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SHUTTLE FEE TO INCREASE

Second increase in less than one year

BY REUBEN PEREIRA
Staff Writer

According to the Department of Parking and Traffic, ticket prices for FIU's inter-campus shuttle service, the Golden Panther Express, are expected to increase for the second time in the last three semesters.

For a long time, the cost for a one way trip was a dollar. However, in 2004, it was increased to \$1.25.

Beginning with the Fall of 2005, it was again increased to \$1.50 and in this year, there are plans to increase the ticket prices again.

"The prices are too much," said Dane Yankowich, an advertising major who uses the shuttle twice a week. "Each bus holds over 40 people and if everyone is paying the price, that [should be] more than enough to cover gas and tolls," Yankowich said.

Like many other students, he has no choice but to register for classes at the Biscayne Bay Campus because the classes he

needs for his major aren't offered at University Park.

Vijay Pradeep, a senior majoring in public relations shares Yankowich's sentiment.

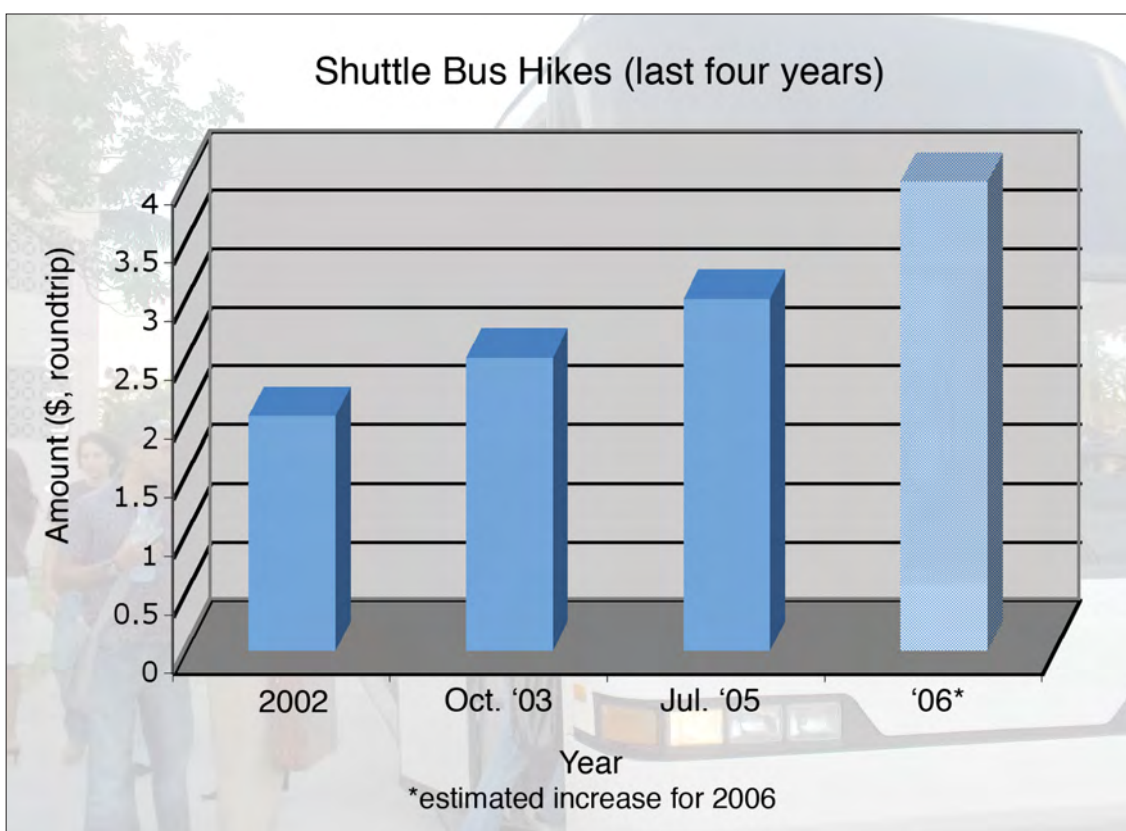
"We pay enough when it comes to raised tuitions. The ticket price should be part of our tuition," Pradeep said.

The raised tuition and the increasing shuttle prices are a priority concern of the Student Government Association.

"We do not want to increase the shuttle prices. I'm a student too and I know how it is," Alex Prado, president of SGA, said. "But unfortunately it's our only option. We will absolutely not consider canceling this service."

Currently, the funding for the shuttle service comes partly from Parking and Traffic department fees paid by students and from the shuttle tickets.

"Increasing the parking and traffic fees by a dollar won't significantly affect students, but a dollar increase for 37,000 students will mean 37,000 extra dollars, which would not only



CHRISTOPHER NECUZE/THE BEACON

reduce the burden on the Parking and Traffic department, but also greatly help funding for the services," Prado said.

When the Golden Panther Express was started, it was free and was supposed to link the two campuses together. However, in the past couple of years, the prices have been consistently increased.

"The prices have been increasing," Kenny Gelok, chair of Student Services for SGA, said. "And they will be going up again."

Gelok stated that he didn't know how much the increase would be and when it would be instituted by Parking and Traffic. He stressed that the increasing prices were justified compared to the prices of driving by car.

"If you're driving from University Park to the Biscayne Bay Campus, you have to pay for gas as well as the highway tolls. With the bus, you're traveling comfortably, you're relaxed, you can study as well as talk to people and it's much cheaper than paying for gas and tolls," Gelok said.

See INCREASE, page 2

STUDENT LEADERS



FLORIDA STUDENT ASSOCIATION: Student Government Association's from 10 Florida universities and colleges unite to form the Florida Student Association. FSA meets once a month to discuss issues which concern all of their students and they lobby together in Washington D.C. for change in legislature. Their meetings rotate at different campuses, and on Jan. 20 they met at University Park. Alex Prado (top), FIU SGA President led the meeting and (bottom) Biscayne Bay SGA President Lemar Linton attended the meeting. **CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON**

Alvarez couple pleads not guilty to charges

BY ANA SANCHEZ
News Editor

AN ALUMNA'S TESTIMONY

Professor Carlos M. Alvarez and his wife, counselor Elsa Alvarez pleaded not guilty at the Jan. 9 arraignment in a Miami federal court.

Their attorneys, Steven Chaykin and Jane Moscowitz, argued that their solitary confinement in the Federal Detention Center is pretrial punishment. The couple is charged with failing to register as foreign agents with the U.S. Attorney General's office. They are accused of operating as covert agents for Cuba's government, giving them information about Miami's exile community.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Andrea Simonton believes that past trips and contacts with the Cuban government made the Alvarezes flight risks. She denied them bond on Jan. 9.

According to *The Miami Herald*, in 1982, a congressional testimony by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement agents said that self-proclaimed double agent Rev. Manuel Espinosa, who died in 1987, identified Elsa Alvarez as a member of the Antonio Maceo Brigade.

The Alvarezes' attorney denied these allegations at the arraignment. A brigade leader told *The Miami Herald* that Elsa Alvarez was not a member of the Brigade, but he did not deny or confirm whether Elsa Alvarez may have attended Brigade meetings or taken trips with them.

A former FIU student who accompanied alleged covert agent Carlos Alvarez in a trip to Cuba has changed her perception of the trip since his arrest.

FIU alumna Roxana Cocina traveled to Cuba in February 2004 with Carlos Alvarez under Puentes Cubanos, an organization that takes six young Cuban-American professionals to the island to engage in a dialogue between six native Cuban professionals to discuss identity issues.

According to Cocina, the purpose of the trip was to see how the Cuban Americans connected with the native Cuban professionals and to discover what they had in common.

"He was very short with us, he wouldn't get into the discussions and he would give us one word answers," Cocina said.

However, on the trip Alvarez would agree with the Cuban American's perspectives and he never gave a sign of his leftist ideals.

"He agreed with all of our anti-Castro sentiments which now I think is weird," Cocina said. "I thought Carlos was a wonderful individual. Who would think that such a nice, eloquent, charming man would fit into an agent profile?"

Cocina looks back on her experience differently after the arrests.

"I am really upset. I thought our experience [in Cuba] was going to make a difference and now I really don't know," she said.

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • JANUARY 23

Student Alumni Association/SGC Meeting: 3 p.m., WUC 159 (BBC)
'Public Relations Students Society of America' Meeting: 7:40 p.m., Ballrooms - Side A
BBC Mentoring Program: 5:30 p.m., WUC 245 (BBC)
SOC Club Fair: 11 a.m., GC Forum (UP)
Panther Rage Meeting: 4 p.m., GC 140 (UP)
Hearst Distinguished Lecture Series presents "It's All About Gossage" with Guest Speaker Bruce Bendinger: 5 p.m., Miami Ad School

TUESDAY • JANUARY 24

Hearst Distinguished Lecture Series presents "Think Creatively" with Guest Speaker Bruce Bendinger: 9:30 a.m., WUC Ballroom (BBC)
Campus Bible Fellowship Study: 11 a.m., WUC 157 (BBC)
SOC Club Fair: 11 a.m., WUC Panther Square (BBC)
SOC Club Fair: 11 a.m., GC Forum (UP)
Memorial for Peggy Endel, Department of English Associate Professor: 3:30 p.m., GC West Ballroom (Call 305-348-2874 for more info.) (UP)
Wild Succulent Women (Tonight's Topic - Cheating in Relationships): 9 p.m., Everglades Hall first floor TV lounge (UP)

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 25

BBC Student Affairs meeting: 10 a.m., WUC 157 (BBC)
SOC Club Fair: 11 a.m., GC Forum (UP)
SGA General Meeting: 4 p.m., GC 150 (UP)
SPC Films Cinema Wednesdays presents "The Best of Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino" - Raging Bull (Robert DeNiro, Joe Pesci): 8 p.m., GC 140 (UP)
International Law Faculty Round Table: 12 p.m., GL 220 (UP)
Graduates 1st Informational Meeting: Noon., GL 165 (UP)
Evening Graduates 1st Meeting: 5 p.m., College of Law Bldg. (UP)
UP Mentoring Program: 7 p.m., Faculty Club (UP)
Resident Hall Association Meeting: 9 p.m., University Park Apartments (UP)

THURSDAY • JANUARY 26

SOC Club Fair: 11 a.m., GC Forum (UP)
Democracy and Propaganda in Peace and War @ the Wolf feat. Stuart Ewen, author and director of the Integrated Media Arts MFA Program at City University of New York: 7 p.m., The Wolfsonian Museum Tickets - Free (Members and Students), \$10 (Others)

FRIDAY • JANUARY 27

Fantasy Theatre presents "Cinderella": 10 a.m., (BBC)
P.E.A.C.E (Peer Educators Advocating Cultural Enrichment) Diversity Week (Peacestock 2006) February 27th - March 3rd
The Golden Panthers Swimming and Diving team tangle with Sun Belt Conference opponent New Orleans for a swim meet: 4 p.m., Bay Vista Pool (BBC)
Public Domain Playhouse presents "Consumption Junction": 7 p.m., The Wolfsonian Museum
RHA Mr. and Mrs. Housing: 7 p.m., GC Ballroom (UP)

SATURDAY • JANUARY 28

Jose Marti Breakfast: 8 a.m., WUC Ballroom (BBC)
The Golden Panthers women's basketball hosts a Sun Belt Conference game against South Dakota State: 7 p.m., Pharmed Arena (Tickets - \$5 (Adults), \$3 (Seniors, Faculty, Staff and Children), Free (FIU Students with ID) (UP)
Golden Panthers Baseball plays at the University of Miami: 7 p.m., UM

SUNDAY • JANUARY 29

Golden Panther Baseball hosts University of Miami: 1 p.m., University Park Baseball Field (UP)

- Compiled by Reuben Pereira

Shuttle bus usage decreases

INCREASE, from page 1

In regards to the reason behind the increased tickets, Gelok blamed the increasing gas prices.

"Gas prices are going up after the hurricane. The bus companies are absorbing the costs, but they can't do it forever," he said.

"I know FIU hires a company, 7871," Yankovich said. "But I think it would be cheaper if FIU [used their own buses]."

Prado disagrees.

"It is much cheaper to hire a private company than to use our own buses because maintenance prices for these keep bus costs [high]. Not only that, we have to keep in mind the costs of tires, gas, hiring drivers and paying them, not to mention benefits.

All this costs money and it's much cheaper to hire 7871 instead," Prado said.

Lazaro Rodriguez, coordinator for the Parking and Traffic department that oversees the operations of 7871 said that FIU has contracted the company since 2003.

"Before 2003, we used to hire 'Coach USA' but they went out of business in Miami," Rodriguez said.

When asked about the increase in ticket prices, Rodriguez declined any comment saying he had no information on it.

However, Rodriguez did offer some statistics on the number of students taking the shuttle in the past year. The first half of the year, 89,635 students used the shuttle, compared to 83,321 in the second

half, showing a decrease in usage.

Despite these statistics, Gelok believes that bus attendance has actually risen.

"Once gas prices went up, there was a spike in the number of students taking the bus. We heard that a number of students were left behind last semester when there weren't any seats on the bus," Gelok said.

SGA Vice President Christine Denton concurred, "Students were taking an earlier bus in order to take a class at a much later time in order to get a seat on the bus. We took this problem seriously as students couldn't miss classes. So we got an extra bus which cost a lot of money," Denton said.

Denton understands the plight of students taking the shuttle as she used to take the shuttle regularly.

She stated that SGA is taking the increasing shuttle prices into consideration.

"We will be meeting with Parking and Traffic to discuss these problems," Denton said. "We are going to discuss the prices and there will be student representatives at the meeting."

A meeting between SGA and the department of Parking and Traffic took place on Jan. 20 during which a conclusion was made to increase the price of the shuttle bus tickets. However, the proposal has to be approved by the Board of Trustees, who will meet to discuss the issue at a date yet to be determined.

POLICEBEAT

FRIDAY • JANUARY 6

- Sometime between 4-4:30 p.m. a car was broken into and a laptop computer was stolen from the trunk.

The student parked his car by the bookstore loading area at University Park. Someone smashed the driver's side window and gained access to the trunk.

THURSDAY • JANUARY 12

- At 1:16 a.m. a young man allegedly attempted to enter the information booth office in the Graham Center. He requested access to the office from the custodial staff. When they refused he allegedly jumped the counter and entered the office. Custodial staff members attempted to stop him. He attempted to kick a female member of the custodial staff; he failed to strike the victim. The custodial personnel then called Public Safety and the suspect took off running toward the Gold Garage. The suspect was then chased by an officer up to the third floor of the garage and was stopped at his car. The suspect refused to return with the officer to the scene and then became 'hostile.' The suspect was restrained with handcuffs. The suspect did not deny the incident and said he was frustrated about losing his keys and was attempting to search for them. He was then transported to Turner Knight Guilford center for arrest and processing.

- Compiled by Andrew Leins

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PUBLISHING POLICY

The Beacon is published on Mondays and Thursdays during the Fall and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer B. Advertising inquiries for classified, local and national ads may be addressed to our advertising department in our newsroom. One copy per person. Additional copies are 25 cents. The Beacon is not responsible for the content of ads. Ad content is the sole responsibility of the company or vendor. The Beacon is an editorially independent newspaper partially funded by Student and Services fees that are appropriated by Student Government.

LONG LINES CONTINUE



WAITING FOR BOOKS:

Denise Machin and Jennifer Kavanaugh, both juniors majoring in hospitality management, stood in line at the bookstore for over 25 minutes (bottom). This is the busiest the bookstore has ever been, according to students. Long lines and waiting were still an issue for students purchasing textbooks Jan. 18 (top).

BETSY MARTINEZ/THE BEACON



Breakfast held to honor Cuban hero

BY CRISTELA GUERRA
Staff Writer

Students at the Biscayne Bay Campus will have the chance to honor the birthday of a great writer and thinker: Jose Marti.

The 6th annual Jose Marti scholarship breakfast will be held at BBC on Jan. 28, with the hopes of honoring Marti's memory and significance in Latin American literature and ideology.

Considered a "breakfast with a purpose" by many who have attended in earlier years, the breakfast - which is shared between FIU and Miami-Dade College - is always held on Jan. 28 to recognize Marti's birthday.

This year's breakfast event is also helping raise money for a scholarship in Marti's honor, according to committee chair Mercedes Kuper.

Students from both schools are encouraged to submit papers and apply for the scholarship as well as other prizes presented to essay contestants. "Marti and his Impact on Latin America" is the topic for the essays, and the winner will receive a \$200 scholarship for textbooks.

"We would like to change this event from a Cuban event to an international event bringing students from all over," said Vice Provost Raul Moncarz. "[It is for] anyone who is interested."

Instead of concentrating on Marti's work during the Cuban Revolution, this year has focused more on Marti's overall impact throughout each country he visited and, in particular, the influence of his writing and poetry.

Marti was known for battling to obtain Cuban independence and also against any country or person trying to take control of another nation.

His words inspired the oppressed, motivated revolts and helped his beloved Cuba achieve independence.

"Jose Marti y la Republica Dominicana" or "Marti and the Dominican Republic" is the title of this year's honorary breakfast.

The event's guest speaker will be Oscar Haza, a television and radio personality known for his news reporting and work with Univision, a Spanish-language television station.

The Dominican Republic-born journalist has also written for the opinion section of *The Miami Herald* and was news director at various radio stations, according to *univision.com*.

The breakfast will be held Jan. 28, at 9:00 a.m. in the Wolfe University Center ballroom. Tickets are priced at \$25 for regular admission and \$10 for students. Funds will go toward the scholarship. To make reservations call (305) 919-5949 or (305) 919-5745.

Hearst Lecture Series may aid with career success

BY ELIZABETH CARAM
Contributing Writer

Get ready to change your preconceptions of the word "lecture."

With the broad variety of topics and speakers at this year's Hearst Distinguished Lecture Series, students won't be snoozing or trying to sneak on iPod headphones.

So far, there are seven lectures lined up with topics ranging from how people are influenced with name brands today to people's right to know what is going on in the government.

"Having industry professionals come here to provide insight for students is a great opportunity," said Jody Rafkind, assistant professor. "We do our best to bring real world situations to the classrooms."

This is her second year coordinating the lecture series.

Students who have attended past lectures are glad they did. Alex Martinez, a senior majoring in public relations, said students should attend even if they're not majoring in communications.

"The lectures are beneficial for the students," said Martinez, who attended three lectures last year. "If you do go, you're [going to] walk out of there with something ... you'll learn something new from someone who is successful in their career."

Rafkind agrees that students from other majors should attend.

"If you're a marketing major, come see Russ Klein, president of Burger King Brands [and learn from him]," she said.

Other speakers include Nancy Ruscheinski, president of Edelman Chicago, John Hockenberry, an author and Dateline NBC correspondent and Lucy Dalglish, executive director, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, among others.

Bendinger, the author of *The Copy Workshop*, presents four steps for better advertising, a better world and a better life.

Klein will speak about media content, media consumption and how people interact with brands in the 21st century.

Ruscheinski will discuss consumer trust, conversation marketing, the impact of blogs and citizen journalism.

While Hockenberry will present the way Americans are viewed in the world media, according to the School of Journalism and Mass Communications official website.

Students may walk away from a lecture with a future business contact.

"When students are looking for a job, they can send a letter to a former speaker and say, 'We met at a lecture at FIU,'" said Rafkind. "It provides an opportunity for the student."

The first of seven lectures, "It's all about Gossage", is scheduled for Jan. 23 at 5 p.m.

For more information and a detailed schedule for upcoming lectures, click on "Hearst Lecture Series 2006" found at www.fiu.edu/~journal.

The series is made possible by a donation from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, and all events are free and open to the public.



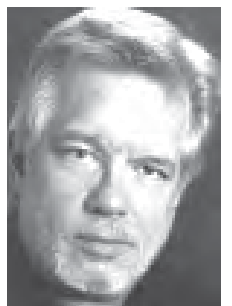
HOCKENBERRY



KLEIN



RUSCHEINSKI



BENDINGER

F.Y.I.

Hearst Distinguished Lecture Series

WHAT: It's all about Gossage
WHEN: Monday, Jan. 23 at 5 p.m.
WHERE: Miami Ad School

WHAT: Think Creatively
WHEN: Tuesday, Jan. 24 at 9:30 a.m.
WHERE: Wolfe University Center - Main Ballroom, BBC

WHAT: Turning your brand over to the consumer
WHEN: Thursday, Feb. 2 at 6:30 p.m.
WHERE: Mary Ann Wolfe Theater, BBC

WHAT: Hurricane advertising: The good hurricane
WHEN: Monday, Feb. 13 at 6 p.m.
WHERE: Mary Ann Wolfe Theater, BBC

WHAT: The changing world of PR
WHEN: Wednesday, Mar. 1 at 6 p.m.
WHERE: Mary Ann Wolfe Theater, BBC

WHAT: Managing perceptions: America's image abroad
WHEN: Thursday, Mar. 9 at 7 p.m.
WHERE: Mary Ann Wolfe Theater, BBC

WHAT: Privacy, terrorism and the public's right to know
WHEN: Tuesday, Mar. 14 at 6 p.m.
WHERE: Mary Ann Wolfe Theater, BBC

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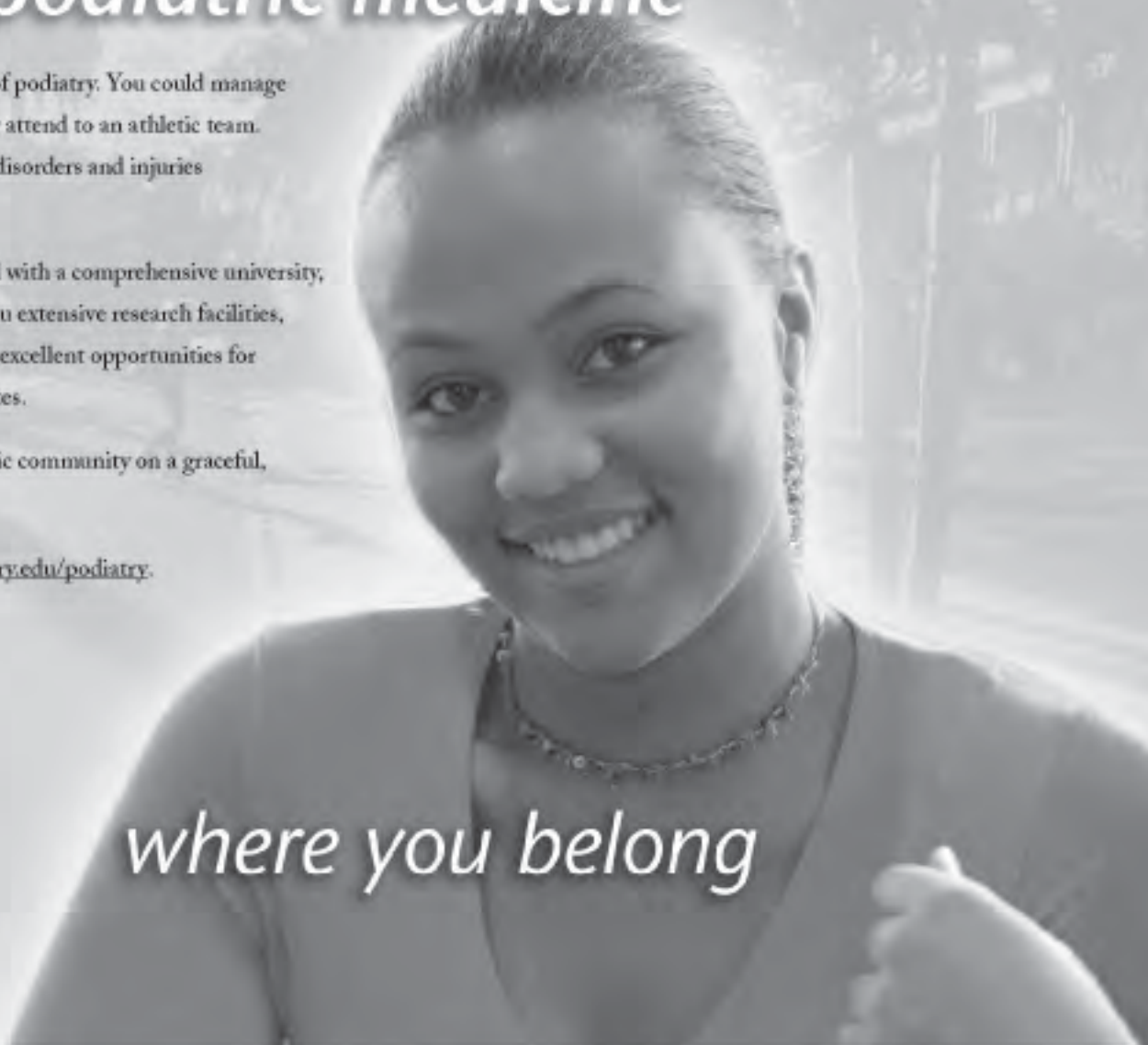
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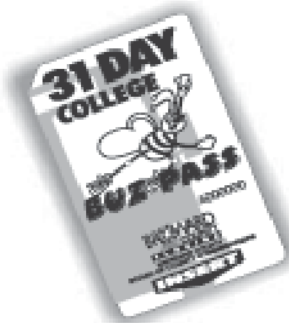
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OPINION

Harry Coleman Editor in Chief • Leoncio Alvarez Managing Editor • Christopher Necuze Opinion Editor

THE BEACON | Editorial

Increase in inter-campus shuttle bus fare ridiculous

In an absurd move, the University has decided to increase the shuttle bus fee for the second time in less than a year. Though no exact date or increase fee is known, an increase is expected by next Fall semester.

The reason why we think this is absurd is because University leaders (including President Modesto A. Maidique) keep saying that they want Biscayne Bay Campus and University Park to be known as one campus, one entity and one university.

However, as changes like the shuttle bus increase take place, the idea of being one university keeps being just that – an idea, that is never put into place.

Why should a student who happens to have a major that primarily has classes at BBC have to pay to get there? Shouldn't he or she just be able to flash his/her PantherCard and not have to worry about

paying for the service?

The shuttle bus fee should already be included in our tuition. This would alleviate the cost of spending money on every bus ride and make life easier for students. While not all 37,000 plus students use the service, this should not be a reason to argue against including it in tuition.

The university charges many fees including recreational, health and wellness, parking and traffic and athletic fees which many students do not use or take advantage of.

We are called Florida International University, meaning many students from all over the world come here from an education. Many of them don't have access to a car so why should they, or any other student who does not have a car, pay the parking and traffic fee?

Any fee can be argued against and that's why the shuttle bus fee should be

included in tuition. If every student paid \$5 to \$10 every semester, that would clear the trouble of selling bus tickets and of students having to empty out their wallets every week. Students who now use the bus service roundtrip four times a week pay \$12 a week and \$48 a month. If an increase of 50 cents takes place for a roundtrip fare – which is the expected figure – that would total to \$16 a week and \$64 a month. This would be a significant increase for students.

FIU is currently building new residence halls with the goal of the university housing more students. For this same reason, both campuses should be more accessible to students, as the shuttle is a lifeline for many.

Another part of the problem with the increase is that several bus drivers let students on the bus at no charge. With frequent riders becoming friendly with

drivers, this has led to many drivers letting several students on the bus for free. Moreover, some bus drivers sometimes even go without charging an entire bus. They open the bus, go out for a smoke and let students go in. They come back, get on the wheel and drive off – letting 45 people ride for free.

This should be totally unacceptable and controlled by the University. There should be secret riders who keep tabs on which drivers are not doing their job correctly. No student, no matter how friendly or good looking they may be, should be allowed on the bus at no charge. This is wrong and needs to be put to an end.

Before the increase is announced, the University needs to take a serious look at this issue. The priority should be to have students get to class on time without the stress of having to worry about money to get there.

Professors should not have to suppress political bias in classroom

BY JAMIE BLANCO
Staff Writer

Christopher Flickinger had a great idea, but he's taken it too far. Flickinger runs an organization called the Network of College Conservatives. I don't mind the group, as a matter of fact, I encourage anything that brings like-minded students together to share ideas, communicate and learn about an ideology they have interest and belief in.

What I don't encourage is the cloak of victimization that some conservatives so readily throw on when met with dissenting views. "When I was on campus, I had no help," said Flickinger in an interview with *FOXNews.com*. "I was harassed intimidated, shouted down."

Imagine the pain of having his preconceived notions challenged time and time again, forcing him to research and strengthen his standpoints and cement his belief structure. So, in return, he's sponsoring a little spy program of his own, only this one is against teachers.

"By exposing left-wing educators, providing information on liberal and conservative activities on campus and educating students on conservative thoughts, views and opinions, the NCC will counter the liberal bias throughout America's institutions of higher learning," proclaims the NCC's mission statement.

The NCC's proverbial witch hunt, along with other groups – some even offering cash for lecture tapes and notes – will accomplish nothing more than stifling the learning process in our nation's universities.

The purpose of higher learning is to challenge common concep-

tions and to break down the belief system students have had all their lives; it is to examine the dynamics of their beliefs, to examine truths, to decide for themselves what they hold to be true. A lot of times, it makes a person stronger.

"I liked how the class was against me," said junior Fernando Anzoategui, one of the only conservative students in Professor Rose Lyn Millner's Intro to Journalism class last semester. "It made me strive to research my answers [during discussions] to make sure my answers were correct. At the end of the day I strived to be right."

Anzoategui often had controversial opinions polar to that of the class and the professor. Being in that class, he boiled my blood sometimes; once or twice I was left in awe of how much I disagreed with him.

Yet I was always desperate to hear his view point so that I could research and re-examine mine and at the end of the day I really appreciated him for that.

"I enjoyed professor Millner's opinion because she let me voice mine as well," Anzoategui said.

There is no policy at FIU that prevents professor from expressing their biases in class, but they are encouraged to be balanced. Professor Millner said she made the decision early on to be up front about her biases with students.

"I feel like it's important to be honest about bias and encourage students to be open about their biases," Millner said. "From there I create the best balance that I can and usually that sparks very meaningful conversation."

But I'm not so naive to believe that every classroom situation is as ideal.

There's always going to be

those teachers, whether liberal or conservative (because there are both) whose word is law and whose demeanor is overbearing.

Such is life and the University is here to prepare you for the real world. It would be a completely different story if a professor sat you down and began teaching things which were factually incorrect to help support his own biases, but that's not what's going on here.

Sometimes we need to be big boys and girls and take what we're told with a grain of salt and move on. Adults debate issues, respect each other's opinion, ask thoughtful questions and analyze alternate viewpoints for themselves.

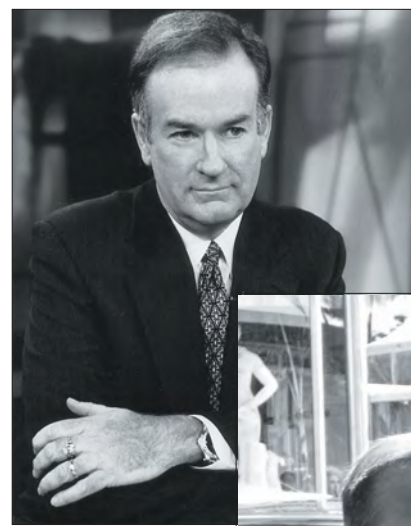
Instead, organizations such as the NCC have decided not to encourage students to fight back with words and ideas. They encourage students to condemn dissenting speech, to criminalize an alternative ideology for perceived wrongs against their comfortable beliefs, victimizing themselves in the process.

There's a very distinct difference between teaching bias as fact and exposing students to bias. Intelligent debate and the free sharing of a range of ideas is a principal American ideal and a right we must fight to preserve, not subvert.

Speaking your mind freely is the most American thing you can do, no matter what people like Bill O'Reilly, Ann Coulter or Michael Moore say about you.

Whether popular or unpopular, we need to preserve our right to accept and reject all kinds of opinions that we might be exposed to inside our universities and colleges.

I dare you to say that that's a liberal bias.



FREE SPEECH: Personalities like Bill O'Reilly, Michael Moore and Ann Coulter make a living by speaking their minds. **COURTESY PHOTOS**

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are your thoughts about the University's decision to increase the inter-campus shuttle bus fare?

- That's total nonsense. If it keeps going up then it stops being useful.
- I guess it depends on how much the price is increased.
- It's fine. You still save some money.
- There's another campus?

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

Why am I not on your Top 8?

Umm ... brb.



myspace

a place for friends

~~distraction~~

~~obsession~~

WORSHIP!

BY GEOFFREY ANDERSON JR.
Staff Writer

Whether you are looking for a former high school classmate or an ex-significant other, it's likely you can find him or her on *MySpace.com*.

With the social networking website hosting 47 million users worldwide, MySpace has achieved unprecedented popularity since it was founded in July 2003. You can search a person's name and MySpace will automatically bring up any possible matches.

None of MySpace's competitors – including *thefacebook.com* – can provide a search with so many results. To put it into perspective, as of November 2005, Facebook had a mere 11.1 million users.

MySpace CEO Chris DeWolfe and President Tom Anderson launched the website from Los Angeles, California in 2003. After seeing the potential value in acquiring MySpace, Fox Broadcasting's parent company, News Corporation, bought the site's owner Intermix Media for \$580 million in July 2005.

One reason for MySpace's increasing

popularity is the website's vast number of features. On the site, users create an online identity by filling out a profile with personal information such as hobbies and interests. After members create a profile, they are able to communicate with other users.

"I found some old friends on MySpace and couldn't believe how much they had changed," said sophomore Gabriela Duarte.

Indeed, the site has rekindled some lost relationships, such as sophomore Rosalyn Delgado's friendship with Coral, a middle school classmate. After Coral moved away to Michigan five years ago, the two friends lost touch. Rosalyn received a surprise last year when she checked her MySpace: a friend request from Coral.

"It was a blast from the past. MySpace really does help people keep in touch. Coral and I talk all the time now," Delgado said.

MySpace also offers its users a convenient "rate my professor" feature. Students can look up professors and see what ratings other students gave them.

Since MySpace has become so popular among the current generation, advertisers are using the website as an effective promotional tool. By using the website's communication tools, such as blogs (online web journals) and bulletins (notices that appear on a user's homepage), celebrities and companies are keeping their audiences up-to-date on the latest happenings.

For instance, comedian Dane Cook continuously promoted his latest comedy album *Retaliation* by using bulletins to announce the album's release date, and FIU mascot Golden Panther Roary Rage has a MySpace home that promotes the University's athletic program.

"Roary's page is convenient for students. It has information on all the sporting teams' schedules, so I always know what's going on with FIU sports," said sophomore Erika Aguilar.

MySpace's rising fame, however, comes with a price. Because more people are meeting friends online, face-to-face interaction is no longer required. With a simple click of a button, a user can gain a new friend – no social skills necessary.

"Online communication leaves a lot to be desired. Only through face-to-face interaction can you truly learn about another person," said speech communication professor Kathleen Watson. "What you miss online are the nuances of nonverbal communication."

In addition, MySpace can become an addiction for many college students. For a student, looking at people's profiles can be more fun than working on a term paper. Instead of getting work done, students might waste time by checking to see if their friends have posted pictures from last night's party.

"Instead of listening to my professor, sometimes I go on MySpace and check my messages [on my laptop]," said sophomore Wendy Corrales.

Even with these disadvantages, MySpace continues to grow in popularity. The ability of talking with old friends and meeting new people while establishing a unique online identity, compels people to join the website. An increasing membership and the regular addition of new features solidify MySpace's online status: The website is probably here to stay for a very long time.

Top 8 Groups

- 1 urbnmix.net:** Provides codes to put music videos on one's profile.
- 2 World artist network:** A global network of artists.
- 3 Laguna Beach (The Real O.C.):** Fan club for the hit MTV reality series "Laguna Beach."
- 4 Crazy Candle Peeps:** For anyone who loves candles.
- 5 [art]iculated:** For sharing of creative ideas.
- 6 President Bush is an A**HOLE!:** An anti-Bush group.
- 7 Green day:** For fans of the popular punk band.
- 8 Make Out Club:** For those wanting to meet, make out and see what develops.

Stylish vampire flick fails due to forced acting

BY REUBEN PEREIRA
Staff Writer

It's been two years since *Underworld* descended into cinemas in the fall of 2003. The film was a hit with action and horror fans alike, and in Hollywood, meeting that condition usually means the green light for a sequel.

The film, chronicling the war between vampires and lycans (werewolves), boasted an alluring concept, was stylishly shot and cut, making it instantly popular. Hiring young and attractive British starlet Kate

Beckinsale as the heroine was a very welcomed addition. So how does the sequel match up to the original?

As *Underworld: Evolution* opens, we are introduced to the ancestors of the two warring species: two brothers, William, a werewolf, and Marcus, a vampire. The opening sequence depicts the capture of William and sets the tone for the rest of the film – it's dark, stylishly shot, violent, bloody and has some ridiculous over-the-top acting.

As the first film ended, Selene, played by Beckinsale, went on

the run from the vampire race with her vampire/werewolf hybrid boyfriend Michael (Scott Speedman). The sequel picks up exactly where the original left off. Selene and Michael are somewhere in cold and icy Hungary (at least that's what the film makers want us to presume), searching for the origins of their bloodlines.

The perfect word to describe the plot of *Underworld: Evolution* would be 'muddled.' Although the film gives depth to the story of the original, the



MUDDLED: *Underworld: Evolution's* introduction lacks creativity and an exciting story line. COURTESY PHOTO

Poor plot leads to cheap end

From UNDERWORLD, page 6

decision to jump directly into the crux of the war between the vampires and lycans wasn't a wise one.

It requires the audience to have a clear understanding of the complex history of the two races, which was discussed in the original. Director Les Wiseman and co-writer Danny McBride try to solve this problem by offering half-baked flashbacks which don't offer much insight into



AT LEAST SHE'S HOT: Kate Beckinsale's performance proves certain actors are meant for certain parts. 'Selene' was clearly not the role that highlights Beckinsale's acting abilities. COURTESY PHOTO

the story other than to show-off the original's best action scenes.

While this film is a little better than the original, it is still plagued with problems. Sure, Les Wiseman knows how to direct an action sequence, but they're used so frequently that they start feeling redundant.

Also redundant are the close-ups Wiseman devotes to his wife's (Beckinsale) face. This is unfortunate because Beckinsale demonstrates the acting abilities of a fish. Beckinsale, if given the right part, is a fine actress. *The Aviator* and *Brokedown Palace* are proof of that. However, in this film, all she does is pout, grimace and look unbelievably sexy, which is probably what the film makers had in mind for their target audience in the first place.

Speedman as Beckinsale's boy toy and sometime conflicted werewolf/vampire is worse. A dramatic scene with Beckinsale where Michael tells Selene how much he loves her is ruined as Speedman is unable to convey the emotions required by his character.

Apart from grunting and growling, Speedman's character, Michael, is

essentially wasted. At least in the original he was an important link in the plot.

The best thing to say about him is that he makes a very good werewolf and his transformation scenes are cool, to say the least.

However, most of the visual effects sequences aren't well done. You can tell that editor Nicolas De Toth had to up the pace during action sequences to make the uneven effects less obvious.

Not all is evil in the Garden of Eden, as there are praiseworthy aspects to the film. The cinematography by Simon Duggan is gorgeous.

From the first scene on, we know we are living in a cold, dry and pale world inhabited by strange creatures of the night.

The action sequences, although repetitive, are more or less spectacular and very well done and the makeup effects by Joel Echallier are commendable.

Overall, *Underworld: Evolution* isn't a bad film, but it isn't a particularly good one either. If you enjoy cheap thrills, gratuitous action sequences with gore, blood and a decent plot, check it out, but make sure you rent the original before watching it. It will certainly make your experience much more rewarding.

UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION



2 1/2 out of 4 stars

Starring: Kate Beckinsale, Scott Speedman, Bill Nighy
Directed by: Len Wiseman

Rapper breaks through stereotype

BY HARRY COLEMAN
Editor in Chief

Street rap and gangster flow are back.

That's what you can expect from the third album of Los Angeles emcee Omni titled *Ballyhoo*.

With a rap style similar to a young Dr. Dre and a lyrical flow comparable to Ludacris, Omni delivers a first class album that many times seems 15 years too late.

What's best about Omni – who is also part of the infamous L.A. hip-hop crew Gershwin BLX – is that he stays true to the music by rapping straight through most of his songs. He does not worry about catchy choruses which sometimes seem to be an entire song for many of today's rappers.

The opening track titled "Back at it," is the album's best lyrical song and one that will keep your head banging with a deep bass that demands a subwoofer. Omni raps, "Never turn my back on where I got my love from/it isn't when you thought it was/you don't know who you can trust/I already know."

On "City 2 City," Omni talks about how his rhythm brings him the adrenaline needed to succeed in every city, not just his hometown. However, the problem with this song is just that. Like many rappers, he calls out differ-

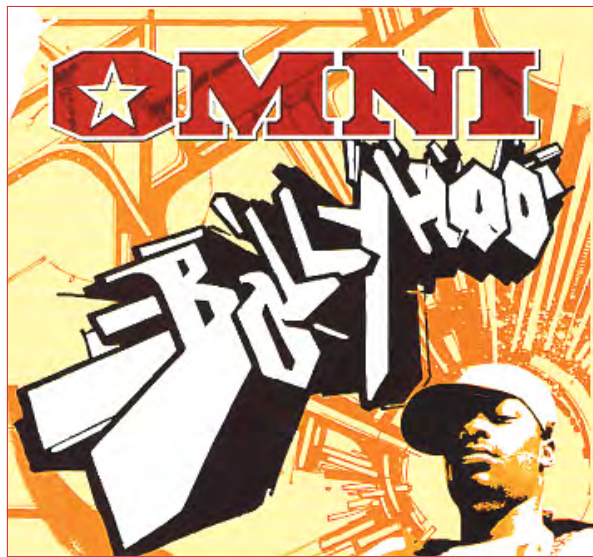
ent cities in the U.S., calling for their support. This has been done over and over again, it's unoriginal lacks creativity. It's an easy way to get clubs in different cities to jam to their songs, such as tracks by Jermaine Dupri and Petey Pablo.

Despite having plenty of hardcore songs, in "Cheeba Remix," Omni has a track for the ladies where he is desperate for a woman. He explains that being with her and touching her is like putting his hands on his Cadillac.

And of course with every woman you can't forget the rapper's bling that catches her attention. Omni raps about the woman, "Kissing on my neck looking for the platinum."

While he raps about violence, sex, drugs and women on most of the songs – like most rappers do – Omni shows he's not about glitz and glamour. He talks about his 'hood' and doesn't need to rap about Gucci and Prada to stand out.

With sleek beats and a good mix of



AN ORIGINAL GANGSTER: *Ballyhoo* delivers a young Dr. Dre style and chooses not to conform to commercialized rap. COURTESY PHOTO

guest appearances on most songs, the album will keep your head banging and your mind thinking as you try to keep up with Omni's flow.

BALLYHOO



2 1/2 out of 4 stars

Artist: Omni
Release date: Jan. 24, 2006
Genre: Hip/Hop

LIFE!



FIVE QUESTIONS OF INTEREST

NAME: PHILLIP HAMILTON
CURRENT POSITION: SGA SENIOR CLERK

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

Because we had a conference of 11 universities. I had to make sure things were in order, do damage control with that.

2. IF YOU COULD BE SOMEONE ELSE FOR A DAY (FROM ANY TIME OR PLACE), WHO WOULD IT BE?

Donald Trump. Because private jets, personal assistants and board of directors are fun things to have.



DONALD TRUMP

3. WHAT TV ACTOR OR PERSONALITY MAKES YOU CHANGE THE CHANNEL IMMEDIATELY?

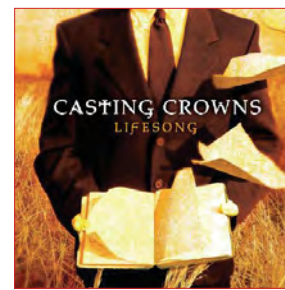
Carlos Mencia. Even cable television should have vulgarity limitations.



CARLOS MENCIA

4. WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THE CARLOS AND ELSA ALVAREZ CASE?

I say 'life happens.' It's unfortunate but whatever misunderstanding took place, will be settled. Let's just hope justice is served.



CASTING CROWNS

5. WHAT SONG DEFINES YOUR LIFE?

"Lifesong" by Casting Crown, because everything I do is for a purpose.

- Compiled by C. Joel Marino

Know an interesting professor? Does your friend have a cool campus job? Then recommend them for this section feature by e-mailing beaconlife@yahoo.com

Look for the Life! 5 feature every Monday issue.

Price's team looking to thrive with chemistry, hard work

PREVIEW, from page 12

Alfonso comes highly touted out of Christopher Columbus High School, after hitting .350 throughout his career. Junior Batista was a NJCAA All-Star last season and earned all-conference honors as a freshman at BCC.

"Luis Rivera is a big glove to replace, but we're hoping Batista and Alfonso can fill those shoes," Price said.

However, it may be Lozano, who started at

second base for most of last season and hit .346, who will start at short early in the season, due to injuries to both newcomers.

Batista will be sidelined for 4-5 weeks with a knee injury and Alfonso is recovering from an injury to his throwing arm.

As for first base, Lopez, who started all but one game at the position last season, is expected to see playing time there.

However, one of the reasons for his move to the outfield is to include the

bat of junior Kurt Crowell, who hit .329 with six homeruns and six doubles to earn second-team all-conference honors for East Los Angeles Community College last season.

"I've been playing first for a while," Crowell said. "I played at my junior college, so I've got some experience there and I just hope to come in, produce and do good for the team."

Crowell's teammate at ELACC, Mike Diaz, can also see some time in the infield. Last season, he

batted .333 with 33 RBI and eight doubles.

The catcher position will also be another highly contested position this season. Sophomores Danny Marquez and Cody Jacobs split time at the position last season, although both struggled offensively, posting batting averages of .239 and .222, respectively.

Freshman J.C. Perez – a two-time All-Miami-Dade county selection for Florida Christian High School – and junior Luis Bautista, a native of the Dominican

Republic, have the tools offensively, but may not be ready defensively. They may see time as the designated hitter.

PITCHING

The biggest story with the pitching staff is the loss of Villanueva. The projected number one starter in the rotation was deemed academically ineligible prior to the Spring semester.

"It's a big loss, but I'm a true believer that somebody's gonna step up,"

said pitching coach Tony Casas. "There's a lot of talent [and] there's a lot of good arms in the staff. It's just giving them some confidence and getting them out there and letting them throw."

Lefty Chris Siebenaler, who is the only pitcher to have started a game last season, is expected to be the new number one starter. Last season he recorded a 5-1 record with a 3.89 ERA, 23 strikeouts and 18 walks in 44 innings pitched over 18 appearances.

"Chris Siebenaler threw a lot of innings late last year and he's gonna be counted on," Price said.

Redshirt junior Walker Whitley, out of Spartanburg Methodist Junior College, is expected to be the number two starter in the rotation. The 6-6 Whitley, who sports a side-arm delivery, went 8-1 last season at Spartanburg.

The other prominent returnee for the pitching staff is senior Frank Gonzalez, who led the team in appearances with 29 and tied for the lowest ERA of 2.70. The All-Sun Belt Conference Second Teamer, who pitched a career-high 66 and two-thirds innings last year, is looking to fill the role as closer, as opposed to his long relief role of last year.

"When you got the game on the line and you're up one run and you're going into the ninth inning, you want the best that you got, who's got experience," Price said. "Frank's not gonna back off of anybody. He's gonna go in and get after them and that's the only thing you can ask from a closer."

The three and four spots in the starting rotation are up for grabs, with newcomers Kyle Preshong and Eduardo Elias expected to fill them.

Infielder Mike Diaz might also see some time coming out of the bullpen as he posted a 5-2 record with a 2.70 ERA last season at ELACC, which earned him the team's Best All-Purpose Athlete Award.

Left-handed returnee Les Rodriguez, who pitched only five innings last season, along with newcomers Eric Horstmann, Miguel Alfonso, Michael Clayton and Jorge Ramos are all expected to contribute out of the bullpen as well.

"I'm really pleased with the 12 guys we have now," Casas said. "All these guys, they can come in late in the game, early in relief or they can start for you. So it's good. There's a lot of flexibility on our staff."

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Transfer wanted to play in Florida; embraced by team

BY ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

Don't be surprised if on opening-day weekend you see a lanky, towering figure trot towards the mound firing sidearm pellets during warm-ups. It's probably Walker Whitley, the Golden Panthers' new right-handed pitcher.

Whitley is attending his fourth university since graduating from J.H. Rose High School in North Carolina, where he grew up in the scarcely populated city of Greenville.

"[I grew up in] a really small town," Whitley said. "It's got everything you need in it. Plus, it's a very big baseball town so there's a lot of good ballplayers around and the competition is tough."

Whitley grew up as a only child and, at a very early age, was really into playing the guitar, but always got nervous when it came time to play in front of people.

One day it all went away.

"I was in my hometown and my girlfriend and I were in a bar listening to this great blues cover band play," Whitley said. "So I left the room for a minute and my girlfriend [requested] a song and the guy [asked] her if she [knew] how to play it and she [said], 'No my boyfriend does.' So by the time I [got] back, the guy [handed] me his guitar so I could play. I got up there and sort of jammed out and lost that fear really quickly."

Whitley not only played a mean guitar, but was also a pretty good baseball player. By earning all-conference honors as a junior and senior in high school, Whitley was recruited to play for nearby power-

house South Carolina. It is there that Whitley went through the devastation of being a red-shirt freshman.

"It wasn't really a big surprise because USC is a big school and they had a lot of pitchers," Whitley said. "But I had every aspiration of coming back and starting but I just didn't have a good fall and I thought it was best to leave."

With an extra year of eligibility from his red shirt, Whitley went on to play at Young Harris Junior College and Spartanburg Methodist Junior College, where he left with a 15-5 record, *magna-cum laude* honors and a new sidearm delivery.

After finishing his tenure at the junior college level, it was time to move on. He had always wanted to travel far from home and Florida was a place where he had a special interest. Then, one day he walked into his room and saw his golden opportunity saved on his machine. It was a message from FIU pitching coach Tony Casas.

"We were looking for some pitchers this summer and we were focusing primarily on the junior college level," Casas

said. "So I contacted his coach - I had known him for years - and I asked him if he had anybody good ... he told me he had a guy that threw in the mid-80's with side-arm delivery ... very smart kid. We rolled him down the next weekend and he met our team and I asked him, 'Is this the place for you?' And he said, 'Coach, I've always wanted to go to Florida and this is where I want to be.'"

Without ever seeing him pitch, Casas knew he was the guy they wanted on their staff.

"We usually never take a guy sight un-seen," said Casas. "But since the coach was a very close personal friend of mine, we knew he wasn't going to recommend somebody that wasn't going to be productive."

This guy has been outstanding so far though man, knock on wood, he's been great."

The junior righty has not only caught the eye of his coaching staff, but fellow teammates as well.

"He's a very hard-working guy that just [goes] after it," said right-handed

pitcher Chris Siebenaler. "He's not afraid to go after hitters and his sidearm delivery makes all of his pitches very deceptive ... he's a great add-on to this pitching staff."

Whitley has good amount of pitches to choose from - a mid- to high- 80 mph fastball, a sinker, split-finger and slider. The movement he gets on his pitches, combined with his poise on the mound and his ability to pitch inside, makes him especially tough on right-handed hitters.

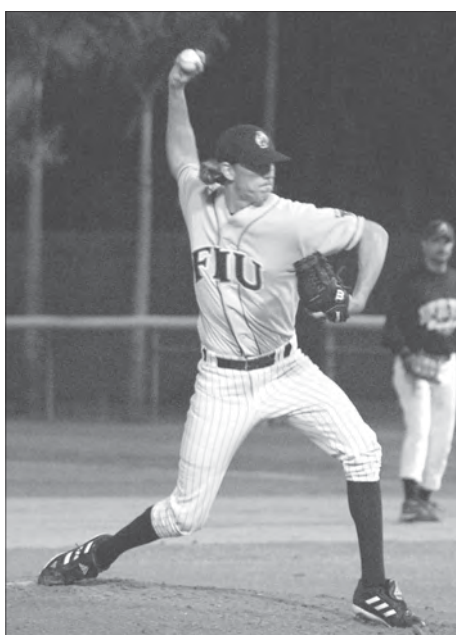
But just where will he fit in with the rest of the pitching staff?

"Right now we're looking at him as a starter," Casas said. "Since we lost [Elihu] Villanueva, we had to change things around. We were originally looking for him to be a long reliever or take on the closer role because he's just something different to see in the middle of the game."

So finally, after growing up in North Carolina, being red-shirted in South Carolina, traveling to Georgia to play at Young Harris, then traveling back to South Carolina to play at Spartanburg Methodist, the 6-6, 210-pound business major seems to have found the home he'd been looking for all along.

"I always wanted to come to Florida because of the warm weather and the great baseball that's played here," Whitley said. "As soon as I got here I loved the environment. The coaches [treat] me good and I get along great with all of the players."

"I think it's going to be a great year."



ROCK ON: Redshirt junior Walker Whitley has played the guitar for 10 years and will soon be in the starting rotation for FIU.

CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

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Third baseman adds energy and leadership to team

BY ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

During the 2005 season, the baseball team made a lot of great catches and came up with many timely hits as they marched into the Sun-Belt Conference tournament. But their biggest play came in the off-season as they acquired third baseman Nick Cadena, a transfer student out of Arizona State University.

Cadena grew up in Phoenix and attended Apollo High School where he broke Paul Lo Duca's record for homeruns in a career. After finishing off his senior year with a .496 average to go along with 18 homeruns and 45 RBI's, Cadena turned down being drafted by the Kansas City Royals in the 41st round and elected to attend nearby Arizona State.

As a freshman, Cadena was used solely as a pinch-hitter in the first half and ended up starting the last 16 games of the season. But a near-death car accident early on in his sophomore season made him a medical red-shirt. He bounced back in his junior year and ended the season hitting .260 with three homeruns.

After three years as a Sun Devil, Cadena transferred to FIU in search of consistent playing time and a stage to show what he was all about. Cadena wasted no time and quickly gained the respect of his FIU teammates with his hard work and leadership.

"That guy's incredible," said senior outfielder Michael Lopez. "He's an incredible leader, incredible player, [and] an incredible teammate. He's an inspiration to us all ... he brings a lot of

chemistry to this team and makes sure everyone is together."

Cadena broke out in 2005 by hitting .329, putting up a .493 slugging percentage and stealing 15 bases. He was also named to the Aeropaste Sun-Belt Conference All-Tournament Team after hitting a .467.

It is because of his big success and winning attitude on the field that head coach Danny Price looks to him for direction.

"He's one of the guys that I classify as a 'Big Cat,'" Price said. "He's got to be okay. He's got to be a leader. He's got to control himself and he's got to play hard and show us the way ... he brings a tremendous amount of energy because he's been there. He just brings the consistency and the ability to go out and perform."

With one week to go before the big season-opener against the University of Miami, *The Beacon* sat down with Cadena to talk about what has made him a 'Big Cat.'

Q: After living your entire life in Phoenix, how has living over there been different from living in Miami?

I have all my family back there including my two younger brothers. I would think the difference is also within the people and the culture, but Phoenix is a big city and it's one of the fastest growing cities in the country, so I'm pretty used to it. But it's still not as fast moving as here.

Q: What was a character trait that your parents instilled in you while you were growing up?

My parents are extremely strong

people and their only concern is [their kids]. They directed my attitude of 'school first and then ball'. They taught me that baseball is not going to be there forever but my education will.

Q: What is it about your parents that makes you admire them so much?

How strong they are despite everything they've gone through. We grew up in a really tough neighborhood and they did a good job of just keeping us focused and away from that stuff. There were a lot of gangs around us and it would've been easy to fall into bad things.

Q: Who is one baseball player that you would pay to see play the game?

Probably Pete Rose. Not so much for his part off the field but just the way he played the game. There was no one like him ... he worked with what he had and just did the best he could.

Q: You signed with ASU right out of high school and struggled a bit there. Now you come to FIU and you're one of the top players in the conference. What contributed to this huge turnaround?

At ASU, I wasn't given the opportunity to play. I never got the opportunity to be a full-time starter because at the beginning I was just pinch-hitting. When I ended up starting I definitely produced but then when I got hurt it brought me down again ... I just needed an opportunity to play everyday.

Q: Talk about the huge car accident you went through as a sophomore that made you miss the entire season.

The first day of practice I got t-boned – blind-sided – and I twisted my back and it put me out for the season. We flew 85 feet, broke the windshield and totaled both vehicles. The driver actually broke his knee.

Q: Did you think you would never play baseball again?

At first I did, but my family and my faith got me through it. If you don't have faith in God then you can't do anything.

My family just told me to never give up and keep working.

Q: Outside of baseball, what has been your proudest achievement in your life thus far?

Being a role model to my older brothers. Giving them something they can look up to and want to be. Definitely leading by example and being the type of guy they can [emulate].

Q: The Kansas City Royals drafted you out of high school in the 41st round. Did you choose not to go to the minor leagues because of the low signing bonus or because an education was just that important to you?

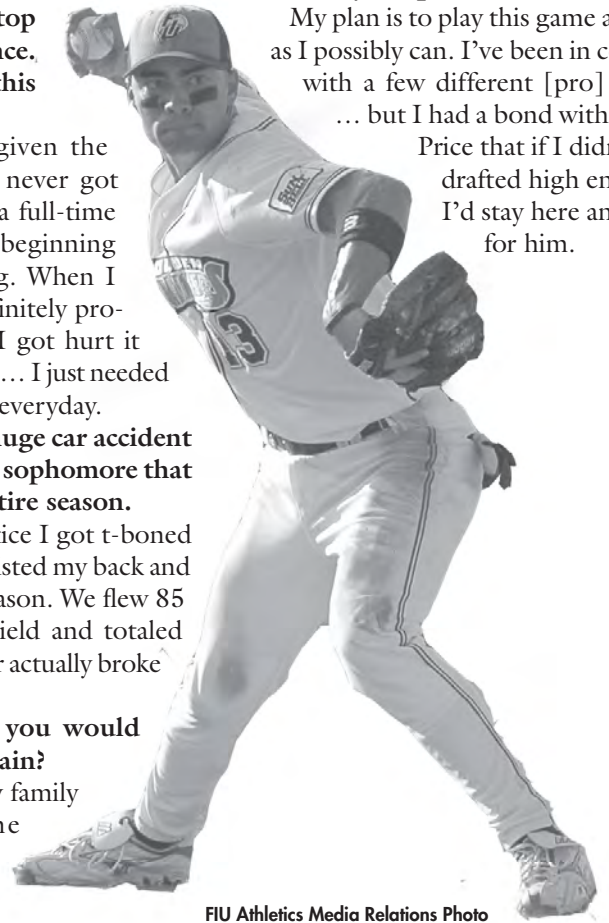
Education, definitely. My parents always stressed that. I wanted to be the first person in my family to graduate from college.

Q: Although you graduate in this semester, you still have one year left of eligibility to play college baseball. What are your plans?

My plan is to play this game as long as I possibly can. I've been in contact with a few different [pro] teams ... but I had a bond with coach

Price that if I didn't get drafted high enough, I'd stay here and play

for him.



FIU Athletics Media Relations Photo

Men's basketball ends losing streak

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FIU BASEBALL PREVIEW

FIRST PITCH

Leadership will carry team's many newcomers

BY XAVIER VILLARMARZO
Sports Editor

The start of a new season, regardless of the sport, brings a heavy dose of uncertainty. The 2006 FIU baseball team can whole-heartedly relate to the previous sentence.

The loss of sophomore pitcher Elih Villanueva, who was projected to be the number one starter, may affect the team greatly.

Also, with the losses of last year's stars Yahmed Yema, Dennis Diaz, David Asher and Luis Rivera to the Major Leagues, the team is looking to fill many holes.

But the uncertainty surrounding this year's team is no different than that of last year's team, who came off the worst season in program history.

"I think both teams are a lot alike than they were last year at this point," said Danny Price, who is entering his 27th season as the team's head coach. "We lost some good players, but we brought in some good players and you don't know what you've got until you play some games."

And when the Golden Panthers begin those games, they will play the most difficult four-week stretch in the history of the program - including the season-opening series against Miami (Jan. 28-29), a home series against Central Florida (Feb. 4-5) and road trips to Southern California (Feb. 10-12) and Alabama (Feb. 24-26).

"We're gonna be tested early and we're gonna have to get tough early and stay tough all season," Price said.

The team returns 14 players from last season and has 16 newcomers.

"New is good if you've got leadership coming back," Price said.

Leadership is one department the team will not be lacking in, as co-captains Nick Cadena and Michael Lopez hope to carry over their stellar performances from last season. And they are just two example of what Price calls his "Big Cats."

"You're only as good as your Big Cats," Price said. "If your Big Cats are okay, then you're Little Cats are gonna be okay."

OUTFIELD

There are four players vying for the three starting spots in the outfield. The most surprising of them is Lopez. The left-hand batting senior has played first base throughout his entire FIU career and has a legitimate shot of

taking some playing time left field.

As for center and right field, speedster Chris Dunn and sophomore James McOwen might interchange between the positions.

McOwen, a consistent producer as a freshman, finished last season second on the team with a .351 batting average and added 11 stolen bases. Dunn batted .229, albeit having only 35 at-bats, but did manage to steal 11 bases.

All three of those players have great speed - stealing a combined 32 bases - and athletic ability and could play every position in the outfield.

"Coach Price is saying we have three centerfielders out there and there's no doubt about it," Dunn said. "That's gonna be huge when it means stopping singles from turning into doubles and doubles turning into triples. It'll save a lot of runs and help the pitchers out [by] shortening their innings [and] shortening their pitch counts."

The fourth player, redshirt junior Bryan Pullin, who was fifth on the team in batting last season with a .328 average, will see time in the outfield, but will most likely see playing time as the designated hitter.

Newcomers DePhillip Mason and Chris Rey hope to provide more speed to this already speedy outfield, as well as bring help with the bats. Both freshmen are highly touted offensively. Mason - out of Monsignor Pace High School - hit over .300 in each of his four seasons in high school, while Rey - a two-sport athlete at Gulliver Prep - hit .400 with five homeruns and 33 RBI his senior year. Both players have earned All-Miami-Dade recognition.

"I think we have a very good defensive outfield and one that's gonna hit as well, so I think it's definitely gonna help," Dunn said.

INFIELD

The only definite starters are Cadena, who was second on the team in stolen bases (15) and homeruns (8) last season, at third base and sophomore Corey Lozano.

The shortstop position, vacated by defensive gem Luis Rivera who chose to forgo his senior season and signed a free agent contract with the Chicago Cubs, will be a battle between freshman Alex Alfonso and Broward Community College transfer Maros Batista.

See PREVIEW, page 8

BIG CATS



NICK CADENA 3B

#16
Fifth Year Senior
Bats: Right Throws: Right
Height: 6-1 Weight: 214
Hometown: Glendale, Ariz.

2005 STATISTICS						
AVG.	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	SB
.329	207	41	68	8	43	15

2006 OUTLOOK
Cadena, now sporting Yahmed Yema's number from last season, will try to put up Yema-like numbers and improve upon his stellar 2005 performance.



FRANK GONZALEZ RHP

#20
Senior
Bats: Right Throws: Right
Height: 6-1 Weight: 185
Hometown: Hialeah, Fla.

2005 STATISTICS						
ERA	W-L	APP	SV	IP	BB	SO
2.70	8-1	29	3	66.2	19	51

2006 OUTLOOK
Last season's most reliable arm out of the bullpen, Gonzalez returns as the team's closer. He will be able to hold the lead in close games while reducing his number of innings.



MICHAEL LOPEZ 1B/OF

#0
Senior
Bats: Left Throws: Left
Height: 6-0 Weight: 200
Hometown: Miami, Fla.

2005 STATISTICS						
AVG.	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	SB
.312	202	51	63	5	47	10

2006 OUTLOOK
For the first time in his FIU career, Lopez will play a position other than first base. The move will be able to bring in more offense to the Golden Panther lineup.



JAMES MCOWEN OF

#18
Sophomore
Bats: Left Throws: Right
Height: 6-0 Weight: 185
Hometown: Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

2005 STATISTICS						
AVG.	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	SB
.351	148	29	52	1	21	11

2006 OUTLOOK
McOwen lived up to his expectation last season. His .351 batting average was second on the team. With a year of experience under his belt, expect more of the same from the lefty.

