



## THE BOYS ARE BACK



### COMMENTARY



By **HARRY COLEMAN**  
Sports Editor

It was just yesterday when the Golden Panthers played their first football in front of a sold out crowd at "The Cage." Fast forward three years and now the team will open its third season with games at higher stakes – Division I-A football.

It is hard to believe that FIU is the fastest university to apply to I-A. Lots of people question the move by Athletic Director Rick Mello to pursue I-A so quickly but in the long run, FIU needed to do this.

With Florida Atlantic University moving to I-A this year and with the University of Miami in town, FIU had to make this move to avoid falling behind. The biggest question will be whether the team can average 15,000 fans per game.

The university is making all the right moves by giving tons of giveaways including Don Strock bobble heads and FIU seat cushions.

But, the biggest move FIU is doing is providing a free concert for fans during the Western Kentucky game. None other than famous rappers Method Man and Redman will be the highlights at the concert.

The Golden Panthers will also play a home game at a bigger venue, the Orange Bowl. The team will face FAMU in the Orange Bowl Classic, which should draw over 20,000 fans.

FIU has some very talented players and if fans want football to stay here they will need to come out to the stands.

Last year FIU had a losing record but four of the losses could have been a victory if a

play or two had gone right.

The offense has a talented duo of receivers in Harold Leath and Cory McKinney. The defense has a linebacker in Antwon Barnes who could be the first Golden Panther drafted into the NFL.

This is an exciting team with players that are hungry for success. Everyone knows Miami is a win driven town and the only way FIU will attract large crowds will be if the team can start winning more games.

The team won four games the inaugural season and two games the following season, but this doesn't mean the team regressed. The Panthers faced talented teams and this year

will be no different. They will face I-A schools, which are no joke.

Strock knows wins are what eventually will draw fans to the stadium, not bobble heads or FIU visors. He knows the team is no longer young and being young is no longer an excuse for losing.

FIU will open the season today in hopes of drawing fans and showing the community they belong in Division I-A. The players are hungry, the giveaways are set to be handed out, and Method Man and Redman are on their way; the question is, will you show up?

## Golden Panthers to make Dolphins their first prey

By **ANDRES CORDERO**  
Staff Writer

The Golden Panthers will open the football season at FIU Stadium today at 8 p.m. facing the visiting Dolphins for the third time in the school's three seasons. The two previous contests saw the JU Dolphins routed by a combined score of 94-18. Both games featured the highest point totals in school history with the Golden Panthers posting 39 in 2002 and a school record 55 in 2003.

Jacksonville comes into its seventh season of I-AA football with just 5 returning starters on offense, 5 on defense and a lot of question marks. The team is notoriously undersized on the defensive line and tries to compensate with quickness,

mobility and fresh legs.

JU features a D-line rotation with as many as 10 players. The linebacker corps, led by senior Tim Hasse, is experienced but lacks depth. If the offensive line can hold, the holes should be there for Rashod Smith, who rushed for a career best 262 yards and 2 touchdowns against the Dolphins in 2002.

The graduation of seniors Charlton Williams and Emile Duvernois leaves a definite lack of experience on the Jacksonville secondary.

The Dolphins will count on Drew Stafford (missed last season with knee injury) and Mathew Kampfe (converted QB) starting at free and strong safety respectively.

Returning cornerbacks Bryan Flowers

(5-10, 180) and Leighton Henderson (5-10, 175) will have to contend with FIU receivers Harold Leath and Cory McKinney, both of which possess a 5-inch height advantage on the JU tandem.

The primary concern for the FIU defense should be to stop the Dolphins air attack. Jacksonville executes a multiple "I" formation, but their game plan relies heavily on the arm of junior Mike Sturgill.

Last season Sturgill threw for 2,060 yards and 20 touchdowns. However, he managed just one touchdown against the Golden Panthers and it was facing back-ups, in the final minutes, while on the short end of a blowout.

Given that this year's schedule is the toughest for FIU thus far, the opening

game should be their most dominant performance of the season. Adam Gorman's 138 yards and Diamos Demerritt's 121 made up the bulk of the 391 yards FIU ran for against Jacksonville's horrid run defense last year.

FIU also enjoyed success in the air against the Dolphins. Quarterback Josh Padrick, playing for the injured Jamie Burke, completed 10-of-14 passes for 232 yards and 3 touchdowns.

This might be a sign that this year's game might not be much of a contest either. A good performance here says a lot less about the team than a bad one would.

Perhaps the biggest question concerning the game is: Will more than 3,512 people show up for this one?



VS



# Smith returns strong from tendon injury

By **NATALIE SABIA**  
Staff Writer

He rushes down the field protecting the football that he holds tightly to his body while passing defenders as they latch out towards him. He looks up ahead in hopes to see the end-zone near; this year, look for him to be there, look out for running back Rashod Smith.

This season, it will be his number four jersey sprinting down the field, celebrating his rushing yards, along with touchdowns. Standing at 5-foot-8-inches and carrying 188 pounds of muscle, Smith is ready for his comeback; the question is, are opponents ready for him?

Recovering from an injury last year, after slicing a tendon in his foot from a run in with a piece of glass, the senior running back is anxiously awaiting his return to the field after an injury was more serious than initially thought.

"I stepped on glass in the cafeteria, but I didn't know it was that serious," said Smith.

Smith was limited to only six games last season and finished with 278 rushing yards, third best on the team. While his teammates played

throughout the season, Smith continued to get healthy in hopes for another try.

"I tried to get back and play, but I couldn't run," said Smith who had gained over 1,000 yards on 194 carries, before his injury while averaging 5.5 yards per run.

During his freshman year at Bryant College in Rhode Island, Smith was already a talented player, who rapidly became a glimpse in people's eyes.

He averaged more than 60 yards in his first two games of the year, but after breaking a toe he was unable to return.

Despite a frustrating season, Smith headed home to Miami for a fresh start.

"I wanted to get back home to keep playing, especially for a new program like FIU had to offer," said Smith.

The Sports Management major, who is no stranger to the

Dean's List, came to FIU as a sophomore and was non-other than team MVP after leading the Golden Panthers with 784 yards over nine games and averaging 6 yards per carry.

As FIU's leading scorer in 2002, with nine touchdowns, sitting out in 2003 was a major upset for Smith.

"I had to learn how to walk again, but I'm ready to get back into the swing of things," said Smith.

As far as Smith is concerned, the Golden Panthers are ready for action. Their days have been consumed by daily practices on the field, while getting focused for the season.

"Right now were taking one step at a time and one play at a time," said Smith. "Were getting ready for Thursday [season opener]."

Despite Smith's nagging injuries he has endured and the fact that he hasn't played a full season in a while, he is prepared to get back on the field and do what he is great at.

"I'm good now," said Smith, "I'm excited to get back with my team. I just want to help my team through the whole season."



**FIRST DOWN:** Rashod Smith rushes two defenders during a controlled scrimmage at The Cage. Smith is returning from a tendon injury he suffered last season. **GEOFF ANDERSON/SPECIAL TO THE BEACON**

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## Student radio broadcasts football

By **NATALIE SABIA**  
Staff Writer

Tucked away in FIU's press box during the Golden Panther Football games are not only the voices who shout out every detail that fans are already saying in their heads, but they are also the voices that blissfully bring us up to speed of the most crucial things that are happening down on the field.

Among the announcers and analysts whom we listen to are Sports Director Andres Cordero, Messod Bendayan, Will Schanez and Harry Coleman. These men are the faces behind the microphones during the most thrilling sports events at FIU, who bring their fans the most desired sports information by the second.

"I really enjoy calling the games," said Bendayan, "I am a huge sports nut."

Despite the small space they have to work with in the press box, both the play-by-play announcers and game analysts sit anxiously in their seats to broadcast games.

By dividing the staff in two different crews, they are able to broadcast each football game, including those games away.

"Football is the only sport that we travel for,

because it's the sport FIU is trying to push the most," said Cordero. Along with the twelve football games coming up this fall, WRGP Radio is also involved with basketball, soccer, baseball and volleyball games.

Broadcasting on 88.1 FM, the WRGP, which is Radio Golden Panther, the sports staff is already getting set in gear for an exciting upcoming football season.

On top of their game list especially this year are the games that will be played in the Orange Bowl, against FAMU, and in Pro Player Stadium, versus FAU.

"I am looking forward to those games because we will be in a real press box," said Cordero.

Securing a storyline that will go along with each game is their most difficult job.

Whether it may be a particular threat that the opposing team will pose or maybe an interesting story that involves a player, both the announcer and analyst must create their storytelling voices fast enough so they don't get behind the action, but yet still entertain their crowd.

"Trying to work in a story is the most difficult," said Bendayan.

Among the sports announcers, who are all very much sports crazies,

they all go through a lot of preparation before announcing a game.

"It's not an easy thing to just become an announcer," said Bendayan.

"It is a tremendous help to alternate games," said Bendayan.

Considering that WRGP is strictly a "volunteer" radio station, securing employees who will commit, while developing an on-air chemistry with the staff is the station's main focus.

For most of the announcer's, including senior journalism major Messod, it is really the experience that plays into hand.

"At the end, it is all worth it," said Bendayan.

Along with the other broadcast majors, also for senior Andres, announcing games is an opportunity of a lifetime. "I have been a sports fan my whole life and I wanted to get some broadcasting under my belt," said Cordero.

Despite which crew announces the games, you can be sure that the people behind it all work through long hours of dedication to keep the sports spirit alive in each of their listening fans.

Look for the very first FIU broadcast on September 2, for volleyball's home opener against Miami.

If you are interested in placing a classified ad in *The Beacon*, contact our advertising manager at 305-348-6994 for rates and more information.



## Bush rallies crowds in Miami Arena



**GRAND OLD PARTY:** President George W. Bush (middle) and First Lady Laura Bush (right) address a jubilant, mostly Hispanic crowd at a Miami rally. **RODOLFO ROMAN/THE BEACON**

By **RODOLFO R. ROMAN**  
Contributing Writer

Reciting a speech delivered in a mix of English and Spanish, President George W. Bush spoke before a crowd of 8,000 in the Miami Arena on Aug. 27.

"We will win in November," exclaimed the President in Spanish as the crowd chanted 'Viva Bush' and 'Four more years.'

In his rally speech, Bush addressed various key issues of his administration.

"We've been through a recession; we've been through an attack; we've been through corporate scandals," he said. "And yet, we've overcome these

obstacles...because we've got the best workers in the world."

The massive crowd cheered and chanted "USA" after most of the president's quotes.

During the event, Bush promised that his administration would continue to adhere to an anti-terrorist agenda, fighting terrorism and spreading democracy around the world.

"There's more work to be done to protect the homeland," he said. "I just want you to know that there's a lot of really good people who are working hard and long hours to protect you."

He also guaranteed that the elimination of Saddam

Hussein—still declared by Bush to be a sworn enemy of the American people—was the first step in fighting international terrorism.

Bush then addressed the mostly Hispanic populace by declaring that a vote for his ticket would also guarantee the struggle to free the people of Cuba governed by Fidel Castro.

"We took action to continue breaking the dictator's information blockade," he said. After the comments, the crowd jubilantly applauded.

Amid the clamors, Bush took some shots at his Democratic opponent, Sen. John Kerry.

"He voted yes, and I

voted no," he said in Spanish. The comment was meant to be a jab at Kerry's vote to lift the Cuban tourism travel ban.

"If you honored me, I would uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I had been elected," he said, smiling brightly and waving to the mass.

As the speech was delivered, a small crowd of protesters held signs and repeatedly chanted 'No more Bush' outside the Arena.

The protesters, most of whom declared themselves to be environmentalists claiming President Bush has placed the Everglades at risk, exchanged vulgar language with the rally's

attendees in Spanish, the pro-Bush party calling Kerry a communist and the pro-Kerry protestors denouncing Bush as an arrogant liar.

The protest did not prevent the large public along with several Republican organizations from attending, including members of FIU political groups.

"It was a good and funny speech," said Juan F. D. Arce, president of the FIU Republicans. "But it's sad that he only spoke about Cuba. He forgot to speak about other countries such as Columbia and Venezuela that are currently fighting terrorism and poverty."

Those FIU students

who attended the rally sat on the left side of the arena, where spectators wearing colored t-shirts created the shape of an American flag.

Marianne Valdorado, senior, is a member of the FIU Republican club who decided to volunteer at the event.

"I started to read and found I liked Bush's policy. That's why I support him," she said.

As the November elections draw closer, several on-campus political groups will hold events such as public forums and guest speakers. They advise FIU students to be on the lookout for flyers promoting the events.

## Payment rush forms massive lines

By **C. JOEL MARINO**  
and **LUIS NIN**  
Staff Writers

They stood in line for hours, bored and silent, waiting for nothing else than a five minute stay at the cashier's window.

As the supposed deadline for tuition payments seemed to come to a close on Aug. 25, an estimated 1,000 students and family of students stood in a massive single file at the Primera Casa first floor hallway in University Park, winding through corridors and, at points, seeping out

of the building.

Some students waited for approximately two hours, trying to pay on time as to avoid the \$100 late fee. Throughout the day, university employees ran along the line in efforts to keep order and sort problems out. Despite these attempts, though, many of the students found grounds to complain.

"Everyday it gets worse. The system [they use] sucks," said Hazel Rivera, a senior. "They've been bouncing me around from office

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**THE LONG WAIT:** Having stood in line for several hours, disgruntled students and family members finally make their tuition payments at the cashier's office in University Park. **LUIS NIN/THE BEACON**

### INSIDE

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# Long waiting lines debated

**LINES, from page 1**

to office for three days. I woke up today at 8:00 a.m. and I'm still here at 4:00 p.m. I have financial aid and can't pay the difference in my tuition online."

Many students attributed the line to a combination of problems within the new Panthersoft system.

"The Panthersoft system is screwy. If FIU sponsors a Visa card why doesn't the program accept Visa?" said Marianne Goodwin, sophomore.

Other students looked for the cause of the con-

gested lines somewhere closer to home, blaming themselves and what they call their procrastination.

"I paid two weeks ago; the entire building was empty. If everyone was responsible and didn't wait till the last minute, the line wouldn't be this huge," said Ron Silvera, sophomore, as he waited in line to make his brother's tuition payment.

Responding to these outcries, Dean of Undergraduate Studies Rosa Jones believes the problem to be rooted more in the perception of the Panthersoft transition than the

system shift itself.

"I don't think it's an either or answer in relation to that," Jones said. "I think there are some issues in terms of the university's transition to a new system, as with any new system, and not just in relation to the payments, but in relation to registration. There were many students with feelings of discomfort. New students are having less problems."

Jones, who herself patrolled the lines for three hours, agrees that not one single factor could be attributed to the congestion.

"The last day to pay is always very hectic. We've had some other situations. We had a lot of students that didn't have the money to pay. The increase in tuition also made it challenging for students," she said.

Due to the large amount of students still waiting to make payments by the end of the day, the cashier's and bursar's offices eventually decided to extend the deadline to Sunday Aug. 29, where students could place their transactions online.

This notwithstanding, the lines continued for the remaining days.

Anita Becker, an FIU alumna from 1982, currently has a daughter attending the university. Making the line to pay her daughter's fees, Becker found nothing new with the accumulated crowds—she's made plenty of those lines before.

"I've been waiting in lines [like these] all my life," she said. "This isn't a problem with the system. It's just good old fashioned procrastination."

## NEWSFLASH

### ON CAMPUS

#### Hurricane predicted to take course through Florida

Hurricane Frances, labeled a category 4 storm on Sept. 1, is set to make a course through Florida, according to the National Hurricane Center at FIU.

Announced to pass through the Caribbean islands and the Bahamas by Sept. 3, the center predicts a northwesterly course with possible Florida impact by the Labor Day weekend.

These estimates, though, carry a wide margin of error.

FIU, which acts as the major evacuation center for residents of Munroe County, will be issuing a statement concerning the storm between Thursday Sept. 2 and Friday Sept. 3. Students, faculty, and staff with any questions regarding the cancellation of classes or evacuation procedures are urged to contact the FIU Help Line at (305)348-HELP.

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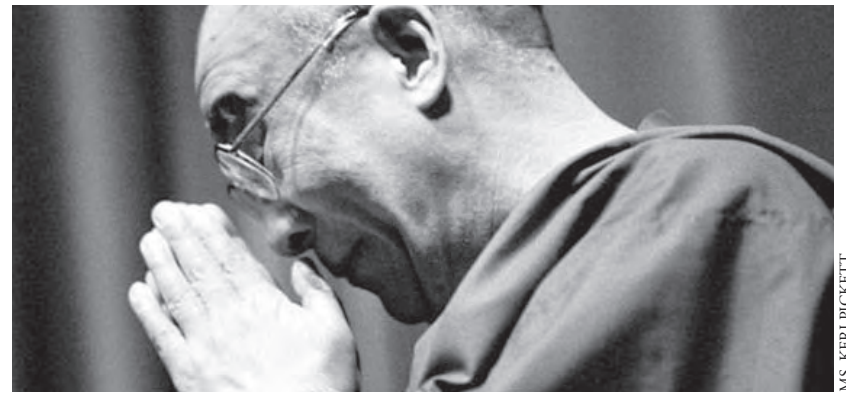
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The Beacon would like to extend a welcome back to all students and faculty.

# OPINION

Alejandra Diaz Editor In Chief • John Lovell Managing Editor

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

### How did you get along with Panthersoft?

- I love it, the new system is incredibly helpful and I have experienced little or no trouble.
- Although it is convenient and structured nicely, I found it difficult to search for classes. It limits your search options and can be frustrating at times.
- I couldn't figure out how to do anything at all, I hate this confusing mess of a software and I miss the old system.
- What's a Panthersoft?

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## WINNER & LOSER



### WINNER

**School Spirit:** With the addition of a Division I-A football team and a new tradition with the "trail of the torch," FIU morale is climbing to an all-time high.



### LOSER

**Presidential Offspring:** During Sunday's MTV Video Music Awards, both John Kerry and President Bush's daughters were booed by crowds. While the American Airlines Arena had many animal restrictions for the show, scapegoats were more than welcome.

## QUOTEABLES

*"If things go right, I'll be there about a week, and if things don't go right, I'll be there about an hour and a half."*

– **Rodney Dangerfield**, comedian, speculating the results of his pending heart surgery.

*"We will win in November."*

– **President George W. Bush** at a Republican rally that took place at the Miami Arena on Aug 27.

*"I know it's hard to believe, but our parents' favorite term of endearment is actually 'Bushie.'"*

– **Barbara Bush**, President Bush's daughter, exchanging quips with sister, Jenna, during an introduction for First Lady Laura Bush at the Republican National Convention.

*"To those critics who are so pessimistic about our economy, I say: Don't be economic girlie men!"*

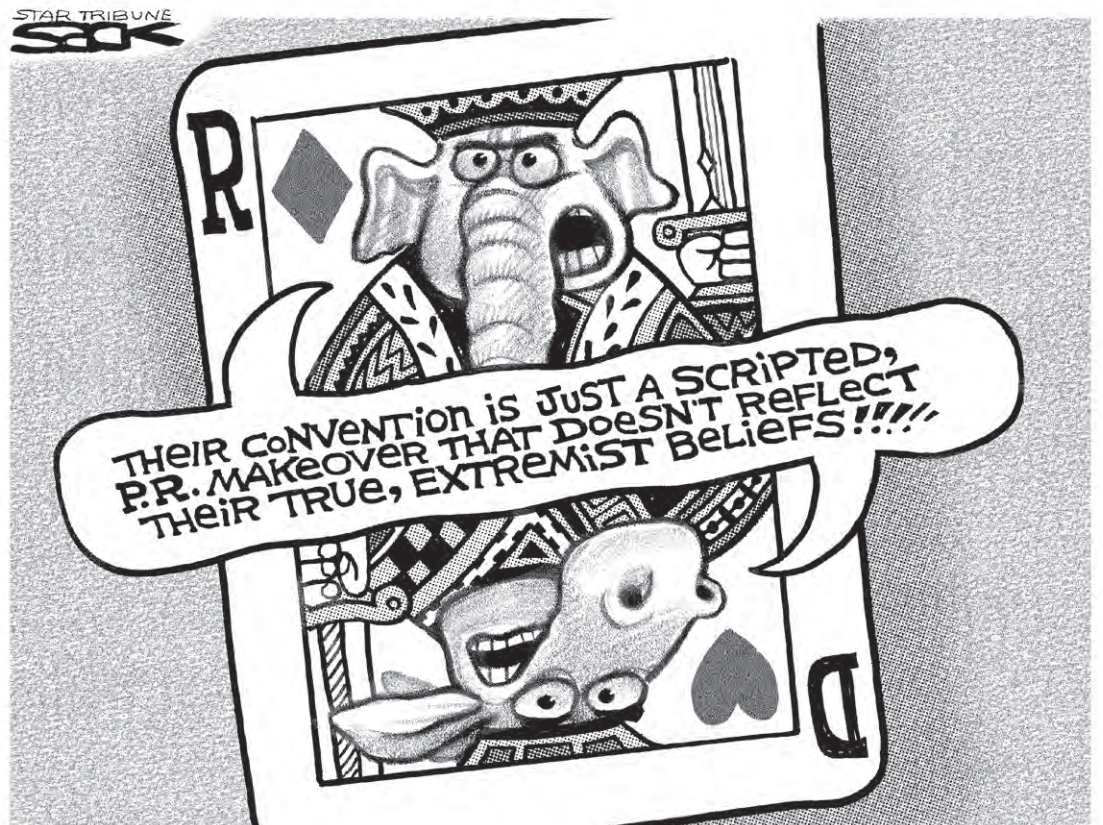
– **Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger** during the Republican National Convention in response to previous heat received for joking with Californian Democrats.

*"They have been bouncing me around from office to office for three days."*

– **Hazel Rivera**, senior, referring to the long lines and hassle at the Cashier's office during Fall registration.

## 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 [beacon@fiu.edu](mailto:beacon@fiu.edu). Letters must include the writer's full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. If brought in to an office, a legitimate ID may be accepted instead of a phone number. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 400 words.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Voters should rely on issues when selecting a presidential candidate not war records and ads

To the Editor:

"Why should I vote for John Kerry? I don't like Bush but I don't know much about Kerry." I wish I had a dime for everytime an FIU student asked me that question over the summer.

As president of the FIU College Democrats, I'm proud to say that 2 out of every 3 who posed this question to me walked away from me with a Kerry-Edwards bumper sticker in hand and a promise to vote for John Kerry on November 2. Now since I can't personally talk to every FIU student, I'd like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts with you about this election, especially all you undecideds out there.

This election should not be about Bush or Kerry's war record and the negative campaigning by both parties should and needs to stop. These 527 committes spending hundreds of millions of dollars on attack ads should cease all their material. Unfortunately, until new campaign finance laws are estab-

lished, the ads will continue.

What is undefendable is that statistically, 75% percent of official Bush-Cheney ads are attack ads on Kerry, while only 25% of Kerry ads are attack ads. This means that we should all take these ads with a grain of salt.

When researching a candidate, analyze their platform, what are their positions on the issues? I'll admit that's difficult to do with the Bush campaign when they have based their campaign on attacking Kerry's credentials, likely feeling that their accomplishments the past 4 years will not be sufficient for reelection. However, I'd like to provide you with an outline of the Kerry-Edwards platform.

Statistics show that the top 1% of Americans receive over \$75,000 on Bush's tax cut, while the middle 20% receive just over \$1,000. To truly relieve the middle class burden, Kerry would repeal tax cuts for those earning over \$200,000 and return to a progressive system of taxation.

Believing that no American should be discriminated against based on their sexual orientation, Kerry will support civil unions of gays to ensure them the same domestic partner privileges that heterosexual Ameri-

cans enjoy.

While elected officials and the most wealthy Americans receive the best health care in the world, Kerry believes that health care is a right of all Americans and will make that same health care available to all Americans and would provide a 75% tax credit to help small businesses pay for their employees health care. Under his plan, 96% of adults and 99% of children would have health care.

Although there are a number of other important issues in this election such as education, women's rights, and the environment, all cannot be covered here.

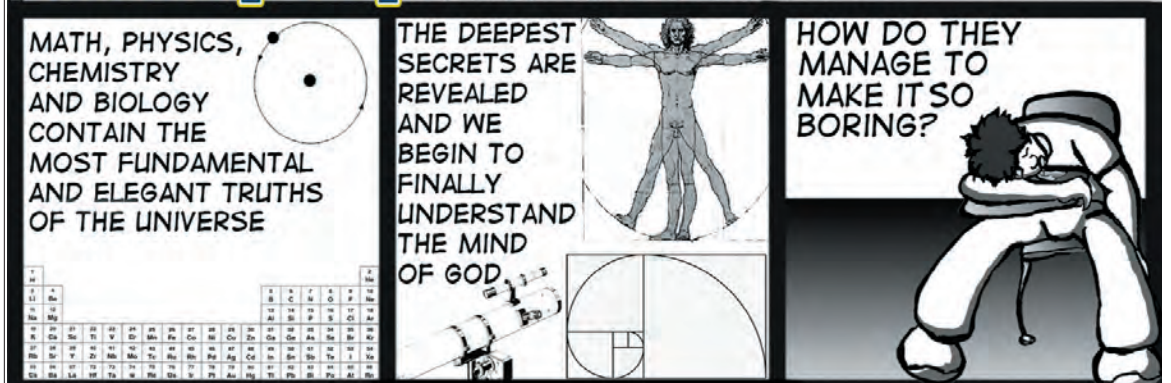
I encourage everyone to make their vote count, research the candidates, listen to the debates and make the choice that will take America to new heights in the next 4 years.

For starters, there will be a debate watching party in Gracie's Grill Sept. 30 at 8:30 p.m. A great place to begin to develop or justify your opinions on the two candidates.

Best of luck to everyone this Fall.

**James Valle,**  
Senior  
Political Science/History

## Phew! [FIU] TRUTH AND BEAUTY



# Constructing Building Expanding Growing Raising Erecting and Evolving



**FACE LIFTS AND MAKE OVERS:** The University Park campus will be receiving a number of new additions in the upcoming school year, some of which have already opened. The new Graham Center Atrium (above) will feature an enormous glass pane and extra rooms for restaurants, offices and retail shops. JOHN LOVELL/THE BEACON



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ALL PHOTOS BY JOHN LOVELL/THE BEACON

## New buildings offer glimpse of modern University design

By JOHN LOVELL  
Managing Editor

The cloud of white gravel dust looming over the construction-ridden University Park Campus is about to settle. The loud drills have finally stopped (for the most part) and in no time the detours will disappear. Along with the new buildings begins a new era at FIU, which has recently been rated as one of the fastest growing universities in the nation.

The Graham Center expansion seems to be the focal point of all the renovation at FIU, or at least the most visible. The new wing of the student center will sport a brand new food court and other campus

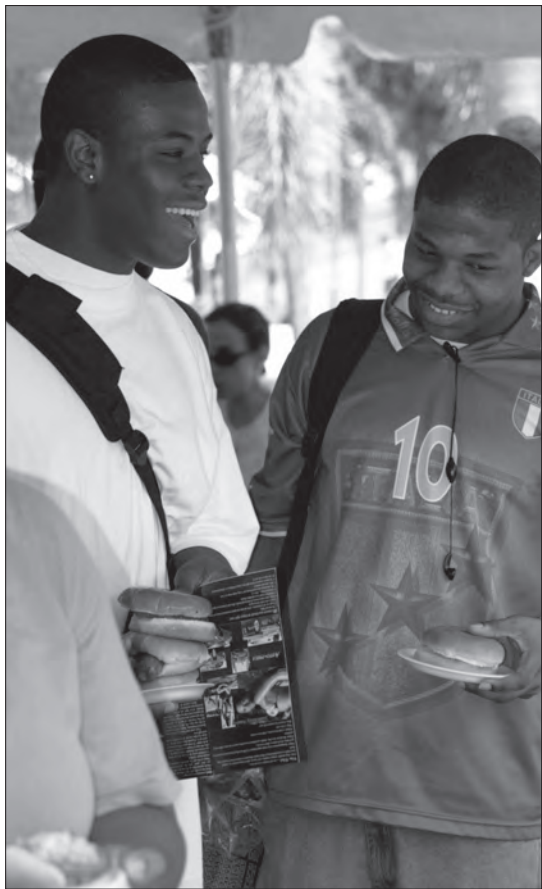
office buildings. Two retail spaces will also be available, with a possibility of space for a U.S. Postal Service.

Other new FIU additions are beginning to finish up as well. Two new parking garages (one of them already open and in service) will bring relief to the commuters, offering several hundred more spaces.

A new recreational center will open as well, turning the existing gym into the athletes' gym.

In the short span of three decades, FIU has blossomed into a major facility with a plethora of modern buildings. If in only one year the face of FIU can change so rapidly, who knows where we'll be after the next ten?

## Students received with entertainment



**CHOW TIME:** Clifford Williams (left) enjoys some hamburgers with friend, Christian Jeannot (right) at the Freshman Lunch at BBC. **BOBBY IRIZARRY/THE BEACON**

### WELCOME WEEK 2004



**FEELING HOT, HOT, HOT:** Students make molds of their hands in hot wax, one of more popular activities taking place at BBC. The wax cools, solidifies into the shape of a hand and is painted different colors. **ROBERT IRIZARRY/THE BEACON**



**BOUNCIN' AROUND:** An inflatable bounce maze entices students to take a fun break between classes. **BOBBY IRIZARRY/THE BEACON**

### USHERING IN A NEW CROWD

## Polyphonic Spree: From feel good sounds to pastel gowns

By **TOM MOON**  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The No. 1 question that Tim DeLaughter, leader of the Polyphonic Spree, gets when people see his 25-member group wearing flowing choir robes in pastel colors, and singing unabashedly positive Up With People-ish songs: Is this some kind of a cult?

The second question: Is there room for one more?

"Every show, somebody comes up to us with this look in their eyes, and you just know they want to be in it," DeLaughter said a few weeks back, on the day the Dallas-based band's long-awaited new album, "Together We're Heavy" (Hollywood), arrived in stores. "I mean, they're really serious. They're prepared to relocate. I've got enough people to start three more Polyphonic Sprees right now."

Sure, there's a novelty aspect at work. But the appeal of this mammoth chamber-pop group goes deeper. The 10 singers interpret DeLaughter's earnest songs of faith and devotion like sacred texts, singing in powerful youth-choir unison or simple two-part harmony. The instrumental accompaniment tends toward the florid, with flutes and trombones and multiple keyboards offsetting electric guitars and a traditional rock rhythm section. And the songs are big, epic creations — sometimes exhibiting a touch of Brian Wilson, or the grandeur of Electric Light Orchestra.

DeLaughter's original idea was simple: "I wanted to create a sound that was

appealing to me." The 38-year-old former rocker and father of three, whose band Tripping Daisy put out several acclaimed records in the early '90s, says he had grown bored with the highly formatted songwriting that is the status quo in rock, and the sameness of its instrumental sounds. He wanted to completely change the canvas.

"It's not like I was thinking I needed to have this many singers or anything. It was more about experimenting with something that would never be confused with whatever else was going on. We're so out of the musical climate, I don't think people know what to make of this band."

The songs of "Together We're Heavy" came about through improvisation. DeLaughter would bring in a skeletal idea, and strum the chords while singing what he hears as the melody.

The musicians, many of whom are classically trained, would fall in around him; they are encouraged to add counter lines or whatever else they hear.

"Most of these people grew up reading sheet music. At first they'd ask what key and what the chords were, and I had to get them to let go of inhibitions. Now, when we work on material, it's 'Let's all just play and see where we go with it.'"

When asked if he purposely leaned in the direction of the idealistic — if not the celestial — when writing the Spree's lyrics, DeLaughter referred back to Tripping Daisy. "From when I first started in music to today, the general tone of hope has always been my subject matter. I didn't change my lyrics for the group."



**THOSE AREN'T SHEETS?!** The unusual Polyphonic Spree (above) recently performed at MTV's Video Music Awards. Their poppy, uplifting songs and peculiar robe attire often leave people in awe. **COURTESY PHOTO**

But, in the next breath, he acknowledges that the themes do resonate differently when sung by such a large ensemble: "It works out, conveniently, that having so many people sing gives the lyrics extra weight. And I like that. It's sort of uncharted waters, this very innocent way of talking about being human in these times."

Some people see it as almost borderline hokey. But to us it's key, because some sort of spirit is there when we perform. And we're not afraid of communicating that."

For the record, DeLaughter says that despite all the spirit talk, the Polyphonic Spree is not a cult. "I haven't adopted a specific religion in the songs. There's

no clear-cut agenda." As for the robes, DeLaughter says they're just another way to differentiate his group.

"I was thinking a lot about the way people look at someone's clothes, and they made judgments about what kind of a person they're looking at," DeLaughter says. "That's annoying to me. I wanted something to unify the group, and the first image was white robes, so I went to my mother-in-law, and boom — right away we made the robes. At first the idea was to project images on the (white robes), but as we've gone along, we're so much more of a band and a family, we've realized there's a lot of vividness, a lot of color. So now each of us wears our own color — we're like pixels on a TV screen."

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# Volleyball Coach Cookie Stevens optimistic on season despite a high number of new players

By **NATALIE SABIA**  
Staff Writer

**Q: How have you and the team been preparing for this upcoming season?**

We have been practicing at least two times each day for the last 2 weeks and we have been doing team building exercises, physical conditioning, individual skill work, team concepts and strategies.

**Q: What are your expectations for this season?**

I am very encouraged that even though this is a new team of players, we have good talent and some players with experience already to help us be competitive from the start. Our goal is to work hard and put the puzzle pieces together each week, that will bring us success.

**Q: Are you excited about the new players?**

Very excited, these players are hard working, dedicated and passionate about playing and winning.

**Q: How do you mold your young players?**

Demand from them everyday a level of excellence on and off the court and be consistent and caring. They have to know the coaches care about them as people first.

**Q: How do you feel about the sched-**

**ule of games your team will be playing this season?**

I think the schedule is very challenging but very doable as far as wins against conference opponents and exciting to play the new non-conference opponents.

**Q: How do you get the team in shape for the season?**

The players worked hard to come in to training camp in good physical shape, before they got here. Of course, some more than others. But training two times a day, every day for two weeks - gets you in shape quickly.

It will take a few matches to find the right combinations. This process is ongoing throughout the season. Many things can affect the puzzle: injuries, players going in and out of mental slumps and confidence levels.

But our job as coaches is to train the team everyday and try to bring the best out of each player helping them to gain a higher level of performance every couple of weeks.

**Q: What do you think is the best way to maintain a strategy for winning?**

Know our strengths and weaknesses as a team. Capitalize on our strengths and reduce our weak areas. Know what our opponent is capable of, plan for it, and set realistic goals.



**FIRED UP:** Coach Cookie Stevens is counting on new players to step up this season. Many players are veterans transferring from community colleges. **HARRY COLEMAN/THE BEACON**

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# FIU not ready for Division I-A football

## COMMENTARY



By **MESSOD BENDAYAN**  
Contributing Writer

Well, here we are, folks. Part trois of FIU Football. Year uno of I-A.

It seems like yesterday when 17, 314 fans packed into FIU Community Stadium to see the Inaugural Game, way back on Aug. 29, 2002. I was a sophomore, then, and that game was my first taste of being a football play-by-play broadcaster.

Now, I'm about to graduate. I get to call five more games before Radio Golden Panther sends me packing. And my school's about to get its first taste of big-time college football.

Goodbye, St. Peter's College, Elon, Butler, Gardner-Webb, Albany and all of the other small-time Division I-AA schools FIU played during these last two years. It's been a pleasure knowing you. Good luck in the future.

Hello, Kansas State, Texas Tech, Alabama and all of the other Division I-A schools FIU has yet to schedule. Oh, and

all of you Sun Belt schools, too, even if you're the worst conference in I-A football. FIU wouldn't be here without you.

I'm pretty excited about my Golden Panthers moving up to the level of Miami, Florida and Florida State. And there's certainly a nice ring to this statement: "FIU's transition from I-AA to I-A is the fastest ever."

Oh, you haven't heard that yet? Guess you've been at the beach all summer. Get used to it. You're going to be hearing it. A lot. Especially when the losses come.

I'm a Golden Panthers fan, to be sure. But, I'm also an aspiring media geek, and in the business I hope to go into, facts are facts. And the facts about this move are depressingly simple: FIU isn't ready for big-time college football.

Here's 5 reasons why:

1. The Golden Panthers' all-time record: 7 wins, 16 losses. Most of their opponents up to this point have been I-AA schools. The difference between I-AA and I-A is huge. It's like comparing the Florida Marlins to the Durham Bulls, or comparing the Miami Dolphins to Miami's former arena football league franchise, the Hooters – both of whom can claim FIU Head Coach Don Strock as a former member.

2. FIU has never won a road

game.

3. FIU has never beaten a scholarship opponent. All of their wins have come against non-scholarship I-AA schools, which means that the majority of those school's athletes don't get a scholarship to play football. Like most of FIU's students, those student-athletes usually pay for school out of their own pocket.

All Division I-A programs grant at least 85 scholarships, and FIU has yet to beat one of those teams.

4. FIU has averaged roughly 7,000 fans a game, which is 8,000 short of what they need if they're to stay I-A past 2005, according to the NCAA.

5. FIU Community Stadium needs a makeover like Pam Anderson needed breast implants. That is, unless FIU's looking to be on the Top 5 list of 'smallest and ugliest I-A Football stadiums'.

But at least it's not called something totally nasty and disgusting, like Pharmed Arena (formerly known as Golden Panther Arena). Yet.

To say that this move is premature is an injustice to the word "premature." This is like a baby being born only five months in the womb and expecting it to live.

Sure, it can happen, but it's going to take a lot of hard

work and skillful people. All the rabbit's feet and four-leaf clovers in South Florida would probably help, too.

FIU Athletic Director Rick Mello has told me – and everyone else he talks to – that FIU had to make this move now, despite all the facts I listed above. And he may be right; events in Coral Gables and Boca Raton certainly forced his hand.

Miami's move to the Atlantic Coast Conference saw a domino effect on every other conference, especially small ones like the Sun Belt.

They lost New Mexico State and Utah State to the Western Athletic Conference after the lost some of their schools to other conferences.

That put the Sun Belt with less football teams, jeopardizing their I-A status with the NCAA. FIU's already a Sun Belt member in all of their other sports, and they need to use Sun Belt schools to get 5 I-A schools to play at FIU next year, an NCAA requirement for moving to I-A. If FIU doesn't go I-A now, the Sun Belt and FIU is up a certain kind of creek with no paddles.

Florida Atlantic's move to I-A put the Golden Panthers in an unenviable position. FAU, overall, is better-prepared to make the move than FIU is, and in a market that may well be over-saturated with college

football teams, FAU or FIU cannot afford to let the other get too far ahead of them, lest the one left behind be deemed irrelevant.

FAU's move to the Sun Belt also put pressure on FIU; don't think the other conference members weren't putting the screws on FIU to make the jump when their neighbor to the north and fellow conference rival had already done so.

To protect FIU's massive investment in the big money-maker of all collegiate sports, Mello was forced to put his John Hancock on this move, even though he (and pretty much everyone else in FIU) knows that this program isn't ready for I-A.

To delay was probably to be left behind Owl poop and Hurricane debris for good.

To delay would almost certainly mean that FIU better start looking for another conference to call home. Too much had been invested into Football to see that happen now. It was time to perform the football equivalent of a Caesarian birth.

So, here we go with part trois of FIU Football. A premature baby is about to be born into a very unforgiving world.

For its sake, I hope this baby's strong enough to begin walking on its own quick. History is not on its side.

## Under new coach 'Tiger' Clark, defense switches to 4-3 formation

By **HENRY GONZALEZ**  
Contributing Writer

Twenty-eight points per game, a four-and-a-half yard rushing average and a miniscule 21 sacks. When you couple those under achieving numbers with the fact that opposing teams averaged more yards rushing (227) than

they did passing (172), defensive line changes are a must.

Last year's team opened the season playing a 3-4 alignment. As a result, the defense suffered and was forced to revert to the original 4-3 scheme half-way into the schedule.

"We had to change it up," declared Coach Tau-

bert, defensive line coach. "We're more familiar with the 4-3 because that's how we first started".

Last season's 3-4 style demanded large defensive tackles that can handle at least two offensive linemen. That means putting up with, and pushing off nearly 600 pounds every play while simultaneously

trying to make a tackle.

While arduous, this task is not impossible and is successfully executed by many teams. However, the defenses that accomplish this enlist gargantuan men on their rosters who routinely exceed 300 pounds.

The Golden Panthers do not have that luxury. The defensive tackle average on the team was 257 pounds. The large discrepancy in weight represents trouble. It means opposing linemen are usually heavier, leading to offensive success for the enemy.

Opposing teams found big holes to run through and had lots of time to release the football. Because of this, it should come as no surprise that teams averaged more than 10 minutes of possession time against the Golden Panthers.

Giving up an extra ten minutes of offense tires the defense and limits the

offense. Opposing teams outscored FIU all season and why the Panthers produced a disappointing 2-10 record.

This year, FIU acquired a full-time defensive coordinator to avoid last year's debacle. Ex Bernard Claker is taking over the squad in hopes of improving a defense that gave up 28.4 points per game.

"I'm bringing a lot of different things with me," said Clark.

For one, he is focusing on the 4-3 defensive scheme and plans to bolster it with the addition of a 4-6 defense. The 4-6 simply brings a safety up to act as an extra linebacker.

This move will undoubtedly help the run defense by providing one extra tackler near the line of scrimmage. The 3-4 will not be totally abolished, but will only be used sparingly in situational downs.

"I feel the 4-3 is better.

It covers all the gaps and produces more pressure on the quarterback," said Clark.

The players also seem to agree that the new defense will allow them to be more proactive.

"We'll be able to attack more with the 4-3 because offensive linemen will have more defenders to block," said linebacker Gerrod Bodie.

With more defensive players on the line of scrimmage, linebackers will have more room to run and make plays. The old 3-4 formation let offensive linemen go out and chase linebackers.

It also let them dominate defensive linemen by double-teaming them. These problems will be minimized by the new set up.

"I'm excited because I won't have to deal with linemen coming at me this year," said linebacker Lance Preston.



**DEFENDANTS:** Antwan Barnes, Nick Turnbull and Greg Moss are key defense players.  
HARRY COLEMAN/THE BEACON



**Sports Writers needed!**  
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**TRIUMPHANT TRIO:** Quarterbacks David Taber, Josh Padrick, and Jamie Burke are the top three in FIU's death chart. **DANNY KAMBELD/SPECIAL TO THE BEACON**

## Position by Position Analysis: FIU strong at QB, Receivers, weak on offensive lines

By **ANDRES CORDERO**  
Staff Writer

With the 2-10 record neatly tucked in the back of their minds, the Golden Panthers are set to kick-off a new football season. The sports world is cyclical and once the disappointment of a losing season fades, it's replaced with the hope and prospect of a clean slate.

Regardless of last season's performance, every team kicks off the Fall with a zero in the loss column. FIU will try to add wins by relying on its strength, the offense. While it's a widely accepted cliché that defense wins games, it's still impossible to win without putting points on the board. What follows is a preview of the individual parts that make up the offensive unit for 2004.

### Offensive Line

The O-line is the backbone of any offense. Unfortunately for the Golden Panthers, this is where the team is in most disarray. FIU has two very capable quarterbacks on its roster and it may need them both if the O-line can't protect the starter.

The unit has given up 76 sacks for 583 yards over the past two seasons. With junior John Shanahan suffering a high-ankle sprain in a recent scrimmage, FIU will start the season with three offensive linemen sidelined. Tackle Tim Dierks (knee) and Guard Jonathan Taylor (shoulder), who combined for 1,579 snaps in 2003, will be alongside Shanahan on the injured list.

Offensive Line Coach Leon Searcy will look for converted defensive tackle Ronny Silva and freshman Tad McConahie to contribute. McConahie is a 6-foot-3, 310-pound lineman who can play guard, tackle and center. His strength and versatility has earned him praise from the coaching staff and made him a viable option to fill some of the holes left by injury. The bottom line is games are won and lost along the line of scrimmage and the offense will need the O-line to hold up to be effective.

### Running Backs

The Golden Panther's ground attack rushed for 1,417 yards and 16 touchdowns in 2003. When placed side-by-side with last year's Sun Belt Conference teams, the ground game ranks 6th in

touchdowns, rushing yards and yards per game.

The team's leading rusher in 2003 was full back Adam Gorman (736 yards, 8 TD), who stepped in because of injuries and was named the offensive player of the year. He and Diamos Demerritt became the first FIU tandem to rush for 100 yards each in the same game last year. Demerritt will not be back because of the six felony counts he's being charged with as a result of his alleged involvement in an on-campus robbery attempt.

The player expected to fill the team's starting role as halfback is returning senior Rashod Smith, who battled injuries throughout the 2003 season. Smith is the school's only career 1,000 yard rusher. In his sophomore season, Smith was voted team MVP by his teammates after rushing for 784 yards in just nine games.

The player to keep an eye on is true freshman Julian Reams out of Coral Reef High School. A true freshman is a player directly out of high school. He's making strides in practice and coaches like his quickness as well as his ability to make cuts and hit holes.

### Tight Ends

Junior Joe Struyf will be sidelined with a possible season-ending surgery. This means that the door is open for either Samuel Smith or Moses Hinton to step into the starting role. Smith is a sophomore who caught 9 passes for 119 yards in 11 games as a true freshman. Coaches are impressed with his progress and he holds a slight advantage over the freshman Hinton.

Hinton is a big and physical player who at 6-foot-5, 260 pounds can be a force at the line of scrimmage. The tight end position is the biggest toss-up on the team and the former Delray Beach standout has a legitimate shot to start

### Receivers

The receiver position is one of the strongest on the FIU offense. With returning starters such as Harold Leath (6-foot-3, 199lbs) and Cory McKinney (6-foot-3, 219 lbs.) both healthy, the team's passing game should be every

bit as good as it has been. They are the school's only career 1,000 yard receivers. Both played in all 12 games last season, and were a huge part of Josh Padrick's break-out season.

Also in the mix will be senior Chandler Williams and junior Andre Rollins. Williams is an experienced threat that made 29 catches for 460 yards last year as the number three receiver playing the slot.

Rollins has been impressive in the spring after returning from a shoulder injury. At 6-foot-4 and 222 pounds, the big guy out of Carol City High can be a good option at the slot or wide-out position. He looks more comfortable in the offense than in previous years and should see more time in the wide receiver rotation.

### Quarterbacks

If ever there was a strong position on this team, this is it. The Golden Panthers have a good situation at quarterback with the return of Josh Padrick and a healthy Jamie Burke. Padrick stepped in for the injured Burke in 2003 and quickly became the story of the year en route to a school record 2,493 yards.

The number of sacks decreased with Padrick under center due in part to his superior mobility over Burke. After averaging 226.3 yards per game and completing nearly 50 percent of his passes, the starting job is his to lose.

Burke is returning from his third career ACL surgery and has spent much of the off-season getting stronger. He was impressive in his freshman year and is expected to challenge for the starting spot. David Tabor is an experienced back up who can step in if things go terribly wrong for the number one and two guys.

The addition of Tavares Kendrick is a solid move for the future of this team. Kendrick was the top rated quarterback out of the top-25 Miami-Dade recruits and should be the quarterback of the future for FIU. At 6-foot-3 and 220 pounds, he runs a 4.60 second 40-yard dash. He is praised for his size, speed, and powerful arm.



**BULLET PASS:** Josh Padrick practices hard to secure his position as starting quarterback on FIU's team. **HARRY COLEMAN/THE BEACON**