

THE OBSERVER

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Success Resources and tips to help you through finals, your school career

Jessica Kladerman
Editor-in-Chief

As students sign up for classes this fall, they may have noticed more face-to-face options for certain classes that meet on campus during scheduled class times. Broward College, commonly referred to as BC, is taking precautions to move into Phase 3 of its COVID-19 Action Plan. In Phase 3 the goal is to “resume face-to-face operations while continuing some of the newly established guidelines as required,” according to BC’s COVID-19 Response Plan and Guidelines document available on the school’s website.

As we transition back to campuses this fall BC and Student Life will be following CDC guidelines including use of properly worn facial coverings across campus and indoors when social distancing cannot be upheld.

“I’m a little nervous to be back on a campus. I want to make sure I follow all the rules and take all the precautions,” says BC student Adam Caraballo, who is taking Intro to Speech Communication this fall at South Campus. Broward College will be offering a federally funded vaccination incentive program for any students or employees that have yet to be vaccinated as well as on campus

vaccination and testing centers. “The testing and vaccination sites will be available at each main campus and the Willis Holcombe Center on a rotating schedule,” according to a recent college wide email. The email goes on to explain when and where it is appropriate to wear your mask. Wearing a face covering over both your nose and mouth is strongly recommended while indoors, regardless of vaccine status.

Students may notice several changes when coming back to campus including some new construction on two campuses in particular. At North Campus, the Testing Center will find its new temporary home in the old Student Life club room and Student Life will be relocated just down the hall from its usual location.

“In Building 19, Student Life was moved to the old financial aid office,” said Carlos Parra, District Director for Student Engagement and Student Life. He continues, “the college is going to be demolishing Buildings 1 and 2, which are the original buildings of the college... so the campus administration is going to be moving into where Student Life was previously in Building 19.”

Student Life held a Student Town Hall Friday August 13 to



Photo Courtesy of broward.edu

address any concerns for the return back to campus this fall with a short Q&A at the end. There will also be a Welcome Back Bash, Wednesday, Aug. 25 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., where Student Life can engage with students in a safe environment. Students and faculty can also expect separate open houses towards the end of August to meet the Student Life staff, learn more about clubs, work study programs, part-time positions as well as available scholarship positions.

“We’re trying to meet students where they’re at. We’ve invested in the technology to be able to

stream once we’re back. We’re excited to test it out and get going,” Parra said. For those who will not be returning to campus this fall, Student Life will still be streaming many events as a way to stay connected. BC has made many observations that students can be successful remotely and wants to encourage involvement from students no matter where they may be.

“We are being given permission to do outdoor events, with the stipulation that masks and hand sanitizer be provided at all outdoor events,” said Lauren Adamo, Cen-

tral Campus Director for Student Life.

The college will be keeping an eye out on recent COVID-19 positive numbers in the area to determine throughout the fall semester whether or not it will be safe to remain in Phase 3 or to return to Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Response Plan and Guidelines. Make sure to stay up to date with the college’s plans through the [BC website](https://www.broward.edu).

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Broward College receives \$30 million gift to Broward UP

Ryan Marin
Staff Writer

On June 15, Broward College received a \$30 million donation from Mackenzie Scott, former wife of Jeff Bezos. This donation is a small part of Scott’s \$2.7 billion donation to 286 organizations. Scott put out a blog post with this donation, discussing how she, her husband Dan Jewett, and a team of researchers wanted to use this money to build power within communities and how one of their targets with these donations are 2- and 4-year institutions that are educating students in communities that have been underserved.

In 2017, a report by Diverse Issues in Higher Education found that Broward College ranked third among institutions around the country in granting associate degrees to minority students, ranking second in the number of two-year degrees awarded to African American Students and fifth in the number of degrees awarded to Hispanic Students.

The college has also been

recognized by the Aspen Institute as being one of the top Community Colleges in the country, as they won a finalist with Distinction Award for community college excellence and has been one of the top ten institutions eligible for the prize four times since 2011.

This donation will be focused on Broward College’s Broward UP program. Launched 3 years ago, the program takes a community-centric approach to increase college access and attendance, improve degree and certificate attainment, and raise social and economic mobility, according to Isabel Gonzalez, Chief of Staff and Vice President of Communications and Community Relations.

Gonzalez said the program focuses on Broward County areas with high unemployment rates and low education attainment and aims to eliminate geographical and economic barriers students face.

“Some (students) face barriers such as transportation, food insecurity, not having access to technology, and tuition, among



Photo Courtesy of broward.edu

other challenges. This gift will provide tremendous support to do just that,” she said.

According to Gonzalez, the program has raised approximately \$6 million for more than 2,500 students to cover tuition and is currently focused on 12 of the 31 municipalities across Broward County, with additional areas identified for future phases of work.

In the last academic year, there were almost 1,400 Broward UP participants, with 792 being awarded workforce ready and technical certificates.

Gonzalez said this donation will allow the program to sustain the support it currently has and continue to develop, as it “allows the program to exist in perpetuity and strengthen its support of additional cities across Broward County.”

According to an independent assessment of Broward UP by Florida TaxWatch, students who have participated in Broward Up courses and workshops can expect combined projected earnings of \$1.3 billion and participants contribute an average of \$39 million in additional earnings to local

areas.

With this donation increasing the number of students involved in the program and resources that Broward College has access to, the county could see additional benefits from Broward UP. The donation to this program helps solidify the goal of Broward College: that every resident should be empowered and enabled to pursue a post-secondary education.

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Keep up with BC: what's going on around campus?



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- ✓ Artists

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Cares Act Provides Help for Students In Need

Ryan Marin
Staff Writer

The federally funded Cares Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund has provided relief for students who need financial assistance due to the impact of Covid-19. The funding can be used for costs related to attending college, such as tuition, fees, books, and a computer, or for personal living expenses like housing, food, transportation, childcare and healthcare.

This relief program has aided thousands of students and allowed them to receive an education during these troubled times.

According to Broward College's website, from April 1 to June 30, 2021 Broward College distributed \$10,575,207 to students. As of June 30, 18,439 students have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant.

One way the college has distributed this funding is by giving Students \$750 if they were Pell Grant eligible, and \$500 if they were not.

Another way this money is distributed is through students completing an application. All

that is needed to apply for the grant is to be currently enrolled and to fill out a short two question application to indicate that the student is in immediate need of assistance. If you want to apply, you can go to this link:

<https://students.broward.edu/resources/emergency-aid/>.

"We are constantly searching for new ways to support our students in their pursuit of education," said Tara Jones, Associate Vice President of Student Financial Services. "These funds, provided to Broward College through the federal higher education emergency relief program, offer immediate financial assistance to our students to assist in whatever way each one needs at the moment to get them through their immediate challenge."

Besides the Cares Act, there are other ways to find financial aid and assistance. On Broward College's website, there is a scholarship application to find other scholarships at <https://www.broward.edu/admissions/financial-aid/scholarships/>. Students are also encouraged to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <https://studentaid.gov/>



Photo Courtesy of <https://aryahomeku.com/>

to ensure they are considered for all potential aid that they are eligible to receive.

Other relief programs are also available, such as broadband assistance. Students can get up to \$50 per month through providers participating in the federal broadband assistance program such as Verizon, Comcast, AT&T, etc. and apply directly with them for assistance. Students with children can also file for the childcare

program grant using this link: <https://www.broward.edu/academics/education/ccampis.html>

"Broward College cares about our students holistically. We want our students to thrive academically, of course, but we also care about their basic needs such as housing, food, transportation and childcare," said Jones. "We want our students to experience as much day-to-day

stability as possible while preparing for their future careers."

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Carnival celebrated during Caribbean American Heritage Month

Leonardo Lopez
Contributing Writer

Whether it is in South America, the Caribbean, Canada or even right here in South Florida, when flashing feathers and lively drum music begin to fill the air, the locals head to the streets because they know what is going on- Carnival! Carnival is a time of festivities and feasting celebrated before the season of Lent. Celebrated around the world, the cradle of the "modern carnival" is in the Caribbean islands (specifically, in Trinidad and Tobago). Although Broward College is hosting events remotely, it ends June by keeping the spirit of the festival alive while also informing students who might be oblivious to these celebrations and their nearby presence.

Concluding Broward College's celebration of Caribbean American Heritage Month, Student Life held a virtual seminar on June 30 which focused on Carnival.

Hosted by Tiffany Erving, the Student Life coordinator at BC's South Campus, the seminar was created and presented in a PowerPoint format by Dr. Rhonda Bobb, professor of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Student Life Skills (SLS) at the college's South Campus. This presentation was held in honor of Caribbean American Heritage Month which highlights the contributions of Caribbean Americans and Caribbean culture.

"Anytime I do an event, my primary goal is representation-to-ac-



Photo Courtesy of Dr. Rhonda Bobb

knowledge our [diverse] students and say that they matter; their heritage, background and culture is significant here in the United States and in our campuses. In the case of Carnival, I also wanted people of other backgrounds to be aware of its presence in other parts of the world. They all have the same origin, and they even have the same influences. By doing so, we realize that we have more in common with each other than differences," Bobb said.

The 45 students were treated to a presentation which highlighted the history and diverse customs of the vibrant festival around the world while also discussing the

South Floridian Carnival experience. With pictures of bright feathered headdresses and videos of people dancing to the traditional music of Carnival, students were also able to view a glimpse of these festivities. "I liked the costumes that were shown during the presentation, I think it would be cool if I could try one on. The bright colors create a feeling of something fun and exciting," said Anna Romanenko, a first-year student at BC.

"I didn't know anything about the Carnival, but I learned many interesting facts. I have never celebrated the Carnival, but after learning about it, I would love to!



Photo Courtesy of <https://rove.me/to/miami/miami-broward-carnival>

It seems like the Carnival is incredibly fun, I would love to get to know those traditions, wear that colorful costume and get that unique experience," Romanenko added.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic and the social distancing protocols, Broward College held several Carnival related events. These include having students make headpieces out of different assortments of feathers and beads, and food events in which the attendees got to taste food of different Caribbean islands. However, this is the first event that explores the topic of the history of the festival.

Regarding the future of Car-

nival themed events in Broward College, Bobb said that she wanted to have a full screening of a documentary titled "Mas: A Carnival story." The film was made by Jessy Schuster, a producer, journalist and friend of Bobb. The feature focuses on retracing the common link between Caribbean carnival traditions with emphasis on Trinidad and Tobago and Guadeloupe (where Schuster is from). Additionally, Bobb said that she would like to plan a "mini-Carnival" for Broward College.

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A few helpful Broward College resources to start the new term

Start

NAVIGATE

BC Navigate is a personalized navigational tool that provides crucial resources and reminders to your fingertips. Explore academic programs and careers, find study buddies, plan out terms and schedules, and set up advising appointments through a computer or phone.

SOS

Seahawk Outreach Services provide services for students to reduce food/housing insecurities, mental health challenges, and financial obstacles among the student population.

LIBRARY DATABASE

BC's libraries provide countless numbers of books, academic papers, research materials, and more offline and online. Some other resources provided include research assistance, live virtual chat support, and student consultations.

ADVISING

Broward College's advisors are here to guide students throughout their academic, life, and career avenues and empower them each step of the way. Through BC Navigate, students can set up in-person or online meetings any time throughout the semester.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

Provides currently enrolled Broward College Students with a variety of quality support services in a one-on-one or collaborative atmosphere. Services include tutoring from certified staff, laptop and graphic calculator loans, open computer centers with print and scanning, textbook reserves, collaborative project space, and study groups.

ONLINE TUTORING

Students are given 10 hours a semester to use Tutor.com's 24/7 tutoring services. Find a tutor for any subject and interact with tutors on a one-on-one basis through audio or text.

For more information on these resources, visit www.broward.edu

Broward College to Give Students a Lyft

Megan Vineberg
Staff Writer

As part of a whole host of improvement plans through the CARES Act, Broward College has partnered with the rideshare company Lyft. Offering Lyft rides will provide access and incentive to students who don't otherwise have the resources to get to and from campus.

Thanks to Seahawk Outreach Services (SOS), Broward College is providing students with ride share vouchers valuable for one month (up to \$80), or valuable for one semester (up to \$223).

Those students who are found eligible receive promotion codes to enter directly from the rideshare app. Students become eligible after having taken classes the past two semesters, or if they are currently enrolled in classes. Approval is limited to or from the Central, South and North campuses and the Willis Holcombe Center, while previous versions of the program allowed only for trips from campus to campus.

Eligibility is based on need and must be approved by the Seahawk Outreach Services Department. Students interested in participating with the Broward College Lyft Ride Program can

apply by visiting the Seahawk Outreach Services section of the Broward College website.

If needed, students may also contact Melanie Gnaizda-Gilson at mгнаизда@broward.edu for more information. via the Broward College website under Students, then clicking on Resources and going to Student Outreach Services to apply as soon as possible as spaces are limited. For technical support before beginning a trip, students must contact 954-201-4SOS (or 4767). If help is needed after a trip has ended, students must use the help section from within the app for issues such as lost and found items.

Students are responsible for entering a credit, debit, or prepaid card with sufficient funds to cover any extra charges or fees incurred, for up to \$5 cancellation, or no-show fee. Tips not included in the trip voucher and are the responsibility of the student. Tips are paid via the in-app feature only. Should students decide to extend the courtesy, 100 percent of tips go to the driver. Students must note that the Lyft Ride Program only covers standard trips and does not allow for more than one passenger to be in the vehicle.

For those students with disabilities, drivers are required



Image Courtesy of Broward College

by both law and Lyft company policy to accommodate for service animals. Service animals are especially trained for those with documented disabilities (such as being hard of hearing, being short of sight, and those who experience seizures). If a driver refuses to accommodate said service animal, they will be at risk for deactivation from the app, as well as under investigation.

Students concerned with safety need not worry. Lyft has partnered with ADT to provide the utmost security to each passenger. As posted on the Lyft website, riding safely involves the following: verifying your ride by making sure the license plate number, driver information, and car make and model match what you see in the app. Share your location and route with a

friend or loved one from within the Lyft app so they can follow your ride in real time. Follow the Lyft vehicle on GPS via the app. Ask the driver to say who they are picking up before entering the vehicle.

Riders are able to share their trip info, where trusted contacts are then able to track the rider to and from their location. Also available when a ride is shared is photo identification of the driver, the make, model, and color of their vehicle, and their license plate number. Masks are required and enforced at all times for both the passengers and drivers for the full duration of the ride.

That start of the pandemic left many without employment, forced to file for government assistance. Others have become underemployed taking

mandatory pay cuts to cut down on costs.

"It is our job to connect students with resources, and then follow up with them," said Melanie Gnaizda-Gilson, Student Success Coordinator. Broward College understands that students have been unable to operate as they normally would.

If the schools are shut down, all of sudden childcare and the costs associated become an issue. If the grocery stores are shut down or limited capacity, access to fresh foods can become more of an obstacle. Broward College met these challenges with free childcare and food and hygiene item distribution drives on a weekly basis for students in need.

The ultimate aim of the Lyft program for students was to help students all around. Consequently, by improving their life circumstances, it provides the students with the opportunity to even perform better academically.

"We are advocates in helping students get what they need, making sure that we alleviate as much as possible for them," said Annelie Moss, Student Success Coordinator.

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Students get creative in the 4th Wall Theater Club

Leonardo Lopez
Staff Writer

The 4th Wall club is open to both theatre majors and other students interested in becoming a member of Broward College's Theatre department. The club plans to transition their online Zoom meetings to the South Campus later this year.

The 4th Wall club specializes in supporting the activities of the Theatre Department. All BC students are welcome to join. Members are encouraged to get involved in the department's four annual productions. Additionally, guest speakers, acting workshops, as well as updates on the department are frequently presented.

Katherine Valli, an assistant Professor of Theatre who has worked at BC for nine years, is the 4th Wall Theatre Club's Faculty Advisor. She said that her favorite aspect of what she does is building a sense of community within the club as well as the department that becomes a family.

"Students can gain a better understanding of the art of theatre and create a sense of family within the club and department, where their creativity and goals are supported and nourished through club activities and

departmental performances," Valli said.

"Even if you are not a performing arts major, I encourage every 'performer at heart' to join the club. Theatre can be beneficial for many different careers and interests, encouraging one to be creative and go outside their 'comfort zone' to grow exponentially," Valli added.

Carly Mrha, sophomore student at BC, had been boxing during her high school years. She won the Golden Gloves award and fought in the Olympic qualifiers. However, after she developed a brain injury, she retired from the sport.

With the dream of performing on stage, Mrha found that BC was offering a degree in theatre. Since then, she dedicated herself to what she had always loved; performing in four stage productions.

Wanting to get involved outside the classroom, she discovered the 4th Wall Club where she went on to become a representative, the vice president and, as of April 1, the president.

"I honestly was a bit shy at first because I knew I had passion for acting but I didn't know where to start. However, after my first meeting I connected with a lot of people



Take Ten- 4th Wall Club's Outdoor Theater Festival

Photo Courtesy of 4th Wall Club

who shared the same interests as me, and I started feeling more comfortable opening up," Mrha said. "I came into BC with an athlete mentality-I associated vulnerability with weakness. However, the theatre program taught me the opposite, that vulnerability isn't weakness, it highlights the inner strength and beauty of the human spirit in all of us. This school and this club have impacted me in the best way possible and I would love to share that with as many of my fellow students as I can with my remaining time at BC."

Valli adds, "The club supports our nationally accredited theatre department, where we have classes in acting, technical theatre, and four performances per year where anyone is welcome and encouraged to be a part of the process. Dip a toe into this art in our club, and you'll find yourself immersed in the joy of theatre."

To adjust to the Covid-19 pandemic the club's meetings are currently held online through Zoom. However, Valli believes that they will be returning to in-person meetings

in the fall. At that point, the meetings will be held at the South Campus. Additionally, Meetings are held once a month, usually the second or third Thursday of the month from 3-4pm.

If you are interested in joining the 4th Wall club, contact the club secretary, Paola Gutierrez, at her email - gutip7@mail.broward.edu.

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Space Jam: A New Legacy – Was it Worth the Wait?

Colette Tamburini
Staff Writer

Welcome back to the Space Jam! Summer's latest hit movie, Space Jam: A New Legacy, came out on the HBOMax streaming service July 16. After 25 years of the first Space Jam film, the highly anticipated follow-up now stars successful basketball player LeBron James alongside the classic Looney Tunes crew. But with all the mixed reviews popping up about the film, is this movie truly worth the wait? Or is this another mediocre flick?

Space Jam: A New Legacy follows James as he tries to teach his son, Dom James (played by Cedric Joe), the accurate rules of basketball. However, Dom would rather develop video games as a career.

This causes a drift between father and son to come apart. Soon, LeBron James gets called to Warner Bros. Studios in hopes that they can sign him up on grand movie/tv show deals.

But after dismissing their offer, James soon finds himself trapped in a virtual reality where multiple Warner Bros. franchises reside. This is where we're introduced to the software's A.I., AI-G Rhythm (played by Don Cheadle).

Angry that LeBron James refused the movie star offer, AI-G Rhythm keeps Dom to himself and



Space Jam: A New Legacy

Image courtesy of Warner Brothers

challenges James to a basketball game, which if James wins, he can go back to the real world along with his son. After being sent to Tune World, James comes across Bugs Bunny, who tells him that all the Tunes left to go to other Warner Bros. worlds. It is now up to LeBron James and Bugs Bunny to recruit all the Looney Tunes in time for the epic basketball game.

Space Jam: A New Legacy has a ton of fun moments for the whole family. The Looney Tunes are charming as always which they use their unique, wacky skills to play the basketball game.

From granny using her kick-butt skill to dodge opponents to the

Tasmanian Devil whirling around the basketball court, causing it to literally twist, the movie features a more video game-esque playthrough of basketball, which kids will be delighted to see.

The special effects are an eye-candy to behold, with fun animation and bright colors to be fully emersed. The true highlight of A New Legacy is the Warnerverse. LeBron James and Bugs Bunny must travel the software to get the rest of the Looney Tunes, and with that we get thrust into worlds such as DC comics where Daffy Duck tries to save Gotham City, Wile Coyote riding alongside Mad Max in a desert to capture Roadrunner,

and even Rick and Morty stop by to drop off the out-of-control Tasmanian Devil.

This leads to some problems of Space Jam: A New Legacy. While many people can enjoy seeing familiar Warner Bros. properties, others may find it pandering and almost like the studio is showing a long commercial.

It also doesn't help that the movie has such a bland, predictable plot which doesn't allow the viewers to care for LeBron James' journey to get his son back when the Looney Tunes are in danger. The acting some actors, especially James, performs can go from awkward to having

blank faces.

But to be fair, acting isn't James' specialty. Besides the voice cast doing a great job with their characters, the only actor that shines in this flick is Don Cheadle as AI-G Rhythm. He brings a great performance and is such fun to watch.

Just as Space Jam became a cult classic over time, Space Jam: A New Legacy may not win many viewers, but it certainly does have an audience. If you are looking for a moving, emotional film to be immersed in, this isn't the right flick. It has corny moments, some unmemorable characters and a predictable plot that can almost seem boring.

However, if what you're looking for is to turn off your brain and watch some wacky Looney Tunes play basketball, this is the perfect movie to enjoy. Get your space jam on and see Space Jam: A New Legacy when it releases on digital and DVD. This is one basketball game you don't want to miss.

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- ✓ Writers
- ✓ Video Editors
- ✓ Graphic Designers
- ✓ Artists

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Tour Date Releases: Too Soon for Mosh Pits?

Jessica Kladerman
Editor-in-Chief

It was summer of 2019 and I remember checking my emails one night when I came across an email from a band that carried me through my teenage years, My Chemical Romance. They had announced a very long-awaited reunion tour for 2020, the following year, and I immediately clicked the link to purchase tickets. This tour was such a huge deal there was a virtual waiting room to claim your ticket.

As I was waiting for my turn to pick the seats for the venue of my choice, I called my mother in the middle of her workday to enter the waitlist just in case anything was to go wrong on my end. Spring of 2020 came with a massive hit from the pandemic along with a follow up email that the tour would be postponed until further notice without much further detail. The COVID-19 pandemic took a massive hit every industry including the music industry.

Tour after tour was cancelled and music festivals were dissolved for the entire year of 2020 across the United States. Ultra Music Festival, held just south of here in Miami's Bayfront Park, was cancelled for the first time in its 22-year history, and rescheduled for March 25, 26, and 27, 2022.



Elysian Events presents Tchami, Destructo and Mija. July 1, 2021.

Photo Courtesy of Quentin Forbes

While artists across the world have been stifled by this challenge there has been a boom in music creation in the last year and a half. Artists from all corners of the music industry from rappers Tyler the Creator, J. Cole, and the late DMX have graced us with new material. Back in May of 2020 at the height of the pandemic Lady Gaga released her fifth studio album Chromatica encouraging artists to keep the industry alive. On the other side with alternative bands like Spiritbox, Evanescence and drummer Travis Barker have been slowly releasing new music and videos since the pandemic hit.

Local DJ and music producer

Victor Forbes, better known as DJ Juno, reminded me that despite a physical arena to release music there have been movements on social media platforms like YouTube where music producers have been able to share their music to honor the music industry's touring season, as opposed to the part of the year usually used for composing.

"Festival livestreams, scheduled livestreams, and big label livestreams are relatively important because that was the only way to get their [artists] albums out," says Forbes about the adaptation seen across the music industry in 2020.

As new developments in the pandemic began to unfold some artists began to experiment over the summer of 2021 reintroducing live shows again with varying degrees of COVID-19 protocols. For example, Machine Gun Kelly had a show in Jacksonville, FL that filled an arena without a mask in sight. On the other hand, Tchami, electronic music producer held a small show in Gainesville, FL at the beginning of July, 2021.

"The show in Gainesville was done by some people I know with Elysian Events. The attendees were generally vaccinated, there was a good mask presence, with controlled amounts of people.

They're running shows at with 50% capacity or less," Forbes mentions about the Tchami show in Gainesville, FL.

Some say it's too soon for crowded venues, especially with the new Delta variant that is highly contagious, according to UC Davis Health's website. Others are tired of waiting for a sense of normalcy that could be years away. One way or another the artists in the music industry will always find a way to adapt to extenuating times with creative ways to share their work.

The college will be keeping an eye out on recent COVID-19 positive numbers in the area to determine throughout the fall semester whether or not it will be safe to remain in Phase 3 or to return to Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Response Plan and Guidelines. Make sure to stay up to date with the college's plans through the BC website.

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17 Años Juntos Short Film Review

Jessica Kladerman
Editor-in-Chief

The short film, 17 Años Juntos was directed by Javier Fesser, produced by Películas Pendelton and released on June 27th, 2016, in Spain. The film starts off with a woman, Mardelina, in uniform making breakfast finding "easter eggs," or hidden gifts around the kitchen from her thoughtful husband, Walter, for her birthday. It was their day off and they made exciting birthday plans for Madelina. As the film continues the audience is introduced to the wealthy couple that the two characters work for.

The couple is having a very important dinner and tell Mardelina and Walter they cannot have the night off, leaving the two workers quite upset. We see the wife, Asun, who makes a lot of demands that tend to overlap each other, not giving Mardelina enough time to finish a task before being asked to complete another.

On the other hand, we see Pepe, Asun's husband, giving Walter empty promises about a guest who has influence in immigration. Mardelina and Walter have been working very hard to make their son Wilson a citizen, so Walter was elated

to have an opportunity to speak with this guest, making his frustration with having to work that night worthwhile. Later in the day Pepe explains to Walter he would not be able to speak with this guest and Asun embellishes that it would not be appropriate.

After an exhausting afternoon of hard work Mardelina answers the door in her employer's dress, which she was to tend to, to find her son and mother, fondly referred to as Abuela, at the door to her surprise. Pepe and Asun walk into the room dressed as a maid and butler and inform Mardelina they will be at their service the rest of the night, which Abuela takes full advantage of.

This film was very well written; it was easy to form an emotional connection to Mardelina and Walter. I quickly grew frustrated with Asun's demanding nature and Pepe's empty promises, which I'm sure was writers Javier Fesser and Claro García's intentions. I appreciated the quick character growth throughout the 15 minutes that the film lasted. The film ended on a very endearing note with the reunion of the parents and their son, and the reunion of Abuela and her daughter. Seeing the smile on Mardelina's face could have been the best gift Walter could



Milagros Monroy and Diana Peñalver, 17 Años Juntos, Photo Courtesy of YouTube.com

have asked for and being able to spend time with their son is a gift that would render any physical object obsolete.

One question that still sits in my mind is, "Will Pepe still connect Walter with someone in immigration?" That's a very serious matter and I thought the writers could have done a better job at giving the audience closure on that forefront. Something as quick as a cut scene during the credits with Pepe introducing Walter to this dinner guest he mentions in an office setting could have worked great, though I'm sure it would have impacted the budget.

On that note the cinematography and musical

arrangements were incredible for a short film with such a small cast and crew, totaling less than 25 people from actors to editors, not including hair, makeup and wardrobe or the camera/ on-set crew. There were no shaky cameras, the lighting and songs were timed appropriately to reflect the emotion of the scene at hand. A year after its release the short film was nominated for the Fugaz Award for Spanish short film. 17 Años Juntos left me wanting 18 Años Juntos and more.

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