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Second of a two part interview

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HARD HAT AREA



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

DEMOLITION MISSION: Construction at the new football stadium at University Park continues with the destruction of the field house last week. See more pictures at www.beaconnewspaper.com

CENTER FOR ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE

FALLING APART

Neglect visible throughout campus

ERIC FELDMAN
Staff Writer

Hurricane damage, security concerns and unresolved maintenance issues have been causing problems for students at FIU's Center for Engineering and Applied Science.

The CEAS, located on Flagler Street about a mile away from University Park, is attended by over 2,000 engineering and computer science students. The build-

ing still burdens damage from Hurricane Wilma three years ago; the most prominent example being the faculty parking lot, housed under the second floor of the building, which, in gratitude to hurricane damage, is not in use.

Faculty must now park in what used to be student parking, and many students have been relegated to park in a pit of gravel," said Jose Villar, president of the Engineering Student Council.

There are more examples of neglect inside and outside the campus. In one area, the façade of the building is stripped away, exposing cinder block. Outside of the main lobby, portions of the wall are covered with plywood. The tile floor on the elevator, also damaged, reveals the wood beneath.

Villar also noted that even though students are studying and working at CEAS at all hours of the day, after midnight the facility is poorly lit.

Students do not feel safe walking to their cars alone and often stay inside until a fellow student is available to accompany them into the parking lot. Maydel Santana-Bravo, director of Media Relations, said this is normal.

"The engineering center is on an automated timer system with set times for lights and other systems to shut down," Santana-

CEAS, page 2

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

SGA still working on fulfilling its 2007-2008 goals

CATHERINE KAIMAN
Staff Writer

Although the Student Government Council at University Park has completed seven of its 12 goals for the 2007-2008 academic year, SGC at the Biscayne Bay Campus has fulfilled three of its seven goals.

"It's not that they haven't been completed, it's just that the environment is at the forefront of our goals," Cassandra Andrade, SGC-BBC vice president, said. "The team effort with the faculty and students

has helped make 'going green' a lot easier."

SGC-BBC has been dedicated to completing its goal of making BBC more environmentally friendly by appointing David Fonseca the Environmental Affairs and Community Relations director, Andrade said.

Andrade said SGC-BBC is pleased with its "green" initiatives.

"The one goal that we are proud of and can say has been completed is trying to bring awareness about the environment and make BBC a

'greener' campus," Andrade said. "David is very passionate about the environment and it's important for our future and to decrease the damage that we are doing."

BBC Council members have installed water-saving showerheads in the Bay Vista residence hall and have hosted Day at the Bay, an environmental awareness event where participants cleaned the bay on the campus. Fonseca also serves on the President's Climate Committee, which allows SGC-BBC to have a voice in environmental decisions

Cassandra Andrade, SGC-BBC vice president

It's not that they haven't been completed, it's just that the environment is at the forefront of our goals.

made by the administration.

With Marbely Hernandez, SGC-UP president, serving on the President's Climate Committee, SGC-UP prefers not to start any green initiatives on its own. They want to wait until administration becomes more environmentally

friendly according to Arthur "AJ" Meyer, SGC-UP vice president.

SGC-BBC's goal to increasing communication between faculty, deans and students has been completed.

GOALS, page 3

SPIRITUALITY CERTIFICATE

New program first of its kind

MICHELLE VEGA
Contributing Writer

As of next Spring, a certificate in the study of spirituality will be offered at FIU — a program that no other university in the world has ever acquired.

This new certificate is aimed for students on professional tracks such as law, medicine, health sciences, education, psychology, environmental studies, international relations, fine and performing arts, and others. It can also be the equivalent of a minor.

"This certificate program in the study of spirituality is outside the box," said Nathan Katz, founder of the FIU Religious Studies department and of the Center for the Study of Spirituality. "It is a personality thing: Some people like to be ahead of the curve and some like to play it safe."

The new certificate program was approved by the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Curriculum Committee Oct. 19.

According to Katz, it took almost a full academic year just to compile a course list and get the written approval from the chairs and deans in the many different departments involved.

The idea came from the 14th Dalai Lama, when he received an honorary degree from FIU in 1999.

"He spoke about the American System of Higher

Education. He told us that we did a very good job in educating the 'good brain,' but that we did not do so well in training the 'warm heart," said Katz, who is also a friend of the Dalai Lama. "He suggested that we try to combine the two."

Following his friend's words, Katz and a group of colleagues decided to develop the Center for the Study of Spirituality to introduce a perspective of spirituality across the curriculum.

Since spirituality can be applied to a variety of professions and endeavors, students are also required to take an additional five courses referred to as 'applied spirituality,' Katz said.

"There are courses in international relations, myth, ritual and mysticism, environmental science, philosophy and urban education. The program's courses were chosen with the aim of expanding a student's world view — to have a student of any major realize his or her inner-connectedness with the whole world," Dubitsky said.

Thomas Pliske, environmental studies professor, believes it is important for students to have a world view of spirituality.

"As part of a creation, we share a bond with whatever force we identify as our creator. Spirituality ... comes to the aid of environmental

SPIRITUALITY, page 2

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • NOVEMBER 26

Campus Bible Fellowship: 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., GC 314 (UP)

TUESDAY • NOVEMBER 27

Honors Council General Meeting: 3:30 - 5 p.m., GC 150 (UP)

SOC General Meeting: 5:30 p.m., GC 150 (UP)

Campus Bible Fellowship: 7:30 - 9 p.m., GC 343 (UP)

SPC- Ratatouille: Movie on the Lawn: 8 p.m., Housing Quad (UP)

WEDNESDAY • NOVEMBER 28

Catholic Student Union- Holy Mass: 12 - 1 p.m., GC 150 (UP)

Catholic Student Union Faith Jam Lunch: 1 - 3 p.m., GC 2215 (UP)

B-HIVE Project: 7 p.m., Everglades Lounge (UP)

Phi Sig & FIU Health and Wellness Center- Health and Body Seminar: 8:30 p.m., GC (UP)

AART- Recreational Therapy Fair: 12 - 4 p.m., Chapman Plaza (UP)

THURSDAY • NOVEMBER 29

Dance Marathon- Mr. & Ms. DM: 8 p.m., GC Ballrooms (UP)

Anything Goes Anime: 8 p.m., - 12 a.m., Chemistry and Physics 145 (UP)

SPC BBC- Comedy Hypnosis & Ventriloquist: 8 p.m., WUC 100 (BBC)

FRIDAY • NOVEMBER 30

SPC- Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix: 7 & 10 p.m., GC 140 (UP)

6th Annual Fashion Show- Irresistible Temptation: 8 p.m., GC Ballrooms (UP)

Compiled by *Kassandra Pool*

Students, staff share complaints

CEAS, page 1

Bravo said.

Senior Javier Rivas, vice president of the FIU branch of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, described what it's like to be at CEAS after dark.

"Without air conditioning, less light and no power in the outlets, my engineering skills are really put to the test when I try to study in the Panther Pit lounge late at night," Rivas said.

Ashley Andersen, a biomedical engineering graduate student, agrees.

"It is creepy; especially at night. I do not feel safe walking to my car after the lights have turned off," Andersen said.

Chris Rego, a senior majoring in civil engineering, expressed concern that students will be distracted studying so close to the noisy recreation area in CEAS, and the pool table in Panther Pit is damaged.

Marcelo Marcelli, a chef who works at the cafeteria at Panther Pit last year, has his own complaints.

"There has been no gas line connected to my restaurant for almost a year," Marcelli said.

The University depends on money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help compensate for damage caused by hurricanes.

"Facilities Management is negotiating the cost of these repairs with a construction manager and will be forwarding those costs to FEMA for funding," Santana-Bravo said.

While roof damage has been repaired, any general maintenance items should be reported to Work Man-



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

WHAT WOULD EINSTEIN SAY?: Damaged ceilings and lighting are a common view of the Center for Engineering and Applied Science parking facility.

agement in order to initiate repairs, according to Santana-Bravo.

Most of engineering majors' classes are held in CEAS, especially during the last two years of classes, which deal exclusively with engineering and engineering-related topics. Another concern is over how these students want to have a classic college life experience but CEAS lacks ready access to social and academic events hosted on other campuses.

Some complained that information about job and career opportunities are restricted, as the Career Services office located at CEAS has been vacant for a year since its former career advisor resigned. Most job fairs occur at UP, and Villar remarked that "industry professionals who do visit CEAS are not impressed by

the facilities."

Lenroy Jones, director of Career Services at UP, contends that the position is in the process of being filled.

"It is tough to fill these positions," Jones said. "I am extremely committed to finding the best individual."

According to Jones, a national search for a replacement has not yielded the perfect candidate yet. In addition, Jones said that a two-month University-wide hiring freeze earlier this year didn't help, although for several months other Career Services employees have rotated worked at CEAS.

Despite many problems, the engineering community is proud of ongoing research projects, including the "Wall of Wind," which simulates hurricane force winds to test structural integrity.

"The whole environment

is not good for learning," said Luis Alonzo, president of the Biomedical Engineering Society. "It is not on the same page as UP."

Student Government Association Vice President Arthur "AJ" Meyer, who takes all of his classes at CEAS, prefers spending time at UP.

"Facilities bring in student life and involvement, and at [CEAS] we are lacking," Meyer said.

Meyer insists that SGA does not ignore CEAS; SGC-UP held its most recent council meeting there.

Associate Dean David Shen is glad that students are trying to get changes made around campus.

"Of course we want more," Shen said in reference to the parking situation as well as lack of landscaping.

THE BEACON
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Visit our Web site for additional stories on the unvailing of the Panther Tram and a feature about homecoming winners.

THE BEACON



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Spirituality program inspired by Dalai Lama

SPIRITUALITY, page 1

studies by suggesting we try to develop a compassionate ethics in our relationships with nature and with one another," Pliske said.

One required foundation course for the certificate program is Meditation and Mystical Traditions, which Sorah Dubitsky, director of the Center for the Study of Spirituality's Undergraduate Certificate Program and adjunct in the Psychology Department, recommends for students planning a career in psychology.

She said the course "would be an adjunct to one's own practice or in aiding their client's growth."

There will also be courses offered in the program that will focus on an array of disciplines, such as cuisine and travel.

"Cuisine is connected to spirituality as people are becoming more

and more conscious of their role in nature and as environmental and health issues are arising," Katz said. "Also, the oldest form of tourism in the world is pilgrimage, which of course is a spiritual endeavor. Today, we are seeing more and more travel programs with a spiritual focus — whether to India, Israel, Japan or the Andes."

As funds become available through grants and donations, Katz says that he and his department plan to expand the program with new courses in any discipline, from literature to psychology to hospital-ity management, within the next year or two.

The program has received more than three dozen student inquiries so far, even though it has not yet been publicized.

For more information on the new curriculum, e-mail Spirituality@fiu.edu.

ART ALONG THE BAY

Marine life sparks eco-friendly artist to submerge artwork

CATHERINE KAIMAN
Staff Writer

Ross Power, an environmental artist, has loaned Biscayne Bay Campus sculptures for at least the next five years.

Previously displayed adjacent to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel on Brickell Key, the four stainless steel sculptures were installed during a ceremony, held Nov. 16, on the bay side of the Marine Sciences building.

"Having sculptures installed along the bay was not a small undertaking because of the hurricane codes that had to be approved," said Julissa Castellanos, director of operations for BBC's Office of the Vice Provost.

The four sculptures along the bay pathway are Future Wave," "No Turning Back" "Focus" and "Reflective Man." Each are more than seven feet tall.

As an environmental artist, Power utilizes the environment as his medium to create environmentally conscious sculptures.

"I established myself in 1972 in California and began creating metal sculptures from places like the Hyatt Regency to Metro Goldwyn Meyer," Power said. "I quickly became disinterested in that medium and knew that I needed something else, which is when I came up with the idea of dropping sculptures in the ocean."



JESSICA KERTZNIUS/THE BEACON

BENDING OVER BACKWARDS: Environmental Artist Ross Power's, *No Turning Back*, on display at Biscayne Bay. The sculpture, along with three others, were installed Nov. 16.

"Future Wave" and "No Turning Back" were submerged in the ocean for one year.

In that one year, Power was inspired by how marine life interacted with his art.

He wanted his design to move with the marine life and remain forever in the sea, according to Power's Web site, www.rosspower.com.

"Focus" is one of seven sculptures that will be permanently submerged in an undecided underwater location.

"By having these sculptures under the ocean forever, there is a marriage of art and science and that is what brings FIU and [I] together," Power said. "We are a creative society and we need to enlighten and give back to our environment which is being abused. We need to make [the environment] even better than it was before we abused it."

Despite the sculptures' installation in a hurricane prone area, BBC's administration is pleased with the relationship that now exists between Power and FIU, said Rebecca Dinar, outreach coordinator for the Vice Provost's office.

"The Office of the Vice Provost is very thankful to Power for his help in making BBC more aesthetically pleasing and incorporating art, science and marine life into our curriculum," Dinar said. "[We] hope that this inspires the members of the community."

Power is equally pleased with his sculptures' enrichment of the BBC community.

"I am so thrilled with every single person at FIU," Power said. "It really feels like a family and we can now embark together on an adventure reaching millions of people."



PHOTO COURTESY/FIU MEDIA RELATIONS

ELEMENTALIST: Ross Power directs the installation of one of his environmentally conscious sculptures.

SGC-BBC hopes to meet its goals

GOALS, page 1

Many members of the House of Representatives are taking the initiative to get faculty members involved in programming events with students.

"We invite all faculty members and Deans to participate in the friendly Toy Drive competition between the different colleges at BBC," Andrade said.

The most important goals that SGC-BBC hopes to accomplish within their administration is finalizing the restaurants and vendors that will provide the new cafeteria more food options, ensure funding for the Aquatic Center's repairs and to continue listening to student's input for the vacant space on the Wolfe University Center's third floor.

"Some students have expressed a desire for a media room or extra leisure space on the third floor, but we really have to wait until the cafeteria is opened to see what we will put up there," Andrade said.

SGC-UP and SGC-BBC both agree that their individual campuses need to strengthen ties with the surrounding communities.

The goal of opening an entrance to BBC from 135th Street will not be completed during the tenure of the current SGC-BBC administration.

"We have tried to increase our community awareness with the city of North

Miami, to let them know [FIU] is here, and we feel that it is dangerous to only have one entrance in and out of the campus," Andrade said. "We know this will be a challenging goal to complete." With the Fall semester coming to a close, UP council members are very pleased with their accomplishments.

"Half of our goals have already been completed and the rest will be accomplished by Spring or the foundation will be set for the new administration," Meyer said.

SGC-UP has tried to limit the number of laptop thefts on campus by offering cable locks, while also increasing the number of laptops that are available for students in the Green Library.

Cable locks, which are similar to bike locks, are hooked up to the back of the computer and a stationery desk, preventing someone from stealing a laptop.

SGC-UP has also bought 10 new Dell laptops in hopes of increasing laptop rental availability for students at the library.

A newly completed goal at UP is the Panther Safety Tram—a free transportation system for students, from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. The response time is usually between five to 10 minutes.

"The Panther Safety Tram offers four and six seater [carts] for students, whether it be to a football game, the recreation center, or just to see a friend,"

Meyer said.

One SGC-UP goal that will have its foundations set this year for next year's council is to carry out the Panther Points system. The system will reward students for attending FIU sporting events, but the prizes and point amounts have yet to be set.

"We want to encourage students to go to sporting events that are usually less popular, and with Panther Points, those events would have a higher point system," Meyer said.

SGC-UP wants to get more involved with Miami-Dade county's government and the city of Sweetwater. Starting next semester, SGC-UP plans to attend several Sweetwater city council meetings to ensure their understanding of the community around UP, Meyer said.

Besides their 12 goals, there are other issues SGC-UP plans to address. Cleaning and dredging the lake outside of Gracie's Grill, possibly restructuring the Student Government Association and the Athletics Partnership Proposal that will ensure students have a chance to utilize the Football Stadium and Pharmed Arena, among other spaces, are issues that have come up throughout the semester.

Andrade believes this year's SGC-BBC has done a great job.

"We are a great team and people are constantly working above and beyond [their duties]," Andrade said.

NEWSFLASH

Student Leaders speak with Ukrainian students

BBC student leaders were invited by the office of Student Affairs and the Ukrainian U.S. Embassy to participate in a video conference call with Ukrainian students on Nov. 16 to discuss current student issues. As part of International Education Week, held from Nov. 12 to 16, the conference was held at 9:00 a.m. in the Vice Provost's office in Library conference room 319. Breakfast was provided.

Exhibition to display local African artists' work

The African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, on 21 St. and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., will host Speak the Unspeakable – Reflections on the Middle Passage. In observance of the 200th anniversary of slavery's abolition, the exhibition will work by Floridian African World artists. The exhibition's opening reception will be Dec. 5 at 6 p.m. For more information, call 305-919-5521.

Core classes available for Spring 2008

The BBC University Core Curriculum schedule for Spring 2008 has been revealed. Courses in English composition, humanities with writing, quantitative reasoning, the arts, natural sciences, physical sciences, social inquiry and societies & identities will be offered Monday through Friday in blocks from 8:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m. Download the compiled list at www.fiu.edu/~bbc/UCCClass.pdf

-Compiled by Susana Rodriguez

THE BEACON | Editorial

Administration fails to upkeep Engineering Campus

Amidst a new building being constructed for the College of Business Administration and \$31 million renovations for an 0-10 football team, it is unacceptable that the Center for Engineering and Applied Science has some structural damage that has gone unfixed for three years.

The shortcomings are far more tangible, as they are visible for all who care to see.

Nestled no more than a mile away from University Park is the CEAS, which as its antiquated façade indicates, has fallen into an utter state of disarray.

CEAS requires repairs two years after Hurricane Wilma damaged the 40-acre campus. Numerous areas of the campus, including the parking lot, have been damaged in what was already a building in need of an architectural modernization.

It is unjust that the 2000 or so students who regularly attend classes at CEAS be forced to park in a dimly lit gravel pit that serves as a parking lot.

Each student pays a parking fee that one would assume would cover the costs of any necessary repairs that must be undertaken on these facilities.

Students should not be concerned for their safety when walking to their cars at any time of the day or night.

The College of Engineering and Computing, which has the second largest number of

degree programs in engineering in Florida, is a victim of neglect.

According to its very own Web site, external funding – \$50 million to be exact – has been generated over the past five years, warranting facilities of a far greater caliber than the outdated ones currently available.

Engineering students in need of career guidance have also been neglected by the University, as the Career Services office has been vacant for over a year following the departure of its previous director.

This ultimately leaves students in the dark with no guidance to career choices.

Such flagrant disregard for students is inexcusable, and needs to be remedied.

President of the Biomedical Engineering Society Luis Alonzo expressed his frustration with the environment of the campus, stating that it is “not on the same page” as UP. “The whole environment is not good for learning,” he said.

Engineering students are being sold short on a traditional college experience.

The University should take exhaustive strides to secure proper funding from FEMA; funding that would cover the basic repairs needed and make an effort to modernize the facilities in the near future.

It is unacceptable that other colleges, schools and departments receive millions of

GAME OVER



Video game diversions can lead to lower grades, failure

KEVIN CASTRO
Staff Writer

Video games are addictive for a good reason.

In video games you can accomplish tasks impossible to achieve in real life. The other day I assassinated a rich, crooked merchant in *Assassin's Creed*, a new game set during the Crusades.

Only in video games can I sneak up on an opponent, chainsaw him in half and then launch a grenade at his friend.

But visceral images aside, playing video games obsessively will knock your grade down a couple notches.

From my own personal experience, I used to play video games 70 hours a week, now I play 38 hours a week. I admit I was a bit addicted.

I fell victim to charismatic characters with unbelievably realistic features and witty dialogues, jaw-dropping environments and storylines that just wouldn't let me put down the controller.

Video games took too much of my free time and left no time to study. My grades and, consequently, GPA plummeted.

Enlightened by my academic failure, and attempting to retrieve my once unparalleled GPA from the sewer it crawled into, I became a slave to my studies.

But I did learn my lesson: this foray into failure made me realize

how important it is to moderate my gaming activities.

A recent study by the University of Rochester shows that video games can be addictive. The study says that video games provide “a sense of achievement, freedom and even social connectedness.”



I fell victim to charismatic characters with unbelievably realistic features and witty dialogues, jaw-dropping environments, and storylines that just wouldn't let me put down the controller.



Raul Hernandez, a sophomore explains why most of the gamers at FIU don't have a 4.0 GPA, “most of the guys here a higher intelligence than they should, but the choose to play video games.”

Another study by two professors working for the National Bureau of Economic Research showed that if you play just 40 minutes of video games for a whole semester, your GPA will be .241 points lower than someone that does not play video games.

Not only does playing video games diminish study time but also the amount of time spent sleeping.

A study from *WebMd.com* states if you play a video game before bed it will keep you awake long after you turn the game off.

The bright light of a computer or gaming screen may alter the body's biological clock and suppress the natural production of

melatonin; that's crucial to the normal sleep-wake cycle.

The answer to passing all your classes and avoiding become a game video game addict is moderation.

“You know how to balance your life, video games are something on the side; grades are the

priority,” said Brian Bonilla, a resident assistant double majoring in criminal justice and psychology.

Even with all of the scientific studies, data and peer accounts students still play more than they should.

“I could pull off a 7.0 GPA if I applied myself as I do with games to school,” said senior Will “The Baddest Man” Allen.

The title was given to him due to his infamous gaming skills playing the video game *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*.

“I could be studying, but I play *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* instead.”

The reason you are here is to graduate, not play games.

Not only do you lose money when re-taking a class, but you also lose valuable time that could be spent working toward a full-time career; and all because you just couldn't put the controller down.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you think the University is at fault for letting the Engineering Center go unrepaired?

• Yes – The repairs should have been made after Hurricane Wilma, when the damages initially took place.

• No – The process of recovery from storm damage is a gradual one. It's not unusual for there to be delays in making repairs.

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

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



December cinema rife with comedy, adventure

CHRIS TOWERS
Asst. Sports Editor

The end of the year generally signifies a push by movie studios for family-oriented comedies, Christmas-themed movies and some more serious and dramatic films.

While that may not sound like much for the average college student, there should still be more than enough reason for you to put your hard-earned money down on tickets for some movies.

JUNO (DEC. 5)

Already being hailed as one of the best films of the year *Juno* stars Ellen Page as the title character, a high school student who faces an unplanned pregnancy with her classmate Bleeker, played by John Cera, who had a star-making role in

Superbad earlier this year.

She decides to give her baby up for adoption and searches for the perfect parents to take her baby, finding Mark (Jason Bateman) and Vanessa (Jennifer Garner).

Along the way, she deals with the typical stigmas involved, and of course, is forced to grow up long before her time.

Like *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Juno* looks to heavily feature dark, sarcastic comedy, awkward family moments, and more than its fair share of acoustic indie rock songs on the soundtrack.

THE GOLDEN COMPASS (DEC. 7)

Based on an award-winning book that was chosen by the Carnegie Medal judging panel as one of the 10 most important children's books of the last 70 years, *The Golden Compass* is a fan-

tasy movie starring Nicole Kidman, Daniel Craig and, making her feature film debut, Dakota Blue Richards.

Richards stars as Lyra Belacqua, a 12-year-old girl who is chosen by a prophecy as the bringer of harmony to the world in which she lives, one where people's souls manifest themselves as animals. Lyra lives a fairly normal life at Jordan College, in Oxford, until her best friend, Roger Parslow, is kidnapped by a mysterious organization. She embarks on a mission to rescue him and is set on the path of her destiny.

I AM LEGEND (DEC. 14)

One of the most anticipated movies of the year, Will Smith stars in this post-apocalyptic horror/action film, as a scientist who survives a massive pandemic

that potentially wipes out the entire population of the world.

Much of the film centers around Smith and his dog, detailing his day to day life as the lone survivor in the city of New York.

Smith has said he drew inspiration from Tom Hanks' performance in *Castaway* for the scenes where he is alone.

For the scenes where he has to deal with the blood hungry, cannibalistic victims of the plague, the mood of the film shifts to one of a zombie or vampire movie, as much of the action takes place at night, with Smith trying to elude the mobs and find a way to help them and find out why he was immune.

WALK HARD: THE DEWEY COX STORY (DEC. 14)

Mocking some of the

most loved movies of recent years may not be the smartest move for a movie to make, *Walk Hard* is looking to do just that.

The movie plays off of the recent success of rock star biopics like *Ray* and *Walk The Line* by parodying the rags to riches (to rags and back to riches) storylines that these movies are based on.

Walk Hard is about a fictional rock star, Dewey Cox (John C. Reilly), whose life is a mash up of every rock star cliché, with numerous stints in rehab, a childhood accident and beautiful women at his side at every turn. Meeting (and mocking) everyone from Elvis Presley to the Beatles, Dewey Cox looks to bring some humor to the rock biopic genre.

With a strong comedic cast featuring John C Reilly, Jenna Fischer, Tim Meadows, Paul Rudd, Jack Black, and cameos from rock stars

Jack White, Eddie Vedder and more, *Walk Hard* looks like it will be one of the funniest movies of the year.

NATIONAL TREASURE: BOOK OF SECRETS (DEC. 21)

The highly anticipated sequel to the blockbuster thriller *National Treasure*, *National Treasure: Book Of Secrets* brings Nicolas Cage back as Ben Gates.

Having become a millionaire numerous times over at the end of the last movie, his life is going well, until a controversy implicating his family as conspirators in Lincoln's assassination moves him to try to fight for his family's name.

Along his journey, Gates, along with returning cast members Diane Kruger and Jon Voigt, discovers a trail of secrets that could shock the world and change the face of the United States.

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EYE EXPERTS

Optometry club helps students gain experience

CHRISTIN ERAZO
Contributing Writer

The Future Optometry Students of America club is a pre-optometry club set to educate students in their field, as well as involve them in local charities. FOSA was founded in 2005 as an FIU organization and has expanded to include students from neighboring colleges and universities, such as Miami-Dade College and the University of Miami.

The club was formed two years ago when current FOSA President Joshua Blokhuis noticed a lack of resources for optometry students at FIU, so he jumped into action and began assembling these students.

“There was no official pre-optometry club at FIU. Students that were interested, or were pursuing optometry, had no access to reliable resources,” Blokhuis said.

Through FOSA, students are given advising and a chance to experience the field of optometry while still attending the University.

“We provide knowledge and opportunities to pre-optometry students to

make themselves competitive applicants when applying to optometry school,” said Blokhuis. “Students gain experience through Optometric observations at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and various private practice settings throughout Miami.”

As part of their hands-on experience, FOSA members are involved in shadowing rotations that allow students to observe actual medical procedures.

Being a member of the FOSA also grants students the chance to visit the Nova Southeastern University School of Optometry, attend events with the Dade County Optometric Association and attend an annual meeting at an exclusive pre-optometry day with the Florida Optometric Association.

Officers and members of FOSA are dedicated to the study of optometry while trying to fund-raise for their philanthropy.

“We conduct a variety of fundraising events for the FOSA as well as for other charities,” mentioned Vice President, Heather Kolomyski. “We have had charity concerts, fundraising sales, special guest speakers and presentations on optometry and eye care.”

Last spring, the FOSA club hosted a charity event entitled “Rock for Eyes” that benefited the Bruce Heiken Memorial Fund, a Florida, not-for-profit, charitable foundation, which provides comprehensive eye examinations and glasses to financially disadvantaged children attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools



COURTESY PHOTO/ FUTURE OPTOMETRY STUDENTS OF AMERICA

VISION CHECK: Mariana Wilde, a member of the Future Optometry Students of America, checks a person's eye sight.

In addition to the Bruce Heiken Memorial Fund, FOSA is also highly involved in charities such as InfantSight and Miami Lighthouse for the Blind. The Drive Home, a local band featured on MTVU's “Best Music on Campus,” performed a concert at Gracie's Grill in the Graham Center to help raise money for FOSA.

As one fundraising event, the club set up a lemonade stand outside of the Graham Center. To their disappointment, it began to rain and members scrambled to take cover.

Despite the rain, the FOSA members strived to achieve their goal and continued with the fundraiser. The club managed to

sell all 10 gallons of lemonade.

“It really brought us closer as a club,” said Blokhuis.

“We discuss recent news and activities, announce opportunities to participate in upcoming events and bring ideas together that serve everyone's interest,” said FOSA secretary, Claudia Santos.

FOSA currently consists of 35 members and is looking for interested students to join. Students interested in joining FOSA and learning more about the field of optometry can attend the organization's general meetings which are held monthly in GC 305 at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Dec. 4.

Reel / Big Fish

Band withstands test of time, revives genre

LAUREN AGOSTO
KASSANDRA POOL
Staff Writer

and drums

Q: Throughout the years, you guys have had such pure lasting power. How were you able to keep up with the changing market and get to where you are today?

A: KLOPFENSTEIN: Pure luck! We also work very, very hard for our live shows. Everyone has different tastes and brings a little something different to the table.

We have the gift of playing music for a living. Through that we bring an entertainer kind of vibe to it.

We came from Ska and Punk Rock, but became part of the music industry as well. We were able to get out of the record label thing just before everybody jumped ship.

Artists are just starting to take back their industry. There has always been a conflict between business people and artists.

You cannot really fault the business people because they are doing what they are supposed to do, make money and find the best

way to make profit.

And the artists just want to make music. Technology has really given back to the artist by being able to create their own recordings, upload them on the web, and promote themselves.

Q: Why Ska?

A: KLOPFENSTEIN: There's a big ska scene in Orange County. We were a weird band; not really knowing what we were doing, playing a lot of shows with ska bands and we were like ‘it's pretty cool.’

That kind of music got the reaction from the crowd; got the crowd dancing. Ska music has always stuck its head up once in a decade. It will always continue on.

It is appealing to people. It's always existed on this underground level. It's new and exciting and innovated. People who like Ska are open to new experiences from what we see and it's also fun!

Q: Where does your musical inspiration come from?

A: CHRISTIANSON: People express themselves in different ways. Life is mysterious. It's the way we have been able to express the weirdness of life. People do it differently. Sometimes the weird-



COURTESY PHOTO

REEL BIG STARS: The members of Reel Big Fish perform at a concert. The band spoke to *The Beacon* about its new album.

est is self inflicted.

A: BARRETT: We obviously can't communicate any other way.

STEIN: It all comes out naturally. No thought process, it just comes out instinctively.

Q: Your new record is self funded, without a label. What was that like?

A: BARRETT: Awesome! We didn't have to wait for a label to approve budget, studio or anything. No pressure only what we pressured ourselves to do. A record label is like a bank - a bank with an opinion.

Original records cost a lot of money, as high as \$300,000, compared to now you can easily do a record for \$8,000.

Q: What are your thoughts on illegal downloading?

A: KLOPFENSTEIN: We're very torn because when it was first discovered, we were on a

major label so we never made any money off of record sales.

But, it geographically helped us to get to Europe because our records were not distributed there.

BARRETT: The only way we can continue to make music is if we get paid.

We don't need a lot, but we do need some and if we can cohabitate we will be able to push the art form forward.

STEIN: If someone is gonna download our music for free and it meant they would come to a show and buy a ticket and a t-shirt at the show, I think that would be a good meeting halfway. If it meant that they became a fan, I'd be okay with it.

Q: Any advice for aspiring musicians?

A: CHRISTIANSON: Practice, practice, practice. And when you think you've practiced enough, practice some more.

Bell still a Golden Panther fan despite distance

RAJA BELL, page 8

Q: Not only did you have a successful basketball career at FIU, but you also meet a soccer player named Cindy Greenman, whom you later married. What can you tell us about meeting your wife at FIU?

A: It's a funny story because I met her my first day on campus. I guess it was meant to be. It was something to be said about the athletic program and everyone living in those apartments. They really made it feel like a family atmosphere.

They welcomed me as a transfer student with open arms. It was a great place for young people to meet and start a relationship and build on their plans.

Q: After you left FIU in

1999, you were undrafted and seemed to bounce around playing for quite a few teams before you landed in the NBA about a year later. How frustrating were these times and what got you through them?

A: I didn't know I ever was going to have an opportunity to play in the NBA. That wasn't my driving force. I just loved to play the game. Every opportunity to play the game, I just took it. It was frustrating when people began to tell me I had a chance and I would knock on the door and it would shut on my face.

What kept me going was the love for the game, not wanting to quit, not feeling like I had showed the best me on the court, knowing that if someone got a chance to see that, they would be impressed with it.

Q: Since leaving FIU, have you been back to work with the players? Do you still keep up with the FIU basketball team and FIU sports? If so, what do you think of the team's chances this season?

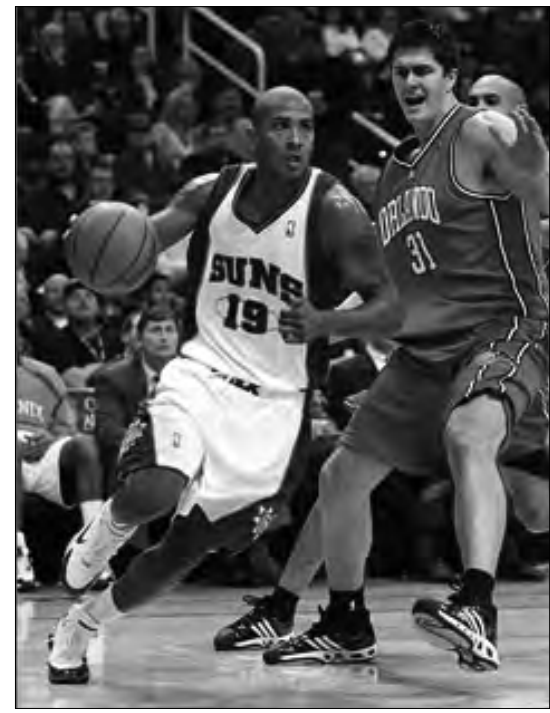
A: I've been back a few times. Earlier in my career I went back more frequently. As I started to get a family and more responsibilities, I don't have as much time.

I was back a couple of times this summer and saw them working out. I keep up with them because I know coach Rouco well. Coach Rouco coached me in tournaments when I was in high school. I know that they've got a pretty good team and that they stand a chance of winning the [Sun Belt] Conference this year. I'm always pulling for them. I'm always checking

the schedule to see if we're in the same places at the same time. I will always be an FIU cheerleader.

Q: You managed to start to make your mark in the NBA in the NBA playoffs with the Philadelphia 76ers. What was it like being thrust into that spotlight and how did you handle the pressure, especially in game 7 of the eastern conference finals?

A: The best way I can describe that it was a roller-coaster ride for me. There were a lot of emotions in me. And everything was happening so fast that it was hard to get my bearings about me. I think that helped me with the pressure because I didn't have time to think about it or realize what kind of situation I was in. So it allowed me to just play with straight adrenaline.



COURTESY PHOTO

MOVING FORWARD: Raja Bell played two years as a Golden Panther. He met men's basketball head coach Sergio Rouco when he was in high school.

MEN'S BASKETBALL NOTEBOOK

Transfer center faces first real challenge of season

SERGIO BONILLA
Sports Editor

Entering the 2007 season, the arrival of 7-footer Russell Hicks and 6-foot-11 Badara Nidaye created the biggest buzz.

For the first time this season, the Golden Panthers' big men will face a challenge in the form of 6-9 University of South Florida center Kentrell Gransberry. He is the nation's leading rebounder this season and poses the biggest offensive threat for the Golden Panthers.

The Golden Panthers face the Bulls Nov. 29 who began the season losing their first three games. Despite their dismal begin-

ning, season, the losses were not disheartening.

Gransberry was unable to play the first game due to a one-game suspension, and the Bulls lost the next two games on the road by less than 10 points each.

After dropping their first three, they now found a rhythm, defeating Florida Atlantic 100-69 and Florida State 68-67 in thrilling fashion.

Defeating a good team on the road could prove to change the momentum of the young season for the Bulls.

The Golden Panthers are facing a Bulls team with the ability to explode on offense. They reached the 100-point mark against FAU,

which can be a difficult feat in college basketball.

Working to the Golden Panthers' advantage is that the Bulls have played twice as many games.

The Golden Panthers boast rested legs, which could be critical down the stretch with big men Hicks and Gransberry battling in the paint all game.

Hicks' responsibility will be to neutralize Gransberry's scoring ability first using his height advantage. This season, Gransberry has been more productive offensively than with his rebounding ability.

He will try to outmuscle Hicks, who weighs 20 pounds less than Grandberry, in order to gain ideal inside position to score. Hicks

will need to be patient and time Grandberry's moves well as his best bet to stop him is by blocking him.

Besides the battle inside the paint, the Golden Panthers' main perimeter threat, Alex Galindo, will need to take advantage of the Bulls double teaming of Hicks.

Galindo did not connect well from behind the arc against Florida Tech, going 1-for-6. Although he was recovering from a concussion, Galindo's shooting will need to improve because he is FIU's most dangerous deep threat.

Defensive specialist Chris Fuller collected nine assists against Florida Tech, but he cannot be expected to hand out that many

dimes on a consistent basis.

Point guard Erick Nsangou provided 15 points of offense against Tech, but his two assists put pressure on his teammates to shoot too many jumpers, rather than cutting to the basket.

The Golden Panthers' 62.5 free-throw percentage will not be enough to overcome the Bulls' offense.

With hopes of getting big man Gransberry into foul trouble, free-throw shooting could be the deciding factor in the game.

Hicks has to build upon his first game as a Golden Panther and the Bulls will have to build upon their upset win against FSU in order to win.

DEMOLISHED



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

TORN DOWN: Excavators destroy the Football Stadium's old field house. Destroying the field house is a necessary step towards Phase 1 of the stadium construction.

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STAR STUDENT

Raja Bell recalls college days, works toward finishing degree

DARREN COLLETTE
Staff Writer

Part two of a two-part interview.

Eight years ago, Raja Bell was one of hundreds of people on the court of the Golden Panther arena (Pharmed Arena) as FIU fans rushed the court to celebrate a 69-62 upset over the University of Michigan. These days, he can still be found on a basketball court, only now as member of the NBA's Phoenix Suns.

Bell came to FIU as a transfer student from the University of Boston. He was an instant success as a Golden Panther and averaging 16.6 points per game in his two years with the team. However, basketball may not even be the number one thing he remembers from his days at FIU.

Bell still has connections to FIU and current coach Sergio Rouco. Bell was first coached by Rouco when he was playing AAU basketball high school.

"He's always been a tough competitor. He is a guy who made his living in the NBA as a defen-

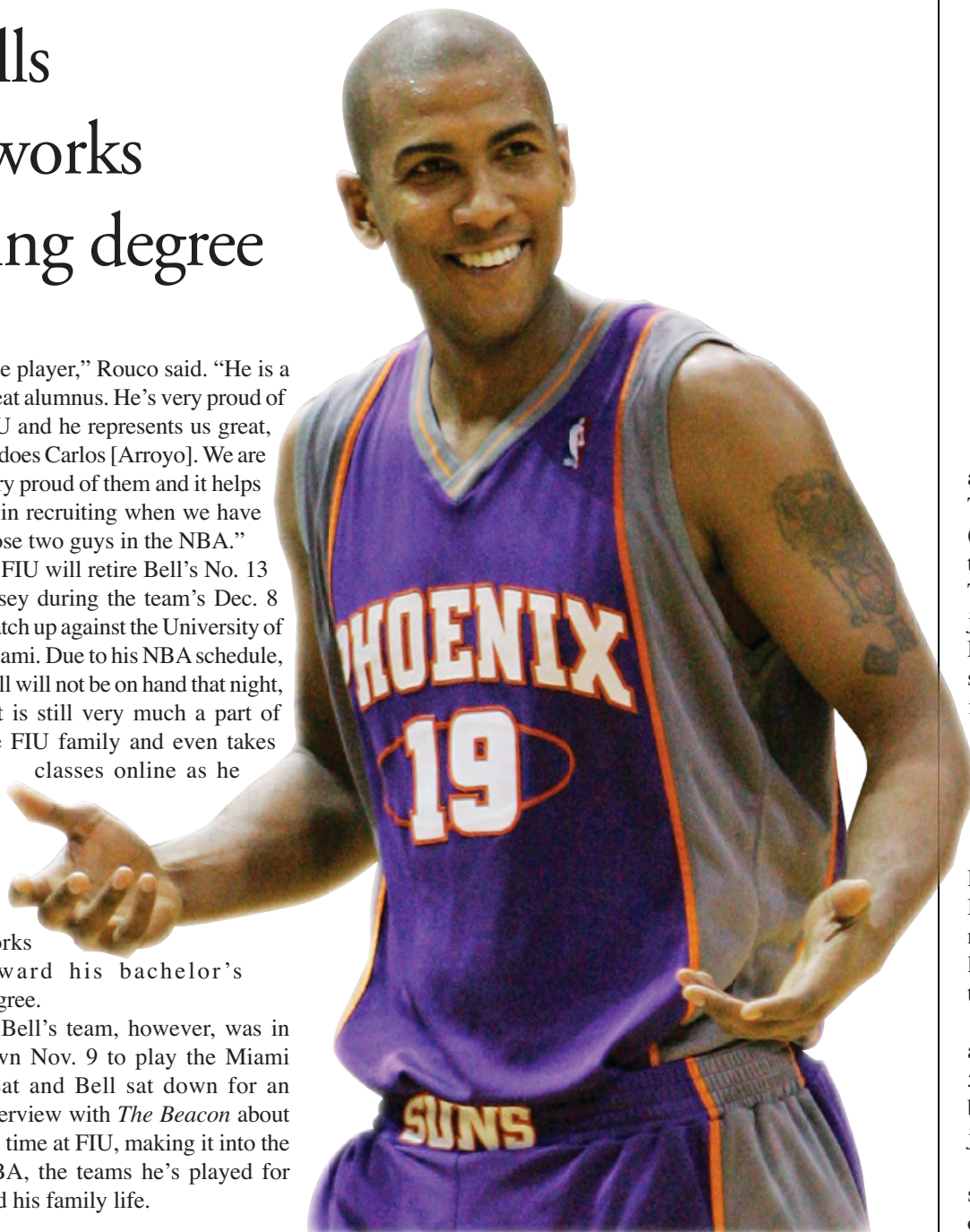
sive player," Rouco said. "He is a great alumnus. He's very proud of FIU and he represents us great, so does Carlos [Arroyo]. We are very proud of them and it helps us in recruiting when we have those two guys in the NBA."

FIU will retire Bell's No. 13 jersey during the team's Dec. 8 match up against the University of Miami. Due to his NBA schedule, Bell will not be on hand that night, but is still very much a part of the FIU family and even takes classes online as he

works toward his bachelor's degree.

Bell's team, however, was in town Nov. 9 to play the Miami Heat and Bell sat down for an interview with *The Beacon* about his time at FIU, making it into the NBA, the teams he's played for and his family life.

RAJA BELL, page 7



MORRY GASH/AP PHOTO

MEN'S SOCCER

Last 10 minutes doom club in finals

CHRIS TOWERS
Asst. Sports Editor

After turning around its season in a magical run in the Conference USA Tournament, the men's soccer team (5-14-2) was poised to sweep the tournament and upset the No. 1 seed, Tulsa (15-2-2), holding a 2-1 lead with just four minutes to play. The Golden Panthers would squander their lead, surrendering two late goals, ultimately falling 3-2 in the championship game Nov. 18 at Birmingham, Ala.

The scoring started in the 29th minute with Tulsa's Eric Burkholder beating a defender one-on-one and firing a shot past junior goaltender Kyle Thomas to put Tulsa up 1-0. Junior Bruno Barbosa answered right back nine minutes later, taking control of a loose ball on a free kick and firing it past the goaltender to knot the score 1-1.

Freshman Stephen Jair Cabas had an opportunity to put FIU on top in the 56th minute when he had an opportunity behind the defense but missed his shot just wide.

Sophomore Juan Guerra, who was selected as an All C-USA first teamer on the strength of his eight-goal season, added one more in the 60th minute off a free kick from junior Cory Kendall, who picked up his first assist of the season.

Golden Hurricane Todd Goddard tied the game up in the 80th minute with a header off a cross from Burkholder, who was chosen as a second team Academic All American.

Missing two defensive players, FIU finally seemed to tire towards the end, and Burkholder and the Hurricanes took advantage as Burkholder beat the defense and scored his second goal of the game in the 86th minute.

The Golden Panthers' stunning tournament run came to an end as Tulsa won its first Conference USA Men's Soccer Championship.

Despite the disappointing ending, the Golden Panthers have to be satisfied with their performance in the tournament.

The offense, which had put up only 15 goals in 18 games during the regular season, scored eight times in the three games in the tournament and upset the tournament's No. 2 seed, Southern Methodist.

For their play in the tournament, Cabas, Guerra, and senior defender Ainsley Deer were selected to the All C-USA Tournament team. Cabas was also selected to the conference's All Freshman squad, and Guerra was a 1st team all conference. Deer was not chosen for his regular season play, but stepped it up in the tourney to receive honors.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL NOTEBOOK

Guard play critical for team's offense

SERGIO BONILLA
Sports Editor

The women's basketball team's next game on Nov. 29 is against the University of South Florida Bulls (2-2), who fell to No. 10 Duke 89-52 on Nov. 15.

The Bulls' wins and losses this season have been blowouts. The closest game they played was a 72-56 win over New Hampshire.

They have been streaky and inconsistent in their play this year. In their two wins, they have accumulated long runs of 22-5 and 18-4 to put their opponents in an inescapable hole.

In order to prevent the Bulls from creating a long run like that, the Golden Panthers will have to defend USF's interior players.

USF center Jessica Lawson dictates how well the offense plays. Her inside presence sets up the perimeter game. In a win over Bethune-Cookman, the Bulls converted 11 3-pointers.

The Golden Panthers' offense is led by junior guard LaQuetta Ferguson. Her career-high, 30-point performance against No. 24 DePaul University nearly led the team to an upset, but eventually fell

89-77.

However, when she scored just eight points against No. 18 Florida State. The result was a horrendous 27 percent field goal shooting performance for the team and a 70-50 rout.

As Ferguson goes, the rest of the offense follows. She cannot be expected to carry the team alone.

Fellow junior guard Iva Ciglar will have to be a facilitator and create offensive opportunities as well. In the team's victory against Lynn University, Ciglar dished out 10 of the team's 15 assists.

Besides Ferguson, there is not another player on offense who can create her own scoring opportunities. Therefore, Ciglar will need to aide her teammates to score easy baskets.

One advantage the Golden Panthers have over the Bulls is that they have faced two very sound basketball teams in back-to-back games. Compared to DePaul and FSU, the erratic Bulls should not pose as many problems on both sides of the ball.

The Golden Panthers defense will need to play a formidable game to keep the Bulls at bay. Rebounding will be another key factor as the Bulls have a height advantage. If the Bulls gain more second



FERNANDO GARCIA/BEACON FILE PHOTO

DRIVING: Junior guard Iva Ciglar is the catalyst for the Golden Panthers offense. Fellow junior guard LaQuetta Ferguson is the team's leading scorer.

chances, the Golden Panthers will find themselves losing their third game of the season.

Inconsistency is the Bulls' biggest weakness and the Golden Panthers will be able to exploit it as long as they receive a decent game from Ferguson and Ciglar.