

GREEN CLASS

Media & environment meet

TXT ADDICT

Typed communication concerning

2008 REPORT CARD

Reviewing this year's top albums

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SAND IN YOUR SNEAKERS



SERGIO MONTEALEGRE/THE BEACON

YOUR SAND IS UNTIED: Architecture students led by Professor Jaime Canaves from the School of Architecture competed in the Sandblast Sand Sculpture Competition, part of the American Institute of Architects' Celebrate Architecture 2008 festival and won the top prize - the Golden Bucket Award.

Personality disorders linked to drug addiction, alcohol abuse

LINDSEY TANNER
AP Wire

Almost one in five young American adults has a personality disorder that interferes with everyday life, and even more abuse alcohol or drugs, researchers reported Monday in the most extensive study of its kind.

The disorders include problems such as obsessive or compulsive tendencies and anti-social behavior that can sometimes lead to violence. The study also

found that fewer than 25 percent of college-aged Americans with mental problems get treatment.

One expert said personality disorders may be overdiagnosed.

But others said the results were not surprising since previous, less rigorous evidence has suggested mental problems are common on college campuses and elsewhere.

Experts praised the study's scope — face-to-face interviews about numerous disorders with

more than 5,000 young people ages 19 to 25 — and said it spotlights a problem college administrators need to address.

Study co-author Dr. Mark Olfson of Columbia University and New York State Psychiatric Institute called the widespread lack of treatment particularly worrisome.

He said it should alert not only “students and parents, but also deans and people who run

DISORDERS, page 2

PantherSoft upgrades allow easy access to used books

SOLDANAYS MUJICA
Contributing Writer

The new registration integration system, which gives easy access to cheap, used books through PantherSoft, makes life easier for students by allowing them to register for Spring semester classes and get affordable books before the semester starts.

John Duran, application manager for PantherSoft, stated in an e-

mail that the system was integrated with the PeopleSoft 9.0 upgrade and was also a suggested idea by student workers in the University.

Sophomore Yessenia Yera believes the new system has its advantages.

“This will help students not only get their books earlier, it will relieve stress of making those hour-long lines in the bookstore like in the past semesters,” Yera said.

In order to use the system, stu-

dents must log onto PantherSoft, select the upcoming term and enroll into the classes.

Then, at the bottom right-hand corner of the new class schedule, a box labeled “order textbooks” leads to a list of textbooks needed for each class with the corresponding prices.

“Registering for classes and purchasing books cannot get any easier

BOOKSTORE, page 2

DEPT. OF BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Device uses 3-D image to detect breast cancer

JULIO MENACHE
Asst. News Director

Researchers at the University's Department of Biomedical Engineering may be able to shine a light on a revolutionary and safer method for early detection of breast cancer.

Dr. Anuradha Godavarty, assistant professor of the Department of Biomedical Engineering, along with five other graduate students, is testing a portable and inexpensive handheld device that uses infrared light to create a 3-D image in order to better detect breast cancer.

“We wanted to have a handheld device that gives three dimensional information,” said Godavarty. “We are trying to do what a bulky system can do [but] with a handheld, portable sleek design.”

According to the researchers, the optical scanner would have a better resolution than ultrasound tests currently used

to detect breast cancer. The optical scanner also varies from other imaging systems in that it does not give off harmful radiation.

The new scanner costs less than a conventional MRI machine. Godavarty claimed she was currently restricted from giving specific details about the price of the machine due to the fact that the University is assessing the commercialization of a patent, however, she contends that while an MRI is priced in the millions for hospitals, the new device would be in the hundreds.

“The MRI has the highest resolution of current technologies, but it is not extensively used because it is very expensive,” Godavarty said.

However, Godavarty insists the new device is not meant to replace existing methods of detecting breast cancer. The handheld device would be used alongside other methods, such as X-rays and MRI scans.

“Basically, the whole concept here is that we are trying to use light ... to make an image of what is inside the tissue,” Godavarty said.

One of the reasons Godavarty and her team are focused on diag-

nosing breast cancer is because it is the largest soft tissue without any bone structure.

“X-rays tend to fail in the early stages of cancer because the cancer is still soft tissue. Once the cancer tissue starts calcifying [hardening], the tumor becomes much larger,” said Godavarty. “The ultimate goal of this project is to improve the survival rate of breast cancer patients by performing early-stage diagnosis.”

Inside the optical imaging lab, amidst the loud humming sound of the air conditioner and posters plastered on the wall explaining how

the optical imager works, were Dr. Jia Jia Ge and Sarah Erickson, a Ph.D student in biomedical engineering, working on the imager. The two graduates are among a group of five graduate students who play a crucial role in making the imager work. According to Ge, the project

The ultimate goal ... is to improve the survival rate of breast cancer patients by performing early-stage diagnosis.

Anuradha Godavarty,
asst. professor
Biomedical Engineering-

follows a series of steps starting with working on instrumentation, then laboratory studies and finally human studies.

“Before the machine works, a great deal of preliminary studies must be done,” said Ge, whose primary role is to build up the optical and electrical equipment.

Both women are also in charge of laboratory studies using “phantoms” — substances designed to mimic human tissue — such as liposyn and chicken breast.

The project has recently begun to move toward the final stages, which involve human testing.

“We just started our human subjects studies and later on we will lead toward clinical studies, in which we will work with patients from Sylvester Cancer Center,” Erickson said.

Aside from Ge and Erickson, the other three graduate students who helped in the project were Dr. Banghe Zhu, graduate research assistant Steven Regalado and Bhavani Jayachandran, who was the first master's student to graduate under Dr. Godavarty.

NEWS FLASH

FIU

T.Y. Hilton sets single season receiving yards record

Freshman wide receiver T.Y. Hilton became the program's all-time single season leader in yards against Florida Atlantic University on Nov. 29.

He caught four passes for 99 yards and two touchdowns to give him a total of 969 yards surpassing former Golden Panther Cory McKinney for the top spot.

McKinney finished the football team's inaugural season with 890 yards.

There is one game left on the Golden Panthers' schedule against the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers on Dec. 6.

LOCAL

Man shot in Dadeland Mall

A man was shot in Dadeland Mall in Kendall on Dec. 1 during an armored car robbery, according to *The Miami Herald*.

Men dressed in black clothing and boots rushed through the closed Limited and Express stores.

They then ran through the mall and escaped out the north side, witnesses said.

A red Dunbar armored car was waiting outside the store surrounded by police. This may be the vehicle targeted by the robbers.

Police reported they saw two men fleeing holding a money bag. The shooting occurred at approximately 11:15 a.m.

The man was airlifted to the Ryder Trauma Center in Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Gay rights group to protest Gov. Crist's wedding

A gay rights group, Impact Florida, that wants all Floridians to have the right to marriage, plans to protest Gov. Crist's wedding.

Crist plans to marry his fiancée Carole Rome on Dec. 12 at the First United Methodist Church in St. Petersburg.

Impact Florida said the demonstration will be peaceful.

– Compiled by Sergio Bonilla

SENATORS LEARN



JOSEPH KOSANKE/THE BEACON

AND MY JOB IS...: Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Ombudsman Larry Lunsford addressed Student Government- University Park senators concerning his responsibilities in Student Affairs on Nov. 24.

Stress enhances mental problems

DISORDERS, page 1

college mental health services about the need to extend access to treatment.”

Counting substance abuse, the study found that nearly half of young people surveyed have some sort of psychiatric condition, including students and non-students.

Personality disorders were the second most common problem behind drug or alcohol abuse as a single category.

The disorders include obsessive, anti-social and paranoid behaviors that are

not mere quirks but actually interfere with ordinary functioning.

The study authors noted that recent tragedies such as fatal shootings at Northern Illinois University and Virginia Tech have raised awareness about the prevalence of mental illness on college campuses.

“For many, young adulthood is characterized by the pursuit of greater educational opportunities and employment prospects, development of personal relationships, and for some, parenthood,” the authors said. These circumstanc-

es, they said, can result in stress that triggers the start or recurrence of psychiatric problems.

The study was released Monday in *Archives of General Psychiatry*.

It was based on interviews with 5,092 young adults in 2001 and 2002.

Olfson said it took time to analyze the data, including weighting the results to extrapolate national numbers. But the authors said the results would probably hold true today.

The study was funded with grants from the National Institutes of

Health, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the New York Psychiatric Institute.

Dr. Sharon Hirsch, a University of Chicago psychiatrist not involved in the study, praised it for raising awareness about the problem and the high numbers of affected people who don't get help.

“Imagine if more than 75 percent of diabetic college students didn't get treatment,” Hirsch said. “Just think about what would be happening on our college campuses.”

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If book buying system succeeds at UP, north campus will follow suit

BOOKSTORE, page 1

than that,” said Dan Salzverg, University Park's Bookstore assistant manager.

Once a student has purchased their books through the system they have two options: to wait until the Spring semester starts and pick up the books with a valid student I.D. at the Bookstore or have the books delivered to their home. A shipping and handling fee must be paid, however.

The new registration integration system is not available for Biscayne Bay Campus students just yet. Since UP's Bookstore is much larger than BBC's, the University decided to try it out at UP first.

If successful, the system will be available to BBC students for the next Summer semester. However, for it to work, students need to return their books before the next term begins, according to UP Bookstore Manager Meaghan Connelly.

By students purchasing used books through the integrated system, it will make not only their lives easier but ours as well ...

Meaghan Connelly, manager
UP Bookstore

She stated how important it is for students to return used books back before the end of the semester. In return there would be more used books available for the new and returning students every semester.

“Only 10 percent of students return their books before the semester ends and then there are those that try to re-

turn them in the beginning or middle of the semester; they don't get back half of what it cost them in the first place,” Connelly said.

If the book is needed, the Bookstore will buy it back unless there is a new edition for it.

According to Connelly, the registration integration system has been implemented in over 100 universities around the country.

Those students who did not select books when they registered should not worry. They can still go back into Panthersoft and add them to their shopping cart. The due date for the payments will be around the time Spring semester starts and when the books are in stock.

“By students purchasing used books through the integrated system, it will make not only their lives easier but ours as well. We will know what books need to be purchased and ordered for them,” Connelly said.

THE BEACON

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New journalism course focuses on environment

BRITON ALONSO
Contributing Writer

This Spring semester, students will be able to learn about Mother Nature and her relationship with the media.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications will start offering environmental journalism, a course focusing on environmental issues faced by both the local and global ecosystem.

The class will be taught by Juliet Pinto, SJMC assistant professor with a master's degree from the University of Miami.

"I have always been passionate about this subject and wondered how we could bring it to the SJMC," said Pinto. "The school is beginning to focus on special topics such as health and new media, so I thought this would be a great time to start."

The course is listed in Panthersoft as Media and Mass Communication "Special Topics" (MMC 4936 sec. B54). Its prerequisite is Writing Strategies (MMC 3104C), but it can be waived for students outside SJMC who wish to enroll.

Although there will only be one section of the class, which will take place Mondays from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., more sections will be offered in the future if interest grows.

The course is currently not a graduation requirement for journalism majors, and students from different areas within SJMC can benefit from the information this three-credit elective will offer.

"Advertisers will be selling green products, and public relations specialists will be dealing with eco-companies and interested consumers," said Pinto. "And of course, it will be imperative that journalists have an understanding of this subject."

Various environment-related issues will be discussed, beginning with those topics closest to home such as the preservation of the Everglades, the sugar company buy-outs and beach access. The course will also tackle international issues such as energy conservation, natural resource consumption, species preservation, green products and eco-friendly companies, among others.

"[The course] would be great for anyone who is interested in being informative on environmental issues," Pinto said.

Marine Science will also participate in the course's offering, although according to Pinto, their specific involvement has yet to be determined.

"[The Marine Science Program] focuses on the coastal environment, and we will too," said Pinto. "It is all combined."

The course is also meant to bring the two departments closer together, according to Allan Richards, SJMC associate dean.

"Science students don't particularly know how to write, and journalists do not know much about science, so it should help everyone," Richards said.

Pinto also stated that nobody will be left behind. Both SJMC students and students from other schools within the University will be able to take the class.

"We are definitely going to find a middle ground between the students outside SJMC without writing experience and the writers with no science background," Pinto said.

Ana Alvarez, a journalism major minoring in environmental science, plans to take the course.

"I want to take from the class a better understanding of our local ecology, which will help me understand all environmental

DECK THE HALLS



NATALYA COHEN/THE BEACON

YULE TIME: Cedric Margron, senior broadcast journalism major, assists in decorating the upper part of the Christmas tree in Panther Square on Nov. 26. A tree trimming ceremony was scheduled for Dec. 2.

issues better," Alvarez said. "I also really care about problems such as the deforestation going on in Southern Asia. The people there do not have a voice and nobody defends them."

Pinto plans on bringing several guest speakers and using multimedia to enhance the class experience.

"Environmental conservation is one of the biggest issues facing us all," Pinto said.

Taking the stress out of gift-giving with homemade treats

The end of the semester is here and it's time to celebrate. We celebrate being able to sleep in late and the fact that we have no homework, but there are other celebrations happening. It is, of course, the most wonderful time of the year: the holidays.

It is the time of year that we toast, whether with eggnog or Manischewitz doesn't matter. It is the time to relish in winter's glory and, of course, everyone's favorite part: the gift-giving.

But then reality sets in. We are college students – broke college students. Gift-giving falls upon us, not in its snow-capped majesty but as a black, smothering cloud, making us turn to anxiety, stress and the constant check of bank accounts to make sure we didn't overdraw.

We do it every year. We take the hits and run up our credit card bills. But this year, maybe we can soften the blow and turn gift-giving into its normal happy self. Here are some of my tricks of the trade.

Make your gifts. Chances are that the foodie gifts you make in your

kitchen will be perceived as thoughtful, as opposed to the Best Buy gift card you usually get your niece or nephew. Also, when you make something for someone you love during the holidays, you pack a secret ingredient in there that goodies from Godiva just don't have – love.

This year, I am treating all my loved ones to special holiday treats. It's the most wonderful time of the year, mostly because we stop counting calories and gorge ourselves on all the bad (good) stuff.

My favorite homemade treats that always capture 'oohs and ahs' are chocolate-dipped morsels. Take the person you are making the gift for – you know their weakness, their favorite sinful treat. Take the treat and dip it in chocolate. There is no way you can go wrong.

My best friend, for example, is an Oreo-aholic. These cookies are her drug of choice throughout the year. So during the holidays, I take her favorite treat and step it up – making it the temptation of temptations.

I make a double boiler on my stove

top by placing a glass bowl over a pot with boiling water. I add the chocolate of choice – if you are planning on making me this treat, I suggest dark chocolate – and stir it until it is melted and smooth.

As for the cookie, I take two forks and lower the Oreo into the pot of velvety goodness and quickly turn twice in the chocolate to coat it.

I say quickly because that deliciousness that is the creamy center tends to melt when introduced to hot chocolate over a pot of boiling water. If you aren't skilled enough to dip the entire cookie and avoid the mess, just dip half of the cookie in, and pull it out. This will give you a neat, more visually pleasing look, with half of the cookie coated in tasty chocolate and the other half exposed.

After dipping, place the cookie on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper, and let the cookie sit until the chocolate has hardened. Do not put the goods in the refrigerator to cool because it will cause them to sweat once you take them out to package. The same goes for anything else you want to dip: strawberries, candy canes, homemade chocolate chip cookies, pretzels, macaroons, etc.

The ultimate chocoholic gift is when you make your friends a variety box, dipping each different thing in different types of chocolate from white to milk to dark.

For an artsy effect, once the first dipping of chocolate has hardened, take melted white chocolate and tap into your inner Jackson Pollock by creating swirl designs on the cookies or fruit of choice. It will take your friends and family members back to the day they wandered through a museum of modern art, maybe with you.

Another fun thing to do is mix together all the dry ingredients to your favorite recipe. I personally make a killer stuffed mushroom appetizer that everyone raves about. I take most of the ingredients, like bread crumbs and grated Pecorino Romano, and package them in a stylish, maybe even festive, jar. Inside, I place the directions on how to finish making my delectable treats.

This present only really works when the person you give it to is constantly bugging you for your culinary secrets. When they open your secret dry mix for grandma's chocolate chip cookies, or your famous jalapeño corn bread, these epicureans will jump for

joy.

In the end, anything you're good at in the kitchen can be made into a great holiday present. When you think about it, getting someone a gift card or a body wash set really only says, "I don't know you." But surprising them with your handmade and homemade treats will be a hit. It says, "I listen to you," and "I put my time into this because I care."

This season is for celebrating, not for a competition over who can spend the most money or for worrying about spending it.

Don't stress yourself out with the gift-giving process. Make something full of love for those people who support you throughout the year. The holidays are supposed to be fun – don't sweat it.

So when someone asks you what you're getting your aunt, cousin, sister, boss, teacher or nephew, just tell them – you are getting them food-gasms. Happy holidays! See you next term.

Need help with a recipe or finding a place to eat, Bianca is here to help! Send any questions, comments or foodgasm ideas to bianca.rojas@fiusm.com



FOODGASM

BIANCA ROJAS

THE SOAPBOX: An Op-Ed Column

SGC-UP prioritizes FIU reputation

In the few decades FIU has private life.”
been around, it has managed to grow into one of the finest research universities in the country.

With few exceptions, the credibility of FIU and its students is above reproach. That is until the emergence of *Juicycampus.com*, a malicious Web site designed to spread falsehoods.

On Nov. 24, the Student Government Council-University Park voted on a resolution to help protect our prestigious University; a recommendation to the administration to ban *Juicycampus.com* from our online network. (Meaning that the site could not be accessed while logged on to the Internet from FIU.)

We recognize that asking the University to ban a Web site is an extreme measure. However, it is a representation of how extreme the situation with the site has become. What started off as shallow insults has become a cesspool of lies and accusations. Some of which are as extreme as rape.

The Beacon's editorial denouncing our final decision makes several strong arguments. However, we do not feel that the banning of the site would infringe on anyone's First Amendment Rights.

I would like to reference an article by Robert S. Barker, a University Distinguished Professor of Law at Duquesne University. In the article Baker gives a concise rundown of free speech.

“First, ‘freedom of speech,’ like almost all other rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, is a limitation only on governmental conduct. Private individuals and institutions, when not acting in concert with government, are free to set and apply their own standards of speech in matters of

COMMENTARY



JENNI FUENTES

Essentially FIU would fall into this category. As an institution, it can restrict activities related to free speech on its grounds. For example, in the past, individuals from highly conservative Christian sects would preach at FIU. However, these demonstrations were filled with hate speech and intolerance.

hate speech and intolerance.

So in accordance with student wishes, these demonstrations are no longer permitted. Even when they were, they were only allowed in specifically designated areas.

Furthermore while on FIU grounds, everyone's Second Amendment Rights are negated as clearly stated in the Student Code of Conduct. Only police officers are allowed to carry firearms while on campus.

Even housing students aged 21 and over are not allowed to possess alcohol in their dorms.

The reason for these restrictions is simple; safety.

It is our hope that the FIU administration will follow our recommendation. After all, other prestigious Universities such as Yale University, Duke University and Ball State University have taken similar actions toward the site.

We are confident the actions taken by the Senate will help maintain the integrity of our university and most importantly, that of our student body.

Lastly the SGC-UP calls for all students and individuals to boycott the site. Even if FIU follows our recommendation, the Internet is accessible from countless coffee shops, malls and bedrooms. Only by a joint effort can the site ever truly be stopped.

Jenni Fuentes is Senator-at-Large for SGC-UP

1 NEW MSG

Dependence on texting apparent in class

NEDA GHOMESHI
Staff Writer

It is no secret that over the last few years, text messaging has surpassed voice communication for a unique group of people, namely teenagers and college students.

It has changed our lives and how we communicate with one another. It is easy to use and it's discrete. When we see or hear something exciting, we text our friends immediately to let them share in the excitement.

However, text messaging does have its downfalls as well.

It affects our grammar and vocabulary. It distracts us from class lectures and meetings, and sometimes makes us forget to put aside our text message lingo to write in formal English.

I'm constantly texting to my friends and family. It's the best and easiest form of communication.

Text messaging has even become more convenient for parents because they are able to stay connected with their kids without being an annoyance, which we all know our parents can be at times. It's simple, and right to the point.

“Text messaging allows me to let my parents know where I am and what I'm doing. This way, I don't have to call them,” said Andrea Noriega, a freshman majoring in business.

Another benefit of text messaging is that it's discrete and does not add to the noise pollution. It is far less annoying than having to listen to the

life story of the person next to you on the bus to BBC.

Despite its benefits, text messaging has created a few problems. It is easy for people to text while they are engaged in a discussion or attending another task.

Unable to talk on the phone, students sometimes use text messaging to send a quick note out even during a class session.

Some teachers specifically ban the use of phones, including text messaging.

Even if you know you shouldn't be texting in class, the curiosity that overcomes you when you find out you have a new message is often too alluring to ignore, which makes texting a prime distraction for students.

Focus can be lost and teachers may get frustrated. But, like any other new technological development, appropriate adaptation in social settings will take time.

Another problem that truly stands out with text messaging is the effect that it has on our vocabulary, spelling and grammar.

Young folks, including myself, tend to minimize a word or a set of words when writing a message.

By shortening a word, we get to write less, which is always pleasant. However, as students, we need to understand the difference between the text mes-

sage lingo and formal writing and avoid mixing the two.

English Professor Ben Lauren describes text messaging as a new genre of writing.

“Students need to recognize it is a genre that requires a certain mode of communicating,” Lauren said.

He explained that many students use abbreviations within their papers.

“A big part of the style of texting is to emphasize speed of response over proper grammar or syntax,” Lauren said.

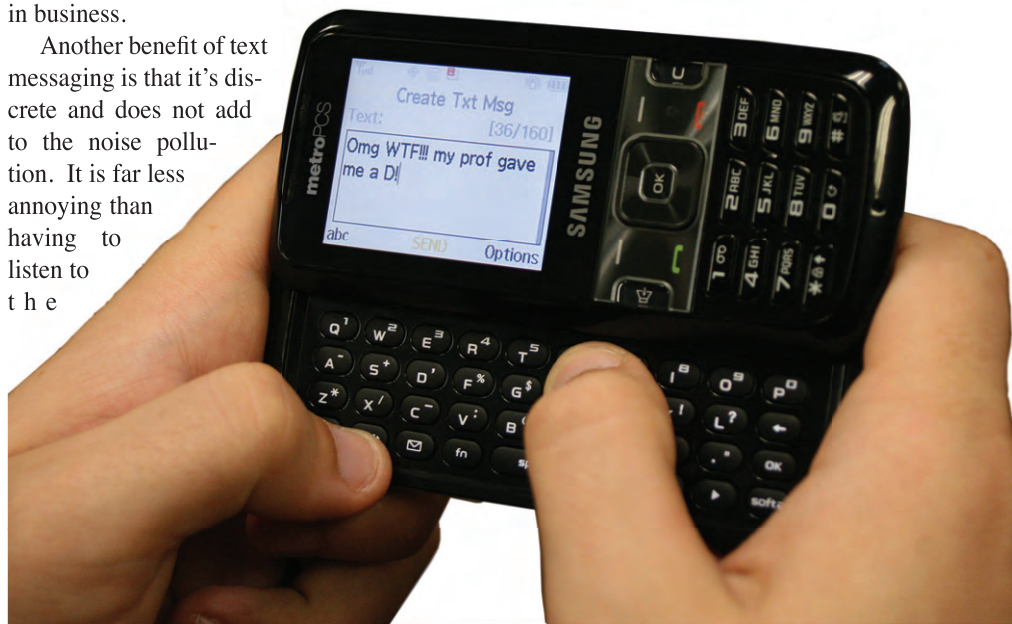
We need to make sure that the convenience of text messaging does not negatively impact our ability to communicate in proper English when using other mediums.

“Sometimes when I'm writing a research paper, I forget to be formal and catch myself using a lot of abbreviations,” said freshman and marketing major Kristjana Magnusdottir.

Like any other technology, text messaging must find its comfortable place in our lives without unduly affecting our other behaviors.

It keeps households informed of each other's activities and whereabouts.

A few adjustments are needed in how we use text messaging in order to make it a respectable social tool in addition to it being an extraordinary communication medium.



GIOVANI GUARRAMA/THE BEACON

Learning English vital, should be required for citizens

CHRIS GREEN
Staff Writer

Imagine this. You're standing in line trying to renew your auto tag.

It's Friday, it's hot and you're last in line of what seems like a million people.

You're finally next in line, but the person in front of you doesn't speak or understand English.

What happens if they speak a different language, perhaps German or Portuguese, or the teller doesn't know Spanish?

Someone has to be found to translate, and the process is held up.

It has been widely debated lately whether or not American citizenship tests and drivers license exams should be administered solely in English.

Not only should these tests be given in English, but all other exams, tests and applications should be as well. In addition, the policy of knowing the most commonly spoken language in order to enter a country has been a practiced worldwide. And, as if that weren't enough, it's a practice that could just simply save us all a ton of time and aggravation.

America would hardly be the only nation to follow such a policy.

Many European countries around

the world require new citizens to know the national language before they move there. Take the Netherlands for example. In order to move there, it is required that all potential citizens become fluent in Dutch.

“We had to learn the language before we moved there,” said Jarod Rosello, a former local high school instructor who is now studying at Penn State. “It made life a lot easier for me and my at-the-time fiancé. And finding a job was also easier.”

Learning the language is also becoming increasingly popular in other nations in the European Union, as numerous countries are debating the

idea, some even putting the idea up to vote during national elections.

Perhaps one of the most dangerous things about this is the fact that people are more prone to accidents if they aren't able to read and comprehend warnings.

Giving these tests in English could potentially save lives.

Now while the idea of a country with no defined national language, in which everyone can still speak their native languages is indeed a noble one, it is not a reasonable one.

While one might believe that they are being slighted by having to learn a new language in order to get a license

or apply for a loan, it is in the best interests for the whole country.

Not only can learning the most commonly spoken language be beneficial to you in terms of finding a job and getting certain licenses, it can also improve safety.

In addition, learning another language has proven to be beneficial to a person's mind. And in the end, it just saves us all a lot of time and energy.

Send you thoughts about this article (preferably in English) to opinion@fiusm.com

YEAR'S BEST

Counting down the top albums of 2008

CHRIS TOWERS
Asst. Life! Editor

Looking back on the best music of the past year, I think the most striking thing is how normal it all sounds.

This list is littered with bands whose influences sound firmly grounded in the music of the past, invoking comparisons of everything from the Talking Heads to AC/DC and even some gospel. You won't find much genre-bending here, just the 10 best albums of the past year.

10. KANYE WEST - *808S & HEARTBREAK*

It is really easy to hate on Kanye West with his massive ego and his, at times, perplexing musical and personal decisions.

Unfortunately for those who do wish to, the man is also extremely talented and, on his fourth album, he takes a step to the side, moving away from standard rap, and a giant step forward, creating the most densely layered and atmospheric hip-hop record since DJ Shadow's *Endtroducing*.

9. THE DRIVE BY TRUCKERS - *BRIGHTER THAN CREATION'S*

COMMENTARY



CHRIS TOWERS

DARK

Following the departure of third songwriter Jason Isbell, Patterson Hood and Mike Cooley further define their roles as the serious paternal figure and the hard partying and hard living troublemaker, respectively. They play these roles up for some of the best songs of their careers.

8. THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM - *THE '59 SOUND*

The Bruce Springsteen comparisons come early and often for this punk group, and it fairly suits them.

Borrowing the riotous roar of Springsteen's early album vocals and longing lyrical style while mixing in the thrash of punk music makes this the best punk album since Against Me's *New Wave*.

7. MY MORNING JACKET - *EVIL URGES*

Stripping away the echo and shine off of their previous albums, *Evil Urges* finds My Morning Jacket at their most soulful.

From the ominous, album opening, quasi-hippie anthem "Evil Urges" to the grooving closer "Touch Me I'm Going To Scream Pt. 2," Jim James and crew present their most wide ranging album and also their best.

6. CONOR OBERST AND THE

MYSTIC VALLEY BAND- CONOR OBERST

This decade's next Bob Dylan silently released his first solo effort, and it might just be his most consistent release.

Continuing his trend of reining in his lyrical ambitions for the sake of the song, this album probably contains some of the best melodies Conor's ever come up with, including "Danny Callahan," one of the best songs of the year.

5. ATMOSPHERE - *WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS YOU PAINT THAT SH*T GOLD*

This Minneapolis hip-hop duo move toward a more third-person story telling style, and live sound to the music has paid off huge dividends on their sixth album, as it is both their best and most sold album to date.

4. THE RACONTEURS - *CONSOLORS OF THE LONELY*

Jack White's personality dominates the band on stage, and while he and Brendan Benson share vocal duties, White is the star of this album. Whether it's incredible guitar solos or the harrowing murder tale, "Carolina Drama," there is no mistaking who the spotlight shines on here.

3. THE HOLD STEADY - *STAY POSITIVE*

Turning his attention toward the after party, lead singer Craig Finn examines the effects of the kind of hard partying detailed in their previous work, urging his subjects to adopt the album's tongue-in-cheek title as a mantra. The highest point is when the solo in "Lord I'm Discouraged" threatens to lift the song ever higher and higher until it crashes down, unable to sustain its own lofty heights.

2. DR. DOG - *FATE*

Not straying too far from their Beatles influenced roots, *Fate* simply finds a more mature group of musicians finding ways to improve on their guitar, bass, drum pop songs. Nothing fancy here, just an collection of 11 stellar songs and not a weak moment among them.

1. VAMPIRE WEEKEND - *VAMPIRE WEEKEND*

Work your way through all of the hype and backlash surrounding this album, and you might find yourself wondering what all of the fuss is about.

There is nothing offensive or groundbreaking about the band to inspire that type of reaction.

In fact, all you'll find is an unassuming four piece group, singing songs about their hometown and making references to Peter Gabriel and vampires over 11 perfectly crafted pop songs. That's enough for me.

Novel highlights negatives of sorority life, ignores positive

"Pledged: The Secret Life of Sororities," a novel by Alexandra Robbins, is the talk of the town every semester when new girls interested in going Greek start looking at potential sororities they might like to pursue.

At the beginning of each Fall semester, when the Panhellenic Council holds its rush week, I have had girls come up to me and ask me if we haze, and if I had read the book "Pledged," questioning me whether that is really the way things are in sororities.

While this book is definitely an interesting and entertaining novel, Robbins views sororities in a completely one-sided way, and she doesn't even mention any of the positives in joining a sorority.

Robbins goes undercover at certain southern universities.

She never mentions the actual university names or the actual sororities and the

members who she followed throughout her investigation for her book.

GREEK LIFE



AMANDA BATHCELOR

Throughout the novel, Robbins discusses issues such as hazing, where pledges have to lie on the floor in their bra and panties and let fraternity men come in and draw circles with a sharpie around the areas that these girls need to work on: where they are out of shape.

She also mentions eating disorders and issues where some of the sorority houses have to change their pipes every year because the acid from the vomit eats away at the pipes.

Robbins also mentions date rapes and, in short, every negative stereotype that comes with the term "sorority."

So why are so many girls at the University worried about what is mentioned in this book?

I guess because it's true.

No matter what we sorority girls say to

defend ourselves, we cannot ignore the fact that these things happen. Maybe it doesn't happen with our own particular chapter at FIU, but maybe it happens in another chapter of our organization in another state.

"Books like 'Pledged' are always only going to show the negative aspects of Greek life," said Janet Careaga, a sophomore majoring in journalism. "They have to find the really crazy stories to write about because that is what people want to read."

As the semester comes to an end and women are looking into the different sororities on campus, I urge them to keep a few things in mind.

I am a sorority woman myself, and I am proud of the sororities and fraternities that we have here at the University.

"Nobody really cares to know about the good things that Greeks accomplish," said Careaga. People want to read the juicy stuff that is kept under wraps. There are only select sororities and fraternities that take it upon themselves to haze but, sadly, all of us

become stereotyped."

However, even FIU has had some cases of hazing and organizations have had to be dealt with.

To my understanding, nothing has ever happened here that is to the extreme of what has happened in the book "Pledged," but the most important thing to always remember is that nobody can ever force you to do anything you are uncomfortable doing.

If you are pledging a sorority and are asked to partake in something you do not want to do, or feel uncomfortable doing, say no. And if your so-called "sisters" want you to do something that would make you uneasy, is that really sisterhood?

That is not an organization you really want to be a part of.

And for those out there who think some forms of hazing are okay because it teaches discipline, remember, you are not mothers, or fathers for the fraternities out there. You are sisters or brothers, and sisters do not stand over you. They stand beside you.

CALENDAR

WED • DEC. 3

THURS • DEC. 4

WHAT: Art Miami
WHERE: Midtown Miami. NE. First Avenue between NE 32nd and NE 31st Streets
WHEN: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$15- One day pass, \$20- Multi-day pass

WHAT: FIU Men's Basketball vs. Florida Memorial *
WHERE: U.S. Century Bank Arena
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE with valid Student ID

WHAT: Carlos Mencia
WHERE: The Hard Rock Live. One Seminole Way. Hollywood.
WHEN: 8 p.m. & 10:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$37

WHAT: The Sounds
WHERE: Revolution. 200 W. Broward Blvd. Ft. Lauderdale.
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Prices Vary

WHAT: Fountain Miami 2008
WHERE: 2505 N. Miami Avenue. Miami
WHEN: Daily
HOW MUCH: \$5

WHAT: Holiday Fantasy of Lights
WHERE: Tradewinds Park. 3600 W. Sample Road. Coconut Creek.
WHEN: 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$9 - \$12

WHAT: Jazz It Up
WHERE: The Original Literary Cafe. 12325 NE 6th Avenue. North Miami
WHEN: 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.
HOW MUCH: \$5

*Listen to WRGP Radiate FM on 88.1, 95.3, 96.9 FM for live game coverage hosted by Andrew Julian

WHAT: Art Basel Miami Beach
WHERE: Miami Beach Convention Center. 1901 Convention Center Drive. South Beach.
WHEN: Daily
HOW MUCH: \$35- One-day pass, \$55- Two-day pass, \$75- Permanent pass, \$15- Evening tickets

WHAT: The Slackers
WHERE: Churchill's Pub. 5501 NE Second Avenue. Miami
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Prices Vary

WHAT: Classic Albums Live
WHERE: Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. One Seminole Way. Hollywood
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Prices Vary

WHAT: Karaoke Night
WHERE: Dave & Buster's. 3000 Oakwood Boulevard. Hollywood
WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Prices Vary

WHAT: Felipe Lamoglia. Grammy Winning Afro-Cuban, Brazilian Jazz Fusion.
WHERE: The Van Dyke Cafe. 846 Lincoln Road. Miami Beach.
WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Prices Vary

WHAT: FIU Art: Master's Mystery Art Show
WHERE: The Ritz Carlton - South Beach. One Lincoln Road. Miami Beach
WHEN: 12 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free and open to the public

- Compiled by Paulo O'Swath

Finding the right gift for the geek on your shopping list

Now that temperatures are dropping into the sixties, the Floridian winter dons its sunglasses and two-inch wide scarf to signal the approaching holiday and gifting season.

Shopping for friends and family may have earned you a bruise or two from fielding black Friday mobs, but at least it's done. The real question is what do you get the technolusters in your life?

Chances are, the techies on your lists probably have all the latest gadgets on the market. But before you double-bandage your mall madness bruises, we've got some gift ideas that'll save you from facing the war torn shops again.

So pull on your lab coats and goggles (it helps get into the spirit) and go shopping online for the geeks you love.

COUNT THE STARS

Take your favorite scientist out for a night of star watching. What greater gift can you give than spending time philosophizing about your places in the universe, especially when it's free?

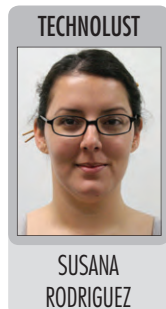
The Southern Cross Astronomical Society, Miami's 78-year-old amateur astronomers society, meets every Saturday at 8:00 p.m. at Bill Sadowski Park to watch the stars and planets. No telescopes necessary, the society brings their collection of high-powered telescopes to the park for visitors to use.

Don't forget to slather on some bug cream to not have to play "guess-the-bite" in the morning. Visit <http://scas.org> or call (305) 661-1375 for more details.

A USB HUB

For the computer geek in your life with a desktop buried under peripherals and wires

meant to enhance their digital life, get them a USB hub to plug them all in at once.



SUSANA RODRIGUEZ

Nurse their world takeover dreams with a Doomsday Device Hub from <http://www.thinkgeek.com>. For \$39.99, you get a four-port USB hub that would match Dr. Evil's laboratory décor: a metal box with three switches that activate a central, big, red button.

Relieve stress by pushing the button to hear explosion sound effects, metaphorically vaporizing real world worries. At last, villainy is at your fingertips!

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First semester's reflections

For my last article I wanted to fully express my opinions on my first semester of college.

It's kind of hard to sum it all up in a couple of words.

This semester has been the most stressful, most exciting and most memorable time in my life, and I know that it will not be the last.

There are several things that I have learned as a freshman here at the University.

For one, the transition from high school to college is not exactly an easy one but it can be if you do it the right way.

The best part about the University is that there are so many activities and organizations that one will never be bored, that is, if one knows how to correctly manage time.

With the fraternities and sororities, football games and parties, student government and programming councils, there is always something to do on campus, all of which are beneficial to one's development as a student and as a leader.

Of course, there are always a few things that we do not like about school.

Some things never change. I hate waking up in the morning to go to school.

Trust me when I say that next semester, I will not be picking classes at the crack of dawn.

Next semester I will be waking up to warm coffee and a decent breakfast, as opposed to the ringing of my alarm clock and a pop tart on the way out.

One thing that did change was the workload.

Back in high school, I never had to

study.

I was able to balance five Advanced Placement classes, varsity sports, and several honor societies, and still manage to pull off a great GPA.

However, that all changes in college.

In order to be involved on campus and pull off a decent GPA, you have to put most, if not all, of your efforts into studying.

I learned that the hard way.

That's one thing that you will never be able to avoid at school, which is kind of disappointing because, in my opinion, school

would be so much better without the going to class part.

As for myself, I'm in it for the campus activities.

That's where I think one can learn the most about oneself and how to do things in life.

I don't think one can gain any life skills by sitting in a classroom and listening to the rantings of a professor.

This first semester at the University has taught me a lot.

I have learned how to study, the hard way. I have learned not to exceed my workload unless I want to be pulling my hair out by the end of the week, and I have learned to try to balance social activities with school work.

That way, I'll be able to have a life but not be failing all of my classes at the same time.

I will most definitely apply these techniques for the next semester, although I know that I am not done learning.

FIU still has much to teach me.

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The French have given mankind existentialism, whipped cream and the ménage a trois. Learn why Paris is known as the city of romance, and get to know firsthand the age-old art of French kissing.

Rome, Italy
For some reason, the girls in Rome like to strip down and jump into fountains. Thankfully, there are hundreds of beautiful fountains around the city. Live *la Vita Dolce* with a bevy of beauties who can't wait to take you home to their mamas.

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*The Promotion does not award any class or studies nor does it provide any university course credit.

MEN'S BASKETBALL NOTEBOOK

Team back from west coast trip; Hicks injured

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers return home from over 3,000 miles away to host Florida Memorial on Dec. 3 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

FIU lost in their cross-country trip to UCLA 89-54 on Nov. 29th at the Pauley Pavilion to drop their third contest in a row after beginning the season 3-1. Jrue Holliday contributed 20 points to lead a Bruin team that broke away from FIU early on and developed a 46-13 halftime advantage.

Forward Nikola Gacesa, who scored a season-best 21 points against the Bruins, has scored at least 14 points in three of his last four games and leads the Golden Panthers with a career-best 12.3 points per contest.

Florida Memorial, who plays in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, will give FIU their last

home game before they embark on three straight meetings on the road. The Golden Panthers will have to play the Fighting Lions with one man less, however, as FIU has lost yet another player to injury for an extended period of time.

BIG MAN DOWN

Starting center and pre-season Sun Belt conference 1st-teamer Russell Hicks fell to a stress fracture in his right ankle versus the Bruins and is expected to be out of action for 8-10 weeks.

The senior, who set an FIU record for blocks last season, is the latest of injuries that head coach Sergio Rouco has had to deal with. Guard Josue Soto (wrist), forwards Alex Galindo (ankle) and J.C. Otero (knee), and center Badara Endiaye (knee) have been out all season and will not be on the court in the foreseeable future.

The Niagara Falls native felt dis-

comfort during practice before the game and played just 19 minutes against UCLA. Hicks is averaging 8.1 points and nearly five rebounds per game this season.

COLDEST WINTER

Michael Dominguez has gone from being 10-17 from three-point territory his first two games in a Golden Panther uniform to hitting just three of his next 28 attempts. The junior swingman has managed to keep his scoring average at 10 points, but has endured a tough slump in part because of opponents' awareness of his ability. Rouco believes Dominguez is getting extra attention from foes.

"Guys being in your face all game," Rouco said. "Opponents are keying in on him."

Dominguez is shooting 37 percent from the field and 88 percent from the foul line.



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

NOT AGAIN: Russell Hicks became the fifth Golden Panther to miss time this season. He leaves a big hole in the front court depth chart



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Mighty Gators and Crimson Tide in titanic tilt for SEC

JOHN ZENOR
AP Writer

No. 1 Alabama has pushed aside all comers on its way to a perfect regular season, climbed to the top of the rankings and stuck around for quite awhile.

No. 2 Florida is a 10-point favorite to topple the top-ranked Crimson Tide Saturday in the Southeastern Conference championship game in Atlanta, where 'Bama opened the season as an underdog to Clemson.

"I ain't worried about that at all," Tide cornerback Javier Arenas said. "It's been like that the whole season, starting with Clemson and going to Georgia. You're accustomed to it now."

Still, is that any way to treat a team that just walloped archrival Auburn 36-0?

"As well as they've been playing, it doesn't surprise me," Tide linebacker Cory Reamer said. "They've been

putting up 50 points, beating people by four touchdowns. Anybody that gets in their way, they're just moving over.

"People have written us off as underdogs before and we've proven them wrong. It's nothing different."

Much of it could have to do with styles. The Tide has won with defense, special teams and the running game. Ho hum.

Maybe a team that routinely puts up huge offensive numbers is just more glamorous than one that is more known for shutting offenses down.

The Gators, meanwhile, even seemed a tad bemused by their status as fairly heavy favorites in a game between two teams vying for a spot in the BCS national championship game.

After all, even Florida has stumbled in a 31-30 loss to Mississippi before resuming its march through opponents. The Tide has had a couple of

close calls but managed to remain unblemished behind a defense that ranks second nationally against the run and yields the third-fewest points. (Florida is 12th and third in those categories, incidentally).

Tide players insist it's nothing new. They're used to seeing and hearing more about those other past or current national title contenders with high-powered offenses, like the Gators, Oklahoma, Texas and Texas Tech.

Tide coach Nick Saban said he doesn't need to use the underdog status as motivation for his players.

"I mean it doesn't matter," Saban said. "Florida has played well, and they've scored a lot of points. They haven't even had a close game other than the Ole Miss game. They've been a dominant team, and they certainly deserve all the accolades that their team gets because they've played extremely well all season long."

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TOURNAMENT TIME

Panthers selected to compete in NCAA championship

JONATHAN ALPERT
Asst. Sports Director

Following a school record 28-win season, the FIU volleyball team will make its first trip to the NCAA Volleyball Championship since 2002, when FIU won the Sun Belt tournament and earned the automatic berth.

FIU won the Sun Belt eastern division, and was the top-seeded team in the conference tournament before falling in the semifinals to New Orleans.

"It's a thrilling feeling," said Head Coach Danijela Tomic, with a hint of excitement in her voice. "I feel satisfied because I feel like we earned to be selected among the 64 teams. You know, the season that we had, we broke all kinds of school records. We didn't really have bad losses. Our only bad loss [was] against Memphis [and New Orleans]. University of Alabama-Birmingham is in the tournament, Iowa State is in the tournament, and of course, Western [Kentucky] and Middle [Tennessee]."

The Golden Panthers (28-6, 15-2 SBC) were buoyed by a top-25 RPI ranking (21st) and

quality road wins, coming at Clemson and WKU.

The Golden Panthers were flooded with awards this season after their excellent conference season, including Player of the Year Yarimar Rosa, all conference selections Isadora Rangel and Natalia Valentin and the Sun Belt coach of the year, awarded to Tomic for the second time.

"I'm glad that the committee recognized that and that they selected us," Tomic said.

FIU will open the tournament Dec. 5 at the O'Connell Center at the sub-regional host, the University of Florida, against the Colorado State Rams (22-6, 12-4 MWC) of the Mountain West Conference. The Rams were the MWC runner-up this year, finishing behind the Utah Utes.

"We know we're playing a very good team. We'll have to have everyone play their best for us to beat this team.

They're big, they play in a good conference, so it's going to take a lot, but the beauty of sport is that anything is possible on any given day," said Tomic about the Rams, who will bring their well-established program

to the Southeast for the opening weekend of the tournament.

CSU – ranked 22nd in the nation – will enter their 14th consecutive NCAA volleyball championship, but on a three game losing streak.

Colorado State may relish in being shipped to Gainesville after all, as this sub-regional is one of the feeder sites to the Fort Collins regional, which the Rams are slated to host on the second weekend of the championship.

FIU also has something to savor going into the tournament, the role of the underdog.

"We have the chance to go to the NCAA and do our best, and now we don't have any pressure," said two-time All-American Yarimar Rosa. Coach Tomic echoed these comments.

"We know that we're underdogs in this picture, which is good, I like to be underdog."

In addition to the records and awards, the Golden Panthers will have the opportunity to hang an NCAA banner in the U.S. Century Bank Arena, something that the volleyball squad hasn't done since 2002.

"I was just thrilled for our team, for the girls. I felt that with the regular season behind us, the obstacles we had to overcome, being so young, I just think it's going to be a great experience for them, and for our seniors, Mariana [Drumeva] and Vanessa [Romano].

tion she had to play, but she developed so fast, and she had a great tournament here. We felt that she played really well in those games."

Tomic has faced some issues with her team this season such as slow starts and playing down to the level of their op-

It's a thrilling feeling ... I feel satisfied because I feel like we earned to be selected among the 64 teams.

Danijela Tomic, head coach
Women's Volleyball

Especially Mariana, since she's been with us for four years, to finish her senior year like this, it's a happy ending story, a fairy tale," said Tomic, who was also very pleased with the performance of her younger players, as well as her veterans'.

"That's what is even more fun about this year: that we've seen this team grow so much, especially our freshmen. From our middles, Sabrina [Gonzalez] and Andrea [Lakovic], being pushed into position, originally, we were planning to redshirt Sabrina because of her inexperience in the game in the posi-

ponents, but the two-time SBC coach of the year is confident in her team being motivated for the tournament.

"Last night, the players went online to check on Colorado State. They know that [CSU] is a good team. They know they'll have to play really well to have a chance to beat them. If I need to extra-motivate them for the NCAA tournament, there's something wrong; that I haven't done a good job through the whole year to teach them what a competition is."

VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

Women's basketball beats NC State, falls to Auburn



MICHAEL COSTA/THE BEACON

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

FIU 58, N.C. STATE 42

Marquita Adley may sound a bit overconfident, but North Carolina State (5-2) probably would agree with her after FIU (1-4) defeated the Wolfpack 58-42 on Nov. 28 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

"Not to be cocky, but I think when we are going, we're unstoppable" Adley said.

The junior forward compiled 10 points and 13 rebounds for the Golden Panthers as they dropped a very formidable Wolfpack team from the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The Golden Panthers were able to handle NC State in the first half en route to a 30-18 lead. FIU forced 19 misses on 26 attempts from the field by NC State in the first half and the defensive effort carried into the second half as well.

The Wolfpack shot a season-low 28 percent from the field for the game. Despite a 23-point effort from Shayla Fields for NC State,

no other opposing player managed to score over four points.

FIU closed the game on a 12-2 run to seal the victory.

The win is the first victory against an ACC opponent since the Golden Panthers held off Florida State in a 1998 affair.

Monika Bosilj and Fanni Hutlassa led the way for FIU with 14 points each, and freshman point guard Michelle Gonzalez finished with 12 for the Golden Panthers.

AUBURN 66, FIU 51

Alli Smalley scored 21 points to lead No. 15 Auburn past Florida International 63-52 on Sunday to win the FIU Thanksgiving Classic.

Smalley earned tournament MVP honors as she averaged 15 points through the tournament games, and DeWanna Bonner added nine points and 12 rebounds for Auburn (7-0), which beat N.C. State 66-51 on Saturday in the opening-round game of the three-team event.

Monika Bosilj led FIU (1-5)

with 32 points and nine rebounds. The 32 points tied a career high for the junior guard, and the nine boards also tied a career best, which Bosilj has now accomplished five times.

Michelle Gonzalez also set a season and career best with nine assists, but the sophomore transfer also turned the ball over eight times. As a team, FIU committed 22 turnovers.

FIU kept it close in the opening minutes, but Auburn went on a 20-2 run to take control and led 34-20 at halftime. FIU committed 14 turnovers in the first half that resulted in 14 points for Auburn.

Despite being on the short end of a 15-point loss, FIU out shot Auburn (41.7 percent to 37.3 percent), and out rebounded the Tigers as well, 39-34.

The Golden Panthers were felled by not being able to sustain a run greater than 8-2 in the game.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

SHARPSHOOTER: Monika Bosilj matched her career high of 32 points in the FIU loss. Bosilj hit six threes, one shy of the FIU single-game record.