Stonewall proposes neutral restrooms

STEVEN SPALDILL Asst. News Director steven.Spaldill@fiusm.com

The Stonewall Pride Alliance is looking into establishing additional gender neutral restrooms on Modesto Maidique Campus that would also be cost-effective. The group has met with John Capote, president of the student affairs. The e-mail also mentions that the proposal has been accepted and is being pushed forward. Capote wrote that they have contacted Ken Jessel, vice president of financial affairs, and is currently waiting on their response.

Gender neutral restrooms at FIU are being proposed as single-service spaces by the organization. The concept would be to allow students to have privacy in a comfortable setting that would allow them to have the ability to lock the door behind them. They are also proposing to change those existing bathrooms that read “family restrooms” to “restrooms” in order to include transgender and gender nonconforming people.

“What we encountered was an issue with the signs that appeared on family restrooms,” said Capote. “When the bathroom in GC had opened it had a ‘Family Restroom’ sign on the front, which was eventually changed to read simply ‘Restroom’ because the original signage excluded the importance that this space could serve to transgender students.”

The proposal entails 26 new single-service restrooms that would also include those already existing family style restrooms that would be renamed. The organization hopes that the initiative will be considered for MMC.

“One population that we have identified as especially vulnerable has been transgender students. These are students that, in one way or another, feel that their gender identity does not match with the gender they were assigned at birth,” wrote Capote. “Because of this, many transgender people experience anxiety around visiting public restrooms.”

The organization, with the help of additional volunteers, have sought out new spaces on MMC that would be suitable for single-service restrooms. It would also possibly be considered on a resource list for transgender students. According to the organization, this would help students identify where they could use the restroom, and be certain of their safety.

“Because of the numerous ways that gender expression manifests for the transgender students,”

SEE LGBTQIA, PAGE 2

Supreme Court immigration arguments, voices for families

JACOB BELL McClatchy Washington Bureau TNS Staff

As the Supreme Court on Monday weighed the legality of two executive orders on immigration, Sayra Hernandez, a 16-year-old from Mexico, stood outside the courthouse with her sister and mother. The family has a deportation date scheduled for April 29.

“For me and my family, it means a lot,” Hernandez, who lives in Ann Arbor, Mich., said of the court’s ability to uphold or tear down Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, or DAPA. DAPA provides three-year work permits and safety from deportation to the parents of children who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, program applies to children brought to the U.S. illegally and is not affected by this case except for the administration’s proposal to extend the work permit for so-called Dreamers to three years from two.

Those Obama administration executive orders have been on ice for more than a year due to legal troubles, as Texas and 25 other states filed lawsuits against them.

For the hundreds of activists and protesters who joined Hernandez and her family Monday outside the courthouse — the majority of whom were against the Texas lawsuit — the oral arguments of Texas v. U.S. served as an opportunity to have their voices heard. “Si, se puede,” which translates roughly to “Yes, we can,” was a consistent chant heard throughout the crowds.

“I’m here because I don’t want to be scared anymore that when I go home my mom isn’t going to be there,” said Kerry Gutierrez, a 17-year-old from Boulder, Colo., whose mother is in the U.S. illegally. “I don’t want to be the head of household. I’m too young for that.”

“I know what it’s like to live in fear of being deported, of being separated from my family,” said Julissa Arce, who came to the United States illegally when she was 11. Now Arce, a former protege at Goldman Sachs, sits on the board of the National Immigration Law Center, an organization that provides legal aid to low-income immigrants.

“At the end of the day my story is one about perseverance and determination, and that is the American story, and that is what we want for the millions of people affected by this issue,” Arce added.

SEE DAPA, PAGE 2

Congress hears more views on iPhone encryption

MICHAEL DOYLE McClatchy Washington Bureau TNS Staff

“W e feel strongly that Americans will be better off if we can offer the very best protections for their digital lives,” Bruce Sewell, Apple’s senior vice president and general counsel, told a three-hour hearing Tuesday of the Oversight and Investigations panel of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. “The best way we... know how to protect your information is through the use of strong encryption.”

Sewell noted as an example, in response to questions and allegations, that the company had refused a Chinese government request that it turn over source code for the Apple operating system.

Congressional intervention in Apple’s case could be one of the many ways the court case against it could become another clickable situation, with Congress hearing more views on the iPhone encryption debate.

SEE IPHONE, PAGE 2
NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Congressman calls for cell phone hacking investigation after ‘60 Minutes’ segment

U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu (D-California) is asking for a congressional investigation after an episode of “60 Minutes” in which his phone was hacked to show how easy it is. In a segment that aired Sunday night, “60 Minutes” purchased an iPhone in New York and sent it to Lieu in California. Lieu, who has a computer science degree from Stanford, agreed to use the phone as his personal device for a week. “60 Minutes” then gave the phone number to a German company that looks for security flaws in technology, and two German hackers were able to easily listen to Lieu’s phone calls. Lieu said that when he showed up to tape the segment in Washington, the hackers had told producers which hotel he’d stayed at the night before. “It was really creepy that they knew where I was even though the GPS was turned off,” he said by phone Monday.

Judge rules against China’s first same-sex marriage case

A judge in central China ruled against a gay couple in China’s first-ever same-sex marriage case Wednesday, effectively hobbling the country’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activism. The plaintiff, Sun Wenlin, a 27-year-old Hunan native, sued a civil affairs bureau in Changsha, the capital of central China’s Hunan province, for refusing to help him marry his 37-year-old boyfriend, Hu Mingliang, last June. The Changsha Furong District People’s Court agreed to hear the case earlier this year, sparking a flurry of sympathetic coverage in China’s staid state-run media and galvanizing the country’s nascent gay rights movement. “If we win the case, it would be an unprecedented achievement for China’s LGBT community,” Sun said in a phone interview before the hearing.

Austin Tice supporters to Obama: Don’t leave missing journalist behind

With an urgent drive by President Barack Obama’s dwindling number of days left in office, supporters of the missing U.S. journalist Austin Tice gathered Monday outside the White House calling for the administration to make his release a priority before the president’s term expires. Tice, now 34, a U.S. Marine-turned-journalist who reported for outlets including McClatchy and The Washington Post, vanished in Syria in August 2012. Apart from a video clip showing him in the custody of unknown gunmen shortly after his disappearance, there’s been no confirmation sighting of Tice since. With his whereabouts still a mystery, Tice joins hundreds of Syrians who have simply disappeared in the midst of the country’s bloody, 5-year-old civil war.

Supreme court interprets two executive orders

For others, however, the authorization of DAPA and the DACA extensions would set a dangerous precedent for the powers of the commander in chief.

“At its core, it’s not about whether you are anti- or pro-immigration, it’s about whether the Supreme Court will allow the executive branch to skirt the rule of law,” U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho, R- Fla., said in a statement after the argument.

Congress discusses encryption on cell phones

Subcommittee discussion to be held in DC on July 13, where it is expected that Jennifer Granick, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, will testify. The hearing will discuss the impact of the move to encrypt cell phones and how it may affect law enforcement.

LGBTQQA, PAGE 1

population, they could very easily encounter harassment or even violence if they use a public restroom that other people feel they should not be in. In one accommodation, however, that eases this struggle is gender neutral restrooms,” says Capote.

“Is this what we would like to see on the rest of the bathrooms which have been catalogued by our members,” says Capote. “To restore what is included in the file, currently there are in ‘Family Restrooms’ located in SIBA, PG 5, PG 6, and VHL.”

“Our first request is that these signs be changed in its entirety. In my opinion, it is made clear that these spaces are available to all those who find themselves in need of using these places,” says Capote.

Capote believes that by making these minor changes to the signs outside of restrooms could help make a difference for many groups of students at FIU.

“These spaces are important resources for many people, including those with children, disabled peoples, and of course the students that I have known, discussing which experience gender amity,” says Capote.

The Stonewall Pride Alliance has also discovered restrooms that appear in what they call “gendered pairs.” Capote said to student media that “Gendered pair restrooms are sets of two single service restrooms which have one sign for men and the other has a sign for women.”

“At first glance this might not seem like too much of an issue, but we found a clear example of the methodology of this practice with the restrooms we found in AHCIS,” says Capote. “AHCIS contains two gender neutral bathrooms on the fifth floor by the conference room. However, because of similar floorplans on the fourth and third floors, there are four more single service restrooms which leads to a total of six for the building.”

“However, these four other restrooms have gendered signage, with two being designated for women and two being designated for men. Considering that all these restrooms are identical, in the event that the time is a time, it is unnecessary to gender these spaces,” says Capote. “It is also a bit confusing since completely identical restrooms have different signage, which seems to be decided upon arbitrarily.”

Capote said, “There is nothing about the ‘Family Restrooms’ that is different from the single service gendered restroom, and both of these are also identical to the gender neutral restrooms. We believe that changing all these inconsistent signs, actually in buildings on campus, to simply ‘Restroom’ is the best and most inclusive way to solve this issue.”

The organization is currently waiting for a response from Jessica to see whether or not the proposal will be accepted.
OPINION

APPROPRIATE APPROPRIATION

‘Cultural appropriation is not inherently negative’

The number zero, for example, from what is now Iraq or the U.S. governmental structure that nearly mirrors British parliament with its roots in Roman influence. Every cultural staple can be traced back centuries, thus finding its place in areas around the world.

Please, take the Christmas-like picture of my family’s Kerr tartan and cover your pillows in it. Drink black tea with Eccles cakes at three in the afternoon, like my mother prepared. Tell the stories my ancestors told. I would be ecstatic to know you were as in love with my culture as I am with yours.

On the point of progress, made by the contributor to Urban Dictionary, we would be nowhere today without the concept of zero, and we certainly wouldn’t be colonising Mars; we would have never figured out the math to fly beyond the atmosphere.

Take China. When Marco Polo travelled to the Orient, he ate noodles and loved them so much that he brought them back to Italy, where they evolved into what “pasta” might immediately bring to mind today - tortellini, fettuccini, rotini, spaghettii and the list goes on.

The Chinese invented fireworks in the second century and Americans culturally appropriated the Chinese and I would be surprised to learn that you have participated in none of the above. That’s okay, because noodles, fireworks and tea have made the world a happier place. We should celebrate their conceptions together.

If you’re Jewish, wearing the new tartan made especially for the Jewish people, you’re appropriating my Scottish heritage.

If you’re Hispanic telling your children fairy tales like Cinderella, you’re appropriating my German roots.

If you’re African with a fancy for meat pies, you’re appropriating my English upbringing - and that’s fabulous.

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Honors professor earns national recognition after 10 years of service

John Bailly, Honors College professor and founder of Aesthetics & Values, recently celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the interdisciplinary curatorial program that has earned national recognition.

An artist in his own right, Bailly wanted to engage the profound nature of art as it related the society by getting students involved.

“There were all kinds of exercises that would have students draw or make art, but I thought that although that has value it was also limited... my idea was to get students involved in the contemporary art world,” said Bailly to Student Media.

A program that is solely about merging academia and the world of contemporary art, A&V has allowed students from a range of disciplines to become curators as part of a year-long course that culminates in a showcase of artists.

Bailly hopes the contemporary art that the students have come to know throughout their year-long project impacts them in ways that will last well past the last day of class.

“I do have students who have changed their majors and go into the arts, and that’s really satisfying but for me the most satisfying is a students who took the class eight or five years ago, tags me in a social media post and says, “hey I saw this show and I thought of our class and thought of you and want you to see it,” Bailly said.

When art still has a central role in the life of his students and is compelling in them and ignites something within the students is most rewarding for Bailly.

Though there have been other venues and mediums that have challenged the values of society, art has presented an easy way to absorb new aesthetics to challenge traditional values. Within the class, Bailly uses personal identity to challenge traditional values.

“I’m interested in trying to create art that reflects these different influences coming together to make things that at first don’t seem like they belong together but they somehow do,” said Bailly.

The setup of the A&V exhibition is all up to the students. The students get a list of names of artists generated by the Frost Art Museum. From that list they have to choose an artist to contact and get them to sign a contract to agree to be in the exhibition at the Frost Art Museum and then the students plan the layout of the exhibition.

“It’s just [students] screaming and changing their minds and advocating for their artist and it is chaos and it works, it comes together,” Bailly said.

The first A&V took place in the Green Library in 2006. The show went from being a small student project into a big enough show that it became a museum exhibition.

“The class ate pizza at the first opening,” Bailly said.

In its 10th year A&V will feature nine artists based locally in Miami: Randy Burman, Weston Charles, Clifton Childree, Brookhart Jonquil, Barron Sherer, Magnus Sodamin, Alex Trimino, Michael Vasquez, and Agustina Woodgate.

Through the years, A&V has cultivated relationships with art institutions throughout Miami and the class has been invited to read poems at the O Miami Poetry Festival as well as going to other venues such as the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens and Deering Estate.

From pizza to a full buffet of hors d’oeuvres and Bacardi drinks, A&V has grown into a swanky party and ambitious art exhibition. Make sure to visit the A&V exhibition this month before the final day, May 1.
‘Love Streams’ makes Tim Hecker go inspirational

On album opener “Obsidian Stack,” the choir voices become harsh and unyielding. On “Castrati,” the sound of the choir is of great beauty and softness, combined with the sound of the choir makes for one of his most powerful songs.

“Hecker’s "Love Streams" speaks on scary choice for a song name if you link the instrument usage to LiveLeak. It almost sounds like the anxiety and the things that came before Halloween as opposed to slasher flick. “Love Streams” also shows Hecker’s prowess at making beautiful, enveloping compositions “Up Red Bull Creek” is such a track, and it would fit well within an orchestra setting.

On “Violet Monumental I,” the singing of simple questions against the ear. On “II,” the constant looping of piano is spooky and playful. The endless looping of high notes, isolated among each other is hypnotic and sealed, but as instruments of their own.

The sound of the choir is of great importance to this album, especially when Hecker plays off the singing as not something to be drowned off and sealed, but as instruments of their own.

Accessibility isn’t the word to describe this - it is a new direction for someone whose past work, particularly “Virgins,” is so rooted in something rough. It’s beautiful and softens the load of the album, a sensitive track really. The sound of the choir is of great importance to this album, especially when Hecker plays off the singing as not something to be drowned off and sealed, but as instruments of their own.

The endless looping of high notes, isolated among each other is hypnotic and enlightening. On “Contrari Stack,” the choir voices become harsh and unyielding. On “Castrati,” the sound of the choir is of great beauty and softness, combined with the sound of the choir makes for one of his most powerful songs.

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FIU's softball team was on the brink of being swept for the third time in their last four series, but Stephanie Texeira and A.J. Belans had other plans. Texeira and Belans avoided being swept by University of Alabama at Birmingham Sunday, April 17, as they both provided home runs for the Panthers in the 11-3 win.

The duo has now hit home runs in the same game four times this season.

It wasn't all happy tales for the Panthers over the weekend, as they got off to a rough start in the first two games.

The series started Saturday, April 16 with a double header. The first game of the night went down to the wire, but it was UAB who came out on top in extra innings. It was a defensive battle up until the fifth inning, when FIU was the first team to be up on the scoreboard. Dani Mowry hit a rocket to right field, good enough for a single, but also bringing in Ashley Leon.

The Panthers took the lead, but UAB tied it up at 1-1 in the sixth. The Blazers hit a walk off home run in the bottom of the eighth inning to end the first game 3-1. Abby Summers took the loss dropping to 8-7 in the season after the game.

The Panthers got off to a hot start in the second game as Texeira hit a homerun in the first inning, but five earned runs for the Blazers in the bottom of the first put them in a 5-1 hole and it wouldn’t get better for FIU after that.

Corrine Jenkins was scratched from the game after two innings, and Rachel Dwyer was able to tame the Blazers for a while. Dwyer allowed just two hits in 2.2 innings, but the game came to an end in the fifth inning by the run rule, with UAB coming out on top 9-1.

Jenkins dropped to 5-8 on the year and went 10-4 in dual matches.

The series came to a close on Sunday, and FIU woke up at the right time. The Panthers managed to get 14 hits in an 11-3 win on the road.

Belans was able to knock her eighth homerun of the season, and Texeira hit her team-leading 12th homerun of the season, which is also her career high for most homeruns in a season. Texeira keeps climbing the FIU record books. She has 31 homeruns in her collegiate career, currently the second most in FIU history. She is also currently fifth for most homeruns in a season, and second for most RBI’s in FIU history with 131.

The Panthers are now 23-23 overall for the season and 8-10 in C-USA. The Panthers have a small break from conference play, now traveling to play Florida Gulf Coast University on April 23-24. Their next C-USA game will be Saturday, April 30, against Marshall University, who is currently last on the East division of the C-USA standings.

With six games left against conference opponents, the Panthers have no room for error left if they want to make the post-season tournament.

The No. 43-ranked FIU women’s tennis team put up historic numbers and broke school records on the way to the team’s best season in recent history.

The Panthers’ 15-2 record is the best since 2009, when the team finished with a 20-9 overall record.

The team’s .882 winning percentage is the second-best in school history, only trailing the 2000-2001 team’s .885 winning season.

During the season, the women also broke the school record with a 10-game winning streak.

The historic streak began after a 7-0 win over Stenson University February 6, and was snapped when the team fell to then-No. 48 Columbia on March 15.

The Panthers were undefeated this season when the team clinched the doubles point.

In comparison, the team’s only losses of the season came when they lost the initial point. The team’s record when they lose the doubles point was 3-2.

Senior Kaylin Brozovich and Orlando put up respectable numbers in their final season at FIU. Despite dropping from the number three to the number four starter, Orlando posted a 20-9 overall record with 12 of her wins coming in dual matches.

Brozovich finished with a respectable 14-11 overall record and had nine wins in dual matches.

Sophomore Nerma Calik led the team with 26 singles wins on the season. The sophomore was 12-1 as the team’s number five starter and was 14-2 overall in dual matches.

The Panthers will enter the Conference USA Women’s Tennis Championships as the No. 1 seed.

Last year, the team entered the C-USA tournament as the No. 5 seed and advanced to the semifinals before losing to No. 1 seeded Rice, 4-1.

FIU will play Friday, April 22, against the winner of the No. 8 Middle Tennessee State University and the No. 9 Western Kentucky University match. First serve from Murfreesboro, Tennessee is set for 11 a.m.  

REYNALDO LLERENA  
Staff Writer  
reynaldo.llerena@fiusm.com

Senior, Kaylin Brozovich played a huge role for the tennis team as she provided consistency and leadership to a young squad as they had one of their best seasons in recent years.

The team’s number one starter, put up standout numbers in her first season at FIU. She won 25 singles matches on the year and went 10-4 in dual matches this season.

Junior Nina Nagode had an equally successful season as the team’s number starter.

The Slovenian posted an 11-3 record in dual matches and had 21 wins on the season. Nagode and Veksler posted a 9-3 doubles record in dual matches, the second-best on the team.

Redshirt freshman Andrea Lazar played a breakout season. The Spaniard went undefeated during the regular season, posting a 15-0 record in dual matches. Lazar’s performance saw her rise from the number five starter to the number three starter on the team.

Lazar paired up with senior Carlotta Orlando in dual matches to post the best doubles record on the team. The duo went 12-3 during the season.

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The historic streak began after a 7-0 win over Stenson University February 6, and was snapped when the team fell to then-No. 48 Columbia on March 15.

The Panthers were undefeated this season when the team clinched the doubles point.

In comparison, the team’s only losses of the season came when they lost the initial point. The team’s record when they lose the doubles point was 3-2.

Freshman Maryna Veksler, the
Panthers finish in top three in California road trip

FL Lose might be a better name

The track and field team traveled to Norwalk, California, last weekend to compete in three different meets. The Panthers took part in the Mt. SAC Relays, the Cal State LA Twilight Open in Los Angeles and the Beach Invitational in Long Beach. During their trip, the Panthers finished in the top three while recording two school records.

One of the school records came when Alton Myrtil claimed second place in the 100-meter dash at the Cal State LA Twilight. Myrtil recorded a personal record during the 200-meter dash with a time of 22.15 seconds, ranking him first in the 200-meter dash. Following him was Eric Knott with a time of 10.75 seconds. Sophomore Todd Jackson finished in first place with a time of 10.33 seconds. With that time, it ranked him No. 20 in the country.

Freshman Clarissa Cutliff tied school record in high jump with the result of 1.80 meters during the Mt. SAC Relays. With that score, it ranks the Orlando native No. 11 in the country in high jumps.

With the performance from both Panther teams, the men and women made their marks during the three meets.

The team overall finished first place with the women finished first in the Cal State LA Twilight Invitational. Starting on the men’s side, Sophomore Myrtil claimed second place in the 100-meter dash at the Cal State LA Twilight with a time of 10.75 seconds. Sophomore Todd Jackson finished in second place in the 200-meter dash with a time of 49.70 seconds. The Riverside Florida native placed second in the 400-meter dash with a time of 49.70 seconds. During the Beach Invitational, Jackson recorded a personal record in the 400-meter dash with a time of 48.86 seconds. During the Cal State LA Twilight Invitational, the Panthers finished in first place with the result of 24.36 seconds in the 200-meter dash during the Cal State LA Twilight Invitational.

In the 100-meter hurdles, senior Jaylaana Slaughter finished in first place in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 14.14 seconds. Lexiex Shields came in first place with the time of 14.45 seconds. During the Beach Invitational, Shields set a personal record in the 400-meter hurdles with the result of 1:44.84 seconds.

The loss might be a better name

This team is 17-21 this year and is more than halfway through the 2016 season, and they have flat out disappointed. This team, from the middle of your batting order, from unimaginable deficits.

Players returning for the 2015 season even said last week they were better at the plate than last season’s, which many would have considered a step backwards. They added a run of productive outs, and several new faces, but none of it seemed like it mattered to the boys of spring from Sweetwater.

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The Panthers just as poorly, if not worse, in the C-USA tournament last week, when they caught fire and went on to take home the Conference Championship. That’s all good, but as reigning champions of the conference, this is not how they should be playing.

Coming into this season, expectations were definitely high, and several new faces, but none of it seemed like it mattered to the boys of spring from Sweetwater.

The Panthers just as poorly, if not worse, in the C-USA tournament last week, when they caught fire and went on to take home the Conference Championship. That’s all good, but as reigning champions of the conference, this is not how they should be playing.

The ace is the pitcher a team leans on to lead it to good times. But, maybe, more importantly, to put a stop to the bad.

The Miami Marlins were in need of a starter after starting 0-5 at Marlins Park and with the first-place Nationals arriving Monday for a four-game series.

No one better to turn to than Jose Fernandez, who has virtually owned the place. It took some early run support and late relief help for Fernandez to record the Marlins’ first win of the season by starting a pitcher in a 6-1 decision against the Nationals.

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The Marlins gave Fernandez a lead to protect with three runs in the first. Dee Gordon followed the leadoff hitter’s playback, reaching third on a single and then scoring on Martin Prado’s sacrifice fly.

The Statscast) into the shrubbery lined a 110-mph screamer (per Statcast) into the shrubbery lined a 110-mph screamer (per Statcast) into the shrubbery lined a 110-mph screamer (per Statcast) into the shrubbery lined a 110-mph screamer. Fernandez followed with a sacrifice fly. In the bottom of the inning, Stanton teed off on a towering drive to right that sent Michael Taylor home with a sacrifice fly.

With things set up this way, his top three starters have combined for an 8-9 record, hardly something to brag about. It doesn’t look like Thomas is going to change his philosophy anytime soon, but that might be what he needs to do if he wants to see his team’s luck change for the better.

Whether he does, or doesn’t, FIU has, in the eyes of a few, their most important series coming up this weekend when the Florida Atlantic University Owls come to town.

In the Panther’s bullpen awaits transfer Cain Spangler, who came to FIU from FAU this offseason. It’ll be interesting to see if he’ll see his first action of the season against his former team, but if the rest of this season has been any indication, we won’t see it.

If the Panthers can somehow sweep the Owls, who currently sit at third place in the C-USA standings, with an 11-4 record against the rest of the conference, it could be just the jolt this team needs. It’s obvious that the Panthers have overachieved, and even win most of these last 18 games left in the season, 16 of which are against C-USA opponents. The first game, and first opportunity to pick up some momentum before the conference tournament is Friday, May 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Louis’ Hacks is a biweekly column covering FIU baseball. For suggestions and comments, contact Louis at louis.agudelo@fisum.com.
BBC’s lack of non-binary bathrooms ‘transphobic’

BBC is centuries old, figuratively speaking. It’s no wonder, then, that gender neutral bathrooms have yet to come to the campus.

Students who do not define themselves using genders or those who do not identify as the gender they were assigned at birth are essentially told that they don’t exist at BBC. Gender neutral bathrooms are available at MMC, in either the form of family restrooms or restrooms that are simply unlabeled. The transition to this system was not one that took extreme amount of effort. In fact, all it took for some of the locations was a small signage change.

Why, then, has BBC neglected to designate a gender neutral safe space for students? It cannot be for lack of need -- I find it hard to believe that the University isn’t aware that the campus has no students who would benefit from the space.

The answer, it seems, is simple: BBC isn’t being pressured to add gender neutral restrooms, and therefore they have not began allocating these gender neutral spaces.

It’s ridiculous that administration would need a rallying cry to provide gender neutral bathrooms, rather than being understanding of the need and proactive. It’s almost as if they’re saying “we don’t care about the issues that face students unless we are pressured to do so.”

FIU prides itself on being an all-inclusive, safe and diverse campus. If the University is so proud of its diversity, then why doesn’t the school show unwavering support for its students who are trans or non-binary?

A common argument against gender neutral bathrooms is that these bathrooms would make it easier for women and children to be sexually assaulted by men who “claim” to be trans in order to access their victims. However, this argument is problematic and deeply rooted in transphobia.

First, women have been sexually assaulted in public, in their own homes and of course in public bathrooms by men who were perfectly comfortable doing so without pretending to be trans.

Second, there are no recorded statistics of a trans person sexually assaulting someone in a public bathroom. However, according to The Advocate, about 70 percent of trans people experience being assaulted while using a public restroom.

Finally, trans people are not confused nor are they pretending to be something they are not. The idea that they are pretending to be the opposite gender in order to harm someone, perpetuates the stereotype that they are “deceivers” trying to scam cisgender people. Trans people aren’t out in the world to deceive anyone - they’re out here trying to live their lives.

At FIU, they are here for an education and equal opportunity to pursue their careers.

Gender identity is complex and we may not always understand it. However, the University community must understand that a person’s identity is not meant for us to understand, it is meant for us to respect. We respect these identities by creating facilities that are inclusive and safe for all members of the community.

Being Worlds Ahead means more than actively seeking international students, more than seeking international research opportunities. It means understanding the changing world, and how students view their place in it. It means changing to reflect the world and being proactive.

It’s disheartening to know that the University isn’t proactive in protecting their students, and ensuring spaces free of fear of oppression. BBC should take notice of the way the world, and designate gender neutral bathrooms for its students.