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SOUTHERN NEWS

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‘Cultural Fest’ celebrates campus diversity

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

The annual Cultural Fest recently took over campus on Wednesday April 23, offering a lively and immersive celebration of diversity, culture and community.

The Academic Quad became a vibrant gathering space where students, faculty and staff came together to enjoy an afternoon filled with music, delicious food and fun activities from around the world.

“It came together really nice in the community,” health science major Aliya Golding, a sophomore, said. “A lot of people showed up to celebrate.”

Sponsored by the Multicultural Center and coordinated through the Center for Intercultural Engagement, the event showcased the university’s dedication to fostering an inclusive environment where people of all backgrounds can connect, learn and celebrate the diversity that makes the community unique.

“It’s good that Southern embraces our culture and other students and staff through various events,” Golding said.

Various cultural cuisines provided by Sodexo showcased a vibrant selection of dishes.

The event featured an array of cultural bites, offering a taste of the rich culinary traditions from India, Jamaica and various parts of Asia and Latin America.

Attendees were able to savor everything from the bold spices of India’s masala chicken to spicy flavors of Jamaican beef patties and the fresh dishes from Asian and Latin cuisine, such as rice pudding and green tea ice cream.

“I really liked the variety of foods, it was really diverse,” biology major Dania Burgess, a junior, said.

Attendees danced to the beats of DJ Fire who played tunes from across the globe.

“The music was really good and I liked the line dances,” social work major Ahlani Nelson, a freshman, said. “It honestly felt like a cookout type of thing.

Many students were disappointed that various clubs from MCC did not perform this year.

“I was expecting to see performances from the CSA dance team or cultural dances,” Burgess said.

Nursing major Elise Ryan said she was initially drawn to the event by the food and the fun atmosphere but chose to stay after learning more about the cultural significance and purpose behind the celebration.



PHOTOS | CARLY RUSSELL

Students serving plates of food at the Latin table in front of Earl Hall on Wednesday, April 23.

“I think that diversity especially is important to celebrate,” Ryan said. “Especially at this school where there are students and staff that have many identities.”

With the event being two weeks before finals, many students said that they took the opportunity of the event being on a hot day to celebrate.

“It’s really good that we get a brief moment of relaxation and free food,” Burgess said. “It really minimizes the stress of finals and stuff.”

On a broader scale students are excited that the event makes its way around every year.

Many students said that the event allowed students to feel welcomed at the university and learn more about other students and staff around them.

“I think it’s important to know that if you are in a certain community, there are more people here from various backgrounds and identities and you are also able to know that there’s more people like you out here,” Golding said.



Students and staff enjoy music in front of the Buley Library on Wednesday, April 23.

FSU shooting prompts safety concern

By Brianna Wallen
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By Haylyne Frederic
Contributor

The eruption of gunfire at Florida State University, thousands of miles away, sent a chilling reminder to students everywhere: that violence can strike without warning.

On April 17, the lives of FSU students were changed forever, when a gunman opened fire on campus.

“A 20-year-old Florida State University student and son of a Leon County sheriff’s deputy is accused of killing two people and wounding five others on campus with a handgun that belonged to his mother,” according to CNN.

As the investigation unfolds, the tragedy has cast a spotlight on campus safety protocols and the swift actions required from university police if a shooting were to occur.

“Southern has a comprehensive Emergency Management Plan administered by the University Incident Management Team, which comprises University Police, Administrators and Staff,” according to the university’s website.

The website also lists methods of communication that are used in emergency situations, including gunman-on-campus.

These include SouthernAlert, siren and public address system and emergency blue phones, email and university website.



PHOTO | SCSU UNIVERSITY

The university’s emergency notification system that reports important information to the campus community in the event of an emergency.

The 2024 Uniform Campus Crime and Fire Safety Report, lists clear guidelines on what to do if a hostile intruder is present on campus on page 10.

University police encourage students to quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect their own life first with the “Run, Hide and Fight” method.

“RUN: Have an escape route plan in mind, leave your belongings and keep your hands visible. HIDE: Hide in an area out of the suspect’s view and block entry to your hiding place by locking all doors. FIGHT (as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger): Attempt to incapacitate the suspect, act with physical aggression and throw items at the suspect.”

This tragedy also raised many concerns about gun safety, specifically young adults having access to or possessing guns.

“I don’t think it’s a wise decision to have a gun and honestly I don’t even think 25 is a good age,” computer science major Alexis Oshomah, a freshman, said. “You have to wait until your brain is done developing.”

Oshomah explains how making emotional decisions at a young age can lead to dangerous outcomes, emphasizing that people often rely on emotions rather than logic during their early years.

“Because we’re still emotional and it’s not really very wise to let young people or honestly anyone, carry one, honestly guns are not the way to solve any kind of problem,” Oshomah said.

Her words reflect the growing concern the youth often have for our easy accessibility to firearms.

Education major Vaughn Keeney, a freshman, said that regulations should be enforced on gun possession and that would solve the issue more directly.

“My stance on gun control is that there needs to be way more regulations surrounding getting a gun license in the first place,” Keeney said.

Keeney also stresses that the risk and consequences outweigh the positives, because the age of 18 is usually rooted in underdeveloped wants and irresponsibility

“The dangers in owning one so young are too big compared to the pros that having one at that age would be,” Keeney said.

It is apparent that many students call for intense background checks and age restrictions when it comes to owning a gun.

Students and the community also share heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the FSU victims.

Students relect on Pope Francis passing

By Victoria Cruz
Contributor

Pope Francis died on Easter Monday, at the age of 88 at his residence in Casa Santa Marta. Cardinal Kevin Farrell announced his passing while describing him as a faithful servant of the Gospel and a voice for marginalized people.

As the world begins to mourn and reflect, students at the university shared their thoughts on what his life and leadership meant to them.

“It’s a big thing for a lot of people,” general studies major Aizea Costa, a junior, said. “He was accepting of a lot of things other people were not, he was very open-minded, and I think that inspired a lot of positive change.”

Pope Francis was widely known for challenging norms within the Catholic Church.

His approach was shaped by a humble past, having once worked as a nightclub bouncer before entering religious life. For many students, this relatability made him stand out.

“He was very progressive during his time with the Catholic church, he was even open to gay marriage,” Julio Merced, a sophomore finance major said. “I hope he had an impact on the next candidates, so moving forward they can follow his path.”

Pope Francis gained a reputation for his emphasis on mercy, inclusion and serving the most vulnerable.

Art and design major Kaiya Bryant, a sophomore, said that rather than focusing on his passing, she is interested in the Pope’s past and overall legacy that he leaves behind.

“I think he was a transcendent Pope and introduced a lot of new ideas to the Vatican and Catholic church as a whole.” Bryant said. “He was very woke in comparison to other popes.”

Bryant said that he represented the possibility of progress.

“He is a clear example that you can come from anywhere and be anything,” Bryant said. “He was the peoples pope.”

His funeral mass is set to take place on April 26, in St. Peters Square in front of St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City.

He will be entombed at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, making him the first pope in over a century to be buried outside of the Vatican. Pope Francis chose to be buried in Rome because of the significance St. Mary Major had on his career. As he prayed there every time he took a trip out of Rome even through tough times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students are already considering how his influence may live on.

Pope Francis left a mark on the world and on the students who see him as an example of what compassionate and radical leadership can look like.