

Alumnus and students face felony charges in exam theft ring

MADISON FANTOZZI & DIEGO SALDANA-ROJAS
FIUSM Staff

Three students and an alumnus are facing felony charges as part of an exam theft ring. The scheme involved breaking into an Owe Ehan room, hacking into a professor's email to obtain unauthorized exams and selling the stolen material to students during finals week.

Krissy Demadrid, 21, Jason Caldeon, 23, Neissy Vasquez Amador, 22, and 30-year-old alumnus Alex Anaya have been charged with dealing in stolen property.

Information about their December

arrests was made available by University Police Chief Alexander Casas.

"We have two students and a former student who have been implicated in a scheme where exams were obtained without authorization and then sold to other students," Casas said.

Anaya, the alleged ringleader who began his distribution scheme fall 2013, gained access to four exams through a professor's secure email account and a fifth exam by breaking into room 219 at Modesto Maidique Campus.

Arrest forms state Anaya sold

SEE THEFT, PAGE 2

MINI MISSION



MARGARITA RENTIS/THE BEACON

Students such as Urvashi Songra, junior majoring in accounting (left), Elizabeth Martinez, freshman majoring in accounting (center), and Bradley Sanchez, freshman majoring in information technology (right), commit to the intense winter mini session offered by the University which lasts for about three weeks during fall and spring semester.

University publicly opposes boycott of Israeli academic institutions, supports academic freedom

MADISON FANTOZZI
News Director

Members of the American Studies Association recently voted to honor the call of Palestinian civil society to boycott Israeli academic institutions -- a resolution the University has publicly opposed.

President Mark B.

Rosenberg and Provost and Executive Vice President Douglas Wartzok authored a University-wide email on December 26 in response to the ASA's action.

"We support research and scholarly dialogue among all scholars including full participation of Palestinian as well as Israeli academics," the

email read.

The 5,000-member national organization dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of American culture and history says it supports a boycott of Israeli academic institutions given that the institutions are "complicit in the multi-tiered system of oppression that has denied Palestinians

basic rights."

More than 1,250 ASA members voted on the boycott proposal and over 66 percent supported the resolution.

The ASA claims Israel's academic institutions have a direct partnership with the military, citing cases like Tel Aviv University's development

of weapon systems and Safed Academic College's ban on Palestinian students running for student government office.

Wartzok said the ASA should not protest the lack of academic freedom for one group by taking it away from another.

"Progress toward solving difficult issues such as this

one will be achieved only when the academic freedom of all scholars is preserved and enhanced," Rosenberg and Wartzok wrote in their email.

Nathan Katz, distinguished professor in the School of International Relations and Public

SEE BOYCOTT, PAGE 2

Frost art may be forgery

MADISON FANTOZZI
News Director

The painting "Untitled" that hung on a Frost Art Museum wall had an illegible date and was labeled oil on paper while director and chief curator Carol Damian thinks it's acrylic. But the painting has become even more ambiguous with critics challenging whether it is correctly credited to the late Cuban artist Carlos Alfonzo.

The work was removed from the museum's current exhibit From Africa to the Americas after outside experts challenged its authenticity. But Damian says experts are yet to be determined.

"Some people had seen the show and commented on it -- a couple of so-called 'experts.' But I haven't determined who the real experts are," Damian said.

Miami developer and art collector Jorge Pérez donated the abstract work in July along with 23 other nineteenth- and twentieth-century Cuban paintings valuing more than \$315,000.

The gift also included \$250,000 for research -- a donation Damian hopes will cover the expensive investigation that she said will take at least a year.

"Usually we would bring in an expert on that artist, but since we don't know who the experts are the painting will undergo scientific testing and research," Damian said.

Damian said nobody works for less than \$300 an hour.

One of the first steps will be to determine the painting's date and whether it is oil or acrylic on paper.

"It can be 1981, 1984 or 1987. It's not clear and we need to determine that to give us the ability to go into the catalogs and research what he was painting and what his work looked like in those years," Damian said.

"She will be able to confirm materials and date -- [an] important place to start since labels are often miswritten over the

SEE FORGERY, PAGE 2

Parking and Transportation offering 2,700 temp spaces

FIUSM STAFF

First-week madness and the loss of Lot 1's 230 spaces with Parking Garage 6 construction may leave University-goers in a scramble to find parking, but the Office of Parking and Transportation is offering over 2,400 additional parking spaces and extended shuttle services through January 10.

The department hopes to alleviate congestion with temporary parking areas at the northeast corner of campus, east of Parking Garage 5-Market Station; Tamiami Park, east of FIU Stadium, south of Lot 6;

Fair and Exposition, east of the Wertheim Performing Arts Center, south of Lot 5; and the Engineering Center located at the intersection of SW 107 Ave. and Flagler Street.

Expanded shuttle service will include transportation to and from the Graham Center and PG5, to and from the Health and Wellness Center and School of International and Public Affairs and the western side of Tamiami Park, to and from the drop off area between Frost Art Museum and Blue Garage and the Fair and Exposition, and to and from Frost Art Museum and the Ryder

Business Building and the Engineering Center.

Additional Panther Mover pick-up and drop-off areas will be available at temporary parking areas at Tamiami Park, PG5 and the Fair and Exposition at peak hours between 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

There will also be additional entrances: Fair and Exposition at SW 107 Ave. and SW 19 St., Tamiami Park at Coral way and SW 112 Ave. and an entrance east of the Florida Turnpike at SW 117 Ave. and SW 21 St.

And if students aren't

SEE PARKING, PAGE 2

WORLD NEWS

Iraqi troops press battle in West with Al-Qaida

Under siege by government forces, al-Qaida militants tried to strengthen their hold on two of Iraq's main Sunni cities Friday, telling residents that they were defending them against the Shiite-led government.

Iraqi troops and allied tribesmen surrounded the western city of Fallujah and fired artillery at a nearby area where up to 150 militants were stationed, a military official said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to release information. Troops also made forays into the city of Ramadi, he added.

Police seeking killer of Rwandan spy chief

A Rwandan man was reportedly being sought Friday by South African police in the death of former Rwandan spymaster Patrick Karegeya whose body was discovered in a plush Johannesburg hotel on New Year's Day.

According to the opposition Rwandan National Congress coalition and the local New Age newspaper, the man was the last person to be seen with Karegeya. However, police would not confirm nor deny it, saying they were chasing up several leads.

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

Four arrested for exam theft, dealing in stolen property

THEFT, PAGE 1

exams for \$150 a piece and he has also been charged with theft and burglary.

Lamadrid and Caldeon were involved in the distribution of exams and the collection of money.

Lamadrid claimed to be the financial manager of the operation and was found with approximately \$860 on her person — money she claims she was entrusted with to purchase exams on behalf of other students.

Calderon claimed the exams were obtained by a former student, presumably Anaya. Police reports state that Vazquez was also a financier of the operation. All students acknowledged they knew the exams were stolen.

In total, three exams were compromised. One class and a limited number of students were impacted. University officials did not name the professor or the affected class, but Casas said a microbiology exam was compromised. Finals proceeded as scheduled.

William Beesting, associate dean of undergraduate education, said he has never seen academic dishonesty "on this kind of scale" but he believes the community can benefit from the incident by inciting others to step forward in light of such dishonesty.

"I have seen students that are obsessed with a goal -- for example, going to medical school -- and they forget or ignore any ethics. Anything justifies the goal. Whatever it takes," said Astrid Arrarás, senior lecturer and undergraduate adviser in the School of International and Public Relations. "But I have never heard of this before, ever."

While University members say they have never witnessed academic dishonesty at this scale, the exam theft ring is only the latest of several high-profile cheating allegations at state universities in recent years.

Many are cases of cyber security. The University of Central Florida made national news in 2010 when about 200 students came forward to admit involvement in purchasing and accessing a test bank sold online. Students had to retake the exam and complete an ethics course.

Central Florida Future, UCF's student newspaper, reported in 2012 that the university would start denoting cheaters with a "Z" designation on students' transcripts.

Cheating has also plagued schools like Florida State University, which discovered that 61 athletes in 10 sports had committed academic fraud in 2009, and University of Florida, where a professor found that over 240 students in a computer science class had cheated in 2012.

Casas said updating security systems including cameras and locknetics is an ongoing process. "No security plan is 100 percent perfect," Casas said. "When it comes to cyber security, the most important element is the human element."

Casas said universities are facing big problems both psychosocially and in cyberspace, but are maintaining integrity.

"You demonstrate integrity when you find things that are wrong and show the community that you found it and you're fixing it," Casas said. "I think that builds confidence in the University."

Under Florida statute, those who knowingly purchase stolen property face second-degree felony charges whereas those who steal and then plan to sell stolen property face first-degree felony charges.

Lamadrid faces six felony counts of dealing in stolen property, Amador faces three and Anaya and Calderon both face one.

Hearings will take place Jan. 8 and 9. The investigation is ongoing and the University said in a statement that new, relevant information will be provided when available.

-news@fiusm.com

Ambiguous painting pulled from Frost's walls, investigation begins with scientific testing

FORGERY, PAGE 1

years," Damian said. "That will lend information regarding the kind of imagery he was doing or not doing at a particular date in time."

In a statement, Pérez expressed "total shock" at the news.

He said he purchased the painting in 1997 from a reputable source and it hung

in his home for over 16 years without anyone questioning its authenticity.

As part of a study collection with the Cuban Research Institute, the work was not yet part of the museum's permanent collection. If the painting is in fact forgery, Pérez has promised to replace it.

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University to compensate for heavy traffic and lost spaces

PARKING, PAGE 1

in a rush to snag a parking space in time for class, they'll notice that Lot 1, the open-air parking lot adjacent to the Red Parking Garage and future site of PG6, has closed.

Lissette Hernandez, director of Parking and Transportation, said the department will try to minimize any negative impact on the University community during the year-long construction project.

The garage will resemble PG5 archi-

tecturally and add 2,000 parking spaces and 30,000 square feet of classroom and retail space.

Hernandez said the garage will alleviate parking problems in the north quadrant of the school.

PG6 is set for August 2015 completion.

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Professors and administrators ignore boycott

BOYCOTT, PAGE 1

Affairs, agrees.

"I'm proud of the University for making its statement," Katz said. "There's this huge academic backlash and the list of opposing institutions is growing everyday."

FIU joins Harvard, Yale, Boston University, University of Florida and University of Miami in opposition.

Katz outlined three reasons opposing the boycott, citing the importance of communication, the concern of discrimination and the academic strength of Israel's institutions.

"For one thing, academic boycotts are a bad idea because conflict means we should speak more, not less," Katz said. "Shutting off universi-

ties means closing off that communication."

The ASA will not allow representatives or ambassadors of Israeli academic institutions including deans, rectors and presidents, to participate in conferences or public lectures. The association will not participate in conferences or events sponsored by Israeli universities either.

"You can't regulate communication between institutions just like you can't regulate two people," Katz said. "Breakthroughs are made at these conferences and they are needed to generate research."

Katz also feels Israel is being singled out.

"There's no boycott against Syria or Tibbett," Katz said. "I'm nervous about the motivation."

Katz said Israel's institutions are crucial to academia.

"The boycott would shut off crucial, important research in areas like aerospace and agriculture," Katz said. "We need Israeli institutions."

While ASA's boycott targets institutions and their representatives, it said it will not regulate individual scholars, students or workers. While the organization will not collaborate with Israeli academic institutions, it said the boycott will not curtail dialogue between American and Israeli scholars.

Still, academia opposes.

And while FIU is not a member of the ASA, Penn State University at Harrisburg and Brandeis University have withdrawn their

memberships.

"If you call for a party and no one comes, that's not a party. If there's a call for a boycott and no one joins then there's no boycott," Katz said. "I hope the boycott is ignored and it becomes meaningless."

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SUMMER JOBS:

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The old tablecloth and stained silverware

JAIRO RAMOS
Contributing Writer

The “New Year’s Eve” experience seems too predictable now: crowded households, mobs on the television whose voices are overpowered by the sounds of music and champagne fizz. Earlier in the afternoon, the women covering their fresh hairdos with their hands and families running out of stores.

What’s most predominant is the mean threat of failure.

In our minds, the failed promises are parts of the atmosphere. We joke about the more stereotypical ones; yet, somewhere inside us, we long for such mechanisms—resolutions that, in the magic of a calendar night, could make us stronger. Nostalgia from

another era, perhaps, when we believed that a wish under starlight could have

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Nostalgia from another era, perhaps, when we believed that a wish under starlight could have miraculously made us new.”

miraculously made us new.

In this endeavor, we have grown used to failing. We have watched so many New Year sunrises—even moved from one millennium to another—without finding our philosopher’s stone in the change of

almanac, losing something inside us every time we do, and slowly forgetting, in the process, about the infallibility of our human instinct to change.

Yet, the epicenter of our recurrent and absolute failure lies not in our sense of expectation but in our timing. We trust the first day of January to be our catalyst, the immediate, epiphanic proof that we can be more committed versions of ourselves, new and clever enough to benefit from the fireworks left behind a calendar lapse.

We’re wrong.

The source we look for, though we often miss it, doesn’t come to us until the fourth or fifth day of the year, once we’re back to the old tablecloth and stained silverware, and we begin to

inhale the Sunday feeling that tells us that life has disappointed us, or that we have disappointed ourselves once more.

It is not until the relatives are gone, and the voids inside us begin to make their way through our desperate fingers, that we start to realize that change doesn’t fly on-call; it doesn’t materialize when invited.

That inspiration and invigoration tend to wane before their products show their first leaves.

This thought, is the basis for our progress.

Because when the claws of our dreaded routines are too close to escape from, and all we have left is the memory of those days we spent apart from it, we remember what the whole run-up to New Year’s Eve

itself is about: remembering.

Reminiscing through videos, and late night talks about precious days gone by that, at the time, seemed like parts of the routine themselves.

Eventually, we come to the immensely beautiful realization that our happiest and saddest moments all come in the form of an engagement to a continuous and continually deferring stream of memories—a series of nostalgic, conscious trips to the past, and through the past, which simultaneously form a part of each other, and through which we unconsciously witness our enormous potential to change over time.

Like this, we start making sense of things.

We contemplate the

marvel of our ability to evolve, and the promise in every Wednesday-night microwave dinner, in every stroll through the university—understanding that even the most silent of our moments are never dull. Never in vain.

The last of the Christmas lights have been taken down from buildings by the time the bang of the garbage disposal on a Monday afternoon takes us back to the pop of a champagne cork, to a firework.

The gap between them is now a vision of life, Ginsberg and Cézenna’s Pater Omnipotens Aeterna Deus.

The contrast turns into a testament to advancement, whilst we, mad, become the resolutions we never made.

-*opinion@fiusm.com*

New Year’s resolution: A worthwhile investment or worthless nonsense

JUNETTE REYES
Entertainment Director

The start of a new year for many means to aspire to self-improvement. This is otherwise known and termed as New Year’s resolutions.

The concept is clearly not new at all, as every year we see advertisements to motivate individuals to better themselves: a new year, a new you.

The practice of creating resolutions for the New Year itself is actually believed to have started with ancient Babylonians, according to History.com. The ancient Babylonians would make “...promises in order to earn the favor of the gods and start the year off on the right foot.”

Today’s resolutions are much simpler and don’t require one to earn the favor of the gods—maybe. One could prob-

ably argue that you would need to earn the favor of the gods in order to lose those extra pounds you’ve been trying to lose several new year’s resolutions ago, but that’s an argument for another article.

Now, my argument for this article is that it’s all a bunch of silly nonsense.

Why? Because people, for the most part, are usually unrealistic with their resolutions and probably abandon them midway through January. This isn’t really one of the reasons why I think it’s silly to make resolutions for the New Year, it’s just one of the reasons why I consider people who make resolutions silly.

Granted, there are people out there who keep their word and see their resolution to its end. These are the individuals who are clearly doing it right and can prove me wrong in thinking that it’s all a bunch of nonsense.

But it still doesn’t change my mind in thinking that it’s all a bunch of nonsense, really. Mainly because I find it ridiculous that people have this notion that improve-

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Self-improvement is something we should all be striving for on a daily basis, be it whatever it is you think you should improve on.”

ments are meant to be made, or at least started, at the beginning of every year.

I can understand the idea of a new year being the motivation behind wanting to create a new and better you, but it shouldn’t always be like that. Self-improvement is something we should all be

striving for on a daily basis, be it whatever it is you think you should improve on. It’s just a matter of having the right motivation, realistic goals and also an understanding that it takes time to achieve great things.

I guess you can say the New Year is the perfect setting for self-improvements, since you have the motivation and timing all in one. It just comes down to one’s goals and whether they’re realistic or not. But honestly, I just see it as another day and not the start of a new and improved life. I’ve already been working on that, as I believe I should be working towards bettering myself for as long as I live.

-*junette.reyes@fiusm.com*

Knowledge no more: The sapping of knowledge from academia

DIEGO SALDANA-ROJAS
Staff Writer

No one cares to learn anymore and that’s just fine.

I do not expect the majority of students who attend this University to genuinely care about the acquisition of knowledge. I do not expect many to ponder the complex questions that life presents; nor to question themselves, their professors, their classmates or their

government.

I expect a majority to scroll through Facebook, Upworthy, Tumblr and/or Pinterest while in class.

I expect only a select few to take notes and raise their hands to ask questions.

Only a fraction of those note-takers go to lectures that aren’t for extra credit.

When a professor does offer credit to attend a lecture I expect students to sit in the back and strain their necks downwards

towards their phones, laptops or tablets.

I expect a look of bewil-

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Curiosity and a thirst for knowledge has taken a back seat.”

derment from many when topics such as politics, science, art and theology are brought up in a social setting, almost aghast that

I didn’t bring up which football/basketball team is doing well.

Yet, I don’t blame anyone.

Obtaining a university degree has become a societal standard, lest you wish to end up working in an “undesirable” career field. The demands of our society has made it so that anyone, for the most part, to be deemed successful and employable in a “respectable” field has to have a college degree.

A piece of cardstock with the words “Bachelor of Arts / Sciences in X or Y” has become a pass that facilitates survival.

We’ve been told that in our hyper competitive job market, even a bachelors degree won’t guarantee you a job. You need recommendations to get internships to get job experience and know somebody that knows somebody to get a job.

It does not matter if you are interested and

knowledgeable in classical literature, philosophy, theology, political theory or sociology.

Curiosity and a thirst for knowledge has taken a back seat. For many, the process of obtaining a University degree is nothing more than a monotonous task: Clock in, clock out and move on.

Everyone wants a degree but not everyone cares to learn.

-*diego.saldana@fiusm.com*

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Have something on your mind? Send your thoughts (400 words maximum) to opinion@fiusm.com or drop by our offices at either GC 210 or WUC 124. With your letter, be sure to include your name, major, year, and copy of your student ID. The Beacon will only run one letter a month from any individual.

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END OF SEMESTER BLUES



JUNETTE REYES/THE BEACON

Architecture students were begging for help during finals week at the end of fall semester while trying to finish up their final projects. Many students pulled all nighters in order to complete all of their work in time.

Year In Review: top five albums from strong 2013

COLUMNIST

IN HER WORDS

MIRZA DE LA FUENTE

It is no doubt that 2013 was a solid year for music. It has been a year filled with lots of surprises and new sounds, from Daft Punk's highly anticipated fourth studio album to Beyonce's overnight self-titled gem dropped only a few weeks before the new year. Overall, 2013 was filled with some future classics. Here's a list of my top five favorite albums of 2013:

5) Flume: "Flume: Deluxe Edition"

It was a good year for upcoming Australian producer/DJ, Flume, who is slowly but surely getting his name out there. And many thought Flume's self-titled debut album in 2012 was great, but then he dropped his deluxe edition,

which changed the game. With the new trend of experimental electronic music circulating the Internet, many new artists with unique styles are upcoming and Flume is definitely high up there. The album consists of two CDs: one with his original tracks and the second loaded with insane remixes and tracks featuring similar artists such as Ta-Ku and Shlohmo. The sounds heard on his deluxe album would be best described as a muse of new style of electronic meets hip-hop. Top original tracks on the first CD include "Sleepless," "Holdin On," and "Left Alone." On the second CD, the most popular remixes include Flume's remix of Disclosure's "You & Me," Shlohmo's remix of "Sleepless," and L D R U's remix of "Insane."

-To read the full review, go to fiusm.com

Miss FIU pageant, not just a beauty contest

PAGEANT, PAGE 8

She mentioned that, as a candidate, you have to be personable and appeal to all of the judges.

This is not an easy task since each of the judges are well rounded and different from each other.

She also talked about how the judges look for a candidate who will represent FIU well.

In the formal interview portion of the competition, the judges will ask about anything from social media to the economy.

"The interview was the one you had to prepare for the most," said Diaz. "It's hard because they can ask you about anything. You won't know if they'll ask you about your charity platform or gun control!"

She explained that being in this competition means being very well versed and always being up to date with current news and events.

Diaz mentioned this as one of the most challenging aspects of the pageant and said that, "You're blind when you come into the interview because you don't know what you're

going into. Even if you watch the news and are knowledgeable in a variety of subjects, it's still nerve-racking because you never know what the judges will ask."

She explained that the most common misconception about the pageants is that they are all about looks.

"Yes, there is a swimsuit section but it's a scholarship pageant so you have to be smart. You have to know how to talk to people you don't know and you have to know how to answer difficult questions on the spot."

As a communication arts major, she spends a significant amount of time in the studio which has helped build her communication skills thus making the interview section less difficult for her.

Diaz also offered advice to Miss FIU candidates.

She emphasized how important it is for a candidate to be confident in herself and explained, "It shows in your body language and radiates from you and the judges can see that."

Her other important piece of advice: don't get caught up in comparisons.

"It's so easy to get wrapped up in comparisons and say things like 'Oh my gosh, she's so much more talented than me or she spent five thousand dollars on her dress and I only spent one hundred!'"

Competitors should not be concerned with how they measure up to the other candidates but rather how they present themselves to the judges.

After the amazing moment of getting crowned, Natalie explained that once you've won Miss FIU, you move up to state competition to compete for Miss Florida, and the winner of that moves up to compete for Miss America.

Natalie started preparing for Miss Florida after winning in January of 2013 and then competed for Miss Florida in July.

The Miss FIU Scholarship Pageant will take place Jan. 19 at 5 p.m. at the Mary Anne Wolfe Theater at BBC.

-bbc@fiusm.com

SPRING 2014 WEEK OF WELCOME

MONDAY, JAN. 6

STUDENT PROGRAMMING COUNCIL (SPC) PIT EVENT

WHEN: 11 am-2 pm
WHERE: MMC GC PIT

MEET YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SGA)

WHEN: 2:30 pm-4 pm
WHERE: MMC GC PIT

COMEDY SHOW W/ MIKE E. WINFIELD

WHEN: 6 pm
WHERE: MMC GC Ballrooms

TUESDAY, JAN. 7

BLACK STUDENT UNION (BSU) "BSU STAND UP"

WHEN: 11 am-3 pm
WHERE: MMC GC PIT

SPC HYPNOTIST SAILESH

WHEN: 6 pm
WHERE: MMC GC Ballrooms

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 8

COUNCIL FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS (CSO) PIT EVENT

WHEN: 12 pm-2 pm
WHERE: MMC GC PIT

PEER ADVISING/PANTHER CAMP FACILITATOR ANNOUNCEMENT

WHEN: 12 pm-2 pm
WHERE: Betty Chapman Plaza

TRANSFER STUDENT MEET AND GREET

WHEN: 5 pm-7 pm
WHERE: MMC GC 234

THURSDAY, JAN. 9

CAMPUS LIFE BONANZA

WHEN: 11 am
WHERE: MMC Housing Quad

FRIDAY, JAN. 10

SORORITY AND FRATERNITY LIFE WELCOME BACK BLOCK PARTY

WHEN: 4 pm-6pm
WHERE: MMC Housing Quad

STUDENT PROGRAMMING COUNCIL MOVIE NIGHT: "DON JON"

WHEN: 5 pm and 8 pm
WHERE: MMC GC 140

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

Year In Review: top five shows of 2013

COLUMNIST

IN HER WORDS

MADARI PENDAS

There was a television Renaissance in 2013. Storylines veered from the cliché and trite, character development was heightened and emphasized, families were portrayed honestly and the problems encountered by characters were dealt with raw sincerity. I've simplified my list to the five shows I felt had the most original storylines, had the greatest character depth and were consistently captivating.

5) "Bob's Burgers"

"Bob's Burgers" is one of the most endearing and charming shows on television. What separates "Bob's Burgers" from the other cartoons is

its emphasis on family and often dark humor. The show does not try to squeeze in myriads of pop culture references or address contemporary issues. Instead, the humor arises from the strong, and often strange, relationships that exist within the family unit. The honesty in which absurd situations are treated is hilarious. Also, the voice acting is phenomenal. Jon Roberts and Dan Mintz voice the female leads Linda and Tina so convincingly well most people don't realize those women are voiced by men. And H. Jon Benjamin brings a familiar rasp and timbre to the show, which many of us grew to love on "Home Movies."

4) "The Good Wife"

"The Good Wife" is the perfect amalgam of legal drama, soap opera and CBS-esque procedural show.

Unlike other shows with a legal theme, the show's center of gravity is on Alicia Florrick and the decisions she makes after her husband's arrest. The strong female protagonist, whom some have referred to as "the female Walter White," is refreshing and empowering. Alicia is not an oversexualized housewife, a background character or love interest for a male protagonist; instead she is a clever, independent, intelligent woman who bounces back after her husband's indiscretion and saves her family.

3) "Orange is the New Black"

Netflix has changed the television industry by producing and creating its own television series and, contrary to what many expected, it's amazing. The show's very existence, along with the high quality

shows coming from cable networks, empowers independent series and loosens the grip the network stations have had on television. By releasing an entire season all at once, Netflix is changing the television structure. The series has a cinematic ambiance and the all-at-once structure doesn't force viewers to wait an entire week to find out what happens, which in turn gives the series a freeflow form as episodes connect right after the other. Life inside a women's prison is portrayed with a balance of dark humor and tragic frustration. The supporting actors are excellent and enrich the environment; the experimental show has proven to be a joy to watch.

2) "Game of Thrones"

This is a show without mercy. Characters who the audience

grows attached to are murdered or maimed, story lines veer onto dark paths and monk-like concentration and memory are required of viewers in order to understand the mystic land of Westeros and Essos. The show caters to both casual watchers without needless exposition or recaps and to the zealous fan. First off, the set and scenery are majestic and beautiful; I could watch the program on mute and still be amazed. Remembering the royal houses, character names and warring factions can be difficult, but even if one cannot keep track of all the elements of the series, the show is still rewarding and enchanting.

-To see the number one show, go to fiusm.com

Year In Review: top five movies

COLUMNIST



MARTELL HARDING

A new year means a new start for some. There is no doubt that you will hear several of your friends on Facebook say "I'm becoming a new me."

As long as the "new me" doesn't use the terms "YOLO" and "twerk," this year may have a chance at a fresh start.

That said, last year wasn't just about Miley Cyrus.

It was a year which contained a few shockingly disappointing films, such as "After Earth" and "Oldboy." But it also had some shockingly great ones.

Here is my list of the top 5 films of 2013:

5) Action: "Iron Man 3"

This year got off to a late start in terms of quality, and what better way to start the excitement than with Robert Downey Jr. as the genius that

is Tony Stark? This movie is great for three reasons. Reason number one: it's funny. I'm sure I don't speak for only myself when I say that action films that take themselves too seriously are awfully boring. Reason number two: the Iron Patriot. We've waited a long time to finally see Rhodes (played by Don Cheadle) suited up in all of his glory and it was worth it. Last, but not least is reason number three: Gwyneth Paltrow as Pepper Potts — no explanation needed.

4) Comedy: "This is the End"

Sadly, this was not a year for comedies. Adam Sandler came out with... something... and Vince Vaughn couldn't do anything better, but with that said, there was one great comedy to fill the void of all the other disappointments. To call "This is the End" hilarious would be an understatement. Based on a short film Seth Rogen had in mind, "This is the End" instead became a huge blockbuster hit. Besides, who can't love James

Franco, Jonah Hill, Craig Robinson, Michael Cera, Emma Watson, Danny McBride and Seth Rogen all in one movie? Oh yeah, let's not forget the forgettable Jay Baruchel.

3) Drama: "12 Years a Slave"

I'll be the first to admit this film is tough to watch. It's violent, cruel and sometimes very unforgiving. Yet there is something beautiful about the film. It shows one man's downfall and his fight for survival through events in which anyone else would have surely surrendered. Solomon Northup did just the opposite. I had the opportunity to read the memoirs of Solomon Northup, the free man from upstate New York who was kidnapped and sold into slavery. His story isn't one to be taken lightly. The film is a testament to those who have forgotten the brutality of slavery and the hope of humanity.

-To see the last two movies, go to fiusm.com

BBC throws Week of Welcome

BBC WoW, PAGE 8

According to Bermeo, Mr. and Miss FIU will make an appearance and serve food at this event.

Later on Wednesday, the Student Programming Council will be hosting another session of "Dancing with the Wolfe" with free belly dancing lessons from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Recreation Center.

To finish up "Welcome Week" at BBC, The Recreation Center at BBC in partnership with the Student Triathlon Club FIU at BBC organized the "Splash and Dash."

This event consists of a combination race by foot and kayak, where students, faculty and staff can partici-

pate. Each team will consist of two people and there will be a total of eleven teams.

The race will take place on Thursday, Jan. 9, and will start at 11 a.m. at the Bay Area by the Aquatics.

Elizabeth Crissien, the assistant race director at the recreation department at BBC said, "The 'Splash and Dash' is just one of the many events our Recreation department and the Triathlon Club helps put on to raise money for our FIU BBC Recreation Scholarship."

The kayak race will start from the Kovens Center, the participants will race across the bay, and come back to the beach area behind the aquatic center, then put away their kayaks on the bay side.

Each team is required to put away their kayak properly before they move on to run, which will be the last part of the race.

Christina Reddick, the coordinator of the recreation center, said this event "should encourage students to work as a team and to also work on communication skills."

The recreation center also requires that both team members finish the race together. First, second and third place winners will receive trophies.

"To get the rhythm together will be challenging for the participants but it will be fun," Reddick said.

Participants must register their two-person team at the front desk of the BBC recreation center

before the event.


Everyone is welcome to watch the race and T-shirts and food will be provided for all participants.

"Students get to see what a great campus this is and they also learn about what free activities we have available to them," Crissien said.

The "Splash and Dash" is an opportunity for students to find out more about the kayaking events that will be held later this semester by the BBC Recreation Center.

"This race also brings together another program we have open to the student which is our kayaking trips. I think this is a great way for students to start this semester," Crissien said.

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Panthers defeat FGCU, stumble into new year

PATRICK CHALVIRE
Staff Writer

As everyone counted down to the holidays and planned what gift to get their loved ones, the FIU men's basketball team spent their break on the hardwood taking on some of their most top-notch opponents of the season.

In what was the largest attended home game of the season, the Panthers played host to last season's sweet-sixteen Cinderella team in Florida Gulf Coast University.

In the first nationally televised game on the Lime Court, the Panthers clipped the Eagles in a 72-61 win.

The Panthers have been led by the "Batman and Robin" duo of senior Tymell Murphy and redshirt senior Rakeem Buckles. In the matchup with FGCU, Murphy withstood the fast paced Eagles, finishing with a game-high 23 points, as well as a perfect 10-of-10 from the free-throw line. Buckles added a double-double, with 11 points and 13 rebounds.

Entering the New Year, the two had combined for 47 blocked shots (24 -

Buckles; 23 - Murphy), the most by any two players in Conference USA.

Size has also been a plus for the Panthers. Standing at 6 feet 5 inches and 6 feet 7 inches respectively, Murphy and Buckles lead the conference in rebounding.

Buckles has been hovering around with some of the nation's top rebounders, reaching as much as second in the nation in that category.

After the FGCU game, the Panthers had a two-week layoff before hosting last year's National Champion Louisville Cardinals. The Cards, ranked sixth in the country during their matchup, were led by Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino.

The game was scheduled as a part of a contract when Richard Pitino was the leading man for the Panthers.

When Pitino left FIU for Minnesota, Louisville had the option to cancel the series.

Father Pitino chose to honor the contract and play FIU, the first time ever that a National Champion has played at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

The bench for the Panthers struggled to cut into the Cardinals lead, only accounting for five points in the contest.

"We played against a very good basketball team," Head Coach Anthony Evans said. "We went out there and played good in spurts. I think their depth wore us down a little bit and they finished the game."

The dynamic duo of Murphy and Buckles were kept in check by the Cardinals, as Murphy finished with 16 points and Buckles with 13.

Buckles had originally started his collegiate career with Pitino and the Cardinals, but a series of devastating injuries ended his tenure at Louisville.

At the time, Richard Pitino was an assistant for the Cardinals and when he was named the head coach for the Panthers, he was accompanied by Buckles who came back to his hometown to play for FIU.

"I treated it as another game. I didn't really see them guys as anybody special, I just wanted to win," Buckles said after the game.

A week after the loss to the Cards and celebrating Christmas with family and friends, the Panthers headed up to the nation's capital to face the Georgetown Hoyas in their final game of 2013.

The game was the third-straight game that FIU was featured on Fox Sports



CARL-FREDERICK FRANCOIS/THE BEACON

Freshman point guard Jason Boswell (above) has inherited the starting role due to lack of depth at the point guard position.

1, making it more regular-season national TV exposure than last season and one game short of the 2011-12 season.

Whether it was the cold weather or the week in-between games, the Panthers were unable to end the year on a happy note, losing to the Hoyas 92-57.

A 30-4 run helped the Hoyas offense gain momentum and keep the Panthers grounded.

It wasn't until there was 6:57 left in the first half when the Panthers took a bite out of the Hoyas lead and began running their

offense.

Evans chose to start the game with regular starters Murphy, Buckles and freshman Jason Boswell on the bench.

"We started off the game with a whole different chemistry, a whole different fire that starts the game," Boswell said. "Us not starting the game definitely messed up the teams flow but coach, he's a great coach. He's willing to teach us a lesson. We messed up, you have to deal with the consequences."

Eight different Georgetown players attributed to a

season-high 50 points in the first half, 30 of which came from in the paint.

The Panthers have also been playing minus their senior point guard Ray Taylor.

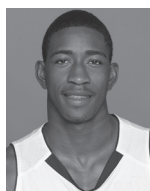
Taylor played the first seven games of the season before eligibility questions arose, forcing him to leave the team for the time being.

There is no timetable to if or when Taylor will return to the team.

-patrick.chalvire@fiusm.com

Freshman uses NBA family to improve his game

PATRICK CHALVIRE
Staff Writer



JASON BOSWELL

Many college athletes look up to professional athletes in order to improve their game, but rarely does the college player have not one, but two, family connections to the big leagues.

FIU freshman Jason Boswell is the exception.

The Bronx native is closely related to Cleveland Cavalier point guard Kyrie Irving. The two are first cousins, and for Boswell, it's been a positive note in his basketball career.

"It's fun because whenever I get into a tough spot, I got people I can talk to," Boswell said. "I speak to Kyrie a lot and for the most part I get a lot of good advice from him. Try to play with a lot of poise. Be deceptive."

Boswell is also first cousins with Lance Thomas, former forward for the New Orleans Pelicans, now member of the Guang-

dong Foshan Dralions of the Chinese Basketball Association.

Boswell grew up with Irving. Both their fathers played pickup basketball games as the cousins watched from the sidelines. As time went by, the two kids would later play each other for fun, and with Irving already a top athlete in the NBA, it gives Boswell an advantage on what to work on to become a better player himself.

"Try to play with a good pace and try to change speeds a lot is what he tells me," Boswell said.

Boswell, who is averaging 4.5 points per game, is still learning the system of new Head Coach Anthony Evans. Boswell did not start the season as the team's starting point guard, but with NCAA eligibility concerns hovering over senior Raymond Taylor, Boswell was thrown into the fire and is adjusting as days go by.

"Ray's my teammate, my friend. I want him to come back but if he can't I still have to play, I still have to step up," Boswell said.

As a student at Florida Atlantic

University, Taylor declared for the NBA Draft after the 2011-12 season. According to the NBA, Taylor was included in the early draft list released on May 3, 2012, but listed as having withdrawn from the list on June, 20 2012.

According to the NCAA manual, the deadline to withdraw was April 10, 2012.

With Boswell taking over the starting point guard position, each day has become a learning experience for the college rookie.

"I think I'm adjusting more every game," Boswell said. "The team is starting to gel better each game. I know we had a couple tough losses but those are all learning experiences for us."

Boswell was recruited by schools such as Pittsburgh, Oklahoma and UCLA, just to name a few, but ultimately decided to begin his college career at FIU, most in part to what Evans, a New York native, told him during his recruiting period.

"Coach has a New York background so that relationship was there and I can trust him," Boswell

said. "He was 100 percent honest with me when he was recruiting me and that's what really sold me."

Evans is known to help players reach the NBA level, most notably Kyle O'Quinn who played under Evans at Norfolk State. According to Boswell, Evans is a big reason why O'Quinn was able to make it to the Orlando Magic.

"The kid [O'Quinn] wasn't that good when he started playing basketball and now he's a professional athlete," Boswell said.

O'Quinn led the Spartans to their second round win over the second ranked Missouri Tigers during the 2012 NCAA Basketball Tournament.

Prior to playing for the Spartans, O'Quinn had contemplated quitting basketball to pursue football. Under Evans, O'Quinn earned several awards, such as the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Player of the Year and was twice named the MEAC Defensive Player of the Year.

Though Boswell chose to leave his hometown for Miami, he still has a little bit of New York in his

new state. Senior forward Tymell Murphy was also born and raised in New York, is giving Boswell an easier transition to the new chapter in his life.

"It makes it a lot easier to adjust to because I got people I can relate to," Boswell said.

The lifestyle and culture of Miami has been different for Boswell, but having the close relationship with his coach and teammate, has allowed for him to easily adjust to his new life.

"They understand where I'm coming from, so they understand why I do certain things. So it makes it a lot easier," Boswell said.

Standing at 6 feet 6 inches, Boswell is taller than most other college starting point guards. His size, though, does have its benefits.

"It has its advantages and disadvantages but I take it more as an advantage because I can use my size," he said. "I'm not just slow—I'm actually quick so that works in my advantage."

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Women's basketball remained busy over break

STEVEN ROWELL
Staff Writer



JERICA COLEY

Over the Winter break, while some students were resting and others going on vacation and leaving town, the FIU women's basketball team did the opposite.

Over the duration of the break, up until Jan. 2, the Panthers went 3-2 and went 1-1 in the two tournaments that they participated in.

FIU participated in the Gator Holiday Classic in Gainesville, Fla. on Dec. 20-21 and hosted the FIU Fun and Sun Classic on Dec. 28-29.

The lone game that FIU played over the break that was not a part of a tournament was the 70-65 win on the road against Tennessee Tech on Dec. 16.

In addition to the games, the team has taken advantage of extra practice time, and players such as senior guard Jerica Coley and sophomore guard Taylor Shade

have used the extra time to work on certain aspects of their game.

While Shade is on break from being an FIU student, she has been using the extra time to focus on the student side of the game of basketball through film.

"I'm just trying to break down what I can improve and what the defense may do and then coming to practice and kind of just feeding off Jerica [Coley] as well and just listening to the coaches and doing what I need to do to help the team win," Shade said.

Coley had herself a couple shining moments including scoring a career high 47 points against Wake Forest on Dec. 29. This feat also broke the school record for points in a game previously held by Alben Branzova, who scored 45 points in 1993. She was also named Conference USA Player of the Week on Dec. 30.

Despite that, the senior still took the extra time off from school to work on some aspects of her game.

"Just always do extra shooting and watch some

extra film which I don't do that often but I need to do and so I will probably do that a little more," Coley said.

Russo Nearing 700th Career Win

As of Jan. 2, Head Coach Cindy Russo stands at 694 career wins in her 35th season roaming the sidelines for FIU women's basketball.

Russo stands six wins shy of joining the 700 club which is a plateau that only 16 other coaches in NCAA Women's basketball history have reached.

When Russo was asked about it, she seemed more concerned about just getting victories and more focused on this season than the accomplishment itself.

The 700th win can happen as early as Jan. 22 when the Panthers host the University of North Texas.

"I didn't even know anything about it, but you know right now winning games mean more than the honor to me," Russo said.

For the full story, go to fiusm.com.

Jerica Coley: an overlooked superstar

COLUMNIST



PATRICK CHALVIRE

It isn't a shock that some of the nation's top athletes choose to attend schools other than FIU, but when one of the top scorers in women's basketball stays true to her commitment, you would think there would be more buzz on campus.

But there isn't.

FIU is home to the nation's second ranked scorer and leader in Conference USA in senior Jerica Coley, but according to the FIU Athletics website, women's basketball home games only average 373 people per game.

It's no surprise that Miami is not a sports town. As much as people want to believe it is, people would rather spend three hours out by the pool or beach with a drink in one hand and their phone in the other.

The Miami Heat may have people believing that this is a sports, rather, basketball city, but it isn't. People are attracted to winning and want to be able to one day look back at their past and say they were a part of history.

Yet no one seems to grasp that history is being made out on Lime Court.

Now I'll admit, I am not a big fan of women's basketball but when you have a player who leads in almost every statistical category available, why not pay her a visit at work?

Coley does everything for her team and school both on and off the court, besides sell food at halftime. Coley is also majoring in nutrition, not an easy task.

Most recently, Coley dropped a mere 47 points against Wake Forest, the second-highest scoring night

in C-USA history, the most points by any FIU player (men's or women's) at home and was named C-USA's player of the week. She accounts for over 40 percent of her team's offense, leads or is in the top two of every school record, yet the team is only 5-7.

Now just to add to the rarity of having a player such as Coley representing a team, prior to the start of their inaugural season in C-USA, Coley was named the Sun Belt Conference Female Athlete of the Year and only the second student-athlete from FIU to earn such honor.

She was also named the Preseason Conference USA Player of the Year.

Coley can fill a wall from top to bottom with the awards she has earned during her time at FIU, but has yet to earn the grand prize in a National or even Conference Championship.

Granted, the team is missing arguably their second best player in senior Marita Davydova, the Panthers haven't seemed to have done due diligence for both Coley and Head Coach Cindy Russo, whose been with the program before many of you reading this were even born.

Last season, the Panthers finished 19-13 with both Coley and Davydova playing all 32 games. It's too early to tell how much of an impact the loss of Davydova will be, but it may also force Coley to continue to post 40-point games and possibly add more awards to an already stacked resume.

Davydova isn't expected to return this season after eligibility concerns arose prior to the start of the season.

With that being said, one would think it would give fans more of a reason to support a team, or shall I say a single player who

will show people outside of Miami who and what FIU is all about.

For us who grew up or simply live in Miami, it may be hard to miss FIU. But believe it or not, once you reach the state line, FIU just brings a puzzled look to the faces of others.

FIU has not reached the national level of UM or FSU. Maybe with the success of Coley and having two possible pro bowlers in the NFL it could be, but I'm not holding my breath on it.

For a team struggling to make a dent in the conference, Coley has hit numbers that even LeBron James would be impressed with. Yet with even all the success she's had and the "Holy Coley" era sweeping through campus, the support has been non-existent.

There are no numbers to truly back it up, but I'm confident enough to say that FIU is one of the top schools in the country where students wear apparel for other institutions other than the school they pay good money to attend.

Unfortunately, the image of not being a sports town will forever be tied to Miami.

When the world witnesses fans leaving early from an crucial NBA Finals game, only to storm back banging at the doors at the American Airlines Arena and become the butt of everyone's joke, it's going to take more than season tickets to get rid of that stain.

I'd like to think that the city has spectators more than it does fans, and there's nothing wrong with that. I've never been but I'm sure there's more to do on South Beach then there is in Alabama or Kentucky.

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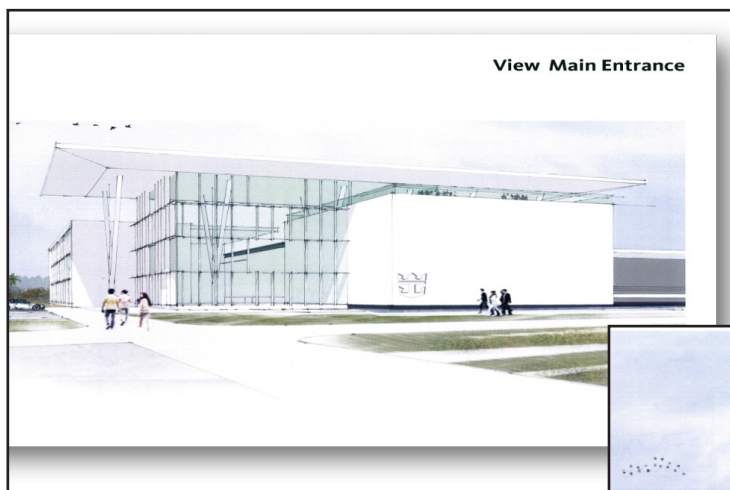
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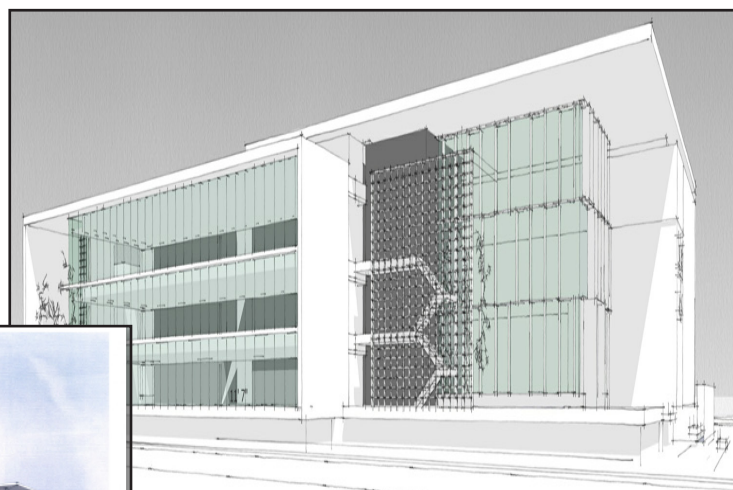
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FIU signs partnership with Royal Caribbean



View Main Entrance

Different views of the Royal Caribbean facility. The Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd building will total 130,000 square feet on approximately 3.2 acres of land. The cost is estimated to be \$30 million.



IMAGES COURTESY OF MEDIA RELATIONS

BRANDON WISE
Editor-in-Chief

The University and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. made their partnership official on Dec. 11 by signing a contract.

The deal allows Royal Caribbean to break ground on their new facility at Biscayne Bay Campus.

“Public-private partnerships such as this one are essential to the vitality of our university and our community. This is win-win for our students and for Royal Caribbean,” said president Mark B. Rosenberg in a press release.

“Through this innovative relationship with industry leader Royal Caribbean, our students are going to gain access to this fantastic facility and internship opportunities with some of the best talent in the business.”

In September 2012, the University published an invitation to negotiate with the company to build and operate a production, rehearsal and performance facility at BBC. The 130,000-square-foot, \$20 million facility is expected to open in January 2015.

It is unclear how this will affect student housing life at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

According to a powerpoint presentation obtained by

Student Media, Royal Caribbean will invest \$6.5 million into renovating the current Bay Vista facilities to provide housing for RCL employees.

In 2008, Architects and Engineers conducted an assess-

“Public-private partnerships such as this one are essential to the vitality of our university and our community. This is win-win for our students and for Royal Caribbean.”

Mark B. Rosenberg
President
Florida International University

ment of Bay Vista and reported \$12.5 million in and building deficiencies. They also noted \$2.5 million in amenity improvements, along with a recommendation that the investment could not be justified.

The project may displace Bay Vista residents for at

least a year, but the University and its new partner remain optimistic.

“Royal Caribbean considers South Florida home, and what better way to give back to the community than to be able to enrich the education of FIU students,” said Richard Fain, chairman and chief executive officer of Royal Caribbean.

The new facility is expected to feature a state-of-the-art rigging system, a 300-seat black box theater and 20,000 square feet dedicated to costume creation and storage.

The partnership provides Royal Caribbean with the opportunity to help train FIU students in other areas of the business through internships in operations and management, according to a press release.

The partnership will open extraordinary opportunities for students and faculty in the College of Architecture and the Arts and the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management including 20 internships (corporate and shipboard), access to the unique training facility and access to data and other proprietary information to be used for research purposes, according to the press release.

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BBC welcomes back students for spring with free events

**ALEXANDRA MOSQUERA
NETZKARSCH**
Staff Writer

Now that the winter break is over, it is time to welcome a new semester at BBC with the “Welcome Week” event series.

“Welcome Week” for the spring semester will kick off with “Food by the Bay” on Monday, Jan. 6. FIU Campus Life has partnered up with Aramark to bring in three different types of food trucks available to FIU students on site. The food trucks will be outside Academic Center I from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Each student will receive a \$5 voucher

which can be reimbursed either at one of the three food trucks or inside the food court. The vouchers will be valid only for Monday.

According to Andrés Bermeo, marketing coordinator at campus life at BBC, the theme for this year’s events is the beach.

“Each year we have different themes,” said Bermeo. There will be also many giveaways throughout the day.

Later on Monday, the Student Programming Council will be hosting, “Dancing with the Wolfe,” which will offer salsa and bachata dancing lessons at the Recreation Center. This event will start at noon and it is free of charge.

The next big event of the week is the “Involvement and Volunteer Fair,” which

is sponsored in conjunction by the Center for Leadership and Service, Campus Life and Student Organizations Council. This event will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 7, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the AC I and AC II buildings.

According to Bermeo, at this event student clubs and all the departments at school are invited to show their involvement at BBC.

There will be approximately 30 clubs and departments recruiting students at this event.

Wednesday’s big event at BBC is the Golden Panther Brunch, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Wolfe University Center ballrooms.

“It’s a good way for the BBC community to start the day,” Bermeo said.

Aside from the free food, students will receive free shirts at this event. The food available will be a full breakfast meal that students with a valid FIU ID will be able to enjoy.

According to Bermeo, the Golden Panther Brunch will be decorated to show Panther pride.

“There will be a warm and welcoming atmosphere at this event,” said Bermeo. The decoration will show the FIU colors and the whole theme will be “very FIU” Bermeo said.

-bbc@fiusm.com

Miss FIU, here we come! Contestants compete for crown

**SAMANTHA DAVIS & MIRZA
DE LA FUENTE**
FIUSM Staff

Get ready to see FIU’s finest showcase their talent and intellectual skills on stage in front of a panel of judges.

The Miss FIU Pageant will be taking place for the tenth year in a row on Jan. 19 at the BBC campus.

The competition is about more than just looks, it is an opportunity for young women to develop

their personal and professional skills, receive scholarship money and participate in the Miss Florida Pageant.

Being Miss FIU is not just about wearing a beautiful dress or doing your hair and makeup right.

There are many responsibilities that come with this title: Miss FIU participates in a variety of events on campus and in the community, fundraisers and any events that the president of the University invites her to.

Miss FIU also becomes part of the Children’s Miracle Network and supports her local Miami Children’s Hospital.

Her work here involves visiting children and fundraising.

Through her partnership, she learns how the hospital is run and how money is used.

Miss FIU also has a reputation to uphold: she must be in good academic and disciplinary standing with the University, have a minimum GPA of 2.5, be able to take on the time commit-

ment and job responsibilities and be actively involved with community service efforts such as fundraising.

The current Miss FIU, junior communication arts major Natalie Diaz, explained in detail the hard work involved with achieving and maintaining the title of Miss FIU.

“Miss FIU was actually my first ever pageant,” says Diaz. “It’s a great opportunity with the prize being money for school so I thought, what do I have to lose?”

It was after her first semester as a student at the University when Natalie signed up for the pageant. She thought of it as a fun way to become more involved in school and meet some new friends. After signing heavy paperwork, making sure her GPA was up to the competition’s requirements and writing a small bio on herself for the judges, Natalie was officially in the competition.

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