



SHAFKAT ANOWAR TNS

A virtual reality surgery lab in Texas helps train students before they face real patients.

In today's paper LOCAL & STATE: Car festival could hit South Beach for 2024 spring break, 3A

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Miami Herald

HIGHER EDUCATION



MATIAS J. OCNER mocner@miamiherald.com | Aug. 19, 2022

From left, Romina Cano Velasquez, Fabiana González Zambrano and Ana Camba Gomes enjoy an afternoon at Miami Dade College West in Doral before heading off to MIT. The MDC Honors College graduates arrived in South Florida less than five years ago.

RAID OF MAR-A-LAGO

Feds expand probe of how Trump handled classified records

Prosecutors said the former president and his lawyers 'offered no explanation as to why boxes of government records ... remained' at his home in Palm Beach.

BY JAY WEAVER jweaver@miamiherald.com

The Department of Justice is expanding a criminal case against Donald Trump by alleging the former president obstructed a grand-jury investigation by failing to turn over classified national-security documents that were in his office and a storage area at his Palm Beach home and later found during an FBI search last month, according to a new court filing.

Prosecutors said Trump and his lawyers did not comply with a subpoena in May after a representative of the former president swore in an affidavit that they had conducted a "diligent search" of dozens of boxes that had been taken from the White House to his Mar-a-Lago estate after he left office.

The custodian of Trump's records asserted the former president had returned all "responsive documents" to the Washington, D.C., federal grand-jury subpoena in June. In their filing, prosecutors said that was not true. The subpoena, which normally would be kept under seal from public view, was released late Tuesday night along with the prosecutors' new filing. It requested "any and all documents or writings ... bearing classification markings," including many references to

SEE MIT, 4A

SEE TRUMP, 10A

'Welcome to the land of dreams.' How three Miami Dade College students made it to MIT

BY CLARA-SOPHIA DALY csdaly@miamiherald.com

Ana Camba Gomes, Fabiana González Zambrano and Romina Cano Velasquez would spend 14 hours a day going to class, labs and studying together, often dissecting linear algebra problems in the early-morning hours. They woke up at 5 in the morning to get to campus by 5:40, scrambling to review

These three girls came in hungry; they were ready to go, said Magda Castineyra, director of the Honors College Dual-Language Program at MDC's Eduardo J. Padrón Campus.

notes before physics class began at 6.

The three classmates — one a mechanical-engineering major, and the other two majoring in computer engineering — took twice as many credits as the average Miami Dade College student. They wrestled with a fifth-dimen-

sional object in linear algebra, with Velasquez protesting: "Humans can only see three dimensions!"

The arduous workload paid off for the three, two of whom are from Venezuela and one who is from Peru. They arrived in South Florida less than five years ago and

graduated with highest honors and distinction in May from the dual-language program at the Honors College at Miami Dade College.

This week, they arrived in Cambridge, Mass., where they will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, ranked the No. 2 university in the country, tied with Harvard University,

IMMIGRATION

More Cuban children are showing up at U.S.-Mexico border without parents

It is probable that many parents have decided that their children have no future in Cuba and therefore decide to send them to the U.S. via Mexico, said a migration expert.

BY SYRA ORTIZ BLANES, NORA GÁMEZ TORRES AND ANA CEBALLOS sortizblanes@miamiherald.com ngameztorres@elnuevoherald.com aceballos@miamiherald.com

Hundreds of unaccompanied Cuban children have shown up at the U.S.-Mexico border this past year as more parents appear to be sending away their kids amid Cuba's deteriorating conditions, which have already brought a record number of people from the island to the United States.

"The increase in the number of children and adolescents among Cuban migrants suggests an intensification of the desperation felt by many families residing on the island,"



DARIO LOPEZ-MILLS AP | March 30, 2021

Migrant children who crossed the border unaccompanied watch television at a detention facility in Donna, Texas.

said Jorge Duany, director at Florida International University's Cuban Research Institute, "and that they do not find another way out of the crisis that the country is experiencing than to leave it in search for better life opportunities for the youngest."

Since October, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has had 662 encounters with unaccompanied Cuban children at the southern border, compared to 32 in the fiscal year 2021 and 57 in 2020. That's a 1,969% increase between the 2021 and

2022 fiscal years alone.

The agency processed another seven unaccompanied children in Florida this fiscal year, although it is unclear from the data if they arrived by sea.

The number of un-

SEE KIDS, 4A

FLORIDA

DeSantis touted arrests of 20 voters, but cases are on shaky ground

The more that comes out on the arrests, the more I believe the individuals involved had no knowledge or intent to violate the law, wrote a Florida state senator.

BY MARY ELLEN KLAS, LAWRENCE MOWER AND ROMY ELLENBOGEN meklas@miamiherald.com lmower@tampabay.com rellenbogen@tampabay.com Herald/Times Tallahassee Bureau

TALLAHASSEE

Two weeks after Gov. Ron DeSantis and the state's top election officials stood in a Broward County courtroom and announced the arrests of 20 people for allegedly voting illegally, the state's cases are falling apart.

The announcement was the first initiative of the governor's Office of Election Crimes and Security, and it targeted people disqualified from voting because they've been convicted of murder or sexual assault.

"They're going to pay the price for it," the governor promised.

But in the face of a stream of conflicting messages coming from the governor and state elections officials and the prospect of no immediate fix to the state's confusing system for felons to regain their voting rights, advocates are urging those arrested to fight the charges. The Senate sponsor of the legislation that implemented the felons voting law has concluded "now a million dollar operation" of the Office of Election Crimes and Security might fail to produce convictions.

"The more that comes out on the arrests, the

SEE VOTING, 2A



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Partly sunny with a stray afternoon storm 92°/78° See 14A



FROM PAGE 1A

MIT

according to U.S. News & World Report's 2022 rankings. (Princeton is No. 1.)

The students are among 21 students worldwide who will be transferring this fall to MIT, whose acceptance rate is just over 4%, and transfer admission is even more competitive than first-year admissions.

It is not unusual for one or two students from the Honors College to get accepted to MIT. But for three students who studied together to be accepted is a rare feat.

"We were so lucky that we got in together at MIT," said Gomes.

"These three girls came in hungry; they were ready to go," said Magda Castineyra, director of the Honors College Dual-Language Program at the Eduardo J. Padrón Campus in Little Havana.

CAME FROM VENEZUELA

At the Honors College, students take classes in both English and Spanish, a rare model within higher education and one that encourages Spanish-speaking students to pursue their education further. At MIT, their classes will be in English.

Gomes, 20, and Zambrano, 20, came to the United States from Venezuela when they were 16. Both had parents who had good jobs in Venezuela: Gomes' parents were engineers; Zambrano's parents owned their own business. But their parents wanted their children to get a better education.

Both Zambrano and Gomes attended some high school in South Florida, Gomes at Ronald W. Reagan Doral Senior High and Zambrano at Doral Academy Preparatory School. The two were introduced by text while at MDC because they both studied computer engineering and were from Venezuela. They became immediate friends.

The students attended the Honors College because they knew it would provide them with the course load and mentorship needed to get into a top university.

Castineyra explained that in the dual-language program at the Honors College, nearly all of the students are from Latin American countries. They are bright and hardworking but don't always know how to navigate the U.S. educational system.

PERUVIAN ROOTS

Velasquez, 24, came to Miami from Peru right



Courtesy of Ana Camba Gomes

From left, Romina Cano Velasquez, Fabiana González Zambrano and Ana Camba Gomes pose at MIT in Cambridge, Mass., on Monday. 'We were so lucky that we got in together at MIT,' says Gomes.

before she started classes at the Honors College. Her grandmother, who was already in the United States, had petitioned for green cards for Velasquez's parents and two sisters. When they got them, her family decided to leave everything behind in Peru.

She said the idea that underlies her family is to take advantage of every opportunity and go as far as possible.

Last summer, she interned with NASA's Student Airborne Science Activation (SaSa) program based in Baltimore, Md. At MIT, she wants to focus on aerospace engineering with a goal of going to space — a dream that she has kept close to her heart since her grandfather gave her a telescope when she was a child. A framed photo of the solar system with all the mission satellites from different countries hangs next to her bed

in Miami.

'WELCOME TO THE LAND OF DREAMS'

Gomes is the workhorse of the group, while Zambrano's easygoing personality provides relief to her friend's unrelenting work ethic. Velasquez is a healthy mix of the two girls' personalities.

Gomes, Zambrano and Velasquez did not expect to all get accepted into MIT. In fact, they were nervous about sharing their acceptance in their group chat because they didn't want to make each other feel bad. Velasquez hadn't even told her friends she applied because she didn't know whether she would get in. "Welcome to the land of dreams," said Velasquez, just a few days before getting on a plane and heading off to MIT.

Gomes and Zambrano plan to major in electrical engineering and computer

science, two fields dominated by men. In the 2018-2019 school year, only 19% of computer-science bachelor degrees nationwide were awarded to female students, according to the Miami Herald's calculation of data from the National Center for Education Statistics. For electrical engineering, just over 14% of degrees nationwide were awarded to female students during this period, according to the center's statistics.

Velasquez plans to major in mechanical engineering. All three are entering MIT as sophomores.

"I am very proud of her force and dedication," said Gomes' father, Nemecio, in Spanish. Her mother, Ana, is also proud, but her heart is divided because she's sad to see her daughter move away from home.

Gomes was also award-

ed a \$55,000-a-year Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholarship, which is awarded to high-performing transfer students. Gomes' parents were engineers in Venezuela. Now, her mom is a warehouse supervisor, and her father works for a company that distributes industrial equipment.

FUTURE PLANS

When she graduates, Gomes wants to create assistive technology for people with disabilities. When she was working at a fast-food restaurant, a deaf customer came in. Observing the customer, she realized there should be more technology to help people living with disabilities.

Zambrano wants to work for the U.S. State Department of Technological Innovation and bring technologies to Venezuela and other Latin American countries. Velasquez has

her eye on aerospace.

On a recent Friday at Miami Dade College's Doral campus, there was an ice-cream social for high-school students. The three were wearing their MIT hoodies when two students came up to the table and asked if they went to MIT. They explained how they are transferring there.

"You must have to be super smart," said Azim Jafer, 17, a student at the School for Advanced Studies, a Miami-Dade public school where students take high-school and college classes.

Zambrano corrected him: "You don't have to be smart; you have to put the work in."

"You guys are like role models," said Azim. "That's the American dream — to go to MIT," he said, shyly. "That's crazy!"

Clara-Sophia Daly: @daly_clara

FROM PAGE 1A

KIDS

accompanied Cuban minors arriving at the border is tiny compared to the nearly 100,000 Central American minors in the same situation.

But the increase of Cuban youth arriving alone is notable, according to South Florida experts, lawyers and care providers.

David Claros, regional director for Church World Services Immigration Legal Services, said the organization has witnessed a "huge increase" in the number of unaccompanied Cuban children, many with relatives in South Florida.

"We rarely had any in the last few years," he said, "and in the last few months, maybe, we've had one every other week."

Duany, a migration expert, said the arrival of so many children is a new trend in Cuban migration.

"It is probable that many parents have decided that their children have no future in Cuba and therefore decide to send them to Mexico with the intention of crossing the border into

the United States," said Duany. "It seems to be a new migratory pattern, which until now has been dominated by young adults without their children."

Cuba's poverty, inflation, power blackouts, supply shortages and increased government repression are driving a historic wave of migration that has surpassed in numbers the 1980 Mariel exodus. U.S. Customs and Border Protection has reported nearly 176,000 encounters with Cuban migrants at the southwest land border since October.

Jennifer Anzardo Valdes, director of the Children's Legal Program at Americans for Immigrant Justice, said the nonprofit law firm has represented more unaccompanied Cuban children this year.

Some have come to reunite with family already living in the United States, but others are asylum-seekers.

Anzardo Valdes said some of her teenage clients were arrested during the anti-government uprising in July last year and targeted in the aftermath.

"Our clients have told us

that conditions in Cuba have continued to deteriorate, so they are coming to the U.S. to seek a better life," she said. "They especially highlighted that they feel that conditions have deteriorated since the protests" last year.

Catholic Charities CEO Peter Routsis-Arroyo told the Miami Herald that the agency's shelter, Msgr. Bryan Walsh Children's Village, has received more Cuban minors than usual recently.

He said most were between the ages of 15 and 17 and many had sponsors who are relatives or family friends in Florida.

"We've gotten no more than a handful at any one time," said Routsis-Arroyo, "but that's more than in past years."

The shelter, also known as Boystown, has a long history of caring for Cuban children, including some of the 14,000 kids who came in the early 1960s through a Catholic Church-led program known as "Operation Pedro Pan" after Fidel Castro took power.

Shelters run by nonprofit organizations, such as

Catholic Charities, have been targeted by Gov. Ron DeSantis as he tries to slow the intake of undocumented immigrants into Florida.

In January, DeSantis directed Florida regulators to stop issuing or renewing the licenses of facilities that contract with the federal government to house migrant children who are waiting to be united with their families or vetted sponsors.

Florida shelters were not allowed to house more migrant children than they did before the rule went into effect in January, a move that could impact the resettlement of hundreds of migrant children.

The rule was one of many policies pushed by DeSantis this year as he attempts to crack down on illegal immigration. One plan included a \$12 million state program to bus undocumented people in the state to other parts of the country. It was put on hold.

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PUBLIC MEETING

The Miami-Dade County Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Local Coordinating Board (LCB) will hold a Public Meeting on Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 1:30 PM in the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization Offices located at 150 West Flagler Street, Suite 1900 Miami, FL 33130 for the purpose of receiving input regarding unmet needs or any other area(s) that relate to the local transportation services for the TD community. All interested parties are invited to attend.

For further information, please contact the LCB Coordinator Jeannine Gaslonde at (305) 375-1739, or Jeannine.Gaslonde@mdtpo.org

It is the policy of the Miami-Dade County LCB to comply with all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The facility is accessible. For sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or materials in accessible format, please call (305) 375-1881 at least five business days in advance.

HAPPY
Labor Day
★ ★ ★

**Closed Monday, Sept. 5th
in observance of Labor Day**

CLASSIFIED AND OBITUARY DEADLINES

CLASSIFIED ADS

PUBLICATION DEADLINE

Monday, Sept. 5th Friday, Sept. 2nd at 6:00 PM
Tuesday, Sept. 6th Friday, Sept. 2nd at 4:30 PM

OBITUARIES

PUBLICATION DEADLINE

Monday, Sept. 5th Sunday, Sept. 4th at 4:30 PM
Tuesday, Sept. 6th Sunday, Sept. 4th at 5:30 PM

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