

CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

Obama appoints alum as inaugural poet

MADISON FANTOZZI
Asst. News Director

Richard Blanco scores a number of firsts as the 2013 inaugural poet – the first Hispanic, the first gay, the youngest person – and the first FIU alum.

“His diversity is only a bonus,” said Campbell McGrath, poet and Patricia and Phillip Frost professor of creative writing at FIU. “He is a great poet.”

Blanco will compose an original poem for President Barack Obama’s second ceremonial swearing-in on Monday, Jan. 21 on the steps of the Capitol.

As a Cuban-American, Blanco’s poems serve as lyrical tales of migration and a search for cultural identity.

“I spoke English; my parents didn’t. None of the girls had hair of gold; none of my brothers or cousins were named Greg,

“ He wasn’t accepted in the program. I wasn’t even sure if he was allowed to take the class, but I thought anyone with that much enthusiasm has to take my course.

Campbell McGrath
Professor
Creative Writing

Peter, or Marsha; we were not the Brady Bunch,” Blanco wrote in “America”, a poem from his book “City of a Hundred Fires”.

On his website, the 44-year-old said that this poem originates from one of his earliest memories of the clash between the two cultures that shaped him.

“A week before Thanksgiving I explained to my abuelita about the Indians and the Mayflower,

” the poem continues. “Until they finally agreed: this Thanksgiving we would have turkey, as well as pork.”

Blanco’s America is similar to Obama’s America, and his appointment as inaugural poet sends the nation a subtle, underlying message – a message of reformation.

The inaugural poet’s diverse demographic complements Obama’s vision for America that

promises the reform of immigration laws.

During a time of great change, Blanco will not only represent immigrants and gays alike, but every person struggling to find their identity in the country people call a melting-pot.

Blanco will also represent the University as an FIU alum, serving as inspiration and motivation to students and aspirers across all majors and programs.

Blanco holds a bachelor’s in civil engineering and a master’s in creative writing.

Blanco’s famous poem “America” was composed in his first course at FIU, McGrath said. The course was an advanced poetry workshop.

Working as a civil engineer, Blanco enrolled in courses at the University where he was eager to learn from poet McGrath.

“He wasn’t accepted in the program. I wasn’t even sure if he was allowed to take the class,” said McGrath. “But I thought ‘anyone with that much enthusiasm has to take my course.’”

McGrath, who would later become Blanco’s mentor, recalls a hardworking student shuffling between identities.

When asked about his expectations of the inaugural poem, McGrath said, “A poem is something personal, but in this case it

SEE POETRY, PAGE 2

Online database connects College of Law alumni

VICTORIA RONDEROS
Contributing Writer

College of Law alumni connect through a social media network. The FIU Law Alumni Community is an exclusive online database website for the graduates of the University’s College of Law.

The database connects fellow alumni of the college, enables client referrals, shares legal advice and expertise and keeps former law students up to date on the College’s projects and events. Robert Scavone Jr., a member of the FIU Alumni Association, says the website has been attaining popularity since its launch last November.

“The alumni have been very receptive,” said Scavone. “Being able to referral clients to one another is important for the members individual businesses and for the entire alumni association as well.”

However, the road to its launch was not an easy one. The database has been in the works since 2009.

“There were talks on creating this social media type of network, kind of like a LinkedIn since 2009,” said

Christina MacRobert-Ruiz, vice president of the FIU Law Alumni Executive Board.

“We’ve been trying to do this for the past three years,” said MacRobert-Ruiz, “and finally, the school signed a contract at the beginning of 2012 with [a] company, that launched and created the way that we wanted it [to be].”

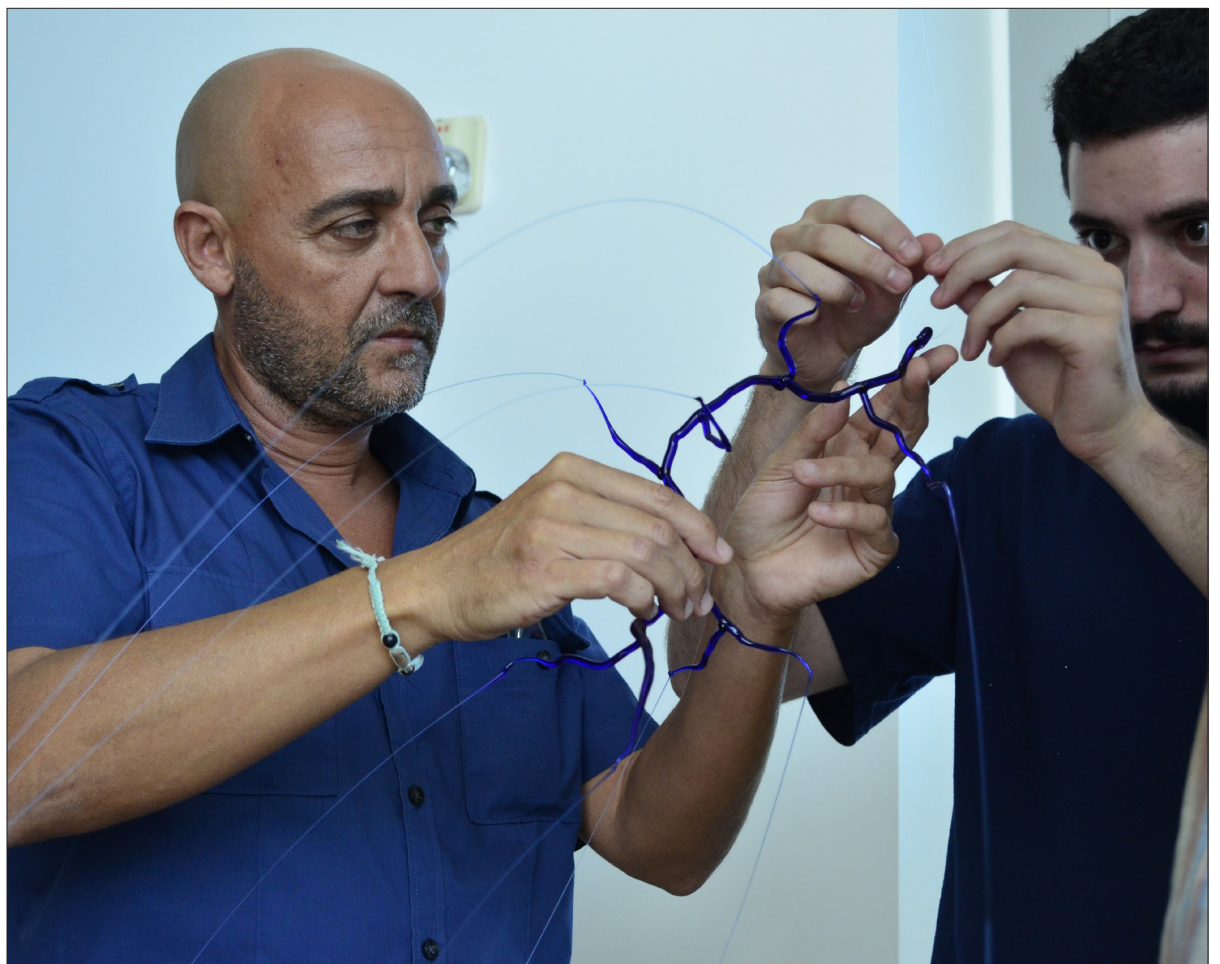
The database works like any other social networking site, like LinkedIn and Facebook.

“Members of the College of Law alumni are able to search by name, location, class year and/or practice area,” said Scavone.

“There’s a wall, like on Facebook, and there’s also different groups that you can join, so if you’re a part of the class of 2007, class of 2008, you’re automatically enrolled in that group, by virtue of your class,” MacRobert-Ruiz said. “You can upload files, if you want to share a statue, like for attorneys, if you want to share an article, anything. You can invite alumni to join if you notice that they’re not using it.”

Alumni can also make groups in regards to their law specialty. MacRobert-Ruiz says lawyers practicing in

GLASS ART



ANDRES BEDOYA/THE BEACON

Spanish artist Javier Velasco (left) getting ready for his exhibition on Sunday, January 27 at the Frost Art Museum. His work includes a series of molten glass titled “Deep Blue” that will hang from the ceiling of the museum.

certain areas, can create groups and share legal advice and ideas with other lawyers.

“I use it for referrals all the time,” said MacRobert-Ruiz, who is also a martial and family lawyer. “In family law, we need bankruptcy advice for our clients sometimes [and] real estate law

advice.”

The database also helps alumni find jobs.

“I would go to my class group and put ‘I am seeking employment in this area,’” said MacRobert. “Or if you’re interested in Bankruptcy law [for example], I would go to the Bankruptcy

group, and post there, and maybe upload, since you can upload files, you can upload your resume.”

The database also allows alumni to invite and RSVP other alumni to events happening at the college. This can be done under the calendar section that appears

at the home page of the database. The database can be found on the College of Law’s website, under the “Alumni & Friends” tool. Under the tool and the “Alumni Directory” tab, the login page appears for the database.

Poet joins the ranks of Maya Angelou and Robert Frost

POETRY, PAGE 1

has to be national.”

Blanco will have to find a balance between staying true to himself, while addressing 300 million people.

“When I congratulated him I told him that I do not envy his job because it’s a hard one,” McGrath said. “I told him ‘you’re going to fail, but don’t worry about it.’ It’s impossible to write something everyone will like.”

Blanco wrote a status update on his official Facebook “poetry page” on Saturday, Jan. 12 that said, “Wow, this has been a great journey into my poetic process. They weren’t kidding that this is tough, but I’m almost there!”

Americans will sit back, wait and anticipate the words to be recited by Blanco as he

joins an elite group of poets that includes Maya Angelou and Robert Frost.

“There is no bigger platform for the art [of poetry] than this,” McGrath said. “Few people read poetry, but now it will be reaching the entire nation.”

Blanco was born to Cuban parents in Spain before moving to New York for a short period. He finally settled in Miami where he spent his childhood struggling to understand where he could go and where he was going.

Blanco will return to his hometown of Miami on Apr. 28, reciting his poetry at the closing night of O, Miami Poetry Festival.

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UNIVERSITY POLICE

University keeps weapons off campus

DIEGO SALDANA
Staff Writer

Guns have stolen the attention of the media with proposed bans and laws made by Congress. FIU, however, has its own policies and restrictions when it comes to this matter.

According to FIU Student Code of Conduct, the “possession, storage or use of firearms, explosives, ammunition or other weapons or dangerous articles or substances, including, but not limited to tasers, switchblade knives and non-lethal weapons such as air guns and Chinese stars. The use of any item as a weapon,” by any student, will be penalized.

Alphonse Ianniello, assistant chief of the University Police Department, clarified the University’s policies regarding weapons.

“No weapons in a car [on campus] or on campus even with a permit,” said Ianniello.

Freshman and biology major Georgina Todd thinks knives shouldn’t be allowed at all, however, tasers and mace should be.

“A taser could come in handy,”

Todd said.

Todd also says students who possess firearm permits should not be severely punished if caught with a firearm in their vehicles because “in Florida its legal with a license.”

Though students like Natalia Cardona, a sophomore and chemistry major, thinks students should not be carrying weapons on campus.

“No weapons because that’s where violence comes from,” said Cardona.

Cardona said she understands why someone would want to carry a weapon, but mentioned she hasn’t “gotten to that point.”

Tasers, however, are understandable in some situations, according to Cardona.

According to University policy set forth by the Department of Human Resources, the only individuals allowed to possess weapons are, “law enforcement officers in the official capacity of their duties, University law enforcement personnel and faculty in the performance of instructional or research responsibilities, only with written approval from the Provost and previous notification to the University’s chief of police.”

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BANNED WEAPONS

- Switch blade knives
- Airsoft guns
- Chinese stars
- Firearms
- Explosives
- Ammunition
- Tasers

‘Once in a lifetime experience’ offered over break

TUSCANY, PAGE 8

Calvo said the trip was a graduation trip from her dad because she’s always been obsessed with Italy and had always wanted to go. One of her favorite memories from the trip was a day that included learning how to process real Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, a visit to a prosciutto factory, a balsamic tasting, and a family style dinner on a farm.

“I would recommend anybody to go because it’s a once in a lifetime experience and you never forget those memories,” Calvo said she is even looking into attending the trip again this year.

Moran said another student, Dante DiGiacomo, also attended the first trip to Tuscany and is planning to attend again, this time with his father. Moran said when DiGiacomo first attended the trip last year, his major was undeclared.

After attending, however, DiGiacomo made the decision to switch to a major in CSHTM.

The deadline is Jan. 18 to sign up to attend the trip with a guaranteed flight included. However, Angulo said students are still able to sign up until Jan. 31 but will be responsible for obtaining their flight on their own.

Moran said although it can be a bit nerve-racking, he feels the trip was

worth it for him because everyone from last year’s trip really bonded.

He hopes to continue this trip in the future and has already been discussing plans for next year.

“The amazing human connection and being able to connect with people that are natives of Tuscany was really special,” said Moran.

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

Florida makes final push to find homeowners

GARY FINEOUT
AP Writer

Time is running out for tens of thousands of Floridians who may be eligible for claim payments as part of a national settlement with five major lenders.

People who lost their homes to foreclosure from 2008 to 2011 have until Friday to file a claim. The settlement applies to loans that were serviced by Bank of America, Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase, Citi or GMAC/Ally.

Florida has been one of the states hit hardest by the foreclosure crisis and recession. But so far less than half of the estimated 167,000 people in Florida eligible for claim payments have responded to mail notices. That has prompted Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi to hire a company to make phone calls over the next two days to former homeowners. The state plans to spend up to \$187,000 on the effort.

“We want every borrower who may be eligible for a cash payment under the national settlement to submit a claim,” Bondi said in a statement on Wednesday.

Some critics, however, have wondered how aggressive the state has been in trying to find those who have lost their homes up until this time.

Matthew Weidner, a St. Petersburg attorney

who represents homeowners involved in foreclosure cases, said as far as he knows no one reached out to defense attorneys or even judges who handle foreclosure cases.

“Both are a rich source of claims,” Weidner said.

The claim payments won’t go out until the middle of this year and depending on the number of people who actually apply, the final amount going out won’t be that much. A Bondi spokeswoman said the average payment is expected to be \$840.

The five major lenders last year reached a \$25 billion settlement with attorneys general across the nation to end investigations over foreclosure abuses. Of that total, an estimated \$8 billion is available to help homeowners in Florida including \$170 million in payments to people who lost their homes to foreclosure.

The state is also directly receiving \$334 million under the settlement. A legislative panel is expected on Thursday to approve spending the first \$60 million. The money will provide counseling to homeowners dealing with foreclosure and default and help the state’s court system deal with foreclosure cases. More than half of the money — \$35 million — will go a program run by the Florida Housing Financing Corporation to assist first-time homebuyers, including providing them with down payment assistance.

A new play for SJMC: sports journalism

SHANNON COPELAND
Contributing Writer

A conversation about sports is one of the most interesting conversations you can have, right after music and food. Here at FIU, sports play an integral role in our collegiate lives. As a sports fan, however, I think more could be done educationally.

I am an aspiring sports journalist who can't get enough of a good soccer game on a Saturday morning and I really like to see Cristiano Ronaldo showcasing his skills.

But, at times, I feel as if sports journalism is overlooked at FIU.

Here at FIU, we have sports fans with interests ranging from basketball to rowing to soccer, baseball to track and field.

Sports journalism is a profitable field. It is diverse, versatile and you can make quite a career out of it.

In journalism, there are many ways to write and present a story, and many ways to conduct an interview. But for each story, there is certain approach that needs to be taken.

Journalism is an art and I believe sports journalism is a very special segment of it.

True sports fans know that you cannot be taught how to love sports, but you can be taught how to use that love for the good of the game.

I think a sports reporting class could guide journalism majors, and others with an interest in sports, in the right direction for becoming a better journalist.

In these classes, students could learn

how to conduct a sports interview, how to ask probing questions to certain tight-lipped coaches, and also how to better connect athletes with their fans by asking

“...I think relationships could be forged with prominent television stations, allowing students to get their hands-on experience...”

the right questions.

To me, a good sports story should make a rival respect a rival, even when they really don't like one another.

Miami is also a perfect city for journalism majors. The Sun Life Stadium, Marlins Park and American Airlines Arena are within a reasonable distance to FIU, and all host some amazing games.

With a sports reporting class, I think relationships could be forged with prominent television stations, allowing students to get their hands-on experience and elevating The School of Journalism and Mass Communication to another level.

Connections could also be made outside of Miami with ESPN and the Fox Soccer Channel, even GoTV. These possible internships could lead to sponsorship for the class and even, hopefully, a sports journalism major.

I spoke with Student Media Sports Director Eduardo Almaguer, who is also a journalism major at the university.

“I think the idea of a sports reporting class would be great, but, and I say this as someone who wants to go into the sports field, it's not necessary,” said Almaguer. “I don't see more than 10-15 students in a class for that. Writing for sports is not something that you can't learn from your sports editor.”

While that may be true, a class on writing specifically for sports would greatly help many sports-minded journalists.

I have spoken with many journalism students who love sports and also believe that having a sports journalism class would be beneficial.

With this class, students could be guided in the most effective ways to being a sports journalist, leading to greater opportunities for them in this field, and SJMC would benefit as well.

With dedicated sports fans and an academic interest in journalism, I am sure FIU and the SJMC could connect the two, resulting in a sports journalism class.

I know one student already eager to register.

-*opinion@fiusm.com*

Wear your own colors at that school

ANTHONY CAVE
Staff Writer

Our colors are blue and gold. Not green and orange. Not blue and orange. And not garnet and gold either.

Around campus, license plates, lanyards and sweaters have displayed everything but the former.

It seems like some students are part of these schools' respective marketing teams, because these colors do not belong at our school.

Unless you simultaneously attend another university or have legacy through family ties, the only colors you should be representing are blue and gold.

The sports argument, “I root for team X because of their team,” is a moot point.

FIU sports have already begun their move to Conference USA. And come fall, we will face stiffer competition.

Our football alumnus T.Y. Hilton already got off to a great start last year as an Indianapolis Colts wide receiver. So, be proud.

Academically, FIU was ranked by Money Magazine as one of the top 10 public commuter colleges in the United States.

And we are among the best when it comes to graduating minorities, especially Hispanics.

This year, former Pentagon official Frank O. Mora will serve as director of FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center.

FIU also announced on Jan. 9 that it will obtain the Aquarius Reef Base, the “world's only operational underwater research center.”

Located 60 miles underwater at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, it would be a remarkable acquisition. The structure allows scientists to live and work underwater for days at a time without coming up for air.

And while February marks the annual Food Network South Beach Wine & Food Festival, this year, an FIU student will have a chance to have his or her burger recipe produced and featured at the festival thanks to the Red Robin Savory Scholarship Contest.

The student that submits the winning burger recipe will also get a three-month internship with Red Robin at their facility in Denver. And they will receive a \$10,000 scholarship as well.

So, whether it is sports, academics or even food, our university stands out. The blue and gold demands the same respect.

Creating a new strategy for making-up

JUNETTE REYES
Staff Writer

The first day of class tends to act as a preview for the rest of the semester in terms of what to expect: the grading system, class content, assignments, examinations and so on.

Each professor lays down what their expectations are in terms of assignments and examinations, and the possibility of making up for these in case they are missed. Each professor has his or her own policy.

The policies for make-ups vary from course to course;

with some professors forbidding them, while others make exceptions for illness, transportation difficulties and/or personal or family issues.

Such events are, at times, unforeseeable and it is the student's responsibility to immediately inform their professors should any of them occur.

The topic of make-ups can be quite tricky for professors. It can force them to go out of their way in order to set up a meeting place for the inconceivable number of students who need to re-take, or make up, exams when class hours, office hours and the like are

not an option.

The absence of a teaching assistant only makes the situation even more difficult for professors who can easily spread themselves too thin.

One solution that many professors have opted for is a policy that does not allow any sort of make-ups.

This, however, might not be the most popular or fairest option when it comes to the students. The events that can justify a make-up can be unpredictable, and the way students perform or function can vary greatly.

Especially when dealing with personal or family illness

and death in the family.

A possible option would be to simply drop the grade for the exam or assignment that could not be completed, due to serious circumstances, so as to not allow it to affect the student's final grade.

It would not eliminate the necessity for make-ups as a whole, but it is certainly a possible alternative to the frustrating situation.

Especially if students go about it intelligently, saving their “get out of jail” free card, so to speak, until absolutely needed.

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STUDENT THOUGHTS

Instagram's terms of service update, not a pretty picture

DANIEL URIA
Staff Writer

In December, Instagram users were met with a notification that Instagram would be updating their terms of service. It was not well received.

The message read: "Some or all of the Service may be supported by advertising revenue."

To help us deliver interesting paid or sponsored content or promotions, you agree that a business or other entity may pay us to display your username, likeness, photos (along with any associated metadata), and/or actions you take, in connection with paid or sponsored content or promotions, without any compensation to you."

The app's users met this announcement almost immediately with outrage, and Instagram CEO Kevin Systrom quickly restored the original terms of service and apologized for the incident, labeling it a misunderstanding.

Despite this quick turn around, various news outlets have reported daily users plummeting from 16.35 million to 7.42 million.

College students are some of the largest users of the app, which caught on like wildfire in 2012 and for some, Instagram even surpassed social network juggernaut Face-

"I don't like to put things that I consider private on Instagram now. I wouldn't want to see something I considered private out somewhere public and have somebody make money on that."

Chloe Reyes
Sophomore
Majoring in Biological Science

book, which bought the company last April.

"It basically took over Facebook for me," said freshman Mirina Monroy. "I don't use my Facebook anymore because I would just upload pictures there, and now it's just Instagram."

Despite its popularity, several FIU students claim that if Instagram were to implement a policy that would allow them to sell user photos to advertisers, they would no longer use the app. Junior biological science major Danny Gallo feels profiting off user

content without their consent is "unfair."

"It's not really right," explained Gallo. "A photo would be considered a person's belonging and shouldn't be used for profit without their consent."

Despite admitting to not using Instagram often in the first place, Gallo claims that if they sought to profit off his content, he would stop using it altogether.

While having their creative property sold without their consent is clearly upsetting to students, many admit that they use Instagram

in a more social capacity and object to the idea of seeing photos of themselves and or their friends being shared without their consent.

Chloe Reyes, a sophomore majoring in biological science, says she uses Instagram just about equally as a creative outlet and a social tool, but explains that the controversy has caused her to alter what she decides to post.

"I don't like to put things that I consider private on Instagram now," said Reyes. "I wouldn't want to see something I considered private out somewhere public and have somebody make money on that."

Senior Edwin Andres has been following the story since the announcement was made and also edited his usage in response to the change.

"I would use it to see other people's pictures, but I stopped posting my own," said Andres.

Continuing the trend, Andres also stressed that the reproduction of photos of himself and his friends being sold without his consent is his biggest fear.

"It's a privacy thing. That's why I have my account set on private so all my friends can see it and not the public."

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CAMPUS LIFE BBC

BBC Rec Center celebrates the New Year with challenge

KARLA REYES
Contributing Writer

In anticipation of BThere's no denying that our holiday break was filled with family, friends and food.

To welcome a healthy, new year, Biscayne Bay Campus Recreation Center is having their 5th annual "New Year Get Fit Challenge," leaving students with no excuses to start the

year the right way.

The "New Year Get Fit Challenge" is a 10-week fitness team competition hosted in collaboration of the Recreation Center and the Wellness Center at BBC. Everyone is welcome to register; it is not exclusive to FIU students and faculty.

Participants sign up in teams of two and partake in an initial fitness/weight assessment. Each team must

then weigh-in every week at the BBC Wellness Center in order to calculate average team weight-loss percentages, which are then sent via email to all participants. At the end of the challenge, two teams are chosen as champions – the team who has the greatest average body fat-loss percentage and the team who has the greatest average weight-loss percentage – and are awarded prizes, such as trophies and

gift certificates.

For anyone who is afraid to start any sort of fitness challenge because it's been quite some time since they've exercised, don't fret. Although it is a competition, the trainers do acknowledge that different teams may be on different fitness levels.

"That's why the fitness assessment at the beginning of the challenge is so important," said Danny Triche, a

personal fitness trainer at the University and one of the trainers for the challenge.

"[The trainers] need to assess the fitness level of each participant in order to properly train them. We can't make them all do the same exercises because not every person is at the same level," said Triche. These trainers are

SEE FITNESS, PAGE 5

STYLE SIGHTINGS

Students adjust their winter looks to fit Miami weather

It's the middle of January and yet it feels like the middle of summer.

For many people who left Miami this winter break to visit family in states that are experiencing "real" January weather, coming back can be a blessing and a curse. For one, you don't have to bundle up into many layers just to avoid getting frostbite or hypothermia. On the other hand, you hardly get to wear any layers at all because within 15 minutes of stepping outside you've already got sweat stains forming.

Wearing sun dresses and bathing suits in January can be great, but sometimes it can feel like you've just missed out on an entire season of great fashion opportunities. Surprisingly, there was a whole crop of students during the first week of classes seen embracing the idea of fall/winter layering, despite the high tempera-

tures. With the use of flannel shirts, jean jackets and cardigans, students were able to mix and match colors, patterns and lengths to create energetic and school ready ensembles.

Senior political science major Heidi Bryce was my first encounter last week, embracing the use of layering. Caught outside of Viertes Haus on Modesto Maidique Campus, I couldn't help chase her down to take a picture of her quirky mixture of a black and white striped maxi dress and a red and black flannel shirt on top. Paired with her aviator sunglasses and combat boots, her look was one of youthful experimentation and grunge attitude.

Later that day, around the housing dorms, I ran into sophomore public relations major Cassandra Aguillila, who was also sporting a very 90's grunge layering vibe but geared more towards a military inspired theme, described by her as "American grunge." Her over-sized olive green button down was vintage

and worn on top of a basic black bralette with high-waisted jean shorts and a multitude of necklaces and rings. Although she could probably never survive in below zero temperatures in that outfit, she fit in perfectly with the 80-degree temperatures seen in Miami.

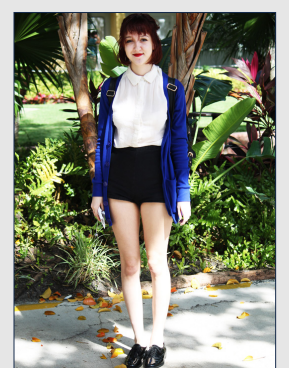
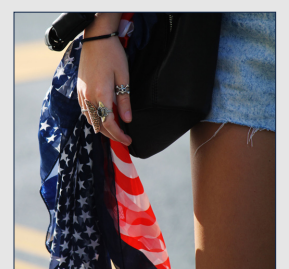
In front of the Graham Center later during the week, I met junior Rosa Villa, a philosophy and international relations major. Seen sitting very quietly on a bench, Rosa's outfit exuded an inner calm and effortless style that I simply had to document.

Wearing a floor-length jersey beige skirt with jelly flats, a simple yet bold polka dot shirt and a jean jacket, Villa nailed a fall layered look that easily transitions into summer weather.

"[I'm inspired by] 50's vintage, 80's punk, 90's grunge; today is just recycling trends," said Villa.

Monique Faure, a sophomore

SEE STYLE, PAGE 5



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY GARNER/THE BEACON

Students are spotted experimenting with trends, colors and patterns in order to enjoy fall and winter fashion inspirations in Miami weather.

REFL TO REFL

'A Royal Affair,' a well-performed period piece

With the Academy Awards right around the corner, it's time to reflect on some of the year's less accessible pieces, and that means foreign cinema. One of the most interesting features hails from Denmark, and is a force to be reckoned with. Nikolaj Arcel's "A Royal Affair" follows the story of a young queen (Alicia Vikander) who is married to an insane king (Mikkel Boe Følsgaard). When a new physician (Mads Mikkelsen) is appointed to help keep the king's madness at bay, the queen finds herself swept into an affair.

COLUMNIST



JUAN BARQUIN

Together, the queen and the physician begin to enlighten the country with ideas of freedom over censorship by manipulating the king, but a forbidden romance can only last so long before the consequences come rolling in.

One of the many appealing factors of "A Royal Affair" is the fact that the characters are easy to feel compassion for, unlike characters in plenty of other stuffy period pieces. The sheer awkwardness of the king and queen, two entirely unfamiliar people, meeting after being married for some time is shown from the start. We can instantly see the king's childish nature and the queen's hesitation to love this



PHOTO FROM IMDB

"A Royal Affair" tells the story of a forbidden love between a young queen, played by Alicia Vikander, and the king's physician, played by Mads Mikkelsen.

insufferable man she has married. What makes Vikander's performance so appealing is the pure emotion she brings to the role of the queen in good times and bad. Her supporting work in the recent movie "Anna Karenina" was a great start, but she leaves quite an impression with her role in "A Royal

Affair." In turn, Følsgaard is outstanding as the raving king alongside the ever entrancing Mikkelsen, who American audiences will remember for his stint as a Bond villain in "Casino Royale." The bond that forms between their two characters is what drives the film, and

convincing performances from both men makes it all the more difficult to choose whose side to take when things get tough.

Regardless of excellent performances, this lengthy period piece comes with faults. The film boasts impeccable production design, but a pretty look doesn't excuse letting a film drag on.

Thankfully, the final act delivers the film's darkest and most fascinating moments in one full swoop, serving as a refreshing treat to a lagging middle act.

While it does suffer from some of the same pacing issues that many a period piece do, Nikolaj Arcel's solid direction, a mostly compelling narrative and all around excellent performances make "A Royal Affair" quite the worthy contender at the Oscars this year.

Juan Barquin is a junior FIU English major. For the past year and a half, he has written more than 80 movie reviews for YAM-Magazine and is pursuing a certificate in Film Studies at the University.

Warm weather calls for fashion experimentation

STYLE, PAGE 4

psychology and anthropology major, took full advantage of today's trend recycling. She kept the basis of her outfit simple, with high-waisted black shorts and a peter pan collar white button down, a trend dating as far back as 1905. For shoes, she wore 1800s style black oxford shoes.

To modernize her look, she wore a rich blue long cardigan, vibrant red lip and a utilitarian leather backpack. Faure went on to explain that her style is "eclectic."

"I work at Urban Outfitters and I'm influenced by a lot of the people I work with," said Faure. All in all she looked school-ready, with the perfect balance of modern meets vintage.

It goes to show that we don't have to lose our fall and winter outfit inspiration just because we live in a city that ranks first place for daily mean temperatures above 65 degrees, according to Current Results Research News and Science Facts.

It's all a matter of mixing and matching: old with new, colors and patterns, short and

long. Play with experimentation, that's what fashion and college is all about.

Ashley Garner is a junior editor, fashion merchandiser for *Fashify.com* and currently has an internship with *College Fashionista*. She was a fashion based writer for *Wasabi Fashion Kult*, the fashion editor for *RAUKUS Magazine* and has worked for *Miami Swim Fashion Week*, *Art Basel*, *Project Runway Latin America* and has been published in several magazines. She also runs a personal art/fashion blog called *Elegant Idiosyncrasy*.

Fitness challenge encourages healthy living

FITNESS, PAGE 4

no amateurs. They've worked with many different clients and are experienced enough to help anyone become more fit and healthier.

While competing against others to become healthier may seem counter-productive, Val Butler, program assistant for the BBC Rec Center, assures that the competition aspect is actually more motivating than intimidating.

"When participants take part in a competition and can see the progress that others are making, it actually motivates them to do more and to do better," says Butler, who is organizing the challenge for a second year. Butler also claims that the benefits of the competition are more than just the prizes awarded to the champions. "Even though they may not win the competition, participants can benefit from a healthier lifestyle and also from the rewarding feeling of getting involved in the FIU community."

In addition to having a healthier lifestyle, students will also benefit from free fitness and

diet assessments given by the Wellness Center.

"The 'New Year Get Fit Challenge' is great because it gives FIU a chance to promote these free health assessments that many students aren't even aware of," said Butler. "It gives us the chance to remind the students that they have these available resources and that they should take advantage of them."

If students are concerned about their diet, the Wellness Center also provides nutritional advising by certified nutritionists.

"As a person trying to lose weight myself, I think this challenge is great... Working with a team would be awesome because you have other people to support and encourage you during those 10 weeks," said senior Darnel Giovanni.

The kick-off reception is Friday, Jan. 18 in WUC 221, where you can meet the competition, trainers, counselors and staff. The "New Year Get Fit Challenge" begins Monday, Jan. 21 and ends Friday, March 29.

-life@fiusm.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS SPRING 2013

FRIDAY, JAN. 18

MLK COMMEMORATIVE BREAKFAST

WHEN: 8-11 a.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE
WHERE: MMC GC Ballrooms

INTERVIEWING SKILLS WORKSHOP

WHEN: 11 a.m.-12 p.m.
HOW MUCH: No registration required.
WHERE: MMC GC 230

OPEN HOUSE WITH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

WHEN: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE
WHERE: Hall of States Building (Miami-Dade County Office)

BELO HORIZONTE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

WHEN: 12-1 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE
WHERE: MMC PC 113

NEW YEAR GET FIT CHALLENGE

WHEN: 12-4 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Fitness assessments and nutritional counseling are provided free for all participants.
WHERE: Biscayne Bay Campus Recreation

SATURDAY, JAN. 19

MLK DAY OF SERVICE

WHEN: 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE
WHERE: West Perrine Park

KEYBOARD ARTS SERIES: KEYBOARD ALUMNI RECITAL

WHEN: 4-11:45 p.m.
WHERE: FIU Wertheim Performing Arts Center

SOUTH FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION WELCOME EVENT

WHEN: 2-4 p.m.
WHERE: Library of Congress Montpelier Room (6th Floor of the Madison Building)

FIU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS TROY

WHEN: 5:30-8:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE
WHERE: U.S Century Bank Arena

NEW YEAR GET FIT CHALLENGE

WHEN: 12-4 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Fitness assessments and nutritional counseling are provided free for all participants.
WHERE: Biscayne Bay Campus Recreation

SUNDAY, JAN. 20

THE FIU CHAMBER PLAYERS

FIU Professor of Piano, Kemal Gekic, will be joined by Iris van Eck, cello, as they perform Stravinsky's Suite Italienne and Rachmaninoff's Sonata for Cello and Piano in g minor, Op. 19.
WHEN: 4 p.m.
WHERE: Miami Beach Urban Studios

AN AFTERNOON OF STRAVINSKY AND RACHMANINOFF

FIU Professor of Piano, Kemal Gekic, will be joined by Iris van Eck, cello, as they perform Stravinsky's Suite Italienne and Rachmaninoff's Sonata for Cello and Piano in g minor, Op. 19.
WHEN: 4 p.m.
WHERE: Miami Beach Urban Studios

PARADA DE LOS REYES MAGOS

WHEN: 12 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Calle Ocho

TANGO CONSPIRACY

WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$7
WHERE: Upstairs at the Van Dyke

To have your event featured, email us at calendar@fiusm.com

CLUB FEATURES

Brothers start FIU lacrosse club, hope to join NCAA

JOLSON DIAZ
Contributing Writer

A long-handled stick, a rubber ball, a mask to protect your face, shoulder pads, gloves and sometimes even rib guards: What sounds like a mix of baseball, hockey and football is actually the sport of lacrosse.

While not at the level of popularity as the NBA or NFL, lacrosse is growing rapidly at about 10 percent popularity per year based on a 2005 U.S Lacrosse participation survey. This is exactly where then-president of FIU's Lacrosse Team, Javi Oliuat, and his brother Alex Oliuat, got things started during the fall of 2009.

"Me and Alex used to play when we were younger," said Javi Oliuat. "But when he graduated from Columbus High School in 2007, he couldn't play for a couple of years because of college. So as soon as I graduated high school, it gave him motivation to want to start playing again."

With the help of flyers plastered around the Modesto Maidique Campus, more than a dozen students started taking interest. The Oliuat brothers welcomed everyone to join at no cost, even those who had little to no experience playing the sport.

Starting a club from the ground up was new to the Oliuat brothers and they had no idea what was in store for them.

"When we first started the club

up, we didn't know what would happen because we didn't have a coach, and no money from the school to pay for one," said Alex Oliuat.

The club caught a break when they came across Alex Lerner, who voluntarily coached the club for the first two seasons. He got things going for them and did so for free as opposed to hiring a full-time head coach.

There has been much improvement in the popularity of the sport at FIU since its inception. Alex Oliuat moved up to become the president of the team and is assisted by Kevin Ortega, vice president. The club plays in-state teams that include the University of Miami and Florida Gulf Coast at least once a season. The club, however, is aiming for a more competitive future.

"Our long-term goal is to eventually become a part of the [Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association] and be a competitive team," said Alex Oliuat. "Hopefully we can even become so good that we eventually get into the NCAA Division I level."

There are currently 61 teams in Division I lacrosse. FIU is not in Division II or III.

The Oliuat brothers know how to keep their sibling rivalry away from the field in order to reach that goal. They understand in order to move forward as a club, working together as a team is an important factor.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAVI OLIUAT

Javi Oliuat, a sophomore at the time, on the attack in a scrimmage game against the University of Miami where they eventually lost 7-4.

"Thankfully my brother and I never really had any big disagreements," said Javi Oliuat. "The only ones were for days where the weather may have been bad, we had to decide whether we want to hold practice through the weather or cancel it."

The object of lacrosse is like most sports. Offensively, the idea is to shoot your ball into the opponent's goal using the lacrosse stick to maneuver the ball

throughout the field. Defensively, body contact plays a huge factor in stealing the ball or keeping the opposing team from scoring. Although, it is not as simple as it sounds.

"Trying to get everything done is the most challenging part of the sport," Javi Oliuat said. "Most people think since we just have to catch and pass a rubber ball it's easy. And I'm not saying it's difficult, but you definitely need some

good eye hand coordination."

The memorable moments these players share on the field plays an impacting role in keeping the club motivated to move forward.

"The most memorable moment was probably last year, which was when we got our first ever win at home against FAU," said Javi Oliuat. "It was great to finally get a win playing at our field."

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COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS



ROBERTO JIMENEZ/THE BEACON

The FIU softball team practices fielding drills on Jan. 14 in the softball fields by Tamiami Park. The team's season opener is just under three weeks away.

From leisure to adrenaline, FIU cycling club does it all

MICHAEL ORTEGA
Staff Writer

Once a week, Jason Diaz, a cycling enthusiast, leads the FIU cycling club on a ride through North Miami Beach. With the sun rising and the sights of the beach life all around him, he forgets about the rest of the world around him.

As lead cyclist and club captain, Diaz has worked with help from others to put together the FIU cycling club and team. Even though the club enjoys leisure riding through Miami, Diaz says there's a lot more to the club than meets the eye.

"This club isn't just for the relaxing style of riding through Miami-Dade," Diaz said. "We try to kick it up a notch and compete in races and marathons through the city and other parts of Florida."

The club gives all riders what they want; they don't focus on just one style of cycling and range from mountain biking to trick riding. The club also isn't limited to experience cyclists. Students with little experience are welcome to join.

"All the members are there to

help anyone with something if it's how pop a trick correctly or if it's tips on how to maintain your bike, we can help the best we can," said Diaz.

The club meets every week at 6:30 a.m. on Thursdays and at 7 a.m. on the first Sunday of every month.

"We try to get together as much as possible for two reasons. One, we love cycling and hanging out with our friends, and the second reason is to get ready for any upcoming races or marathons," Diaz said.

The club took part in the Rosewood Miami Lakes Championship race on Sept. 23, 2012 where USA Cycling recognized the club for the first successful university cycling team in South Florida. Member Alex Gil also won the Fastest Mile at the local Velodrome, recording a new record for the course and beating out four national champions, including the former record holder.

Despite some of the leisure activities, there are adrenaline-filled events members can do. Some of the members join the cycling team to take part in marathons and races through Miami sponsored by FIU

and others like the Rudy Project, SunTrust and Bike Werx.

"We have competed in a few races in the last years, but we are still looking to do more and hopefully one day travel across country to perform in different races," Diaz said.

The club accepts any cycling enthusiast from FIU to come join them. They also allow other members to join from other locations. The only draw is that they cannot compete in the races or marathons on the FIU cycling team.

"We started doing this so we can get some of our other friends that don't go to FIU to join as

well, but to our surprise we have had a couple of other riders come and join from just word of mouth throughout the community. This is making our club bigger and more adventures," Diaz said. "I always enjoy adding more members to the team; it brings more life and depth to the club.

You can reach the club through [Facebook.com/FIUCyclingTeam](https://www.facebook.com/FIUCyclingTeam) or [@FIUCycling](https://twitter.com/FIUCycling).

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TENNIS

Injuries remain a hurdle before tennis season starts

STEVEN ROWELL
Contributing Writer

With spring semester almost two weeks old, the FIU tennis team is wrapping up its preparation for the beginning of the spring season.

As the Panthers prepare for the upcoming spring season, first-year Head Coach Katarina Petrovic is using this time to get the team completely healthy as the team has been battling injuries. Petrovic will also use this time to make sure her team is in shape and get the new recruits up to speed with the rest of the players.

“Right now we still have some players coming back late from vacation, and I have new players and some injuries,” Petrovic said. “We have good players who know what they need to do, we just need to make sure we are all on the same page.”

In the fall season, the Panthers competed in the Fall Opener Tournament that saw the team go a combined 2-9 in singles matches and a combined 1-3 in doubles matches.

The Panthers, however, bounced

back with a much better performance in the End of Fall Tournament in early November. They went a combined 5-1 in doubles and 5-6 in singles matches. The duo of Magali Holt and Giulietta Boha went 3-0 in doubles matches winning their flight in the championship.

The Panthers look to carry the momentum from their End of Fall Tournament into the spring season. FIU opens their season on Jan. 26 at home against Florida Gulf Coast University.

Between the beginning of the fall season and the End of Fall tournament, Boha and Rita Maisak went to Tampa to compete in the ITA Southeast Regionals. The two of them finished 2-2 in doubles together. In singles, both reached the round of 32 before falling to defeat.

“The fall tournaments really helped us. They went pretty good for us, especially in doubles since it has been our weakness,” Boha said. “Now after the tournament I feel like it’s becoming our strength.”

For Boha and Maisak, the main thing they want to work on as they prepare for spring is to be mentally tougher and to have the durability to last through the long season.

“We mainly have to be mentally ready. We already know how to play. We just have mentally be there,” Maisak said. “I have been working on my conditioning a lot since the season is quite long for us, so it’s really important to stay in shape.”

So far, Petrovic is four months into her first year as FIU’s women’s tennis coach and the players have bought into what Petrovic has to offer.

“I knew her from before, when I played at South Carolina she was an assistant, so it was an easy transition for me. I think she is a great coach and a great recruiter,” Maisak said. “She brought some great recruits for this spring. I feel great about her because I feel she does a good job, she gets us ready, and we have great practices with her.”

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“We have good players who know what they need to do, we just need to make sure we are all on the same page.”

Katarina Petrovic
Head Coach
FIU’s Tennis Team

PANTHER OF THE WEEK



JASEN DELGADO/THE BEACON

Jerica Coley, who celebrated her 21st birthday on Wednesday, averaged 26 points, 8.5 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 blocks and 2 steals over her last two games against Arkansas State and UALR. The All-American sits third in the country at 23.8 ppg.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Suddenly unwanted, Tebow has uncertain NFL future

DENNIS WASZAK JR.
AP Sports Writer

Tim Tebow was two wins from the Super Bowl a year ago. Now, he’s pretty much a player without a team — likely to be released by the New York Jets after one frustrating season and his hometown team in Jacksonville already pulling in the welcome mat.

Even Tebow doesn’t know how this will unfold. A backup role on another NFL team? A position change? The Canadian Football League?

“I don’t know what my future holds, but I know who holds my future,” the devout Christian said in a recent interview with Fox Business Network, his only public comments since his strange Jets season ended.

“And, in that,” he added, “there is a lot of peace and a lot of comfort.”

Tebow barely played for the Jets last season. “An absolute mess,” is the way recently retired special teams coordinator Mike Westhoff described it. Tebow has two years left on his contract, but New

York is expected to trade or release him in the next few weeks. So far, destination unknown.

“I can’t imagine a scenario in which he’ll be a Jacksonville Jaguar,” new general manager David Caldwell declared last week. “Even if he’s released.”

While there’s an outside chance Tebow could remain a New Yorker, depending on the whims of the still-to-be-hired GM, it appears highly unlikely.

So, that’s two NFL teams down — the only ones, at that, who showed any interest last offseason when Denver shopped him — and the 25-year-old Tebow’s options appear to be dwindling.

Tebow went from being considered a key part of Rex Ryan’s offense to almost non-existent. Offensive coordinator Tony Sparano didn’t know how to use him effectively, and Tebow wasn’t particularly productive when he got his few snaps in the wildcat-style formation. He made his biggest mark on special teams as the personal punt protector, and did all he could to hide his frustration at not playing. But the numbers said it all: a mere 102

yards rushing and 6-of-8 passing for 39 yards. And, the most damning stat of all: zero touchdowns.

“I would’ve liked to see him get a chance,” defensive end Mike DeVito said.

It didn’t even come when Mark Sanchez struggled so badly that he was benched for the first time in his career. Instead of going with Tebow, the No. 2 quarterback on the depth chart, Ryan went with third-stringer Greg McElroy. Tebow now had a bruised ego to go along with the two broken ribs that limited him earlier in the season.

“Every opportunity you get, you want to make the most of,” Tebow said a few weeks before the season ended, “and I’d have loved to have more of an opportunity to just play quarterback.”

Acquiring Tebow ultimately helped lead to Tannenbaum and Sparano losing their jobs. And, it clouded Tebow’s prospects in the NFL. No matter what, though, he insists he’s a quarterback.

Tebow, reportedly working out in Arizona with a personal trainer, could still land somewhere in the league as a project

for an offensive coordinator willing to learn from the Jets’ mistakes.

“He’s still worth a try and I think somebody will sign him, but it’ll be under the condition that it will be as something other than as a quarterback,” said Brandt, who thinks Tebow will stay on offense. “If Al Davis were still here, he’d take him in a second and try to turn him into a tight end for the Raiders.”

Or, Tebow could simply swallow his pride, head to Canada and become a huge star there with the CFL’s wide-open fields. And then, who knows? Maybe he would come back to the United States — the same route Warren Moon, Doug Flutie and Jeff Garcia took to NFL stardom.

“There’s no shame at all in going to the CFL,” Crouch said. “They’d take him right now and he’d get a lot of tape, and if he’s there two years, he’d have 50 games under his belt reading defenses and coverages. Let the NFL scouts make their decisions then.”

“And, hey, he might have so much fun there actually playing, he might not want to ever come back.”

HOLDING ON TO THE DREAM

Students and faculty to clean up parks on MLK day of service

NATASHA ROQUE
Contributing Writer

The Office of Multicultural Programs and Services and the Center for Leadership and Service are sponsoring the Martin Luther King Day of Service, which will take place tomorrow, Jan. 19, at Colonial Drive Park and Zoo Miami.

The event, open to all students and faculty, will run from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Transportation to and from the parks will be provided by the University for all volunteers.

“The goal of this day is to get out of our comfort zones, gather together, and serve others through hands-on projects in honor of this extraordinary man who once lived,” said Ashley Mulet, a sophomore business major participating in the event.

Those leaving from the Modesto Maidique Campus must be ready to depart by 8 a.m. and those leaving from the Biscayne Bay Campus will depart by 7:30 a.m.

While the project changes annually, this year’s Day of Service efforts seek to clean up and beautify two of Miami-Dade

County’s key community recreational areas: Colonial Drive Park, located at 10750 SW 156 Terr. in Miami and Zoo Miami, located at 12400 SW 152 St.

Though technically a “day off,” a projected 400 FIU volunteers -- an increase from the usual 250 -- will help preserve and make improvements to the two recreational parks.

Students and staff can register to volunteer online on the CLS website. Day of Service tasks at both locations will include: edging baseball fields, re-stripping parking lots, repainting basketball hoop poles, cleaning playground areas, repainting playground equipment, removing trash and organizing food for mealtimes.

Both breakfast -- fruits, Danishes, muffins, granola bars, orange juice, and water -- and lunch -- sandwiches, chips, fruits, water, and soft beverages -- will be provided. It is advised that all volunteers wear closed-toed shoes and comfortable clothing with sunscreen and bug repellent.

Volunteers are also urged to bring canned goods along with them to support the MLK Food

“The Day of Service takes away titles, meaning there are no faculty, no students, just people who have a sincere desire to help other people who come together on this day.... They have fun and get to know each other outside of the classroom, outside of the University.”

Janice Spann-Givens
Associate Director
Office of Multicultural Programs and Services

Drive.

“The Day of Service takes away titles, meaning there are no faculty, no students, just people who have sincere desire to help other people who come together on this day... They have fun and get to know each other outside of the classroom, outside of the University,” said Janice Spann-Givens, associate director in the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services. “The FIU commu-

nity coming together to help the Miami-Dade County community, it is a win-win situation for everyone.”

Among the many other events that will be taking place throughout this month in honor of King, including an MLK Youth Forum and Peace Walk at BBC on Jan. 23, the Day of Service event strikes a particularly unique chord within the members of the community.

“I believe it gives the

students a moment to reflect on the struggles that their parents and grandparents had to endure so that they could have the many opportunities to get the quality education they are getting here at FIU,” said Spann-Givens. “As a result they get a sense of appreciation and respect for Dr. King and his use of such peaceful means during volatile times.”

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CHAPLIN SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Time off in Tuscany: A spring break escape to Europe

STEPHANIE MASON
Staff Writer

With the sharp taste of fine wine paired with authentic Italian cuisine, students can celebrate spring break bonding with Italians and the beautiful scenery of Tuscany, Italy.

From March 8 to 16, the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s Chef Michael Moran will host the second annual trip to Tuscany.

Over ten students have already registered to attend this year’s trip although there is room for a maximum of 20 attendees.

The cost of the trip with round-trip airfare is \$3,040. This price includes accommodations in the villa complex, food, transportation, as well as the many activities.

The trip is not limited to CSHTM students. According to Myriam Angulo, the trip’s tour operator, the trip is open to

FIU alumni as well.

Kyle Gibbons, a junior majoring in business, said he studied abroad in Italy in 2009 and would love to go back.

“Italy is an amazing country [and] it’s always great to incorporate wine and food to take a trip to Italy,” Gibbons said.

There are no courses for this trip as, according to Moran, its purpose is to simply be a fun trip for Spring Break.

However, there is much planned for the trip such as cooking with Italian chefs,

embarking on wine tours, and exploring the “highlights of Tuscany,” according to Angulo, such as Siena and Florence.

“It’s living the true Tuscan experience in every way,” Angulo said.

Kristen Calvo, University alumna who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Hospitality and minor in Beverage Management this past May, attended Moran’s first spring break trip to Tuscany in 2012.

SEE TUSCANY, PAGE 2

Panther pride puts on its best dress for Miss FIU pageant

SELIMA HUSSAIN
Staff Writer

Glittering evening gowns, philanthropic, school-spirited young women, a talent series, and a swimsuit wear round are just a few things to watch out for in the coming Miss FIU 2013 pageant.

The pageant, which is the preliminary round to the Miss Florida scholarship pageant, will be held on Sunday, Jan. 20, in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre on the Biscayne Bay campus.

“This is the first time

we’re holding the pageant at the Biscayne Bay campus,” said Isamar Huingo, the executive director of the competition. “We wanted to go back and forth between campuses to reach out to different people, like public relations majors and hospitality majors. We’re very excited to have the pageant at BBC this year.”

Melissa Vasquez, a contestant in the pageant, is equally enthusiastic.

“I’m really excited because there’s an actual auditorium and stage, so it will be better for not just the

contestants, but the audience as well,” said Vasquez.

The Miss FIU 2013 pageant began in 2004 as a way for women in college to not only earn scholarship money, but to become well-rounded, healthy, and charitable individuals.

It is currently one of the world’s largest scholarship providers for young women.

The contest, which is modeled after the Miss America pageant, is divided into five different sections: formal interview, talent, lifestyle and fitness,

evening-wear, and an onstage question interview.

Questions vary for each contestant depending on their specific platform, or charitable organization the student supports. The future Miss FIU 2013 will have to dedicate herself to her platform for one year after winning the pageant.

Gabriela Pomar, a senior majoring in criminal justice, is passionate about her platform, Women in Distress.

“[Women in Distress] is an organization concerned with domestic violence,

which is something I feel very strongly about-- especially since I’m a criminal justice major,” said Pomar. “I’m very passionate about women’s empowerment and hope to go further with the organization once Miss FIU is over.”

Aside from supporting a charitable cause, each contestant has to prepare herself both mentally and physically for the pageant.

“I’ve been going to the gym a lot, eating healthy, watching previous Miss America pageants...” said Vasquez, who is majoring

in early childhood development. “I’m not that nervous [for the pageant] because I feel like I’m prepared. I’m excited and can’t wait to do everything we’ve practiced.”

Pomar is also eager to participate in the pageant.

“I knew it was going to be an adventure from the very beginning,” said Pomar. “I’m sure that later on, the nerves will kick in, but right now I’m full of energy and excitement.”

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