

No students referred to Student Health Services for smoking on campus

JENNIFER SANS
Contributing Writer

Back in January 2011, the University began its smoke-free policy. The tobacco-free regulation prohibited the use of any smoking or tobacco product on University grounds.

According to tobacco-free.fiu.edu, the first time a student is caught smoking on campus, the consequence is a slap on the wrist with a notice of violation. The second time a student is caught, he or she has to go to two consultations with University Health Services.

However, since the ban started, no person has been referred for a consultation.

“No one has ever been referred to us by campus police to come in for a dependence consultation,” Sarah Kenneally, senior health educator at University Health Services said. “If someone actually requests a consultation, it’s a staff member, not a student.”

A third violation states that students will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for appropriate discipline. The “appropriate discipline” is not detailed on the web page or in the FIU

student handbook.

When FIU’s Police Department was contacted, the information on reports of tobacco use wasn’t given and the crime logs on the FIU Police website have no reports of any tobacco use for the fall 2012 and spring 2013 semesters. There are some reports of marijuana use in the crime logs.

“I know someone who was caught smoking last year in the Biscayne Bay Campus parking lot, but campus police just gave him a warning,” said Abbas Parpai, sophomore biology major.

According to Kenneally, tobacco use is a declining issue for college-aged students, therefore students are not coming in for any dependence consultations.

Although tobacco use in college-aged students is not common, there are students who are not bothered by it even if they do not smoke.

“I don’t mind it. I think they should have a place to smoke. I don’t think it’s right for them not to have a designated smoking area,” said Parpai.

There are numerous places where students are seen smoking daily at both campuses including



ALFONSO YEC/THE BEACON

There have been no people referred to Student Health Services for consultations for using tobacco related products at the University. Despite that, many faculty and students have been seen smoking cigarettes around the outside of various buildings throughout both the Modesto Maidique Campus and the Biscayne Bay Campus.

the Green Library at Modesto A. Maidique Campus and the Hubert Library at Biscayne Bay Campus.

“I know someone who was caught smoking by the Glenn Hubert library, but they were just given a warning. It didn’t go any further than that. People at the south campus walk around smoking and no one tells them anything,” said Vanessa Fraiss, freshman biology major.

“I see people smoking at BBC all the time right next to the signs telling us to supposedly ‘breathe easy’. I’ve never seen anyone asked to stop,” said Tamicha Roger, an undecided junior.

Parpai and Fraiss both agree that designated smoking areas would be a better alternative to being a smoke-free campus.

“If there were designated smoking areas, I would at least be able to avoid those specific areas instead of having a cloud of smoke blown in my face when I’m walking by the library,” said Parpai.

“I understand that people don’t like it, so designated smoking areas would be beneficial to the students who need to smoke while on campus,” said Fraiss.

The problem with designated smoking areas is that it would defeat the purpose of having a smoke-free campus. It is impossible to have a smoke-free campus that still has places for people to smoke.

Even if there were designated smoking areas at MMC or BBC, according to the World

Health Organization, “second-hand smoke can spread from a smoking area to a non-smoking area, even if the doors between the two areas are closed.”

This leaves no chance for students to be able to smoke. It is as though this policy gives students and staff who don’t smoke preferential treatment over those who do smoke, but the law actually says that smokers aren’t entitled to protection against discrimination under these circumstances.

“I don’t think someone should be able to tell me I can’t do something. There are even smoking areas at Disney World, so I don’t see the big deal about smoking on campus,” said Fraiss.

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New staff member helps students combat loans

NATASHA ROQUE
Contributing Writer

FIU has officially hired a new, full-time default prevention coordinator, Gabriela Mendez, to offer students personalized loan counseling to ease their financial burdens and put them back on the path towards overall improved financial prosperity.

A recent article on BusinessWire.com detailed the results and analysis of a study conducted by EverFi—a leader in education technology—and sponsored by Higher One entitled “Money Matters on Campus: How Early Attitudes and Behaviors Affect the Financial Decisions of First-Year College Students”.

The study dissected

several contributors of widespread financial mismanagement among college freshmen and urged universities to become more aggressive in their financial literacy campaigns, especially in

the case of those schools enrolling large amounts of first-generation students.

“I’ve learned that the most confusing part about college is trying to understand the financial aspect of it. Understanding how

your scholarships, grants and loans work is an essential ingredient in the recipe to a successful college career,” said FIU freshman and international relations major, David Rodriguez. “I definitely wish I could understand it better.”

According to Celia Melis, Assistant Director of the Office of Financial Aid, some of the default prevention coordinator’s responsibilities will include managing and monitoring the cohort default rate (the percent of students entering the repayment phase of money borrowing during the federal fiscal year), assisting students with loan counseling and moving forward and implementing a financial literacy initiative involving other departments throughout the

campus such as Academic Affairs.

“Students’ financial literacy is a shared responsibility. First and foremost it is the student’s responsibility to learn to be good managers of their own finances. Our responsibility is to provide resources and opportunities for our students to learn how to do that. At FIU we are in the early stages of taking a more assertive approach to partnering with our students in this area,” said Melis.

Melis said the following months at OFA will revolve mostly around reaching out to students already working to repay their loans and struggling with the large monthly payments. It will also be taking on many delinquent

accounts running the risk of default.

“There is a ‘spend now, pay later’ mentality until the bill arrives and there is that shock effect,” added Melis. “I’ve worked with many students throughout my career from community college to medical students who at graduation are stunned that they have borrowed so much money.”

Among other factors, the study found that one major contributor to incurring debt so early on was many students’ lack of affiliation with any one banking institution. Additionally, it asserted that poor, uncorrected financial behavior adopted by a great portion of first-year college students is often

“Understanding how your scholarships, grants and loans work is an essential ingredient in the recipe to a successful college career.”

David Rodriguez
Freshman
International Relations major

SEE LOAN, PAGE 2

WORLD NEWS

International court detains Rwandan-born warlord

Rwandan-born warlord Bosco Ntaganda was taken into custody by the International Criminal Court on Friday after giving himself up in the African country earlier this week and was being flown to The Hague to stand trial on charges of overseeing atrocities in eastern Congo a decade ago.

The announcement brought to an end Ntaganda's time as one of the court's longest-standing fugitives nearly seven years after he was first indicted and was a crucial step in bringing to justice one of Africa's most notorious warlords.

Colombia's ex-pres faces blowback over peace talks

Alvaro Uribe did more as president than any Colombian leader to weaken the South American nation's main leftist rebel group and he has been among the most vocal opponents of peace talks with the insurgents. Now, he's finding that his strident opposition to the negotiations is bringing him some unsought attention. Formal talks to end the half-century-old conflict with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, began in November in Cuba, and the latest round closed Thursday for a two-week recess with no agreement on the first agenda item: agrarian reform.

Russia may help Cyprus only after its deal with EU

Moscow will help Cyprus out financially only if the country's new money-raising measures get the backing of the European Union, Russia's prime minister said Friday.

Dmitry Medvedev said Russia "hasn't closed the door, hasn't said 'no'" to Cyprus, but will discuss specific assistance to Cyprus only after it reaches a deal with the EU.

For more world news, check out www.FIUSM.com.

New staff preventing students from debt

LOAN, PAGE 1

correlated with negative impacts in financial standing later on in life.

According to Melis, nearly 30 percent of college students drop out of school, and roughly 80 percent of these students end up defaulting.

"Realistically, low-income students who in many cases are your first-generation, your immigrants, minorities, etc. are the neediest students who end up with the highest debt, underemployed and are the least literate in financial matters," said Melis.

Upon first accepting loans, FIU requires students to partake in an entrance-counseling seminar where first-time borrowers are walked through loan fundamentals, including options for repayment, interest rate calculation, and Master Promissory Notes —the function by which universities gain the authorization to credit loan funds to students' accounts.

However, with a new Default Prevention Coordinator

on board the FIU staff, students can gain more personalized, step-by-step guidance to borrowing money and coming out of student debt cleanly.

"I worry a lot about the financial stress that might come up later on in my life if I don't pay off my student loans quickly after I graduate," noted FIU junior and business major, Amanda Romero. "I think this is a great advancement for FIU because I know that there are lots of other students out there like me who want to talk these problems out with someone who will be able to guide us in the right direction."

Mendez was unavailable for comment as of press time for this story.

Students interested in speaking with Mendez can stop by the Modesto Maidique Campus Office of Financial Aid anytime from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

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Health fee increase hearing will take place this Thursday

ALYSSA ELSO Contributing Writer

The newly renamed Student Health Services, will soon be improving its medical services available to students. These new improvements will however come at a cost for students.

On March 4, a health fee increase was presented to the health fee committee.

The increase will be used to help meet various compliance issues and improve the quality of services provided to students.

"Student Health Services is asking for a small increase to meet compliance issues," said Oscar Loynaz, director of

University Health Services. "Human Resources has had a lot of temporary employees, so the University has a plan to ensure that everyone that is classified as temporary, becomes permanent employees."

An increase on the health fee has not occurred in three years, as FIU cycles increases among athletics, activity and services and health.

"The increase is necessary for health services as, in the last three years the demand for medical attention has increased," said Andrew Black, assistant director of Recreational Services and member of the committee.

"Walk-in appointments have increased by about 50 percent."

Health Services is permitted to ask for a maximum five percent health fee increase, amounting to \$18, but is only asking for an increase of 2.8 percent, amounting to a \$10.15 increase.

"We only want to increase the amount to what is necessary to improve health services," said Loynaz. "We understand that students do not necessarily want to be paying more tuition."

William Beesting, associate dean of Undergraduate Education and chairman of the committee, was unavail-

able for comment.

On Thursday March 28, the health fee committee will host a public forum, where students can voice their concerns on the new increase that will be applied to students' tuition.

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HEALTH FEE

The meeting will take place in GC 150 at 10:30 a.m. and in WUC 155 at 2 p.m.

THE BEACON

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Ultra Festival may not be worth the cost anymore

ASHLEY VALENTIN
Staff Writer

I love electronic dance music. My car is consistently blasting house beats and my neon Kaskadee kandi bracelets dangle proudly from my jewelry stand.

Ultra Music Festival is an exciting time for people like me. I've been counting down the days for this year's Ultra since last year's Ultra. But when it came time for me to pay for my Weekend 1 pass, I almost passed up the festival.

The complaint on the street is that Ultra has been abusing their fees to get as much money as they can squeeze out of it's attendees. Ticket prices have skyrocketed, food and drinks are overpriced, and Ultra has left ravers without the option of buying just a one day ticket – forcing people to dish out hundreds just to go for a Saturday.

"I do think that while they've milked it for every last penny this year, there's a chance of this EDM craze dying. I'm not sure if people will still be willing to pay these prices in a year or two," said senior Alex Rodriguez.

Sure, there's production costs and the cost of flying in all of these big name artists to Miami, but the prices for a weekend at Ultra have increased from \$150 to \$200 to \$300 to close to \$400 this year if

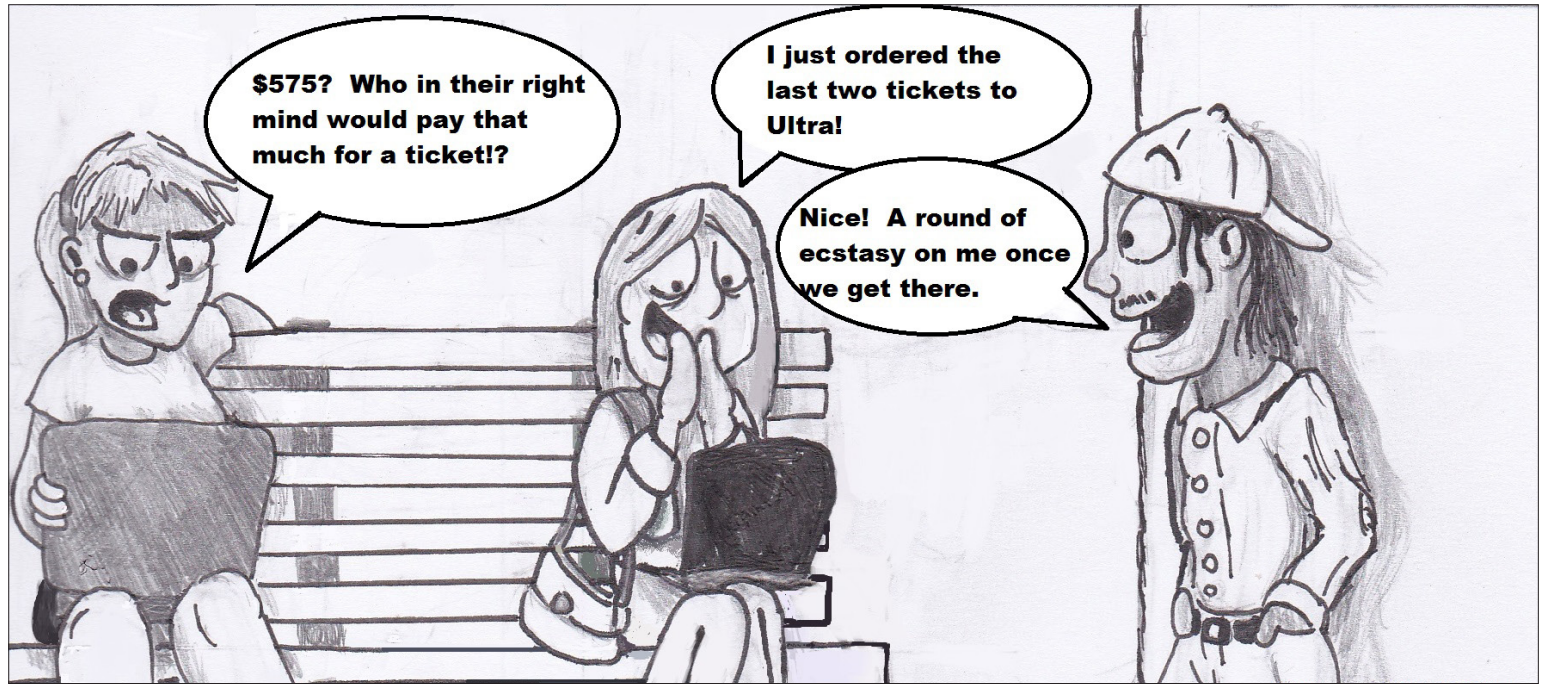


ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTIAN SPENCER/THE BEACON

you include fees, and many of the artists haven't changed. The price change is not necessary.

Electronic music festivals seem to be the festivals most guilty of these heavy price inflations as of late.

Where a day at Vans Warped Tour watching big name bands play costs a mere \$40, buying off a one day Ultra ticket from someone will easily cost you \$150.

Ultra Music Festival, above anything else, is a business looking to make an extra buck, and their prices aren't going to lower

because there is a high demand for tickets.

Despite their scandalous ticket prices, people are still willing to dish out big money for their chance to see David Guetta live (hilariously, myself included).

Some are even going to extreme measures to see their favorite DJ.

"Someone traded me their MacBook Pro for my Ultra tickets," said senior Bennett Bonta. "Quickest return on investment I've ever seen in my life."

Many EDM lovers go to these extremes because of the impor-

tance placed on the festival, however the same DJs who play at Ultra play in other venues in Miami, so often that we shouldn't be so desperate to spend so much on tickets.

Despite the outrageous ticket prices and trades, Ultra was still amazing.

I enjoyed my weekend there. I danced with friends until my feet lost feeling and my ears didn't stop ringing.

But for the price I paid, I'm not sure if it was worth it.

I don't want to pay over \$300

for three exhausting days of being pushed around in a crowd full of drugged up high schoolers, unable to get close to the stage, losing my friends between sets, and dividing my attention between two DJs I love playing at the same time on different stages. And if prices continue to rise, I might just spend next Ultra weekend at home shuffling to EDM tracks on my iPod with friends instead of fighting for room to dance in a sweaty crowd downtown.

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Careers in science, there is more than meets the eye

GIOVANNI GARCIA
Staff Writer

Ever since I obtained my associate in arts in pre-medicine/dentistry, I always wondered, 'What am I going to do for the rest of my career?' Better yet, what am I going to do as my career?

I recently received an email from the biology department about a Careers in Science workshop to answer my questions.

Suzanne Koptur, professor and director of Quantifying Biology in the Classroom, said that most students are sometimes stuck in between what their family hopes they will be and what they discover later in their school life.

"When I was in high school, I had no idea of all the things you could do with a career in biology. All I knew was I like to read and write and I wanted to be a doctor, or maybe a lawyer, or maybe a veterinarian," said Koptur.

She continued and shared her experience throughout her university life.

It is true that some students worry if they will find a career their family accepts, or if it is a high paying job or if they will never enter the graduate program because of certain grades.

As Koptur explained, you can find another major within biology that may not require certain math or chemistry courses you may have previously struggled with.

The biology department's student advisors help guide students through their courses.

Normally if a student takes one science course per semester, then they will graduate in eight years. Advisors encourage the students to take two of each core science and math courses within the first two years in order to graduate at an earlier time.

Another thing advisors can do is view your course grades and if they see a student struggling within calculus, physics, or any other higher level science course, the advisors can look for an alternative major within the same field that would not require those courses.

This may help other majors as well, even biomedical engineers.

Ranu Jung, professor and chair of the Department of Biomedical Engineering, understands the concept of interconnection within biology majors quite well.

During the workshop, she discussed that biomedical engineers are similar to being bilingual.

If a child is bilingual at an early age they will speak both languages much better than

an older person trying to learn a second language and having to check for translations.

We live in a city filled with a number of bilingual people who do not have to struggle with translating English to Spanish and vice versa.

If more people are able to converse in another language then it could help us connect with different industries and even help connect with different countries during research studies and other projects.

Jung later shared different projects other scientists made, like the STEM cell research project, prosthetics for limbless patients and small microchips to help understand high blood pressure and how to prevent it.

“There is always a career for you and the University will always open your eyes to the opportunities.”

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Hurricane exhibit showcases mini Wall of Wind

NATALIE MONTANER
Contributing Writer

Florida International University's Wall of Wind was unveiled near Hurricane Andrew's 20th anniversary in August of 2012 as a research project by the International Hurricane Research Center.

Powered through 12 fans, the Wall of Wind generates up to Category 5 winds and provides researchers the opportunity to test how various structures and items hold up in the different hurricane categories.

This Wall of Wind has been imitated and condensed into a mini replica for an exhibit at the Miami Museum of Science. The exhibit centers itself on Florida's well-known weather catastrophe--the hurricane.

The mini Wall of Wind provides visitors the ability to have a similar, on-hands experience based on what scientists and researchers were able to do with the real Wall of Wind. At this particular exhibit piece, one is



BEACON FILE PHOTO

The University's Wall of Wind has been imitated and condensed into a mini replica for an exhibit at the Miami Museum of Science.

able to construct their own home and test how well it would sustain itself during hurricane force winds.

Another key, interactive piece

of the exhibit is the cockpit of a P-3 hurricane hunter airplane. By sitting inside the airplane, visitors can envision what it would be

like to chase a hurricane and be an

actual storm pilot.

Hurricane Andrew is not a disaster that is easily forgotten in the minds of many. For those too young to remember the devasta-

tion themselves, the event is kept alive through the vivid recollection of others who experienced the monstrous hurricane directly.

The Hurricanes exhibit also brings this almost 21-year-old catastrophe to life through a display case of artifacts and pictures from the storm.

This exhibit is hoping to provide patrons of all ages with the opportunity to learn about the natural disaster that threatens the devastation of many locations every year from June 1 to Nov. 30.

This exhibit also hopes to educate visitors on the preparedness steps that that should be taken in order to ensure one's safety during a hurricane, a storm system that threatens Floridians yearly.

As of now, there is no set end date for the "Hurricanes" exhibit.

The Miami Museum of Science is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is located at 3280 S Miami Ave.

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'App Challenge' awards students for their creations

LUIS BOLAÑOS
Staff Writer

Making applications for iPhones and Android are popular among developers, because of the user bases and ease of making applications for the respective platforms, to some extent.

With the introduction of Windows 8, Microsoft's latest operating system designed for PCs, tablets and smartphones, Microsoft has been reaching out to developers to make apps for the platform just as they do for iOS and Android.

One way they're doing this is by attracting college students to develop apps for Windows 8 in an "App Challenge," where students are awarded a \$100 Visa gift card by having an app submitted and certified in the Windows Store.

A grand prize is also available to students for

submitting the most apps. The grand prize winner will enjoy a vacation determined by an online poll including locales such as San Diego, Seattle, Chicago or Silicon Valley.

Claudia Garcia, a junior in advertising and the Microsoft campus representative at FIU, organized an event on campus to drum up excitement for the challenge and introduce ways FIU students get their app published for the App Challenge.

Garcia explained that the goal of the App Challenge event hosted at the Engineering and Computer Science building was "to show students how to build apps for Windows 8, provide them with all the tools and tutorials they need to get their app published."

At the event, demonstrations of game development tools such as Monogame and Construct 2 were demon-

strated to the audience.

Andrew Duthie, a Microsoft evangelist, demonstrated the use of Construct 2 over Skype, demoing some games in the application, as well as giving a tour of the tools in Construct 2.

Daniel Antonio, a sophomore majoring in computer science, enjoyed "seeing the simplicity of Construct 2."

Alan Cardero, a junior in computer science, commented on the demonstration of Construct 2 for creating an app for Windows 8.

"The framework they are advising us to use seems very complete and apparently turns the process of creating an app/game into just combining different elements and [making] them interact with each other using only logic."

Not only did the event allow students to learn new tools to develop apps, but



LUIS BOLAÑOS/THE BEACON

Microsoft Evangelist, Andrew Duthie, demonstrates a game demo using Construct 2 over Skype to students.

it also allowed for students, like Antonio, to network.

"I learned a little about app building, and I got to speak to people experienced in the field."

Garcia encourages students to enter the App Challenge, along with following the "Microsoft

at FIU" Facebook page for future workshops, Microsoft product giveaways and news of future events.

Antonio felt positively about the event and the App Challenge.

"I think its a really cool contest and provides a great opportunity."

Cardero is hopeful for the future and potentially participating in the App Challenge.

"I got a look at all the tools we can use for the app competition. Hopefully I will make a game or an app."

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FIU Media Arts Festival showcases visual projects

ALFREDO APARICIO
Staff Writer

"I had this idea for a festival that would showcase media work, done mostly by students, but also by faculty and alumni," said Dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication Raul Reis.

The idea grew into the FIU Media Arts Festival, which will be the closing event for the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors

Bureau's Miami Film Month that is designed to showcase Miami's significant role as an international film destination. The festival will provide an opportunity for students in SJMC as well as faculty alumni to showcase visually oriented projects across various fields such as journalism, public relations and advertising.

"We were thinking about the work students do, the classes they take as well as faculty involvement and we thought the unifying element was storytelling," said Reis. "Every-

thing that is produced has a visual representation and students are required to do various multimedia presentations so it made sense to focus on this aspect in our inaugural year."

This year's theme, "Only in Miami..." came from Reis' desire to unite the entries around a common theme regardless of the wide range of entries. "Miami is a very unique city and we wanted the entries to portray this diversity and uniqueness. In the future, we might change the theme or structure of the festival but, for our

first year, this theme seemed to be a good fit for the festival."

Out of the more than 30 entries that were submitted, 25 will be showcased at the festival and represent the rich, exciting culture in Miami.

"The website for the festival was a big help in making the submission process easy and accessible," said Reis. "We are very happy with

SEE MEDIA, PAGE 5

England exchange students talk about cultural differences

A completely different culture lies just across the pond.

English exchange students Jessica Everall, Will Jakes, and Ben Steward, who are juniors studying forensic chemistry, traveled all the way from Norwich, England to experience the Miami lifestyle.

After spending a little over a month here, the changes the trio have experienced are drastic, but exciting.

"It feels like a summer holiday all the time," said Jakes, in reference to the sunny weather, palm trees, and the various sports that are constant throughout the semester, including basketball.

As far as stereotypes go, the fact that most English people drink tea is quite true, except it's served hot.

"We don't drink cold tea. Nobody drinks [cold tea]," said Steward.

"People drink tea all of the

time and usually out of a mug, not a cup and saucer unless they are posh."

In England, dinnertime is not always called "dinner" or "supper" either.

"If you ever hear a British person talking about teatime, they often mean dinnertime!" said Steward.

"Although, I will add that afternoon tea is the stereotyped time for tea and cake [or] biscuits."

Afternoon tea is usually around 3 p.m., but most people, again, refer to dinner as teatime.

As for some major differences between Norwich and Miami, Miami cannot beat the frequent amount of transportation available in Norwich and the rest of England.

"Public transportation is better [and] cheaper," said Jakes.

Gas prices are almost double the amount in England, estimating to about \$8 per gallon. As a result, the cars are much smaller, and public transportation is common to the majority of the Brits.

Even though automobile

transportation is not common, the drivers there differ greatly to that of Miami.

"Texting and talking [on your cellphone] while driving is a big no-no back home," said Jakes.

Everall admits that she found it strange when her friend's foot was propped up on the steering wheel.

"Everyone has manual cars back home," said Everall. Due to this, foot propping is not an option.

Helmets are a must for bikers in England, as well as the use of your indicator, or as we call it, your blinker. Lack of the use of your blinker in the UK is also a big no-no, which can allot to angry drivers who know you are not signaling your turn.

Most Americans can usually mentally translate words and phrases that only the English use. However, in South Florida, Everall, Jakes, and Steward had a bit more trouble.

"I went [to a restaurant] and asked for tomato sauce and the lady looked at me like I just asked for an elephant," said Everall.

Tomato sauce, otherwise

known as ketchup, is one of many different words they use. People wait in a queue, not a line; pants are your underwear, not jeans or trousers; "air-con" is short for air-conditioning, not "A/C;" French fries are known as chips, and our biscuits are known to the English as scones.

Jakes mentioned that he received a surprise one day when he received his food at Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC).

"Why is there a scone in my chicken and chips, and where's the jam and cream?" said Jakes.

The KFCs in England differ in that no biscuits, or scones, are included in a meal.

Some Americans or non-British folk may notice an "xx" or an "x" at the end of a text message, e-mail, or a conversational sentence from any Brit.

"It's a signal that the message has ended," said Jakes.

It also is a small charming indication of adoration or fellowship, but in a general fashion. Most guys address this to female friends rather than to their fellow male friends, and it is mostly used informally.

Fashion for the most part is the same, but after I asked the trio what are the main differences, Everall blurted, "Everyone wears socks and sandals!"

Apparently, this seems to be the biggest difference that most foreigners notice. Other than this American staple, the only eye-catching fashion characteristics are baggy clothing and sports jerseys.

Everall, Jakes, and Steward do not regret joining the University community in South Florida, even though there are some minor and drastic differences.

"All the international students are really close and are in a really tight unit. They are very welcoming and friendly. There [are] people from all over the world," said Jakes.

Miami locals should not be wary to visit England. Just know that the slang, food, and transportation is little to milestones different, but with the right attitude visitors can enjoy all the little things England has to offer, even if it is just a cup of hot tea.

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Media Arts Festival represents Miami culture

MEDIA, PAGE 4

the amount of interest and submissions considering it's our first year and the entries were required to be under five minutes. The qualities of the submissions have also great. We're really happy with the work people have submitted."

One of the entries, an eBook entitled 305: Stories of Miami and South Florida, was produced by journalism students as a class project with the help of Robert "Ted" Gutsche, Jr., an assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Broadcasting, and includes various media like photos, videos and 20 chap-

ters of different stories from the Miami and South Florida areas.

"One of the reasons for the project was to train media students to get ahead of the curve and to get students to think about other forms of media that combine text, images and videos across various disciplines like news and advertising," said Gutsche. "One of the emerging trends in journalism is to put it into electronic books and the iBook software lends itself to making the experience more interactive."

The stories themselves represent the multi-layered Miami culture and deal with the experiences of Hispanics in South Florida. "These are

stories you would only hear in the Miami area. Outside of Miami, 'Hispanic' tends to mean Mexican, so the students were trying to get out these stories about what it's like for Hispanics. Hopefully, it alters people's understanding of the Miami culture and help them realize how this country is such a global space," said Gutsche.

Reis, in agreement with Gutsche, recognizes the festival as not only a way to showcase the talent of the South Florida community but as a way for students to network. "We have a lot of talented alumni doing visual work, music videos, etc. and we wanted to bring them to

campus and expose their work in the same way we do with students work and have the students network and learn from them."

"It's a great event and I hope students can come and meet other people in community," Gutsche said. "It's been exciting to see this community's sense of art flourish."

The FIU Media Arts Festival will take at 5:00 p.m. on March 26 at the College of Architecture + the Arts – Miami Beach Urban Studios. The event is free and open to the public.

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WHERE: FIU Stadium Club
TIME: 11am-1pm OR 6pm-8pm

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Injured Panther comes roaring back

FRANCISCO RIVERO
Staff Writer

Major League pitchers Josh Johnson, Chris Carpenter and Stephen Strasburg all share an amazing story with junior starter Mike Franco.

All four of these pitchers suffered an injury that requires a surgery that is known as Tommy John. The surgery is a procedure in which the ulnar collateral ligament in the elbow is replaced with a tendon from elsewhere in the body.

Normally, the recovery time for pitchers after having the surgery is anywhere between 12 to 18 months. However, all three major league pitchers and Franco returned after only 10 months of recovery.

The injury happened in the summer of 2011.

"I took about a month and a half off throwing when I got invited to play in this summer league. I played third base at the time and after playing third base most of the time, Coach came up to me and said 'here's the ball if you want it,'" said Franco. "Being the guy that I am, I wasn't going to back down from a challenge, I threw five innings just rearing back and throwing all fastballs."

As the days went on after Franco's pitching performance, he started to



BEACON FILE PHOTO

Mike Franco surpassed expectations and recovered from Tommy John surgery in only 10 months, a procedure that usually takes more than a year to come back from.

feel that something was just not right. After a couple of weeks of constant pain in his right arm, returned for his sophomore year of junior college and couldn't even throw 90 feet.

"I spoke with my coach

and we started to do rehabing and my arm started feeling better, but when I went out for my first start, my arm started to feel the same way again," Franco said.

Franco faced a decision

that would be not only a turning point in his baseball career but also in his life: have Tommy John surgery or give up baseball.

"I didn't want to get the surgery, I really thought that I was done playing

ball," said Franco. "I spoke with a few people and they all told me that a lot of people have gotten the surgery and have come back better from it, so I sat down and my roommate was the person that convinced me to get the surgery."

Franco's roommate was his former pitcher, Texas teammate and current Los Angeles Angels minor league pitcher Reid Scoggins. After Franco's surgery, the road to the mound was a long and winding one. However, Franco was determined to get back on the field as fast as he could.

"There were days I wanted to pick up the phone and call the physical therapists and tell them that I wasn't going to be able to come in, but then I realized that I can't be making excuses if I want to come back healthy and strong," said Franco. "I couldn't even sit down and watch my teammates practice because it was too painful for me; I wanted to be out there on the field again so I just dedicated my time to rehabbing."

All throughout his rehab, Franco would remember a motto that he has lived by all his life and would even get that motto tattooed on his right bicep next to his Tommy John scar.

"The saying I came up with is 'Some call it luck, but I call it hard work'. It's just something that I try to live up to all my life," said Franco. "Every time I would wake up and hear people say it's just luck, it's something that he was born with, that's not how I see it. You have to put forth the effort and time to be the best you can be."

After months of hard work and intensive rehabbing, the day finally came when Franco could throw on his baseball uniform, pick up his glove and walk out onto the pitcher's mound he'd been eyeing for 10 months from the bench.

"I called my mom that day because my mom has never seen me pitch a college game and I told her I did it," said Franco. "She would always tell me in Spanish 'you can do it, don't feel sorry for yourself'. It was a game that I wanted to do for my mom because she's done everything for me ever since I was a little kid."

Franco has posted a record of three wins and only one loses so far this season while gathering 11 strikeouts and a 4.86 earned run average as he continues on with his comeback season.

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New look defense calls for new leadership

JONATHAN JACOBSSKIND
Asst. Sports Director

New conference, new coach, new schemes, no Jonathan Cyprien.

These are four tribulations the FIU defense is facing as the team concludes the first week of spring practice. Now with Defensive Coordinator Josh Conklin calling the shots for the Panther defense, spring football gives Conklin the opportunity to implement his defensive strategies for a defense in dire need of a facelift.

In 2012, the defensive unit failed to live up to prodigious expectations after surrendering an average of 31 points and around 400 yards a game. Despite having the liability of improving the FIU defense that needs to be immediately revamped, Conklin has a different mentality in taking the proper time and strategy to setting his system with the right personal.

"It's a process, we're not trying to win the Super Bowl on Saturday. We are trying to get ourselves in position to play the best football we can going into next fall and guys are picking up the defense so we'll just keep adding more as we go," Conklin said. "We are talking about an organizational depth chart and it's not linear, it's circular and we're just going to keep plugging guys through and pretty soon it will define itself."

After failed expectations in 2012 and the move to Conference USA that will feature offenses alien to FIU, the Panthers have an even a bigger pill to swallow: replacing defensive cornerstone and bone-crushing strong safety Cyprien. This April, Cyprien will be trading his blue and gold garments for an NFL uniform, as the all-time leading tackler in FIU history is projected to be selected third among safeties.

With Cyprien headed for

the pros, Conklin stressed that it leaves a void in team leadership and emphasized the need for some of the returning players to step up and take the reigns as leaders. He had two players in mind.

"With a guy like Cyprien gone, you definitely miss that leadership," Conklin said. "Now that he's gone, I expect guys like Sam Miller and Justin Halley to step up and bring that leadership. These are guys that have been here for a while and are great football players."

In 2012, the two defensive standouts combined for 185 tackles and 9 pass breakups with Miller registering just one interception. After a breakout year in 2011 where he was a part of one of best secondaries in the nation in 2012, it earned him a spot on the 2012 preseason All-Sun Belt Conference First-Team.

The 5-foot-10, 190-pound senior, who is taking part in his

final stretch of spring football of his college career, is optimistic things about the new coaching staff and fully embraces the idea of stepping up as one of the leaders on defense.

"It feels great, it's a new atmosphere. These new coaches bring a lot of energy to us and its just great to see what we have as a

unit," Miller said. "It feels good to be a leader on this defense. I have to bring a lot of energy and learn from the guys last year like Cyprien and Tourek Williams who were great leaders of this team."

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“With a guy like Cyprien gone, you definitely miss that leadership. Now that he's gone, I expect guys like Sam Miller and Justin Halley to step up and bring that leadership.”

Josh Conklin
Defensive Coordinator
Football

Women's rugby fighting uphill battle to compete

RHYS WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

Normally, people would expect a team that is competing for a national title to be treated well by their respective school.

Teams may expect some more funding and maybe even some recognition from their school.

However, the women's rugby team here hasn't received any of this and are even looked over for field space to practice.

On March 21, when the team was practicing on the grass fields at Tamiami Park, after having gotten the authorization to do so, they were approached by officials from the Miami-Dade Youth Fair telling the team that they had to move to make way for more parking for fair-goers.

"It is an uphill battle that we have to fight," Head Coach Trevor Alfred said. "We get disregarded in being able to use to the multi-use fields at the school.

Sports like intramural flag-football, soccer, and even the quidditch team get priority over us for use of the fields. We are actually practicing for something big, whereas most of the activities we have to move for don't leave the campus."

One of the team's primary practice spot is in the southwest corner of Tamiami Park, near the Slugger's batting cages, which is not in good shape.

"It is not a very big space and is

rocky and has holes," Alfred said.

The team, via a press release over Facebook, is currently ranked No.1 within the Division II Women's Rugby League in the state. They will compete in the upcoming USA Rugby's South Championships in Georgia, the national playoffs in Pennsylvania and the USA Rugby Women's Collegiate National Championships in California. However, they are asking for support of their journey as the only thing that the

school will pay for are tournament fees.

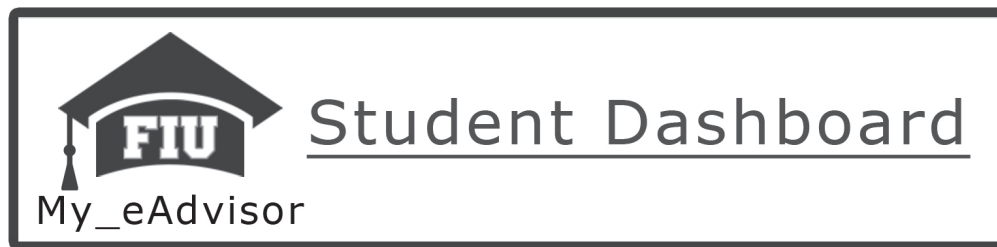
The Recreation Center provides funding, anywhere from \$150 to \$300, for tournament fees. Funds that go towards jerseys, travel and board when need be are all through fundraising by the teams and donations.

For more information on the team, you can visit their website at freeteams.net/fiuwomensrugby.

-sports@fiusm.com

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The University Capital Improvement Trust Fund Fee Committee will be holding public hearings on

Monday, March 25, 2013 MMC
GC 140 at 10:30am
Monday, March 25, 2013 BBC
WUC 155 at 2:00pm

The objective of these meetings will be to give interested individuals an opportunity to hear arguments pertaining to the proposed increase to the CITF fee, used to fund student buildings.

The amended fee will become effective in the Fall 2013 term. Students and other interested individuals are invited to attend these meetings.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The University Health Fee Committee will be holding public hearings on

Thursday, March 28, 2013 MMC
GC 150 at 10:00am
Thursday, March 28, 2013 BBC
WUC 155 at 2:00pm

The objective of these meetings will be to give interested individuals an opportunity to hear arguments pertaining to the proposed increase to the Health Fee.

The amended fee will become effective in the Fall 2013 term. Students and other interested individuals are invited to attend these meetings.

New facility coming soon to the CSHTM

STEPHANIE MASON
Staff Writer

The Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management will soon be finished with its newest and up-to-date renovation.

Beginning in the fall of 2011, the project has taken around two years to complete and is still in need of some finishing touches.

Currently titled the Restaurant Management Lab, the facility was built to provide students with a realistic experience of what it will be like to manage a modern restaurant.

Mohammad Qureshi, associate dean of operations for the CSHTM, estimates that the Restaurant Management Lab will be finished by the end of April and students taking classes in summer will be the first to utilize the facility.

“It is designed for teaching only, so all of our classes that are related to food and beverage can be taught in there,” said Qureshi.

Qureshi notes that the facility will not be a restaurant open to the public, but that does not mean that special events will not be held there.

The facility includes several new features such as a two-story wine tower, various interactive televisions, barista stations, an expanded cooking line and more.

Mihaela Plugarasu, strategic alignment administrator for the CSHTM, said the kitchens have even been “equipped to cook all world cuisine,” so students can be taught how to cook any cuisine from around the world.

According to Plugarasu, the Restaurant Management Lab is an addition to the Southern Wine & Spirits Beverage Management Center. Plugarasu said that hospitality management students need to learn beverage and food skills together as they go hand in hand.

Laura Gonzalez, junior in hospitality management, said she is excited to get to use the new facilities that have been a mystery thus far.

“I think it’s a great opportunity and I do think that FIU does need to update their facilities here,” said Gonzalez. “I feel like there’s not enough to do here and I think more classes that are pertaining to food and to the hospitality industry would not only better the students but better the program.”

According to Qureshi, construction of the Restaurant Management Lab cost around \$7.35 million and has been funded entirely by the money the school has earned from being sponsored annually at the South Beach Wine and Food Festival.

The facility is expected to allow a variety of skills and classes to be taught such as mixology, brewing, restaurant management and possibly even barista training in the future.

Qureshi described the previous facility used for restaurant management classes as just a long room and unlike a real restaurant. For the time being, students in the CSHTM taking the restaurant management classes have been moved to the Kovens Center on the Biscayne Bay Campus.

Isis Acuna, junior in hospitality management, said she is sad she will not get to use the Restaurant Management Lab since she is currently finishing all of her classes that would require the facility in the Kovens Center.

“I think just having those types of equipment in the building will help out a lot faster instead of having printouts and be more eco-friendly and it’s something amazing and it’s going to help us out eventually in the future,” said Acuna.

Qureshi said that not only did they not hold back on technology for this facility, but the development was also done by keeping much of the faculty engaged in the project.

With all aspects of this facility, Qureshi said, “When they [students] go out in industry they will have a better understanding on how to manage assets, people, products, and all those things.”

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STEPHANIE MASON/THE BEACON

The Restaurant Management lab includes several new features such as a two story wine tower, various interactive televisions, barista stations and an expanded cooking line. The facility will be finished by the end of April and students taking classes in summer will be the first to utilize it.

Pitch Perfect



SANA ULLAH/THE BEACON

On March 22, students gathered in Panther Square for Panther Power’s Load Your Bases with Panther Spirit baseball kick-off event. Shaquel Bussue, a sophomore in accounting, takes a photo of Bianca Rodriguez, a freshman in psychology, while she poses for a photo with one of the elementary school kids.

Verification process irks students

VINSON PRESSLEY
Staff Writer

The financial aid process each year may at times be simple and straightforward while in other instances complex and confusing.

FIU participates in the U.S. Department of Education’s Quality Assurance Program, which requires financial aid applications be checked for accuracy. The University complies with the mandate of the Quality Assurance Program through a verification process that involves statistical analysis of students’ financial aid applications to determine accuracy.

According to Francisco Valines, director of financial aid, students apply for financial aid through a Free Application for Federal Student Aid and a sample of students are selected for verification based on a statistical analysis that has determined that these students are likely to make an error in their application for financial aid.

If a student is selected for verification, the financial aid office will request further documentation to substantiate the information inputted on their FAFSA. Students are notified that they have been selected for verification via email and their MyFIU portal, where the requested documents will be under the “to-do lists.”

According to Valines, the IRS Tax Transcript is usually requested of students because it comes directly from the IRS.

W-2s and 1040 forms are unacceptable because that information is provided by the family who completed the forms. However, the only exception to this rule is in the case of identity theft because it is impossible to obtain an IRS Tax Transcript.

The purpose of the verification program is to minimize the error on the FAFSA in order to properly disburse financial aid to students. Valines explained that FIU’s “institution verification program only targets certain areas of the FAFSA.” One of the examples he noted was that a student’s family may have provided inaccurate estimates of their income for that year, which would prompt the Financial Aid office to request more documents to verify that information.

Valines also discussed the difference between the institution verification process and the federal verification process, which is that the institution verification process only focuses on the FAFSAs of the students that attend that individual institution. The federal verification process analyzes the FAFSAs of every student who applies for financial aid. In the case of FIU, over 33,000 students file a FAFSA, according to Valines.

Nina Montoya, sophomore public relations major, was one of those 33,000 students that filed a FAFSA and was selected for verification. Montoya was not fond of the verification process.

“I didn’t know what [Financial Aid]

wanted at first and they weren’t specific about the instructions,” said Montoya. “It was a long and unnecessary process.”

Some students are selected multiple times for the verification process. Alicia Sneij, a graduate student studying nutrition and dietetics, said she was selected for verification two or three times during her undergraduate career.

“It wasn’t stressful; but it was like really, another thing I have to do?” said Sneij.

“Nobody knew what was going on, nobody could help,” said Colleen Lyons, graduate student studying higher education administration. “[My financial aid] wasn’t dispersed, they kept telling me the wrong thing.”

For Lyons, the verification process was perplexing and frustrating. Lyons summed up her frustrating experience and said no one had the passion to really want to help someone.

Although the verification process is perceived as difficult and frustrating by some students, there is a way of filing the FAFSA without being subjected to verification.

According to Valines, students who file the FAFSA and use the “IRS Tax Retrieval” tool to access their financial aid data, will not be subjected to verification because the information will come directly from the IRS.

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