

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Court rules voter fraud; calls for Special Elections

MELHOR LEONOR
Asst. News Director
melhor.leonor@fiusm.com

In a rare occurrence, the Student Government Council at Modesto Maidique Campus Supreme Court ruled “voter fraud took place” during the 2012 presidential elections, mandating a Special Election.

In the opinion released by the court, the panel states that the fraud was so widespread that it “tainted the results of the election.”

“This is going to affect the electoral process for students at-large and students trying to get elected.”

Jose Toscano,
Assistant Director
Campus Life

The court also determined that because of the closeness of the race, the outcome “raise[s] serious doubt about the legitimacy

of the election results.”

With the evidence presented by the petitioner, the court was able to rule on the legitimacy of the allegations of voter fraud by third-party individuals, yet, also stated that the petitioner failed to prove that the campaign in question “requested, enabled, or in some other way facilitated the actions of the third party.”

As a result, the court vacated the results of the FIU SGC-MMC, and directed the Elections Board to conduct a Special Election.

“This has hit like a concussion bomb and we are at a worst case scenario,” said Jose Toscano, assistant director of Campus Life. “Right now looking at the calendar we have graduations, finals week and pre-finals week, the last week of classes. This is going to affect the electoral process for [both] students at-large and the students trying to get elected.”

In the opinion, the court recommends that the eligible candidates “should have a time...to conduct a new campaign for votes.”



SANA ULAH/THE BEACON

Laura Farinas and campaign supporters awaited the election results on April 5. These same results were vacated by court on Friday.

“I’m going to speak to the court regarding that recommendation,” Toscano said. “I think they’ve campaigned enough.”

Additionally, the court held that only candidates who ran for the president and vice-president positions will be eligible to participate in the special elections. These include Sanjeev Udhvani and running mate Connor Mautner, Samir Patel and Andres Wu, along with Farinas and Castro.

“I know the implications of this decision,” said Udhvani, who originally submitted the allegations of voter fraud. “I know this is going to be tough on the student body but I also think it’s fair. This case made history and changes the way we view the election process.”

“I hope [the elections don’t] get in the way of finals week and that it doesn’t impede on university academics,” Patel said.

“I’m grateful for this second chance.”

The Farinas campaign was not available for comment as of press time.

The use of mobile polling stations was addressed by the court as being in violation of the Election’s Code. The court specifically referred to “campaign workers carrying computers around campus, accosting innocent students and soliciting votes for their candidate.”

According to Toscano, the election’s board will have to meet with IT in order to predict possible voting days. Among the possibilities are the last days of finals week and the second to third week of summer A.

“It won’t be solid and we might have technical issues,” Toscano said. “They key is that we need to elect and ensure we have the progression of SGA leadership.”

PUBLIC HEALTH

Students target HIV/AIDS in annual competition

MELISSA CACERES
News Director
melissa.caceres@fiusm.com

Public health graduate students got the chance to pitch their own HIV/AIDS prevention during the second annual Smarty Pants Bowl competition.

The April 11 contest, which involved four teams of 22 students competing for the most effective campaign to spread awareness of the epidemic, was a part of the class curriculum of William Darrow, a professor of program development and evaluation for health promotion at the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work.

“It really gets students to work in teams on an

“When you really get people to participate in this kind of awareness, then you’re really on to something.”

Kate MacMillin,
Professor
School of Journalism and Mass Communication

issue like HIV/AIDS,” said Darrow, who had his students work throughout the whole semester on their prevention plans. “Almost everyone knows

someone who has HIV/AIDS.”

Darrow, who worked for the Center for Disease Control for 33 years, was a member of

the CDC team that first found the connection between sexual activity and HIV transmission.

He hoped that through creating presentations in a competitive setting, the students would be able to “become better public health professionals.”

As part of an initiative with the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the College of Public Health, a panel of five judges from different areas of public health provided feedback for each group’s presentation. Many offered suggestions on how to make their awareness campaign reach target student demographics while still being realistically affordable.

One team, the “Stempel Stompers,” suggested

SEE BOWL, PAGE 2

COMING UP | Life!

Check out Wednesday’s issue for Explore: International for an interview with a student from Jamaica.

ONLINE | www.fiusm.com

Follow us on:
Twitter - @FIUSM
Facebook - FIU Student Media: News,
FIU Student Media: Sports

RADIO | Radiate FM

Tune in to Radiate FM on Mon., Wed. and Fri. for our Opinion, Sports and News shows or check them out on FIUSM.com.

The Radioactive Underground: 88.1 - 95.3 - 96.9

NEWS FLASH

LOCAL

Fla. GOP continue to outraise state Democrats

Heading into a crucial election year, the two main political parties in Florida took large checks from gambling companies, insurers and other special interests during the first three months of the year.

But still the overall fundraising totals were somewhat lackluster - especially for Republicans - in comparison to the money the party raised during 2011.

State campaign finance reports filed late Tuesday showed that the Republican Party of Florida raised nearly \$2.96 million during the first quarter of this year, while the Florida Democratic Party reported raising \$1.15 million during the same period.

It was the lowest quarterly total reported by Republicans since 2009. But it also coincided with a time when Gov. Rick Scott reported raising more than \$900,000 for a political committee that will assist him in his re-election effort. Scott held a major fundraiser for his committee just last week in Sarasota.

The money taken in by both parties will be important during a critical election year when all 160 seats in the Florida Legislature are up because of redistricting. Large checks from companies and other corporations cannot be used by the state party for any federal races in Florida.

WORLD

Russian opposition challenges Putin with walkout

A large opposition faction stormed out of Russia's parliament on Wednesday to protest Vladimir Putin's refusal to look into claims of vote-rigging in a mayoral election that has sparked nationwide anger.

Putin, who returns for a third term as Russian president on May 7, told the Duma he had no authority over local elections and suggested that critics go to court instead to contest the result. His remarks prompted the entire Just Russia faction to leave the session.

Oleg Shein, a member of the Just Russia party who ran for mayor in the southern city of Astrakhan, has been on a hunger strike for 27 days to protest the results of the March 4 poll that he and other opposition figures said was marred by rampant fraud in favor of a Kremlin-backed candidate. About 20 of his supporters have joined the hunger strike.

Shein's protest has received nationwide attention, drawing support from a range of opposition groups struggling after Putin's victory in March's presidential vote. Opposition members have increasingly tried to focus on local elections and saw the Astrakhan vote as a flagrant example of fraud.

— Compiled by Melhor Leonor

ASSOCIATED PRESS

George Zimmerman arrested and charged with second-degree murder

BRENDAN FARRINGTON
GARY FINEOUT
AP Staff

The neighborhood watch volunteer who shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was arrested and charged with second-degree murder Wednesday after weeks of mounting tensions and protests across the U.S.

George Zimmerman, 28, could get up to life in prison if convicted in the slaying of the unarmed black teenager.

Special prosecutor Angela Corey announced the charges but would not discuss how she arrived at them or disclose other details of her investigation, saying: "That's why we try cases in a courtroom."

Second-degree murder is typically brought in cases when there is a fight or other confrontation that results in death but involves no premeditation to kill. It carries a mandatory minimum of 25 years behind bars when a gun is used.

Martin's parents expressed relief over the decision to prosecute their son's killer.

"The question I would really like to ask him is, if he could look into Trayvon's eyes and see how innocent he was, would he have then pulled the trigger? Or would he have just let him go on home?" said his father, Tracy Martin.

Corey would not disclose Zimmerman's whereabouts for his safety but said that he will be in court within 24 hours, at which point he can request bail. He turned himself in in Florida.

Zimmerman's new attorney, Mark O'Mara, said Zimmerman will plead not guilty and will invoke Florida's "stand your ground" law, which gives people wide leeway to use deadly force without having to retreat in the face of danger. The lawyer asked that people

not jump to conclusions about his client's guilt and said he is "hoping that the community will calm down" now that charges have been filed.

"I'm expecting a lot of work and hopefully justice in the end," O'Mara said.

On Tuesday, Zimmerman's former lawyers portrayed him as erratic and in precarious mental condition. But O'Mara said Zimmerman was OK: "I'm not concerned about his mental well-being."

Zimmerman, whose father is white and whose mother is Hispanic, has asserted since the Feb. 26 killing in Sanford that he shot in self-defense after the teenager attacked him. Martin's family argued Zimmerman was the aggressor.

The shooting brought demands from black leaders for his arrest, touched off protests in which people wore hooded sweatshirts like the one the teenager had on, and set off a furious debate over race and self-defense that reached all the way to the White House, where President Barack Obama observed: "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon."

Separately, the U.S. Justice Department's civil rights division is conducting its own investigation.

Corey said the decision to bring charges was based on the facts and the law, declaring: "We do not prosecute by public pressure or by petition."

One of the biggest hurdles to Zimmerman's arrest over the past month was Florida's "stand your ground" law, which affords strong protection to those who use deadly force.

Second-degree murder means a killing that was not premeditated but resulted instead from an "imminently dangerous act" that showed a "depraved" lack of regard for human life.

Some legal experts had predicted the prosecutor would instead bring a charge of manslaughter, which carries up to 15 years behind bars. It is defined as a death that results from a reckless but not a depraved act.

Corey repeatedly declined to answer questions about details in the case.

"So much information got released on this case that never should have been released. We have to protect this prosecution and this investigation for Trayvon, for George Zimmerman," she said.

Legal experts said Corey must have compelling evidence against Zimmerman if she chose to charge him with second-degree murder.

"That indicates they have evidence (Zimmerman) was chasing Trayvon because he was black," said Florida defense attorney Richard Hornsby. "It's difficult to think how one prosecutor didn't charge him at all and another thought there was enough evidence to justify a second-degree charge. It's a pretty drastic swing."

Tensions have risen in recent days in Sanford, a town of 50,000 outside Orlando. Someone shot up an unoccupied police car Tuesday as it sat outside the neighborhood where Martin was killed. And a demonstration by college students closed the town's police station Monday.

But as the hour of the prosecutor's announcement neared, the Martin family and their lawyer pleaded for calm.

Outside Sanford City Hall, Stacy Davis, a black woman, said she was glad to see arrested Zimmerman under arrest. "It's not a black or white thing for me. It's a right or wrong thing. He needed to be arrested," she said. "I'm happy because maybe that boy can get some rest."

THE BEACON

E-BOARD AND PRODUCTION STAFF

| | |
|---|---|
| EDITOR IN CHIEF ALEXANDRA CAMEJO | ASST. OPINION EDITOR BROOKLYN MIDDLETON |
| BBC MANAGING EDITOR JONATHAN SZYDLO | PHOTO EDITOR KRISTI CAMARA |
| PRODUCTION MANAGER/COPY CHIEF LAURA ALONSO | ASST. PHOTO EDITOR ALEXIA ESCALANTE |
| NEWS DIRECTOR MELISSA CACERES | BBC PHOTO EDITOR ANDRES BEDOYA |
| ASST. NEWS DIRECTORS MELHOR LEONOR NADRA MABROUK | COPY EDITORS DIANE ARIAS, JASMYN ELLIOTT, JONATHAN RAMOS, JOHN GIRALT, PATRIK SIMMONS |
| SPORTS DIRECTOR IGOR MELLO | PAGE DESIGNERS CAMILA CALCINES, EISSY DE LA MONEDA, CRISTINA MIRALLES, ALEXANDRA SARDI |
| ASST. SPORTS DIRECTORS RICO ALBARRACIN BRANDON WISE | RECRUITMENT DIRECTOR KYLE PINEDA |
| LIFE! EDITOR ESRA ERDOGAN | BUSINESS MANAGER EDDITH SEVILLA |
| ASST. LIFE! EDITOR VANESSA PAREDES | DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MEDIA ROBERT JAROSS |
| OPINION EDITOR NEDA GHOMESHI | ASST. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MEDIA ALFRED SOTO |



CONTACT INFORMATION

Modesto Maidique Campus:
GC 210, Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-4:30 PM
(305) 348-2709
news@fiusm.com

Biscayne Bay Campus:
WUC 124, Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-4:30 PM
(305) 919-4722
bbc@fiusm.com

Fax:
(305) 348-2712

Editor-in-Chief:
(305) 348-1580
alexandra.camejo@fiusm.com

Advertising:
(305) 348-6994
advertising@fiusm.com

The Beacon is published on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during the Fall and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer B. One copy per person. Additional copies are 25 cents. The Beacon is not responsible for the content of ads. Ad content is the sole responsibility of the company or vendor. The Beacon is an editorially independent newspaper partially funded by student and services fees that are appropriated by student government.

Students aim at awareness

BOWL, PAGE 1

a program that relied heavily on the youth's use of mobile phones to connect HIV/AIDS information with the disease's key demographic.

Judges felt that the idea was ambitious and "a little too ahead of our time."

"It's so hard to come to a decision on these presentations because you always want to encourage students," Florence Greer, public health practicum coordinator at the University, who was one of the judges in last year's competition.

The winning team, the "Bionic 6," won over the judges with their multimedia video that explained their idea through elements like interviews, info graphics and branding.

"It was such a hands-on experience," said Amani Odhman, public health master's student and team leader for the "Bionic 6."

Odhman and her teammates

created a logo combining the red HIV/AIDS ribbon and the FIU panther paw, which would serve as a main marketing tool in their campaign.

"None of us [on my team] had any experience in video or graphic design," said Odhman.

Journalism professor and contest judge Kate MacMillin, who produced the WPBT tele-

vision special "Tell Somebody: The New Face of AIDS" was impressed by the team's use of engagement through their video and emphasis on social media.

"When you really get people to participate in this kind of awareness, then you're really on to something," said MacMillin.

CLASSIFIED AD

EASY MONEY, FLEXIBLE HOURS, make \$100-500 a week: DC non-profit looking for current students to table or walk the campus to collect marketing data from student body. Start immediately, make a difference in the community, and add value to your resume. Incentive pay and bonuses. Email HR@abcte.org if interested. Training and materials provided.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Players request release papers in wake of Isiah Thomas firing



BEACON FILE PHOTO

All but four players on the current roster have asked for a release after the firing of Isiah Thomas on April 9.

IGOR MELLO
Sports Director
igor.mello@fiusm.com

As college hopefuls begin to sign their letters of intent to the universities of their choice, the men's basketball team is still without a coach and possibly without any recruits. And now the school could lose the majority of their current players.

During the annual athletics banquet on April 9, six players staged a walk-out when they were being honored.

After serving three seasons at FIU, Isiah Thomas and his entire coaching staff was fired on April 6, just five days before the initial signing period began for basketball recruits.

Because of the popularity of Thomas, the news of his firing and the protest of his former players have brought national attention to FIU from numerous sports outlets.

As a result, the players have found other ways to voice their frustration in the wake of the firing of Thomas.

"It's just sketchy how they have handled it," said Tanner Wozniak, who will be a sophomore next season. "They waited an entire month and a half [to fire Thomas] and that puts us in a hole."

And now just days after walking out, the players, led by DeJuan Wright, have written a letter to University President Mark Rosenberg asking for an explanation on

why they are not being allowed to transfer.

"It was all composed by everyone on the team and sent to President Rosenberg through an attachment email," Wright said.

According to Wright, nine out of the 13 players on the current roster are demanding the school to release their scholarships so that they can attempt to transfer out of FIU. Rosenberg declined to comment to Student Media.

"I don't know what I would do [if I can't get my release]," said Wozniak. "I will keep my options open."

Tola Akomolafe (who is a junior college transfer), Cameron Bell, Steven Miro and Manuel Nunez are the only players that have decided to remain on the team for now.

"They should have their freedom [to stay or go] since they came to play for Isiah Thomas and he was fired," said Wright, who served four years at FIU and is not eligible to play for the team next season.

Whether Thomas was the coach at FIU or not, Dominique Ferguson does not want to be in Miami. The Indianapolis native felt homesick and filed a request to release his scholarship in mid-March, nearly three weeks before Thomas was let go. Ferguson will be a junior next season.

"I had a meeting with Julie [Berg] (Senior Associate AD) and I was denied. They didn't give me a reason for why I was being denied,

kind of like how they did not give a reason for Isiah [Thomas] being fired," Ferguson said.

The Athletic Department did not grant his release, so Ferguson considered staying at FIU. But when it was announced that the school was making a coaching change, Ferguson quickly filed an appeal to have his scholarship released.

The last player to appeal for a scholarship release was Freddy Asprilla in 2009. Asprilla, a 6-10 forward/center, went on to leave FIU to play in the junior collegiate level, enrolling at Miami-Dade College at the time.

If an athlete transfers to another NCAA school, they must sit out a year before becoming eligible to play for that school.

"It's not like we came here for FIU. We came here for Isiah Thomas," Ferguson said.

Regardless of the outcome, Ferguson has vowed to never dress in an FIU jersey again.

"I'm done here. It is a business but you can't trust an AD that just fired your coach for no reason," Ferguson said. "I am not attending school here [next year]."

FIU has less than a month to round up their recruiting class for 2012. May 16 is the final day for any recruit to sign their letter of intent. They may need to fill up more spaces in their roster if the school grants any of the nine players who are demanding to transfer out.

Vacant coaching positions may be a sign of concern

The start of a school year is like a clean slate, but somehow, Athletics just kept throwing dirt all over that slate, nearly burying it.

Between June 2011 and April 2012, the FIU coaching

the nation.

But for a coach like Tomic to move to the Mid-American Conference from the Sun Belt is virtually a lateral move. Those transitions have brought up a bit of questioning into how things are being handled internally.

The firing of Thomas is one that was questionable. For the amount of money that was left on his contract, around \$560,000, that still has to be paid to Thomas, the timing just does not add up. Coupled with the fact that the new coach will also need some kind of compensation means that that coach will hardly be able to make any kind of money.

It is a frustrating thing to see a program that has the potential to become a national power, but it is always tripped up by the little speed bumps like this.

Stability can never be established if a coach is not given his or her proper time to put his or her imprint on the program. In the case of Thomas, he still had two more years on his contract and supposedly had top recruits in the state of Florida on the way in next year. The system is set up to where it is only beneficial for the coach because they can decide at anytime to leave for a better situation.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN

Obviously, this year was a bit of an outlier for 30 percent of the head coaches to be fired. It won't happen like this every year. But when cases like this come up, it brings into question whether it is the coach or athletic director who is more at fault.

The next few years at FIU will be very telling as to what exactly the department is going to become, whether more head coaches will be fired or decide to take on better positions. Lest we forget that Mario Cristobal was out the door, twice. If he would have decided to leave, then this program would have been completely decimated.

That would have taken this place back into the stone age of Intercollegiate Athletics.

COMMENTARY



BRANDON WISE

staffs have gone through a face lift, seeing four new head coaches over that time span. It all started when Beth Torina, head softball coach, took the same position at Louisiana State University over the summer.

The school year began and all attention went straight to the football program, while a historically more successful program in volleyball was placed on the back burner.

Once the season ended, head coach Danijela Tomic took her experience elsewhere, namely Bowling Green State University.

At the same time, the men's soccer program was floundering and the decision was made to get rid of head coach Munga Eketebi after sub par years.

And now the news of Isiah Thomas being let go just adds to the list of coaches who were a part of the university heading into the season and are no longer here.

This University has 14 Division-I athletic programs. This year, nearly 30 percent of them were without leadership, without guidance and without a way to go.

In this day and age of the coaching carousel in major college sports, it is impossible to ever predict exactly what a coach has in mind for his or her future. But I do believe it says something about the department if a few of the more respected coaches decide to move on.

Torina had a better job become available. It is completely understandable for her to make the jump from the Sun Belt conference to the Southeastern Conference, which is arguably the most prestigious in

TENNIS

Coach downplays upcoming SBC tourney



BEACON FILE PHOTO

Christine Seredni (above) is 3-3 in her last six single's matches.

JONATHAN JACOBSKIND
Staff Writer
jonathan.jacobskind@fiusm.com

After finishing the season losing five out of their last five events, tennis head coach Melissa Applebaum-Dallau has gotten practice underway in preparation for the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

Despite the magnitude of the tournament and the chance of earning an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament, Applebaum-Dallau has downplayed the importance of the conference tournament in Denton, Texas.

“My philosophy on [the tournament] is not to make it a big deal. To me it is just another match,” Applebaum-Dallau said. “Just because there is a label on it does not really mean anything to me.”

The team has been working on routine baseline drills in preparation for the tournament.

Lisa Johnson has been pairing up with Karyn Guttormsen, the team's leader in wins during singles play this season. Christine

Seredni matched up with Giulietta Boha.

“We really have not changed anything in practice,” said Seredni, who is playing in her last Sun Belt Tournament as a senior. “We have been sticking to the same drills and such.”

Johnson takes most of her practice time to work on her fitness and cardio. She also spares extra time to focus on the minor details and aspects of the game as well as getting back in sync with Seredni.

Despite the enhanced motivation to win her final conference title, Johnson is sticking to her coach's philosophy and is not changing their approach to this year's tournament compared to last season, when they won the 2011 Sun Belt Championship.

“I'd say there is extra motivation. I definitely want to win it being that it's my last year,” Johnson said. “Everything is still staying the same. It worked out last year when we won [the conference].”

The team has also been participating in consistency drills as well as working on

serves and returns, which played a role in the last couple of matches for FIU. The Panthers have struggled with the serve, especially in the last game of the season. The Panthers dropped a 4-2 contest against No. 49 Fresno State on April 6.

Applebaum-Dallau, the 2011 Sun Belt Coach of the Year, maintains her confidence in how her team will fare in the tournament. During her four-year tenure at FIU, Applebaum-Dallau's squad has only surrendered two losses within conference play.

Both of those losses came against North Texas, the host for the SBC Championships.

“Whether we are the number one seed or the number 13th seed, we are a team where people are going to say, ‘oh we do not want to play them,’” Applebaum-Dallau preached.

“So I tell the girls we just have to go one match at a time, regardless if it's three or four matches in a row... our goals do not change, we just need to go out there, get it done and live in the moment.”

Don't change your life.
Change your protection.

Get up to 12 hours of period protection. Softcup® lets you do anything—from sleeping to sports to swimming. Easy to use and comfortable, Softcup lets you live life without interruptions.

Find your nearest store at softcup.com

See what real women are saying about Softcup at [facebook.com/softcup](https://www.facebook.com/softcup)

Learn about Softcup

SPC



UPROAR

SANA ULLAH
Staff Writer
life@fiusm.com

Students gathered by the soccer field, pushing their way toward the front of the stage for a perfect view of their guest artists: Gym Class Heroes and Big Sean. On April 11, Wednesday night, students roared and shook the base.

The Student Programming Council held a previous competition for students to win a chance to meet the artists backstage. For the concert, SPC positioned the contest winners in the front row.

"I'm so excited to see Big Sean perform. I love his song, 'Memories,'" said SPC's contest winner, Justin Hu, a sophomore accounting major.

Gym Class Heroes was welcomed on stage by University students with howls and cheers. While Travie McCoy joked about Miami girls being gorgeous, he opened the performance with his hit single, "Cupid's Chokehold," dedicating it to the couples in the crowd.

Not only did Gym Class Heroes sing about relationships,

but they also sang about having confidence in yourself.

"Raise your fists in the air if you've been pushed into a corner and if someone pointed out your flaws as though you don't already know them," said McCoy.

More than half the crowd raised their clenched hands as high as they can.

"Keep your fists in the air because there's six people on stage that believe in you," said McCoy, the lead singer of Gym Class Heroes.

Although a few students fell ill from the congestion and got rowdy from the pushing, the hype was not over. Big Sean walked on stage and the students screamed with excitement.

He played all his hit singles, such as "Marvin Gaye and Chardonnay" and "Dance (Ass)." Big Sean continually told the crowd to repeat after him, "Everybody say 'do it,'" and sang his line from Kanye's song, "Mercy."

The bass was accepted and felt in everyone's chests, while they hopped with their arms reached out. SPC's UPRoar concert was once again a success.



Big Sean [top left and bottom right] headlined at the UPRoar concert, the annual spring concert hosted by SPC. Travie McCoy, the lead singer for Gym Class Heroes, entertained the audience as the opening act [bottom left and upper and middle right].

PHOTOS BY SANA ULLAH/THE BEACON

REEL TO REEL

"Bully" has good intentions, but terrible execution

Bullying is a disturbing issue that affects people of all ages, and often those who suffer the most are left in silence. In comes the Weinstein Company, on the highest of horses, to bring the world a documentary that declares "it's time to take a stand" as its tagline. Unfortunately, "Bully" does not even come close to offering a realistic look at bullying in the U.S.

The feature documentary "Bully" shows how different students and families from around America have been affected by bullying. The main focus is a 12-year-old boy named Alex from Iowa.

He suffers regularly from teasing and even physical violence while his encounters with other students, his family and the administration are followed closely by the camera.

Alex's story is not the only one told in the film, as audiences are given a look into the lives of a number of other children. Ja'Meya is a young girl who was sent to juvenile hall after being tormented so much that she had to resort to bringing a gun aboard her school bus.

Another young girl, Kelby, has been ostracized by her community after coming out as lesbian and is attempting to deal with it through the support of her friends and family. Also featured are stories of parents who have lost children due to suicide and who have even launched the organization Stand for the Silent, which is dedicated to preventing school bullying and youth suicide.

The film's greatest issue is that every story that does not relate to Alex is left to die after being established. Both Ja'Meya and Kelby's stories have key issues other than bullying that are important for today's generation, including gun violence, race and sexuality.

It is disappointing that a film like this allows these two well-established stories to dissolve into a series of landscape shots and a lot of walking around with friends and families where nobody speaks.

The touchy, but equally important, subject of suicide is handled slightly better, but barely touches anything that would indicate why these kids would take their lives aside from the big bad word "bullying" without actually placing a face on this threat.

While some of these stories are genuinely sad, the film relies on getting as many people to cry on

screen as often as possible, allowing for the emotional manipulation of audiences everywhere.

As if the unevenness of the film was not bad enough, some of the camera work makes one wonder how anyone ever gave a camera to director Lee Hirsch. There are one too many landscape shots, as well as shots of teens staring off into the distance, and the amount of times that the camera purposely goes out of focus for no reason is obnoxiously distracting.

Many of the bullying incidents with Alex on his bus route feel entirely staged and would have benefited from using archival footage from the bus itself, as with Ja'Meya's incident.

"Bully" just feels like multiple after-school specials. There is the one about bullying with a bunch of reenactments that will not admit to being staged, the one about youth suicide, and the one about how flawed the school administration is. If you poorly edited together those three with a BBC nature documentary and tried to limit yourself to under 100 minutes, "Bully" would be your result.

One would think with all the time spent attempting to lower the film's MPAA rating from R to PG-13 for the benefit of students, "Bully" would actually be geared toward a younger



PHOTO COURTESY OF HINTV.COM

Documentary film "Bully" changed its rating from R to PG-13 last minute.

audience.

It is hard to believe, but those who will probably be most impacted by this film are the susceptible parents who will practically eat up anything.

The few students who actually end up paying money to watch this movie will likely find themselves as restless as the ones in my theater. They will be the ones who end up walking out with just as little knowledge on the effects of bullying as before.

Maybe it is because I have experienced bullying in my past, but I expect more from a documentary tackling something that causes as much suffering as this. Every child, parent, student and friend in this

movie deserves better. Every person who this film is meant to reach out to deserves better.

Anyone interested in The Bully Project should explore their website, as the intent behind the documentary is truly good-hearted. Everyone deserves a chance to tell their story, and you can read about hundreds of others online.

For those who want to spend \$10 on a poorly made documentary, "Bully" is now playing at AMC Sunset Place.

Reel to Reel is a weekly film review column. Juan Barquin has seen 152 films this year and counting.

COVER TO COVER

Novel leaves readers wanting more

Jude Keffy-Horn and Teddy McNicholas spent the majority of their teenage years in a haze, with their eyes tired and heavy from which-ever drug they managed to get their hands on from day to day.

But all that changed one night when the two passed out after sniffing Freon from an air conditioning unit, and only Jude woke up.

In her popular novel, "Ten Thousand Saints," Eleanor Henderson takes readers through the everyday experiences of Jude's life, as well as many other characters' lives in the novel that are close to him, like Teddy and Jude's family.

After Teddy's death, Jude moves to New York to live with his brother Johnny, who introduces him to the music scene and a new life in the Big Apple.

In the novel, characters like Johnny and his and Jude's mutual love interest, Eliza, often steal the show from Jude, who seems to be the glue that ties their stories together.

As the story transitions through the '80s and into later decades, so

does Jude, as he grows from being a druggie to a "straight-edged punk." In its entirety, the story is about coming-of-age in the midst of a changing culture, and is one that would be easy for anyone to relate to.

Whether it is because many have been through a change or coming-of-age like Jude's, or through a familiarity to the characters' personalities, the book is extremely realistic and relatable.

The novel is a nostalgic piece of art that describes the period's music and cultural scenes. If *The Misfits* does not ring a bell, you might feel a little left out of the story from time to time; however, Henderson does not fail in getting the reader to fully grasp her story, with or without an understanding of these references.

However, the greatest flaw of the book is in Henderson's descriptions of such nostalgia. The author describes every facet of every object in every room every character enters in a way that is both repetitive and often times completely unnecessary.

At some point, people stop caring about how gray the sky is and care more about what the characters in the book are actually doing underneath it.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BROADWAYWORLD.COM

Eleanor Henderson is the writer of "Ten Thousand Saints."

Besides this, the book left me with very few complaints. It is short, sweet, and besides some frivolous descriptions, the majority of the author's diction proves to be artfully purposeful. The book is not one full of action, horror or glamour, but one that reflects reality in a charming, thought-provoking manner.

Because of all the great aspects of the novel, Henderson's debut has left me and, I can only assume, many other fans of hers in anticipa-

tion of her next book. In the meantime, however, "Ten Thousand Saints" is available at the University's Barnes and Noble.

The novel, which has received great reviews from *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *The Boston Globe*, is worth a read, as it is a subtle, outstanding example of modern literature.

Cover to Cover is a biweekly book review column. Email at kelly.malambri@fiusm.com

KONY 2012

Viral movement loses hype due to speculations

ASHLEY MARIE LAPADULA
Staff Writer
life@fiusm.com

Who knew a 30-minute film could capture the attention of so many? If you have not heard of "Kony 2012" by now, there is a chance you have not been near the Internet in about a month. However, whether the impact of the video still remains among students is now in question.

The short film created by California-based advocacy group Invisible Children, which was released March 5, went viral a few days after and currently has over 89 million views on YouTube.

The film's sole purpose was, and continues to be, promoting a movement that plans to make Joseph Kony, a Ugandan war criminal, famous, making it possible to find him and arrest him.

The video has not only reached Congress and the African Union, but it has also appealed to a wider international audience.

"Kony 2012" has really changed my views on the

ment after the creator and founder, Jason Russel, was detained due to a meltdown less than two weeks after the video was released, affecting their willingness to become further involved with "Kony 2012."

Samantha Garcia, a business major, said, "The video received so much commentary for not including more than a single Ugandan voice, and the fact that the founder Jason Russell suffered a public meltdown has really put into question for me the authenticity of the video."

Similarly, Kim Armstrong, a senior majoring in psychology and criminal justice, expressed her frustration with the whole campaign.

"When it first came out, it went viral and it was huge, but then when I looked more into it, it was iffy. It was one of those things that people were jumping the gun on it before reading more into it," she said.

Armstrong went on to say that she did not plan to participate in the "Cover the Night" event.

Like Armstrong, many

UPCOMING EVENTS

16

MONDAY

NATURE PRESERVE VOLUNTEER DAY
WHEN: 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
WHERE: MMC Nature Preserve

CRIMINAL LAW CAREER DAY
WHEN: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
WHERE: Atrium, RDB 1000 and RDB 1006

CHRIS ALVY BAND
WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: No cover, \$5 tables
WHERE: Upstairs at The Van Dyke

MIAMI RUM RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL
WHEN: Daily
HOW MUCH: \$40-\$50
WHERE: Deauville Resort

SICILIAN FILM FESTIVAL
WHEN: Daily
HOW MUCH: \$15
WHERE: Miami Beach Cinematheque

"WINNING ART!"
WHEN: Daily
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Art Center South Florida

17

TUESDAY

CHAMBER PLAYER SERIES: THE FIU CHAMBER PLAYERS
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$15.00 General Admission, \$10.00 Seniors and FIU Faculty/Staff, \$5.00 FIU Students and Alumni Association Members
WHERE: Herbert & Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center, Concert Hall

AMA FIU PRESENTS THE 2012 HONDA CIVIC COUPE
Join us for music, food and giveaways.
WHEN: 12-4 p.m.
WHERE: Outside Graham Center, South Entrance

WOMEN ON THE MOVE PROGRAM
WHEN: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
WHERE: Hyatt Regency Bonaventure

TO HAVE YOUR EVENT FEATURED
EMAIL:
CALENDAR@FIUSM.COM

“People shouldn't form their opinions on just that one documentary...”
Claudia Vega,
Sophomore
Sociology/Psychology major

situation in Uganda. It's sad to see the circumstances there, and it is truly heartbreaking. Although the video has blown over in recent weeks, I think it is important that we continue to follow up on this movement," said Krystal Lopez, an international politics major.

Near the end it states that April 20 will be the time for viewers to take action at an event called "Cover the Night." The organization encouraged everyone to go out and fill the streets with Kony-related content to fully raise awareness.

The participation of students is key, but students share speculation about the actual move-

Additional reporting by Vanessa Paredes.

BORDERLESS WITH BROOKLYN

Final thoughts - the ripple effect

The notion that it is wholly an issue of ethics or morality to promote women's status globally is insufficient.

Predicated on the fact that a reoccurring theme woven into all issues I've discussed in my columns pertain to women, it is poignant to illustrate just how essential "women's issues" are to states' interests and overall global well being.

COLUMNIST



BROOKLYN MIDDLETON

There needs to be a disclaimer that the phrase "women's issues" is inherently problematic; the assertion that issues affecting all of humanity are solely "women's" is not just dismissive, but provides an easy justification for total inertia by people who are not, in fact, women.

Furthermore, should the graduating class and future graduating classes want to truly orchestrate social change and implement initiatives

“If you want to change the world, support organizations and initiatives that encourage reproductive health and an increase in access to birth control.”

that promote equality and progression - women do not just need to be a part of their conversation, they need to be the entire conversation.

There is no greater ripple effect produced, universally, than that of a wanted and planned child being born into the world.

This intentionally oversimplified statement should be the mantra of every developed or underdeveloped nation.

The World Health Organization reports every

year that women who have the resources and education to plan motherhood have far better health than those who do not.

Equally important, in regions where reproductive health is promoted and resources are ensured, are lower levels of infant and maternal mortality.

There is a strong, direct correlation between girls and women's access to birth control and their education, as well as their children's

educations.

This cannot be overemphasized; if you want to change the world, support organizations and initiatives that encourage reproductive health and an increase in access to birth control.

Our era is experiencing unprecedented changes. We have never been so globally connected as we are in this moment.

The ramifications of the Arab Spring are still unfolding, and, closer to home, the United States is experiencing a sort of identity crisis as it seeks to be a leader in, well, almost everything, but continues to appoint lawmakers that insist on pushing forward legislation that marginalizes women.

It is not just a poetic catchphrase that we should look at the status of women to gauge the prosperity of the nation - it is a concept that has been proved repeatedly - though one that is paradoxically forgotten constantly.

Email at brooklyn.middleton@fiusm.com.

Labels a pointless method

LAUREN ROVIRA

Staff Writer

lauren.rovira@fiusm.com

What does it mean to be a conservative these days? What does it mean to be a Republican or a feminist? When you tell another person you are a democrat, what does that say?

My conjecture on the matter is that telling someone you are (insert any label here) means absolutely nothing.

The labels that divide our society don't really tell us anything about ourselves or others; rather, they provide people a means to compartmentalize based on their own interpretations of the meaning of the label used.

As if the natural psychologically-occurring barriers weren't enough, let's throw a mess of useless, hardly definable terms into the mix.

I first gave this thought on a bus ride with some girls I had just met. We were talking about the possibility of replacing environmentally-damaging energy sources with solar energy.

They started discussing how anti-environment Republicans are, and my brow furrowed.

"I'm a Republican," I told them, somewhat peeved, and they both turned to me confused.

Over the years, it is true that the trend among the majority of "Republicans" has been to dismiss environmental issues as irrelevant or non-existent, but that doesn't mean all Republicans do.

There is an overabundance of

partisan dispute on Capitol Hill. When we divide ourselves into groups, even if we only do so to assume a name, we normally begin by citing all the ways we are dissimilar to the outsiders.

Within our own groups, we see the differences among our members, but from inside looking out towards others, we expect that the rest is all of the same breed, color, shape, size and form.

In doing so, we become even more inclined to believe and fight for the exact opposite of what we presume the outsiders believe.

In such a combative atmosphere, nothing productive can get done.

Take, for instance, the break-up of the Latin vote in Congress. Subsequent to a non-policy related disagreement over a member's trip to Cuba, Republican House Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Henry Bonilla and Mario Diaz-Balart split from Congress and formed the Congressional Hispanic Congress.

Since the split in the 1990s, the Caucus has been host to Democrats and the Conference to Republicans.

Whereas, prior to the split, the group could back causes that would benefit the whole of the United States' Latino community, nowadays, they are more caught up in partisan debates.

This is the "us vs. them" effect so often lectured about in political science and social psychology classes.

This also explains the attitude the girls had toward me

thereafter. They picked at the holes in "Republican" viewpoints, and asked me how it was I called myself one (they were "Democrats").

When I sat to think about that question afterward, I really didn't know what to say because there isn't much to be said.

The fact of the matter is, we all have differing viewpoints, and although I can understand and appreciate the organizational benefits of adopting labels, they cease to be helpful when the definition becomes entirely intangible and counter-productive when in use.

I'm socially moderate, which is itself a manner of labeling my beliefs, but I'm going to assume for the sake of this relation that it's a little more specific than branding myself with a political party.

I'm also fiscally conservative. I believe in reducing spending when there is a crisis, and investing in high-profit, high-yield industry when there is the capital and proper timing to do so.

I dislike the idea of big government, and I'm not of the persuasion that socialism of any kind is a fortuitous thing.

For most people, that makes me a Republican. For some it makes me a staunch Republican.

For others, it may make me a Libertarian, or a moderate. I don't know if someone else would deem me a Democrat, but I would not be altogether surprised if someone did. The confusion therefore is superfluous.

University fairground ownership denied

LOURDES GINART

Contributing Writer

opinion@fiusm.com

In March, the University was denied the ownership of the Miami-Dade county fairgrounds, the current location for the Miami-Dade County Youth Fair.

The county and Mayor Carlos Gimenez turned down the University's proposal.

In a letter to Florida lawmakers, Mayor Gimenez explained his objection. Gimenez did not want to push "the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition from its long-time home abutting FIU's main campus to a site outside the county's sprawl-controlling urban development boundary (UDB)."

While Gimenez's objection may not be in favor of our beloved university, his objection is pivotal to the protection of the Everglades.

Located in the northeast quadrant of the Bird Drive Wetland Basin, originally part of the Everglades, the land was purchased as a water conservation and recharge project for the South Florida Waste Management District.

However, the project went sour in 2008 and the land has been left alone since. That is, until FIU and the county scouted the land.

As the lack of parking spaces increases, along with the growing student body, the University hopes to expand its land.

As convenient as expanding FIU next door seems to be, moving the fairgrounds onto Everglades' territory is not convenient.

Yet, lawmakers fail to realize just how inconvenient this would be for the environment.

According to Everglades Coalition, the Bird Basin is "within historic footprints of the Everglades and has robust ecological value."

Developing an urban center on this land would destroy nearby bird nesting colonies, a crucial and protected area of the Everglades.

Not only would urbanization affect ecosystems within range, it would also impact the county's water supply.

Laura Reynolds, a Tropical Audubon Society spokesperson, argued that using the land would not be such an issue, that it could be used for research by FIU or as a park for wetlands preservation.

Leaving the land as is or converting it into a community park would serve a greater purpose than having it used for less than a month each year.

Rather than urbanizing the land and risking environmental damage, the SFWMD and Miami-Dade County should return the land to its rightful owners - the Everglades National Park.

Reynolds claims that Florida does not realize the economic value of maintaining this green space - and she is right.

This green space was once part of a massive swamp that dominated the now urban South Florida.

The massive swamp is known by most as the Everglades National Park, a designated area, withered down to a fraction of its original size, that has been forced under lawful protection because city development was tampering with nature, and a part of Florida's history.

Now, the very same issue that already destroyed priceless Everglades land is threatening this green space once again.

DISCLAIMER

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

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Have something on your mind? Send your thoughts in (500 word maximum) to neda.ghomeshi@fiusm.com or drop by our offices at either GC 210 or WUC 124. With your letter, be sure to include your name, major and year.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Editorials are the unified voice of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor in chief, management, and the editors of each of the five sections. The Beacon welcomes any letters regarding or in response to its editorials, send them to opinion@fiusm.com

ENVIRONMENT

Squirrels are ‘funny critters who are fun to observe’

STEPHANIE FELDMAN

Staff Writer

stephanie.feldman@fiusm.com

Scurrying up and down trees and popping their heads out of the blue garbage cans that line the University’s buildings, squirrels seem to be at home at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

One of South Florida’s most common native animals, the Grey Squirrel is exceptionally adaptive and athletic as demonstrated by its ability to jump from second story railings to trees and back.

Squirrels are active during the day, where they spend most of their time on the ground scavenging for food. This frantic search for lunch has led many students to come in direct contact with these creatures.

Students walking to class are often footsteps away from squirrels, and those who chose to enjoy their meal outside often attract several bushy tailed guests.

Although squirrels are usually vegetarian, with seeds, acorns, and nuts making up most of their diet, they have become spoiled by the abundance of food and garbage left on campus. Squirrels are urban scavengers, with a keen eyesight, sense of smell, and amazing ability to dive in and out of the trash bins equipped with swinging doors.

This seemingly endless and easy to obtain food source, fueled by people feeding them, has resulted in many of the squirrels losing their fear of people. Alex Lasky, a senior International Relations major, feels that this increase in squirrels on campus is disturbing.

“I felt the squirrels kept watching me

eat. It has become quite uncomfortable with them around,” Lasky said. “Very uninvited guests.”

She along with many students realize that as soon as they sit down beneath the shade of a tree, they are under the watch of many black beady eyes, waiting for a crumb to fall.

According to Joel Heinen, a professor of Environmental Studies, squirrels “lose their fear as people feed them and can become rather aggressive in trying to get food.”

As far as a dramatic increase on campus, Heinen explains that “Squirrels are rodents and many rodents go through natural population cycles of booms and busts.”

Eastern Grey squirrels breed twice a year and can give birth to up to eight young per litter. With the squirrels living up to twelve years in the wild, access to year round food sources, and a lack of predators, populations have grown.

And while squirrels are capable of becoming infected with and spreading Rabies, this is extremely rare, but students should still avoid feeding or touching the wild animals.

“There is little need to worry about squirrels from a disease or human safety standpoint,” Heinen said.

Brany Boza, a junior advertising major, is not bothered by the animals as he sees the squirrels on campus as entertaining.

“[They’re] funny critters who are fun to observe and bother no one,” Boza said.

According to Heinen, squirrels are not harmful. He does not believe the University should take any steps in eradicating or reducing their populations.



ANDRES BEDOYA/THE BEACON

Squirrels’ population on campus has increased. Students walking to class or sitting outside find themselves coming in contact with the quick creatures. Their boldness around people is fueled by students feeding them and the abundant garbage left on campus.

‘TAKE ONE’ ON CAMPUS



ANDRES BEDOYA/THE BEACON

Jarrod Knowles, senior and information technology major is filming a scene from his horror movie about college students exploring and then getting themselves killed. He hopes, through his film, to help develop FIU’s film program.

LGBT

Author to address gender identity issues in lecture

STEVE MESA

Staff Writer

steve.mesa@fiusm.com

Author and activist Chaz Bono will speak as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Awareness Week tonight at 6:30 p.m. in the Wolfe University Center ballroom.

Bono has written three books including his latest one, “Transition: The Story of How I Became A Man,” which about his struggle to match his gender identity with his own body and his transformation from female to male.

Bono was also a competitor on last season’s “Dancing with the Stars.”

“His life and his book are a taboo topic that shouldn’t be because everyone is entitled to personal freedom of choice whatever it may be,” said Lauren Gonzalez, a senior

journalism major.

In his lecture tonight, Bono will talk about his life experiences, including gaining acceptance from his family, and will touch upon a variety of LGBT issues such as marriage and transgender equality.

“I think he is a great speaker,” said Jeffrey McNamee, associate director of Multicultural Programs and Services. “He has a great platform and a great story to tell in his lecture.”

Craig Cunningham, the director of Campus Life, said that some FIU students did not understand the needs of transgender individuals.

“Many people at FIU are not aware that we have transgender student on our campus,” Cunningham said. “There are some needs for transgendered individuals such as

gender-neutral bathrooms on campus and that they might have some special physical and emotional health services available to them.”

McNamee says that he hopes that people will come away with something good from the lecture by listening to Bono’s story with an open mind.

Tickets are available at the Information Desk in WUC for FIU students, faculty and staff. It is \$10 in advance for the general public and \$20 at the door. The lecture will be sponsored by Student Government Association, Student Programming Council and other FIU organizations.

“I hope they will learn more about gender-identity and understand that we as a community need to be conscious of the needs of transgender individuals,” Cunningham said.