘La Nona’ a ‘huge deal’ for theatre department

Theatre, which Alonso says will add something new to our political, economic and social issues right now. It think that’s one of the great things about this show; it’s relevant in the sense that it deals with the deterioration of the characters is also reflected in the scenes throughout the show.”

Frias said the English script didn’t do the justice, as the “narrative flows better in Spanish.” Alonso said the novelty of a completely Spanish show will have a pay off for the department.

“Some people may be like, ‘Oh, cool, it’s a theatre piece in Spanish,’ but I think it’s a huge deal for us, and I think it’s a really great opportunity,” Alonso said.

Pareja, the play’s director, said that in addition to wanting to redo the story in Spanish, she chose the show because of its relevance to the community.

“It’s relevant in the sense that it deals with different issues. Mainly, it has to do with the working middle class and how powerless they can be in front of unforeseen forces sometimes. It’s very relevant to our political, economic and social issues right now. It also has to do with immigration issues, to an extent,” Pareja said.

Set in 1970s La Boca, “La Nona” follows the struggles of a family who immigrated to Argentina. The family, according to Pareja, wanted to escape Italy’s socio-economic turmoil and settled in a new country fighting an even bigger issue.

The deterioration of the characters is also reflected in the costume. One character, Maria, undergoes six changes as ethics unravel.

“I just would like the audience to notice that deterioration of the costumes. Look at the colors. Seeing the change at the actual deterioration of [Marta’s] costumes indicate something about her that is never explicitly mentioned out loud,” the third-year BFA candidate said.

By the end of Act Two, the characters are doing very strange things; Alonso uses that distortion of reality to create the scene.

“If you really look into La Boca, there’s a lot of violence in it. It’s not the greatest city in the world, as you would depict it to be because it’s so colorful and so bright.” Alonso said. “It’s a pretty rough place, but it’s actually kind of dark, in a sense. So we played a lot with the distortion of reality and things falling apart, things not being the way that they appear to be.”

The senior BFA candidate said that the single-unit set doesn’t change much, but the lighting changes really bring the visual metaphor of deterioration home for audience.

“With the different colors amplifying the set, as those start to disappear, you start to see the imperfections within the set both intentional and unintentional.” Alonso said.

The show, which Pareja describes as a tragic comedy, will play until Oct. 3 in the Black Box Theatre, which Alonso says will add something special to the show.

“The comedy and tragedy are so close together. I think that’s one of the great things about this show; you see all these great emotions mixed in, in one play,” said Pareja.

Alumna finds success in fashion blogging

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Former Panther Annie Vazquez’s motivation to start a blog was propelled by a few harsh words of wisdom.

“Originally I wanted to be a poet, but a creative writing professor at FIU told me my work was no good and that it’s better to find another career. So I did the second thing I liked to do and that was fashion. Hence ‘The Fashion Poet’ blog name” Vazquez said.

Vazquez is known for her eclectic style and edgy pieces, something she said was influenced by her mother.

“I spent a lot of my childhood in and out of shopping with her and I’d watch her dress in stuff other moms weren’t wearing and always receive a ton of compliments. I started to do the same.”

Since graduating from FIU with a liberal studies degree, Vazquez has pursued fashion writing full-time.

Writing came naturally to Vazquez and her love for fashion made her idea for a blog flow effortlessly, but her eye for innovation is what helped her secure the title of “Miami’s fashion pioneer” given to her by Style Blazer.

“I was a journalist at the time and I was living through the change. There were so many stories about local designers and style events, but papers weren’t buying them and I decided to do something about it,” said Vazquez.

Though blogging has become a social media staple, not everyone supported Vazquez’s decision to begin her blog.

“I had three people that believed in me. Everyone else thought I was crazy or I was going to fail,” said Vazquez.

That didn’t stop her, and she became a “social media influencer,” since graduating in 1999. According to LuxuryDaily.com, social media influencer campaigns are 11 times more impactful than digital advertising.

Vazquez’s blog, ‘The Fashion Poet’, has been voted Miami’s Top Fashion Blog by the New Times in 2013, and was awarded Best Fashion Content Creator at the Hispanicize x Telemundo Awards in 2016. Vazquez also became the first blogger from Miami to star in a campaign for Coach.

“Every year I set goals and go after them. I think coming out in Vogue was epic, but really following my love of writing and fashion because it led me to this. You have to do what you love because you’ll be successful.”

The FIU alumni says that doing a job you love and the rest of your life isn’t worth the money when you can earn a lot doing the things you love.

“You just have to give things time and believe it. Most people quit too fast or they want instant success but my journey lasted long and I had a lot of doors shut in my face and I spent some sleepless nights wondering.”

“Getting to where she is now did not come easy, according to Vazquez. She says she had to work three jobs to support her freelance writing. During that time, she was asked why she didn’t quit, but she felt like quitting would write nothing else for her because writing makes her happy.

“Every time I think I’m not trying. Life is short. We are all blessed with gifts and we are here to use them.” Vazquez said.

If I could recommend a book to kids in college, it would be: The Alchemist and The Secret. Read those books. “Manifest good stuff, believe in the magic, trust the universe and most important let your star shine. We are here to shine and fear is fake. Don’t believe the hype.”
College is often a time of many firsts: first time living on your own, first time thinking seriously about a career, first time contemplating adulthood. It is first for many students, meaning first in their families to enroll in and/or obtain a four-year college or university degree, these firsts can be accompanied by particular joys and tribulations, including gender expectations.

“As a first-generation college student, [I faced] a lot of pressure from my family,” Destiny Medina, a sophomore and psychology major said. “They had high expectations for me to get straight-A’s, to be involved, and even eventually to become a doctor.”

Madeline Tablada, a freshmen and biology major, echoed this sentiment: “I’m the first in my family to seek higher education which will set the bar for future generations,” she said.

The overall number of such students has increased over the last 40 years. Of 7.3 million first-time undergraduates attending four-year colleges and universities, 20 percent are the first in their family to go to college.

The College Board acknowledges some of the challenges faced by first-generation college students, advising counselors working with students who are preparing to go to college to reach out to these students early, to involve the family, and to help explain what college will be like.

“First generation students may never have been encouraged to assess their talents and weaknesses with a view toward higher education,” the College Board states on its website. “They are likely to have minimal knowledge of what education requirements are for certain professions.”

Others are as knowledgeable about their future prospects as their counterparts from “college-going families,” those who have sometimes sent generations of family members to institutions of higher learning.

I am currently majoring in psychology, hoping to go to graduate school and have a concentration in mental health,” Medina said. “My dream would be to become a psychiatrist and open my own practice here in Florida and even internationally.”

Tablada also has definite career plans. “I plan on attending medical school and become a forensic pathologist and/or physician in emergency trauma,” she said.

According to website Inside Higher Ed, the term “first-generation college student” itself requires clarification: does it refer to students who come from homes where neither parent has a degree, or where neither has ever enrolled in college? What if a live-in step-parent has attended college? Or only one parent attended? Do the models within their own families, which now may have a college-going tradition.

“If I went to Coco Beach [with my family] and my grandma was speaking Spanish to us, and the family next to us started speaking ‘mock-Spanish’ – making fun of us.”

Along with being pressured to identify as others, Cuban, American or both, Cerulean also feels pressured to conform to gender roles. “I don’t really identify with being a man but if I want to put my foot through the door in some places, and I deviate from male, I’m not going to get that opportunity,” they said.

“Though Cerulean prefers ‘they’ or ‘them’ pronouns, they often hesitate to tell others their preferred pronouns. “If someone asks, I’ll say ‘my preferred pronouns,’” they said. “Because if they’re asking they’re probably aware, but otherwise I never say it because I know the backlash I’ll get.”

“I’ve been told by family members that I’m an inspiration,” Medina said.

And in terms of being a first-generation college student, Tablada responds: “It’s pretty cool.”

## Lens Project exhibit to open

**DRUGS, PAGE 4**

brainstorm ways to adapt the photovoice methodology to the group. The point is to basically allow the photographs to speak for themselves, so the visuals can say something the participants can’t say because they don’t have access to the policymakers or the audience they are trying to reach,” Matiz Reyes said. “Photovoice is a great methodology for those that do not have any kind of education yet still want to make some changes.”

Padilla said the participants learned social analysis and photography skills, to allow the photos to spark discussion and debate about the surroundings of the participants. The exhibit of these photos, which opens Thursday, Sept. 22 at 5 p.m., is part of efforts by Padilla and Matiz Reyes to show the correlation between heroin addiction and pandemics in the Dominican Republic and the U.S.

“What we’ve been doing recently is talking to teachers to sort of talk about the U.S. based heroin epidemic and show that it’s all connected. The Dominican Republic is not isolated from the U.S. and a lot of the heroin that enters through the U.S. enters through the Dominican Republic,” Padilla said.

The duo hopes to hold workshops and other exhibits to help educate the community to bring help about changes in drug policy and health access. Spanish, people look at us like we’re different,” said Cerulean. “Informalizing a time their family was discriminated against while on vacation.”

“I went to Coco Beach with my family and my grandma was speaking Spanish to us, and the family next to us started speaking ‘mock-Spanish’ – making fun of us.”

Along with being pressured to identify as others, Cuban, American or both, Cerulean also feels pressured to conform to gender
FOOTBALL

Player of the week, running back says team is ‘going to bring it’

JASMINE CASIMIR
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The ending to the story for the Panthers when they played against the University of Maryland, was another loss. But junior running back, Alex Gardner, gave it all he had to fight for a different ending.

Gardner was a man with a plan in the Friday night lights game against the Terrapins, leading the Panthers with 109 rushing yards.

The offense opened up the first quarter scoreless, but had a different mindset for the second quarter as they made an impressive drive to put points on the scoreboard.

The drive to the Terrapins’ end zone included a 55-yard breakthrough by the running back, putting the offense at the four-yard line.

“Pushed the hole when the offensive lineman got to the guys,” Gardner said. “I seen (sic) the cutback and I split through the middle and just did my thing after that.”

In the very next play, redshirt freshman quarterback Maurice Alexander handed off to Gardner to finish the job.

Gardner’s on-field relationship with quarterback Alex McGough was cut short during the game after McGough sustained an injury, but a rapport was established.

“With him coming in, it opened us up with the inside run game.”

Gardner was one of the four team captains for the matchup, and made it his duty to step up for his team no matter the outcome.

“The great thing about sports is that you get another chance to improve and get better,” Gardner said. “We’re going to bring it. We’ll be good.”

COLUMN

Sports director uses tablet giveaway to increase attendance

COLUMNIST

PETER HOLLAND JR.

Is it a reward or a desperate bribe to get students to come to football games? Do students come to see a football game or just to get free luxurious items for showing up?

There are probably other ways, but giveaways and halftime shows (along with a winning team) are the common ones,” said Tyler Porth, a senior majoring in sports management and recreation.

There’s two ironies to this: One, all football games are free from the get-go. Two, the giveaways and halftime shows will bring fans.

The fans that do show up, however, how long do they plan to stay? You could just simply swipe your card, stay for the first half, then go home. It wouldn’t make a difference.

Gina Fernandez, an FIU student who had no interest in the football games, however, the biology major would attend for other reasons.

“I’m not into football, I’m just mostly hanging out with my friends and don’t really pay attention to what’s going on,” said Fernandez. “I do like how they give away free staff.”

First game against Indiana, 16,089 were in attendance. A decent amount if you want count Indiana fan base and the freshman class. Against Maryland, 17,084 people were at the FIU Stadium last Friday. The first 10,000 students who showed up received a free T-shirt.

Desperate times does call for desperate measures, right? To make money you have to spend money, right?

As much as Garcia is trying to make FIU a college atmosphere during sporting events, at the end of the day, winning games consistently will bring fans.

Men’s soccer team was at one point in the top 10 nationally. There was no marketing scheme to promote home games for the soccer team but a decent amount of people would still show up and sit in the wooden bleachers.

“I think with such a big freshman class, that a lot of people were there for the game. If anyone did come for the free stuff, then they were probably upperclassmen,” said Porth.

Pete’s pick is a weekly column about FIU football and Athletic news. To contact Peter, email him at peter.holland@fiusm.com.

SOCCER

Defender leaves hometown to play soccer

COLUMNIST

SAMIR BADIR

The distance between Miami and Iceland is 3,378 miles, and for freshman defender, Aron Heiddal, leaving the city of Gardabær, Iceland, to come play the game he loves is an opportunity of a lifetime.

Standing at 6-foot-2 and wearing the No. 4 jersey, Heiddal uses his talent of controlling the ball and communicating with teammates to make sure that nothing will get past him.

“It’s different in a way. Everything about facilities and how coaching is done, [and] everyone acting so professionally,” Heiddal said to Student Media. “Back home in Iceland, there is no professional league so players can act more lazy just to have fun.”

Coming from a town where soccer is not taken too seriously, Heiddal thought about what really got him motivated to play.

“Well that’s a hard one,” Heiddal said when asked about his motivation. “The English premier league is more popular than the Icelandic premier league. My step father used to play soccer in Iceland, and he got me into it.”

Whether it’s through television, the internet or someone close, soccer, among other sports, travels all over the world to gain someone’s interest. Heiddal is a prime example of just how special this sport can be.

With a promising freshman year and a college career for Heiddal, the Panthers look to continue defending their Conference USA championship. Many surrounding the team believe they can take another step forward and gain more respect from their peers all across the nation.

When asked if his favorite player of all time was a forward or defender, Heiddal said: “First thing that comes to mind is Francesco Totti. He’s a fantastic player and loyal. I love playing.”

FIU men’s soccer team will travel away to play Wake Forest University in North Carolina at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 20.

Bader Bizz is a biweekly column about occurrences in sports at FIU. To contact Samir, email him at samir. bader@fiusm.com.
ROAD TO RECOVERY
Running back fights to bounceback from ACL injury

Napoleon Maxwell, redshirt sophomore, doing drills on the sideline in his orange shirt, which means he’s refrained from weight cutting.

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FOOTBALL

While some players have already returned on the field from their injuries, redshirt sophomore Napoleon Maxwell has yet to be cleared. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, over 30 percent of injuries encountered involve ligament sprains. During the 2014 season, Maxwell played six games, rushing for 254 yards and one touchdown that year. With high expectations going into the 2015 season, Maxwell’s sophomore season was over before it started.

Days before training camp, Maxwell was doing drills to prepare for their first official practice when he went down and tore his ACL. The St. Petersburg native was redshirted and spent his entire season rehabbing his knee. Even going into this season, Maxwell is not quite ready. Kevin O’Neill was hired as head trainer for FIU athletics last March, following a 20-year career working for the Miami Dolphins, and works on Maxwell’s recovery.

“I tried to take an approach with him in season to work him five days a week. We’re going to give him two good days of recovery every week. Because, the work we are trying to challenge him during those five days is difficult,” said O’Neill. “We’re trying to take a little step forward each week to be incrementally stronger and incrementally better in movement activities that pertained to his position as a running back.”

According to the former NFL Trainer of the Year, one of the exercises he uses for players is cardiovascular workouts, namely stationary biking and treadmills. “We like him to stay somewhat fit from a cardiovascular standpoint,” said O’Neill. During the recovery process, O’Neill states the importance of making sure injured players are physically ready, but also see if they are mentally.

“Think that if you know your players, you will have a better understanding of their individual make up, said O’Neill. “Some may required more sensitive handling than others. We always treat them as students, as athletes and interact with other people.”

That includes visiting friends, family members and teammates, said O’Neill. An ACL injury take saround nine to 12 months to heal, according to O’Neill. Maxwell has not been medically cleared to participate in football activities going into the Panther’s fourth game of the season. He is still recovering and is looking forward to being in full pads again.

COLUMN

Weight cutting: A danger in combat sports

Losing an excessive amount of weight through dehydration and dieting in a short period of time looks as bad as it sounds. In the fight business, this is known as weight cutting and it’s done by fighters who want to achieve a goal weight in order to perform in a specific weight class.

One of the great features about combat sports is that any and every one can perform. Men, women and sometimes children can compete in these sports but they are typically limited to one weight.

This is done to ensure that two athletes are competing against an equal counterpart. This way, there’s little chance of one of the athletes having a significant weight advantage over the other.

There are different names for these weight classifications. They start as low as atomweight, which means that a person weighs less than or at least 105 pounds, and end as high as heavyweight, meaning that a person weighs less than or at least 265 pounds.

Now, having these divisions in weight seems like a fantastic idea to reinforce the fairness of these sports, but the problem lies in the manner in which some of these athletes get down to their designated weight goal. FIU student Natalie Banos said: “I don’t think rapid weight changes can be good for the body. Most of the methods are too severe and unhealthy, which can make the person sick. I don’t even think it can improve these people’s performances.”

She’s right. In fact, weight cutting gives an athlete the worst disadvantage there is in combat sports. According to a memo published by the California State Athletic Commission, almost 40 percent of athletes enter their fight dehydrated, which puts them at risk of injury and imbalance within the body.

The worst part about cutting weight is trying to go back to your regular self. You go from one extreme losing a severe amount of weight to another extreme in trying to gain it all back which causes even more problems,” said nutritionist and former bodybuilder Nancy Sneed.

From brutal injuries, fainting before fights and death, fighters subject themselves to these risks for the sake of the sport and something must be done to change these ways. FIU, thankfully, does not promote this extreme measure of weight loss for their sports. Instead, the University offers a healthier alternative that just began at the start of this year.

In January, a group of doctors lead by Dr. Zaher Nuwayhid, initiated a weight management/bariatric surgery program through the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, which will help people lose weight in the healthiest way possible.

“I think having this program at FIU shows how much we care for the health of our students and community. We have some combat sports clubs at the school and I would hope they don’t have to weight cut for competitions or tournaments,” said FIU student Edrik Bandez. “If they did, I would want them to use a program like this just to make sure that they are 100 percent healthy.”

By having a program like this, we are already taking one step to promote safer and healthier alternatives for athletes and people alike who wish to get down to a desired weight. If we continue to do this, hopefully it will spark a change that goes beyond collegiate lines and into professional sports.

These athletes are putting their lives and bodies on the line to fight. The least we, as spectators and fans, can want for them is to guarantee they are at their healthiest when they go into battle.

Kristen’s Corner is a column focusing on issues that affect students interested in sports. For questions, commentary or suggestions email Kristen at kristen.king@fiusm.com.