

Florida legislation proposes 6 percent increase to tuition

MARIELLA ROQUE
Staff Writer

While members of the Florida legislature are considering a 6 percent tuition, members of the University's administration are not considering an increase at all.

The House's budget currently recommends a mandated 6 percent increase, but it is yet to be seen whether the Senate will agree to the increase or make a different decision.

According to Steve Sauls, the University's vice president of Governmental Relations, University students will only experience the legislature's tuition increase and not one from the University itself.

"We've taken a lead advocacy role on behalf of student financial aid," Sauls said. "The President has spoken out repeatedly on behalf of financial aid."

"I'm told the Senate is considering something," said Sauls.

Both chambers have agreed to restore the \$300 million cut from state universities last year.

"That's very good news, that's worth over \$24 million to FIU," Sauls said. "The state doesn't seem to be cutting our budgets further and they're restoring money that was cut before and maybe provide some additional money beyond that, and some of that might be a small tuition increase."

Florida currently ranks 41 in the country in terms of tuition, although House Speaker Will Weatherford previously noted that it ranked 48.

"We were 48, but in recent years we are now 41," Sauls said. "There are nine states that have tuition on the aggregate less than us, so comparatively we are still a low-cost tuition state."

Last year, the Florida Board of Governors approved a request from

Walk the walk



PHILIPPE BUTEAU/THE BEACON

The National Organization of Women at FIU organized a "slut walk," which took place on April 3, to spread awareness about the many forms of violence against women.

the University to increase tuition by 15 percent.

"Despite the series of increases in tuition, some of our neediest students did not experience an

increase because they got more FIU scholarships and they got more student financial aid dollars," Sauls said.

The legislative session is set to

end May 3 and the joint budget at that point will be sent to Governor Rick Scott for his signature.

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Texting Service unfamiliar within University

MARIA BRITOS
Contributing Writer

When anyone has a concern or comment about transportation within the University, most students remain quiet or simply complain to their friends. What they don't know, or haven't heard of, is the Department of Parking and Transportation's BusBuzz Text Connect service.

Promoted on the buses and shuttles, this service is a text messaging service that provides bus routes and schedules, safety rules and allows riders to text comments and concerns. These texts are immediately replied the Department of Parking and Transportation with a list of options for the person to pick according to the purpose of

the text.

Lissette Hernandez, director of Parking and Transportation, said that this service is a partnership with the University and a vendor which Parking and Transportation has hired.

This vendor is called Solstice Transportation Group, which specializes in providing large institutions with the proper tools to develop better transportation systems. The department uses the company's services for bus passenger transportation consulting, evaluation and service performance analysis.

STG attends and participates in a variety of educational seminars and conferences provided by industry leading associations including the International Parking Insti-

tute, BusCon, the American Public Transit Association, the Parking Association of Georgia and the Carolinas Parking Association. Most of their clients include colleges and universities, city transit systems and larger institutions.

"This is how we hope to know how the bus service does on a daily basis and we can get firsthand information from the riders," said Hernandez. "We get a report weekly, aside for the immediate notification when an email or text is sent."

Hernandez also said that this service is covered by student tuition, which then is given back to students.

"It is part of the parking and transportation overall operation," said Hernandez.

"However, the problem is that the

service isn't being used as much as it should be and the little that it is used, the category with the highest feedback is the 'complaints.'"

"I have honestly never heard of it, but I'm guessing it could be beneficial to the buses," said Mitch Prieto, a sophomore public relations major, who commutes by bus from Modesto Maidique Campus to Biscayne Bay Campus on a daily basis.

The department expects this service to be promoted with more advertising around both campuses.

"The more this service is advertised and the riders are aware of it, the more effective it will be," said Hernandez.

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North Korea speaking of possible threat to US

JESSICA MESZAROS
Contributing Writer

While students and faculty went about their everyday tasks on Thursday, South Korea's defense minister announced that North Korea has moved a missile in range to its east coast.

According to The Associated Press, North Korea has been railing against U.S.-South Korean military exercises, which began in March and are scheduled to continue until the end of April. The North calls these

exercises "rehearsals for an invasion" and said it needs to defend itself with nuclear weapons.

Astrid Arraras, senior lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Relations, has been with the University for 13 years. She said that North Korea is doing this in a very public way on purpose.

"They want to intimidate, or create some fear in order for them to achieve whatever goals they want to achieve," said Arraras.

Arraras said that she saw pictures of Kim Jong-Un,

leader of North Korea, with a map in the background that supposedly illustrated desired targets for the missile.

The Pentagon announced that it will deploy a missile defense system to the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam to strengthen regional protection against a possible attack, according to AP.

"The U.S. is concerned that the production of all these weapons can escalate, and this can turn into our conflict," said Arraras. "So it's part of U.S. policy to reduce the production of

these weapons."

Arraras said that for the moment, North Korea and the United States are just showing force on both of their parts. She said that North Korea is indicating that it is a threat, and the U.S. is demonstrating that it is prepared to protect itself.

"Honestly, I don't think there is anyone that hasn't heard about it," said journalism freshman

Jose Dominguez. "I'm kind of annoyed that everyone is taking it as a joke."

Dominguez said that

there are many memes circulating around the Internet having to do with North Korea. Memes are photographs that usually have comical captions within them. He finds them funny because he feels the North Korean leader doesn't know what he is doing, but still believes him to be a serious threat to the nation.

Ghazal Soleimani is a doctoral candidate for the Department of Epidemiology. She said that sanctions in North Korea, or in general, aren't always

the best idea because they don't always

consider the people that suffer as a result.

"A lot of times they do these types of things as a plea for attention, and it's the corrupt leaders in those countries that are to blame, and I think it's really unfortunate," said Soleimani.

"We'll see what will be the response from the other countries, and we'll see if he goes through," said Arraras. "But it will be suicidal."

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WORLD NEWS

Putin urges peace talks to end Syria 'massacre'

President Vladimir Putin said the civil war in Syria has become "a massacre" that must be stopped through peace talks between the government and the opposition, and repeated Russia's firm rejection of calls for Syrian President Bashar Assad's ouster.

Speaking to the German ARD television in remarks released by the Kremlin on Friday, he rejected the Western criticism of Russia for continuing to supply weapons to Assad's regime.

Expert: Warlord Kony under pressure to free women

The fugitive African warlord Joseph Kony is jettisoning women and children in a possible desperate bid to keep his weakened group lean and mobile, an expert said Friday, after three women freed by the Lord's Resistance Army arrived home in Uganda after spending years in the bush.

Haiti historian who chronicled capital dies at 88

George Corvington, a prominent Haitian historian best known for his exhaustive study of the Caribbean nation's capital of Port-au-Prince, died Wednesday at age 88, a close friend said.

Fellow historian and longtime friend Georges Michel said that Corvington died peacefully in his sleep at his home in the capital he wrote so much about.

For more world news, check out www.FIUSM.com.

Federal Aviation Administration delays closing of control towers

JOAN LOWY
AP Staff

The closings of control towers at 149 small airports, due to begin this weekend because of government-wide spending cuts, are being delayed until mid-June, federal regulators announced Friday.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it needs more time to deal with legal challenges to the closures.

Also, about 50 airport authorities and other "stakeholders" have indicated they want to fund the operations of the towers themselves rather than see them shut down, and more time will be needed to work out those plans, the agency said in a statement.

The first 24 tower closures were scheduled to begin Sunday, with the rest coming over the next few weeks. Obama administration officials have said the closures are necessary to accomplish automatic spending cuts required by Congress. Despite the delay, the FAA said it will stop funding all 149 of the airport towers, which are operated by private contractors, on June 15. Under the new schedule, the closures will be implemented at once, rather than a gradual phase-in as had been planned. Airport operators in

several states, including Florida, Illinois and Washington state, and the U.S. Contract Tower Association, which represents the companies that operate contract towers, have filed lawsuits with the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington seeking to halt the closures.

The suits contend that the closures violated a federal law meant to ensure major changes at airports do not erode safety, and unfairly targeted the program for an outsized share of the more than \$600 million the agency is required to trim from its budget by the end of September.

"The administration has decided to make tower closures the poster child of sequestration (automatic spending cuts)," said the group's director, J. Spencer Dickerson. "We believe there are other ways they could have skinned this cat."

Federal officials have insisted that the closures wouldn't affect safety. And there is evidence that with improving safety, some of the closures would make economic sense.

It turns out that the FAA has been using 30-year-old data on aircraft collisions to justify the cost of operating many of the control towers, even though accident rates

have improved significantly over that time.

Had the FAA used more current data, it's probable that some low-traffic airport towers operated by private contractors would no longer have met the agency's criteria for funding, industry officials say. But the FAA has long been under pressure from members of Congress to open new towers at airports in their states, not to close them.

The FAA began paying contractors to staff and operate towers at a handful of small airports after President Ronald Reagan fired striking air traffic controllers in 1981. Today, there are 251 towers operated by private contractors at airports across the country at an average annual cost of more than \$500,000 each.

The closure plan is unrelated to the FAA's use of obsolete safety data to justify the contract tower program.

In 1990, the FAA developed a complicated cost-benefit methodology for the tower program that relies on accident data from 1983 to 1986 to determine how many accidents would be averted and lives saved if an airport had controllers working onsite. The safety data have never been updated, despite marked improvements in accident rates.

In 1983, there were 10.7 accidents for every 100,000 departures involving small planes, business jets and other non-airline flights in the U.S., according to the National Transportation Safety Board. By 2011, the latest year for which figures are available, that rate had dropped to 6.5 accidents per 100,000 departures. The commercial airline accident rate has also dropped, and fatalities have declined even more. There have been no passenger airline fatalities in the U.S. in more than four years, the longest period without fatalities since the dawn of the jet age half a century ago.

"None of the formulas have been updated since 1990, despite a very significant change in the aviation operating environment and the general aviation and commercial accident rates," the FAA said in a statement in response to questions from The Associated Press. "The FAA is in the process of updating this policy."

Agency officials offered no explanation for the oversight.

"The FAA methodology likely overestimates present-day collisions," the Congressional Research Service said in a recent report.

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Students gather, dress down to walk for a cause

LAUREN BANA
Staff Writer

This past Wednesday, I had the amazing opportunity to join the National Organization for Women at Modesto Maidique Campus at the first ever Miami SlutWalk.

There was an amazing turnout, and I couldn't believe how many strong women and men came out to spread awareness of rape culture in our community.

As we waited for the walk to begin, people were preparing signs, sharing ideas and discussing opinions.

"SlutWalk is one of many calls to action to put an end to victim blaming," said sophomore Anamaria Zambrano. "The victim is not at fault for rape. The rapist is."

I felt so proud to be a woman. Walking with other women, who passionately spoke their minds.

So many people were utilizing their right to protest. And all to confidently speak out against the epidemic of rape culture.

I had a chance to interview Gabriela Bonilla, a member of NOW, to discuss the overall

success of the SlutWalk, and ask how she felt this would impact the people of Miami as it opens its new chapter here.

She said that she was very pleased with how many people arrived to support victims of sexual abuse, and that she was "happy to see this movement reach people outside the FIU community, and had supporters from all different ages groups, especially happy to see so many men show up."

I was also surprised to see so many men coming out to, both, represent men who have been sexually abused, and to support their female friends. I think that this alone really shows the potential that Miami has to stand up for victims of sexual assault.

When I asked Bonilla what her stance was on how an event like this would affect Miami locals, she stated that it was an empowering experience to be a part of, and that she hopes for it to affect the people who witnessed it, and people who just heard about it.

I could tell that she was very passionate about this, and she really invoked a fiery spirit inside of me to continue to argue against



LAUREN BANA/THE BEACON

people who will ignorantly combat against this issue.

Though the turnout was impressive, Bonilla did have a few concerns about the accomplishments of the event and whether or not it got enough attention.

"[It] could have reached a larger audience in our education initiative," she said. "I still feel

like there are a lot of students, and people of the community, who don't understand the meaning behind the movement." During the walk Bonilla also voiced her opinion about the word 'slut' and what she believes is the meaning behind it.

"[It's] not conducive for an environment free of sexual

violence. The language we use to describe women is just another way in which we facilitate violence against women," she said.

"It's time Miami becomes intolerant to all forms sexual violence," she said, and I couldn't agree more.

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Miami Dade Transportation: a love/hate relationship

VINSON PRESSLEY
Staff Writer

I sit on the bus stop bench at the Biscayne Bay Campus waiting patiently for the number 75 bus to arrive. The bus pulls up -- after about 45 minutes -- and everyone sprints to catch it, but suddenly the bus driver turns off the bus and casually strolls off the vehicle without a care in the world.

Although our transportation system has a few issues with being on time and reliable, it does provide a great service to a lot of Miami natives and college students who rely on their services every day.

The Miami Dade Transit system gives a college student an affordable alternative to buying a car, especially for some of us on a tight budget. For just \$50 a month, thanks to the college discount bus pass, I can almost navigate the entire city without the financial strain of car insurance, car repairs,

gas money, etc. However, there are a few noticeable tradeoffs when someone chooses the bus system over the convenience of having a car.

Patience must become a virtue when relying on Miami's bus system -- sometimes people can rely on a bus schedule every time and sometimes I wonder if a bus schedule even exists.

Buses that are usually suppose to come every 20 to 30 minutes might arrive once every one to two hours depending on which bus someone is waiting for and the time of day.

This can be frustrating, especially when a college student has somewhere to go or is eager to get home after a long day, which is usually my case.

There is a remedy for this type of situation by leaving extra early to anticipate a long wait or finding other routes to arrive at my destination.

Thankfully Miami Dade's transportation system usually offers several different options to get to one location.

Although Miami Dade's Transportation system has its advantages, it also has char-

acter flaws.

A small percentage of MDT's bus drivers display unpredictable, irritable and curt attitudes toward passengers at times.

There have been several instances where I would ask a bus driver a simple question and was met with a very sharp response that was really unnecessary.

Maybe the bus driver had a bad day or experienced endless traffic, it doesn't make it right to take it out on passengers, but to me its no big deal. I just pay my bus fare and take my seat and usually laugh about the experience later on.

Sure our transportation system may not be perfect but I do recognize and appreciate the service they provide; without them, the task of getting from point A to point B would be very difficult and expensive for me.

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“ Although Miami Dade's Transportation system has its advantages, it also has character flaws. ”

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Students become creative with senior projects

ALFREDO APARICIO
Staff Writer

"It's an accumulation of our four years of working here. We are showing the FIU community what we have learned from the students and teachers in the program as well as bridging together people from different backgrounds, cultures and even states of times with these projects," said Julio Liverpool regarding his senior project on Jesse Owens titled "The Great Jesse Owens: The Fastest Man Alive!"

"It's a chance to demonstrate what Americans are potentially contributing to the world in the future."

Liverpool is just one of the 12 seniors who began presenting their senior projects on April 4 and 5, and will continue on April 11 and 12 at 8 p.m. in DM 150, where they had to write, direct, produce and star in their own 30 minute one-person shows.

Lucille Cocco, whose project is titled "The Lost Chord," struggled with choosing one person for her project, eventually deciding on Julie Andrews after hearing about her throat operation in 1997, which ruined her vocal range.

"When you come into the program and see other projects you start thinking 'what can I do' and how can I make it better, but the person choices you sometimes and when I saw an interview with Julie [Andrews] that made me cry I thought 'this is it.'"

One of the people Cocco originally considered was Marilyn Monroe, but Andrews' story reflected with her because singing

is something she enjoys to do as well.

"Ultimately, you don't do a person's life, you do a story that calls out to you and finding out she had lost her voice was something that touched me and that's how I connected to her even though I don't like her as a person."

Despite the requirements of a real person and the inclusion of dialogue, senior projects have little else preventing seniors from expressing themselves.

Stephanie Sandoval, whose senior project "Charcoal" will be based on Louise Brooks, values the importance of dialogue and emphasizes that dialogue should not just be something that should be included to meet requirements; they should speak to the audience about the character.

"You say just enough, give importance to the words. They shouldn't be extraneous or include more words than necessary," said Sandoval.

The project has also allowed Sandoval and her classmates to break about from conventions and explore new artistic techniques they have learned in class or on their own.

"This project is a way to break the mold and do something how we've always wanted to do it and take control if we've ever felt restricted in any way. We have an opportunity to go out of the box for some things but also learning to work with what we have."

Jason Caceres, whose senior project will be titled "Drella: When the Shoe Doesn't Fit..." based on the life of Andy Warhol, has

embraced the project as a chance to explore himself within another character that is closely related to who he is.

"We chose something that means something to our lives. It's a rite of passage into becoming the artists because it's hard to write a conflict with just one person and make it interesting."

For Caceres, solo performance classes has been key to making his project work in which he will be alone onstage with only 100 shoe boxes to keep him company. "There are boundaries to what we can make up but there are ways around that. My piece has nothing to do with Andy Warhol but everything to do with him."

Jordan Clara Ihilani Sasaki's senior project, entitled "My Name is Butterfly," will be based on Julia Butterfly Hill's three years living in a 1500-year-old California Redwood tree from 1997 to 1998. The idea stems from her love of nature and global environmental issues.

"It's a topic I'm passionate about and my research allowed me to rediscover her story."

Sasaki also had to adjust to being the writer, director and actor in her own show and performing the words she wrote to an audience.

"It's been hard because you're usually given someone else's words and those are your lines but performing a script you write has added a much more personal level to this project than anything else I've been involved in."

Jair Bula, whose senior project will focus on Jesus in "I Am," also believes senior projects to be a rite



ALFONSO YEC/THE BEACON

Jordan Clara Ihilani Sasaki, a senior BFA performance major, admires nature atop a tree as Julia Butterfly Hill in her senior project, My Name is Butterfly, with the help of senior BFA performance major, Mariana Vallejo.

of passage and a time of birth for him and his classmates as artists.

"This is the final presentation/thesis type thing for us but I feel, as artists, that we are being born because most of us, for the most part, have been actors. This

is a closing chapter but it's also the beginning of my career as a performer and artist in general."

The performances are free and open to the public.

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University honors founding father Butler Waugh

EDWIVE SEME
Staff Writer

The University community honored Butler Waugh and celebrated his achievements by joining together in front of the PC building.

Butler Waugh, who died on November 7, 2012 at 78, is considered one of the four founding fathers of the University and moved on to become the College of Arts and Science's first dean.

Becoming a founding member, dean and teaching for 40 years was an adventure for Butler. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he went on to earn his bachelor's degree from Washington and Jefferson College. He continued to earn his PH.D. from Indiana University in 1959.

The kick-start of his career was at the University of Kansas, but in 1961 he moved to Florida to become an English professor at the University of Florida. But his

career wasn't going to end there; it would keep growing at FIU.

Just when FIU was nothing more than an abandoned airfield in the late 1960's, Charles E. Perry, FIU's founding father, called

to creating a university from scratch was an experiment to him, an experiment that he proudly watched grow and succeed.

"He was smart, funny, he didn't have too much of a sense his own self-impor-

needed at the time."

When FIU opened its first college in 1970, the College of Arts and Sciences, Waugh was chosen to be its founding dean. The College of Arts and Sciences became his own personal project; he was responsible for choosing all the faculty members that would start up the College, and monitoring the education of the first 5,667 students to enroll in 1972.

However, Butler's passion seemed to be more in teaching. He stepped down in 1975 and returned to teaching English with great joy.

"His heart was always in the classroom," said James.

After stepping down, Butler had a better idea of what to do and what not to do with his career. "It clarified for him why he wanted to read literature and talk to students," said James. He was able to think about the issues that were important to him.

"My guess is, during those years when he was starting the

University...he didn't have a lot of time to do that," said James.

Indeed, now that Butler didn't have to worry about hiring, working with faculty and students, and making sure the parking lots were running right as he did as a dean, he was left with a lot of time on his hands to think about the teaching itself.

"He loved his students," said James. "He would sit on his office and talk for hours with his students, and he stayed in touch with his students."

According to James, Butler not only enjoyed the diversity of FIU, but also the fact that many of the students were hard working and first generation college attendees. It really mattered to him that he wasn't teaching to privilege elite kind of students, but students who tried hard to get where they were at.

"He was terrific teacher... really good to the willing and inquisitive," said James.

He stayed in the Department of English until he felt like it was time to retire in 2003. After retiring, he moved to Tampa to be with his wife. His legacy lives on through FIU and his bloodline continues through his six children, eight grandchildren and a great-grandchild. James thinks he'll be remembered for his personality.

"He wasn't your usual guy. He was different and quirky," said James

"He's significant because he founded the University... and being the first dean of the College of Arts and Sciences," said James as he cited the main reasons why Waugh should be remembered.

"The way that he touched so many students during the 25 years that he was teaching—that's the kind of legacy that professors always want to have. He really helped build strength in the faculty union at FIU."

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The way that he touched so many students during the 25 years that he was teaching—that's the kind of legacy that professors always want to have.

James Sutton
Chairperson
Department of English

out to Butler to join him, Donald McDowell and Nicholas Sileo to plan what would become FIU. Going from an English professor and author

tance," said colleague James Sutton, who is now chairperson of the Department of English. "He was hard working; it was just what FIU

A tribute to renowned film critic Roger Ebert

Finding the right words to pay tribute to someone who's passed on is always difficult, even more so when that person is someone you've never known, but respected immensely. Sadly, that person is renowned film critic Roger Ebert.

I can honestly say Roger Ebert was a man I didn't always agree with. We had more than enough one-sided yelling matches when it came to genre film ratings, but something always kept me coming back for more. That something was pure and unabashed honesty.

Whether he loved or hated a film, Ebert never held back on what he thought and nearly always backed it up with solid reasoning. It's a quality that's actually rare in the world of film criticism nowadays, where hatred and misinformed criticism are abundant.

When we agreed, it was a wonder to read through every scene analysis he came up with. I would nod to myself and yell, "Yes! Exactly!" Even when we were at odds, I was still curious, because that's exactly what a great writer

does: keep you coming back for more.

For those living in a world where film is everything, he meant something. Being a kid and waiting to see those thumbs up and thumbs down, or just sitting in front of your TV to watch Ebert chatting it up with Siskel or Roeper about the latest flicks, has almost been a rite of passage into the film criticism world.

Heck, every year around February I'd refresh his website constantly waiting to see if I could outguess his Oscar predictions just once - and wouldn't you know it, I did.

While that seems like something completely miniscule and pointless in hundreds upon hundreds of reviews, it's still something that gave a budding writer like me confidence.

It's really those little bits of inspiration all around the world that really add up to how much of an influential presence Ebert was.

There's no doubt in my mind that thousands of others found their budding interest in film affected by Ebert's writing.

A good friend of mine who also studied English and Film at the University, Francisco Pedro, told me something that really hit me after Ebert's death. "Once his voice was gone and Ebert was reduced to

writing online, he went from just being a Pulitzer Prize critic to a guiding voice in my life. I could still hear his voice in his writing."

It's a voice that will continue on over the years, guiding budding young film lovers and critics to find wonderful classic works, especially through his Great Movies pieces.

All those willing to look at art through a critical lens will find something to appreciate in the writing that Ebert has left behind.

Anyone who can bring humor, grace and intelligence into their words and opinions like he did, and is able to provoke people into thinking deeper about their film experiences is a man worth respecting and looking up to.

So, here's to you Roger Ebert. Regardless of our differences, your writing will always have a place in my heart, and I'll always be thankful you gave us "Beyond the Valley of the Dolls" along with every word of film criticism.

Juan Barquin is a junior FIU English major. For the past year and a half, he has written more than 80 movie reviews for YAM-Magazine and is pursuing a certificate in Film Studies at the University.

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Balance is key



Dear Nick,

How can I deal with a rocky relationship while dealing with school and the everyday stresses of life?

J.J.
Senior

Environmental engineering major

Dear JJ.,

Finding balance can be challenging with all of the demands on our time and attention. With a little perspective, mindfulness and planning you can help get life back to a manageable pace. First, I would clarify your values. Find out what is important and meaningful to you.



This will help dictate your priorities and allow you to let go of things you may no longer need or want in your life. Relationships can be a wonderful source of gratification and fulfillment. Speak with your partner; let him or her know about the demands on your time and resources. Plan a date night each week when you can set aside the stresses from everyday life and school and focus on your relationship. Overall, we function better when we prioritize, take

action to make sure we are doing what is important and meaningful in our life, and take care of ourselves. Try exercising or picking up yoga. With the end of the semester near you might even begin to practice meditation to help you keep a clear mind. Life can get a little overwhelming sometimes; just remember that with the right tools and a good positive outlook, you can overcome many obstacles! Good luck with your relationship and best wishes for the end of the semester!

Be Well,

Nick



Nick Scheidt, M.S. is a Doctoral Psychology Intern at FIU Counseling and Psychological Services. He is a Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate from Carlos Albizu University. Once he completes his internship at FIU, Nick plans to work as a Psychologist, Writer, and Professor.

Do you have questions you would like to Ask Nick? Send an email to: Nscheidt@fiu.edu

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The search is on for new basketball coach



BEACON FILE PHOTO

Richard Pitino left FIU to coach at the University of Minnesota and signed a six-year, \$7.2 million deal.

EDUARDO ALMAGUER
Sports Director

Making history was not enough to keep men's basketball Head Coach Richard Pitino rooted with the Panthers and now the search is on for a new coach.

On April 3, news broke that Pitino reached a verbal agreement to be the new coach at the University of Minnesota.

The stunning departure comes less than a month after Pitino finished a season where he led the Panthers to an 18-14 season and the program's first Sun Belt Conference championship game.

No one on the basketball team knew that Pitino planned on leaving.

"We had one of the best seasons in FIU history and we were going in the right direction. I'm just shocked he would leave right now," senior guard Manny Nunez said.

Malik Smith, the team's leading three-point shooter and second on the team in points per game, indicated via Twitter that he was going to ask his release immediately.

"It might be time for me to part ways for FIU," Smith said via Twitter.

Pitino leaves the program after year one of a five-year, \$1.25 million deal that he signed in April 2012. His contract states that because he left before April 2015, he must now pay FIU one year's base salary worth \$250,000.

Retaining Pitino was something Pete Garcia, executive director of sports and entertainment, attempted, but in the end couldn't.

In a press conference on April 4, Garcia said he sat down with Pitino at the end of the season and they had agreed to a modest pay raise, but once Garcia realized Minnesota offers, he knew it'd be tough to keep the 30-year-old coach.

Pitino's deal with Minnesota is six years with a base salary of \$1.2 million per year, totaling \$7.2 million.

"FIU can't go there at this point in time," Garcia said.

Garcia was unsure if Pitino would be taking his assistants with him. None of the assistants could be reached for comment.

A national search for a new basketball coach is now underway. Garcia says he wants to hire someone within the coming week.

"I want somebody that's going to do things right. I want somebody that's going to demand that the kids go to class and graduate," Garcia said. "I know we have a good list of candidates and there's a lot of people interested in this job."

One omen hanging over the head of the incoming coach is the academic troubles of the squad.

Garcia hinted that the FIU men's basketball may soon be slapped with a postseason ban for the 2013-14 season for sub par academic progress rate scores.

The likely ban stems from the poor scores the team achieved during former Head Coach Isiah Thomas' three-year tenure.

The NCAA draws the cutoff mark for penalties at 900. The maximum score is 1000.

In the 2009-10 season, the team had a single-year 900 mark, lower than the previous year's 933. In 2010-11, Thomas' players registered a dismal single-year 833 score.

The 2011-12 scores have not been released, but they're expected to be below 900. APR is a metric created by the NCAA to gauge how much progress institutions are making in graduating their student-athletes.

The number is derived from two factors, worth one point each: eligibility and retention.

In other words, players get their two points if the athlete meets the GPA cutoff mark and if they stay in school that year. Points are then tallied up, divided by the maximum amount of possible points

SEE BASKETBALL, PAGE 7

Softball team adjusts to adversity on the road

JOLSON DIAZ
Contributing Writer

Facing high caliber teams, dealing with long bus drives and taking on away crowds are just some of the extra obstacles FIU softball runs into when going on road games.

The Panthers are 4-7 on the road and wrapped up a series against University of Louisiana at Lafayette at the end of March where they were swept for the second straight series. Although they had their struggles, the players focus on zoning out the crowds and not letting their away record interfere with their mindset and how they perform on the field.

"At the end of the day, it's all the same game," junior infielder Brie Kay said. "You just need to prepare yourself mentally to deal with the away game atmosphere."

There have been many highs

and lows when the Panthers play on the road. A game against University of North Florida led to 12 panther hits and 16 total bases, the most this season in both categories. However, a game in Louisiana-Lafayette led to 11 Panther strikeouts, and they gave up 11 North Florida runs, the most the Panthers have given up to any team this season.

To the players, home games and away games are nothing but a ball game. When it comes to preparation, they do exactly what they do to prepare for a home game. That usually involves reviewing opposing teams and players.

The "I" in FIU is certainly represented in the softball team with players from all parts of the U.S., from Camas, Wash. where junior pitcher Mariah Dawson is from to Rose Hill, Kan., outfielder Marisa McGregor's hometown. So even playing home games

at the softball field in FIU still doesn't feel like home to most of the players.

we go away, the crowds are bigger and even more different, it stills feels the same for me because I'm

“At the end of the day it's all the same game. You just need to prepare yourself mentally to deal with the away game atmosphere.”

Brie Kay
Infielder
Softball

“For me, it's just like any other game. I don't have many fans that come and travel to watch me play,” Dawson said. “So every game we play, even at home, I'm playing to a different crowd. Of course, when

not used to having fans.”

The Panther games never take place the same day as the bus drive over to their opponent's field, so the trip heading over proves to be more relaxing for the players. It's

one of the few days they have off and get to enjoy the trip.

“It's honestly really nice on travel days,” Kay said. “We get to relax on the drive over, prepare mentally for the game so the drive over there actually is an advantage to us.”

The Panthers 16-10 home record proves that the players feel more comfortable playing on home turf. This is where the Panthers have executed their best offensive performance. In a home stand against Middle Tennessee State University in March, they swept the Blue Raiders, outscoring them by 27 runs in the series, scoring just under 30 and allowing only seven runs.

“I personally love it at home,” Kay said. “They have to come and face us and our home crowd. That's what motivates us.”

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Panthers' own dual threat may create havoc for opponents

PATRICK CHALVIRE
Staff Writer

Athletes spend years, some their whole lives, perfecting their craft at a position. There are certain cases, however, where an athlete is expected and able to compete and perfect two positions in one sport. Richard Leonard is one of those cases.

Leonard, a junior cornerback from Miami Killian Sr. High School, is considered a dual threat to both the Panthers' offense during practice, and opponents during games. Not only does Leonard spend his time harassing receivers and taking on any running back that may get past the line of scrimmage as a cornerback, he also showcases his ability returning punts and kicks as a returner on special teams.

"It's a plus for our special teams," Jason Brooks said, defensive secondary coach for the Panthers. "Having him back there as a return guy with his speed and athleticism, I think it's fantastic."

In 12 games last season, Leonard averaged 70.2 all-purpose yards a game. He racked up 758 out of his total 843 yards on kick returns. Leonard's 29.2 average on kick returns placed him second in the Sun Belt Conference, just a yard short of Reggie Whatley of Middle Tennessee State University.

Though the Panthers are under new management with new Head Coach Ron Turner and staff, as well as heading into a new conference, Leonard does not let that stop him from reaching one of the many milestones set for himself.

"I'm just trying to be the best in the league," Leonard said. "Just working on ball security and things like that. Things that I struggled with last year."

Leonard prides himself in not only his dual ability, but also his role as a coach

and mentor for the rest of the defense. Leonard understands the success of the team will not come from just one person, and can be seen in practice correcting and helping his teammates on becoming better players.

Aside from learning a new system and gaining more experience during practice, Brooks has gone back to the roots to where many players, including Leonard, began their careers. Brooks strove to correct technique and concentration to the players and has the luxury of having an experienced player, such as Leonard, with improving the defense every day.

"The one thing we told these guys from day one is that fundamentals and technique will never change," Brooks said. "Football is football. Schemes are schemes. The most important thing is the fundamentals and technique part of it."

"He's a very very talented individual," Brooks said. "I think he helps our secondary tremendously. He sets an example to younger guys as far as becoming a good football player."

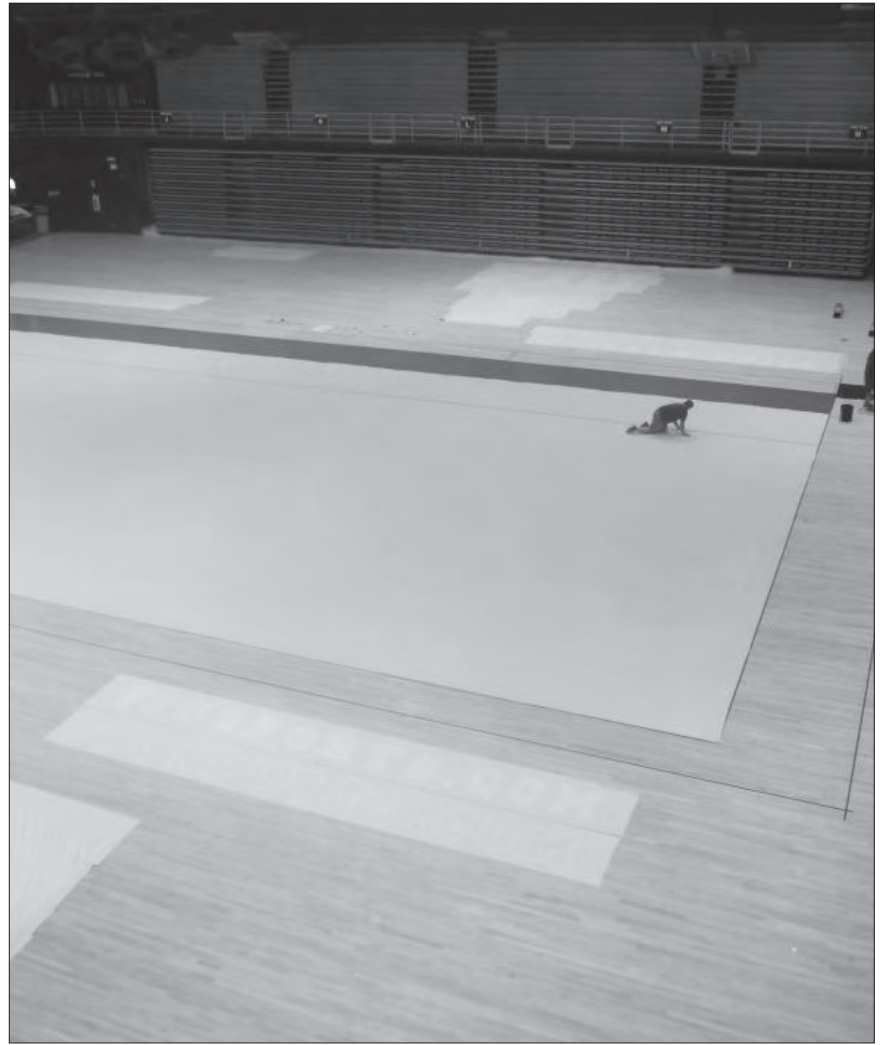
Along with the talent Leonard displays on the football field, 170-pound corner also get it done off the field, especially in academics.

"Even outside of football he's been great for guys," Brooks said. "As far as going to class, doing the right thing. Studying, not only for school, but in football as well. He's just been a leader for this defense."

Being a dual threat has always come to Leonard. Prior to joining FIU, Leonard covered both sides of the football at Killian. Leonard was considered an all-around athlete as he not only played cornerback, but as well as quarterback, running back and receiver on offense.

Posting a 4.39 time in the forty-yard sprint, Leonard has always showcased his

Vacation home



RHYS WILLIAMS/THE BEACON

The basketball court renovations are under way for the U.S Century Bank Arena in preparation for the school's entry into Conference USA. The finished product will be a beach with the shore and some palm trees to reflect South Beach.

talent on kickoff and punt returns. Transitioning to college, many coaches try to limit the workload a player will take on the field. That doesn't seem to bother Brooks one bit, as he fully trusts and respects Leonard to protect himself as he takes on a team on kickoff returns.

"I'm comfortable with it, as long as he keeps making smart decisions," Brooks said. "When you have eight guys barreling down on you, we don't want you returning. We want you to fair catch. Here in practice he's made some great deci-

sions back there." Standing at 5 feet 10 inches tall, Leonard does not come off as the biggest or tallest guy on the field. That does not stop him though, to Leonard, it only comes as an advantage to him and the team, and havoc for opposing teams trying to stop him.

"What makes me different is that I'm really quick," Leonard said. "Since I'm short, I use my quickness and speed to make up for my size."

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New coach expected in about a week

BASKETBALL, PAGE 6

– determined by number of athletes on the team – and multiplied by one thousand to reach the final score.

Garcia said he's been in contact with an APR specialist who alerted him that basketball was "heading down the wrong road" and was part of the reason FIU fired Thomas last season. In the press conference, Garcia acknowledged the possible ban and said that in the search for a new men's basketball coach, he's going to make all candidates very aware of the dilemma like he did with Pitino.

"Richard [Pitino] inherited that and Richard did a tremendous job of doing everything he could to fix that," Garcia

said. "He's leaving us in a lot better shape than we ever managed."

This is not the first time FIU has run into trouble with the NCAA. In 2008, FIU lost 11 sports scholarships for "misapplied enrollment and financial aid rules, transfer requirements and eligibility rules" during their shift from Division I-AA to Division I-A. Whether the new coach will be here two years or 10, Garcia said he has a strong vision of the program's future.

"We want to be successful at the next level," he said. "We want to go to the NCAA [tournament] and be successful there. We want to win in everything we do."

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VP of student affairs candidate speaks to students



SANA ULLAH/THE BEACON

Patrick Rombalski, former vice president of student affairs at Boston College, spoke to students in the Wolfe University Center as part of an open forum. Rombalski prefers a diverse population in the student body as well as academics, both of which FIU has to offer. When asked how he would deal with the imbalance of attention between campuses, Rombalski said that each campus should forget about comparisons and focus more on how to be unique in its own way.

**DIEGO SALDAÑA-ROJAS
NADRA MABROUK**
FIUSM Staff

With 15 years of experience as Vice President of Student Affairs in Boston College and John Carroll University, a private Jesuit University, Patrick Rombalski is among three candidates to take over the Vice President of Student Affairs position at the University.

Larry Lunsford has served as Interim Vice President of Student Affairs since August 2012, and Rombalski is the first of the three candidates to speak to students and faculty at open forums which were held at Modesto Maidique Campus and Biscayne Bay Campus April 4 through April 5.

Students at BBC shared their complaints about limited food options at the campus, the aging condition of Bay Vista Housing that drives students away from living on the campus, as well as how there is a large imbalance between campuses at the University.

Rombalski believes that in order to get over the imbalances between campuses, it would be beneficial not to compare each campus to the other but to think of what is unique to each campus and build upon those qualities to attract students to want to be at each campus for a different reason.

Students also brought up how important it is to engage students in any decision-making because everything essentially affects the students.

He believes that it takes the students' voice to make changes on a university campus.

"You have the skill to do it, but you also need the will to do it."

The \$2.50 Golden Panther Express shuttle was also a topic of concern as the Wi-Fi on the shuttles is problematic.

MMC students brought up issue of parking at MMC as well as a lack of

student involvement on campus.

Other questions brought up by students at the MMC panel were geared towards how Rombalski performed while at BC and how he would implement his experiences there to the University.

Desiree Hernandez, junior English major, asked Rombalski how he would assimilate to the diverse student population that makes up the University to which Rombalski responded he "really looked forward to," understanding the diverse student communities and seeing "how they are represented, how they identify, how they understand themselves and how they relate to their local community."

He cited his work in helping found a non-profit organization in Ecuador which he ran for approximately 20 years and his work in the Caribbean and other parts of Latin America

In response to a student's question as to how we would help the student retention rate, Rombalski said, "In my mind, if you focus on students and you're doing the best possible job to improve their experiences and you're looking at specific populations and coming up with population based responses whether its greek life or first generation students or what have you then you're going to move the retention rate," said Rombalski.

The other two candidates running for the position are Vicki McNeil and Brian Haynes.

McNeil will speak on Monday April 10 in GC 243 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. and at BBC April 11 in WUC 155 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Haynes will speak on April 17th at MMC in the West Ballroom from 2:30 p.m. to 3:45pm and at BBC on April 18th in WUC 223 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

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Professor researches help for autistic children

JUNETTE REYES
Staff Writer

April is National Autism Awareness Month. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention approximates the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders to be 1 out of 88 in children.

Autism spectrum disorders can be diagnosed as early as 18-24 months after birth; unfortunately, services in the nation's school systems are not provided until children are at least 3 years old.

Dr. Anibal Gutierrez, assistant professor of the Department of Psychology and certified behavior analyst, is working on a program known as the Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention Program that can change this by advocating early identification and intervention of the disorder.

As a behavioral analyst

certified by the Behavioral Analyst Certification Board, Gutierrez is able to design and supervise behavior analytic interventions, such as the one implemented in his work.

Gutierrez said that there is a program available before school system services, known as the Birth to Three System, but funding is typically low, and by extension, the depth of the services.

"We thought that we would set up this program to be a low-cost option; it is \$500 a month, which at the hourly rate for intervention is incredibly inexpensive," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said that autism spectrum disorders are characterized by symptoms of impaired social interaction, restricted interest and repetitive behaviors whose manifestations can vary, such as rocking and hand flapping. Meeting criterion for diag-

nosis can differentiate from person to person, which is why the early intervention program works on many aspects of the disorder.

"We work on all the domain areas that they need help with: communication, expressive language, receptive language, play skills, self-care, toilet training, picky eating if they have eating restrictions or if they don't have a very wide array of foods that they'll eat, and independence," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said the program acts as a preparatory step for the child before entering a school program.

"Our classroom attempts to look like the next setting so we'll have areas for independent work systems, areas for play, and areas for one-on-one teacher time," said Gutierrez.

The program takes place on Tuesdays and Thurs-

days from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There is a 1-1 staff to child ratio and the staff is completely made up of undergraduate and graduate students from FIU.

"The ability for students to gain meaningful clinical and research experience in autism exists at FIU; that's kind of exciting because not everyone has that," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said there are differing views in terms of what aspects of the disorder should be emphasized: discovering causation and cures or working on clinical work and interventions.

His research with the Behavior Analysis Autism Research Lab at FIU is driven by developing and improving procedures used in clinical work.

"My research isn't about causes or cures, my research is about interventions and

just helping people today get better services and better interventions," said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said the autism community shows interest in both and agrees that there should be an equal combination of the two.

Although there may not be a definitive answer for causation, the controversial linkage between vaccinations and autism has at least been disproven as reported by a study published in the Journal of Pediatrics on March 29.

Gutierrez said that the 18-24 month mark is the point in development in which typically developing children can be differentiated from those with autism.

This differentiation was associated to the number of vaccines children get around this time, which provoked fear in people.

"I know there are families who are not giving their kids

vaccines and now they're at risk for developing these conditions that we kind of had eradicated many years ago; now there are kids dying from these other really awful things," said Gutierrez.

In regards to its awareness, Gutierrez said the autism community certainly knows more than they used to and that it is an issue people are conscious of but it still has not received a federal mandate for insurance coverage.

"It's crazy to think that you can have a condition that isn't covered by your insurance," said Gutierrez. "When you stop to think about it, as big as autism is and as aware as we are, it's probably not anywhere close to where it should be given how many cases there are and given how much it affects people's lives."

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