Turning Point USA’s job is to change the extremely liberal narrative present in high schools and college campuses and their mission continues at FIU, according to Driena Sixto, FIU alumna and Miami Field director for the organization.

“Usually, students only get one side, one perspective, that’s why we have seen an increase in the romanticizing of fascism, socialism and communism,” she said. “Whereas there’s very little faculty members, teachers or administrators promoting capitalism, free markets, individual liberties, individual rights and freedoms instead of a collective.”

The non-profit organization, with a presence in over 1,000 college campuses and high schools nationwide, is known for its controversial right-wing ideals including a professor watch list that warns students of professors who have left-leaning ideologies. The website has been accused of inciting fear and promoting censorship but Sixto disagrees.

“The Professor Watchlist is not a tool to censor anyone, you do not get yourself on the Professor Watchlist for having a leftist ideology,” she said. “If that were the case more than 80 percent of all higher-learning faculty and staff would be there. You get yourself on the list by being an abusive, unprofessional or simply unhinged professor who is guilty of censorship or discriminating against others.”

The website contains a collection of previously published news stories and accepts tips for new content, but says that they only publish the profiles for incidents that have been reported by a credible news outlet. Sixto, who graduated from the University last summer, was responsible for recruiting members while she was a student, and has continued her work for the FIU chapter.

“Sometimes I go up to a table [on campus] to get them to sign up and find out they’re already members and they flash me their pins,” Sixto said. “We are changing the culture on campus. It was great to see what it has blossomed into, and the enthusiasm that you see from so many diverse members.”

The FIU chapter boasts about 2,000 members and is the largest club on campus, according to Sixto. Club President Anaise Hernandez, a junior studying international relations, liked the idea of bringing a more conservative, libertarian voice to campus and invites students who don’t agree with the organization’s views to sign up and see their side.

“I get them another perspective to either question what they believe or to affirm their beliefs,” Hernandez said. “You don’t keep yourself in your own echo chamber where you’re hearing the same thing over and over again.”

Krisha McKay, a senior political science major who says he has vastly different views than the organization, regularly attends their events because he likes to “get an idea of how the opposition thinks.”

He says while they do raise some good points, such as taxes getting too high he disagrees with their views on government involvement. McKay believes that more federal mandated business regulations would help the lower and middle working classes.

As for the way the club handles debate, McKay also adds they can be condescending but likes “how they are getting our generation involved in the political process.” The organization has hosted a few events on campus in the spring semester. In February, the club held a debate watch party on campus to broadcast the healthcare debate between senators Bernie Sanders and Ted Cruz, which had a pretty big turnout, according to the club president.

On March 6, they held a movie night and showed “Atlas Shrugged,” based on the Ayn Rand novel of the same name.

Future events planned for the organization include “2A Event” with the Law Cabinet Republicans to promote their ideals on Second Amendment rights. They also hope to collaborate with Pink Pistols, an LGBTQ group who teaches people about gun safety and how to properly handle firearms but the date has not yet been set.

The club doesn’t hold weekly meetings however, interested students can sign up for their newsletter or contact them through their facebook page at FIU Turning Point USA.

Award ceremony serves as capstone to reading series

The Lawrence Sanders Award was created to show where a life of literature can lead and this year, it will honor Pulitzer prize-winning author Jane Smiley.

“It’s the best way, as a Creative Writing Program, of making what we do in our classrooms more visible … So much of what you do [as a writer] happens alone,” said Julie Wade, assistant professor at the program. “You’re writing by yourself and then you come to classes, workshop, talk about other writers’ work and use other writers’ work as models to emulate, but even that happens in this cordoned off space that everyone outside of the class doesn’t see.”

The award, which Wade says is the only one of its kind, honors writers of fiction who have achieved market success in both commercial markets and literary contexts. This year, the program honors award-winning author Jane Smiley, who will participate in a book reading and a Q&A session with Les Standiford, the director of the program, on Thursday, March 30.

“Jane Smiley is someone who has been on our watchlist of writers for a while and we approached her ... and she was very gracious and receptive,” said Wade. “She’s one of our people who we’ve wanted to honor for a while and this is the year that it works.”

Part of the process in planning the event is finding someone who meets the criteria — which includes the writing genre and date of the event — and is willing to accept the award “within the limits of what the award can pay,” Wade says. She adds that the program also encourages and requires students to work in multiple genres while getting their MSA so it’s important to find writers who exemplify this.

“She [Smiley] has a brilliant academic satirical called ‘Moo’ and she has a young adult series,” said Wade. “She not only meets all of the criteria and graciously accepted the award, but on top of that, she’s someone who represents more than one genre too.”

Wade recalls only reading books from authors who were deceased in high school and says it’s exciting to highlight current writers who are able to connect with students by coming to universities and answering questions about their work.

“It makes the whole thing seem so much more real, not something that’s happening

"You do not get yourself on the Professor Watchlist for having a leftist ideology. If that were the case, more than 80 percent of all higher-learning faculty and staff would be there. You get yourself on the list by being an abusive, unprofessional or simply unhinged professor who is guilty of censorship or discriminating against others.

Driena Sixto Miami Field Director
Turning Point USA, FIU Chapter

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"It gives them another perspective to either question what they believe or to affirm their beliefs," Hernandez said. "You don’t keep yourself in your own echo chamber where you’re hearing the same thing over and over again."
Unearthing atrocities in Iraq's newest mass graves

AL HOUD, Iraq — The skull still had a thatch of brown hair attached. The lower jaw was missing, and the forehead had a hole in it.

“One of the bodies, the hands were tied. They were blindfolded and shot in the forehead,” said Omer Hassan as he surveyed remains scattered beside a sinkhole the Islamic State had turned into a mass grave.

A captain in a local Sunni tribal militia that polices the area around the village of Al Houd since it was freed in November, Hassan helped excavate the mass grave, where locals found 25 sets of remains. But land mines planted by the Islamic State have already killed some volunteers.

China cautions US against a trade war

BEIJING — Chinese Premier Li Keqiang cautioned the U.S. against starting a trade war and positioned Beijing as a leading proponent of globalization at a news conference Wednesday, underscoring the extent to which Donald Trump’s presidency has pushed China into a global leadership role.

“We do not want to see a trade war breaking out,” Li said at the news conference, a highly scripted annual ritual in a gold-bedded meeting room at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People. American companies, he said, would suffer the most in a trade battle between the world’s two largest economies.

Fair-right populism falters with Dutch vote, but remains a powerful force

LONDON — First came the sighs of relief — and now come hard questions. Has the march of far-right populism in Europe been halted? Or is it still a force to be reckoned with?

Congratulations poured in Thursday from leaders across Europe after Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte’s center-right party garnered the largest share of parliamentary seats, blunting a challenge from populism in Europe been halted? Or is it still a force to be reckoned with?

Congressman urges administration to help keep loan payments affordable

WASHINGTON — A lawmaker who has made strengthening the nation’s economic safety net a top priority is calling on the administration to do more to help students who have become ensnared in the student loan crisis.

This new automatic income certification program does just that, and borrowers will be protected from unnecessary payment increases that make it even harder for young people to pay down their debt and manage their finances,” Curbelo said. “My colleagues and I are urging the Treasury and Education Departments to move forward as quickly as possible.”

“This legislation, introduced by Democratic Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici of Oregon and Republican Congressman Ryan Costello of Philadelphia in 2016, would automatically connect borrowers with income-driven repayment plans before default.

Committee invites students to join

SCC, PAGE 1

witnesses, will review all the evidence and reports what has been submitted ...”, said Torres.

They will then determine whether the student is responsible for each of the individual charges.

The SCC’s reviewing cases include drug use on and off campus, underage drinking, allegations of physical violence, harassment toward other students, staff, or faculty, verbal abuse, threats, sexual misconduct, rape and stalking among others.

The deadline to submit applications is Friday, March 24 and interviews will be held a week before final week, though the exact date has not yet been set.

“We hold interviews so that we can better project to students the importance of the Student Conduct Committee, as we deal with a lot of confidential information,” said Torres. “[We look for] a student who is able to have access to all this information and keep it confidentially to themselves and not go around telling highly confidential information. The student must be trustworthy and capable of handling a high level of responsibility.”

“arborcans who currently have minimal or no prior involvement with the University or outside the University can gain to more involvement within the community. On the other hand, extracurricular activities will not hinder students from being accepted into the program.

Prospective students must be enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours for undergraduate students and three credit hours for graduate students. They must also be in good academic and conduct standing with the University, have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5, and be available to serve on at least two committee hearings — three hours each — a month to remain an active member.

Program honors author at BBC

AWARD, PAGE 1

in a vacuum but something’s that’s immediate and has often a social justice component, representing different subject positions in the world and literature,” she said. “It just makes it more meaningful for everyone, readers and writers.”

The event acts as a capstone to the ‘Writers on the Bay’ series, Wade says, which includes two alumni book readings in the fall, student literary awards in the spring and book readings with three outside writers who’ve achieved literary success.

“Our students can see ‘I can submit for student literary award [and] if I go through the graduate program, I can come back as an alumnus[s] and have a reading. If I continue in the writing life ... I can be a part of ‘Writers On the Bay’ or something like it and then, at the culmination of my career, I can end up in a reading context like the Lawrence Sanders Award ... it shows every stage of a writing career,” she said.

The event will take the Biscayne Bay Campus in the Wolfe Union Ballrooms from 8 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, March 30. It’s free and open to the public but tickets are required.

For more information, visit english.fiu.edu or their offices in Deuxieme Maison, room 453 at MMC and Academic Center I, room 335 at the BBC.
James Baldwin’s thoughts still ‘shine light’ on today’s racial problems

Today, we’re always asking people to take sides. Is it Blue Lives Matter? All Lives Matter? Or BLM? Baldwin would have hated that.

Alfredo Garcia
Adjunct faculty
Sociology

oppression, necessitated the moral destruction of those willing to be accomplices to the abuse. Baldwin would almost surely have sympathized, if not endorsed, the criticisms against mass incarceration and against the way discrimination persists in American society. But to ignore his idiosyncrasies and complexities is unfair to his writing. "I Am Not Your Negro," despite all this, is nonetheless an outstanding and a deeply profound movie.

As I watched it, people around me emitted their feelings — when Peck showed racism, the disgust in the theater was palpable; when progress was displayed — as with the election of a black president people smiled and clapped. This general disposition shows the progress that has been made.

Yet the fact that the film’s message remains relevant and thought provoking demonstrates we still have tribulations to overcome.

Christian Gonzalez, is a staff writer for Panther Press.
His column, Right Turn, is a commentary on foreign affairs, culture, and social sciences.

Students: Make sure you have time to sleep

What time do students have to unwind and take care of themselves?

Sacrificing our sleep for daily activities, no matter how important they may be, does not come without its consequences.

Another Huffington Post article talks about the side effects of sleep deprivation. These include, "memory loss, decreased creativity, symptoms similar to ADHD, terrors, higher risk of stroke, impaired moral judgement, cognitive impairment, and irritability."

The good news is that the article mentioned a few tips that may improve health and productivity throughout the day. Of the various tips, I find two to be the most important. The first is "No binge sleeping in on the weekends. When you sleep late on the weekends it messes with your circadian rhythm making your wakeup time inconsistent, which results in a groggy and tired feeling in the beginning of the day, resulting in a less productive day."

The second tip is to "Learn how much sleep you really need." According to the article, it’s not true that everyone needs eight hours of sleep, but not knowing how much your body needs can harm you.

According to the Huffington Post, their founder Arianna Huffington was a woman who understudied until her body finally collapsed from exhaustion one afternoon. Thankfully, she survived, but as you can see, getting the right amount of sleep is essential to countering these negative effects and maintain a healthy life.

So, I encourage all of you who are reading this to make the proper changes to your life as soon as possible to deter any health risks. I’m sure there are still questions of what to do about all the demands life may be putting on you, however, there is a way you can take advantage of the resources FIU has for its students.

You are always welcome to seek assistance from the Counseling and Psychological Services, which is dedicated to providing quality services to FIU’s student body. CAPS is located in the MMC Student Health Center and in the Wolfe University Center at BBU. The staff there are available to help you with your time management, and more so you can excel in your everyday life. The program also offers podcasts, online stress assessments or schedule workshops so you can receive the help you need.

Alecia Allen is a contributing writer for Panther Press. Her column, LifeWinks, discusses how to improve your life while making a positive influence in the community.

Alecia Allen
Most students have sacrificed homework for sports, student organizations or a social life. Other times, it’s the exact opposite; simple pleasures like family time and exercising are sacrificed for academic success. But, what time do students have to unwind and take care of themselves?

It can be difficult to complete priorities, and the workload put on students can be unfair sometimes. On certain days or even weeks, it appears that students are forced indirectly to sit at a desk for hours at a time, thereby excluding in and out of class.

But there is what professors and teachers call “a better way to be successful in college.” For every hour spent in class, it’s expected that you spend two to three hours studying outside of class.

A typical full-time student will take four classes nearly five days a week, which totals to about 40 hours a factor. In part time jobs, leisure time, eating, sleeping and any other activities, that’s a little over 200 hours a week. There are only 168 hours in a week.

This elevated demand for energy throughout the day has led to a high number of sleep deprived people. According to the Huffington Post, “about 83.6 million people in America were suffering from sleep deprivation in 2014.”

SEND YOUR LETTERS
Have something on your mind? Send an email to opinion@fiu.edu. Be sure to include your name, major and year and a photo of yourself. Letters must be less than 400 words and may be edited for clarity and length.

Panther Press will only run two letters a semester from any individual.

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University’s Mind and Melody Chapter looking to grow, recruit volunteers

Michele Silva Contributing Writer

Mind and Melody at FIU is fine-tuning its pitch to attract new members.

The newly founded chapter of the non-profit organization is expanding its services which already uses music to aid those with neurological impairments.

Carolina Formoso, the chapter’s president, says Mind and Melody uses the music as interactive therapy, and the impairments serviced by the club vary in nature.

“Right now, we work with individuals that are older than Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, strokes or different forms of dementia,” Formoso said.

As the organization grows, the e-board envisions an expansion of its sessions and a broadening of its audience.

“We want to make it to the national level and we also want to incorporate different age groups...and different types of neurological impairments,” Formoso said.

Mind and Melody, INC. was created in 2014, said Formoso. The young non-profit relies exclusively on volunteers to keep the programs growing.

“Participating in Mind and Melody is actually a really rewarding opportunity [to be] among an older community,” said Elizabeth Medina, the organization’s public relations coordinator.

Formoso explains that senior citizens who attend music sessions by Mind and Melody find as much solace in their weekly reprieve from conventional therapy as their session leaders do. Members of the group Formoso led last semester reminded her of the importance they placed on the sessions.

“They would remember that I would come on a specific day to teach them music [and] it was very rewarding to hear that. They would say to their families ‘please don’t pick me up on this day because I’m going to learn a little bit about music,’” Formoso said.

While Mind and Melody’s public relations team is looking to add to the list of facilities they collaborate with, they are also looking to strengthen the organization’s membership numbers. Joining FIU’s chapter of Mind and Melody is a two-step process, Formoso says. The process includes a background check and interview that excludes questions about musical ability.

“We’re always looking for volunteers and we’re always looking for musicians,” said Formoso. “We welcome all types of students despite their music background.”

Volunteering with the organization accounts for part of their operation, but part time paid opportunites exist within Mind and Melody as well, according to Medina.

“That’s our [current] goal, to see if we can target some musicians so they can be hired,” Medina tells student media.

Formoso says volunteer opportunities with Mind and Melody are available to all members of the FIU community. Volunteers help senior citizens play user-friendly instruments, like maracas and xylophones.

“The focus of volunteers is to help the [participants], to make sure that the individual is...getting all that they can get from the session,” said Formoso.

Mind and Melody also provides multi-lingual sessions. Catering to individuals, Medina and Formoso emphasize, is the key to helping the mind through melodies.

According to Formoso, facilities currently partnering with Mind and Melody are home to Spanish-speaking, Creole-speaking, and English-speaking individuals. As such, the organization makes sure to provide translations in all three languages. The organization welcomes new volunteers fluent in any language.

Students interested in joining the non-profit organization can find more information at mindandmelody.org.

FIU’s chapter meets every other Monday in GC 286.

One of the performers, Helen Blondel, performed Mariah Carey’s 1993 song, “Hero.” She says she has been singing her whole life and the key to a good performance is connecting with the audience.

“Singing is something that’s natural to me,” Blondel said. “When it comes to [being] on stage, I just make a connection with [the] audience...it is my heart and soul and it’s my way of expressing my feelings coherently.”

Sophomore broadcast journalism major Laniah Harris felt pleasantly surprised by the talent that performed at her first visit to open mic night.

“I thought that Open Mic Night was very interesting, being able to see students be brave and step out of their shell and perform,” said Harris.

Harris said she was so moved by the performers that she’ll be attending open mic nights at Vicky’s more often and encourages other students to do the same.

Students can check out Vicky Cafe’s Open Mic Night every Thursdays from 6 p.m. to closing. The performer sign up sheet is available to students at 6 p.m. as well.
Service group helps students travel abroad

KALI-RAY SKINNER
Staff Writer

Students interested in traveling the world while giving back to the communities they visit will be able to get more information through the Global Exchange Fair at MMC on March 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in GC 243.

The fair will be hosted by AIESEC, a non-profit that focuses on providing students and recent graduates opportunities to improve their leadership skills through service work around the world.

At the fair, AIESEC will offer on-site interviews with representatives from the programs abroad who would be hosting the students. Students will be able to find which programs interest them while exploring the various tables for each program, interview, and find out on the spot if they are accepted.

The current AIESEC president, Tarek Abdel Raouf, is a senior triple majoring in psychology, philosophy and political science who hopes to start a non-profit.

Originally from Egypt, Raouf joined AIESEC after coming to Miami to pursue his education. He worked his way through the departments of AIESEC before deciding to do his own exchange.

“I am very passionate about making the world a better place,” said Raouf.

From May to June of 2016, Raouf volunteered in Colombia to teach children about sustainable development goals. While in Colombia, Raouf saw other international AIESEC members, traveled and learned Spanish.

“It was one of the best experiences in my life. I now have a Colombian family and they might even come to my graduation,” said Raouf.

FIU sent over fifty students and political science

Tarek Abdel Raouf
Senior
Psychology, philosophy and political science

SEE AIESEC, PAGE 6

BAYFEST RETURNS
Spc to host festival with local artists

JULIANE SUNSHINE
Staff Writer

Student Programming Council will celebrate their annual Bayfest music festival with performances from Mr. Vegas, Kiddo Marv, Gabel Pix and DJ Luke Nast, to name a few.

Bayfest was created for not just students, but faculty, family and anyone else who wants to enjoy a musical festival.

The event has had major headliners in the past such as Trick Daddy, Kes, Jbeatz, Alan Cave and Migos, drawing crowds of 800-1000 of people and there is to be an increase of at least 200 more this year.

“There will be a mixture of reggae, hip hop, Haitian and local artists this year,” said SPC President Fabiola Jean-Baptise.

The final lineup for the Bayfest has been revealed. It first started with Mr. Vegas, Kiddo Marv, Gabel Pix and DJ Luke Nasty. The last two artists for Bayfest, are A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie and Sweet Micky.

A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie, whose real name is Arturo Dunco is a rising rapper from Bronx, New York. Dunco spent most of his teenage years between New York and Florida, before finally moving back to New York. Dunco is currently co-signed with Meek Mill and DJ Khaled and his two songs “Timeless” and “My Sh*t” have both had spots on the Billboard 100.

Sweet Micky, whose real name is Michel Martelly was the president of Haiti from the years 2011 to 2016. The Haitian performing and recording artist, is also a businessman, composer and musical sociopolitical activist.

His recognition with type of music known as compas or Kompa is a dance style music with Creole lyrics. Sweet Micky’s “Kite Yo Pale” is one of the singer’s newer songs released in 2016.

Bayfest will be held on April 1 from 3 p.m. to 12 a.m. behind the swimming pool at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

“There will be food trucks, games and different activities. I look forward for students to attend the event,” said Jean-Baptiste.

Early bird tickets are on sale right now. FIU students can buy tickets for five dollars. Otherwise, tickets are 15 dollars. Tickets are currently being sold online through Eventbrite.

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Student leaders promote world ‘development’

AIESEC, PAGE 5

 alone. AIESEC offers volunteer and internship opportunities. Internships can either be paid (3-8 months) or unpaid (2-3 months).

Volunteering can range from 6-8 weeks, and all programs are based off of the seventeen sustainable development goals from the Youth for Global Goals Initiative that AIESEC is working hard to complete by 2030. These sustainable development goals include such topics as climate action, quality of education, and gender equality.

Danielle Lyn, a senior communication arts major with a global media minor, recently chose to get involved with AIESEC. She says she was browsing through the AIESEC website one day with no intention of applying, and came across a program that was a perfect fit: a digital media producer with a global media producer in Egypt.

She applied and heard back soon after. “Digital media and cultural exploration are two of my passions. I really feel like without AIESEC I wouldn’t have found a way to put the two together. It’s such a no-hassle process and there [are] so many opportunities to choose from that are all financially affordable. I’m so glad I found them. I graduate this semester so I almost missed out,” said Lyn.

AIESEC is doing onsite interviews in an effort to make the process easier and they hope it will keep people focused on what it is they really care about and on the programs that will match those passions.

If you are unable to afford the programs, AIESEC will provide the tools to help fundraise.

Having a resume ready to email is required for internship applications. AIESEC can be reached at their Instagram: @aiesciimiami and vpo@miami@aiesecus.org.

Those interested around the year can book a meeting at: http://oxg.youcanbook.me. Students do not need to book a meeting to participate in the Global Exchange Fair.
Triathlon club hosts first practice at BBC

The Triathlon Club partnered up with TriDi Multisport Training to hold its first triathlon practice of the season at Biscayne Bay Campus on Saturday, March 4.

Athletes of all levels were welcomed to come out and participate and go at their own pace.

The practice began with a group stretching session, followed by a 30-minute swim in BBC’s Aquatic Center and a bike ride through the campus. It concluded with a mile-time-trial. At the end of the practice, members enjoyed a nutritious brunch.

Christina Reddick, assistant director at the Wellness and Recreation center at BBC, is an advisor for the Triathlon Club, and said no one is left behind.

“We do everything as a group,” Reddick said. “Our practices really give our students the triathlon experience.”

Almost 90 participants showed up for the first practice of the semester, which was led by three TriDi coaches and two FIU coaches.

Vivek Somani, a hospitality junior, returned to practice with the club.

“I love the fact that they provide coaches that are willing to teach and push you,” Somani said. “It’s challenging, and I like that.”

Diego Zambrano, an information technology senior, is a common face at the practices held by the club.

“IT’s a chance to prove to yourself that you can do something you thought you could never do,” he said.

The club’s purpose of holding practices is to also assist athletes who wish to participate in FIU’s triathlon, held later in 2017.

Students can participate in these practices for free, while non-FIU students pay a fee of $80 per semester. Practices are held at BBC every Saturday at 8 a.m.

For more information on the Triathlon Club, visit FIU’s student affairs website.
PITCHIN’ PANTHERS
Freshman pitchers showcase talents as starters on field

BRETT SHWEKY
Staff Writer

Freshman pitcher Nick MacDonald earned Conference USA Pitcher of the Week honors, following his dominating performance in the 5-1 victory against the Manhattan College Jaspers on Sunday, March 5.

The right-hander retired the first 11 of 12 opposing batters he faced before Manhattan secured its first hit in the top of the fourth. MacDonald pitched a career-high 7 2/3, where he restricted the Jaspers to one earned run off just two hits. The right-hander retired the first 11 of 12 opposing batters he faced before Manhattan secured its first hit in the top of the fourth. MacDonald pitched a career-high 7 2/3, where he restricted the Jaspers to one earned run off just two hits. The right-hander.

 MacDonald said that with it being one of his first starts in his career, the award had some greater meaning.

“Of course it’s special, it was special because it really was my second start in my collegiate career,” MacDonald said. “It doesn’t happen; however, if my team doesn’t play at the high-level they’ve been playing at.”

Currently leading the Panthers’ pitching staff with a staggering 1.42 ERA, MacDonald has been able to limit opposing batters to a .143 batting average. MacDonald in 12.2 innings pitched this season has only given up two-earned runs and has collected 16 strikeouts.

Prior to attending FIU, the freshman played for West Broward High School and Charles W. Flanagan High School. During his tenure at Flanagan, MacDonald earned team MVP honors in his senior season and was also named Pitcher of the Year in 2015 and 2016. The right-hander was highly sought after by Alabama State, Tennessee, Kentucky and the crosstown rival Miami Hurricanes.

When asked about his decision to attend FIU, MacDonald said that head coach Mervyl Melendez was the deciding factor in him becoming a Panther.

“To be honest with you Mervyl Melendez was really my deciding factor in my decision to attend FIU” said MacDonald. “I wasn’t directly recruited by him, but his assistant was the one that recruited me and once we finally met I fell in love with the way he coached almost immediately.”

With the game being tied going into the eighth, pitcher Shannon Saile returned to the mound preparing to lead the Panthers out of the inning against the University of Notre Dame Saturday, March 4.

The freshman hurler struck out an additional two Notre Dame batters in the inning, to bring her strikeout total to 12 on the day. Saturday’s game against the Fighting Irish was the fourth time this season that Saile recorded 10-or-more strikeouts in a game. Having played in nine games so far, the freshman has been able to accumulate 71 strikeouts in just 53 innings pitched.

Having played in nine collegiate games, the freshman hurler says the faster pace of the game was one of the differences that stood out going from high school to college.

“The faster pace, the bigger hitters, relying on my team as much as I can are some differences I’ve noticed so far,” said Saile. “In high school, you don’t really have the outstanding outfielder that you would in college, my fielders have really been backing me up and that always makes a difference throughout any game.”

Prior to attending FIU, Saile went to Land O’Lakes High School where she was a four-year softball player and a three-year volleyball standout. As a senior for the Gators, she finished with 18 wins, a remarkable 0.78 ERA and 269 strikeouts. In 2016, she was named All-Tampa Player of the year and was a finalist for the 6A FACA Player of the year.

Saile, who said it was always her dream to play division-one softball, decided to attend FIU because she felt the Panthers provided her with the best opportunity.

“I always wanted to play division-one softball in Florida,” said the freshman ace. “FIU presented themselves at the correct time, when I went on my unofficial visit I instantly fell in love with the university.”

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