

LIGHT UP THE SKY Lights shine off from the top of the Shalala Student Center while fireworks explode for crowds around Lake Osceola to witness. The fireworks show was produced by Zambelli Fireworks, the company behind many of the world's most famous fireworks spectacles, including the Times Square New Year's Eve celebration. *Photo by Ava Strohane*

dare to **DREAM**

Homecoming brings the community together to honor tradition, reconnect with friends and make lasting memories through a range of events and activities.



WHAT'S THAT SPELL? Sebastian the Ibis does the C-A-N-E-S spell-out while on stage with Maya Bentley and Mary Hannah Sutcliffe for the Homecoming Opening Ceremony at Lakeside Patio. *Photo by Ava Strohshane*

UNITED in tradition

Energized performances, heartfelt speeches and a celebration of tradition set the tone for a week of unforgettable events.

Homecoming is a week filled with school spirit, traditions and excitement. With musical performances, cheer routines, food and activities, the opening ceremony marks the official start of Homecoming week and all the festivities ahead. Vendors at the Lakeside Patio provide giveaways, snacks and an afternoon of fun activities. With the football team having a strong start to the season, school spirit was strong with anticipation of the game ahead against FSU. Homecoming is not only about football, but also about connections and community.

Ben Grunblatt, a freshman majoring in political

science, reflected on the unity Homecoming brings to campus life. "Homecoming is all about connecting with school pride and feeling part of something bigger," Grunblatt said. "I love seeing the energy and excitement on campus—it's like we're all part of one big family, and that makes me feel proud to be a Hurricane."

The Homecoming theme, "Dare to Dream" blends tradition while encouraging the next generation of 'Canes to "follow their dreams" as the University approaches its centennial year. The theme was inspired by a comment from committee member Hanna Ebrahimi.

EMBRACING TRADITION

Wearing his Iron Arrow Society custom jacket, a symbol of their membership and the honor they've received, seniors Josh Abel and Lauren Ferrer hug while enjoying the festivities at the Lakeside Patio.

Photo by Jake Sperling



HERE WE GO Senior Lauren Hartman dances with the 'Nettes on the Lakeside Stage at HoCo Opening Ceremonies. *Photo by Jake Sperling*



RINGING THE BELL An age old tradition, the bell of the Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society is rang by Senior Aris Montero to begin the Homecoming celebration. *Photo by Jake Sperling*



GETTING HYPED Excited by the sight of free swag and gear, seniors Zoe Mutombo and Fadelah Pessinaba rush to the Homecoming Committee table at the opening ceremonies. *Photo by Jake Sperling*



AMPING UP THE ENERGY The Frost Marching Band performs at the Homecoming Opening Ceremony on Oct. 21 at Lakeside Patio. *Photo by Ava Strohshane*

fit for ROYALTY

Glitz, grit and school spirit lit up the stage as student leaders competed for the pageant crown.

From twinkling dresses to organized dance numbers, the Homecoming Pageant was filled with shouting fans, sweet treats and waving signs. The pageant consisted of three parts: runway, talent and poise. The runway portion allows contestants to showcase their personalities through their outfits. After the runway, contestants display their unique skills in the talents section. Finally, they wrap up by answering questions about leadership and service in the poise segment.

The pageant crowd included members of Category 5, Commuter Council, Student Government, United Black Students and Hurricane Productions. Each contestant represented one of these organizations, which brought signs with encouraging words, chants, slogans and even life-sized cutouts.

When the court was revealed, it consisted of four winners. First place went to Asia Blocker, a sophomore studying finance and marketing who represented United Black Students. After securing her win, Blocker reflected on the importance of her community.

"I'm glad my village is here to support and shout out to all the other competitors as competitors and people," Blocker said.

The court also included Daniela Dechard, a junior majoring in health studies; Albertie Regalado, a junior double-majoring in pre-medical biochemistry and nutrition and psychology; and Maui Candela, a senior majoring in pre-law studies and communication. Members of the court said they felt honored to have been bestowed such a title for this year's Homecoming.



THAT CROWNING MOMENT After being crowned Homecoming Royalty Court, Seniors Asia Blocker, Albertie Regalado, Daniela Dachard and junior Maui Candela pose together to celebrate their accomplishment. *Photo by Jake Sperling*



HONORING HERITAGE During the runway portion of the Homecoming Pageant, senior Ayanna Gonzalez represents her Puerto Rican heritage with its flag attached to her dress. *Photo by Jake Sperling*

CONFIDENCE IS KEY

Making her entrance during the first round of the royalty pageant, senior Alejandra Hernandez exudes confidence through her walk.

Photo by Jake Sperling



MUSIC IN THE AIR In the Shalala Ballroom on Oct. 21 for the Homecoming Pageant, senior Maui Candela sings and plays the guitar as his talent. *Photo by Jake Sperling*



CROWD PARTICIPATION While singing "Valerie" by Amy Winehouse for her talent portion of the pageant, senior Kat Hernandez turns the microphone towards the audience to encourage them to sing along with her. *Photo by Jake Sperling*

TWO is better than ONE

At the annual Hurricane Productions Homecoming Concert, this year two artists were featured instead of just one, drawing crowds from different areas of campus.

HP Concerts featured pop artist Olivia O'Brien and EDM group Cheat Codes for the Homecoming Concert on Oct. 24 at the Watsco Center. In response to popular demand, the student-led organization chose to deviate from past shows involving prominent rappers.

As neon lights shined and music emanated from the venue, students danced and sang along while back-to-back sets from O'Brien and Cheat Codes performed.

Trinity Vodovoz, a sophomore majoring in finance and legal studies serves as the marketing chair for HP Concerts. She explained some of the factors that HP Concerts must consider when organizing the annual Homecoming Concert.

"Despite the challenge of scheduling just one artist, HP took on the challenge of scheduling two," Vodovoz said.

"The biggest challenge that HP Concerts faces during scheduling is working around different artists' tour dates and the locations they will be in," said Vodovoz.

Niloy Bhattacharyya, a graduate student studying marine biology, has attended the Homecoming Concert since he was a freshman.

"The Homecoming Concert is an integral part of Homecoming, it brings a different type of life to the university which is really exciting," Bhattacharyya said.



AND THE CROWD GOES Smoke cannons go off as the crowd jumps to the Homecoming performance of Cheat Codes. Kevin Ford, or KEVI as he's known colloquially, encourages the crowd. *Photo by Jake Sperling*



GET IN TO IT Headliner Olivia O'Brien performs her hit song "Jocelyn" to the crowd. *Photo by Jake Sperling*

U GOT IT Cheat Codes DJ KEVI throws up the "U" while playing to students gathered in the Watsco Center. *Photo by Jake Sperling*

CONNECTION Looking into the crowd, Olivia O'Brien shares her music writing process. *Photo by Jake Sperling*

PUMP IT UP Trevor Dahl of Cheat Codes stands on the speakers to connect with the crowd. *Photo by Jake Sperling*

let's get LOUD

OCher brought the heat as orgs battled it out through song, dance and spirit.

With over 305 student-run organizations on campus, the Organized Cheer competition, which is dubbed "OCher," gives students the opportunity to compete and perform a choreographed skit and dance for the community at Lakeside Patio. To win the competition, organizations are tasked to come up with a creative way to relay a message to showcase the purpose of their community through song and dance. Each organization is not only responsible for the dances and songs, but the costumes and energy as well.

"When practicing, we struggled with spacing," Jenny Rivas a junior majoring in psychology and criminology said. "Spacing in Shalala for example does not compare to the stage in Lakeside Patio." Rivas is an active member of the Association of Commuter Students.

The Association of Commuter Students, United Black Students, Federación de Estudiantes Cubanos and C-Force—a combination of all the Caribbean organizations on campus competed in OCher. United Black Students placed first, Association of Commuter Students second, Federación de Estudiantes Cubanos third followed by C-Force.

"I really loved getting to perform," said Jesminder Pongnon, a freshman majoring in health science. "I think this event is so much fun, and seeing everyone from different communities is a great way to get involved whether you're performing or in the audience."



GIVE IT ALL Full of emotion, senior Amari McNair completes a performance for the UBS OCher skit. Photo by Ava Strohane



DANCE OFF At Lakeside Patio, sophomore Jennifer St. Germain participates in the opening dance for the OCher competition. Photo by Ava Strohane



CELEBRATING VICTORY United Black Students (UBS) smile for a celebratory photo after being named the winner of the Homecoming Organized Cheer Competition. Photo by Ava Strohane

IN IT TO WIN IT

Representing the Federación de Estudiantes Cubanos, freshman Ricardo Canellas participates in the Homecoming OCher Competition. Photo by Ava Strohane



IGNITE the spirit

According to legend, if the mast of the ship with the opposing teams' logo falls before the boat sinks, UM will defeat them at the Homecoming football game.

To close out Homecoming Week, current and past 'Canes gathered around Lake Osceola for one of the University of Miami's oldest traditions: the Hurricane Howl, Boat Burning and firework show.

Aris Montero, a senior majoring in creative advertising and communications studies is the Vice Chair of the Homecoming Executive Committee.

"I had so much fun when we were painting the boat as a committee," Montero said. "It was not only a great way to continue bonding as a team but also an exciting opportunity to get everyone eager for homecoming week starting!"

Following the Hurricane Howl, the crowd gathers to watch the boat burning and firework show. According to tradition, if the boat's mast falls before the boat sinks, UM will go on to win the football game on Saturday. Staying true to tradition, the Hurricanes defeated the Florida State Seminoles, 36-14.

For freshmen Aubrey Gatewood majoring in biology, this was her first Hurricane Howl.

"My favorite part about tonight was seeing our whole school come together to celebrate such a big week," said Gatewood.

The boat burning tradition began in 1956 to promote the fraternity Theta Chi in its first year on campus. At the time, Student Union Director Norman A. Whitten was looking for a student-run event to commemorate the thirtieth Homecoming.

LIGHT THE FUSE Adhering to tradition, Homecoming culminated with a boat with the FSU logo being set aflame for the Boat Burning Ceremony. Photo by Ava Strohane

SPARKLING SPIRIT Red fireworks go off over Lake Osceola to end Homecoming Week festivities before the game. Before the spectacle began, the Homecoming Executive Committee broadcast over the speakers a message about how "throughout the week, we've celebrated the power of our dreams, hopes and aspirations, and we've invited everyone to bring them to life here at the "U". The theme encourages us to let our imaginations soar – much like the enchanting tales found in fairy tales and storybooks – as we envision the extraordinary. Together, we embrace the journey ahead and the dreams that will shape our future as the University of Miami enters a new century." *Photo by Ava Strohane*

same place **NEXT YEAR**

As Homecoming draws to a close, the community comes together one final time to reflect on a week of celebration, cherished traditions and memories made with friends both new and old.