Board of Trustees unanimously approve Nature Preserve construction

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The Board of Trustees meeting was in session Friday, March 11, to discuss building two practice fields over the northern part of the then Nature Preserve. The plans included a give and take resolution, where the University would take the 2.82 acres from the north, and provide a 2.95 expansion of the wetland area to the south.

Those countering the University’s decisions were in attendance, anticipating the outcome of FIU’s Nature Preserve. The ruling resulted in the unanimous decision in favor of the construction to build both fields in the controversial area, and to add the Preserve’s expansion to the south. It was immediately followed by a walkout by opposing students.

President Mark B. Rosenberg opened the floor, saying “to the entire group of individuals who care, we want to figure this out.”

“It may not always go exactly the way that everybody wants. This is an issue that there is a lot of frustration everywhere. I want you to understand that we are working as hard as we can to do what’s in the best interest of the University,” he said.

Some believe that the administration has been working in their best interest. Aime Estezé, a junior studying environmental studies, presented her concern that the University was not responding to the real needs of the students at FIU.

“FIU made an agreement with Miami FC in October of last year, giving them use of the Ocean Bank Stadium,” Estezé said when reporting her claim. “What that means is that it’s displacing some of our athletic students, and they won’t have as much area to practice. So it seems to stand that since October the FIU administration has known that their athletic students have needed another space to practice, and yet we were not made aware of the fact,” she said.

Estezé said, “Now I have to ask you what we’re standing for as a University? Are we standing for short term privatized monetized gain, or are we standing for the education of our students?”

Chief Financial Officer Kenneth Jessell addressed the accusation.

“This is not something that came up in October, November or December. This has been a long going concern for our students, and our student athletes,” he said.

He also said “we are the only school in Conference USA without practice fields.”

“We expect our athletes to perform on the field, on the court and in the classroom which is the most important part. We want them to have access to the best facilities, and to be trained appropriately” said Jessell.

According to Jessell, The University had reportedly planned the project in December with an estimated budget of $1.9 million, and student government had agreed to contribute $500,000 towards its construction. While the Board has been considering many options over which approved plan would be the best location, and also would be the most cost effective. It was determined that the plan to build over the Preserve

SEE NATURE, PAGE 2

FIU fires Chinn

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Two weeks after women’s basketball team captain Destini Feagin filed a sexual misconduct complaint against Head Coach Marlin Chin, the University fired him.

Chin was released Friday, March 11 following his admission to violating NCAA rules with athlete benefits. He never admitted to sexual misconduct on his behalf.

The violation of NCAA rules came when Chin gave Feagin $600 to pay off a $500 debt on her FIU account in December in order to register for the spring semester. Feagin claimed she was unaware that the loan Chinn gave her was an NCAA violation.

Although Chin has been fired, the case with Feagin is still under investigation by local authorities. Chin’s firing saves FIU a total of $644,000, which would’ve been his total payout had he served the remaining four years on his contract.

In Chin’s contract, Section 6(e) states he can be terminated with cause for an intentional violation of NCAA rules.

Since Chin’s suspension began Saturday, Feb. 27, Assistant Coach Tiara Malcolm has served as interim coach for FIU’s last two regular season games and its two Conference USA tournament games.

FIU finished last in the Conference with a 5-26 record. Their season ended after a 76-44 loss to Marshall Thursday, March 9 in the C-USA tournament.

During the offseason FIU will recruit and look for a new head coach.

SEE VOTE, PAGE 2

Actress Eva Longoria joins NextGen and Latino Victory Project to discuss Latino vote

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On March 10, NextGen Climate and Latino Victory Project hosted a panel dubbed “Young Hispanic Voters: Climate Change and Economic Opportunity.”

Moderated by Maria Cardona, principal at Dewey Square Group, the panel focused on the importance of voting and participating in the primaries.

In the wake of the Florida primaries, Donald Trump achieved a significant victory.

Panelists Tom Steyer, president of NextGen Climate, actress Eva Longoria, founder of Latino Victory Project, congresswoman Joaquin Castro of Texas, and Salome Garcia, student and co-founder of FIU’s Age of Aquarius Group, weighed in on the discussion of environmental and Latino concerns.

“This is probably the most important audience in The United States because you’re young, in Miami, and Latino,” said Steyer.

She said, “We’re asking every candidate to layout their plans to explain how we’re going to solve the problem and move to clean energy, but every poll we have says that any of group, Latinos or Hispanics, care more about energy, climate and environment [issues] than any other group. Every poll we have says that when it comes to age, people under the age of 30 care more about energy, climate and the environment more than any other group.”

Latinos, according to Longoria, is the fastest growing demographic in the United States.

“Demography is not destiny,” she said. “I think a big myth is that as Latinos think. ‘We’re the biggest group, we’re the largest minorities.’ If we don’t vote, if we don’t show up, that means nothing.”

“We can be the largest group, but we’re still the most undereducated group; we’re the most unemployed group; we’re the group that lives most in poverty. Don’t be deceived by the numbers, our own numbers.”

The panel discussed the ongoing issue of getting young Kiwi Easterman
NATION & WORLD
BRIEFS

13.1 million US coastal residents could face flooding because of rising sea levels

As many as 13.1 million people living along U.S. coastlines could face flooding by the end of the century because of rising sea levels, according to a new study that warns that large numbers of Americans could be forced to relocate to higher ground. The estimated number of coastal dwellers affected by rising sea level is three times higher than previously projected, according to the study published Monday in the science journal Nature Climate Change.

Dangerous fire stunt at school rally was against district policy

School officials had strong words about a “forbidden” pyrotechnic performance that was approved by a Delray Beach high school principal, then went horribly wrong when a stuntman’s face caught fire in front of 2,000 stunned students at a pep rally. Students gasped and screamed Thursday morning when the fire breather’s face erupted into flames that spread to his arms and body as he tried to tamp it out. Engulfed in a fireball, he ran onto the gymnasiun floor at Atlantic Community High, video of the incident showed. “He panicked, he was swinging his arms, trying to hit it out,” said Danny Lahav, 18, a senior at the rally.

Zuckerberg braves Beijing smog for a jog as his China charm offensive continues

He’s spent years studying Chinese. He’s hosted China’s cyberspace czar at his office, and encouraged employees to read President Xi Jinping’s book “The Governance of China.” Now Facebook supremo Mark Zuckerberg, whose social network is still blocked by the Great Firewall, has gone yet another mile in his ceaseless courtship of China. He’s gone jogging through Beijing’s Tiantanmen Square during a yellow-level smog alert. On Friday morning Beijing time, when the Air Quality Index had soared over 350, deep into “hazardous” territory, Zuckerberg posted a message on his Facebook account saying he had just jogged through Tiantanmen Square. The accompanying photo showed Zuckerberg to be without a protective face mask.

Practice fields to be built on the Preserve

NATURE, PAGE 1

The approved plan would be the best location, and also would be the most cost effective. It was determined that the plan to build over the Preserve was the best option. The replacement of land was very important so we are using 2,828, and we are giving back 2,953,” said Jessell when referring to the acres being provided at the south and being taken from the north. “We are putting in $400,000 from that,1.3 million dollars to do the mitigation on the southern part of the newly created areas. In addition, the committee wanted a $2 million endowment that could be used with a four percent payout.

Jessell had mentioned that the $80,000 a year will come from the endowment plan. “In essence this gives us the equivalent of the endowment so we don’t have to wait months or years in order to have that endowment,” he said.

Jessell also reported that the environmental planning committee currently has only $10,000 going into the improvement and maintenance of the preserve. Only $5,000 are coming from the university funds and $5,000 from the endowment.

“We are not stopping there; we are committed to this notion of earth environment and sustainability so we are going to be working on the comprehensive university wide programs of conservation and sustainability,” he said.

Alexis Calaytay, president of MMC-SCG, also detailed the student government’s comprehensive plan and what it actually insinuated, “Student Government recently signed a resolution that said ‘we support the preservation of the preserve, and not mutually exclusive, we support intramural fields on campus.” According to Calaytay, the message in the proposed resolution means preserving the preserve but does not include the northern portion.

She said “Students will have educational experiences they’ve never had before. Students will be able to be a part of the process of creating a conservation and sustainability plan.”

“The replacement of land will go on natural areas on campus. We will do the necessary demands to care for the best interest of the University. We support intramural fields on campus, and we have educational experiences that they’ve never had before.”

NextGen and Latino Vote Project hosts panel

VOTE, PAGE 1

“Will the preserve be the same? No. We have unprecedented opportunities for the university, for student participation, and to explore what sustainability looks like.” He said “we have yet another mile to go, we have yet another step to go.”

I really think that our party, both candidates are speaking to the issues that we care about in the way that the other party is…not just absent, but they have no plan, then they don’t care.” said Steyer.

We really don’t care about the science…we don’t care about our good intentions if you tell us you care,” said Steyer.

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EVERYONE KNOWS GIRLS AND WOMEN MENSTRUATE, SO THERE IS NO REASON TO TREAT PERIODS AS DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS. HOWEVER, SOCIETY STILL PLACES A TABOO ON THIS NATURAL BODILY FUNCTION. THIS IS A PERSISTING STIGMA THAT STILL LEAVES WOMEN FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE DISCUSSING MENSTRUATION OR EVEN NEEDING TO GO TO THE BATHROOM TO “TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS.” LUCKILY, A GROWING NUMBER OF ADVOCATES, ENTREPRENEURS AND FEMALE LAWMAKERS ARE CHALLENGING THE TABOOS AND PUTTING ALL CARDS ABOUT THE SUBJECT ON THE TABLE.

PERIODS SHOULD BE PUT SQUARELY ON THE PUBLIC AGENDA AND FACILITIES SHOULD TAKE MENSTRUATION INTO CONSIDERATION. ONE WAY TO DO SO IS TO MAKE TAMpons AND PADS AVAILABLE IN EVERY PUBLIC BATHROOM—FOR FREE.

CURRENTLY, FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS ARE LARGELY INACCESSIBLE IN THE UNITED STATES, DESPITE THE ACCESS TO SUCH PRODUCTS BEING A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT. STILL, MANY CITIZENS DO NOT ACTUALLY HAVE ACCESS TO THESE BASIC HYGIENE PRODUCTS.

Representative Grace Meng, a New York Democrat, stated that “menstruation is not a luxury item and is an essential than feminine products. Like people, all bathrooms should be equal. Unfortunately, they are not all public. All public bathrooms provide free toilet paper, soap and even covers, but not tampons and pads. According to the nonprofit Free the Tampons organization, a national organization dedicated to the free access to feminine products in restrooms, 86 percent of women aged 18 to 24 are reporting running their period unexpectedly in public without the supplies they need. 78 percent of women who unexpectedly started their period in public without supplies, improvised with toilet paper or another makeshift fix.

Free the Tampons is fighting to influence facilities such as schools and airports to stock feminine products at no charge. “I’m trying to change a social norm,” said founder Nancy Kramer. “It’s a matter of dignity. It’s humiliating to be in a situation and not have what you need.”

FLU, a university committed to keeping its students safe and healthy is one of the many schools that fail to provide women with sanitary necessities free of charge. However, counterproductive methods for both men and women are available for free.

Isabel Piccaro, a sophomore majoring in International Relations and Asian Studies, thinks that both women and men need menstruation on the public agenda as an issue.

“The idea behind early access releases is that it could help fund the project while serving as a means to receive feedback from users. This allows developers to improve the playthrough experience before the full release. While it sounds great in theory, a majority of games utilizing early access fall short of meeting the expectations of the people who make them. It’s a crapshoot for consumers to never know whether a purchase will blow up in their faces with bugs, glitches and other issues. The average buyer who goes into a store to purchase a product that was unfinished gets burnt, creating a hesitation trust for the game and not a demo.

Street Fighter doesn’t even have the most fundamental elements included in many fighting games since its inception into the gaming world like Arcade Mode. The trend of incomplete games doesn’t seem to be fading anytime soon, forcing users to fork up anywhere from $20 to $50 extra “extra content” that the developers often don’t even completely know what it will include. Early access games on Steam started another trend wherein PC developers are able to release a game while it’s still in development and charge money for it.

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NOW THAT YOU HAVENT READ, THE Sentences and problems on the next page are kept in the same context.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

The opinions presented within this page do not represent the views of The FIU50 Editorial Board. These views are separate from the editors and reflect individual perspectives of contributing writers and/or members of the University community.

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Editorials are the unabased opinions of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor in chief, management, and the editors of each of the five sections. The Beacon welcomes all letters regarding or in response to its editorials. Send them to opinion@fiusm.com.
**LIFE!**

**Black Beans are the Heart of Miami**

**SDA Health**

Black beans offer a wealth of nutrients such as fiber, plant chemicals known as flavonoids, folate and a significant amount of protein.

Fiber is important for a variety of reasons. The USDA recommends 25-30 grams of fiber per day, but most people get only 12 grams per day.

There are two main types of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber controls blood sugar, prevents the absorption of fat from the digestive tract and fuels the gut’s beneficial bacteria to improve immune function. Insoluble fiber helps you feel full longer and allows for the smooth elimination of waste.

It’s easy to get the fiber you need by adding black beans to your diet since a one-half cup of canned black beans contains six grams of fiber.

In addition to fiber, black beans are loaded with the B Vitamin, Folate, associated with the prevention of heart disease, neurology defects in developing babies and some forms of cancers. Black beans also contain seven grams of protein per serving, but it’s important to understand that proteins from plant sources only provide a few of the essential amino acids.

Whether you want to go on vegan, vegetarian or would like to add an occasional meatless meal to your menu, you’ll want to pair beans with a whole grain such as brown rice. This pairing will give you all the proteins you need to stay healthy.

Aside from numerous health benefits, black beans are a source of cultural pride. From Cuba to Brazil, frijoles negros are found on the stovetops and tables of many Latin homes – making it a delicious staple in our diverse Miami community.

Students longing for the taste of home can pop over to Pollo Tropical in the Graham Center for a quick fix. If you’re on a budget and strapped for time, canned black beans are available at any supermarket and can be popped into a dorm room microwave for a fast, hot meal.

For those moments when that sweet tooth just can’t be satisfied, here is a recipe for Black Bean Brownies. They have all the fudgy richness that you expect from a brownie with all the nutrients and health benefits found in black beans. Black beans will keep you performing your best for many years to come.

**How to make Black Bean Brownies:**

1. Open can of beans, emptying the can into a strainer to drain the liquid and rinse them under running water. Place beans in a food processor or blender with sugar, oil, eggs and cocoa powder. Process ingredients until smooth. If you do not have a food processor or blender, you can mash the beans in a bowl with a fork.

2. Mix the flour and the baking powder then stir into bean mixture.

3. To prepare the baking pan spread a teaspoon of oil over the inside of the pan using a paper towel (or use oil spray if preferred). Scrape the brownie batter into the pan and place in an oven preheated to 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 15-20 minutes, or until a toothpick tests clean. If you don’t have access to a conventional oven, you can spoon the batter into several coffee mugs or a large plastic bowl and “bake” in the microwave for 30 seconds (mug) to three minutes (large bowl).

4. Let the brownies cool, refrigerated, for at least two hours before cutting. Cut the brownies as follows: four across, three down for 12 small bars. If microwaving in mugs, there’s no need to wait, dive right in.

*SDA Health is a weekly column written by members of the Student Dietetic Association. The column focuses on healthy eating and living. For more commentary or to suggest a topic, email life@fiusm.com*

**Laura Pariseau**

Continue performing at your best with a rich, fudgy black bean brownie with the nutrients and health benefits found in black beans.
Disney gets real in latest animated feature ‘Zootopia’

The student programming council recently revealed the name of their final artists in a long line-up. The first artist to be revealed was Dapsa Daxa, famous for his fusion of reggae, pop and R&B. This was followed by the revelations of artists consisting of Triumph, Machambo and J-Beatrice, T-Vice and Migos. The last artist, a famous rapper from Miami, has released several successful albums. J Beatrice is an up and coming producer from Northern London. He is mostly known for his collaborations with Ty Dolla $ign’s Tropical Remix Producer Competition.

Migos, a hip-hop trio based out of Atlanta and is famous for singles such as ‘Versace,’ ‘One Time’ and ‘Fight Night‘ to name a few. With such star studded talent, the FIU 2016 BayFest has potential to be just as successful as last year’s events.

Brown said, “There will be local artists from around Miami who will perform as well, followed by a showdown between two of Miami’s biggest acts.”

“I am so excited for the festival. Since it is Saturday, I will spend the whole time on BBC with my friends as we rarely have a chance to go to [BBC],” said Bhumi Patel, a biological science major.

The tickets for the event are available at www.eventbrite.com with prices ranging from about $12-533. Discounts for University students are available.

Motivate yourself to be the change

Monday, March 21

We all have low points in our lives and in those times we discover who we really are. A few years ago I was overweight, not motivated to change and I felt I had suffered from a case of laziness. All it took was one decision to change my life around. The source of all this was my nephew, Adiyat. He motivated me to become a better version of myself in order to be the perfect role model for him. When I realized what a positive impact health and fitness made on my life, I took an oath to change myself and to make an impact on the lives of others.

In order to solve a problem, first you need to identify what the problem is. Once that is done then you can utilize resources to fix the issue. In America people don’t realize being unhealthy and unfit until it is a major problem. According to American Medical Association more than 78.6 million adults are obese. That is one-third of our adult population! Obesity causes several illnesses that include heart disease, strokes and diabetes.

No matter where you dine, the plates are enormous. The soda drinks we get at restaurants and especially at movie theater are giant in size. In the United Kingdom, they are in the process of proposing a law that will ban the selling of sugary drinks more than 16 ounces in size, the smallest size in America. It’s good to watch your calorie count for the day. There are many drinks you will see that contain zero calories and zero sugar.

A healthy homemade smoothie can have 200 to 400 calories with 10 to 20 grams of sugar. Do you really think the zero calorie drink is better than a natural fruit or avoid your diet with nutrition. You can have zero calorie, zero sugar and zero carbohydrates produce all day but probably just consuming chemicals.

For more on this story visit fium.com!
SWIMMING AND DIVING

FIU invited to swimming and diving NCAA zone B diving championships

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While most students were spending spring break poolside for leisure, the swimming and diving team was poolside with one goal in mind: bringing home gold medals.

When senior Rebecca Quesnel joined the Lady Kauffman, two of the most nationally recognized Panthons, continued their recent string of successes at the NCAA Zone B Diving competition held at the Georgia Aquatic Center in Atlanta. Quesnel also placed third with a score of 233.20 in six dives in the Preliminaries/Quarterfinals of the C-USA Women’s 1 Meter Championships. After placing 13th in the Women’s Platform Preliminaries, she earned a spot in the Platform Finals.

She solidified her position in the NCAA Championships after earning fifth place in the finals with a score of 523.50 in five dives. This feat earned her position as the first diver in FIU history to reach the NCAA championships.

Following her dominant performance, Quesnel was named C-USA Diver of the Meet. She entered the NCAA Championship hopeful after setting two personal best times, five C-USA Diver of the Week awards and setting the University’s record score of 299.80 in addition to her aforementioned accomplishments at the C-USA Championships. As for Kauffman, she placed 13th in the Women’s 3 Meter Championship Preliminaries with a score of 234.75 in six dives. She followed this up with 23rd place in the Women’s Platform Preliminaries with a score of 208.05 in five dives, the same competition where Quesnel placed 13th.

She is a legit threat to contend at the NCAA’s next week if she can put all her dives together in one list,” said Horner to FIU Sports.

Going into the NCAA Championships, which took place March 16-19, both Quesnel and Ruelle were eliminated from the competition during preliminaries. Quesnel placed last in both the 1 Meter and 3 Meter Diving competitions, keeping her from moving on to the Finals. At press time, the Platform Diving event hadn’t taken place, but Quesnel is expected to finish last.

Ruelle tied for 41st place in the 50 yard freestyle, the only event the Botswana native was invited to compete in.

Contributing Writer

ALEX TOLEDO

Swimming and diving for leisure, the swimming and diving team was poolside with one goal in mind: bringing home gold medals. While most students were spending spring break poolside for leisure, the swimming and diving team was poolside with one goal in mind: bringing home gold medals. When senior Rebecca Quesnel joined the Lady Kauffman, two of the most nationally recognized Panthons, continued their recent string of successes at the NCAA Zone B Diving competition held at the Georgia Aquatic Center in Atlanta. Quesnel also placed third with a score of 233.20 in six dives in the Preliminaries/Quarterfinals of the C-USA Women’s 1 Meter Championships. After placing 13th in the Women’s Platform Preliminaries, she earned a spot in the Platform Finals. She solidified her position in the NCAA Championships after earning fifth place in the finals with a score of 523.50 in five dives. This feat earned her position as the first diver in FIU history to reach the NCAA championships. Following her dominant performance, Quesnel was named C-USA Diver of the Meet. She entered the NCAA Championship hopeful after setting two personal best times, five C-USA Diver of the Week awards and setting the University’s record score of 299.80 in addition to her aforementioned accomplishments at the C-USA Championships. As for Kauffman, she placed 13th in the Women’s 3 Meter Championship Preliminaries with a score of 234.75 in six dives. She followed this up with 23rd place in the Women’s Platform Preliminaries with a score of 208.05 in five dives, the same competition where Quesnel placed 13th.

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Panthers sweep first Conference USA matchup

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The FIU softball team got back to their winning ways with a three game sweep on the Charlotte 49ers, Saturday, March 12, and Sunday, March 13. This stretch of games came after the Panthers went 1-2 in their mid-week battle at Miami.

FIU picked up a satisfying victory Tuesday, March 8, against East Carolina. The following day, the Panthers found themselves facing the nationally ranked Notre Dame Fighting Irish.

The Fighting Irish came into Felsberg Field for a double header against the Panthers. In the first game of the weekend, FIU picked up a satisfying victory allowing 11 hits and six runs in a complete game. In the second game of the weekend, a 2-1 nail biter. She only allowed four hits and had six strikeouts in the contest. Jackie Schof led the Panther batting going 2-4 with an RBI.

The bright note for the Panthers came after the Panthers went 1-2 in their mid-week battles.

FIU would end up with a fair overall record, however, the rest of the rotation struggled. Abby Summers took the loss, while her and Hunter Schaarf combined to award the opposition 15 runs in their combined four innings pitched.

Jenkins pitched yet another complete game, picking up her third win of the season (3-4) in a 2-1 nail biter. She also set a new career high seven strikeouts, while allowing just two runs in the game. The Panthers used a pair of homeruns to end the game with the run-rule in the fifth inning.

G-MADNESS is a weekly college basketball column on the NCAA basketball tournament.

It’s March ladies and gentlemen and the basketball madness has officially begun. With the conference tournaments just wrapping up this past weekend, there’s already been a surplus of drama, with impossible shots, buzzer beaters and even game winners.

University of Connecticut

Going into the American Athletic Conference Tournament, the Huskies were actually on the outside looking in at the field of 68. A matchup versus Cincinnati gave University of Connecticut the opportunity to make a statement and they sure did.

Down three in the third overtime of the game, Julian Adams hoisted a shot from almost full court to tie the game. The momentum carried the Huskies through the fourth overtime and to eventually win the AAC tournament, earning an automatic bid into the NCAA tournament.

With head coach Kevin Ollie, a compliment of scoring guards, and a 7-foot rim protector, expect them to be a tough out in this tournament.

University of Kentucky

As always, coach John Calipari has a team with an abundance of talent and size that looks like it’s capable of making a deep run.

Led by sophomore point guard Tyler Ulis, this team has the ability to go as far as the Final Four. The Wildcats have a rotation of four big men that all move well on both the offensive and defensive end, which proved to be useful just last weekend winning the Southeastern Conference tournament.

But the most intriguing prospect is Shooting Guard Jamal Murray. This athletic Canadian Freshman can absolutely fill it up on the offensive end of the floor. Expect them to cause some trouble in the NCAAs.

University of Virginia

Although they may not be the most entertaining team to watch as they rank as the slowest team in the division one college basketball, they are among the most efficient teams both offensive and defensively. Coach Tony Bennett has a full complement of seniors led by Malcolm Brogdon who will not produce any lottery picks in the NBA, but certainly understand the game at the highest level and play the game the right way sharing the basketball.

I watched them play live versus University of Miami in a game they about a month ago, but I was thoroughly impressed. They are a battle tested team with leadership all over the place, so I don’t expect them to go quietly into the night.

University of Miami

The hometown Hurricanes have had an outstanding year with their veteran transfers combined with underclassman talent. Although we finished second in the league and third in the conference journey, Head Coach Jim Larranaga seems to always prepare well for a deep tournament run.

This Miami team has a lot more talent than the George Mason team that Larranaga took to the Final Four 10 years ago. The Canes have played a difficult non conference schedule and have wins over teams in conference teams such as Duke, University of Virginia, Notre Dame, University of Pittsburgh and Syracuse who are all in this tournament.

G-Madness is a weekly college basketball column on the NCAA basketball tournament. For commentary and suggestions email Garret Epperson at sports@fiusm.com.

Ballin’: 2016 NCAA March Madness predictions
Wellness and Recreation Center offers trips with Adventure Recreations Program

There is no doubt that students are proud of calling themselves FIU Panthers with the amount of achievements FIU has under its name. Being one of the 10 largest public universities in Florida, ranking 17th among the top universities in the country by Washington Monthly and being the operators of The Aquarius Reef Base, the only underwater ocean laboratory in the world, are just a few of these accolades.

The fact that our university is located in one of the busiest cities in the country means that even though school is back in session you can still have some serious R&R. We have an almost 24/7 “Sun ‘n’ Fun” climate, a luxury that students who attend other universities might not have.

Now that the warm rays are returning, FIU is taking advantage of Miami’s natural attractions and offering its students a chance to get out, get active and have fun under the sun through its Adventure Recreation Trips Program.

According to FIU’s Student Affairs website, the Adventure Recreation Trips program is “designed to get you and maybe even friends, outdoors to experience recreation opportunities available in parts of Florida and the Southeastern U.S.”

The program is open to FIU students, Wellness & Recreation Center members and non-FIU affiliated non-WRC members. WRC has coordinated a variety of different trips for the spring semester.

If you weren’t able to attend the University’s annual February Ski and Snowboarding trip to Gatlinburg, Tennessee you still have an opportunity to attend its next two trips. Saturday, March 26, WRC will be taking students on a full day excursion to snorkel off the coast of Key Largo for just $35. This trip will give students a chance to see one of the most endangered and important ecosystems in the world: the coral reefs.

Transportation will be included in the registration price and if you would like to bring someone who isn’t an FIU student with you, they can attend for $40. Interested participants can register at the WRC Membership Desk and cash, credit card and the FIU One Card will be accepted as payment.

Registration will be open until Wednesday, March 23 but space is limited as a maximum of only 20 participants will be able to attend the trip. If snorkeling under the sea with Ariel and her friends isn’t your cup of tea, the program is also sponsoring a bike trip to Shark Valley, located in Everglades National Park.

The trip to Shark Valley is scheduled for Saturday, April 16 and registration will be open until Wednesday, April 13. Tickets and transportation will be included for the price of $35 for FIU students and $40 for non-FIU students. This is a great chance for students who have never visited the Everglades to get up close and personal with this diverse fauna and flora ecosystem especially since Shark Valley is considered to be in the heart of the “True Everglades” as labeled by the National Park Service website.

While these are local trips, they’re still a fun and unique activity to participate in, even for Panthers who have lived in Miami all their lives.

These trips not only give you a chance to explore two of the most endangered and important ecosystems in the world but it’s a different way to be active.

So, start working on your summer tan and gain an extra little something to post on Instagram. Show your followers why attending FIU and living in Miami is one of the best decisions you’ve made yet, with the caption #WishYouWereHere.

Michelle Marchante is the Assistant Opinion Director for FIU Student Media. Her column, M Talk, focuses on new and innovative events and ideas. For suggestions or comments, please email Michelle at michelle.marchante@fiusm.com.