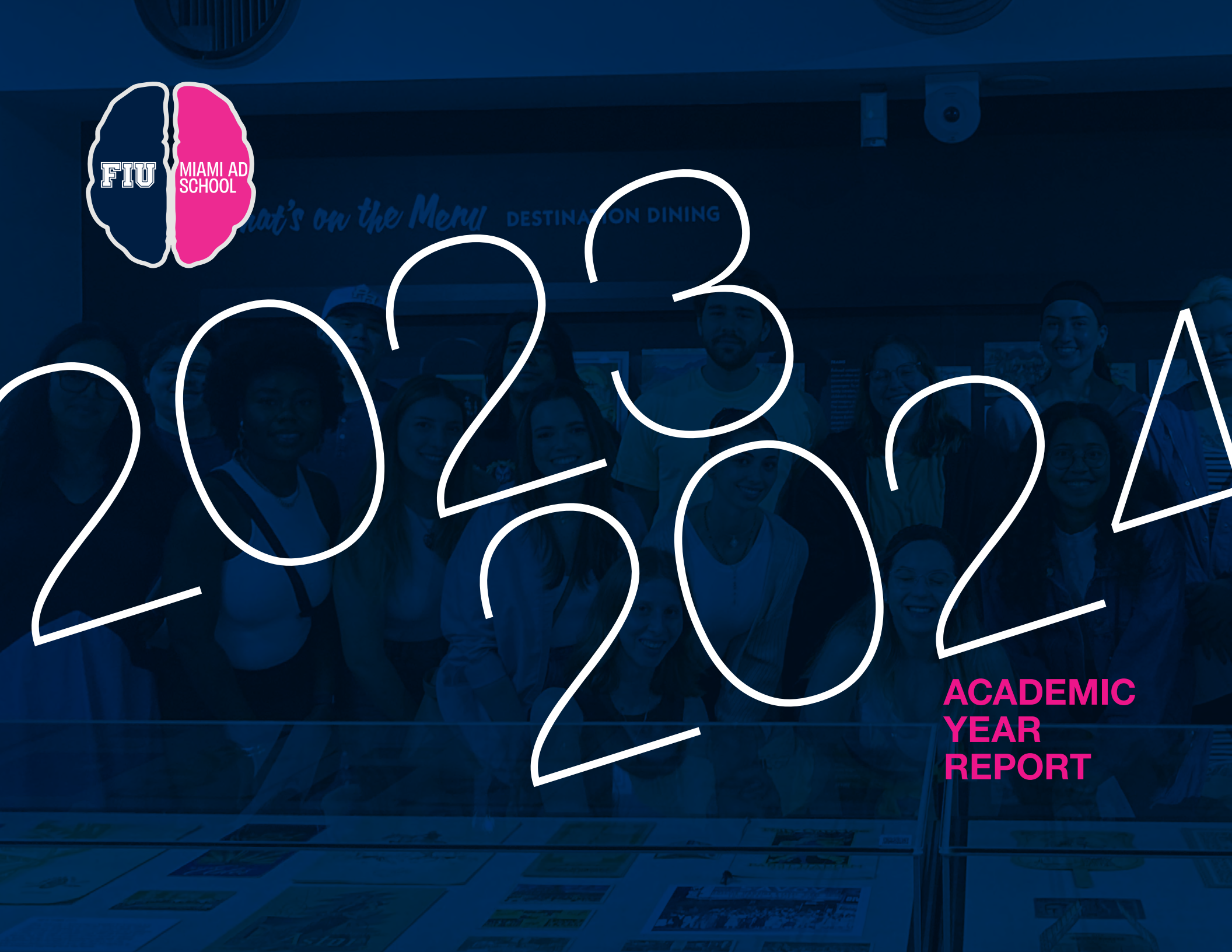
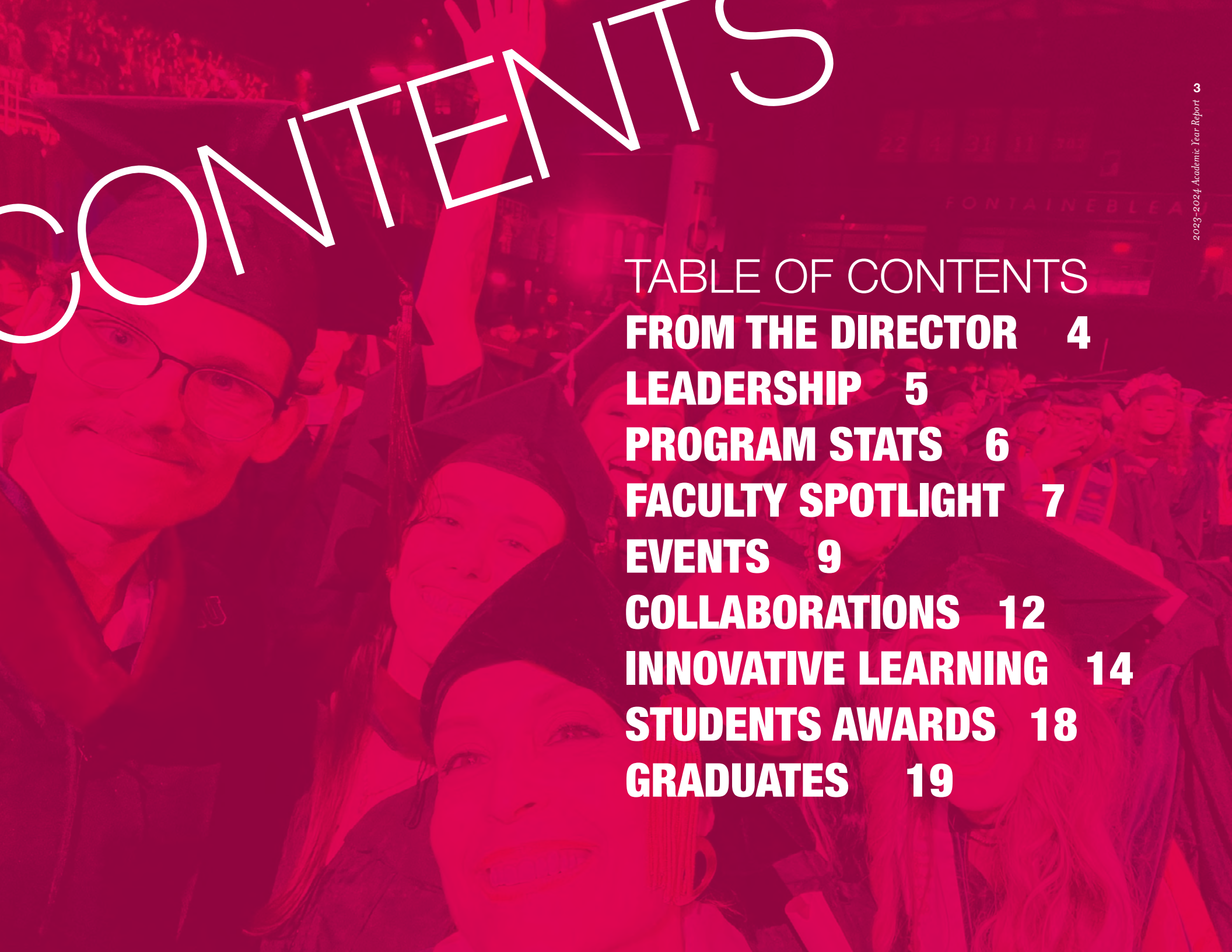

FIU
MIAMI AD SCHOOL
2023
2024
ACADEMIC
YEAR
REPORT

ABOUT THE GSC CREATIVE TRACK – A GRADUATE PROGRAM BETWEEN FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND MIAMI AD SCHOOL

The unique partnership between FIU and Miami Ad School began in the early 1990s with an innovative approach that combines higher education with practical, hands-on courses to teach creativity in advertising and strategic communications. Located in Miami, one of the most vibrant, culturally diverse, and creative cities in the world, the program culminates in a Master of Science in Mass Communication degree, a diploma from the world-renowned Miami Ad School, and a polished portfolio designed to help graduates land the job of their dreams. The program aims to train both the left (logical) and right (creative) sides of the brain, developing global creatives specializing in art direction, copywriting, social media strategy, and strategic planning.



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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear FIU Students, Faculty, Staff, CARTA/Miami Ad School Family and Community Members,

We are excited to welcome you to the new 2024-2025 academic year at Florida International University and Miami Ad School. Whether you are returning to our campus or joining us for the first time, we are thrilled to embark on this journey of learning, growth, and discovery together. This report highlights the achievements of our program's graduates, current students, and faculty in the Global Strategic Communication Creative Track in partnership with the world-renowned Miami Ad School during 2023-2024, aiming to inspire even greater accomplishments in 2024-2025.

In Fall 2024, we are welcoming our largest incoming class, with students from across the United States and around the world. We are also fortunate to welcome two industry veterans to our faculty this Fall. Isaac Mizrahi, CEO of Alma DDB—one of the most awarded multicultural agencies—will teach Global Strategic Communications, focusing on the U.S. Latino marketplace and using his new book, Hispanic Market Power. Also joining our faculty is Rene Alvarez, a digital strategist, political consultant, and artificial intelligence expert, who will teach Advertising Law, Ethics, and Corporate Social Responsibility.

We are proud to have two authors among our faculty who are using their books as course content. Alongside Mizrahi, Marlon Quintero, Managing Director of CIC Media & Innovation MCC Initiative, will teach Theories of Mass Communication in the Spring semester using his book, Innovation for Media Content Creation. In other faculty news, Dr. Luis Montenegro, who teaches Research Strategies, is now the owner and president of NORS Surveys/Metropolitan Research Services. Professor Albena Petrus, teaching Trends in Graphics & Design in the Spring semester, is currently working on her Doctorate in Strategic Communication, Advertising, and Public Relations at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain.

Lastly, we would like to thank departing Professor Audrey Glover-Ditcher for her years of dedication to the program, and we wish Professor Mihaela Plugarasu a very productive sabbatical.

This academic year promises to be filled with opportunities to challenge ourselves, expand our horizons, make lasting connections, and bring out the best in our students' potential and talents. One of our graduates summed it up perfectly: "Thank you for believing in me when I sometimes didn't believe in myself. We did it!"…and that, we will.

PAWS up!

Grizelle De Los Reyes

Associate Teaching Faculty

Director of the Global Strategic Communications - Creative Track in partnership with Miami Ad School

LEADERSHIP

FIU

Brian Schriner
Dean CARTA

Aileen Izquierdo
Director FIU School of Communication

Grizelle De Los Reyes
Program Director

Albena Petrus
Program Specialist

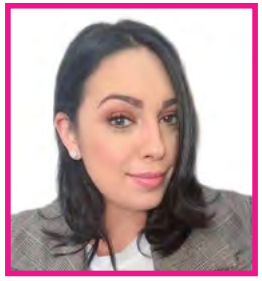
Meira Langsam
Graduate Programs Coordinator

MIAMI AD SCHOOL

Henry Mairena
Managing Director

Allan Alvarez
Director of Develop. and Marketing

Nour Da Silva
Director (Miami) & Corp. Relations Director



Jennifer Hernandez
Admissions Coordinator

WELCOME DAVINA CLARKE AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Davina Clarke
Director FIU School of Communication

Davina Clarke will begin her new role as the Director of the School of Communication at FIU in Fall 2024. Dr. Clarke has over 15 years of teaching experience, covering a variety of communication courses. Her teaching interests include Advanced Business Communication, Nonverbal Communication, and Conflict Management. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Clarke is active in her community, volunteering as a public speaking coach and conflict mediator.

PROGRAM STATS

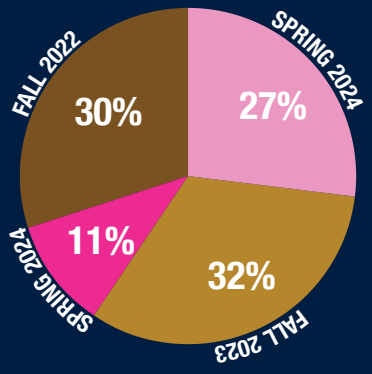
Students by Active Cohorts

		FROM FIU
Spring 2024	10	20%
Fall 2023	12	17%
Spring 2023	4	-
Fall 2022	11	36%
Total	**37**	

Upcoming Cohort

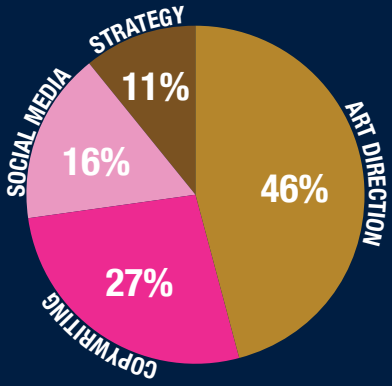
Fall 2024	*23*	30%

On average 26% are FIU graduated students.



Students by Sub Tracks

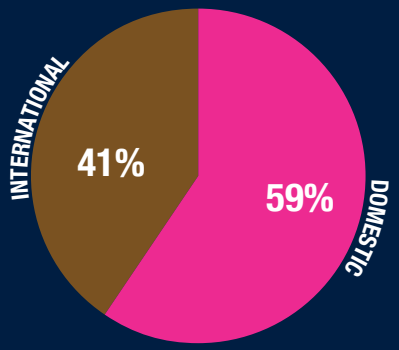
Art Direction	17
Copywriting	10
Social Media Strategy	6
Strategic Planning	4

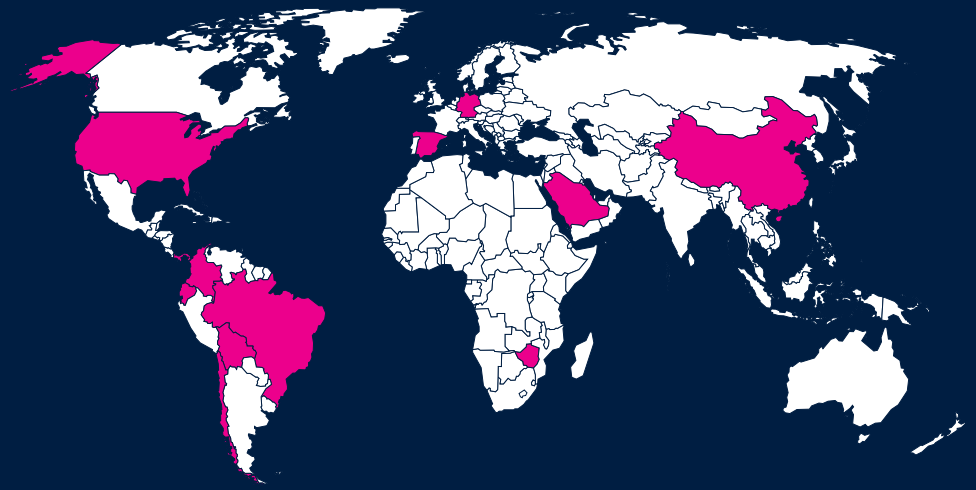


Students by Origin

Domestic	22
International	15

Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
China
Colombia
Ecuador
Germany
Panama
Saudi Arabia
Spain
Zimbawe





GRIZELLE DE LOS REYES

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT & CREATIVE STRATEGY

Director and Advisor of the GSC Creative Track and Chair of Student Success at the School of Communication.
Served on various committees, including the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Search Committees for open faculty lines, Professors' Promotions Committees (Assistant and Associate levels), and the Accreditation Development of Graduate Programs Committee.
Additionally, coordinated internships for the National Association of Television Programming Executives (NATPE) conference, served as a Board Member of Miami Ad School Punta Cana, and lectured in other professors' classes on topics such as branding, campaign development, and media.

MARLON QUINTERO

THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Professional:

- *Producer on "Uncharted Adventure" for The Weather Channel, which won an Emmy in 2023 in the Best Host category.*
- *Selected as a juror for #PremiosPRODU, recognizing excellence in the Latin TV industry, August 2024.*
- *Led the production of the documentary series "Señales del Crimen" for the VIX platform, February 2024.*

Classroom:

- *Co-taught Managing Innovation in the Digital Economy Executive course for Florida Atlantic Executive Education division and International Business School Americas, July 2024.*

ALBENA PETRUS

TRENDS IN GRAPHICS & DESIGN

Professional:

- *Serves as President of The One Club Awards-Miami (since 2018), overseeing events, the board, and initiatives that connect the local creative community while bringing local and global opportunities to students. Continues to lead marketing, logistics, and jury selection for The One Club Awards Miami.*
- *Currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, with an expected graduation in 2026.*

Classroom:

- *Nominated for the Adjunct Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching.*
- *Undergraduate course nominated for FIU Online Course of the Year.*

LUIS MONTENEGRO

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Dr. Montenegro is a certified professional in marketing research and a professor specializing in research, marketing, and management courses. He recently acquired one of Miami's premier marketing research companies, NORS Surveys, established in 1991. NORS Surveys is a leading firm in conducting surveys and is a pioneer in recruiting Hispanic panels and multilingual national telephone interviewing.

MIHAELA PLUGARASU

GLOBAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Professional:

- *Spoke at the GROWTHCON Conference, June 2024.*
- *Spoke on Brain-Based Mindfulness Practices for Increased Wellbeing, June 2024, Kherson State Maritime Academy, Ukraine.*
- *Workshop Facilitator for Leadership at The Neuroscience of Trust and Human Connection, February 2024.*

Classroom:

- *Nominated for the FIU Teaching Award 2024.*
- *FIU Faculty Happiness Ambassador & Facilitator, World Happiness Fest, March 2024.*
- *Taught Intrapersonal Communication: Self-Leadership + Emotional Intelligence Micro Badge (elective), Spring 2024.*

RP KUMAR

CREATIVE STRATEGY

Professional:

- *Attended an engrossing lecture by Blake Gopnik, the renowned former Chief Art Critic of The Washington Post, at the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum on FIU's Main Campus.*

Classroom:

- *Taught Basics of Branding in two sessions to a senior executive class during the Strategic Planning Bootcamp at Miami Ad School in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The students, a dynamic mix of marketers and media/ad agency professionals, engaged in excellent, real-world conversations that enriched the experience for everyone.*

AUDREY GLOVER-DICHTER

LAW & ETHICS IN MASS COMMUNICATION

Professional:

- *Attended the International Bar Association annual conference, October/November 2023, Paris.*
- *Participated in a Zoom webinar by the University of Boston on AI Governance and its responsible use, April 2024, Massachusetts.*
- *Attended the first INTA conference on AI, "The Business of AI," April 2024, New York City.*
- *Attended a business retreat on growing a professional practice, April 2024, Barcelona.*
- *Chaired and spoke on AI Governance at the American Bar Association International Law Section, May 2024, Washington, DC.*

WELCOME

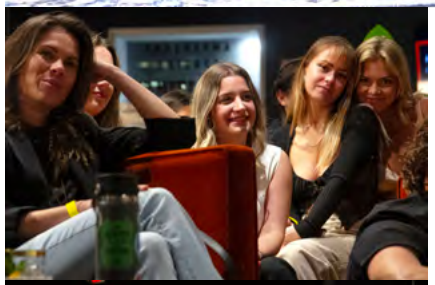
ISAAC MIZRAHI

GLOBAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

RENE ALVAREZ

LAW & ETHICS IN MASS COMMUNICATION

DISRUPTING TRADITIONS



Friday, October 27
6-8:30PM
Ampersand Studios

One-of-a-kind event to highlight unconventional routes in the creative world. A collab with The One Club Miami + AAF Miami + AiGA Miami.

RODRIGO BUTORI
Creative Director/Founder

MICHAEL CAMPOS
CEO & Head of Strategy

BRE FERN
Associate Creative Director

GIGI GUTIERREZ
Executive Creative Director

MARS MAHONEY
Freelance Strategy Director

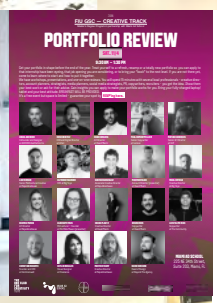
CJ PASLEY
Consultant & Account Supervisor

EMMA RILEY
Strategy Director

LUCY LOPEZ
Podcast Host & MC

October 27th, 2023

PORTFOLIO REVIEW FALL 2023



Saturday, Nov 4th
9:30am-1:30pm
Miami Ad School

75 registered students
8 rounds of 15 minutes

18 reviewers from RepublicaHavas, GUT, David, The Community, Lenovo's in-house agency, Acevedo Aesthetics Co., Arbol, Big Toys, Karnna Fashion Labs, Beyond the Agency, and freelancers.

3 presentations
All About Portfolios by Albena Petrus, How to get into an Agency by Max Montaldo, and Portfolio Presentation by FIU+MAS graduated Wendy Thulen

Breakfast was served. Farthest student attending came from Orlando, FL.

November 4th, 2023

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PROGRAM SHOWCASE

Students (40) and faculty professors from Karel de Grote University of Applied Sciences — Business Management Department — Antwerp and Artevelde University of Applied Sciences — Business Management Department — Ghent, Belgium.

Our students came back full of energy, positive vibes and inspiring ideas!

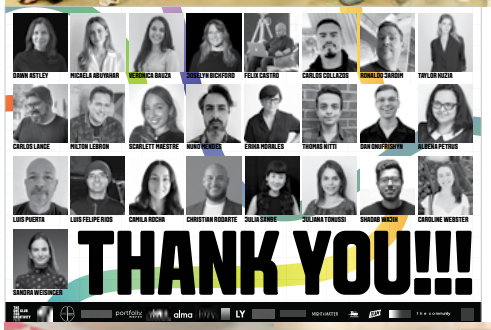
Natasja Braem
Business Coach + Passionate Lecturer

We had the privilege of visiting FIU and explore global communication, creative thinking, and self-leadership. We gained valuable insights that will undoubtedly shape our future endeavors. Thank you Grizelle De Los Reyes, Albena Petrus, and Mihaela Plugarasu for organizing this and inspiring us!

Christophe Delcroix
Docent at Karel de Grote Hogeschool

January 29th, 2024

PORTFOLIO REVIEW SPRING 2024



Saturday, April 6th
9:30am-1:30pm
Miami Ad School

102 registered students
8 rounds of 15 minutes

23 reviewers from LemonYellow, The Community, GUT, Alma, WOW Marketing, cplus8design, Might & Matter, TEAM, Flow Studio, Zubi, David, AIGA Miami, Commonwell, MAD, El Autobus, and Golin Chicago.

5 presentations
All About Portfolios by Albena Petrus, We are MAD by Juliana Tonussi, and Portfolio Presentations by FIU+MAS graduates Micaela Abuyahar, Veronica Bauza, and Mariel Hernandez.

Breakfast was served
1 Adobe Cloud year subscription was raffled

April 16th, 2024

HEALTH ADVERTISING PRESENTATIONS

JASON GRAFF

EVP Executive Creative Director, AREA 23

Jason Graff has advertising in his blood—his father was one of the original "mad men" at DDB who helped shape the golden age of advertising, inspiring Jason to follow in his footsteps. Before joining AREA 23, Jason served as Executive Creative Director at Publicis and the Kaplan Thaler Group, where he garnered numerous consumer awards for brands like Wendy's, Trojan condoms, Hot Pockets, and Abbott Nutrition. However, it was his impactful work on Similac that set him on a more inspired career path.

Watch Jason's lecture

Thursday, *April 11th 2024*
1-2:30pm
ZOOM

TIM JONES

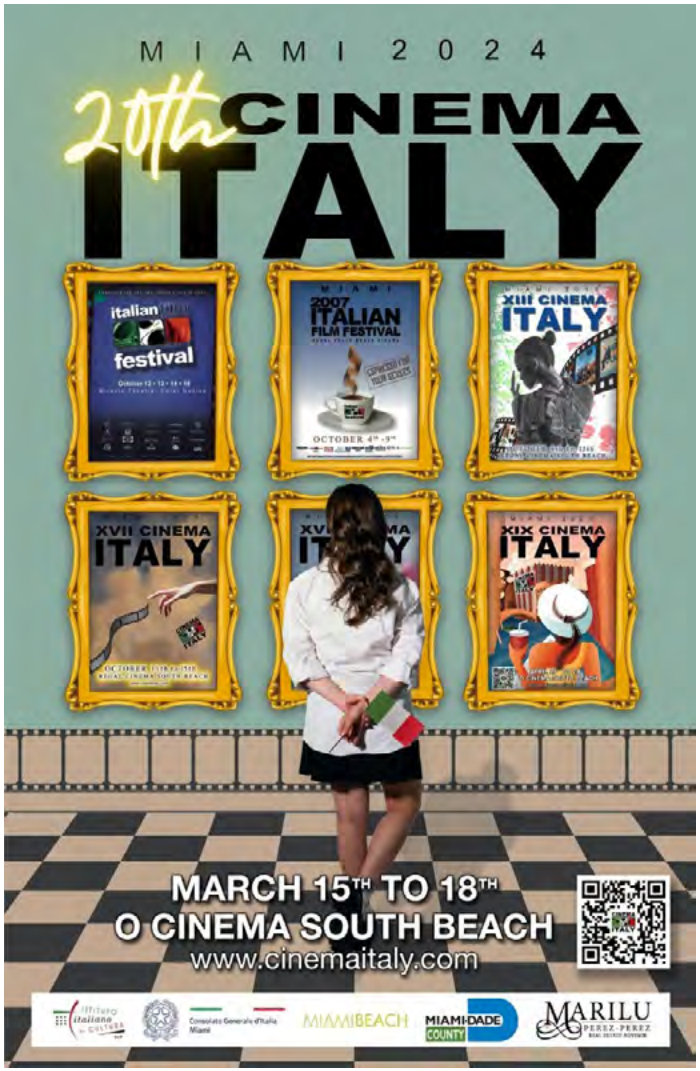
Executive Creative Director EMEA, KlickHealth

Tim Jones is a creative leader whose enthusiasm for improving healthcare advertising has resulted in over 70 creative awards, notably helping two of his agencies win Agency of the Year at Cannes in the past three years. Tim believes that celebrating ideas that survive heavy regulations is crucial in convincing creatives that healthcare is a path to more meaningful work. His latest project, American Cancer Stories, brings together two of the major public health crises affecting children in America.

Watch Tim's lecture

Thursday, *April 18th 2024*
1-2:30pm
ZOOM

CREATIVE STRATEGY | CINEMA ITALY



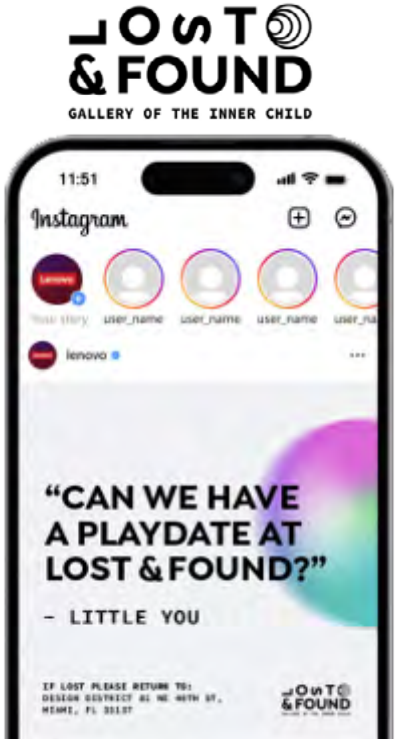
In the Creative Strategy course, Professor De Los Reyes' students worked with Cinema Italy on a challenging project that needed to communicate Italy and cinema without being obvious or cliché. Cinema Italy is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Italian cinema and culture outside of Italy. The winning image, selected by Cinema Italy's board members, was used on the festival's 2024 promotional materials, from the marquee to the playbill, becoming another valuable addition to the students' portfolios and body of creative work.

Fall 2023

RESEARCH STRATEGY + CREATIVE STRATEGY | LENOVO + MATCH.COM + SUPER LESS PLASTIC

In Fall 2023, Professor De Los Reyes taught Creative Strategy and engaged her students in an innovative teaching and learning approach by working with real clients across three of the program's courses. Her students were divided into teams to work with technology giant Lenovo, online dating pioneer Match.com, and Super Less Plastics, a Spanish-based company helping hotels eliminate single-use plastics and promoting green initiatives to save the planet. Throughout the Fall 2023 semester, students were also enrolled in Research Strategies at FIU and Thinking Strategically at Miami Ad School. Professor De Los Reyes collaborated with each professor, using the same project to teach about research design and how the resulting data informs strategic recommendations and creative campaign work. This allowed students to experience working with real clients and see how everything taught in the program integrates to bring out the best ideas in a teamwork setting.

LENOVO asked us to solve a human problem with technology and AI. We pitched "Healing the inner child is the healthy path to adulthood."



Fall 2023

CREATIVE STRATEGY

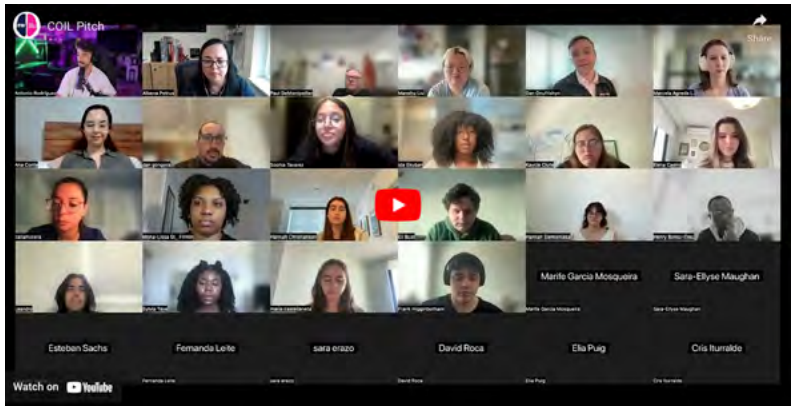
Students conducted primary research and developed a campaign, including target group analysis, personas, campaign assets (billboards, website, social media), and further recommendations for a brand.

Michael Pyatte, founder of Scuba Aruba, delivered an inspiring lecture on the power of branding and entrepreneurship.

Our Good (CBD gummies) is launching five specific hemp-based products for sleep, pain management, focus, energy, and mood boosting — moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach.

Spring 2024

TRENDS IN GRAPHICS & DESIGN | COIL



In the Trends in Graphics & Design course, Professor Petrus's students collaborated online with students from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Mixed teams from both universities worked on a brief to create a unique advertising campaign using one or more media formats to encourage U.S. college students (ages 18-24) to drink less or not at all.

Check out the COLLAB

FIU | Collaborative Online International Learning

UAB Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Pitch Reviewers

Antonio Rodriguez
Creative Director
Eleven Media

Paul DeMontpelier
Senior Copywriter
Lenovo in-house

Henry Kojo
Professor
Ghana Institute of Journalism

Dan Onufrishyn
President
Aiga Miami

Daniel Gongora
Freelance Art Director

FIELD TRIP TO THE WOLFSONIAN

Every Spring, Trends in Graphics & Design students visit The Wolfsonian to learn about its resources, current exhibitions, digital collection, and the whole process from research to execution. This was our Spring 2024 trip!

In collaboration with
Frank Luca
Chief Librarian

Molly Channon
Student + Academic Engagement Coordinator

March 7th, 2024

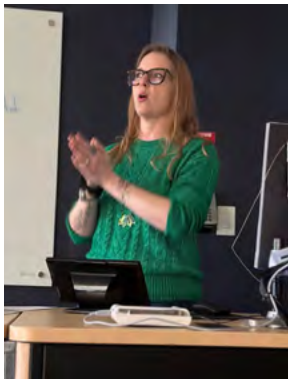
GUEST SPEAKERS

Connecting the classroom with the industry is what we do best. Our students learn from top industry professionals while expanding their professional network.

Alfredo Figaredo
Co-founder and CEO
Big Toys

Alfredo shared cutting-edge visual trends and new agency formats that help us adapt to current industry challenges with Professor Petrus's Trends in Graphics and Design students.

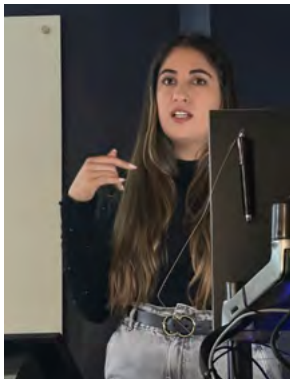
January 24th, 2024



Gina Licciardi
Sr Copywriter
MAD

Gina shared the latest about MAD Innovation's lab, along with trends in advertising and when to follow them—or not—with Professor Petrus's Trends in Graphics and Design students.

February 1st, 2024



Paola Villalobos
Associate Strategic Planning Director
Alma DDB

Paola, an FIU alumna, shared insights on research, social trends, and cultural dynamics, explaining how Alma anticipates, taps into, or creates advertising trends in the Hispanic market with Professor Petrus's Trends in Graphics and Design students.

February 15th, 2024

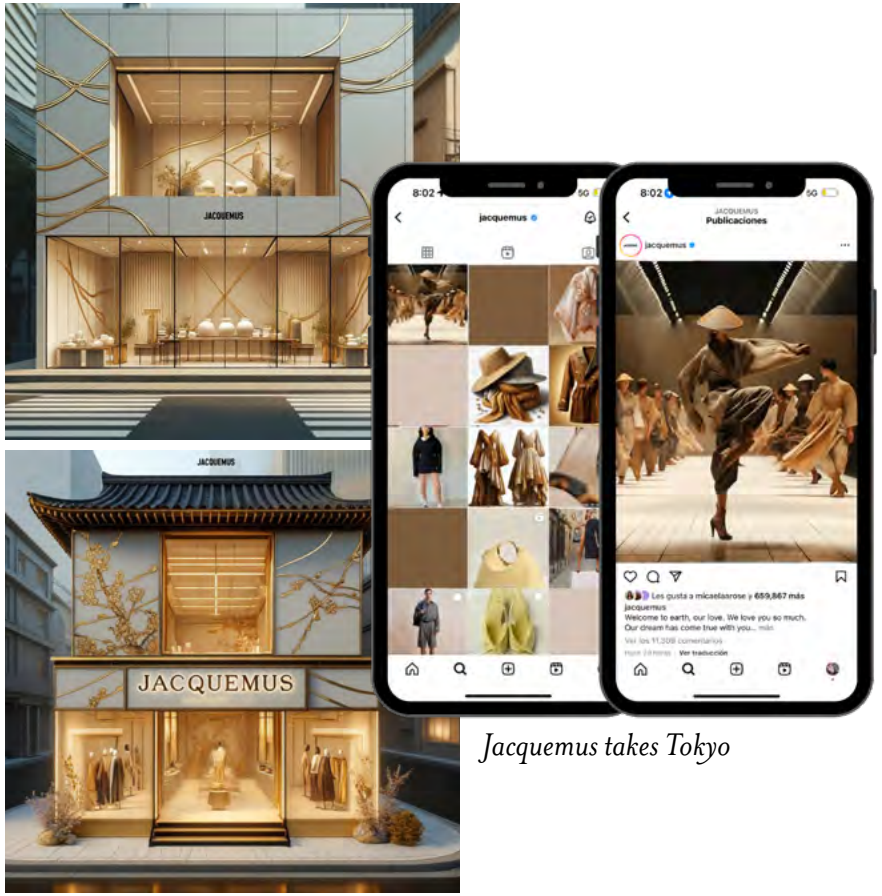
THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Shell's From the Pump to the Boardroom Series.

The students successfully presented their final projects, which required them to develop innovative content strategies for brands such as Coca-Cola, Expedia, American Express, Home Depot, and Fiat. Although the projects were not presented directly to the clients, the high quality of the ideas gave students a practical framework for implementing innovation in media content creation. They explored various forms of content beyond traditional online commercials and media, creating content platforms closely tied to the brand's DNA. These platforms showcased engaging content that enhances the brand's power and affinity with consumers and users.

GLOBAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Students introduced the French fashion brand Jacquemus to the Japanese market, where it was previously unknown. They conducted an in-depth analysis of Japanese culture to ensure a successful brand entry. The campaign involved extensive research and strategy development, including brand positioning, consumer analysis, advertising, and channel targeting. They created mockups of ads, billboards, and even designed clothing specifically tailored to the Japanese market. The strategy aimed to align the brand's image with local cultural values, making it resonate with the target audience. Drawing inspiration from the Japanese art of kintsugi, which repairs broken pottery with gold to highlight imperfections as something valuable, the strategy beautifully connected the brand's ethos with the essence of Japanese culture.



Jacquemus takes Tokyo

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

Professor De Los Reyes' approach to guiding students through their final intellectual property projects toward graduation is to give them not only the choice between doing a professional project or a thesis but also to use the document to launch a business idea. Understanding that creative students are natural idea generators, she offers them the opportunity to use this work to conduct research and turn their ideas into viable businesses and intellectual property.

SUMMER 2024
4 GRADUATES
1 THESIS
3 PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS

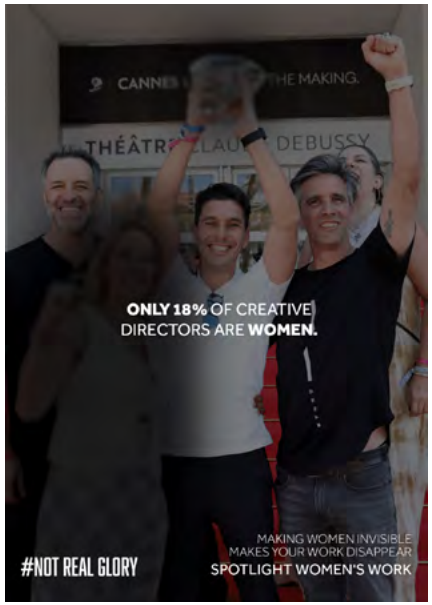
THESIS
Building strategic foundations: designing a curriculum for the future of Brand strategy
Mohammad Alshanawani

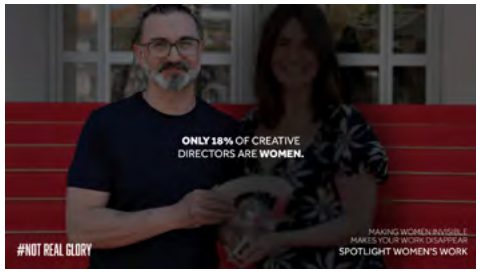
PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
Raising gender equality awareness in the creative industry: an Integrated campaign for advertisers
Andrea Avila

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
Rethink miami: a new way to reposition miami as the ultimate travel destination
Marie Sophie Baier

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
What's the best investment? Podcast development through storytelling for young entrepreneurs
Micaela Cedillo

16 GRADUATES
7 THESIS
9 PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS





Andrea Avila

INNOVATIVE LEARNING

SPRING 2024
12 GRADUATES
6 THESIS
6 PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS

THESIS
Diamonds are forever - analysis of an effective advertising campaign which influenced social norms and increased consumer demand
Micaela Maria Abuhayar Cucalón

THESIS
Gen Z: the new boomer - the evolving landscape of communications and advertising strategies
Veronica Bauza

THESIS
connecting in the age of disconnection: assessing communication strategies and the paradox of social media to combat the loneliness pandemic
Kayla Brown

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
Revitalizing lemon8: strategic innovations for differentiation in the united states market
Haireti Dilihuxi

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
Behr® palettepro: psychological and emotional impacts of color
Lawren Elderkin

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
Sensual movement's strategic expansion: elevating bachata sensual in Miami
Mariel Hernández

THESIS
Not of an age, but for all time: Shakespeare and the power of the personal brand
Kiah Kimpton

THESIS
Personalizing gen'zs career guidance with creativty coaching: innovating career education for the digital generation
Luna Xavie Mendez

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
Language of sex: integrating sexual health education into duolingo
Alina Stopello

THESIS
How Western Media influences Zimbabwean culture - the interplay of globalmedia and local identity
Tinotenda Vheriwa

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
Humor in German advertising - German humor techniques applied to a Deutsche Bahn campaign
Iuliana-Isabela Vilcan

Mariel Hernández

THE ONE CLUB AWARDS MIAMI

MERIT
Integrated Campaign
SOUNDS OF PLEASURE
Micaela Cedillo, Mariel Hernandez, & Alina Stopello

THE ONE CLUB FOR CREATIVITY

YOUNG ONES

BRONZE
Design for Good/Product Design
THE CLOTS MATTER
Andrea Avila

BRONZE
Gaming/UX/UI Advertising
THE BLINK TRIGGER
Andrea Avila, Iuliana Vilcan, & Javier Forero

MERIT
Product Design
THE CLOTS MATTER
Andrea Avila, Iuliana Vilcan, & Javier Forero

MERIT
Integrated Campaign
DUOLINGO
Marie Sophie Baier, Aïna Zaragoza, & Daniel Torres

MERIT
Print, Promotional & OOH
NOTCO
Marie Sophie Baier, Aïna Zaragoza, & Daniel Torres

From left to right, Micaela Cedillo, Alina Stopello, & Mariel Hernandez during The One Club Awards Miami ceremony in November 2023.

D&AD

PENCIL
21 GRAMS Brief
THE BLINK TRIGGER
Andrea Avila, Iuliana Vilcan, & Javier Forero

GOLD
Student Product Design
SEXY NESTERS
Micaela Cedillo, Mariel Hernandez, & Alina Stopello

SILVER
Student Product Design
SOUND OF PLEASURE
Micaela Cedillo, Mariel Hernandez, & Alina Stopello

AMERICAN ADVERTISING AWARDS

GOLD
Integrated Campaign
THE CLOTS MATTER
Andrea Avila

SILVER
Integrated Advertising Campaign
DUOLINGO
Marie Sophie Baier, Aïna Zaragoza, & Daniel Torres

SILVER
Integrated Advertising Campaign
GIRLCODE
Marie Sophie Baier & Andrea Avila

SILVER
Integration
FOUL LANGUAGE
Micaela Cedillo, Vero Esguerra, & Christian Ramos

Graphis

SILVER
Integrated Campaign
THE CLOTS MATTER
Andrea Avila

THE ANDYs

SHORTLISTED
THE BLINK TRIGGER
Andrea Avila, Iuliana Vilcan, & Javier Forero

100% GRADUATION!

COMMENCEMENT SPRING 2024

COMMENCEMENT AT MIAMI AD SCHOOL

COMMENCEMENT SUMMER 2024

LOCATIONS

FIU School of Communication

FIU Biscayne Bay Campus (BBC)
3000 NE 151th Street,
North Miami, FL 33181

FIU Modesto A. Maidique (MMC)
11200 SW 8th St,
Miami, FL 33199

FIU CARTA | Mana Wynwood
318 NW 23rd Street,
Miami, FL 33127

MIAMI AD SCHOOL

Miami Ad School
225 NE 34th Street, Suite 203,
Miami, FL 33137

FIU MIAMI AD SCHOOL

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