

The Patriot

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Francis Marion University's award-winning student newspaper

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FMU celebrates Homecoming Crowning continues despite COVID-19

Finn Millians
Copy Editor

After a heartbreaking cancellation of Homecoming due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, FMU continued the coronation tradition of Homecoming King and Queen at a small, socially distanced pep rally at 5 p.m. on Feb. 26 in the Smith University Center (UC).

"The idea came from Student Life," said Tymoshio "Ty" Robinson, student body president. "After the festivities were cancelled, they still wanted to go with one tradition—crowning the Homecoming court. The pep rally was their solution."

Usually, FMU hosts a variety of events for Homecoming. Bonfires, food trucks, tailgates at the basketball games and much more inundate campus during Homecoming weekend. However, FMU President Fred Carter was forced to make the difficult, but safer decision to cancel Homecoming this year.

The pandemic is an ongoing fight for the health of the FMU student body and staff, so there was a necessity for increased safety measures. By limiting



PHOTO BY ELODI BREG

Malachi Dawson and Kei'Yona Jordan were crowned Homecoming King and Queen during the coronation at the pep rally.

Homecoming to a pep rally in the UC, students could be monitored and social distancing guidelines could be enforced. During halftime at the men's basketball game at 3:30 p.m. on Feb. 27, the crowned King and Queen would be presented again.

The event featured appearances from the former Homecoming King and

Queen and performances by two dance teams on campus. The nominees for Homecoming Court were presented at the end.

All of the nominees received immense support, but the crowns were presented to Malachi Dawson, a junior mathematics major, and Kei'Yona Jordan, a senior mass communications ma-

jor.

Hayli Keith, one of the nominees for Homecoming Queen, thoroughly enjoyed her experience despite the restrictions and loss this year.

"I hated that this year we didn't get to do as much with it, such as the Homecoming bonfire and walking out during the basketball games,

but the adjustments were understandable," Keith said. "I am hopeful that next year's candidates will get the full experience."

Keith is well-versed in the art of Homecoming, as she has run for the Homecoming Court for the past three years. As a senior member of the Zeta Tau Alpha (ZTA) sorority, she en-

joys the event as a way to represent her sisters and be a part of a community with them.

"Running for Homecoming is an excuse to dress nicely and [it] challenges me to come out of my comfort zone," Keith said. "Overall, I've had great Homecoming experiences, hence why I've run three times now. My sorority, ZTA, helped me campaign for Homecoming via flyers and social media posts. My whole family line attended the pep rally to show support, and each one of them means the world to me."

Aleah Smalls, a junior psychology major, attended the event to participate in Homecoming even though it had been constrained due to the pandemic.

"Overall, I loved the event; every person who participated did an amazing job," Smalls said. "Of course, everyone wants to enjoy Homecoming, and even though it was different this year, I felt like I still enjoyed what the school has done as far as events go. With the pep rally being limited to a certain number of people, I thought it was still enjoyable and entertaining."

FMU crowns its 50th annual Ms. FMU

Ansley Lesley
Copy Editor

FMU Student Life and the Ms. FMU Scholarship Pageant Committee crowned Ms. FMU 2021 from 6:30–8:30 p.m. on March 12 at the Chapman Auditorium. Hubert Setzler, associate professor of management, presided as the Master of Ceremonies.

There were seven contestants this year: junior psychology major Lindsey Roof, freshman performing arts major Princesslori Biglow, sophomore secondary education major Savannah Lewter, sophomore pre-nursing major Alexis Hough, junior psychology major Katelyn Coker, sophomore industrial engineering major Laney Rodgers and sophomore pre-nursing major Jamia Bracy.

They competed in four different categories in front of a panel of five judges.

The night opened with a speech from Lauren Stanton, executive director of the FMU Education Foundation

and former Ms. FMU.

"I owe much of my professional success to my year as Ms. FMU," Stanton said. "Competing in Ms. FMU and winning the title was a time of tremendous personal growth for me."

Maquitta Butler, Ms. FMU 2020, also spoke about her platform and how she served as Ms. FMU during the COVID-19 pandemic. She also briefly discussed her decision to join the Air Force National Guard. She gave her farewell address as Ms. FMU 2020 before crowning Ms. FMU 2021.

Between competitions, Butler gave a piece of advice for her predecessor.

"Take every single moment and treasure it," Butler said. "If I had known that my last event would be my last event, I would have stayed a little longer. I would have taken more pictures. Just take every moment, and don't take it for granted."

The first competition of the night was the On-Stage Question, in which con-

testants drew a random question from a bowl and answered it impromptu. They were also asked one personal question that related to their platform.

This contest tested their interpersonal skills and gave the contestants an opportunity to discuss their platform.

The Casual Wear portion allowed the judges to assess their stage presence, self-confidence and pride in their appearance.

During the Talent section, the contestants showed off their skills, stage presence and level of preparation. Biglow performed a monologue from the movie "He's Just Not That Into You." Roof, Coker and Bracy displayed their dancing abilities through lyrical, tap and jazz respectively. Hough sang "For Your Glory" by Tasha Cobbs while Rodgers sung and played "I Can't Help Falling in Love with You" by Elvis Presely on the ukelele. Lewter also sang, choosing "She Used to Be Mine" from "Waitress" as her piece.

The Evening Gown por-

tion allowed the ladies to give more information about themselves and their platform as well as display their personality, stage-presence and self confidence. FMU Homecoming King Malachi Dawson assisted the contestants as they stepped onto the stage.

At the end of the night,

Roof was crowned Ms. FMU 2021 and received a \$1,000 scholarship. Coker won first runner-up and was given a \$500 scholarship. She also won the Community Service Award for her essay on community service. Bracy received a \$250 scholarship for second runner-up and also won the People's Choice

Award. Hough won the Miss Congeniality Award for her support of the other contestants and sportsmanship.

Roof will spend the year as an FMU ambassador and serve as a role model for FMU and the Florence community.



PHOTO BY ELODI BREG

Maquitta Butler crowns Lindsey Roof Ms. FMU 2021.

3 FMU baseball players suspended in hazing incident

Kei'Yona Jordan
Copy Editor

Three former FMU baseball players were charged with hazing after an off-campus incident that took place at Patriot Place on Feb. 5.

According to a police

report, Jon Carter, 21, David Magnum, 21, and Noah Jones, 21, were involved in an altercation that resulted in them being charged with hazing. Three underclassmen baseball players were struck for the purpose of initiation, leaving one of them with a

broken jaw.

The police report also mentioned that there were drinks involved the night of the incident. According to a student, athletes were throwing a party on the night of the incident.

On Feb. 6, Carter,

Magnum and Jones were released from the Florence County Detention center on a \$1,000 bond. Their court dates are set for April 29.

Along with all the other athletes, Carter, Jones and Magnum are supposed to review the policies for

athlete behavior and conduct and sign a contract at the end, acknowledging their understanding of the policies and consequences for misconduct.

The university released a statement saying that the university did not condone the

alleged actions. Carter, Jones and Magnum were suspended from the baseball team and the university pending the outcome of these charges.

FMU President Fred Carter declined to give a statement due to the investigation being ongoing.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT | Le'Darrieus Dunlap

Lesley Willard

Staff Writer

Le'Darrieus "LD" Dunlap, a senior biology major, said he has always wanted to be in a position that would allow him to positively impact someone's life, and he can't wait to graduate so he can do just that.

Born and raised in Clover, South Carolina, the 22-year-old FMU student will be the first in his family to graduate from college.

"Completing this next step in my life is huge for me," Dunlap said. "Being able to provide for my family in the long run is a dream because they sacrificed a lot in order to give my siblings and I a better life."

Dunlap initially decided to attend FMU simply because of its affordable tuition. However, all it took for him to fall in love with the school was one visit to the campus.

With the desire to help people in mind, LD chose his major carefully. He decided to major in biology and minor in chemistry so there was an opportunity for him to go to medical school or another graduate health program of some kind after college.



PHOTO BY ELODI BREG

Le'Darrieus Dunlap is pursuing a career in healthcare so that he can continue helping others.

Before he continues his education in the classroom, Dunlap plans to join the Army Reserves as an officer. His goal is to then use his experience, along with his degree, to begin applying to medical schools, with the hope that the Army will cover a large portion of his tuition.

As of now, Dunlap would like to become a cardiovascular physician's assistant, a pediatric physician's assistant or a cardiovascular perfusionist.

"The thing that excites me the most about graduating is that I'll have the opportunity to further myself professionally and personally," Dunlap said. "I know that graduation will be hard, but I am looking forward to growing and learning new things."

Dunlap has used every opportunity to grow as a student at FMU. He currently works as a medical scribe in the McLeod Emergency Department, where he gets to see and experience all

kinds of things. In addition to balancing both school and a job, Dunlap previously served as president of the Tau Sigma Chapter (TKE) and FMU's Interfraternity Council (IFC). He has also taken on the role of president of the Intramural Sports Council in the past and served as a COVID-19 contact tracer.

TKE has been a huge part of Dunlap's experience at FMU. He said that of all the things he has grown to love at FMU, his brothers

through the fraternity are what he will miss the most after he graduates.

"One of the biggest challenges I had to face when I came to FMU was being three hours away from my family and not having that support system, but then I found TKE," Dunlap said. "My brothers pushed me to be the best I could be, and in return, I pushed myself to be the best for them."

With all of the happiness that comes with a college graduation, there is also a little sadness. Dunlap said one of his biggest concerns about graduating from FMU is leaving behind all of the people that have looked up to him and leaned on him over the past few years. Although he is confident they will be fine, he said knowing he won't be able to provide them with that support anymore is a bittersweet feeling.

Overall, LD is more than satisfied with all the knowledge and experiences he has gained through FMU.

"I would not change a thing about my experience at FMU," Dunlap said. "I have definitely overcome and been through a lot, but from those experiences, I have learned more than I could have ever asked for."

Professors discuss adjusting to COVID-19

Chanelle Hanberry

Staff Writer

A variety of FMU professors met over Zoom for a humanities and social sciences symposium to discuss how they adjusted to COVID-19 in the classroom.

Professors were comparing their experiences from last semester, when they were completely virtual, to the current semester, and discussed how some classes are in-person while others are either hybrid or completely virtual. During the previous semester, Jodi Zeis, assistant professor of education, interviewed her students to determine how they felt about classes being online. According to her survey, students missed the connection they had when

they were in the classroom.

Catherine England, assistant composition coordinator, said she believed that the tradition of feedback was disrupted whenever they were fully virtual. In the classroom, students were able to communicate with the professor freely whenever they needed. England saw, when classes were only virtual, that students felt uncomfortable whenever they received virtual feedback. She would call this synchronous feedback. This semester she created a more fully integrated communication system with her classroom. Rather than the students only receiving feedback from email, she also communicates through other applications such as Blackboard.

Last semester, Lindsey

Banister, assistant professor of English, interviewed freshman students who attended her university life class and asked them how they felt at college as freshman. Many said they didn't know anyone and felt a huge level of isolation. The freshman would walk to class, walk to the dining hall, then they would walk back to their room.

Banister believed if she were to help build a social connection with students, they wouldn't feel so isolated. In her classes this semester, Banister allows students five minutes to chat about anything not involving the class.

Erica Edwards, assistant professor of history, said she believes that although COVID-19 has affected

teaching, they found some of the changes to be more beneficial for their classes. Before COVID-19, Edwards would tell her students she had food in her office to get her students to come by during her office hours. Some would arrive for the food, but others who actually needed the help were unable to arrive because her office hours would not work well with their class schedule. Now, since she is available through Zoom during her office hours, students have no problem attending. If needed, they could email her to have a Zoom meeting at a different time or another day in general. "Student hours" is what Edwards would call her office hours. She has office hours to benefit students, and consequently, other

professors said they will be changing their office hours' title to "student hours."

As classes this semester are a mix of in-person, hybrid and virtual, class attendance has changed compared to pre-COVID-19. Some professors believe that attendance is a vital part of passing the class while others believe that attendance isn't as important.

Edwards said she doesn't have an attendance policy because she prefers not to invade students' personal lives. However, Banister made participation a larger part of her grade because she wants them to interact and have a social connection with each other.

PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT | Bryan McLeod

Chanelle Hanberry

Staff Writer

Assistant Professor of Marketing Bryan McLeod's passion for marketing pushed him to create courses that teach students about the more modern methods of marketing.

"Marketing is not just for businesses," McLeod said.

As part of a group effort from the marketing department, McLeod has designed a course that will include social media marketing, mobile marketing and email marketing.

"That's the route everything is headed now," McLeod said. "Everything is online now."

If the course is approved, he will be teaching this course starting in the fall of 2021.

McLeod and the marketing department hope to soon have a track solely for digital marketing. To get the ball rolling, McLeod has also transformed the foundation of one class to cover more information.

Instead of the marketing communication course covering mainly advertising and promotion, McLeod has revamped it so that it covers more digital aspects.

McLeod's journey to become a marketing professor was everything but a traditional route. Joining the navy in 1996, McLeod served his country for eight years. McLeod may have been honorably discharged from the United States Navy, but he hasn't stopped serving since.

Being in the navy gave McLeod an opportunity to travel the world, learning about different cultures and ways of life. He traveled to Ecuador, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Panama, Venezuela and other South American countries.

Traveling to all those different places helped him to be able to connect with all his students and coworkers. McLeod said that helping people was his main goal.

"It's what I really wanted to do," McLeod said. "I wanted to help people."

After leaving the navy in 2004, McLeod earned his law degree at Southern Illinois University and shortly afterward opened a non-profit law office to help defend people who couldn't afford lawyers.

Being the passionate person he is, McLeod had trouble leaving his work at work. He cared deeply about

the things his clients were going through and he realized that he wanted to try helping in a different way.

While practicing law, McLeod was still taking classes to get his MBA. During that time, McLeod lost a case that weighed heavily on his conscience and was a major reason he decided to leave that field.

McLeod said he had never thought about becoming a marketing professor until one of his professors suggested that he get his Ph.D in marketing.

"I always figured I would get my Ph.D in political science or something," McLeod said.

McLeod said he was still studying to get his Ph.D when he started teaching his first marketing class.

"They needed someone to fill in for a class and I kind of got thrown into it and from that moment I was hooked," McLeod said. "I loved it."

McLeod was hired by FMU during the time of the thousand-year flood and said he was captivated by how welcoming the faculty and staff was.

During the time he had been teaching at FMU in October 2016, he suffered a



PHOTO BY KEI'YONA JORDON

Bryan McLeod creates new opportunities with new class.

life-threatening health issue.

"I was really sick and I was put in McLeod Hospital for about a month," McLeod said.

While McLeod was sick, he said he was amazed at how much his coworkers and people at the school helped him.

"They are the main reasons I came to FMU," McLeod said.

McLeod is the faculty

advisor for the American Marketing Association, an organization that shows marketing students and any interested students about the field of marketing.

Before the pandemic, McLeod said the marketing association invited guest speakers and got the students to do cool projects. McLeod hopes to be able to continue helping people and inspiring students through marketing.

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT | Lauryn Taylor

Kei'Yona Jordon
Copy Editor

It's always just been basketball for sophomore forward Lauryn Taylor. At a very young age, Taylor adopted her love for basketball from her father who played college and oversees basketball.

"I would be bouncing balls around my house all day, every day since the age of 3," Taylor said.

Taylor's father, Rodney Taylor, played for AC Flora High School back in his day and took the offer to play at Villanova University.

Taylor said her father's love for the game inspired her to want to play too.

Taylor first started playing basketball in sixth grade, and she faced some obstacles, but ultimately she overcame them. Now, she is one of the leading scorers on her team.

Today, Taylor's ability to shoot three pointers, grab rebounds and dominate the post area makes her unstoppable on the court.

Having joined college basketball during such a sensitive time, Taylor didn't let that keep her from going hard on the basketball court.

Taylor turned a new leaf in her basketball career when



PHOTO BY KEI'YONA JORDON

Lauryn Taylor's dedication to basketball has been a fundamental part of her FMU career.

she began attending Spring Valley High School. She went straight to varsity as a freshman and worked her way up to a starting position.

"I wasn't very good in middle school," Taylor said. "But I worked hard and made varsity my freshman year in high school."

In Taylor's high school

career, she went to the playoffs four times. During her sophomore year of high school, her team won the state championship.

Taylor earned the 2019 All-State Honors from the High School Sports Report, securing the All-Region Honors her sophomore and junior high years.

"My senior season, everybody on the team was new except for me," Taylor said. "And we had some struggles, but I was still able to make the senior All-Star team."

Taylor's motivation to push her hardest has been one of her former coaches, Teresa Legette.

"Through all of that I had an assistant coach, Coach Teresa Legette, who believed in me through everything," Taylor said.

During Taylor's four years in high school, Legette was battling breast cancer and lost the battle in 2020.

Taylor remembers Legette every time she steps

on the court and does her best to honor her.

"She is the reason why I keep playing and going hard every time I'm on the court," Taylor said.

Taylor said her experience as a freshman basketball player has been different and at times overwhelming, but nothing she couldn't work through.

"My freshman season of college was a new experience for me and it took a lot of hard work, but I managed to learn and grow through the game," Taylor said.

Taylor hopes that she gets better with every game she plays.

Before leaving college, she also hopes to have all-conference first team at least twice before she graduates. Despite the limited crowd due to COVID-19, Taylor still had the entire support of the FMU audience at her home games.

Taylor's personality always shines through. Taylor's selflessness shows through her own personal goals, one of which is to be the best teammate she can be for her team.

Patriots defeat Claflin in 3-game winning streak

Kei'Yona Jordon
Copy Editor

The FMU men's baseball team ended their week-end with a three-game winning streak against Claflin University on March 5-6.

Senior third baseman, Todd Mattox brought in five hits and four runs. Head Coach Art Inabinet secured his 700th win as a head baseball coach.

During the first game, the Patriots were merciless as they scored six times off two hits in the fourth inning. They brought in four runs in

the sixth inning and used the 10-run mercy rule.

Senior Weston Rogers struck out eight players with no walks. Rogers also tossed a six-hit shutout in the first inning.

The Patriots overtook the sixth inning after Mattox sent the ball over left field, making way for three runs.

In the second game, the Patriots brought just as much energy, with FMU senior Bailey Wendel pitching six scoreless innings. Wendel

only walked one player during game two.

FMU totaled 21 knocks from four players. Sophomore left fielder Jack Hegan was 3-for-6, Mattox 3-for-5, senior first baseman Darius Nobles 3-for-6 and senior center fielder Bill Hanna 3-for-3.

Freshman right fielder Kolby Crepeau drove in three runs, and Mattox and Hanna achieved two RBIs.

The Patriots broke a scoreless inning with gradu-

ate student Grayson Cunningham and Hanna delivering run-scoring singles and one run scored off of a wild pitch.

The sixth inning was another game changer. Five players – Crepeau, Mattox, Hanna, Nobles and sophomore designated hitter Austin Moore – all brought in runs.

The team scored the last runs in the eighth inning, widening the score gap for Claflin.

Mattox had a great game achieving 8-for-15 with 11 RBIs overall.

The doubleheader is Inabinet's second win in a row for Peach Belt Conference.

In an interview about the doubleheader, Inabinet thanked all the good players he's had over the past years.

"I attribute every single one of those wins to the players," Inabinet said. "I didn't pitch, didn't play defense or hit one ball during the 700 wins."

Inabinet was proud of how well the team pitched and only walked a couple of Claflin's players.

"When you play 18 innings of baseball, that's impressive," Inabinet said.

Catch their next game against USC Aiken at 6 p.m. on March 26 at the Griffin Athletic Complex.

Lady Patriots win against Lander in season opener

Julia Fulmer
Copy Editor

The FMU Lady Patriots volleyball team defeated Lander University 3-0 during the season opener at 6 p.m. on March 4 at Smith University Center (UC).

FMU claimed the first three sets with a score of 25-22, 26-24 and 25-18 respectively, ending the game prematurely.

Since the season was delayed due to COVID-19, this was the first game the Lady Patriots played since Nov. 22, 2019, when they lost a close 2-3 game to Lander. Without a doubt, this history added an extra layer of excitement in the air that both sides delivered in their performance.

FMU maintained a strong offense throughout the game, with sophomore outside hitter Gracie Davis taking the court by storm with 12 kills, four digs and a block. Junior middle blocker Lily Walton and freshman outside hitter Lexi Albright both attained seven kills, with Albright picking up four aces along the way and Walton following with an



PHOTO BY KEI'YONA JORDON

After a year of waiting, the Lady Patriots return to the game, winning against Lander University.

ace.

Junior setter Finn Millians also worked a solid game in offense, completing 37 assists and securing two aces for the Lady Patriots. Senior outside hitter Kayla Arthur brought six additional kills to the team, with junior middle blocker Iyanla Thigpen sending a booming kill to Lander early in the first set, setting the stage for

three more during the match.

FMU also held a steady defense, with junior libero Alexis Watts amassing 16 digs, followed by senior middle blocker Courtney Abdur-Rahim with nine and Albright with eight.

Watts said the rivalry with Lander encourages both teams to work their hardest, making more enjoyable and interesting games.

"We were very nervous and excited before the game, but it felt awesome," Watts said. "I feel like we play our best games against each other, and they always play hard, so it just fires us up. It's really nice to play against them, and we're just really excited for this season and for what we have to come."

Head Coach Lauren Baufield-Edwards said it was

a long 468 days of anticipation to play games again, but the delay gave the team plenty of time to train for the coming season.

"I am so proud of every single one of them," Baufield-Edwards said. "It's awesome to finally have a full roster, and with 14 kids that are capable of going onto the court at any time, that was a good team win,

not just for the players that were on the court."

Alongside the teams cheered nearly 150 fans, adding to the overall energy of the night. Though seats were safely-spaced throughout the gym, the crowd's voices rang together as one in support of their schools. Baufield-Edwards was thankful for the encouragement the team received from the stands and said it played a crucial role in keeping the team's spirits high.

"It was a little nerve-racking at first, but we got into a good rhythm, and they did a great job," Baufield-Edwards said. "[FMU fans] carried us through tight moments, and it's fun to see our girls tight on a game, and we've got people standing up and cheering us on. That just means that our girls are doing a really good job of putting on a good show, so the fans are engaged and all about it."

The Lady Patriots will play their next home game against Young Harris College starting at 6 p.m. on March 25 at the UC.

NEED A JOB?
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COACH SPOTLIGHT

|Chelsea Parker

Finn Millions
Copy Editor

Despite beginning soccer later than most at 11 years old, Chelsea Parker, first-year head women's soccer coach at FMU, has turned her passion into the career she always wanted. "It is soccer that puts food on my table, and I couldn't ask for a better scenario for a job," Parker said. "The thing that you love is what supports you, so it has definitely done a lot for my life in terms of who I've become, the places I've been and the people I've met."

Parker had an interesting start to her career at FMU, as the pandemic struck the week after she moved to Florence.

"It's a very weird feeling because I came here as soon as COVID-19 hit," Parker said. "It was like, 'Oh, wow, March 1 is my first day and then March 14 everything shut down.'"

Parker's previous coaching experiences involved assistant coaching positions at different schools: Shorter University, Lees McCrae College and Tusculum University. Not only is it her first year with the FMU women's program, but it is also her first time working as a head coach.

"I think as a first-year



PHOTO BY ELODI BREG

In her first year as the head women's soccer coach, Chelsea Parker has been making the most of her soccer career.

head coach, I have hit every bump you can think of," Parker said. "Even bumps you wouldn't think of because of the pandemic."

As a former collegiate athlete herself, Parker is no stranger to adversity. She played volleyball at Mars Hill her entire collegiate career and earned conference titles and academic accolades to commemorate her time there.

"I think one thing that attracted me to this position was knowing the situation, knowing what players I did and didn't have and how many players were not coming in the fall," Parker said. "You know, that athlete competitiveness never really goes away; like, 'Yeah, I'm going to take this on and I'm going to see what I can do with it.'"

She was definitely given a tough role, especially during the pandemic, but Parker is thriving under the pressure.

"Being challenged and uncomfortable every day meant that I was doing something right, that I was working toward something," Parker said. "It makes the wins, the good practices and that next commit that much

more exciting and rewarding. It was definitely a challenge, but I think, as a coach, that is what we want."

Despite all the adversity throughout her debut at FMU, Parker is determined to take the reins of the program and create the foundation for present and future growth. The Lady Patriots' record is currently 2-4 in conference, and they are working hard

for future victories.

"The goal right now is to instill stability and the cornerstones I want to put in place for the program," Parker said. "I think we've started to see even more structure and an overall change in the atmosphere. I think the goal this year is to make sure we're healthy and safe and get back on the field, and then do the best that we can do."

With the NCAA tournament taken away this season and only the top four teams being accepted into the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) tournament, the women's soccer program will do its best to enter the tournament and prepare for the new conference in the next season. Overall, Parker is looking to transform the program into a household name in Florence and the region.

"I want this to be a place where FMU women's soccer comes first," Parker said. "There's integrity; you're proud to play for FMU. We want to walk around campus and have people know who we are."

You can catch the Lady Patriots at their next home game at 1:00 p.m. on March 21 versus Columbus State University at the Murray G. Hartzler soccer field.

FMU awards 4 alumni at its annual gala

Cierra Graham
Staff Writer

On Thursday, March 4, FMU held its annual Alumni Awards gala at the Performing Arts Center in downtown Florence. Four highly recognized FMU alumni were awarded for their outstanding work ethic and career achievements. The four honorees of Thursday night's event were Jennifer Darr, the Honorable Linward Edwards, Keith Callicutt and Dr. Deborah Hopla.

First, Darr received the Benjamin Wall Ingram III

Young Alumna Award. Darr graduated from FMU in 2014, having earned a bachelor's in biology with a minor in chemistry. Darr is a pharmaceutical drug manufacturer for a startup, non-profit company called Civica Rx, in which she distributes affordable drugs to hospitals throughout the country. She thanked Roche Pharmaceuticals, her family and all the professors she had as a student while attending FMU.

"It really does mean something to me that my peers are acknowledging me for something well done,"

Darr said.

The next honoree was the Edwards, who received the Professional Industry Award in Public Service in Law. Edwards graduated from FMU in 2004, earning a bachelor's in administration in management before pursuing his post-graduate studies. Edwards practices law at the Office of Linward Edwards II in Florence and Dillon. He thanked God, his parents, his wife and children and the university as a whole.

"I thank the university for giving me the educa-

tional opportunity to help me achieve everything I have achieved and will ever achieve," Edwards said.

Keith Callicutt was the third alumni honoree to be awarded at the gala, receiving the Professional Industry Award in Education. Callicutt graduated from FMU in 1979, earning his master's degree in education. After serving 47 years in education, Callicutt recently retired from the Pee Dee Education Center as executive director. He thanked his wife and children for the sacrifices they have made

throughout the years for his career, as well as FMU President Fred Carter. Callicutt acknowledged Carter to be "a mentor, not only [for] his leadership and serving as a colleague, but also a true friend."

The final honoree was Dr. Deborah Hopla, as she was awarded with the Outstanding Alumni award. Hopla is a Florence native and graduated from FMU in 1989, earning her bachelor's in nursing. Hopla currently serves as an associate professor of nursing at FMU and a practicing DNP at Hope-

Health. She is also the director of the FMU School of Health Science's MSN Family Nurse Practitioner program as well as the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. She thanked her family and friends, Dr. Larry Nelson, the late Dr. Richard Brooke, Dr. Murph Whitman-Price and her nursing colleagues.

"There is a scripture that says, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish,' and I can tell you Carter has a vision, has the leadership, and the future of FMU could not be any brighter," Hopla said.

President's Bowl begins

Chanelle Hanberry
Staff Writer

The first round of the President's Bowl happened at 6 p.m. on March 2 in the Smith University Center lobby with a total of four matches. Each match included three rounds with toss-up questions and key questions.

The first match of the event was the "FMU Honors" versus "The Tekes." The members of the "FMU Honors" team were Ryan Johnson, Mary Bey and Garrett Swanson. The members of "The Tekes" team were Benjamin Rivers, Abhay Patel and Jacob Erickson. Before halftime, the scores were 45-30 with "FMU Honors" having the lead by 15 points. After halftime, the teams were very close, with "FMU Honors" winning against "The Tekes" by five points with the ending score being 80-75.

The second match of the round was "Phi Alpha Theta" versus the "Pyramid Schemers." The members of "Phi Alpha Theta" were James McCarley, Joey Mabbutt and Chelsea Anderson. The members of the "Pyramid Schemers" are James Gaskins, Jacob Bellington and Chelsea Davis. Before halftime, the score was 10-60 in favor of the "Pyramid Schemers." After halftime, the "Pyramid

Schemers" won by 95 points with a score of 125 compared to "Phi Alpha Theta" with a score of 30.

The third match of the round was the "Math Club" versus "The Six Sigmas." The members of the "Math Club" were Tyler Pearson, Steven Barnes and Roland Vu. The members of "The Six Sigmas" were Adam Lane, Martin Perez, Karla Rico, Chase Lynch, Bryce Chavis and Kolby Benton. Before halftime, the teams were at a score of 10-25 with "The Six Sigmas" taking the lead. After halftime, the

scores were very close with the "Math Club" losing by just five points with a score of 45-50.

The last match of the night was "Active Minds" versus "Amine Dream Team." The members on "Active Minds" were Tristan Shird, Hailey Reed and Kylie Coward. The members on "Amine Dream Team" were Demetri McCall, Andrew Powell, Rhiannon Van Denmark, David Conti and Landon Hardee.



PHOTO BY ELODI BREG

Student Life hosts the first round of the President's Bowl.

FMU freezes tuition

Kei'yona Jordon
Copy Editor

In a time of great political and economic uncertainty, the FMU board of trustees announced the school's decision to freeze tuition for the third year in a row on March 11.

FMU President Fred Carter said there are students on campus who have never experienced a raise in tuition.

Every year, FMU students are responsible for three sets of cost: basic tuition, housing and general fees.

"We are freezing everything," Carter said. "Students will not have to pay more for anything."

Carter said because 95 percent of the students are South Carolina residents, there is not much out-of-state tuition coming to the school.

"Our students simply just can't afford it," Carter said. "And we understand that, which is why we've done our best to keep those costs as constrained as possible."

Carter said the school froze tuition last year because of COVID 19, and the year before that, they froze it because they had enough resources to avoid raising it.

"If we are doing well enough financially, then we don't have an obligation to increase the tuition," Carter

said.

The tuition freeze allows employees and staff to keep a steady income, while ensuring students don't have to borrow more money or continuously raise the amount of loan money they have to pay back at the end of their college career.

"Sooner or later, you're going to have to pay that money [back]," Carter said. "So the less money you have to borrow, the better off you are."

Carter said during normal school years the school raises tuition to accommodate the constant increase in food, electrical and health costs.

Carter also said the school typically only raises tuition about 2 percent a year.

"It's been a long time since we raised tuition more than two percent," Carter said.

In addition to freezing tuition, FMU is offering students a new health care plan at no extra cost to them in the fall. Amid the pandemic, FMU was able to make space for Hope Health to operate a full clinic on campus.

Carter said the university was able to offer all students, faculty and staff a basic treatment plan with no extra cost in tuition for students.

"Not only is tuition frozen but we were able to stretch the existing tuition further to include those extra

services," Carter said.

Carter said those services will include basic treatment and preventative care services.

"So, if you're a diabetic, you can go over and work with them relative to a diabetic plan, keeping blood sugar in, being tested periodically and all that will be at no cost," Carter said.

Many FMU students expressed happiness about not having to borrow more money for tuition.

Meisha Coles, a sophomore math education major, said she will be able to pay for another year of college because of the freeze.

"As a first-generation college student, it is very difficult having to figure out on my own how I can afford school or what loans I need to take," Coles said. "The tuition freeze gives me the opportunity to only have to worry about making the same amount of money."

Additionally, the board approved a proposal to add the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program. It is now under consideration at the state level, and if approved, it would be FMU's second doctoral program.