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BEACON MAGAZINE

A Forum for Free Student Expression at Florida International University

Vol. 1 Issue 14

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SAMUEL PRITCHARD-TORRES/THE BEACON

LESSONS LEARNED

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOCUS

Latin American and Caribbean studies offers ample opportunity

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With the growth in popularity of area studies around the country, colleges are gearing up their course offerings on the subject, which according to Wikipedia is an interdisciplinary field of research and scholarship pertaining to particular geographical, national, federal, or cultural regions. FIU offers a similar degree called Interdisciplinary Studies to the Honors College.

Courses in area studies tend to involve history, political science, sociology, cultural studies, languages, geography, and literature.

The key to area studies is their interdisciplinary focus.

“If the magical realist novels of Latin America capture your imagination, you might major in comparative literature or Spanish. Or if it’s the history of colonialism in African countries that fires your brain, you might major in history,” the College Board says. “But if you want to know Latin America or Africa inside out, then major in area studies. You’ll not only study everything from an area’s history to its present-day economy and art, you’ll also bring greater understanding to specific topics, from magical realism to colonialism.”

Given Miami’s proximity to Latin America and the Caribbean, the University is uniquely poised to develop a strong Latin American Studies program, and its offerings in this area are already wide-ranging.

Offered by the Kimberly Green Latin

American and Caribbean Center (LACC), FIU’s Latin American Studies program takes advantage of this proximity.

“Recognized as a leader in advanced training in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, LACC’s academic programs attract students and scholars from around the world,” the LACC website states. “With Miami as a backdrop, students study Latin America and the Caribbean with access more than 200 distinguished

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Because of the interdisciplinary approach in all of our programs, students acquire research and professional skills in the religious, political, economic, social and cultural processes shaping Latin America and the Caribbean

Viroselie Caviedes
Academic Programs Coordinator
Latin American and Caribbean Center

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faculty from a variety of disciplines.”

FIU’s Latin American Studies program encompasses various degrees, including a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Arts, and undergraduate and graduate certificate programs.

Joint degrees programs, which combine a Master of Arts in Latin American and Caribbean Studies with a law degree, an international MBA, or a PhD in History, for example, are also available.

At the undergraduate level, studies can combine other majors with a Latin American and Caribbean studies degree.

“For our BA program, there are many majors which can be combined, not only because the disciplines would work well together, but because students do not need to add much more coursework in order to complete the two degrees,” Viroselie Caviedes, Academic Programs Coordinator at the LACC, says. “Students with majors in Comparative Politics and International Relations, History, Anthropology or Sociology and Modern

particularly well with LACS certificate programs.

Students with degrees or certificates in Latin American and Caribbean Studies find that they acquire skills that are easily transferrable beyond the scope of their coursework.

“Because of the interdisciplinary approach in all of our programs, students acquire research and professional skills in the religious, political, economic, social and cultural processes shaping Latin America and the Caribbean,” Caviedes stated.

This view is corroborated in the LACC’s website.

“Students learn to think critically and creatively about major issues facing the hemisphere, including inter-American relations, energy and environment, migration, human security and development while exploring the history, language, culture and art of one of the most vibrant and dynamic regions of the world,” the LACC says.

In addition, the interdisciplinary nature of Latin American and Caribbean Studies allows students to contemplate career opportunities in a variety of fields.

“Through completion of our programs, students gain the expertise required to become leaders in a variety of fields, including education, government, non-government, business and human and social services, among others,” Caviedes said. “We have had graduates continue on to work as foreign affairs officers, K-12 education teachers, university professors, policy analysts, financial analysts...the list goes on.”

EDITOR’S NOTE

Higher ed provides home for some, still has shortcomings to address

CAYLA BUSH



EDITOR IN CHIEF

For the 26 members of the Student Media editorial board and the many writers, cartoonists and DJs who have been working with us, FIU gave us more than an education; it gave us a home.

Higher education was, when I first started, just a necessary evil. I had to come to get my degree, but

didn’t seek anything else outside of that. As life works, I found someplace I spend more time at than I do my actual home.

Higher education is important not only because it provides experience, opportunities and lessons, because it helps students find their voices and a place to love.

More importantly, as we mention in our editorial, higher education has an important role in society and shaping the future, which comes from addressing issues in measuring performance. It has a responsibility to all students and the community, while

simultaneously not being for everyone.

The lessons go beyond lecture halls, into graduate programs for sports management and the importance of giving back to the community.

FIU has provided most students a home. It’s become a sanctuary campus, and it’s shown students options for their careers and endeavors that wouldn’t have been thought of before.

It’s been great putting together this last issue, about higher education, what it means and how it affects every student.

We’ll see you next semester, FIU.

Lessons for life learned beyond lecture halls

SUDYEN NAVARRETE

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Extracurricular activities, volunteering and time management are some of the responsibilities students have managed to deal with in college and managing these responsibilities is just what comes with obtaining a higher education, students say.

“College has served for other lessons,” said Alexandra Marolla, a senior marketing major. “It’s hard to put into words, but I’ve learned how to grow as a person.”

According to the FIU Student Affairs, there’s a variety of resources to help students in different ways; Student Health, Campus Life and a Disability Resource Center among other resources.

Student Affairs offers different programs for student success such as the Career and Talent Development Department, which prepares students to apply for potential jobs

Nevertheless, students are reporting that there are other things higher education has taught them that can’t be

taught in a lecture hall.

“Besides attending classes, I’ve learned that trying to become someone in life is not easy,” said Jennifer Ramirez, a junior criminal justice major. “We’re all trying to make it and we are all facing the same struggles.”

Crystal Serrano, a senior double majoring in international relations and political science, also responded on what higher education has taught her.

“After being in college for three and a half years, I’ve experienced different things,” Serrano said “To begin with, I’ve learn to be independent because I live on my own, so I must look after myself and be responsible with my school work.”

Through higher education, students can get to discover different things for them to do while being in college apart from learning in a classroom.

For example, Marolla said that she serves two fraternities that have helped her with time management, leadership and learn more about herself.

“When you just go to school and back you learn from the books,

SEE LESSONS, PAGE 3

Study finds 19 percent of students graduate on time across the nation

GUETHSHINA ALTENA
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At most public universities, only 19 percent of full-time students earn a bachelor's degree in four years, according to a study by a nonprofit group based in Indianapolis called Complete College America. The report titled "The Four Year Myth" argues that the current state of our higher education is too expensive and slow, with few graduates to show for it. Despite this, Anjali Thota, a sophomore majoring in civil engineering and international student is confident she will graduate on time and her course of action is to take 15 credits every semester.

The study reported that 81 percent of students in public non-flagship universities don't graduate within the traditional four-year window.

At the University, according to collegefactual.com, 28.1 percent of students graduate within four years.

Overall, FIU's graduation rate is 54.2 percent of all students, putting the University right at the average for graduation.

Some students, like Thota, are determined to stay on the traditional route.

"That's how the program is designed to help student graduate in a reasonable amount of time," Thota told Student Media. "Student should really try and keep up with their credits."

According to Thota, the

four year quota is in place to usher students into the next phase of their lives.

"I think the system is that way so that students can apply their knowledge in real life and enter the work environment without wasting their time taking classes they don't need and drag their education longer than it should be," Thota said.

While some students are forced to take less credits per semester by financial circumstances, or the maintenance of an internship or job. Thota she believes one should always focus on their education first and minimize the distractions that may delay your path to graduation.

"Becoming a super senior is not something I project because my plan is to solely focus on school for the next two years and a half, and earn my degree in the four-year interval universally accepted, because I know I can do it," Thota said.

The four year quota is reasonable and definitely attainable no matter what the major, Thota says. Taking anywhere from 12 to 15 credits should fulfill a student's curriculum within four years and accumulate the 120 credits required for graduation. The University also offers a Graduation Success Initiative, which aims to graduate students on time by guiding them along the path to 120 credits through its resources both online and on campus.

Academic Advisors

support and guide students through their major as part of the Graduation Success Initiative. MyFIU, My_eAdvisor and the Panther Degree Audit are tools available to students to track, plan and make progress.

Jimmy Pluviose, a senior majoring in information technology, attests that graduating in four years is definitely possible.

"Although it really depends on the major, I believe that the four year in college is do-able," Pluviose said. "Some majors have a heavier courseload than others but I do believe that with proper planning and preparation, it is realistic."

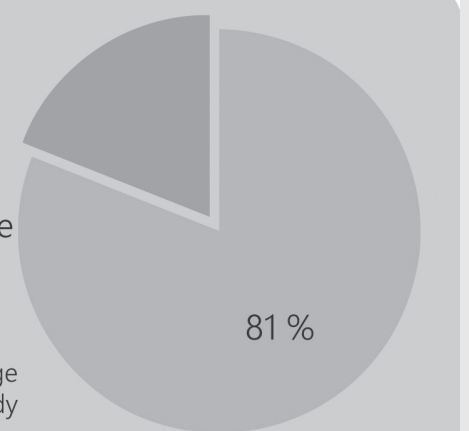
Pluviose transferred to the University for his junior year and said the two-year plan he prepared with his advisor helped him reach his goal and graduate on time.

"It was very challenging and sometimes, it did not even seem possible to me. Though I learned along the way that there are a lot of tutoring and advising services that are there just to help student when they need it, and it helped me," Pluviose said.

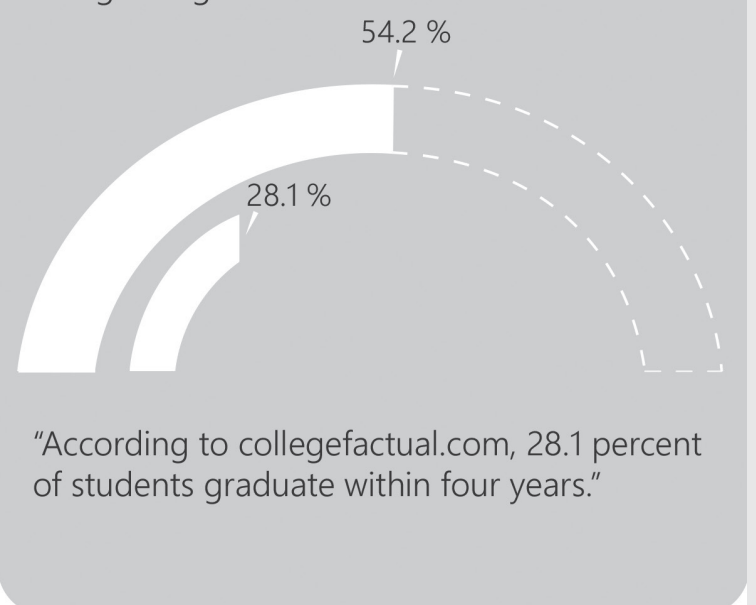
Pluviose is proud to graduate as an IT major with his graduating class and he strongly encourages undergraduate students to focus on their curriculum and plan ahead for their course load in the upcoming semesters.

"81 percent of students in public non-flagship universities don't graduate within the traditional four-year window"

- Complete College America Study



"FIU's graduation rate is 54.2 percent of all students, putting the University right at the average for graduation."



"According to collegefactual.com, 28.1 percent of students graduate within four years."

NIA YOUNG/THE BEACON

Higher education gives students professional lessons

LESSONS, PAGE 3

materials and classes," she said. "But I feel that when you're involved, you grow socially and that is just as important to learn."

Serrano added that with two majors and extracurricular activities, the most valuable lesson she has learned is that of time management.

"I work eight-hour shifts, I'm part of a co-ed fraternity, and at the same time I'm preparing myself for Law school so with all of this I've learned to manage my time," Serrano said.

“

The fact that knowing your hard work is going to pay off is more than satisfactory.

Jennifer Ramirez
Junior
Criminal Justice

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In addition, Serrano says her college

experience has increased her financial management abilities and motivation to succeed.

"I think college has taught me to persevere, to fight for that A, and manage my finances," Serrano said.

Serrano has been living on her own from the moment she started college and according to her, it was tough for her to get used to being on her own at first.

"I felt sad during my freshman year," she said. "I didn't have any friends in college, so I felt lonely. I had to open myself socially to make new friends."

In general, students say that they expect

for all of the life lessons they're gathering in their higher education experience to pay off after graduating.

"After graduating college I really hope I am able to obtain a job in my field of study, that's what I'm really hoping for," said Ramirez. "The fact that knowing your hard work is going to pay off is more than satisfactory."

Making yourself a better individual and striving to obtain a career is definitely worth the sacrifice, Ramirez said.

COMING UP | The Beacon

And we're done for the semester!
Check out our next issue,
on stands Jan. 9

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Master's degree can help graduates in job search

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In competition with three other applicants with the same level of experience for a job in media relations, FIU alumnus Aileen Izquierdo says she stood out because of one thing: her master's degree.

In 1995, Izquierdo graduated with a bachelor's in public relations. However, shortly after entering the workforce, she returned to school to pursue a master's in integrated communication, now known as Global Strategic Communications, the program she currently oversees.

"After my bachelor's, I went to go work in the agency world and that didn't work out for me, and [I] came back to work on my master's. I ended up working at FIU's Media Relations Department and got some great experiences there," she said.

Now as a professor and GSC faculty coordinator at the University, Izquierdo believes she wouldn't have been offered these opportunities without her master's degree.

"After I got my master's, I had a professor tell me that there was this great job at FAU overseeing their Media Relations Department, so I applied for it," Izquierdo said.

Shortly after applying, Izquierdo went through a

rigorous multi-phase interview process and found out three other people were applying for the same job, all with the same amount of experience. But only she had the master's.

She went on to become the vice president of communications at several institutions before landing back at the University.

“

I think that FIU students are very fortunate, in that the school has a very large range of master[s] degree programs and from a cost perspective, it's less from what you will find compared to a private institution

Aileen Izquierdo
Professor and Faculty Coordinator
Global Strategic Communications

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"The perspective of whether ... someone needs a master[s] is a personal decision and depending on field. [In] communications, you can get a job straight out of undergrad with a bachelor[s] degree, it can fine tune your skills and network; however, the challenge comes when you want that next step," Izquierdo said.

That next step is managerial positions. How do you take that next big leap when competition is fierce and competitive? The question then becomes, what makes you stand out?

Fittings for cap and gown have already started as students prepare to graduate in December. However, there has been an increase in students pursuing additional degrees after the bachelor's. Some students, like senior Maria Gil, approaching graduation with a journalism degree, believe the bachelor's has lost its competitive edge.

"Most of the jobs I want just require a B.A., but I think most jobs today require a master's degree," Gil said.

Izquierdo recommends a master's for various reasons, the first is, "it never hurts anybody." In addition to learning a new set of skills, she says, the degree is good for those interested in managerial positions, participating in decision-making processes and earning more.

"I think that FIU students are very fortunate, in that the school has a very large range of master[s] degree programs and from a cost perspective, it's less from what you will find compared to a private institution," Izquierdo said. "I just think it's a wise investment, it gives you that extra wiggle room, that chance for a managerial position. It can only help."

As the bachelor's degree becomes all too common, a master's degree can help set you apart from the crowd.

November: 'month-full of giving back'

SGC-BBC



NATALIA BERTOK

With the holiday season upon us, the Student Government Association at The Biscayne Bay Campus has been involved with a variety of events and activities for BBC students to engage in. During the month of November, members of the council worked on completing a toy drive, a food pantry campaign and student forum open to students. It was a month full of giving back to students as well as our communities.

SGA Council members hosted a Thanksgiving dinner at His House Children's Home on Nov. 24. The dinner was open to BBC students and it was a chance for students to get involved with our outside community and enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner with

the children of His House.

Our director of Events, Dianne Morales, has dedicated many hours to arranging events for BBC students to participate in. Morales arranged the Thanksgiving event, as well as hosting a toy drive for the holidays, during which students can bring in a new toy donation for His House children.

The SGC-BBC also hosted a food pantry campaign which was held for a couple of weeks before the Thanksgiving break. The food drive was open to all students to get involved and donated items were given back to the community.

The Council held two SGA public forums during the month of November. Students were invited to join SGA in discussing the proposed changes to the organization's constitution. The forums are an effective way for BBC students to get involved with the council and listen to the potential

changes in the SGA.

On Nov. 22, students had the opportunity to attend a "Student Feedback Forum" event hosted by the SGA, along with the Division of Student Affairs. Assistant vice president for Student Affairs, Dr. Eric E. Arneson, and SGA-BBC president, Allhan Mejia, led the open forum for students. The event was held to encourage BBC students to share their own thoughts, concerns and ideas for the campus. The forums are also a beneficial way to hear students' feedback and communicate changes happening within the student government.

The month of December will be busy, full of studying and celebrating. SGA-BBC members want to wish students all the best with their upcoming finals and to have a safe, relaxing and happy holiday break ahead.

SGC-MMC hosts Finals Week Event

SGC-MMC



ALIAN COLLAZO

Dear Panthers, I would like to start off by wishing you all the best of luck on your upcoming final exams. Since last month, the Student Government Association has been working on many initiatives in order to better serve the FIU community.

Certain issues have been brought to our attention and we are working hard to resolve issues such as, having a 24-hour library or at least one floor open to facilitate studying for students, changing the route of the panther mover so that they stop at every parking garage, and working on a mental health kiosk to assist in the delivery of mental health services.

In February, FIU was invited to join the prestigious Ashoka University Changemaker Campus consortium and as such, SGA is working on a social

innovation workshop for next semester. Students will get to brainstorm solutions to the local, national or world social issues with the idea that we can all be change makers. Therefore, we will keep you posted with any updates.

On Nov. 16, SGA had its first of many DC fly-ins. Along with Campus Life and the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, 10 students were given the opportunity to interview for potential jobs and internships at the nation's Capitol.

Our executive board kept busy throughout the trip advocating on Capitol Hill for year-round pell grants, continual funding for STEM research and the restructuring of student loan debt.

We were able to spend some time in the FIU in D.C. office, which is open to all students and its goal is to aid students in getting jobs and internships in DC — if ever in D.C., make sure to stop by and show some Panther pride!

Overall, the trip was successful and we

hope to continue this initiative in the spring.

With finals week coming up, SGA wants to let you know that we are rooting for you and will make sure to reduce as much stress as possible.

We will be hosting our annual "Recharge for Finals" events during pre-finals and finals week. Some services SGA will be offering including free massages during pre-finals and finals week, coffee services and free printing for all students during exam week in the Graham Center computer lab.

In addition, the Late Night Breakfast will be held on Monday, Dec. 5 from 9:30 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. in GC, with an option to get food earlier with a \$1 donation to the "Roar it Forward" campaign. For our engineering students, SGA will also be hosting dinner at the engineering campus on Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. — We hope to see you there.

Happy Holidays from your Student Government Council!

Student thoughts on higher ed

CHRISTOPHER DOWNS
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As the world continues to evolve and advance in various industries, a bachelor's degree is progressively losing its edge to land a well-paying job. But the question is, with rapid cost of college increasing, why would anyone want to put themselves further into debt by attending graduate school?

Junior biology major, Elian Cordoba, says that for his major, it's the only logical option.

"It's implied that you'll attend either medical school or professional school after graduation," he said.

Once he graduates, Cordoba looks forward to attending medical school, in hopes of becoming a psychiatrist. He also emphasized the influence his brother had on his decision to dive into this career field.

"My brother is my true inspiration. He's currently a nurse, and seeing him help people every day has encouraged me to want to do the same," said Cordoba.

For some, the financial reward is the motivating factor in getting a higher education, for others, the personal impact is far more valuable.

"Growing up my parents didn't really enforce me to get an education, it was

kind of something I wanted for myself. Looking back, I can honestly say it the best decision that I have ever made," said Susan Rodriguez, senior marketing major and a first-generation college student.

Now as she embarks on her search for graduate school to become a market research analyst, Rodriguez hopes to inspire her younger family members.

"I just hope that my younger cousins will see the bar that I'm setting and want to do the same," she said.

In addition to the personal satisfaction a higher education brings, the career advancement opportunities is also another important aspect to consider.

"What's the point in spending thousands of dollars to pursue a graduate program if you're not looking to grow and advance in your career?" said Daniel Matthews, a sophomore computer science major.

Matthews emphasized the rise of technology in today's society, classifying it as a prime industry for a career. He strives to be a computer programmer after grad school, as his fascination with computers and technology continues to grow.

"I like playing around with different software and programs — I know that it may very time consuming to some people but for me I see it has a fun challenge to push my brain further," he said.

FAREWELL, FRANK AND IRENE



SAMUEL PRITCHARD-TORRES/THE BEACON

How to avoid the freshmen fifteen

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Starting college can be an exciting experience; we look forward to meeting new people, learning a lot and getting to be on our own for the first time. However, it can also be full of stress and anxiety.

These emotions can impact our eating habits, leading to one of the most well-known phrases: the freshman 15. This phenomenon comes from the myth that most college students gain around 15 pounds on their first year of college and while

there are no clear facts on the exact amount of weight college students gain on their first year of college, it is true that adapting to a college life may influence eating habits among freshman.

The freshman 15 can sound really discouraging, but the good news is that you can take control of your eating habits and avoid gaining those extra pounds during college.

Remember, you are in control of making healthier choices and every smart decision that you make will help you avoid gaining those extra pounds and keep both your mind and body in good shape.

- 1 **Eat breakfast:** Several studies show that eating a healthy breakfast will help you eat less during the day. It gives you the energy you need to perform your daily activities. Some ideas for a healthy breakfast include boiled eggs with fruits, whole wheat toasts and low-fat or almond milk.
- 2 **Make healthier choices:** For the days you stay longer hours on campus, pick food choices with healthy cooking methods like grilled, baked or steamed. Add a salad or a side of veggies to your meal instead of fried sides.
- 3 **Increase your physical activity:** With assignments to complete, tests to study, it might seem like there's never enough time for a workout. However, finding the time to increase your physical activity will improve your moods, control your stress levels and most importantly, help you maintain a healthy weight. By find a partner to work out with, exercising can be fun.
- 4 **Do no drink your calories:** Drinking beverages high in sugar or the consumption of large amounts of alcohol may result in gaining those extra pounds. Watch your sugar intake and remember that nothing will be better than drinking water.
- 5 **Stick to healthy snacks:** As a college student, it is easier to grab a snack without thinking about what you are eating. Try to snack smart by picking food with the nutrients your body needs. Some of these can be almonds, whole-wheat crackers, pita bread with hummus or apples with peanut butter among many others.



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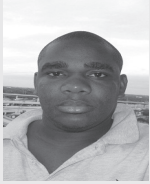
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EDUCATION IS NOT A LUXURY

Entering the job market without a degree is almost impossible

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



JONEL JUSTE

“Today, even working at McDonald’s requires a bachelor’s degree!” It sounds like a joke right? Well it is, since it’s not really a requirement to work at McDonald’s. It’s not yet, but you never know. Things are evolving. It may be the case in 10 or 20 years. Who knows?

The point is that more education and skills are required on the labor market today. It seems like a bachelor’s degree is what a high school diploma used to be, and master’s degree corresponds to a bachelor’s degree.

I often hear people complaining about job requirements that didn’t require as much a few decades ago. That’s when I heard the McDonald’s joke.

“30 years ago, it was easy to find jobs; you just had to know how to read, write and count. Now you must have a bachelor

or a master’s degree for the same job, and you must be willing to get back to school to learn new stuffs about the job,” a man told me once.

I also met a guy who returned to college 15 years after leaving it. He told me in 2000 that he found a job while he was in college, so he left because “the money was good.”

He got married, had a family, and bought a house. Everything was going fine until the day he lost his job. He tried to find another job but it was difficult with a high school diploma. Why?

Because, in the meantime, the job market had changed and more was required from job applicants. So he had to head back to school, with more responsibility this time.

Another guy I know didn’t lose his job but he couldn’t get a promotion with an AS and he wasn’t satisfied with his earnings, so he went back to school for the bachelor’s degree. More education is required to find one’s place on the work market, and the reason is quite simple.

“The United States is more

educated than ever: In 1973, workers with postsecondary education held only 28 percent of jobs; by comparison, they held 59 percent of jobs,” a 2015 report from Georgetown University called “Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020,” reports.

“By 2020 [in less than 4 years], 65 percent of all jobs in the US economy will require

Center for Education Statistics, in fall 2016, about 50.4 million students were expected to attend public elementary and secondary schools. Some 20.5 million students were to attend American colleges and universities, constituting an increase of about 5.2 million since fall 2000, added the NCES.

How many graduate? The National Center for Education

As we can see it, a lot of people get a bachelor’s degree. They were 1.8 million in 2014 and they will be probably more in 2017. That may explain why the work market is so competitive and why more is required from job applicants.

Let’s conclude with the words of the Department of Education: “In today’s economy, higher education is no longer a luxury for the privileged few, but a necessity for individual economic opportunity and America’s competitiveness in the global economy. At a time when jobs can go anywhere in the world, skills and education will determine success, for individuals and for nations. As a result, college education remains the best investment a student can make in his or her future.”

By 2020 [in less than 4 years], 65 percent of all jobs in the US economy will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school.

Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020

postsecondary education and training beyond high school,” the report read.

The United States is one of the countries that produce more schooled people in the world. According to the National

Statistics estimated that during the 2013–14 school year, colleges and universities awarded 943,000 associate’s degrees; 1.8 million bachelor’s degrees; 778,000 master’s degrees; and 177,000 doctor’s degrees.

Jonel Juste is a contributing writer for FIU Student Media. His column, Food for Thought, is a commentary on social and political issues. For suggestions or comments, please contact Jonel at opinion@fiusm.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Our relationship with alumni’s must improve

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



JOSHUA LANE

I applaud the writer who wrote “Students share thoughts on student debt crisis in America” on November 17, 2016 for his efforts in bringing forth attention on this issue, especially when he quoted a statistic from 2012 comparing debt held by students

from private institutions versus public institutions.

It helps provide perspective on how good we, public schoolers, have it in affording university education. However, although those who attend private schools have to pay more they often have better alumni networks, and perhaps a better environment regarding mere ambitions of other students. This explains why they have better networks which grant more, lucrative opportunities after graduation.

In my opinion, all current students at Florida International University need to have more ambition among not only ourselves, but for our colleagues if we wish to attract more of our alumni in giving back in productive ways comparably speaking to private schools like the University of Miami.

This doesn’t necessarily mean that our admission officers have to be more selective in allowing more STEM-motivated students in, and catering financial aid packages accordingly. This would mean, perhaps, requiring some

sort of letter of intent for future students, including those who wish to transfer or come back after dropping out.

All the same, expect more regardless of one’s major. For instance, an international relations or political science major setting themselves to be some sort of an analyst who uses statistical models in evaluating, or creating, strategies relating to national security, or in general to establish world peace.

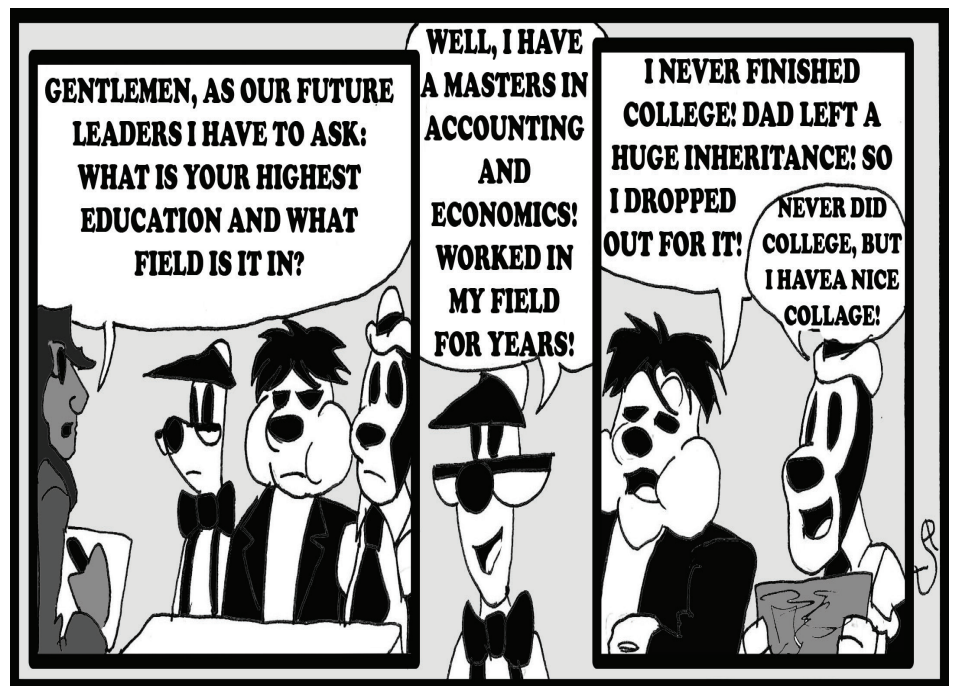
Or, for an English major in setting the stage in writing their debut novel that is worthy to be reviewed by The New York Times. Or, finally, a business major utilizing extensive statistical models for better running a business in the 21st Century.

Debt is something that everybody must live with, and this article touched upon that. Much appreciated.

Joshua Lane
International Relations
Junior

Letters to the Editor are published once a month. They are not written by FIUSM staff but by members of the FIU community. If you would like to submit a letter, please email it to opinion@fiusm.com

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FIU has a responsibility to all students

Higher education can benefit students in the workforce

Working with Student Media has shown us the role higher education plays in society.

We've learned that the University and all higher education institutions have a responsibility not only to provide quality preparation and education for the workforce, but to be a leading force in shaping the world in which we live.

That's why we are calling for the University to lead the charge in accepting and supporting humanities and arts programs.

We understand that STEM is important to society, and in no way aim to undermine the work and dedication of students who pursue careers in these fields. We are, however, asking that this same respect be paid to arts and humanities majors.

Too often, we're told that we'll be living with our parents forever or that we should grow up and choose a "real major."

These programs feel the brunt

of budget cuts, and then we're told that we've chosen a poor return on investment.

The problem isn't the return on investment — it's that there isn't enough investment in our future.

We know this shortcoming isn't entirely the fault of the University, and that state performance metrics enforce the preference of STEM majors and programs. However, ignoring the other programs that are offered sends the message to students that their aspirations and goals are not important.

The University has a responsibility to all of its students, including arts and humanities majors.

Just as the logical lessons learned in STEM programs are essential to society, so are the critical thinking and creative processing skills learned in humanities and arts programs.

Visit FIUSM.com for the full version.

RIVERS OF TRUTH



LINDA RIOS

When thinking about obtaining a higher education, people usually direct their attention to doctors, lawyers, politicians and other high paying jobs, but what if their beliefs are wrong?

Obtaining a higher education, in the past, used to be looked at as overachieving and exclusive for those individuals who had the means of paying for their education. On the other hand, in this day and age, obtaining a higher education is seen as a necessity rather than a privilege to have a stable life.

The Higher Education website states that "the majority of employers (61 percent) say they are looking for more educated candidates at the mid-level skill level, but 46 percent are looking to hire better educated candidates at entry level and 43 percent think the same for higher levels."

Almost all of the requirements that have to be fulfilled to get a good

paying job include at least a master's degree or a higher level of education.

In previous decades, people could have a well-paying job with a high school diploma, but as the years have passed, the requirements have increased to benefit the companies

“56 percent [of companies] said they saw higher quality work from college grads.”

CBS NEWS

hiring their workers.

During an experiment several companies implemented on their employee acquisition, CBS News reported that "56 percent [of companies] said they saw higher quality work from college grads. 41 percent reported better communication.

19 percent said they actually saw more revenue coming in as a result of hiring college educated workers."

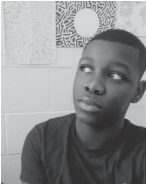
There are still many careers that don't necessarily need a higher level of education besides a bachelor's degree, such as being a school teacher. However, this provides limitations to their own potential and the people around them.

I understand that thinking about obtaining a higher education may not be pleasant and might be stressful, but if reaching your highest potential is something you have in mind, it shouldn't be avoided, but rather embraced.

Linda Rios is a contributing writer for FIU Student Media. Her column, Rivers of Truth, is a commentary on pop culture current events. For suggestions or comments, please contact Linda at opinion@fiusm.com.

Not every job requires you to have a college degree

SOCIAL SCOOP



ALHI LECONTE

The importance of obtaining a college degree has always been highly debated.

The idea of having a college degree is synonymous with having a well paying job and being successful. There are many arguments to support and contradict that going to college and graduating with a degree is essential

in life but there are also multiple professional and personal pros and cons to look at.

Attending college can give you the knowledge that is needed for many jobs. In college, students learn and prepare for their future careers. Students who attend colleges are also given access to resources that can help them get numerous job opportunities while they're in college or upon graduation.

Networking possibilities are plentiful in college as well because of all the events that you can go to. There is higher earning potential for

college-goers. Financial stability and satisfaction is a big point of interest for people who are deciding whether or not to go to college.

Culture and society influence young ones to attend college because they get them to think that it's the thing to do but four years of college immediately after high school may not be the best option for every degree seeking student.

A lot of students do not consider community or technical colleges because of the importance that is placed on attending a four year university. College involves a lot

of responsibilities and expectations, which not everyone is able to handle.

Not all college education is tailored to someone's personal interests and abilities. Most adolescents begin college at the age of 18, but many also enter at the age of 16 and 17. Getting thrown into college brings on big life changes that can negatively affect some students. Someone's maturity level plays a big factor in their college success.

Skyrocketing tuition is another big argument for why you shouldn't attend college because of the figurative dark cloud

associated with it. There is no 100 percent guarantee that you will get a job in the field of your choice. Many college graduates are sometimes employed in jobs that are not related to their degrees.

Truthfully, college degrees are most likely to pay off in the STEM field. This includes any jobs that are related to science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

But, while getting a college degree is not necessary for all jobs, it can still help you get your foot in the door in many different job fields.

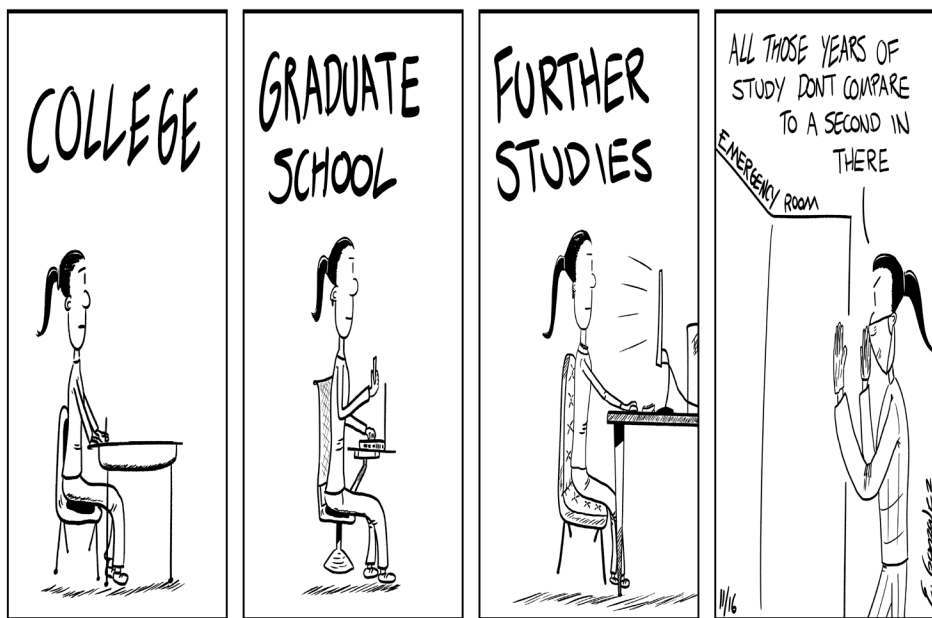
The majority of people feel like they need to

attend college in order to get a good job but you need to remember that while it's helpful, it's not fully required.

There are many people that do not have college degrees and are still successful. In the end, it's an individual's choice whether or not to attend college.

Alhi Leconte is a contributing writer for FIU Student Media. His column, Social Scoop, is a commentary on social issues and pop culture related matters. For suggestions or comments, please contact Alhi at opinion@fiusm.com.

CAN'T STUDY LIFE



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Sports therapy makes getting degrees easier

KRISTEN'S
KORNER



KRISTEN KING

Deciding to obtain a higher education means that you have made the choice to continue your studies beyond high school. It goes without saying that college or a university can be a bit tougher than high school, but many students believe that the transition is worth the strife.

Getting into a college or university may seem like the hardest part of your educational journey, but in reality it is the experience of college that proves to be the most difficult. For some, stepping foot inside a higher education institute proves harder for them than others.

Factors like working a full-time job or raising a family may hinder a person's opportunity to earn a higher education. But, this does not mean they are completely unable to do so.

FIU senior Michelle Byrd knows the struggle of balancing school with work and being a full-time all too well.

"Yes, I knew getting a higher education would be challenging, but I'm always up for a good challenge," Byrd said. "I know that no matter what you put your mind to, you can accomplish and that's what kept me going these last four years."

Byrd is a mother of a 6-year-old boy who has his own

agenda with primary school and extracurricular activities on a weekly basis. However, with his schedule, Byrd knew that she had to adjust her own to ensure that he was also successful in getting an education.

"I wanted to have a degree for my own self-satisfaction but I also realized that this was also for my son," she said. "My biggest fear is that I don't lead by example for him so I believe that all of the work I have put in to getting a higher education is as much his accomplishment as it is mine."

Sometimes factors like the one aforementioned can be the toughest part of getting a higher education. Yet, other factors like stress and time management, which are normal for everyday students, also come into play.

So, why is it that students constantly live up to the stigma surrounding college or university in that it is only about studying? Why not make your time getting a higher education more meaningful by doing more than just studying?

How about joining or participating in one of the various sports FIU has to offer?

Considered by many to be one of the easiest methods of stress relief, sports can indeed help students in their quest to getting a higher education in a healthier manner.

According to the most recent findings of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA), the percentage of students experiencing a mental health issue like anxiety is over 58 percent. So far, this is the highest percentage

recorded by the NCHA within this study.

While there are plenty of options that can be exercised in alleviating stress caused by school, I trust that sports are the best way to do so. You can actually feel the stress leaving your body because of the amount of work you are exuding.

Jefferson Noel, a junior majoring in communications, believes that it is a good idea to use sports as a means of relieving pressure in students' everyday lives.

"I've played sports recreationally and I find that it is a calming experience especially with my school schedule. I feel like watching sports as well puts me at ease and gets rid of any stress or anxiety I may be feeling," said Noel.

Most people understand that getting a higher education isn't the easiest task to achieve because of elements like jobs and stress. But, before you think all hope is gone, explore the idea of joining a sport.

Not only will you be able to lower or keep your stress levels at bay, but you will also create better experiences for yourself while in school. It is most certainly worth the risk.

Kristen King is a staff writer for FIUSM. Her column, Kristen's Korner, focuses on issues that affect students interested in sports. For questions, commentary or suggestions, email Kristen at kristen.king@fiusm.com.

Starting forward plans to 'stay in basketball' after graduating

PETER HOLLAND JR.
Asst. Sports Director
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Balancing both basketball and being a graduate student, Michael Kessens still has the sport as a top priority after finishing his master's program.

The men's basketball starting forward is a University of Alabama transfer who decided to take advantage of his final year of eligibility to play basketball for FIU while being enrolled in a three-semester graduate program for sports management.

So far, the Switzerland native is enjoying every minute living in the warm climates and diversity in Miami.

"I love it. I love the community. It's Florida International University and it has an international feel to it," said Kessens. "The location, too. It's hot, sunny and we have a great community here."

Kessens is from the countryside of Nyon, Switzerland, just four and a half hours away from France. According to the graduate student, his home country is not well known for popular attractions but provides a placid and suburban vibe that he calls home.

"It's a beautiful country," said Kessens. "From the people I know who been to the U.S., they take a week to travel around the country. It's very well organized, and a little bit expensive. It's not like visiting a city like New York City, Paris, or London. It's more chill, relaxed and you just enjoy your time there like family trips or something like that."

Traveling is nothing new for the 6-foot-9, 228 pounder since that's all he did when he was on the 'French Under-20' national team. Traveling all over Europe as an amateur basketball player, it's not surprising to know that Kessens can speak different languages. Kessens is trilingual, speaking French, German and English.

"It's like going state to state in Florida and you go to a Georgia high school," said Kessens. "The differences is with Europe when you go state to state



MICHAEL
KESSENS

in the U.S., you go country to country in Europe. And every country is different like different languages from most of the time, different cultures. It was awesome and I loved it."

Kessens originally signed to play college basketball for Longwood University but transferred after his freshman year due to coaching changes. After sitting out for one season, he played for the Alabama Crimson Tide. His former coach was long-time NBA player and head coach Avery Johnson. After playing two seasons and graduating with a business administration degree, Kessens decided to use his final year of eligibility to play at FIU.

Kessens says that his departure from Alabama will not effect the relationships that he had at the University.

"Coach Johnson is an awesome coach. He's a player's coach, meaning he's been there and done that at the same level that we are at," said Kessens. "We left on great terms and it wasn't he who wanted me to leave or that I wanted to leave, it was just the best thing for both of us. We bonded and it was a bond for life."

Now a graduate student, Kessens, who still wants to play basketball after college, wants to stay with the sport even if he has to hang up his jersey for good. After being asked what he wants to do after playing for FIU, Kessens says he wants to be a mentor for the up and coming basketball players.

"I want to stay in basketball," said Kessens. "I want to play professionally, but I have been hurt and that gave me setbacks forcing me to open my eyes on other career plans. I want guys that are experiencing what I experienced."

Kessens has a message to everyone who's not only a student athlete, but a graduate student as well.

"Just commit yourself to whatever you're doing," said Kessens. "That's basketball, that's school, that's work. If you're not committed, you're not going to get the best out of yourself. Just commit yourself and give 100 percent and believe in your abilities and make goals out of your dreams."

The Panthers are on in the middle of a three game road trip. Their next game will be on Dec.4 against University of South Carolina at 2 pm.



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