Four MDC Students Win Renowned Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship

Top Scholars: Four Miami Dade College graduates were recently awarded the Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship. Pictured from left to right are Nathalie Saladrigas, Javier Gil, Kayla Ribeiro and Carlen Arevalo.

Recipients of the prestigious scholarship will receive up to $55,000 annually to cover living expenses, tuition, books and additional fees at a four-year transfer institution.

By Nikole Valiente
nikole.valiente001@mymdc.net

Four Miami Dade College Honors College graduates—Carlen Arevalo, Javier Gil, Nathalie Saladrigas and Kayla Ribeiro—were awarded the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship.

Three of this year’s winners are from Eduardo J. Padrón Campus. In the past three years, the campus has produced eight JKC scholars.

The scholarship recipients will each receive up to $55,000 annually for living expenses, tuition, books and other fees at a transfer institution.

Sixty winners were selected from a pool of more than 1,700 candidates from 448 community colleges nationwide.

Applicants had to be sophomores or recent graduates of a two-year institution in the United States with a plan to enroll full-time in a baccalaureate program in the fall. They also needed to have a minimum 3.5 GPA, demonstrate unmet financial need and have no previous enrollment at a four-year institution.

Carlen Arevalo

After immigrating to the United States when she was 12 years old to escape gang violence in El Salvador, Arevalo struggled with cyberbullying as she struggled to learn English. Refusing to be discouraged, Arevalo discovered how to express her creativity in middle school using photography, post design and algorithms. At MDC, she merged her passion for social media by studying business marketing.

At Padrón Campus, she served as the vice president of scholarship and leadership for Phi Theta Kappa, was a co-organizer for the Jovenes Contra el Cáncer (youth against cancer) Foundation and was president of the Meraki Youth community service club.

The 20-year-old, who was selected as a New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar and the All-USA Academic Team, graduated...
Padrón Campus Student Selected As 2023 Newman Civic Fellow
Nicole Viloria, a second-year Honors College student at Eduardo J. Padrón Campus, was named a Newman Civic Fellow on April 6.

The award, which is the highest honor in student engagement and leadership, was provided by Campus Impact—a non-profit organization based in Boston promoting higher education.

"Finding out about this news reaffirmed my commitment to the causes I believe in," said Viloria, who emigrated from Venezuela in 2017. "I would not have done anything differently."

During her time at Padrón Campus, Viloria served as the co-editor-in-chief of Tribuna, the campus’ literary magazine, president of the Gamma Eta English Honor Society and co-president of Hermione’s Army—a Harry Potter-based community service club.

Viloria also provided one-on-one English tutoring to Ukrainian Youth through the international non-profit organization, ENGin.

The 20-year-old earned an associate’s degree in English literature from Padrón Campus in April. She will transfer to Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut this fall to pursue her dream of becoming a writer.

— Juan S. Gomez

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program Accepting Applications
Miami Dade College is accepting applications for its 10th cohort of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program through June 13.

The project is a partnership between Miami Dade College and Goldman Sachs—a global investment banking company.

During the 12-week initiative, participants will learn how to improve their networking and entrepreneurship skills to grow their businesses. Instruction is done through classroom sessions, one-on-one guidance and workshop events with Goldman Sachs professionals.

Applicants must be an owner or co-owner of a business that has been open for at least two years, have a minimum of two employees and have a revenue of at least $75,000 in the last fiscal year.

The program is set to begin on Sept. 12 at Wolfson Campus.

To apply, visit the program’s website at https://www.10ksxhapply.com.

— Juan S. Gomez

New World School of the Arts To Host Senior Showcase From May 22 to June 2

New World School of the Arts will host their annual visual arts exhibition, Prelude 3: 2023 Senior Showcase, from May 22 to June 2.

The exhibit, which has been held for more than three decades, features the final projects of high school seniors graduating from the New World School of the Arts. Following an opening reception from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on May 19, the exhibit will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the New World Gallery, 25 N.E. 2nd Street.

The exhibition is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact NWSA at 305-237-3820 or nwsaw@mdc.edu.

— Veronica Romano

Applications Open For Koubek Center’s En Residencia Program
The En Residencia program at Miami Dade College’s Koubek Center is accepting applications until May 31.

En Residencia is a year-long program that gives local artists access to four classrooms and a large studio space at the Koubek Center in exchange for their participation in one of the facilities programs or activities.

The membership-based initiative allows artists to create a maximum of two projects per year. Artists can use the Koubek Center for blocks of two months per project.

Membership cost for the entire year is $200.

To apply, visit En Residencia, visit https://bit.ly/42B33kF.

— Nicholy Charles

Kendall Campus Professor Named 2023 Guggenheim Fellow
Tony Chirinos, a photography professor at Kendall Campus, was selected as a 2023 Guggenheim Fellow in the photography category on April 6.

The fellowships, which award an average of 30,000 to $45,000, are given to those who have demonstrated exceptional creative ability in the arts.

"It still hasn't hit me," said Chirinos, who will use the grant to fund a photography project on the stories behind people’s scars. “I can not believe I am at that level with all the people I have admired and studied for so long.”

Chirinos worked as the director of biomedical photography at Miami Children’s Hospital and Baptist Hospital from 1989 to 2001. Two years later, he began his tenure as a photography professor at Kendall Campus.

The 57-year-old earned a master of fine arts degree in 2003 from Columbia University in New York City.

— Gabriella Gutierrez

Hialeah Campus Selects New Student Life Director
Jordan Chang was appointed as the new student life director at Hialeah Campus on March 13.

Chang, 32, will manage the department’s budget, supervise staff and promote events and programs to increase student engagement on campus.

“I am very excited to take on this role,” Chang said. “My previous experiences and familiarity will assist me in executing quality programs and events for our students.”

Prior to Miami Dade College, he worked at Florida Atlantic University from 2013-2015 as a graduate assistant in the office of diversity & multicultural affairs and as the interim multicultural specialist.

For the past eight years, he worked at Sam Houston State University. First as the multicultural student services coordinator and most recently as the assistant director of the center for diversity & intercultural affairs.

Chang earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and government and a master’s in educational leadership and administration from Florida Atlantic University.

— Hugo Guillen

Platform Offers Students Free Online Peer-to-Peer Tutoring
Knack, an online tutoring platform for college students, is partnering with Miami Dade College to expand peer learning opportunities.

The platform allows students to match with a tutor who’s previously attended MDC and has mastered the course they want to receive mentoring on.

Tutoring, which is offered on a flexible schedule, is available for courses in areas like English composition, computer science, history and chemistry. Students interested in becoming a tutor must submit a college transcript and have an A in the course they want to mentor.

Tutor applications can be completed at https://www.joinknack.com. For more information about Knack, visit their website at https://bit.ly/3n1C2sE.

— Alyson Castillo

MDC Student Receives Voter Engagement Honor
Arturo Ortiz, a nursing student at Medical Campus, was named to the Student Honor Roll by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

The award recognizes 175 students nationwide for their efforts to “advance nonpartisan student voter registration and education.” Ortiz was the only recipient from Miami Dade College.

"This is a very prestigious honor and I am humbled," Ortiz said. "None of this would be possible without the collaboration of the amazing resources MDC offers."

During the 2022-23 academic year, Ortiz served as the student government association president and Phi Theta Kappa vice president at Hialeah Campus. He was also involved with Mo-trove, a digital voter engagement platform.

Before transitioning to the Medical Campus this summer, where he will serve as SGA President, the 35-year-old completed his nursing prerequisites at Hialeah Campus.

— Alyson Castillo

MDC Appoints New Senior Vice Provost And Chief Financial Officer
Chris Starling was selected as the senior vice provost and chief financial officer at Miami Dade College on April 7.

He is responsible for managing the College’s financial and business sectors, which include overseeing all business affairs operations.

"I was excited," Starling said. "This was the highest level in my career that I thought I would be able to achieve here at the college."

At the College, he has served as the associate vice president for business services and vice provost for business affairs, a post he has held since 2009.

Prior to joining MDC in 1999, Starling served a five-year term as an auditor general for the State of Florida.

The 54-year-old earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Florida in 1991. Two years later, he earned a master’s degree in accounting from Florida International University.

— Gabriella Gutierrez

Miami Book Fair To Host Little Haiti Book Festival
The Miami Book Fair will present its annual Little Haiti Book Festival from May 7 to 28. It aims to celebrate Haitian culture and features speakers and live art performances.

On May 7, the opening ceremony will have a Haitian music show, yoga classes and live music from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex, 212 N.E. 59 Terre.

Two one-hour discussions will be held virtually at 2 p.m. on May 21 and 28. The first will discuss the significance of Haitian Creole culture and the last will provide possible solutions for Haiti’s poverty and political instability.

For more information, contact the Miami Book Fair at (305) 237-2377 or visit https://bit.ly/41B0c5C.

— Isabelle Greiner

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— Gabriella Gutierrez
Signs Of Support: Students from more than 300 high schools and colleges in Florida walked out of their classrooms on April 21 to protest recent state legislation restricting LGBTQ rights. Pictured are students who gathered at Pride Park in Miami Beach in support of the walkout.

Good Morning: Singer Ally Evenson performs at Pride Park on April 21 during a protest against state legislation restricting LGBTQ rights.

Standing Tall: Students who disagree with recent state legislation restricting LGBTQ rights let their opinions be known during a protest at Pride Park on April 21.

My Choice: Local activist, Luna, joins a crowd advocating for abortion as a basic human right at the Torch of Friendship on April 14.
MDC Graduates Turn The Tassel At LoanDepot Park

Nearly 12,000 Miami Dade College students walked the stage as friends and family rooted them on at Little Havana’s loanDepot Park during three commencement ceremonies on April 22.

By Nikole Valiente and Juan S. Gomez
nikole.valiente001@mymdc.net

Gisela Celis knows a thing or two about the curveballs life throws.

In the last decade, the Peruvian immigrant has relocated to Canada, Mexico and the United States nine years ago, was grateful for having the opportunity to graduate from MDC despite financial struggles. “[The U.S] opened doors that Venezuela shut,” said Padriño, who graduated from Hialeah Campus in December with an associate’s degree in biology but walked during the April 22 ceremony. “But I can never forget my home because I know where I’m from.”

Success stories like Padriño’s were plentiful.
Twenty-year-old Tykirah Harris, a North Campus Honors College graduate, was one of eight students—each campus had a recipient—to receive the $5,000 Board of Trustees Scholarship.

“Now that I have reached the finish line I am left with conflicting feelings because MDC has become a second home for me,” Harris said. “Yet, I am excited to begin my next chapter in life.”

Softball player Vicky Navarro, who won 22 games and struck out 157 batters in two seasons at the College, is also ready to turn the page toward her next challenge.

“Don’t let things like tests define who you are,” said Navarro, who plans to continue her softball career and studies at Nova Southeastern University next fall. “Just live your life, try your hardest, and if you don’t succeed, you tried. You can’t succeed without failure.”

Arturo Ortiz, the SGA president at Hialeah Campus, was equally reflective, addressing his peers one last time, to offer his gratitude.

“We would be remiss if we did not recognize and acknowledge our support system—your family, your friends, your loved ones, your MDC family,” Ortiz said. “The opportunity to have this support made the difference between success and failure.”

Staff writer Olivia Valkenburg contributed to this story.

The Finish Line: A graduate triumphantly walks across the stage on April 22 at loanDepot Park during the commencement ceremony for the Hialeah, North and West campuses.

Prior to speaking, Griffin was recognized for making a $20 million dollar donation to create the Griffin Scholarship Fund—an initiative to promote educational opportunities for MDC students. A college press release touted the gift as the “largest single philanthropic gift in MDC history.”

Humpton, the first keynote speaker, talked about the importance of technology, the obstacles she has faced during her career and how challenges sharpen you.

“Look back at the road you’ve traveled to get to this place and know you’ve built the strength to travel the next stretch and the next one,” Humpton said. “You have what it takes.”

Luisana Padriño, a Venezuelan national who arrived in the United States nine years ago, was grateful for having the opportunity to graduate from MDC despite financial struggles. “[The U.S] opened doors that Venezuela shut,” said Padriño, who graduated from Hialeah Campus in December with an associate’s degree in biology but walked during the April 22 ceremony. “But I can never forget my home because I know where I’m from.”

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Medical Campus Student Honored Posthumously During Graduation

Christina Neal was known for her kindness. In October of 2019, when her friend Claudia Moran told her she feared an abusive ex-boyfriend, Neal picked her up from her Key Biscayne home and took her to Baptist Health South Miami Hospital where the duo was part of the Nurse Scholars Program.

"It was just the kindest thing I think anybody's ever done for me," Moran said. "There are not a lot of people like that."

Today, Moran is one of the countless people touched by Neal who now mourn her loss. Following a decade-long struggle with cancer, Neal succumbed to the disease one month prior to graduating from the Medical Campus at Miami Dade College.

Neal was posthumously awarded a bachelor's degree in nursing during last month's commencement ceremony. The award was given to her family on stage. They were greeted with a standing ovation.

"We are very appreciative," said John Neal, Christina's father. "This would have been her second graduation…I just started to think about a lot of the things that she was deprived of accomplishing."

A Fighter

Christina Louise Neal was born in October of 1985 in Queens, New York. She was the youngest and only daughter of John and Marilyn Neal. A year and a half after she was born, Neal's family relocated to Florida seeking a respite from the cold.

Ever since she was a kid, Neal learned to express herself by dancing, acting and modeling. And she also developed a strong sense of leadership.

"She was always spearheading everything [at home]," said Gayle Harris, Christina's first cousin. "She blossomed into that and never lost that personality trait."

After graduating from Coral Reef High School in 2003, Neal pursued her dream of becoming a pharmacist, attending Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. Six years later she earned a bachelor's degree in biology. Once she obtained her degree, Neal worked as a pharmacy technician at CVS and Target.

In April of 2012, the then-26-year-old was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer after she discovered a lump on her chest. Within weeks, Neal had part of her left breast removed and began doing monthly chemotherapy sessions at the Lennar Foundation Medical Center in Coral Gables.

A year later, her cancer went into remission. But in the spring of 2015, the cancer returned with a vengeance. She was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer and it had spread to her liver.

Neal underwent two surgeries in the fall and winter of that year to remove 75% of her liver and start chemotherapy again. Within a year, the cancer had once again retreated.

Three years later her world was uprooted again.

She received her third breast cancer diagnosis. This time it had spread to her lungs.

Neal valiantly fought the disease for four years before passing on March 16. "She was a fighter," Marilyn said. "She just wouldn't give up."

Throughout the process, Neal formed a close bond with Cristina Upegui, who has worked as a cancer patient nurse for the past 17 years at the Diagnostic Center of Miami.

Upegui took care of Neal after various medical procedures and went with her to doctors' appointments. In September of 2015, she raised $2,445 to cover some of Neal's medical costs.

"I try to stay away from getting personal with patients, but there was just a connection from the beginning with Christina," Upegui said. "This is a journey that we put together."

Inspired by Upegui's support, Neal aspired to be a nurse. In 2019, she enrolled at MDC to pursue an associate's degree in nursing. After graduating with honors in 2021, Neal began working on her bachelor's degree. That same year, she began working as an oncology nurse at Baptist Health Baptist Hospital in Kendall.

"She was very open and nice from the first day I met her."

Outside of the classroom, Neal and her friends unwound by eating at Mediterranean restaurants in Coral-Gables.

"She's a firecracker," Moran said. "She's smart and kind and beautiful and funny. She just made me laugh all the time."

Neal loved re-watching films such as Ratatouille, Fifty-First Dates and What's Love Got to Do with It and took road trips to visit relatives in North Carolina and Washington, D.C. Up until her final days, Neal often spoke with her first cousin Harris, who lives in California, via Google Meets.

"We can say Muhammad Ali was the greatest of all time, but I think Christina really showed us so much," Harris said. "Her body—it wasn't friendly to her—but she still fought to live."

For the past three years, Neal revealed in taking care of her black French Bulldog Luxe. The pooch died on May 4—less than two months after her death.

"Anyone who remembers her is going to remember her fondly," said James Neal, Christina's brother. "It doesn't matter how you remember her— as long as you do."
Scholarship Awards Each Student Up To $55,000 Annually

Kayla Ribeiro

After moving to Miami from New Jersey two years ago, Ribeiro was often the only girl in her computer science courses at Kendall Campus. Inspired by a summer program she took in high school through Girls Who Code—an international non-profit supporting women in computer science—Ribeiro created a chapter of the organization to promote inclusivity.

“All it takes is [to have] somebody there to tell you can do it,” Ribeiro said. “I want to let girls know that I was in their shoes too, and we are able to accomplish just as much as men do in the coding world.”

During her time at MDC, Ribeiro served as the president of the Honors College ambassador’s program, secretary for the Omega Tau PTK chapter at Kendall Campus and was a mentor in the Sharks Guiding Sharks club.

Ribeiro, who was named a Coca-Cola Academic Team Gold Scholar and a member of the All-Florida Academic Team by PTK, also conducted research in the spring semester on sagebrush ecosystems before earning an associate’s degree in computer science with a 4.0 GPA.

The 18-year-old plans to transfer to the Georgia Institute of Technology or Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore this fall to pursue a bachelor’s degree in computer science. She aspires to be a software developer.

Schedule Set For 2023 Miami Dade College Journalism Speaker Series

This year’s series will host interviews with Pulitzer journalists from media outlets such as Bloomberg News, the Miami Herald, NBC 6 and the Locked On Canes podcast.

Grab your pens and notepads—the Miami Dade College Journalism Speaker Series has returned.

This year’s five episodes will be broadcast on MDC-TV, YouTube and Instagram Live—@mdctheposter.

Featured guests will include journalists from Bloomberg News, NBC 6, Miami Herald and the Locked On Canes podcast.

“We are excited to have these veteran journalists share their knowledge with our students,” said Manolo Barco, who created the Speaker Series and serves as media adviser to @The Reporter, the student newspaper at MDC.

Kris Anderson, a morning anchor for NBC 6 News Today, launched this year’s series on April 18.

The next guest was Alex Donno, host of the Locked On Canes daily podcast, who covers the University of Miami athletics department. He was featured on May 16 at Kendall Campus, 11011 S.W. 104 St., in Room M-239 at 11 a.m.

Donno, a 2007 UM graduate, has covered the Hurricanes since 2005—first at the university’s student radio station and later on WQAM.

The South Florida native has also been a studio host for the Miami Dolphins and Florida Panthers and a midday and evening talk show host on WQAM.

Felipe Marques the Miami bureau chief for Bloomberg News, who covers Florida politics, appeared on May 22 at Wolfson Campus, 300 N.E. 2nd Ave. in Room B60 at 11 a.m.

The Brazilian national has previously served as a wealth reporter for Latin America, covering the region’s billionaires, largest banks and hedge funds. He is a graduate of the University of São Paulo.

Photjournalist Al Diaz, who has worked at the Miami Herald for more than four decades, will speak at the series on May 31 at Kendall Campus in Room M-239 at 11 a.m.

Diaz has won numerous recognitions since he started his career at the Herald in 1983, including the 2014 Humanitarian Award from the National Press Photographers Association and the Associated Press Media Editors Showcase Photo of the Year for capturing an image of the CPR rescue of a baby on a Miami highway.

He has also contributed to two Pulitzer Prize-winning teams, covering the sudden collapse of Champlain Towers South in Surfside in 2022 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

Diaz is a bachelor’s degree in journalism with a minor in visual arts from the University of Florida. He started his collegiate journalism career at MDC in the fall of 1976 serving as photographer for The Catalyst, the former student newspaper at Kendall Campus.

The final guest of this year’s series was Be Hines, the first Black female reporter at the Miami Herald. She has worked as a reporter and columnist for the paper for more than 50 years and got her start in journalism at The Falcon Times—the North Campus’ student newspaper until 2010—in the late 1960s.

The details of her appearances have not been finalized yet.

The Miami Dade College Journalism Speaker Series was initiated in February of 2008 to provide students with the opportunity to learn from working journalists. To date, more than 77 journalists have participated in the series.

Interviews are in 25-30 minute intervals and viewers can interact with guests at the end of each presentation during a 15-minute Q&A session.

For more information, contact Manolo Barco at (305) 237-1255 or at mbarco@mdc.edu.
New Artificial Intelligence Center Unveiled At Wolfson Campus

Following a $14 million investment and three years of work, Miami Dade College’s second Artificial Intelligence Center is here. Located in Room 2104 at Wolfson Campus, the 5,000-square foot facility opened its doors on April 13.

Students will be taught how AI operates in fields such as business, computer science and ethics.

“Every field, every industry and every job is going to be disrupted with AI,” said Antonio Delgado, the Vice President of Innovation & Tech Partnerships at the College. “We want every student at MDC to have AI skills.”

Classrooms entering the facility are greeted by a blue video column that can project things like images, student projects and adverstisements. The entrance features a seating space and an incubator glass pod that allows three to four people to meet privately or work on projects.

Inspired by the human brain, the remaining areas of the AI center are divided into a left quadrant featuring classrooms and a right side that has flexible study spaces to entice student creativity.

On the left side of the facility, two classroom spaces each include 25 high-end computers with a dual monitor setup. The areas, which are separated by a glass wall, can be combined.

They will be utilized to teach the College’s AI Thinking course, which offers students an introduction to the technology and its ethical implications, and allow students to explore Open AI’s ChatGPT and DALL-E 2 and host hackathon events, webinars and speakers.

The other side of the AI Center houses two additional classrooms that feature more than 10 collaborative desks that can accommodate three people each. They will be used by students working on projects. Nicolas Campozzalla, a second-year entrepreneurship student at Wolfson Campus, is using the facility to work on a project that utilizes AI to help students find directions and obtain more information about a campus.

“AI is something that is coming for us, the creators, to be empowered,” Campozzalla said. “The most important part of the center is the education [it] can bring to the students.”

Next fall, the facility will welcome new programs such as the AI awareness college credit certificate, applied AI associate’s in science degree and the applied AI bachelors degree. All three tracks will teach students how to operate AI to optimize work operations.

In conjunction with the opening of Wolfson’s AI Center, MDC launched its Metaverse—a digital platform that allows students to use virtual reality technology to complete college tours and virtual classes.

Developed in less than six months through VictoryRX—a company that offers classroom and campus models for VR use—the platform includes VR representations of Wolfson’s Business Innovation & Technology Center and Medical Campus’ nursing facilities.

It will also create virtual environments that allow students in fields such as biology or pre-med to perform simulated dissections through VR headsets.

“We want to embrace this virtual world and let them experience emerging technologies, education,” said Chechu Lasheras, the executive director of emerging technologies at MDC Tech.

Jazz At Wolfson Presents Series Creator Steps Down After 25 Years

Michael Di Liddo, who started the Jazz At Wolfson Presents series in 1998, is stepping down as the series’ director in July. He is retiring from Miami Dade College in December after 37 years at the college.

By Juan S. Gomez
gomez070@mymdc.net

Fourteen years into his teaching career, jazz professor Michael Di Liddo was searching for a tool outside of the classroom to captivate students.

Determined to make a change, Di Liddo reached out to New York City jazz musicians in hopes of creating a year-long program that featured free performances at Wolfson Campus.

Jazz At Wolfson Presents was launched in 1998.

Twenty-five years later, the series has hosted more than 250 jazz musicians including notable artists such as four-time Grammy-award winner John Riley, Boston-based guitarist Mike Stern and legendary jazz saxophonist, the late James Moody.

Di Liddo, who has fostered the program into its longest-tenured free jazz series in Miami-Dade County, is stepping down as the initiative’s director in July.

He is retiring from the College in December after 37 years. “I felt like I had done everything that I could do to make the jazz program strong,” Di Liddo said. “It’s time to turn it over to someone else for new ideas.

Lifelong Passion

Di Liddo was born in February of 1958 in Brooklyn, New York. His first musical milestone was when he saw The Beatles perform on the Ed Sullivan Show on TV when he was six.

“I remember watching this thing with my mouth wide open,” Di Liddo said, “Mu -

Six.

on the Ed Sullivan Show on TV when he was stone was when he saw The Beatles perform.

During his four-decade-long teaching career, Di Liddo has influenced the lives of hundreds of students.

In 2008, Kemuel Roig considered abandoning his promising musical career because he was unsure he could make a living doing what he loved. But Di Liddo convinced Roig to continue pursuing his passion. Today, the 34-year-old is a renowned jazz pianist who has toured internationally and performed with artists like Arturo Sandoval, Al Di Meola and Giovanni Hidalgo.

“[Di Liddo] made me realize the blessing I actually had in my hands, and gave me the courage to keep going forward,” said Roig, who was featured at the Jazz At Wolfson Presents in October.

For the past year, Di Liddo has prepared Wolfson Campus adjunct professor Mark Smail to take the reins of the Jazz At Wolfson Presents series.

“Every field, every industry and every job is going to be disrupted with AI,” said Antonio Delgado, the Vice President of Innovation & Tech Partnerships at the College. “We want every student at MDC to have AI skills.”

The Grammy award-winning jazz saxophonist and composer has performed on Broadway, the Sydney Opera House and Madison Square Garden. He has been featured in dozens of films, and composed for musicians like Rosanna Amed and Michael Bublé.

At MDC, Small has reserved venues, secured artists, scheduled events, organized rehearsals and promoted the series through the College’s public relations team. He hopes to offer outdoor events and free food at each performance.

“Our main goal is community outreach and fostering a knowledge of jazz,” Small said.

During his retirement, Di Liddo plans to continue being active in the jazz music scene. As he has done so for the past 31 years, Di Liddo will continue directing and playing the guitar for the quartet at Broward Coun -ry’s North Creek Presbyterian Church.

In addition, Di Liddo said he is consulting with his high school band for their 50-year anniversary.

He has also planned to travel, visiting Germany, Italy and Spain and spending time at his log home in Andrews, North Carolina, where he has a collection of antique radios, fans and clocks.

“I’m going to miss him greatly,” said Irene Marquez, who has served as communications director of promotions and promotes the Jazz At Wolfson Present series through email and social media marketing campaigns.

“He’s a consummate professional, professor and artist.”

The Reporter
Professor To Retire After Three Decade-Long Teaching Career At MDC

English professor Ivonne Lamazares is retiring in August after more than 30 years at Miami Dade College. Lamazares serves as co-advisor to Café Cultura, the literary arts magazine at Hialeah Campus.

By Juan S. Gomez and Nikole Valiente

When Nerys Torralbas started her academic endeavors at Miami Dade College, she had her sights set on becoming an optometrist. That was the plan—until she joined Café Cultura, the literary arts magazine at Hialeah Campus. Within a year, Torralbas was the publication’s editor-in-chief and she switched her major to English after realizing writing was her passion.

Thirteen years later, Torralbas credits Café Cultura co-advisor Ivonne Lamazares for guiding her toward her calling. “She really helped me [and] always saw potential in me,” said Torralbas, who currently serves as the associate director of Learning Resources at Hialeah Campus. “She really made that push for me to make that first step.”

Torralbas is one of the hundreds of students Lamazares has influenced during her three decades at Miami Dade College. In August, the 61-year-old English professor is slated to retire.

“I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. “I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. “I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. “I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. “I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. “I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. “I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. “I’m retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family,” said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said. Love What You Do

Lamazares was born in March of 1962 in Havana, Cuba. She was raised by her grandparents, her mom passed away when she was three and three years later, her dad left for the United States. When she was 13, Lamazares and her grandparents moved to Spain for three months before immigrating to Hialeah.

“Migrating was both, I would say liberating since it gave me a lot of opportunities I wouldn’t have had in Cuba, but it was also traumatic,” Lamazares said. “I didn’t know what I was doing.”

When she arrived in the U.S., Lamazares was pushed back two academic years because she didn’t speak English. She used that setback as fuel to master the English language. At Hialeah Senior High School, the teenager practiced English by singing the songs she heard on the radio and reading her textbooks methodically.

A few years later, Lamazares found her passion for teaching by working as a tutor at the North Campus writing center. “I remember running an older man who had come back to school, and I was teaching him how to write an effective paragraph and I realized...this is what I want to do for the rest of my life,” Lamazares said. “I was just so fulfilling.”

Two years after graduating from North Campus Lamazares earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Barry University in 1984. One year later, she earned a master’s in English from Florida International University. In 1986, Lamazares began working as an English professor at North Campus. She encouraged students to dissect novels by John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway and Virginia Woolf during class discussions.

“(Professor Lamazares) is someone who is very patient and believes in the potential of everyone,” Torralbas said. “She’s very kind, patient, warm, and always wants to push you to dig deeper as a student and as a critical thinker.”

But after 17 years at North Campus, Lamazares took a job teaching creative writing at the University of Central Florida.

However, six years later, Lamazares had an epiphany: Her mission was to educate the community that raised her.

She returned to South Florida in 2007 to teach English at Hialeah Campus. “I just wanted to come home,” Lamazares said.

Passion Project

Less than a year later, Lamazares and English professor Victor Calderin joined forces to create Café Cultura. “It was grassroots. We were looking [for] students who wanted to get their work out there,” Calderin said. “We really had to learn everything from scratch because we had never done anything like a magazine before.”

To help with the process, Lamazares and Calderin reached out to Marta Magellan, who at the time served as advisor to the Kendall Campus literary magazine, Miambiance.

With Magellan’s help and the publications’ first designer, John Muniz, the duo taught students how to lay out the magazine, establish deadlines and promote Café Cultura. “The hard work paid off. In the summer of 2008, the magazine published 1,900 copies of its inaugural volume. It featured 64 pages bonded together in a saddle stitch style. The volume’s theme honored the campus’ coffee culture.”

Since its creation, Café Cultura has earned three Crown Awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and dozens of awards from the Florida College System Publications Association.

One of Lamazares’ students more than three decades ago—Kennedy Everett, now an English professor at Hialeah Campus—will fill her role at the magazine. “[Café Cultura] fulfilled what I want to do as an educator, which is to mentor students and help them find their paths, express themselves and be creative,” Lamazares said.

Happy Retirement

Outside of the classroom Lamazares has proven to be a prolific writer. Twenty-two years ago, she published her debut novel The Sugar Island. It’s a coming-of-age story that follows the life of Tampa, a five-year-old who flies Fidel Castro’s political regime in Cuba in the 1960s.

The story, which was inspired by Lamazares’ personal immigration journey, has been translated into seven languages.

“I wanted to write about my childhood,” Lamazares said. “It was kind of, you know, an act of translation to write about your childhood now as an adult.”

Lamazares has also published short stories and non-fiction for Latina Magazine, The Southern Review and A Century of Cuban Writers in Florida—an anthology of Cuban writers which includes Felix Varela and José Martí. Her work has earned her three Florida art fellowships and a National Endowment for the Arts grant.

During retirement, Lamazares plans to publish a second novel—The House of Ruth. The book is about two sisters who reunite in Cuba after growing up in different cultural environments. Lamazares also plans to volunteer as a tutor for Miami-Dade Public Schools and teach in Japan, Germany, Chile and New York.

“I want her to do everything that she’s ever wanted to do,” said Lourdes Gonzales who served as editor-in-chief of Café Cultura five years ago. “She deserves more than anyone else in just be joyful and have time to do anything she wants.”

Staff writer Olivia Valdenberg contributed to this story.
The Non-Traditional Scholar Podcast in March to share his story and assist students in their educational journey.

Overcoming Obstacles: Yane Nemeroff, a Hialeah Campus speech and communications professor, started the Non-Traditional Scholar Podcast in March to share his story and assist students in their educational journey.

“Podcast in March to inspire others. On March 31, he released The Non-Traditional Scholar Podcast on Spotify to help students navigate the educational system. The first episode discusses how non-traditional students can traverse the educational landscape by obtaining help from college advisors, tutors and librarians.

Now a speech and communications professor at Hialeah Campus, the 40-year-old is using his story to inspire others. On March 31, he released The Non-Traditional Scholar Podcast on Spotify to help students navigate the educational system. The first episode discusses how non-traditional students can traverse the educational landscape by obtaining help from college advisors, tutors and librarians.

To date, the podcast has created eight more episodes. The episodes are released weekly. Topics range from discussions about overcoming educational obstacles to how students can benefit from resources at their institution. My podcast is another opportunity to see how you can connect to somebody, even though at first glance, you might think that they have no commonality with you whatsoever,” said Nemeroff, who’s been teaching at Hialeah Campus since 2015.

Nemeroff’s wife, Lesley Gonzalez, came up with the idea to create the podcast after she attended one of his Reroute, Return and Redemption events at Hialeah Campus. “It hit me like a ton of bricks,” said Gonzalez, who was a hairdresser for nine years before re-turning to college to earn an associate’s degree in psychology from Hialeah Campus last year. “Every time I went to the event it was very impactful but I always felt I wanted more.”

The podcast is a TEDx Talk-styled event in which guest speakers discuss how they overcame challenges such as raising children, dealing with unsupportive parents and being undocumented. To kick-start the series, Nemeroff reserved a space at Learning Resources at Hialeah Campus. He utilizes lapel microphones and his own phone to do audio recordings. Nemeroff’s guests are people whose educational paths weren’t smooth transition from high school to college. The only exceptions were episodes two and five, where Nemeroff spoke about his path to becoming a college professor while raising his two children. Episodes last 45 to 60 minutes and guests talk candidly about the trials and tribulations they have faced. A recent episode featured Medical Campus Student Government Association President Astro Ortiz, who at the time served in the same capacity at Hialeah Campus. He discussed his struggle as an undocumented college student.

“I think it has shined a light and given a voice, again, to the non-traditional route,” Ortiz said. “It kind of helps highlight the fact that the college journey is not a one size fits all.” Other people featured in the podcast include Gloria Rodriguez—a pizza restaurant owner in Miami Lakes who is studying to become a teacher at Hialeah Campus—and Kelly Hernandez, a writing coach at Medical Campus who went from working in a factory to attending Georgetown University. After Nemeroff conducts the interviews, he polishes the voice recordings through Adobe’s Enhance Speech software. Then, he uses Spotify’s podcast creator software to add music to the audio before sending the final product to the guests for their final approval.

Nemeroff is applying for a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to purchase new microphones, soundproof walls, video equipment and a green screen to turn the podcast into a video series. “I hope this can reach as many people as possible,” Nemeroff said. “It can serve as an initiative to connect people that feel like college passed them by and inspire them to realize they still have a chance.”

The Reporter is accepting applications for Editor-In-Chief for the 2023-24 school year.

For details and to apply, contact Manolo Barco, media adviser: (305) 237-1255 | mbarco@mdc.edu

Deadline for applications is JUNE 22 by 5 p.m.
Sharks Lose Two Of Three Games At State Tournament In Lakeland

The Miami Dade College baseball team's season ended at the State Tournament in Lakeland. After winning their first game—4-3—versus State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota on May 12, the Sharks lost the next two games versus the College of Central Florida and Northwest Florida State College.

Miami Dade College finished the season with a 34-16-1 record including a 15-6 mark in Southern Conference play.

"It sucks to finish this way but that's just a part of life," said Sharks right fielder Wooyeoul Shin. "We can't have everything we want but we came pretty far."

In the first game, the Sharks were paced by their ace, Herick Hernandez. The left-hander allowed three runs in 5.1 innings and struck out five batters. Relievers Miguel Gonzalez and Julian Hernandez added 3.1 scoreless innings.

The game ended in dramatic fashion in the ninth-inning with the bases loaded when second baseman Joseph Zamora beat out a double play and the Sharks walked off with a 4-3 win versus the Manatees.

On May 13, the Sharks bats went cold in a 6-0 loss to the College of Central Florida. Relievers Carlos Nolasco and Gonzalez allowed three runs in 0.1 innings of work to set up the elimination game on Sunday.

In that game, Northwest Florida State College roughed up Sharks starter Ervis Solis. The left-hander was knocked out of the game, lasting only 0.2 innings and surrendering three runs.

Offensively, the Sharks bats were sharp. Shin led the MDC offense with three runs and two hits, Zamora added two runs and two hits and center fielder Max Galvin had two singles. After falling behind 8-4 in the sixth inning, the Sharks mounted a comeback. They picked up two runs in the seventh and one in the ninth but fell just short, losing to the Raiders 8-7.

"We had a rough last few games," Hernandez said. "But we were focused and played as a team."

The Sharks struggled with consistency at the start of the 2022-23 season. They were 5-5-1 but eventually put things together winning 29 of their last 40 games including four winning streaks of at least four games.

Offensively the Sharks were led by a quartet of sophomores. Shin had a monstrous season, hitting 15 home runs, producing 47 RBI and a .407 batting average and .772 slugging percentage. Shortstop Jose Hernandez had 11 home runs and 44 RBI, Galvin added six home runs, 41 RBI and a .400 batting average and Zamora contributed four homeruns, 33 RBI and a .328 batting average.

Freshman D'Angelo Ortiz, the son of former Red Sox legend David Ortiz, posted a .328 batting average and added 38 RBI.

Hernandez led the pitching staff with an 8-3 record, hitting 15 home runs, producing 47 RBI and a 2.86 earned run average. He was selected as the Southern Conference Pitcher of the Year.

Reliever Kader Rabagh was 5-4 with 43 strikeouts and a 2.76 ERA.

Shin and Herick Hernandez were all selected First Team All-State. Galvin was selected to the second team.

Sharks Head Coach Adrian Morales was named the Southern Conference Coach of the Year.
WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Lady Sharks End Season With Seven-Game Losing Streak

The Miami Dade College softball team finished the season with a 14-26 record and a 2-12 mark in Southern Conference play. They had 15 fewer overall wins than the previous year.

By Juan S. Gomez
juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

After a promising 11-5 start, the Lady Sharks had three losing streaks of at least six games and ended the season on a seven-game slide. They won 15 fewer games than the previous season.

Their best stretch was from Feb. 3 through Feb. 17 when they won eight of eleven games including a five-game winning streak, the team's biggest of the season.

"I think we had a good, bonding team," said Beatriz Narazaki, the team's starting catcher. "Although we lost a lot, we did have fun together.

Despite the losses, the Lady Sharks also had some bright spots. Right-hander Vicky Navarro led the pitching staff with a 6-8 mark, a 2.91 earned run average and 49 strikeouts. In two seasons at MDC, Navarro won 22 games and struck out 157 batters.

The sophomore was also potent with the bat. Navarro was second on the team with a .344 batting average this season while contributing 17 RBI and a team-leading nine doubles.

"I had a little bit of a rocky start," Navarro said. "As we went on I got out of my head and then I was able to push through and play to the best of my ability.

Narazaki, who shared catching duties as a freshman, had a break-out season for the Lady Sharks. She led the team with a .373 batting average, 26 RBI and four triples and was third on the squad with six doubles.

Sophomore pitchers Ashlyn Blanchard and Mckenna Thompson each won four games. Two freshmen—outfielder Taylor Clayton and first baseman Alexis Ortega—also played prominent roles.

Ortega had a team-leading three home runs and added 18 RBI, seven doubles and a .274 to the Lady Sharks offensive attack.

Clayton contributed a .316 batting average, 21 RBI, seven doubles and three triples.
The Evil Of Money And Power—A Character Analysis of HBO's Succession

HBO's Succession has enraptured critics and audiences alike since its 2018 debut. Having earned 13 Emmy Awards and a cult-like following, fans can't get enough of the show's gripping writing, powerful acting and unforgettable characters.

For those unfamiliar with the series, Succession follows aging media mogul Logan Roy and his international media conglomerate, Waystar Royco, as Roy's four children—Kendall, Roman, Siobhan and Connor—grapple to take over their father's empire. Throughout the show, all of Roy's children are haunted by the trauma inflicted by their cold and manipulative father, who instilled a "you have to be a killer" attitude that encourages them to obtain power through any means necessary.

While its fourth and final season hitting the airwaves, fans of the show are preparing to say goodbye to the satirical drama. As the end of the saga nears and the battle to gain control of Waystar Royco intensifies, it's time to take a deeper look into the characters that made Succession so memorable.

Logan Roy
Recalling his humble beginnings in Scotland, Logan deeply resents the cushy life his four children have had from the profitability and success of his own work. While Logan displays a caring demeanor toward his children to the outside world, viewers are exposed to his rampant emotional abuse and narcissism behind closed doors. The show alludes to how Logan, who grew up in an abusive household, sees his abuse as a way to develop the same stoicism that helped him dominate the business world.

As one of the most powerful men in the media, Logan has everything he would ever want at his palm of his hands. However, his power is so insurmountable that none of his children have the qualifications or experience to be a successful heir to Waystar Royco.

Kendall Roy
Kendall, the most likely heir of Logan's empire, is self-destructive and impulsive. Like a spoiled prince, Kendall claims he is ready to ascend to his father's throne and refuses to take no for an answer. As the eldest sibling, he often asserts himself as the leader, even though his father is always the one pulling the strings. As someone who craves his father's approval, Kendall always comes back to Logan, even after a series of betrayals, hoping that he will one day become the favorite child.

Roman Roy
Second in line is Roman Roy, who is the only sibling we see receive physical abuse on screen. Through his dark sense of humor, Roman often pokes fun at an otherwise cutthroat and dark corporate world. However, although Roman likes to play court jester, there is more to him than meets the eye. As the series progresses, so does his knowledge of the business world. He begins to understand the importance of making connections and unexpected power plays. Knowing that his father will always dismiss him due to his struggles with mental illness and lack of maturity, Roman finds other ways to prove himself worthy of being succession.

Siobhan "Shiv" Roy
As the youngest child and only daughter, Shiv is tireied of being overlooked due to her gender and age. This makes her one of the best-written female characters in TV history. She shows how women continue to struggle to be seen as more than superficial "girl bosses" who are taunted for bringing diversity. Logan's constant patriarchal pressures makes Shiv want to prove him wrong. Unfortunately, his mother, Logan's first wife, was condemned to a mental institution after the divorce, scarring Connor for life. Due to the significant age gap with the other Roy siblings, he struggles to connect with them. Despite his attempts to be a paternal figure, even his siblings reject him because they are too distracted trying to take over Logan's empire. As the least ambitious, Connor has never had a job until he decides to run for president. As the punching bag of the family, Connor's self-esteem crumbles to the point where he becomes the only one in the family who rejects Waystar Royco and wants to forge his own path.

CORPORATE CORRUPTION: As the Roy family battles for control of international media conglomerate Waystar Royco, Succession demonstrates how money and power can tear families apart.

The Evil Of Money And Power—A Character Analysis of HBO's Succession

Corporate Corruption: As the Roy family battles for control of international media conglomerate Waystar Royco, Succession demonstrates how money and power can tear families apart.

Connor Roy
Tabbed as the forgotten one, Connor is the eldest son from Logan's first marriage. After being abandoned during his childhood by Logan, he became a drug addict. After reconnecting with his father, Logan's first wife, was condemned to a mental institution after the divorce, scarring Connor for life. Due to the significant age gap with the other Roy siblings, he struggles to connect with them. Despite his attempts to be a paternal figure, even his siblings reject him because they are too distracted trying to take over Logan's empire. As the least ambitious, Connor has never had a job until he decides to run for president. As the punching bag of the family, Connor's self-esteem crumbles to the point where he becomes the only one in the family who rejects Waystar Royco and wants to forge his own path.

THE REPORTER
VIDEO GAME THROWBACK

15 Years Later, Grand Theft Auto IV Is Still Rockstar’s Undisputed Masterpiece

Released on April 29, 2008, the open-world game, set in a fictional depiction of New York City, contains one of the most controversial moments in the history of video games. On April 29, the game will celebrate its 15th anniversary, reminding us that video games can serve as a medium to convey the complexity of our human experience.

Heartfelt Narrative

Set in Liberty City, a fictional depiction of New York City, GTA IV follows the story of Niko Bellic—a Serbian immigrant who arrives in the United States in search of a new life. After settling with his cousin, Roman, Niko quickly embarks himself in the criminal underworld to save his cousin from debt. Soon, he begins to form relationships with gangsters and mafia bosses as he rises up in the criminal underworld. While all of this takes place, we see glimpses of Niko’s somber and cynical personality as he recalls his traumatic memories during the 1990s Yugoslav War and his desire to leave crime. This is the first thing that makes GTA IV special. While other series glorify crime through satire and over-the-top jokes, this rendition looks at the misery of living a life of violence.

Near the end of the game, we learn that Niko went to the U.S. to find a former comrade who betrayed him and his unit in an ambush during the war. After finding him and learning he betrayed his friends for drug money, players are left with the choice to let him live or kill him to fulfill Niko’s thirst for revenge. That was the most emotional part of the game for me because either choice will remind you of the futility of revenge.

Romantical Gameplay

To complement its storyline, GTA IV features a gritty visual gradient that’s mostly devoid of color. While many criticize the game’s gray aura, the stylistic choice from the game’s developers makes perfect sense considering the dark nature of the game’s story and setting.

Another aspect of the game’s mechanics that is undervalued is its physics engine, which even after 15 years, continues to be one of the best in gaming. As opposed to GTA V, the car handling in GTA IV feels more akin to real life than to Mario Kart. Each vehicle has a different rate of acceleration and handling depending on its size and weight.

While many criticize the game’s visual style, its physics engine is still undervalued by some. GTA IV is the most immersive and realistic rendition in the series yet. GTA IV’s immersion is further complemented by the setting itself. One thing players will quickly notice is the city of Liberty. The city’s inhabitants also have a life of their own.

MUSIC

Now that summer is nearly here, many Miami natives will start to wonder how they can make the best out of their staycations.

One way to take advantage of this newfound free time is to visit one of the many art museums to visit in the city’s metropolitan area.

Museums

On April 29, the game will celebrate its 15th anniversary, reminding us that video games can serve as a medium to convey the complexity of our human experience.  

Heartfelt Narrative

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Like NYC, Liberty City features historic neighborhoods with clusters of Russian, Hispanic and Asian culture. While we continue to wait for the release of the long-awaited GTA VI that’s set to take place in Miami, every gaming fan should revisit Liberty City to unravel Rockstar Games’ undisputed magnum opus.
The Importance Of Unions In The Workplace

By Tomas Lara
tomas.lara001@mymdc.net

Ron DeSantis’ push for highly restrictive immigration legislation in Florida highlights our need to focus on bi-partisan and reasonable solutions to solve immigration issues.

Ron DeSantis is back at it again. The Florida governor, who has earned a controversial reputation for his stance on COVID-19 and education, has set his sights on another deeply contentious issue—immigration.

On May 10, DeSantis signed a comprehensive immigration bill, SB 1718, into law. It will negatively impact the lives of the estimated 800,000 undocumented immigrants who live in Florida.

Rather than drive a bi-partisan reform, the governor created policies that hurt everyone and benefit no one. As someone who was undocumented, I believe DeSantis’ approach is misguided.

One of the most controversial stipulations in the bill includes the allocation of $12 million to the state’s immigrant relocation program. This will expand DeSantis’ initiative to send undocumented immigrants to other states. Something he has already done to further his political agenda.

Undocumented or not, treating any human being as mere pawns in a political game is deeply unethical. Aside from this, the new legislation will also yield harsher punishment for small businesses that hire undocumented immigrants.

Denying the opportunity for immigrant communities to contribute to society would be catastrophic for the economy; many of the farmworkers in the agricultural industry are undocumented. Undocumented immigrants who have a driver’s license from another state will also no longer be able to drive legally in Florida.

Denying an immigrant the privilege to drive will not stop them from doing so. The passing of this bill will only generate more unlicensed and uninsured drivers, making our roads less safe.

In the realm of education, the bill initially proposed to remove a law that allows undocumented immigrants to receive in-state tuition.

Without that help, it would have been impossible for me to attend Miami Dade College. That would have made it impossible for me to serve as the editor-in-chief of The Reporter, participate in several other clubs, graduate with honors and earn a full-ride scholarship to attend Duke University next fall. The aforementioned points are all an attack on the undocumented community, but it gets worse.

As part of the new legislation, any hospital in the state would be obligated to collect information about a patient’s immigration status. That means an emergency visit to the hospital will be met with hesitancy, something that will trigger a loss of lives for fear of deportation.

Immigration has become such a politicized issue that we’ve gone to these lengths to make a political point. Illegal immigration affects every aspect of society, therefore, we should put aside our political differences to provide a reasonable solution to this complicated issue. While it may not be right to enter the United States illegally, we shouldn’t treat undocumented immigrants as third-class citizens. Most people who come here illegally do so because of safety and economic issues in their native country. They aspire for opportunities to make a good life for their family.

You can argue that people need to get in line and do the process legally. However, when it takes years for the immigration process to play out, it’s easy to see why people who don’t have time to spare come here illegally. Rather than dishing out severe punishment to a community that is already battered by circumstance, our nation should focus on the real enemy—our outdated and deeply inefficient immigration system.
RENT CONTROL

Home Rental Prices In Miami Are Spiraling Out Of Control

The Reporter's Hugo Guillen recounts his experience with Miami's soaring rental prices to emphasize the need for more affordable housing units.

By Hugo Guillen
hugo.guillen@02@ymdc.net

When I first arrived in Miami two years ago, my family paid $1,200 each month for our two-bedroom apartment.

Today, the same space costs $1,800 per month.

Despite the 50 percent increase in rent, the building and its surrounding area are not offering anything new.

This city-wide phenomenon made me ask this question: What does Miami offer that makes it so expensive?

As one of the major immigration hubs in the United States, South Florida's metropolitan area serves as the new home for countless people from all around the world.

That constant influx of immigrants is what makes rent prices in Miami soar. Landlords are aware that as demand rises, so do the housing unit prices.

That's how the market works.

But as this trend continues, many of Miami's long-time residents will be forced out of the city as more affluent tenants move in.

The soaring housing prices are also affecting first-time house hunters because properties are becoming almost impossible to pay off with a middle-class salary.

For the working-class families that make up the spine of this city, that means it will be harder than ever to cement roots in Miami.

Even worse, this situation makes me and many of the people from my generation ponder if we'll ever be able to afford a home.

With this crisis having no end in sight, one can't help but wonder if the rent prices in Miami will ever stabilize and meet the demand of our city's growing immigrant population.

While controlling immigration seems like an alternative, this is not the root of the problem. Miami, a sprawling city of single-family units, is in dire need of denser and more affordable housing units.

In February, the City of Miami unveiled a new housing project, which features two high-rise buildings along with commercial space adjacent to a Metrorail stop.

While the initiative will not fix Miami's housing crisis by itself, the new project will hopefully mark a period of transition in which Miami embraces housing density to meet its demand.

If not, creating a new life and home in a different city or county will be the only answer to affordable housing for Miami's working class.

MENTAL HEALTH

MDC Offers Free Resources To Help You De-Stress

Although life can become increasingly stressful due to a demanding academic workload, financial struggles and personal issues, the College offers free mental health resources to help students.

By Angel Araujo
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Overdue assignments, economic hardships and time management issues.

Those are all problems college students face, and while those things can make you feel overwhelmed, you are not alone.

According to a recent study by the American Addiction Center, nearly 88 percent of college students report suffering from stress, which can come from a variety of aspects including our social and personal lives.

Imagine if your stress was a 5-pound bag. Any gesture used to get rid of it landing in your day-to-day life, the bag may start to feel natural. However, the smallest problem or situation can make the bag heavier, causing you to lose your balance.

When we lose our balance, we start to feel like everything is impossible to solve. Once we fall into the trap of hopelessness, we begin to lose sleep, suffer higher irritability and increased negative thoughts.

Throughout my college years, I've had to work up to 60 hours a week to afford my education.

At some point, the work became draining and I was left with only a few hours to focus on school.

When my sleeping and eating habits began to suffer because of it, I began to experience daily mental breakdowns.

It wasn't until I reached that breaking point that I realized I needed to reach out for help and take care of my mental health.

Every since then it feels like I've removed a huge weight off my shoulders.

As Miami Dade College students we are offered a plethora of resources to liberate us from stress.

As Miami Dade College students we are offered a plethora of resources to liberate us from stress.

Accessing help for the proper services to help you with managing stress.

Stress is a serious topic that shouldn't be underestimated. If not taken care of, it can ruin your life by contributing to health-related issues like depression, substance abuse and high blood pressure.

Don't be afraid to seek help by talking to a counselor or friend and attending workshops to improve your mental health. It's never too late to take care of yourself.
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Are you majoring in: JOURNALISM, ENGLISH, MASS COMMUNICATIONS, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, or GRAPHIC ARTS?

GET INVOLVED!

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