



# MEDICAL SCHOOL APPROVED

## Board of Governors cast 15-1 vote in favor of proposal

**BY C. JOEL MARINO**  
Content Editor

TALLAHASSEE – Students cheered, administrators hugged one another and University supporters rose to their feet in a wave of applause as the Board of Governors approved the establishment of an FIU medical school with a 15-1 vote at its March 23 meeting, an anticipated decision made at the very end of a four-hour session.

“This is probably the most historic moment in the history of not just the University, but in the history of the state,” an exuberant Modesto A. Maidique, FIU’s president, told *The Beacon* after the news had been announced. “Yes, we had to wait a while for the confirmation, but it was worth it.”

The medical school proposal has been on the board’s agenda since 2003, although Maidique has said in the past that the initiative had been in the planning stages for at least a decade before that.

Since then, both Maidique and his colleagues (including former Provost Mark Rosenberg, who was present at the meeting as the BOG’s new Chancellor and a non-voting member) have worked on several drafts of the request, the last version submitted at a meeting held in spring of 2005.

“We’ve been working a long time on all of this, so of course the decision is exciting news,” said Interim Provost Ronald Berkman.

Although Berkman said that much lobbying had been done in preparation for this meeting, the nearly unanimous vote still took him by surprise.

“I didn’t know what to expect coming here. We had an idea of what was going to happen, but these results are just a delight,”



**CLEAR!:** President Modesto A. Maidique gets a hug from Providence Okoye, vice president of Student Organizations Council, upon learning the Board of Governor’s 15-1 approval decision. **CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON**

he said.

The one dissenting vote came from board member and former Florida State University President J. Stanley Marshall, who is one of board’s newest governors.

“New medical schools won’t turn out fully qualified doctors for at least 12 years,” Marshall said during a discussion period before the vote. “There are underprivileged people in South Florida who need medical care and they can’t wait 12 years for it.”

Marshall acknowledged the current shortage of physicians in Florida, which has been the main reasoning behind the opening of a medical program by both FIU and the University of Central Florida.

However, he maintained that a better solution would be to expand doctoral residencies in existing programs like those in the University of Florida or the University of South Florida.

Marshall also blasted the continual affirmation by both Maidique and University of Central Florida President John Hitt that the new schools would bring about great economic growth to their communities and the state.

“Economic development is important, but we’re not an economy board, we’re an educational board,” he said.

Despite his oppositions, he nevertheless gave his dissenting vote with a smile,

congratulating the universities and wishing them the best of luck.

Another avid opponent was Zach Zachariah, a board member who has consistently questioned the logic behind the school petitions at several BOG meetings.

“I have never heard of a shortage of doctors. As soon as the universities began asking for a program, the shortage was born,” he said.

However, Zachariah shocked those in attendance when he promised to cast a favorable vote after being assured that the expansion of current residency programs

See **MEDICAL**, page 2

## Candidates prepare for elections

**BY BETSY MARTINEZ AND ANA SANCHEZ**  
Beacon Staff

The Student Government Associations at Biscayne Bay Campus and University Park have planned events that will allow students to become familiar with the candidates running for office in this year’s elections.

At BBC there are an unprecedented three presidential candidates: Zachary Trautenberg, the current SGA financial chair, Lemar Linton, the current president and Camilo A. Silva, a current lower division representative. While at UP, Alfonso “Alfie” Leon, representative-at-large, is running unopposed.

In past years, the number of presidential candidates running at UP has been higher than those of BBC.

“Over the past year people considering running for president [at UP] might feel that they don’t have the time or didn’t feel that they were ready. Maybe they want to wait another year,” said Charles Andrews, Campus Life and Orientation director.

Brent Maximin, the current vice-president at BBC who is also running for re-election, prepares for campaigning and wants people to know that students are working toward making SGA more visible at BBC.

“We want to up the bar,” Maximin said. “We’re

trying to shed the image that students at BBC don’t care as much.”

Candidates will campaign March 29 through April 5.

According to Leon, students at UP will get the full campaigning experience; he encourages students to vote.

“Freshmans will get to experience the campaigning process and even though I am running uncontested, I intend to campaign to get students to vote. We want students to know that SGA cares about their concerns,” Leon said.

At UP, the competition has shifted from the presidential ticket to representative-at-large.

“There are some [representative-at-large] candidates who are in the same Greek organization and it’s going to be interesting to see how those organizations are going to vote,” said Travis Stokes, former SGA special events coordinator.

Maximin, like other candidates, urges students to hit the polls.

“There’s no reason not to come out and vote because the competition is there ... the choices are there,” Maximin said.

*For a full list of the 2006 SGA candidates for both campuses turn to page two.*

## F.Y.I.

### SGA Election Events

**Monday, March 27**

**Know Your Vote**

**12 p.m. – 2 p.m. GC Pit**

**Know Your Vote**

**12 p.m. – 2 p.m. Panther Square, BBC**

**Tuesday, March 28**

**Chillin’ with the Candidates**

**2 p.m. – 3 p.m. GC Atrium**

**Know Your Candidate**

**10:30 a.m. in Panther Square, BBC**

**Wednesday, March 29**

**Meet the Candidates/Candidate Debate**

**GC Pit 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Meet the Candidates/Candidate Debate**

**12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre, BBC**

**Election Dates:**

**Tuesday & Wednesday, April 4 & 5**



# THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

## MONDAY • MARCH 27

**Haitian Student Organization Movie Night:** 8 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre (BBC)  
**Panther Rage General Meeting:** 4 p.m., GC 140 (UP)

## TUESDAY • MARCH 28

**SPC General Elections:** 3:30 p.m., GC 243 (UP)  
**SOC General Meeting:** 5:30 p.m., GC 150 (UP)  
**Women's Center presents Guerrilla Girls on Tour:** 7 p.m., Women's Center (UP)  
**Kappa Alpha Phi & Zeta Phi Silver present Silver Screen Dream movie night "Crash" (Matt Dillon, Terrence Howard):** 8 p.m., University Park Apartment Building A (UP)

## WEDNESDAY • MARCH 29

**Student Government Association Meeting:** 3:30 p.m., WUC Ballroom A (BBC)  
**Service for Peace Corps Meeting:** 5:30 p.m., WUC 159 (BBC)  
**Kappa Alpha Phi and SOC presents 2006 Greek Auction and Stroll off Competition hosted by DJ Reconn:** 8 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)  
**"The Garden of Eden" Caribbean Students Dance Team Auction:** 7 p.m., GC Ballroom (UP)  
**SPC Films Cinema Wednesdays presents "Scarface" (Al Pacino) (Dress-up Movie):** 8 p.m., GC 140 (UP)  
**Resident Hall Association Meeting:** 9 p.m., University Park Towers Lounge (UP)

## THURSDAY • MARCH 30

**Department of International Relations Lecture:** 7 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre (BBC)  
**Haitian Students Organization Meeting:** 7 p.m., WUC Panther Square (BBC)  
**SPC BBC Comedy Show featuring Owen Smith and Tim Young:** 9:30 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre (BBC)

## FRIDAY • MARCH 31

**Haitian Students Association Compa Night:** 8 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)  
**Next Gen Film Festival Selection at the Wolf:** 7 p.m., The Wolfsonian (1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL)

- Compiled by Reuben Pereira

# School expected to open Fall 2008

From MEDICAL, page 1

would still be on the Legislature's agenda.

The board's final decision was submitted in the form of a resolution drafted by member Sheila McDevitt.

The document listed several factors that had been taken into consideration before the vote, followed by seven courses of action that the board would try to follow.

Among these points: the promise that no funding would be sought for the schools until the 2007 Legislative Session; a continual search for economic aid toward under funded enrollment programs at the existing medical schools; and the quick submittal of the resolution along with each university's economic findings to the Legislature.

"It hasn't been easy getting here, but this resolution will help everything get easier from now on," Maidique said.

As they wait for the vote to be taken up to the Legislature, Berkman said the next step would be to strengthen the University's basic science courses while

getting the public health program fully accredited.

He also said that funds like FIU patron Philip Frost's recently announced \$40 million donation (one of the largest single donations in the University's history) will be disbursed as soon as the legislature gives a positive vote. To date, FIU has collected an estimated \$70 million in donations.

However, the next all important step is persuading the state legislature to spend \$250 million over 12 years for the school, and then more than \$20 million to build and maintain it.

Deals with Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Miami Children's Hospital and possible ties with Mercy and Baptist hospitals are also in the works, with many of the hospitals' CEOs and presidents in attendance at the actual meeting.

The school is expected to open for the Fall semester of 2008 with a graduating class in Spring 2012.

"We're ready for what's coming ahead. This has been a significant accomplishment for us, but that doesn't mean the work is done," Berkman said.

# F.Y.I.

## SGA Candidates (UP)

**President & Vice President**  
Alfonso Leon  
Providence Okoye

**Arts & Sciences**  
Charlene Collazo

**Business**  
Michael Jadoo  
Aviva Rose-Avila

**Rep. At Large**  
Ryun Alli  
Robert Borgmann  
Marbely Hernandez  
Arthur Meyer  
Michelle Oria  
Tapeka Pringle  
Jennifer Ruiz

**CHUA**  
Bidlose Olivier  
Jose L. Torres

**Education**  
Ralph Delgado

**Graduate**  
Shawna McNair

**Honors**  
Rocio Perez

**Housing**  
Ebe Mezzanotte  
Emanuel Washington

**Law**  
Maria Garcia

**Lower Division**  
Wolfgang Acevedo  
Paige LaPointe  
Tomas Martinelli

## SGA Candidates (BBC)

**President**  
Zachary Trautenberg  
Lemar Linton  
Camilo A. Silva

**Vice President**  
Brent Maximin  
Pamela St. Fleur  
Vanessa Robinson

**Broward**  
Andrew Doblinger

**Arts & Sciences**  
Maha Berg

**Rep. At Large**  
Gabriel Labrador Jr.  
Fabrice Octave  
Katiana Saintable

**Housing**  
Jessika Serrano

**Hospitality**  
Andre BrathwHoaitte

**Journalism & Mass Communications**  
Steven Ramirez

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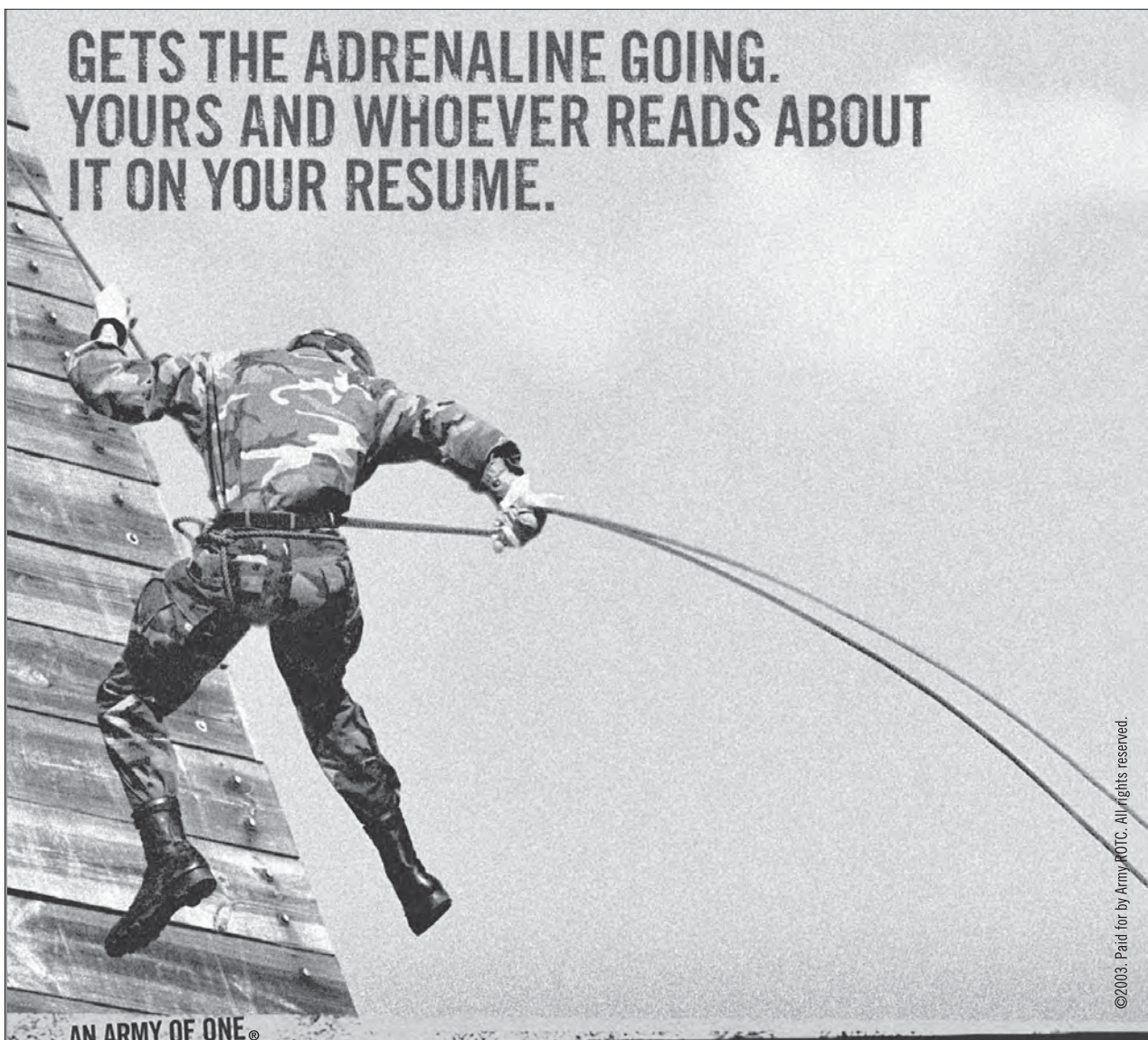
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# Campus organizations confident after budget hearings

BY REUBEN PEREIRA  
Staff Writer

After a month of undergoing its annual budget hearing and deliberation process, the Student Government Association at University Park has come to a conclusion as to where and how they will be allocating their budget for the upcoming academic year.

Although most student organizations will not know the decisions made by SGA for another two weeks, many are confident of getting budget increases for the upcoming fiscal year.

SGA usually conducts its hearings and deliberations every Spring semester during which various University-wide and campus-based organizations propose a budget for the next academic year.

The decisions made by the voting council of SGA, includes President Alex Prado; Vice President Christine Denton and Comptroller Nancy Cadavid.

Prado stated that he was very confident on the decisions made this year.

"I think, for the most part, the hearings went pretty much as we expected. The organizations came out and gave good presentations," Prado said. "Some of them were very well organized and put together."

During the budget hearing process, organi-

zations are given between 10 to 15 minutes to present their case to the voting body of the SGA and persuade the members why they need the budget they are asking for.

Once the hearings conclude, the SGA voting body takes a look at the money they have to allocate and the money SGA allocated to a particular organization during the previous academic year.

Cadavid stated that the \$ 7.5 million SGA budget that comes from students' Activities and Services fee needs to be spent wisely and that's where the deliberation process comes in.

"We take into account who needs what and how much, and then we sit down and discuss who needs the money the most," Cadavid said.

Of the student organizations on campus, the largest share of the Activities and Services fee goes to the Student Programming Council, an organization that programs comedy shows, concerts, movies and other campus entertainment activities for students.

SPC President Bill Buchanan was very satisfied with SPC's proposal to SGA and believes that the hearings went very well.

"I think that our proposal will be fulfilled by the fact that we will get the money we asked for certain events," Buchanan



**Nancy Cadavid, SGA Comptroller**

**We take into account who needs what and how much, then we sit down and discuss who needs the money the most.**

said. "What I do know is that our budget will be fine when it comes to doing what we have to do for the students."

Buchanan stated that SPC's budget proposal was very itemized and organized dealing with budgets for each committee in the council and that he was very pleased with the way the current SGA administration was dealing with the process.

"I believe SGA is really working hard towards dealing out the money in the best ways they can," Buchanan said. "And I do think we will receive as much as we asked for."

Panther Rage Presi-

dent Carlton Ng also believes that his organization will be receiving a boost in the academic year.

Ng asserted that the school spirit at games needs to be increased and the only way to get that done is through publicity.

"We will be having many games off-campus next year, Ng said. We really need the extra funding to promote these events and with our present budget, it isn't enough to really promote FIU."

Ng admits that their proposal presentation didn't go as well as they

expected it to but they nevertheless expect a budget increase to involve more promotions for University sports teams such as baseball, basketball and soccer.

"I think the question isn't whether we'll get an increase but how much," Ng said.

Members of Homecoming, which organizes most of its events in the Fall semester, were confident of an increase.

Alex Ravelo, assistant director of Homecoming stated that his organization put down everything they thought was needed and recognized that the presentation went pretty well.

"We proposed an increase and I think that there is a good possibility that we will get the increase because of the things we have proposed," Ravelo said. "We want to take more con-

trol of Panther Prowl and want to bring a big time comedian in the Fall."

Cadavid admitted that every organization proposes an increase and expects to have an increased budget.

She stated that in order to come to a decision, SGA looks to see who needs the increase the most, who isn't using the money responsibly, who has more than they require and who will gain the most.

"We review their proposals in past years and see if they used the money they were allocated wisely," she said.

The SGA is expected to send out the results of organizations' proposals within the next two weeks after the deliberation process has been approved by Rosa L. Jones, vice president of Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education.

## The Department of Housing and Residential Life would like to recognize the Student Leaders listed below for all the work they have done

The job you have is a very difficult one, a job that you all do with passion and class. We hope you realize how important you are and the impact you have on students' lives. It is sincerely appreciated.

### Thanks for being wonderful HRL Student Leaders!

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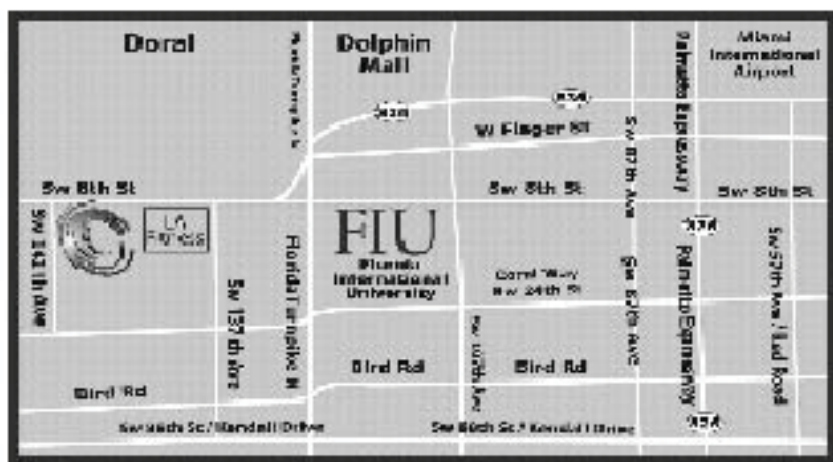


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## Maximin urges students to get involved

BY JOSE MAYA  
Contributing Writer

The Biscayne Bay Campus Student Government Association current vice-president and vice presidential candidate for the 2006-2007 term, Brent Maximin, sat down with *The Beacon* to explain his plans for the remainder of his term as SGA vice president, the importance of student representation and improvements at BBC.

**Q:** Why did you decide to run for an important position that expresses the concerns of students?

**A:** I didn't know who my student government leaders were; something that worried me. And I knew they probably had to make important decisions for students periodically.

I wanted to be a voice of representation for the students and be involved in an activity where I can influence faculty or other key FIU personnel.

Also, at times the administration doesn't tell students as much information as they should.

**Q:** What are your goals as SGA vice president for the rest of the Spring semester?

**A:** I am planning on improving the general appearance of Academic I and Academic II



**IN CHARGE:** BBC Student Government Association Vice President Brent Maximin urges students to vote during the upcoming elections taking place April 4 and 5. **MARISA FIALHO/THE BEACON**

so that students, faculty and visitors appreciate the campus. SGA is in the process of ordering artificial palm trees for both buildings; these palm trees will be placed inside the buildings. I'm also planning a big public relations campaign for SGA, so

that students can learn about the organization and decide if they would like to join some time in the future.

**Q:** What do you think BBC needs to improve?

**A:** The campus needs to offer more classes. Although

we are looking forward to the return of the nursing program and some business classes, we are also looking forward to the conclusion of the new marine biology building.

**Q:** Do you have any nicknames?

**A:** Bretless, in Trinidad where I'm from, it means to be straight to the point.

**Q:** Do you have any hobbies, interests or talents?

**A:** I love to watch and play soccer. I also love movies and I'm actually organizing my own DVD collection. I love to relax and read the newspaper, but I have no time for television.

**Q:** Why do you think students should join SGA?

**A:** Students will be fully aware of all University-wide issues and they will have a chance to become involved in an important organization where they will meet many important people.

Elections take place April 4 and 5 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. There will be one voting booth in Academic I, and one in the library.

Maximin, a junior majoring in psychology, said that if re-elected he plans to continue carrying out his ideas for a brighter future at BBC. SGA meets every Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. in the Campus Life office, located in the Wolfe University Center in room 141.

All students are welcomed to listen in or voice their opinions. For more information students can visit [www.fiu.edu/~sga/bbc/](http://www.fiu.edu/~sga/bbc/).

## Students stay active on campus late at night

BY SAMUEL HYPOLITE  
Contributing Writer

After the last class is released around 9 p.m., the Biscayne Bay Campus is not left in the dark.

Issac Georges, a junior, finds it a great place to be at night and leaves his home to relieve monotony on the soccer, basketball or tennis fields.

"I am a football player, yet when I feel bored at home, I like to come to BBC when the air is fresh to play basketball," Georges said.

But the fresh night air and a passion for sports aren't the only factors keeping students on campus late at night.

Projects and homework assignments keep students at BBC, too.

However, after the academic work is complete, some students, like junior Anya James, prefer to leave BBC because there is no place like home.

"I do stay in the school after hours when I have a project to do or want to work in a group with some of my friends, but I usually like to go home because I feel more comfortable and more relaxed at home," James said.

In the spring, the sun begins to set at about 6:30 p.m., but BBC seems to have darkness under control.

Students are seen walking around campus both day and night.

For the most part, students are also seen walking the halls of BBC at night because they're at work during



**John Morris, Information Center employee**

The Wolfe University Center is one of the buildings that has most recreational activities and that makes it imperative to stay open late. It has an information center that makes it important to be available to students who need information at a certain time.

the day.

However, students like Jay Souza, don't mind being on campus at night because of the class schedule.

"Unlike me, I have three classes in the morning and I have no problem taking one class at night," said Souza, a graduate student.

Although many activities are shut down at BBC by 6 p.m., many others remain open later at night.

Most of the offices on campus close between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., but some are open until after 10 p.m.

For example, in Academic I, the latest time the financial aid and administration offices are opened until is 7 p.m.

The Express, one of BBC's food shops, is open until 7:45 p.m.

And the computer lab in the same building remains opened until 10 p.m., but the number of students seen in the lab decreases as the night sets in.

"We have very few students in the

lab between 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.," said Williams Priscella, a senior who work as a student assistant in the computer lab.

However, mid-terms and final exams week increase the number of students on campus, according to Priscella.

According to senior John Morris, an information center employee, the Wolfe University Center is the place to be after dark.

"The WUC is one of the buildings that has more recreational activities and that makes it imperative to stay open late," Morris said.

The information center is one of the most useful resources at the WUC during late night hours.

"[The information center] is important to students who need information at a certain time," Morris said.

The WUC also has a gym upstairs that is open until 9 p.m. and a computer lab on the second floor that

remains open until 10 p.m., according to Morris.

"We often have students who are either studying or watching television in the reception room during this time period," Morris said.

The WUC is open until 11 p.m.

However, activities at BBC continue even later.

The BBC library is one of the most visited centers for recreation and remains opened until 1 a.m. on weekdays.

"We probably have that much more students at night because there is less pressure of the class schedule on them," said Austin Bovt, a library employee.

Even at this time, it can be difficult to find an available computer in both the first and second floor of the library.

Group meetings and individual studies are commonly observed at the library late at night.

Bovt said that there are more students at night rather than in the morning at the library.

Late-night students are more serious about college, according to Bovt.

"People who come to study here at the library seem to be the ones who are more concerned about school and those who come to use the computer for recreational purposes," said Bovt, a junior.



# OPINION

Harry Coleman Editor in Chief • Christopher Necuze Opinion Editor

THE BEACON | Editorial

## *With medical school approved, new questions arise*

On November 18, 2004, University President Modesto Maidique traveled to Tallahassee, along with a contingent of hopefuls, to propose to the Florida Board of Governors a bold initiative to start a public medical school in South Florida. What would ensue over the next year and a half is a battle unlike any other FIU has seen in its history.

Almost a year and a half later, FIU finally get the approval it was looking for. In a historic vote, the Board of Governors granted the University permission to go ahead and build its medical school. The decision was almost unanimous (15-1), with only one dissenting opinion.

The lone dissent came from former Florida State University President J. Stanley Marshall, who argued that the community could not wait for a medical school to be established to fill the need for physicians in South Florida.

As FIU now begins to prepare for the next leg in its journey to become one of the nation's more traditional universities, some troubling questions remain unanswered. Firstly, let it be clear that we applaud the efforts of Maidique, who has lead the University through an unprecedented



**SUCCESS:** FIU President Modesto A. Maidique and University of Central Florida President John Hitt share a congratulatory moment after learning of the long-awaited approval of the medical school proposal. Both universities must wait one year before they begin to campaign for funds from the state. **Chris Cutro/The Beacon**

period of growth, culminating in his medical school proposal.

First and foremost are the inevitable questions of funding. FIU has accrued an estimated \$70 million in private donations. While impressive, we wonder how the

University will find the remaining \$180 million in the estimated quarter-billion dollar price tag of this endeavor. All that has come from the Board of Governors is the go ahead. There has yet to be any allocation of state funds so,

as far as we know, the state may require that FIU swallow the remaining bulk of the costs.

For a university that – as Maidique has made clear in several interviews – is cash-starved, the last thing it needs is to scrounge

another \$180 million. But this is the reality FIU may face should the state fail to apportion the necessary funds. Where, at that point, would these funds come from? With a brand new law school, FIU is undoubtedly milking every dollar for all it's worth.

Most students now will not be around to see the medical school in full fruition. In fact, with the final facilities scheduled for completion around 2025, it is the children of current students who will most likely benefit from this school in its completed form.

This leaves the question: should the University fail to find the necessary funds from an exterior source, like the State, would the burden then fall on students' pocketbooks?

Beside the students, who will undoubtedly suffer financially in any efforts of expansion by University, what about the other inadequately funded entities, such as several departments within the College of Arts and Sciences for starters?

Granted, a medical school will undeniably add an FIU degree more prestige and clout than ever before. However, we must differentiate between its worth and its cost.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Mega-churches not mass marketing

I do not attend a mega-church, but contributing writer Ruth Barrocas assumes a great deal of things about these churches that are simply not true (*The Beacon*, March 6). She has every right to say that she doesn't believe these huge churches are effective for believers, but some of her claims are outrageous.

First off, she gives the example of Rick Warren and Saddleback in O.C., California. Later on in her article she says: "Mass marketing faith, however, and abusing it for monetary function is not the path to righteousness." So, is she implying that Warren is mass marketing faith and abusing it for the monetary function? What sort of monetary function? Money? Did you know that Warren does not receive any salary from Saddleback?

Furthermore, all of the royalties from Warren's book, "The Purpose Driven Life" go straight to the church instead of to his pocket. Then what exactly is he gaining by 'mass marketing faith?' It sounds to me that you're saying he's in it for the money.

I am not claiming that mega-

churches are perfect or that there aren't people who do abuse so-called "faith" for their own gain. Barrocas however claims that all one finds in large churches are "nothing but false friends and random general acquaintances." How do you know that?

And on the flip-side, just because a church is small doesn't mean you won't find false friends and acquaintances. You are pointing the finger at Pentecostal and Evangelical leaders without even knowing who they are or how God is using them.

Small churches have their benefits and purpose, but that does not mean that churches with over x-amount of members are automatically "a simple marketing ploy in the way of religion." Please examine the facts before coming to such conclusions.

- Julie Sierra  
Senior  
English Education  
major

## Tranquilizer guns are a safe and effective alternative for police

BY MARIO MENDOZA  
Contributing Writer

The methods employed by police departments to battle crime have always caused a great deal of controversy. Police officers work under a great amount of stress. When a policeman stops an automobile, for example, it is impossible for the officer to know whether the subject is an inoffensive driver, a drug dealer or someone whose had a bad day.

There are officers who protect and serve as well as those who blur the line between duty and crime.

In recent years, police departments have increased their use of taser guns. Even though the electric shock can paralyze the alleged perpetrator immediately, this method has been highly questioned as being violent and dangerous. Cases involving the use of tasers on young children and senior citizens have occurred in the past year in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. One option that is less lethal than

pistol firearms or tasers are tranquilizer guns.

The term "tranquilizer guns" is applied to air powered rifles with sedative darts that are used for shooting large animals, such as polar bears and lions, for research purposes or removal if the animal has entered an area inhabited by humans.

Pistol type firearms carrying tranquilizer darts also exist; the shooting range varies between five and 50 feet in distance.

In an age where terrorism has become a possible threat, police departments must proceed with caution and must apprehend terrorists before they commit deadly acts without hurting civilians and other bystanders.

A perfect example is the tragic death of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes in the London Subway, the day after the July 7, 2005 terrorist attack. Scotland Yard ordered de Menezes, who was running to catch the train, to stop; somehow he didn't hear them and the officers opened fire fatally wounding de

Menezes. In this case, if a tranquilizer firearm had been used the outcome would have been different.

The sedative darts would have stopped de Menezes without killing him and the case would have been closed as a misunderstanding. If the person running would have been a real terrorist and had he been stopped with tranquilizers, he would have been caught alive and questioned about the whereabouts of possible accomplices.

Using tranquilizer firearms will reduce the risk of wrongful killings of innocent civilians and also the subsequent lawsuits that police departments face in these situations.

Police officers are trained to handle danger and avoid civilian deaths, but they still make mistakes. The use of tranquilizer firearms will lower the margin of error. Police departments, FBI and other agencies should consider implementing the use of tranquilizer firearms as a safer alternative for fighting crime.



# U.S. in difficult position with Iran and North Korea

## Countries pose threat due to their nuclear policies

BY LUIS H. GARCIA  
Contributing Writer

Lately, Iran and North Korea have been scaring the hell out of everyone, as they are both emerging as possible nuclear threats. Relations with both nations have not been smooth thus far and with tensions mounting, the United States is in a very difficult position negotiating with the two countries.

Looking at both nations, it is easy to see that handling relations with both Iran and North Korea requires extreme care, but which is the greater threat?

So far on the Iranian front, there has been criticism rising from within Iran regarding its nuclear policy. Former President Mohammad Khatami has criticized the current direction of the Iranian government and suggested a return to building relations with the West.

Iran seems to be giving off mixed signals with its nuclear affairs. On one hand, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei strongly insisted that that Iran would not back down. On the other hand, however, Iran requested to continue talks in Moscow, days after they had rejected Russia's proposal to end the standoff.

At first, Iran was very fierce in defending their nuclear program. Criticism from the Iranian people and the change of the status of the talks with the United Nations, might signal a shift. The ayatollah, however, has the final say in what Iran does and so far, still holds that "a nuclear program is our irrefutable right."

The situation in Iran has the potential to dramatically affect Middle Eastern affairs. With tensions already mounting from the United States involvement in Iraq and the continuing conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the possible addition of nuclear weapons can deteriorate the situation further.

North Korea has been more adamant in its stance. Currently, North Korea has been facing a squeeze on its funds due to United States involvement in blacklisting the Macao bank due to alleged counterfeiting and money laundering, an act the United States insists is unrelated to the nuclear talks.

This restriction on North Korean funds could be an



**MIXED SIGNALS:** Although Ayatollah Khamenei has insisted that Iran will not back down from trying to reach its nuclear goals, Iran has requested to continue talks with Moscow. **KRT Campus**

attempt by the United States to put pressure on North Korea to disarm. While such a measure makes sense, it could be dangerous as well.

South Korea, also involved in the talks, has already urged the United States to watch its words. Even some in the State Department have had some reservations in how the United States is handling North Korean relations.

Another thing to consider is that North Korea is believed to have enough plutonium to create eight to 12 nuclear weapons. Iran, on the other hand, could still be years away from creating its first.

Nuclear talks with North Korea have been deadlocked and recent reports confirmed that North Korea has launched two short-ranged test missiles within its borders. This act could very well be interpreted as a warning because the missiles fired were capable of housing a nuclear device.

North Korea has been accusing the United States of using the financial restrictions as a means to hinder the nuclear talks. While North Korea did

say they would abandon its nuclear program to receive aid and security guarantees, no progress has yet been made.

At the moment, it would appear that North Korea is the greater threat – since it continues to be angered by the current U.S. policy and may already have nuclear capabilities. On top of that, relations with North Korea have already not gone very smoothly for the past two and a half years.

Iran is still a threat mainly due to its already hostile political climate. With U.S. soldiers still fighting in Iraq, the possibility of weapons in Iran could mean much more action to be considered and more anger from dissidents.

With pressure mounting on both sides, the United States must be extremely careful. Though the United States functions as a two-party system, there must be unity and wisdom in handling this situation, especially with North Korea. Either way, regardless of who is the bigger threat to international safety, further actions must be weighed carefully and acted on decisively.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**Do you think that the Miami-Dade County Youth Fair will affect the parking situation at FIU?**

- Yes – The parking situation here is bad as it is – it seems like it will only get worse.

**72%**

- No – The University has made sufficient improvements to its parking facilities.

**12%**

- I don't care whether it gets worse or not. The Youth Fair is worth it.

**16%**

Total participants: 86

Cast your vote at [www.beaconnewspaper.com](http://www.beaconnewspaper.com)

## WINNER & LOSER

### WINNER



**The English:** The Post Office Homephone survey revealed that 40 percent of British men and 27 percent of British women admit to making phone calls in the nude. Even more surprising is that they make these calls in public phone booths.

### LOSER



**Classical Musicians:** One in four musicians use performance enhancing beta-blockers to calm their nerves and improve their performance on stage.

## QUOTATIONATION

*"I'm troubled when I hear — deeply troubled when I hear that a person who has converted away from Islam may be held to account."*

– **George W. Bush**, president of the United States, on Abdul Rahman, an Afghan man facing the death penalty for converting to Christianity. The Bush administration has been pressuring Afghan president Hamid Karzai, to release the man on grounds of religious freedom.

*"I will testify, Zerkin, whether you want it or not."*

– **Zacarias Moussaoui**, Al-Qaeda terrorist, on his decision to testify despite Gerald Zerkin's, one of his lawyers, suggestions.

*"We were doing this to inflate our earnings, and I don't think we wanted to show people what we were doing."*

– **Andrew Fastow**, former Enron Corp. finance chief, on running financial partnerships that helped the company hide as much as hundreds of millions of dollars in losses.

*"It's a small number, but it's real."*

– **Robert M. Nelson**, an intensive-care physician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, on a warning from federal drug officials that said Ritalin leads a small number of children to have hallucinations.

*"We've been working a long time on all of this, so of course the decision is exciting news."*

– **Ronald Berkman**, interim provost, on approval of the medical school by the Board of Governor's on March 23.

## SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off in GC 210 at the University Park campus, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to [beaconopinion@yahoo.com](mailto:beaconopinion@yahoo.com). Letters must include the writer's full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words.



# UNDER THE SEA



## Scuba diving class more than ocean explorations

*This is part one of a five-part series that features fun classes available to students.*

**BY REUBEN PEREIRA**  
Staff Writer

Brett Castellucio is a junior majoring in architecture that, like many other students in his field, often stays until 3 a.m. in the University Park architecture labs. Looking for a relaxing alternative to his busy schedule, Castellucio learned that the University offered a scuba diving class and jumped at the opportunity to enroll.

"I enrolled in the class because I thought it would be something fun and at the same time, I'd be able to learn something useful from it," Castellucio said. "It's a more relaxed class and it isn't as hard as some of my other classes."

The Basic Scuba Diving Course (PEN 2136) has been offered at FIU since 1996, as part of the Dive Safety Program under the direction of Dive and Safety officer Robert Weisman. The program has represented the University at several science and diving conferences and has been designated as one of the top 10 active marine research institutions in the United States.

Weisman, who also instructs the Basic Scuba Diving Course, stated that the basic course is the first step toward becoming a certified diver.

"Students enrolled in this class not only learn to dive properly but also learn the physics, physiology and medical aspects of the hazards of diving and how to prevent it," Weisman said.

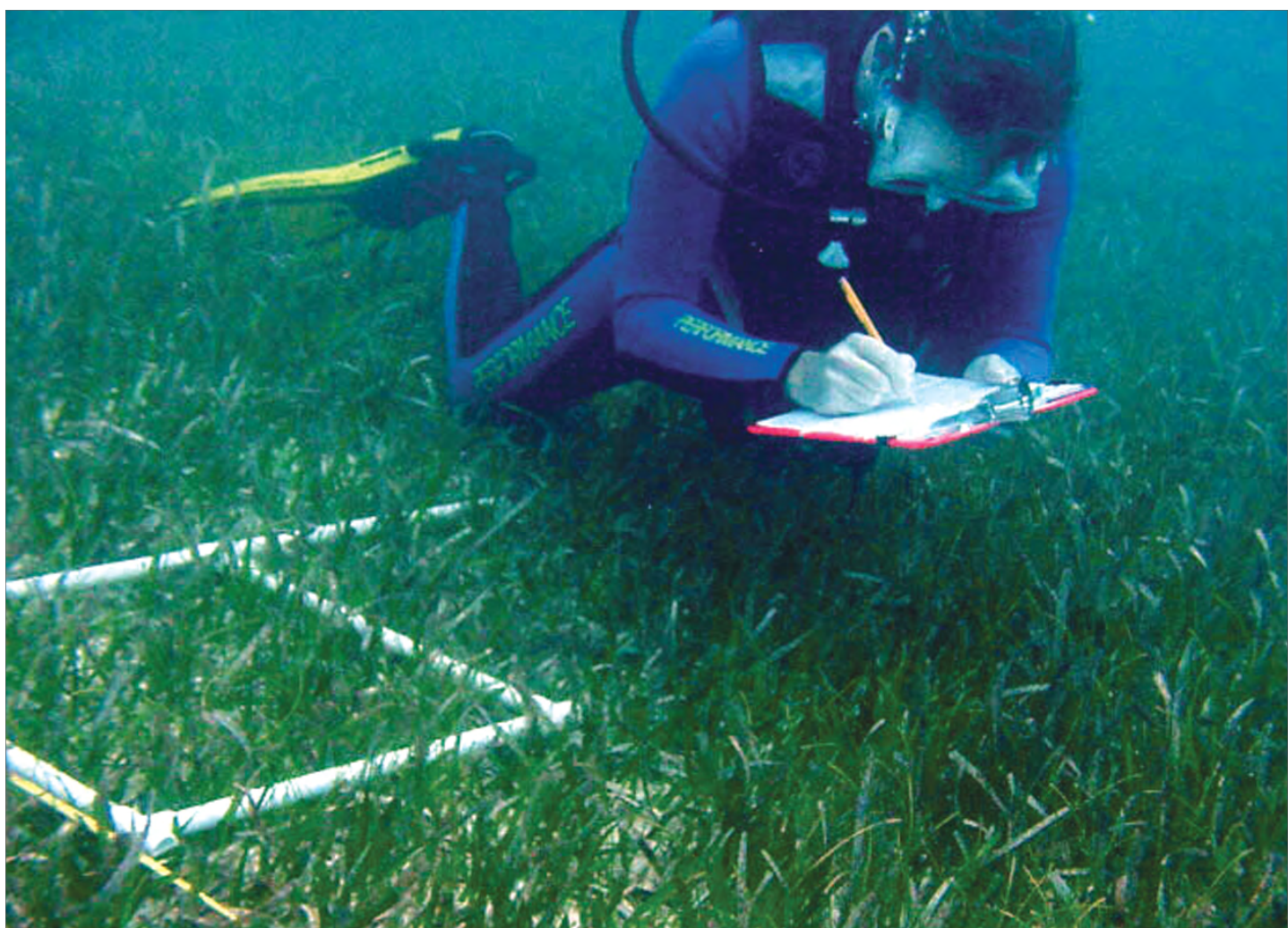
Students who enroll in the basic class also have to enroll in a corresponding lab class (PEN 2132) where they receive practical training and perform six ocean dives. Upon completion, students become certified as professional scuba divers.

Apart from the basic class, the Dive Safety Program also offers an advanced scuba training class, which is a combination of three certification courses and includes dives to depths of 100 feet, exploring shipwrecks and night dives.

Junior Natalie Quinn hasn't had the chance to take the class but admits that enrolling in such a class would be a very rewarding experience.

"Although I think I would be a little nervous at first, it'd be really cool to take a scuba diving class," Quinn said. "I'd be able to get some expertise and certification – something I have been interested in for quite some time now."

Junior Patrick Medina enrolled in the course after first hearing about it in the



**AQUATIC DIVE:** For over 10 years, scuba diving courses have been offered to FIU students, opening the door to becoming a certified diver and learning a variety of techniques that will enhance diving safety. **PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ROBERT WEISMAN**

Fall semester of 2005.

"A friend of mine told me that this was an interesting class where I could learn a lot of new things as well as really enjoy myself," Medina said.

Sophomore Lucas Araujo decided to take this class along with Medina, whom he had known from the previous semester. He admits that the class was more than he expected it to be.

"We had taken another class together in the Fall semester and decided to enroll in this class together," Araujo said. "When I enrolled in the class, I expected us to go to the ocean and come back. I didn't expect to learn as much as I did."

The theory class, which meets every Monday from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Pharmed Arena, goes through the theory of dive safety and teaches students about the different marine creatures and hazards in the ocean as well as the various misconceptions about them.

Students are graded on their performances in four quizzes, a mid-term examination and a final, like most classes taught at FIU.

The lab class, however, is vastly dif-

ferent. The lab, offered on Saturdays, initially takes place at the Panther Hall Residential Quad pool and then later at the Tamiami Pool.

Students learn how to get up close with sea creatures and how to avoid getting injured. When students train, they learn how to dive and go through every possible thing they will experience in the real world. The lab class is graded on student's performances in five tests.

"They have to put on all their equipment under water in one breath, do an underwater emergency and learn how to rescue another diver," Weisman said.

"Our labs ended last week and now we go on to the real dives," Castellucio said. "We're going to go diving in the Keys so I'm really looking forward to it."



**BREATHE:** CPR is one of the safety skills taught to students dealing with potential underwater perils. **CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON**

Weisman acknowledged that most students come into the class expecting to just have fun and get an easy A.

"They might have seen Flipper, or they may want to be photographers. Some even take this class to beat the fear of the water. What they get from this class is that they learn how to dive properly in the ocean and actually become certified divers," Weisman said.



# Student furthers artistic talent

BY SARAH RODRIGUEZ  
Staff Writer

Looking back, senior Ivania Guerrero has realized she has felt pulled toward art since she was eight years old, when it was the one school subject in which she never needed assistance; it flowed from her naturally.

“I’ve known Ivania all my life, I’ve seen her paint since she was a kid. Her work is very analytical and symbolic of who she is as a person,” said her best friend Marilyn Baez.

27-year-old Guerrero, a transfer student from Miami-Dade College, is a budding artist.

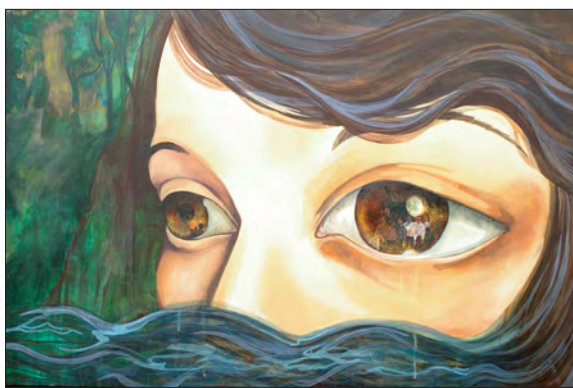
Guerrero has focused on painting and drawing as her main mediums, enjoying both so much she can hardly imagine pursuing only one.

A painting, Guerrero says, could take her as much as three weeks to complete, depending on how often she feels in the right mood to work on it, whereas finishing a drawing would only require her to dedicate a few hours. For this reason, she has about eight paintings, but a countless amount of drawings.

Guerrero has had the opportunity to participate in two art exhibits. Her very first art show and auction took place in April 2002 at the New Directions Employment and Training, a vocational school in the Miami Design District that helps children with disabilities.

Her second exhibit was the *Exposición de Arte Nicaraguense* (Nicaraguan art exposition) – held at the Teatro Towers on Eighth Street in September 2002 – in honor of the president of Nicaragua, Guerrero’s native country.

“It made me nervous because you don’t know if people will like it or even show up,” she said. “At an auction, for example, you don’t know how much they’ll bet. I was really happy when I saw they bet up to \$600. That’s a lot of money.”



#### ARTISTICALLY INCLINED:

Senior Ivania Guerrero has always felt an affinity toward drawing and painting and now is exploring a new territory of fantastical versus realistic art, moving more toward her own imagination and away from simply interpreting what she sees.

CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

Guerrero is always trying to develop and push herself as much as she can.

“I’ve seen Ivania progress since high school; she’s developed a great technique that becomes more elaborate every day,” said Guerrero’s husband Melton Diaz. “Not many people can transfer quality from drawing to painting as she does, and I think that’s what her professors like.”

Guerrero is currently undergoing a shift in her artistic style. While in the past her work has been mainly categorized as realism, now during her second semester at FIU, she is seeing a gradual change toward fantastical – dream world art. She feels her new technique allows her to go beyond the

limitations of realism.

“I felt that painting realistically was a little too stiff; now I can go beyond that,” Guerrero said.

Recently, during a feedback and critique session mandatory for all art majors, a group of her professors judged part of her collection, surprising Guerrero by being even more impressed by her drawings than by her paintings. Through their feedback, she feels that she has learned a lot.

Music serves as Guerrero’s muse; as it drones on in the background it points out the direction in which any given work should go.

See **STUDENT**, page 10

# Nostalgic TV show jogs memories

BY GEOFFREY ANDERSON JR.  
Staff Writer

With shows like VH1’s “I Love Toys” reminding viewers of their beloved childhood playthings, the media attention surrounding toys has shown just how much these diversions have evolved over time.

“Growing up, I loved playing with my toys,” said freshman Antonio Carrillo. “I always played with a G.I. Joe or Hot Wheels cars. I mean, who doesn’t remember building stuff with Legos or fighting crime with the Ninja Turtles?”

Among the oldest toys created were dolls made out of wood or stone, yo-yos and kites. These toys, particularly dolls, have been traced back thousands of years.

In the 20th century, however, toys evolved and branched out into different levels of complexity. Aside from creating typical action figures and dolls for children to play with, toy makers made toys that involved the use of problem-solving skills. The Rubik’s Cube, a popular toy in the ’80s, forced players to twist parts

of the cube in order to solve its puzzle.

“I remember my parents occasionally getting me some educational toys,” said junior Jose Boubou. “Although I loved my action figures, the Rubik’s Cube was interesting because it actually forced you to think about reaching a specific solution.”

Even with educational toys becoming popular in the 20th century, toy makers did not forget that the prime purpose for toys is entertainment. Diversions such as silly putty, legos and Barbie were all created in the 1900s and achieved much popularity among the youth.

Although plenty of students hold their childhood toys, such as the infamous Slinky, close to their hearts, this attachment has not kept them from moving on to other forms of entertainment.



**SIMPLE BUT FUN:** The Slinky is just one of the many toys commented on in nostalgia-based programs such as VH1’s “I Love Toys.”

CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

“Power Rangers and Tonka Trucks are not interesting anymore,” said sophomore Ociel Corada. “Now I have my Xbox 360 to keep me busy and entertained. Although all those old toys make me sentimental, growing up moves my attention elsewhere.”

The sudden shift in attention from toys to media has not daunted some

See **NOSTALGIC**, page 10

# LIFE!

# 5

## FIVE QUESTIONS OF INTEREST



**NAME:**  
PROVIDENCE OKOYE

**CURRENT POSITIONS:**  
SGA INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CHAIR, SOC VICE PRESIDENT

### 1. WHY DID YOU GET OUT OF BED THIS MORNING?

Well, today I had an event, the international students dinner. Whenever I have an event or meeting, I truly do not get much sleep because I am thinking about how it is going to turn out and praying it turns out well. I am glad this one did.

### 2. EXPLAIN WHAT YOU DO AT SGA.

Well, as the international students chair, I am responsible for facilitating a better relationship with students, the ISSS office and SGA. Also, our committee identifies issues, problems and concerns international students face and work to provide solutions for them. This semester we hosted the “Taste of the World” during “Welcome Week” in January, had the International Students Forum in February, and hosted the international students dinner where we had an insurance consultant explain to the students what is going on with health insurance. We continue to work on other issues such as scholarships, off-campus housing solutions among others.

### 3. IF YOU COULD SWITCH PLACES WITH ANYONE IN THE PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURE, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Providence in the future! I trust I have such an exciting life ahead of me and I am just waiting to explore it. I believe I will live a life that is pleasing in the sight of God and made useful in affecting positive change in the lives of men. I just can’t wait to experience this, but I have to.

### 4. WHAT CELEBRITY/TV PERSONALITY/SHOW MAKES YOU SWITCH THE CHANNEL IMMEDIATELY THAT YOU CANNOT STAND TO WATCH?

I just can’t stand “Sex in the City!” It does nothing but continuously breed immorality. It’s like taking something that is bad and continually doing it, numbing your conscience into thinking it is good. That is what that show does to the minds of people.

### 5. THE POSSIBILITY OF TAKING AWAY THE ARTS REQUIREMENT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS WAS RAISED BY GOV. JEB BUSH. DO YOU THINK THIS IS A GOOD IDEA OR A BAD ONE?

I think this is a very wrong thing to do, because I am a strong believer that education comes in diverse ways and not just formal teaching in classrooms. Not exposing students to the arts takes away a vital part of what molds individuals as innovators. It is expensive to keep, yes, but there are some things we have to continue to pay for in order not to drive the up and coming generation into intellectual stagnation.

- Compiled by Amanda Healy



# Old toys can yield big profits

From NOSTALGIC, page 9

students' fixations on storing their old toys.

"Although I don't play with my toys anymore, I

still keep them around the house," said junior Richard Lopez. "Even if I do not use them anymore, it is nice to have the toys around my house for nostalgic reasons."

Instead of storing toys, other students have tried selling them over the internet on auction sites such as eBay. On eBay, thousands of listings for toys can be posted or found by users – collectors are sure to find some rare items for purchase. Some toys, such as Cabbage Patch

Kids, are being sold for over \$200 while others, particularly Beanie Babies, are selling for over \$5,000.

"I think it is crazy how much money some of those toys are fetching on eBay," said freshman Gabriela Santos. "Paying over \$5,000 for a [Beanie Baby] is somewhat stupid. All that money could go to charity or be used on something useful. It's absurd how some people spend their money."

The reason for such high biddings on certain toys is their rarity. Toys such as Beanie Babies have limited production runs, resulting in few opportunities for consumers to buy them.

Many of the toys given out at fast food restaurants such as McDonalds and Burger King have limited production runs and garner many bids on auction sites, such as a McDonalds 101 Dalmatians set selling for over \$500 on eBay.

Whether toys are used for entertainment purposes or otherwise, they give children something to do and remind older generations of their fond adolescent experiences. As students continue to grow up and toys continue to evolve, many students still carry memories of childhood toys.



COURTESY PHOTO

# Music serves as artist's inspiration

From STUDENT, page 9

"It takes me to that zone," Guerrero said, "I like all kinds of music, from Dave Matthews to the [Red Hot] Chili Peppers. Usually when I listen to rock and roll, my paintings turns out more intense and energetic. When I'm listening to something like jazz, they come out more relaxed."

Once in this zone of inspiration, Guerrero naturally fills her artwork with her own ideas, imaginations and stories. But once these basics have been laid, her goal is to allow her audience to take it from there, building their own stories upon her foundation.

As she looks toward her future, Guerrero aims to finish her bachelor's and master's degrees in Art and then become a teacher at a university or magnet school.

"Many people see art as an easy 'A,'" she said. "But I want to teach students who care about it and are really there to learn."

## Oh, Snap!

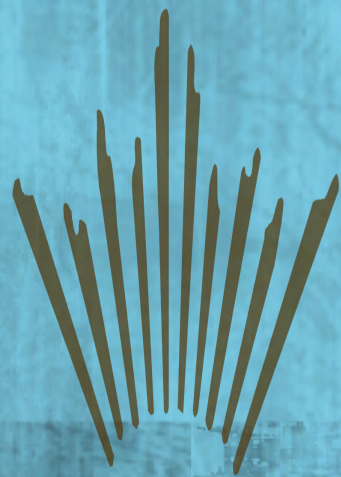
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## APRIL 11

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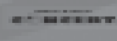
DOORS OPEN @ 6PM, SHOW STARTS @ 7PM

FIU STUDENT TICKETS (ONE TICKET PER PANTHER ID) FREE IN ADVANCE, \$5 DAY OF SHOW

PUBLIC TICKETS \$5 IN ADVANCE, \$10 DAY OF SHOW

Student tickets available in GC 2240

Public tickets available at the Pharmed Arena Box Office



## Would like to congratulate the 2005 Greek Award Winners!

**Highest IFC GPA, Spring 2005:**  
Phi Gamma Delta - 2.78

**Highest NPHC GPA,  
Spring 2005:**

Phi Beta Sigma, Fraternity Inc. - 3.29

**Highest PC GPA,  
Spring 2005:**

Delta Phi Omega - 2.93

**Highest IFC GPA,  
Fall 2005:**

Alpha Epsilon Pi - 2.88

**Highest NPHC GPA,  
Fall 2005:**

Alpha Kappa Alpha,  
Sorority Inc. - 3.47

**Highest PC GPA,  
Fall 2005:**

Delta Phi Omega - 3.01

**Outstanding Alumni Relations**

Delta Phi Epsilon  
Pi Kappa Phi

**Outstanding Campus Involvement**

Alpha Xi Delta  
Pi Kappa Phi

**Outstanding Community Service &  
Philanthropy**

Alpha Xi Delta  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

**Outstanding Public Relations**

Alpha Xi Delta  
Pi Kappa Phi

**Outstanding Recruitment Program**

Phi Mu  
Pi Kappa Phi

**Outstanding New Member Program**

Phi Sigma Sigma  
Sigma Phi Epsilon

**Outstanding Risk/Standards  
Management**

Phi Sigma Sigma  
Phi Gamma Delta

**2005 Most Improved Chapter**

Phi Gamma Delta

**2005 Sorority New Member  
of the Year**

Giselle Gutierrez  
Delta Phi Epsilon

**2005 Fraternity New Member  
of the Year**

Adrian Molina  
Sigma Phi Epsilon

**2005 Advisor of the Year**

Anna Cuba de la Fe  
Phi Sigma Sigma

**2005 Sorority President  
of the Year**

Christine Denton  
Alpha Xi Delta

**2005 Fraternity President  
of the Year**

Jorge Triay  
Pi Kappa Phi

**2005 Sorority Woman of the Year**

Brittany Juliachs  
Alpha Xi Delta

**2005 Fraternity Man of the Year**

Randy Mora  
Pi Kappa Phi

**2005 Janelle Bertot Professional  
Award of Excellence**

Dr. John Bonanno

**2005 Tony Perez Student Fraternal  
Award of Excellence**

Alexis Hamilton  
Alpha Xi Delta

**Fraternal Award of Excellence**

Alpha Xi Delta



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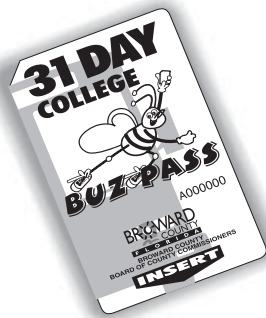
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# For Francis, everything is perfect when he's on the field

FRANCIS, from page 16

Saint Thomas or he could pack his bags and take the golden opportunity that lay in front of him.

"My sister was a little skeptical at first because she didn't want me to go," Francis said. "But she knew it was the right thing for me because I really wanted to [make it] as a baseball player ... plus the situation in Saint Thomas had gotten really bad because there was a teacher strike and the schools were closed for several months."

Francis finally decided to travel to South Florida with his four teammates and take his game to the next level. But a huge culture shock greeted him.

"It was really hard on me because I only speak English and [Hialeah] was completely dominated by people speaking Spanish," he said. "The beaches are [very] different too ... the water is too far away from where the sand starts."

Despite these setbacks and a couple of his teammates going back home because they couldn't deal with it, Francis toughed it out.

He knew he was on a mission and he was not going to let anything get in his way.

It turns out he really enjoyed his time in the United States and the way his new coaching staff helped him adjust as things were going along very smoothly his sophomore year - after spending his first year of high school in Saint Thomas.

He was leading the league in hitting until the Florida High School Athletic Association got in his way and claimed him ineligible.



**CARIBBEAN SMILE:** Transfer and St. Thomas native Akeem Francis has overcome many obstacles in his life and still keeps a positive attitude. **FIU ATHLETICS MEDIA RELATIONS PHOTO**

"I don't know what happened, it was just something with the rules that claimed I was not able to play," Francis said. "Supposedly at the time I got there, I was too late to play in the regular season."

Tragedy may have struck again, but Francis did not let it stop him. He kept pursuing his dream and ended up being one of the best players in Champag-

nat, which lead Major League Baseball scouts to come out and see him play.

But once again, things got in Francis' way and he was unable to get drafted.

"While I was being looked at by [MLB] scouts, somebody told them that I had signed to [the University of Miami], which was completely false," Francis said. "To this

day, I haven't found out who it was."

The Caribbean native rolled with the punches and moved on to Miami-Dade Community College, a place he had wanted to attend all along.

During his two years there he hit for a .423 average with six RBI and pitched over 26 innings in which he recorded fifteen strikeouts and a save.

After his first two years in college baseball were up, Francis got closer and closer to his dream of playing for FIU.

"When I first got here and started recognizing the colleges. I wanted to play for FIU ... ever since the beginning I knew this was where I wanted to be."

An exuberant Francis finally got the call from a very interested Tony Casas, who is the pitching coach and the recruiting coordinator for the FIU baseball team.

Finally, in August of 2005, Francis would get his shot to play at FIU and compete at the Division-1 level. The first thing the 5-9, 21-year-old did was call his older sister - whom he actually calls mom - and tell her the great news.

"I called her up and said, '[Jermaine], you don't need to worry about me. I could come out here naked and I have everything I need to play baseball,'" Francis said. "It's just nothing like Miami-Dade. I came into the locker room and there was all my stuff waiting for me ... I mean we get everything for free."

After all the pitfalls, shortcomings and obstacles Francis has faced, it's easy for anyone to have quit, but he remain positive throughout.

It is with that same attitude that he goes about his business today, even when his outings don't turn out as well.

"When I'm on that field, everything seems perfect," Francis said. "I focus on the game and I don't have a care in the world. All of my problems outside the field go away when I step between those lines. It's something I can't even explain."

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## Promising core of young players will lead to successful 2006-07

**WOMEN, from page 16**

Sure, you can say that turnovers accumulated because of the fast-paced offense the Golden Panthers ran to make up for their size, but I attribute it to a lack of leadership. Although she had a solid season, Bouderra committed over five turnovers per game in-route to a - 4.4 turnover margin for the team.

In turn, many teams like Western Kentucky and Middle Tennessee brought heavy full-court presses that rattled Bouderra and Ciglar. In their 1-4 record versus the top two teams of the Sun Belt Conference, FIU's two point guards combined to average nearly 12 turnovers per game.

The other supposed leader this season was Makela, an area where Makela strikingly came up short. After averaging 11 points and five rebounds last season, the Finnish guard only put up eight points and two rebounds per game. Surely a knee

injury early in the season contributed to her low numbers, but her presence on the court was almost invisible.

I didn't see that killer instinct and confidence a leader is supposed to have, especially down the stretch.

All in all, though, the season was a successful one for FIU. Even though it was supposed to downgrade from last year, the team persevered and went on to an impressive 16-13 record and a 9-5 record in conference play. The team advanced all the way to the third round of the Sun Belt tournament and was invited to the WNIT - which last year's team failed to do.

Thanks to a promising core of young players, I look forward to a great year next season and hope to see more butts in those bleachers to root for these women.

The way I see it, if you're going to show up for a 7 p.m. men's basketball game, why not come a couple of hours early and watch a real team play?

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**MARCH 19** – Softball finishes as the runner-up at the USF Speedline Invitational.

**MARCH 20** – Tabitha Embry and Sarah Belanger earn Sun Belt Player and Pitcher of the Week, respectively.

**MARCH 21** – Women's tennis beats Dartmouth 7-0 and earns its ninth-consecutive victory.

– Women's golf, led by Rebecca Samuelsson, wins the USF Waterlefe Invitational title.

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SAM LEWIS/IMAGE REFLEX



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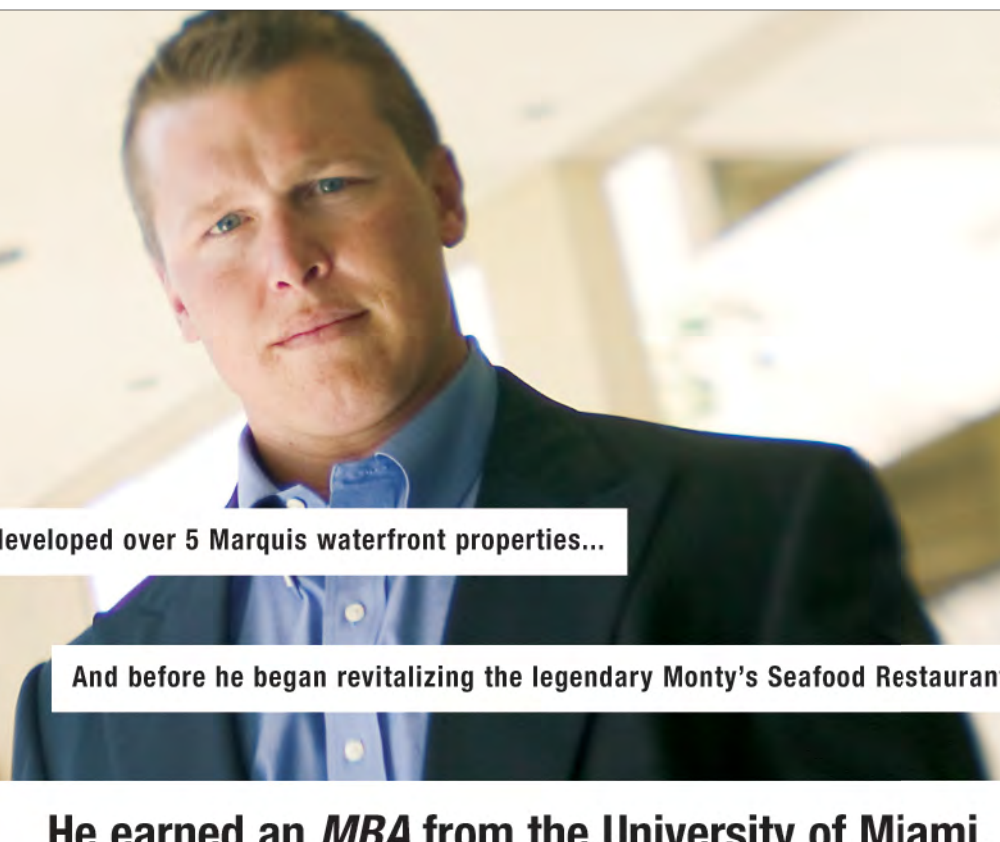


SAM LEWIS/IMAGE REFLEX



SAM LEWIS/IMAGE REFLEX

**SEASON OVER:** The women's basketball team, led by head coach Cindy Russo [top right], ended its season with a 95-83 WNIT second round loss to cross-town rival Miami March 18 at the BankUnited Center in Coral Gables. The Golden Panthers fell to 14 UM 3-pointers and a game-high 32 points coming off the hands of UM's star senior Tamara James. Junior Lasma Jekabsone came one point short of James's total, scoring 31 points, and grabbed six rebounds. Senior Faeza Bouderra [top left], who was injured in the first round victory over Cincinatti, came off the bench to score 10 points. Eva Makela [bottom left] added 13 points. FIU ends its 2005-06 campaign in its 11th postseason appearance in 15 years and with a 19-13 record.



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## Women's team surpassed expectations this season

### COMMENTARY



BY ALDEN GONZALEZ  
Staff Writer

It would've been easy to underrate the women's basketball team this season. After choking in the second round of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament last year and losing their best player in Milena Tomova, not much was riding high for the Golden Panthers.

However, in covering this team throughout the season, I must say I was extremely impressed with their resiliency.

Heading into the season, it was clear they were a young team that lacked a severe scoring threat on offense, but head coach Cindy Russo did her part instilling confidence in her players to get them back on track.

One thing that already has me excited about the 2006-2007 season is the outstanding play from the newcomers, especially Iva Ciglar and Marquita Adley. Watching Ciglar penetrate through defenders and rain 3-pointers, I'm convinced the freshman from Croatia is a star in the making.

Unlike most freshmen that come into a new system, Ciglar displayed extreme confidence all year and, in many moments, outshined FIU favorite Faeza Bouderra. After a great first half, she solidified herself as the sixth woman off the bench and every time she stepped in, she gave a spark to this team unlike any other. Her strong upside, quick



**A LOOK AHEAD:** Freshman Iva Ciglar has a bright future ahead as a Golden Panther. Her performance this season shows she will be a good replacement for departing guard Faeza Bouderra. **SAM LEWIS/IMAGE REFLEX**

first step, great ball-handling ability and definite range made her an opposing defender's nightmare. As the season wore on, Russo seemed to gain more and more confidence in her

new point guard as she played alongside Bouderra down the stretch, where junior Eva Makela couldn't cut it

In Adley, FIU finally has a strong player in the post unafraid

to go after loose balls and offensive rebounds. She reminds me of Miami Heat forward Udonis Haslem - a player that may not come out in the paper everyday, but does all the little things that

make a ball club successful.

Women's basketball fans can also look forward to another year from the developing Latvian center, Lasma Jekabsone, who seems to get better and better every year.

Coming into the season, the big question mark was who was going to be the dominating presence in the paint and many people were relying on Jekabsone to fill that role, simply because she was the only one. But no one expected this kind of season from her. Even when the season started, many were questioning Jekabsone's toughness.

Right before the Christmas break, Coach Russo told me, "We need Lasma to step it up. She's a big part of our offense and she has not stepped up so far."

Jekabsone took to the criticism well, en-route to a season that saw her average 16 points and 10 rebounds.

There were, however, some tough losses against quality programs like Western Kentucky and the University of Miami. The Golden Panthers lost to Western Kentucky twice during the regular season and then got eliminated by them in an eight-point loss during the third round of the Sun-Belt Conference tournament.

The difference between a team like FIU and Western Kentucky is execution. Throughout the season, many players stepped up for this team and when they met on Feb. 23 at Pharmed Arena, FIU seemingly had the players to match up to the Lady Toppers, but turnovers were a recurring theme throughout the season and, eventually, spelled the demise of this team.

See **WOMEN**, page 14

## Pitcher overcomes many hardships to play baseball

BY ALDEN GONZALEZ  
Staff Writer

When life bears down on you and it really gets tough, you usually only have two choices - you can dwell on the setbacks and allow it to take its toll or you can take Akeem Francis' route: display a big Caribbean smile, enjoy life and keep on pushing.

Francis' boyhood charm and carefree attitude would be tested early. Growing up in the Virgin Islands, Francis was the youngest of eight children, including six sisters.

At the age of eight, his mother died and Francis' life and attitude would be changed forever.

"When my sister told me my mother died, I didn't bother asking questions," Francis said. "But it was a really tough loss for me because she was such a big part of my life."

His mother's death changed his life.

"It ended up changing me completely because I was always a troublemaker and after [my mother] died, I started doing better in school and not behaving as badly," Francis said.

Francis ended up moving in with his oldest sister Jermaine after living with his father for a short while.



**Akeem Francis, pitcher**

I could come out here naked and I have everything I need to play baseball.

Because she was so much older than him, Jermaine was a big influence in his life and proved to be the mother he seldom had.

"I love her very much because she did so much for me," Francis said. "Sure we had our dumb little [sibling] fights, but she truly cared about me and she helped me get through a tough part of my life ... I don't know what I would've done if it wasn't for her."

Around this time, baseball

started becoming a big part of his life, but Francis couldn't just buy a glove and bat and hit the field. Growing up in the proj-

ects of Saint Thomas, Francis needed to use his creativity.

"We would pick up sticks and rocks and just start pitching to ourselves and hitting the rocks into buildings," Francis said. "Then sometimes, we would break off tree branches or grab brooms and stand in front of a wall and pitch to each other with tennis balls. That's how we started gaining technique."

Little by little, Francis' game kept enhancing as he started playing in the popular Latin

American Tournament that would allow him to play against some of the best competition from countries like the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Venezuela.

His popularity also kept growing as he started displaying talent as a shortstop and a pitcher.

That caught the eye of a scout from Hialeah-based Champagnat High School, who was very interested in having Francis and four of his teammates join his program.

Francis had a big decision to make. He could either stay with his loving sister and the only home he'd ever known in

See **FRANCIS**, page 13